

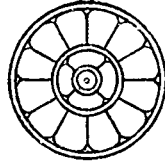
MOTHER INDIA

APRIL 24, 1964

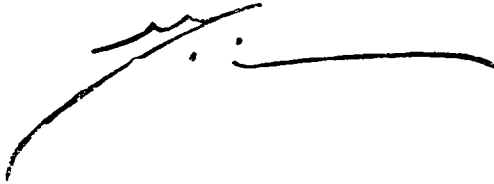
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Mother India : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2



Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XVI

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MOTHER ANSWERS QUESTIONS

(1)

Pourquoi les hommes sont-ils obligés de quitter le corps ?

Parce qu'ils ne savent pas aller aussi vite que la Nature dans son progrès vers le Divin.

Why are men obliged to leave their bodies ?

Because they do not know how to go as fast as Nature in her progress towards the Divine.

(2)

Faut-il respecter le corps d'une personne morte ? Si oui, comment ?

Il faut tout respecter, les vivants et les morts et savoir que tout vit dans la Conscience Divine.

Le respect doit être senti dans le cœur et l'attitude intérieure.

Must we respect the body of one who is dead ? If so, how ?

We must respect everything, the living and the dead and know that everything lives in the Divine Consciousness.

The respect has to be felt in the heart and the inner attitude.

(3)

Est-ce qu'il y a le Divin dans le corps d'une personne morte ?

Le Divin est *partout*; et je répète que pour le Divin il n'y a pas des vivants et des morts—tout vit éternellement.

Is the Divine there in the body of a dead person ?

The Divine is *everywhere*; and I repeat that for the Divine there are no living and dead—all live eternally.

(4)

Que devons-nous faire pour rendre l'âme heureuse et pour qu'elle se réincarne dans de bonnes conditions, par exemple, dans un milieu spirituel ?

Ne pas avoir de chagrin, et rester très paisible et tranquille, en gardant le souvenir affectueux de celui qui est parti.

What should we do to make the soul happy and to help it reincarnate under good conditions—for example, in a spiritual surrounding ?

Have no grief, remain very peaceful and quiet, keeping a loving memory of the departed.

(5)

Est-ce que les âmes pleurent ?

Quand quelque chose les éloigne du Divin.

Do souls weep ?

When something takes them away from the Divine.

(6)

Comment faire pour arrêter quelqu'un de pleurer ?

L'aimer sincèrement et profondément sans chercher à arrêter ses larmes.

What should one do to stop someone from weeping ?

✓ Love sincerely and deeply without seeking to stop his tears.

MARCH 29, 1964

THIS day was the fiftieth anniversary of the Mother's arrival in Pondicherry—the first arrival as distinguished from the second and final which took place on April 24, 1920. To mark the occasion an appeal was made to her to give *darshan* in the evening from her second-floor terrace. She responded gladly. . . . There she stood—ten minutes of radiant calm, with a soft smile playing across it at the end—ten gracious minutes from which the power of a new life flowed out to all the hundreds assembled below, their hearts rising up as hers reached down to gather them into herself.

It was with the same all-gathering ever-uplifting Mother-heart that she came from France fifty years before with the vision of a Golden Future in her eyes. India she had felt to be her soul's true country. And it was her conviction that here she would meet the one who would be her leader and co-worker in the adventure of a divine life such as earth had never known. This conviction was born from the touch of a presence she had been familiar with in her trances—a presence she had instinctively called Krishna.

As the French boat drew near the coast of Pondicherry, she had the occult experience of a great light shining from some centre in the town. In the town itself, when she landed, she was more intensely aware of the light. And, on behalf of the seeking and stumbling souls around her, her prayer went forth to the Supreme :

Pondicherry, March 29, 1914

O Thou whom we must know, understand, realise, absolute Consciousness, eternal Law, Thou who guidest and enlightenest us, who determinest and inspirest, grant that these weak souls may be strengthened and those who are fearful may be reassured. To Thee I confide them, in the same way as I confide to Thee the destinies of all of us.

But she had not long to wait for a reply to her prayer. For, on that very day she stood face to face with the centre of the light she had visioned. And when she saw Sri Aurobindo she recognised the original of the presence that had presided over her inner life. And the next day she wrote in her spiritual diary, addressing again the Supreme :

“...It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth: His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be, indeed, established upon earth.

“O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope is boundless.”

From March 29, half a century ago, started the work, in union with Sri Aurobindo, of establishing in the very substance of the physical being the divine dynamism which Sri Aurobindo has called Supermind, the Creative Truth-Consciousness secretly holding both beyond and within that substance the perfect originals of all forms and activities of earth, and pressing upon the latter to evolve and manifest those gadheads.

In part of this half century the Ashram has grown up, child of the Mother's old ideal of organising a place where men's souls would be free to realise God and find happy expression in a many-sided beauty and harmony. In making it grow and bringing more and more into it the power of a new life, she has gone through days and nights of silent steadfast strenuous labour, encountering for our sake difficulties and dangers which we can hardly imagine.

Then in 1956, on March 29 she announced that the long battle was at last won :

“Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.”

And now, exactly eight years after announcing that fulfilment which was the seed of the Supermind sown in all material existence, she came before us at the day's end—the flowering of this seed into a body clothed in subtle lustre, ready to kindle into God's golden wideness all those who held up to her their lamps of love.

AMAL KIRAN

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

DECEMBER 7, 1939

As we were sponging Sri Aurobindo, P started once more the topic of X, the Yogi of Western India, by saying that one disciple of his had sketched some diagrams of X's world-scheme.

S : There he shows the arrangement of the different planes.

SRI AUROBINDO : It seems by "Intuition" he means the Intuitive Mind which throws its light on the ordinary intelligence. In that plane there are four divisions : discrimination, with intuitive suggestion—inspiration which he calls "Higher Inspiration"—and then revelation which is equivalent to his "Insight"—and finally the gnosis which could be his "Illumination". In that way his scheme is more understandable.

S : In his diagram all jivas, individual souls, are held in the Paramatman Consciousness : they are latent and the purpose of evolution is to make them conscious of their unity with the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is akin to our idea.

At this point we noticed that C was shaking his head with closed eyes, and we began to laugh.

SRI AUROBINDO : What's it ?

N : C is shaking his head.

SRI AUROBINDO : Because he doesn't understand us ?

S : Probably he is shaking to the rhythm of my speech.

C : Both. (*Laughter*)

S : To go back to X : his action is, as I have said, very erratic, saying one thing just now, contradicting it the next moment, prophesying so many things that don't come true.

SRI AUROBINDO : That means he is living and acting from the Cosmic Consciousness. I don't know what realisation he has reached. Perhaps it is in the vital plane. That is a plane of possibilities. If any possibility or an idea or suggestion comes to him with some force, he accepts it. The nature of the vital formations is to present them with a force. And when another possibility comes with the same force, X accepts that too so that his prophecies go wrong, become contradictory and his planning and behaviour erratic. This sort of thing I have known by experience. But the European mind can't understand it. It calls it fraud.

S : He doesn't reject anything. He even goes to cinemas and says that one can act there more easily where people are concentrated on one purpose.

SRI AUROBINDO : That means he works through the mass, which again is a sign of working from the vital plane.

N : He seems to be an interesting fellow anyhow.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, he is interesting.

S : He lays great stress on love.

SRI AUROBINDO : That means the heart. And that again is a sign of his action through the vital being.

S : Among the people who go to see him some are not impressed. Others feel a sense of love towards him. Ramdas also acts through love; he mixes with people and serves them out of love : he has no mission, while X claims to have a mission.

P : N was wondering what you had meant by saying yesterday that he had got into a higher consciousness.

N : Isn't the higher consciousness a vast range ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The higher consciousness is anything above the mind. Of course, there are different levels of higher consciousness.

N : That's what I mean by "a vast range".

SRI AUROBINDO : There is no indication of the nature of X's first realisation; but to judge from his first experience or from its results, he seems to have got into the Cosmic Consciousness, but for its expression there was no instrumentation for a long time. That explains his long period of seeming madness. After that, he has been trying to establish the contact but there is no proper organisation of the instrument.

S : But he is quite conscious. He makes his own plans and arrangements even as regards details.

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't mean there is no contact but the contact is not sufficiently established and organised. He is trying to establish it by his silence.

S : He doesn't seem to be conscious of other worlds.

SRI AUROBINDO : For that one must have the visionary power and know their workings and their influence on you. It is sometimes done by coming in contact with beings of those worlds. Otherwise one is only conscious of the planes within oneself.

S : People who go to him feel a great bustle and activity. One biographer has written like that.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then his life could be written as a hustle and bustle coming out of the silence. (*Laughter*)

N : At any rate he seems to be more interesting than Raman Maharshi.

S : He is another type. People say they feel great peace at his Ashram. And Maharshi himself looks like a rock of peace.

SRI AUROBINDO : Maharshi is much more firmly established in his realisation, at any rate.

N : Does he believe in transformation of this life ?

S : No. he says he has no such *Sankalpa* (Will). D asked him once what he thought of Sri Aurobindo's idea of ascent, descent, transformation, etc., and whether he didn't want to change earth-life. He replied that there was no *Sankalpa* in him for it.

SRI AUROBINDO : The Mother also believes in *Sankalpa*, as you can see from what she said to Paul Brunton when he asked what he should do. She said "You have to follow whatever will arises in you. When you have realised the Self, the Self will choose for you what to do." That is another thing European minds can't understand. They think all spiritual personalities must be of the same fixed type.

S : Sometimes X makes provocative statements. If asked, "Are you Christ ?" he says, "Yes." "Are you God ?" Again, "Yes." When a Christian comes, he says, "I can help you. Awaken the Christ within." By that he means the Christ consciousness.

P : Blake and other European mystics have said the same.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the doctrine of all esoterics.

S : X wants to create a circle of twelve disciples.

SRI AUROBINDO : Like the twelve apostles ? Repetition of an old performance ?

N : Ending in a crucifixion ?

S : No, minus that.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then there won't be any Judas ? (*Laughter*)

S : His system of communicating with others is by a board on which the alphabets are arranged. By swift movements he indicates what he has to say.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is like table-tapping.

S : Some of his disciples deny him and say he is proud — that's because of his wrong prophecies, I think. I wish he would remain silent.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, if it is true silence. And silence would have saved him the inconvenience to which he has been put.

S : Some people say we are convinced he has no nirvikalpa samadhi.

SRI AUROBINDO : He doesn't believe in samadhi. One can't act in samadhi.

S : And some people get bored by him.

SRI AUROBINDO : Do they think they are in a school ?

S : No, not that bad. (*Laughter*) He puts meditation above concentration — meditation on an idea or scheme or object.

SRI AUROBINDO : Quite correct.

S (*after some time*) : Some people—especially Europeans—at once rush to the press to vent their impressions. The danger is that sometimes they have to contradict their previous statements and impressions, as in Y's case. He was taken up with Yoga first, then he began to decry it. Just the same with some other Europeans in connection with X. They praise him at first and then say, "He is inconsistent." In Yoga one can't always be consistent. Whitman said, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself. I contain multitudes." When one is growing, one can't have consistency always.

SRI AUROBINDO : Quite so. Emerson and Vivekananda said the same thing. "Consistency," said Emerson, "is the hobgoblin of little minds." There are contrary sides to a truth and their expressions may appear contradictory.

EVENING

N (*as Sri Aurobindo was being massaged*) : It seems that for some time the response in the physical with regard to illness has been quicker than before. J was relieved yesterday of an acute asthmatic attack as soon as the news of it reached you.

P : Jwalanti got relief of acute sciatica the moment the evening meditation started.

N : Is all this because the Power has increased or is it because of a greater receptivity in us ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The Power has increased, and so has the receptivity but in particular cases and not in a general sense. (*To N after a while*) I am told Z does meditation when working and has that experience of nothingness, but feels giddy. If she feels giddy she shouldn't allow herself to meditate during work. She may fall down.

N : She didn't tell me about giddiness. When she asked me about meditating during work I told her to ask the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO : But does she remain conscious? What is meant by being "conscious of nothingness" ?

N : I'll ask her to write out the experience.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling to S*) : What about Sh ?

S : I was just thinking of him while reviewing in my mind my present patients. Strange coincidence ! He is getting on well though he won't admit it. He has asked back his own medical reports from Dr. Saviour.

SRI AUROBINDO : What for ? Does he want to make a book out of them and publish it ? Saviour may have thrown them into the WPB.

S : P also has asked for homeopathic treatment. I advised him to go to R... (*After some time*) I want to say something more about X. At the start of his spiritual life he lost consciousness by an embrace from a Yogini and recovered by a knock from a Yogi.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is allopathic and not homeopathic treatment.

S . While he was rambling in a dazed condition after that embrace he came

across a Yogi who as soon as he saw him threw a stone at him which struck his forehead. X was startled and came back to normal consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO : Startled back into commonsense ?

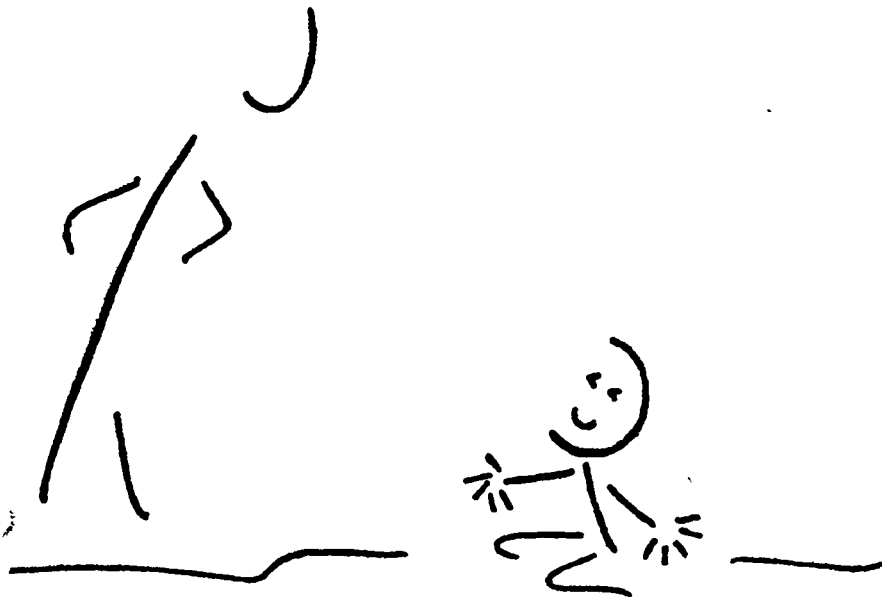
S : I have heard of Sadhus curing diseases by flinging things at people and hurting them in various other ways. In general I don't know how to view Sadhus. It is curious to see jealousy and egoism among them even more than among worldly people who are doing sadhana. They are egoistic even about their renunciation !

SRI AUROBINDO : How ?

S : One tells another : "I have sacrificed a lot. How much have you sacrificed ?" As for the worldly people who do sadhana, they are busy all day and when at the end of the day they see some brother disciples, they become happy.

SRI AUROBINDO : In the world there is more restraint. People know that otherwise they would get into hot water. I have seen many jealousies in Ashrams. I knew a Bengali sadhu who fought with a fellow sadhu for the gadi of an Ashram. He was quiet at first but his own disciples egged him on. When his Guru came to know about the quarrel he said, "You have gained what you can in this life. You won't advance any more." In the Ashram of Dayananda, however, the disciples lived in peace and harmony because he was always insisting on love among them.

NIRODBARAN



"What shall I do with a little boy who is always getting himself dirty?"

"That's *your* problem, Mother !"

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

SOME DIFFICULTIES OF THE VITAL BEING

Q : I wonder why I do not have any psychic experiences at present, even during the periods when my vital is calm.

SRI AUROBINDO : Only calm in the vital is hardly sufficient. There must be something throwing out the ego from the vital. 17-1-1936

Q : It seems my vital has become extremely unstable. When its views are even slightly contradicted it invariably sinks into despair. I often try to stop it but it always returns to its nature.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is because the vital was very much under the grip of its desires and so, now that it is separately active, not controlled by mental will, it kicks and cries whenever its desires are not satisfied. That is an ordinary movement of the human vital when not dominated and kept in its place by the mental will. 18-1-1936

Q : Cannot the dynamic descent into us of spiritual consciousness take place in spite of the vital difficulty?

SRI AUROBINDO : Not fully. There are alternations of descent and interruption of descent. 18-1-1936

Q : In what way am I keeping myself open to "Ego, Demand and Desire?"

SRI AUROBINDO : The fact that your vital "goes out of the poise" and accepts them means that you keep yourself open to them. The sign that these things are no longer admitted is when the inner vital rejects them so that they become suggestions only and nothing else. There may arise a surge of suggestions or waves from the general nature, but they cannot get admission. It is only then that a will can be kept in which one is untouched by the general atmosphere. 6-3-1936

Q : I feel a sort of voidness just after my English class. Anyway it is not a spiritual emptiness. For there is an exhaustion of my life-energy.

SRI AUROBINDO : Voidness may be of different kinds—a certain kind of spiritual voidness, or the emptiness that is a preparation for new experience. But an exhaustion of life energy is a very different thing. It may come from fatigue, from somebody or something drawing away the vital force or from an invasion of *tamas*. But I don't know why it should be connected with the English study and happening only then. 1-3-1936

Q : I just read that if our vital lays its hold on the physical the transformation of the body can be done very quickly. Why then does my vital not try it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Laziness. The vital can be all right when things are going on swimmingly, but when difficulties become strong, it sinks and lies supine. Also if a bait is held out to the vital ego, then it can become enthusiastic and active.

25-3-1936

The feeling "I can't aspire etc. What can I do ?" is suggested by the physical inertia, but it must not be accepted as a truth.

30-3-1936

The vital struggle comes from a wrong attitude in the vital itself and in the physical mind, an absence of quietude resulting.

30-3-1936

Q : Is vital sensitiveness good ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is neither good nor bad. It comes like that in the course of the development. Some are incapable of consciously or visibly opening to others because they are insensitive. On the other hand to be too open is troublesome.

15-4-1936

Q : Does everybody have to pass through the stage of vital sensitiveness ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The Mother and myself have passed through it. It comes inevitably in the full opening of the being to the universal.

17-4-1936

There can be no transformation of the being in an insensitive consciousness.

17-4-1936

The depression is not the only cause of suspension of experiences. There are others such as inertia etc. If one can have experiences continuously in spite of these things, that means that a part of the consciousness has definitely separated from the rest and is able to go on in spite of the outer resistance.

17-4-1936

Q : Since yesterday I have felt no despondency though outer reasons have been there in plenty. Is it then a fact that my being does not respond to it, but simply my mind thinks like that ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The outer reasons are created by the mind and it is the mind that responds or does not respond to them. Nothing outward can affect unless the mind (vital mind usually) represents them to itself in a particular way and makes its own response.

17-4-1936

If the mind does not respond to any suggested reasons for despondency, that is indeed a great liberation.

17-4-1936

Q : Does the vital by itself never get depression, and is it only the mind that is responsible by creating suitable reasons for it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The vital mind is part of the vital. If mind (mental mind, vital mind, physical mind, subconscious mind) does not respond to outer things, depression is impossible. The self at one end, the stone at the other never get into depression and between them the true mind, true vital, true physical consciousness never get depression because they do not give responses to things that create depression.

20-4-1936

Q : I have raised this question again for a further enlightenment because X tells me that when he is depressed it has never any external causes. Well, that may prove that depression is possible in the absence of any outward reasons.

SRI AUROBINDO : You seem to rely very much on X and his experiences and ideas about them. X's experience proves nothing because he is quite ignorant. His depression comes from outside and has its causes, only his vital mind does not record or understand the causes, but there is a response to them all the same. Because the vital mind has in the past always associated depression with these causes and that impression remains in the vital stuff, so it responds to their touch with the usual reaction taught to it by the vital mind. An ignorant and untrained mind like X's cannot be expected to realise the secret machinery of the movements of his own consciousness.

20-4-1936

Q : If one does not get depressions, is it due to a greater Grace of the Divine working on one ? How is it that some people are rarely depressed, while others so often are ?

SRI AUROBINDO : For many reasons, some because their vital has taken the right attitude, some because their psychic is prominent, some simply because they have a more sound, balanced and reasonable nature. The Grace of the Divine has nothing to do with it.

20-4-1935

From NAGIN DOSHI.

SRI AUROBINDO AS I REMEMBER HIM

SRI Aurobindo was one of the greatest thinkers of his day. It is strange, however, that the people of his own province know so little of him, and the number of those who bother about the principles and the ideals he stood for can be counted on one's fingers. But there was a time when his name was on all lips, and young Bengal looked for his views on the living issues of the day with eagerness and expectancy.

It was from a family-circumstance that I knew Sri Aurobindo who was not so widely known till he had left his job in Baroda to join the Bengal National College. His father-in-law, the late Rai Bhopal Chandra Bose Bahadur, and the father of my sister-in-law were close neighbours, and my sister-in-law and Mrs Mrinalini Ghose were of about the same age and on fairly intimate terms. They maintained a close correspondence and exchanged photos. When, therefore, I joined the Bengal National College in December, 1906, Sri Aurobindo was already known to me by name and reputation. According to the scheme of the National Council of Education the syllabus was divided into three stages or courses—the Primary, the Secondary and the College course—and the Secondary stage included the First Arts classes of the Indian Universities. As we belonged to the Secondary stage we saw little of him. But we were conscious of his presence and felt proud of him. We were also aware that he was one of the front-rank leaders of the nationalist group though comparatively young of age.

In December, 1906, there was a session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta. It is possible that Calcutta was selected as the venue of this particular session in view of the All-India importance already attaching to the resistance movement started in Bengal over the partition issue. A sharp cleavage was already manifest among the political thinkers of the day, not only over the political programme, but also over fundamental political issues, and their rank was divided into two well-defined groups dubbed the "Moderates" and the "Extremists". Without intending in any way to minimise their contribution to the struggle for freedom I shall not be unfair to them, I believe, when I say that the Moderates were incapable of going farther than claiming a few small mercies here and there. Even to think of Colonial Self-government, the political haven of moderate ambition in those days, within any conceivable measure of time, was taboo. The extremists, on the other hand, dreamt in terms of complete independence and were for a more dynamic programme. Lal-Bal-Pal—as the late Lala Lajpat Rai, Balgangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal were sometimes popularly known—were the acknowledged leaders of this group, but Sri Aurobindo was the idol of the younger generation and represented the sum-total of their aspiration. This cleavage became widest over the election of the President for the ensuing session of the Congress. When it grew evident that Lokmanya Tilak whose political philosophy the Moderates regarded with a sense of dread had all the chance of an easy walk-over, they cabled to the late Dadabhoy Naoroji, the

Grand Old Man of India, offering him the Presidentship of the Calcutta session, and as soon as that venerable leader cabled back acceptance all strife at once ceased. But the cleavage was complete. Simultaneously with the Congress the Extremists held a separate conference under the presidency of Lokmanya Tilak, and the Calcutta Extremists—or “Nationalists”, as they called themselves—formed a separate political organisation which they named “Swaraj Samiti”.¹ The *Bande Mataram*, an English daily started under the chief editorship of Bipin Chandra Pal, was the organ of this group. Differences, however, soon arose over its policy, and Pal left the Editorial Board. The paper very soon attracted the attention of the Government, and Sri Aurobindo was hauled up for sedition. The case did not stand and he was acquitted, but as the College authorities disfavoured his political associations and ideas he left it rather than embarrass them. This happened towards the latter half of 1907. The gagging operations were now in full swing and the Freedom Movement was driven underground and began to gather force. Towards the end of April, 1908, two young men went to Muzaffarpore in Behar which was then a part of the Presidency of Bengal and, in their attempt to kill Mr. Kingsford on whom a revolutionary tribunal had passed the death sentence, killed, through inadvertence, two English ladies. There were wide-spread searches in Calcutta and Sri Aurobindo was arrested along with others and was lodged in the Alipur Central Jail.²

For the first two months or so he was lodged in a separate block of cells all by himself, and we saw very little of him. The only occasions on which we could see him were on Court days and on Sundays when we had interviews. At first the authorities were very strict about interviews, but in the flush of their apparent success they imagined they had struck the movement a death-blow and became careless.

The undertrials, as we were then called in Jail parlance, were huddled together in the back veranda of the Jail office while the interviewers waited inside with only the iron bars of the arched door-openings in the office wall intervening, and for a full half hour or so they had complete freedom.

It was sometimes near the later part of June that Sri Aurobindo and the rest were brought to the cookshed cells where I had been lodged with my two brothers and some others. Among the newcomers was the would-be approver Narendra Nath Goswami. The motive of the authorities in bringing us together was not quite clear. It is possible they had in mind greater facilities for the approver to fish for information. For the couple of weeks we passed together in these cells the days were so packed with events and the cells so overcrowded that we had scarcely any time to watch and think.

¹ It is to be noted here that the *Bande Mataram* was started a few months prior to the Calcutta session of the Congress while the “Swaraj Samiti” was inaugurated immediately after it.

² In 1908 the Presidency Jail occupied the site where the Victoria Memorial now stands and the present Alipore Central Jail was a small jail for juveniles just constructed. When the old Presidency Jail was demolished to make room for the Victoria Memorial the Alipore Central Jail of Sri Aurobindo's time became the Presidency Jail, and the Juvenile Jail was enlarged to accommodate the Alipore Central Jail.

But even in those days groups formed around the leading personalities and some of us more than the others turned to the practice of Yoga. My elder brother, the late Hem Chandra Sen, ordered some books on Yoga and started practising 'Nadisadhana'; he consulted the Master about his experiences, and took instructions. Sri Aurobindo was nothing like the dreadful men we expected leaders to be. Though reserved, his manner was easy and natural. At night he was often found to be in deep meditation or in various postures of 'asanas' or 'mudras', and, during day-time, and as long as the light permitted, he lay steeped in the ancient lore of Mother India. But that did not prevent him from mixing freely with the rest. He could talk and would talk at times for hours; would not mind playing cards, or rounds of 'Ghost' and 'Word-making' and 'Word-raking'; had a fund of humour; and would even prepare propaganda literature like 'The Cult of the Bomb' for circulation outside. At times he would relate his experiences of Yoga, at other times he would listen to the experiences of his comrades and help them with suggestions; while at yet other times, and not quite unoften, he could be seen engaged in random conversation.

Shortly after Narendra Nath Goswami had been declared King's witness and tendered pardon and the enquiry at the committing magistrate's court had concluded we were, all of us, removed to ward No. 23, a spacious block on the ground floor in front of the cookshed with enough accommodation for us all. With nothing to do we made enough noise to disturb the entire jail but there was one man in our midst whom we could not disturb and who appeared like a 'flame in still air that did not flicker'. But this man was not, for that reason, callous or unresponsive to things around him. He was extremely human and could even be a party to, and enjoy, the devilries of youth. Our friends outside would often send delicacies for us, and my elder brother, Hem Chandra, would sometimes take charge of these and see to their equitable distribution and conservation. One night when all were asleep a few young men conspired to stealthily remove a tin of biscuits and were helping themselves to the contents. Sri Aurobindo also had his share of the loot. Somehow my brother was disturbed out of his sleep and the miscreants took to hiding. Sri Aurobindo, who was busy with his share, noticed my brother and called out—"Hello, Hem! come here and have your share."

Narendra Goswami was removed to the European Ward direct from the court on the day he was tendered pardon as King's Witness. He was shot dead on the morning of the 31st of August, 1908, in a narrow alley leading from the jail hospital to the jail gate. We were removed to the 44 cells the very same day and were deprived of all our comforts. Then began a dreary and solitary life—without books, without company, and without even the chance of looking at the face of any other man outside those who guarded us or were directly concerned with giving us indispensable services. This could not last long and within a few days one could hear taps all along the cells and at all hours of the day and night when no undesirable person was by, and any news or alarm passed along the walls to the ends of the block in a few minutes' time.

After the first shock had passed off, the authorities relaxed a bit; we were allowed to walk about a few minutes every morning and every evening within the cell-enclosures. We were, next, taken out of our cells morning and evening and marched for half-an-hour or so in the yard of the block. We were, then, allowed into the yard itself for our meals, and, finally, two reservoirs were erected in the yard, one in each wing, and we were brought out daily for our baths, and every Sunday for the weekly washing of clothes. We were not supposed to exchange greetings or to talk, but it was scarcely possible to enforce this too strictly. At least we could see each other, and that was no small boon.

In the meantime the entire upper grade staff of the jail excepting the Deputy Superintendent had been changed. The Superintendent and the Medical Officer had to quit, the Indian jailor was replaced by a European jailor, and European warders were appointed. Police enquiries into a dacoity case had brought to light a plan for breaking the jail, and the guarding arrangements were strengthened. Powerful electric lights were placed all along the outer wall of the block and the inner wall enclosing the cells. The work of the Indian warders were supervised by European warders, men from European regiments stood sentry inside the block day and night while Indian regiments stood guard outside, fully armed.¹ During interviews the parties stood on the opposite sides of an expanded metal cage in which sat a police officer. And, as if this was not enough, they were searched before and after the interview. Nothing was allowed from outside, and correspondence was kept strictly within the limits of the jail Code. Searches were frequent and transfers from cell to cell took place every now and then. This was not always an unwelcome event; it brought us constantly into touch with new sets of people, and this was a welcome change. During this period while one day we were taking exercise a European warder whom one of us had dubbed "Ruffian" caught Sri Aurobindo by the neck and pushed him along as he was not walking smartly enough. Sri Aurobindo flared up and turned back; "Remember, I am a gentleman," he flashed. The man was scarcely prepared for this and was taken aback. "I am also a gentleman, I am also a gentleman," he fumbled and stammered. The Chief Warder hurried to the spot to smooth matters. The prisoners were greatly agitated though they maintained outward calm. This was the single occasion on which Sri Aurobindo ever showed any temper, though only for a moment, but this one moment demonstrated the ascendancy of the spirit over

¹ The 16th Rajputs were the first Indian regiment placed outside, and the Gordon Highlanders the first European regiment to be placed inside. At least one—and possibly four—of the European warders belonged to this regiment and thereby hangs a story. When Mr Norton received his first threatening letter the *Englishman* came out with a letter signed 'The Gordon Highlanders' threatening reprisals on Indians in case any harm came to Mr. Norton. This letter was read out in court. When, therefore, the Government required European warders to guard us, the choice naturally fell on the Gordon Highlanders. One of these warders belonged to a small socialist group of 12 or so who were guided by a man in London who supplied them with socialist literature and tracts. This man volunteered for the job with the express purpose of coming into contact with us and was particularly helpful. It is interesting to note that this group went by the name of "Sons of India".

the insolence of office. The proud and insolent Scotchman instinctively knew that he had, here, to reckon with a being far superior to him though a prisoner under his charge and clothed in a dark skin.

The date for the hearing of the case at the Sessions had been announced and was drawing near. We were waiting for the day expectantly. Not that we had been looking for a general delivery from the Sessions, but because it would bring us together every now and then. After their last few months' experience culminating in the execution by the revolutionaries of several persons connected with the case the authorities had grown wiser and had provided for the prisoners a cage with wire-netting and locking arrangements. Here again, groups formed around the prominent members of the party, and while the fate of the prisoners hung in the balance, animated discussions over the principles and practice of revolutionary philosophy and history, on the various phases of a revolutionary movement, and on the cults of 'Bhakti' and 'Karma' absorbed the attention of the youthful delinquents. Those who practised Yoga or any particular form of Sadhana exchanged their experiences. Sri Aurobindo, again, was the centre of this group. But his interest was not confined to the spiritual sphere. At times he could be found listening intently to the proceedings of the Court and it was remarkable how closely he followed them in the midst of his noisy surroundings. At other times he would be found engaged in general conversation, or discussing particular subjects. At one time he gave an interesting account of how the revolutionary spirit had worked throughout our fallen days and traced its history up to the time we were passing through. This history was remarkably corroborated by the writings of Samarth Ramdas Swami, the testimony of the late Puln Bihari Das from an entirely different source, and, strangely enough, the testimony of the Russian revolutionary Mironow—an exiled military engineer and a Sanskrit scholar who had, at one time, lived in Benares for the study of Sanskrit and whom the late Hem Chandra Kanungo contacted in Paris for the purpose of acquiring first-hand knowledge of Russian revolutionary methods. "How so?" exclaimed the Russian in some surprise, "We learnt revolutionary methods from the Chinese who claim they got them from India. How is it that you come to us for light?"

The trial at the sessions closed on the 4th of March, 1909, and there was a long spell of two months before the judgement was delivered. We saw very little of one another except when we were taken out for meals, or for the daily exercise, or for bath and washing. At last the day of judgement came, and we were taken to the Court. The judge was very grave. For a moment he seemed to have lost that composure of mind that should belong to a dispenser of Justice, and there was a perceptible tremor in his voice as he pronounced the death sentences.

Sri Aurobindo was acquitted along with 15 others and he was as unconcerned in his acquittal as he was in his confinement. There were touching scenes of leave-taking. The convicted persons were separated and removed to prison, and a veil descended upon their earthly life, as in death.

REMINISCENCES

MY PROFESSORS

I

MY professors at college were giants, Olympian gods all. They are memorable names in the fields of scholarship, learning and teaching. Of these, J. C. Bose, P. C. Ray, Percival, M. Ghose and our Principal P. K. Roy were mature elderly men; among the younger group were Harinath Dey, Prafulla Ghose, Khagendranath Mitra, and a few others who will appear in this story later.

All these men possessed a special gift for which they deserve admiration. Learning and teaching ability are qualities not so rare, many teachers have them. But the quality for which our ancient teachers were known as preceptors, *guru*, is something unusual : that is the power of influence, the touch of an awakened soul. The true quality of a teacher does not lie in what mysteries he has taught the disciple. How deep has been his exposition ? how far has he evoked with his own personality the inner spirit of his disciple ?—that is the question. We find this in the records of our ancient tradition. A disciple comes to the teacher for the knowledge of Brahman, *brahma-vidyā*. The teacher, instead of giving him any instruction or explanation of any deep mystery, asks him simply to repair to the forest and tend the kine for a while. “For a while” meant quite a few years in fact—as in the Gautama-Satyakama episode of the Chhandogya Upanishad ! As we all know, here in the Ashram, the Mother has often given us to clean the dishes and not read.

The great men with whom we studied had this gift in large measure, at least many of them. Percival taught us Shakespeare. He never expounded in full the meaning of words and phrases. This was done in detail by Manomohan Ghose, although he too did this only during the first two years of college; for we were then just fresh from school and he had to explain everything in detail, so that we had no need of any other help, not even a dictionary. But, from this point of view, there was no one, the students thought, who could match Professor J. N. Dasgupta. He was actually a History man, but he was given to teach English as well. The boys would say, the naughty ones perhaps, that Dasgupta left us in no doubt or uncertainty as to the meaning anywhere, so he would dictate, “father means the male parent” ! Percival did not act as a lexicon. He dwelt only on such passages as had any complexity or dramatic intent, and he would convey the inner sense by his manner of reading. I remember a passage in *King John*, where a single monosyllable, “O !” is uttered by a character. Percival omitted to read it, his only comment was, “Only a great actor can utter this word.” We read Burke with him. He would turn over pages after pages of the huge volume, with just an occasional word as to the writer’s drift; this would help bring out the personality of Burke, the mould of his thought. Percival’s figure lives clearly in my mind. He always walked with his back stiff and erect, sat in his chair in the same posture. I have never seen him bend or sway. He would sit

immobile and straight, his head high up on a stiff neck; only the words came out of his mouth as from an oracle.

Manomohan Ghose not only gave his explanations and comments, he also helped us in appreciating poetry. He taught us *The Princess*. This was his comment on the book. "You know what this work is like? If Tagore had cared to write a poem on female emancipation, it would have been something like this book of Tennyson's. But even in this arid expanse there are some oases, as for instance these charming lines :

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes."

I was lucky about his comments on two of my own compositions. One was on my very first essay in college. We were asked to do a homework, the subject given was "Imitation". He explained what it meant : I still recall he gave as an illustration the protective mimicry of birds. I wrote out a very full essay, dwelling first on the virtues of imitation, next on its drawbacks. I began the second part of my essay by saying, "But Janus has his other face too." I had at the time just heard about the god Janus. You know who is Janus? He is the two-faced god of ancient Rome. He was also known as a god of war, war and peace being his two faces. The doors of his temple were opened in times of war, they were closed during peace. So he symbolised the door; indeed the word in Latin means the door, through which one can pass this way or that. The month of January derives from the name of this god, as this month faces both the old year and the new. Anyway, the professor wrote on my composition, "First class essay." You can well understand how elated I felt.

The second time it was probably just after I had come to the Degree class. In a tutorial class he set an essay to be written on the spot. We were given the choice of a number of subjects. I chose "Self-Realisation or God-Realisation". I do not now remember which of the two I supported, Self or God ! Perhaps I said that Self-Realisation really meant God-Realisation, for the Self was nothing but an illusion. Or did I say that to realise God was nothing but Self-Realisation, for God was nothing, Self alone was the reality? I must have introduced a lot of such metaphysical stuff. This brought the following comment from the professor : "He is one of those generalisers who fight shy of facts and figures." I could see these "facts and figures" clearly illustrated in the work of my neighbour. Next to me sat Naren Laha (now well-known as Dr. N. N. Law). I cast a furtive glance to see what he had written. He had chosen "Bankimchandra" as his subject. I found he had serially classified the collected works of Bankim with a full tabulation of their good and bad points. Here was a shining example of clear "facts and figures", and complete statistics.

There is another amusing anecdote about this Naren Laha; it relates to another professor of ours, Harinath De. De was then a comparatively junior man just re-

turned from England. One day he mentioned in class that before he left for England he had kept a page mark in a book he had been reading in the college library and that the book must still be there with its page mark, exactly as he had left it. I went to the library to search out the book and could verify the truth of his remark, though I cannot now tell you what the book was about. In his teaching he was noted for parallel passages; he would bring in heaps of quotations from passages of similar thoughts. He also prepared a book of Notes on these lines, although he once himself admitted in class that the Notes had been written at an immature stage with the sole object of showing off his learning and that all those parallel passages were really unnecessary. This Harinath De happened to be our examiner in English at the Annual Test, and in his hands our Naren Laha, a good boy, an exceptionally good boy in fact, received a big zero. This left us gaping and we had no end of fun. We decided among ourselves it must be credited to drink. I need not hide the fact that De had been addicted to alcohol, but that had no adverse effect on his character or learning. He was simple and easy in his manner and very sociable. And as for his learning, it was a veritable ocean. He was proficient in about two dozen languages; whatever language he offered for an examination, he always got a first class first. Greek and Latin he had read with Sri Aurobindo; he knew Sri Aurobindo.

The youngest of all our teachers of English was Prafulla Ghose. He had just passed out of the University. Precisely because he was a raw young man, he could infuse into his feelings and attitude, his manner and language, a degree of warmth and enthusiasm. One day he asked a question in class. One Kiran Chatterji (he was first in English in his B.A. and M.A. and a Greats scholar at Oxford later) stood up and gave a fine answer. But Prafulla Ghose remarked, "I see the Roman hand of the master", that is to say, the answer had been given after getting hold of Percival's Notes on the point.¹ I seem to have come under his special favour, somehow. Two of us once took part in a recitation competition. I do not now recall exactly what was the particular piece of which poet or dramatist. Very probably, it was from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the piece beginning :

A stark moss-trooping Scot was he.

Prafulla Ghose and an Englishman named Tipping, another teacher of English, were the judges. They listened to our pieces and Tipping decided in favour of the other boy. He being the senior man, and an Englishman at that, it was his verdict that prevailed. Prafulla Ghose sent for me afterwards and expressed his opinion that Tipping had not done justice to me. I believe my competitor spoke English with a slightly Anglo-Indian accent, like the one our educated people in Calcutta used to affect once or do even now in imitation, and that must have sounded better in Tip-

¹ The phrase "Roman hand" occurs in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (III.4.48). The hero receives a letter from his fiancée and can guess who the writer may be from the handwriting itself. He exclaims in joy, "I think we do know the sweet Roman hand."

ping's ears than my "native" Bengali pronunciation.

Now that we have been discussing Mr. Tipping, let me add a little more about him. As a teacher his speciality lay in drawing sketches. That is to say, he tried to present before the students in a concrete, living manner any scene described in the text, by sketching it on the black-board. It can hardly be said that he was a skilled painter or artist. But perhaps illustrations in literature belong to the same category as advertising posters; they serve the same purpose.

As I remarked at the outset, our professors were like the Olympian gods, not merely because of their calibre or gifts and greatness of character; their position and attitude were like that—somewhat aloof and quite beyond the reach of personal contact or relations—at least for the first two or three years. But there were some who sought to establish with the students an intimacy, or at least a relatively closer relationship. Take for example our professor of philosophy, Aditya Mukherji. He was nearing his forties perhaps at the time. On the very first day of the First Year class he announced during the roll call that he would try every day to make himself familiar with the faces of about half a dozen students. But this turned out to be impossible later on, his resolution turned into a merely pious wish. He was a very good teacher who would present the subject matter in a very simple, easy, neat and clear manner. He had about his manner and expression what I have subsequently come to recognise as French clarity. There is a pleasing association linked with his name in my mind. I have told you about my first composition in the first year of college, in connection with Manomohan Ghose. The first essay I had to write in my Degree course was in the Honours class in philosophy. Professor Aditya Mukherji gave an essay to be written at home and it was duly submitted. One day in class the Professor called out, "No. 40"—this happened to be my roll number. He said to me, "Here is your essay. I hope you will get a first-class in English also." You may well imagine the state of my mind! My neighbours clustered round me and said, "What is this wonderful stuff you have written! Let's have a look." I had shown off a lot of learning, by quoting from Vijnanabhikshu, *īśvarasiddheḥ*, to show that the Sankhya is not necessarily atheistic, by stealing whole passages from Mill and so on.

The paper finally reached the hands of Kiran Mukherji. I have spoken to you about him before; perhaps something more could be added here. As I have said, he returned from England after attaining great distinction at Oxford. Ashutosh Mukherji took him on as a professor at the Calcutta University. I met him several times during my trips to Calcutta from here. While in England he used to read with interest all my articles in the journals. Our relations grew more intimate several years later, that is, when he got interested in our work and sadhana here. There had been some tragedy in his life, I do not know the exact story; so that in spite of his intellectual gifts and learning he was an unhappy man. He had been turning this way in search of peace and a different kind of life. But he was taken away from this world by an untimely death.

P.C.Ray was the one person who could set up an intimate personal relationship

with the students; that indeed was his outstanding gift, and it was this that enabled him to leave behind a series of disciples. At the very sight of his pleasant smiling face, the students felt their minds and hearts suffused with joy, almost with a light as it were. One day in class he happened to say something in Bengali. We were taken aback : a professor using Bengali in college, at the Presidency of all places! This was unprecedented! He could guess immediately what we felt and came out with the Bengali verse, meaning:

All over the world there is a babel of tongues.
Can anything please unless it's one's own ?

You can understand how unfailingly he could draw the students towards him.

J.C. Bose was a somewhat different type. I did not have the luck to meet him in class more than once or twice, for he left for England soon. But he was by nature of a serious temperament; and in contrast to P.C.Ray who never bothered about his dress or appearance, he was always neat and prim and proper. But he too was equally worthy of respect for his nobility of mind and innate greatness. I have referred elsewhere in an earlier talk to his friendship with Nivedita and the encouragement I had from him in my attempt to master the technique of the bomb.

There was another professor of philosophy I should not omit to mention. He too was quite young at the time, a fine handsome and pleasing figure. But the subject that he taught gave us—to me at least—no kind of pleasure. The subject was Ethics, and the text book was James Seth's. To me, it seemed, it talked all sorts of rubbish and nonsense, things that had neither depth nor sincerity. The professor, Khagendranath Mitra, did, however, take a good deal of pains to initiate us into the mysteries of morality. But I am mentioning his name here not for that reason; nor again because he developed into a well-known singer of Vaishnava hymns. It is because he chanced to turn up here, many years later, on the occasion of a Darshan; this was after he had retired from service. When we met, I reminded him in the course of our talk, "Sir, you are my guru, I have been a student of yours". "He was a little surprised. I then explained everything. "That's very well," he said, "I am very pleased to hear it. I have found what I wanted; I was your guru, now give me my fee." "Tell me how." "I have given you some teaching, now you give me some: tell me about the sadhana you follow here."

While speaking of my professors, I must not omit to mention our Pundit. This was a title given by the students to the teacher of Sanskrit in college as in school, no matter how big a professor he might be—as if to show that the feeling of distance created by English was not there in the case of Sanskrit. Our Pundit was Satischandra Vidyaabhusan, who later became a Mahamahopadhyaya, an extremely courteous man, entirely modest, one who behaved as if he were an absolute "nobody". In his class the students had no fear or worry, no constraint, sometimes even no sense of propriety either. One day they said in class, "There is not going to be any reading

today, sir; you had better tell us a story. You are familiar with the languages and histories and cultures of so many strange lands, please tell us something." Vidyabhushan was particularly learned in Pali and the Buddhist scriptures. Without a murmur he accepted the order of the boys. While talking of Pali and the Buddhists, he told us something about the Tibetans too. "What you call Darjeeling," he said, is not a distorted version of Durjaya linga. Actually it is a transcription of a Tibetan word." He spelt out the word on the black-board, in the Tibetan script—it looked somewhat like Bengali—something like Dang-Sang-Ling, I cannot now exactly recall. On another occasion we had the chance to hear a conversation in Sanskrit in his class. The class was on, when one of the officials of the college entered the room with a Ceylonese monk. The monk wanted to meet the Pundit. They talked in Sanskrit. I only remember a single sentence of our professor, "*ghatikā-catuṣṭayām eva āgacchati bhavān*," "Be pleased to come at four o'clock." The kindness and affection of our Pundit are still fresh in my mind. He was never afflicted by the weight of his learning, nor did it ever afflict us.

Now to conclude: let me give you the scene of my final parting with college, the professors and college life.

I had just been released after a year of jail. My father said, "You should resume your studies, but not in Calcutta. Calcutta is a place for all sorts of excitement. Young people easily lose their heads on coming in contact with Calcutta. If you are to study, you shall have to choose a place outside Calcutta where there is not much excitement." I said, "All right." I had no intention of proceeding further with my studies; my real object was to bide my time until I found a safe anchor. What kind of anchor it would be I had no idea. So, on the pretext of securing a Transfer Certificate, for getting admitted to a college outside Calcutta, I went to my old college, the Presidency. The certificate had been made out by the clerk and submitted to the Principal for his signature. As we waited, there was a summons for me from the Principal to see him. In the column for "conduct", there was this entry on my certificate, "He was an accused in the Alipur Bomb Conspiracy case, but was acquitted." This entry must have drawn the attention of the Principal, and perhaps he wanted to see for himself who and what kind of man was this "accused". As I entered his room, he looked up and saw me. Could he recognise me? For in his English classes I used to sit on the front bench just facing him. He must have observed me any number of times, so I used to think. Now he kept on asking why I wanted a transfer and why I should not continue in the same college. "My guardians do not want me to continue here," I said. He expressed his doubts, "You won't find it convenient. It is better to continue here." In the end, he had to give me the Certificate. I bowed to him and came away. The Principal happened to be our professor of English, Percival.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji from the original Bengali)

SPIRITUAL CAUSERIE

THE NEW AGE

I HAVE been frequently asked if there are any concrete signs by which one can know that the manifestation of a New Force, the Supramental Power, has really taken place, or whether it is a matter of faith. It is really a question which involves both, testimony and faith. At the present stage, faith is required at the outset. Testimony follows to corroborate. As things develop and the external results of the inner workings begin to emerge more clearly, faith or no faith, men will be obliged to recognise the presence of a new Factor, the Supramental Consciousness in action upon earth. As the Mother says, even the blindest will come to see.

“What testimony has come your way ?” they ask. “Plenty,” I would say. To speak in general terms, there has been a marked ascendancy, during the last few years, of the forces working for harmony and peace over those that seek to wreck the progressive order of life. The possibility of a general war has been positively pushed back; a world war is most unlikely, more unlikely than ever, unless it comes as the bolt of Rudra to wipe out malignant remains of the old. Conflicts and clashes occur—rather, are allowed to occur—in the process of working out the collective Karma, but they are localised. It is unthinkable that a decade ago the Suez affair could have subsided in the manner it did. Or the Cuban crisis. Or, to come nearer home, the Chinese invasion. You may explain it in any way, but the fact remains that such a thing has not happened so far, it is something unique in history—I mean about their withdrawal.¹ Secondly, the realisation of Oneness among men and nations is stronger today than at any time before. It is penetrating more and more spheres of life. There is, further, an acute awareness among the leaders of thought that the human mind has reached the end of its tether and a further leap in evolution is indispensable if mankind is destined for a completer and happier life. There is a good deal of vigorous thinking on what is going to be the next step.

Most spectacular, however, are the results in the inner sphere, the spiritual. I have ascertained, and am in a position to state truthfully, that every serious spiritual seeker, whatever his path, finds a host of obstructions broken down. The barriers are removed. Those who meditate find it easier to collect themselves; those who pray proceed through the heart, find that there is an effortless intensity and keener aspiration in their seeking; those whose way lies through work find their dynamism quickened and their joy of consecration continuous. And for people in the Ashram it is a daily experience how the Mother’s spiritual Force is today able to exact response from the

¹ This withdrawal of the Chinese, I am convinced, was first determined on the subtler planes. I know of an *upāsaka* who had the prevision and said—a month earlier—that the Chinese might just walk back. And we know they did.

most physical strata of life to a degree that was unknown before. Masses of illumination break upon cultivated and receptive minds, throwing open fresh vistas of possibilities. The human mind has been preparing itself for this hour and all over the globe there has been an air of expectancy as evidenced in the innumerable movements, collective and individual, that have been working and waiting for a New Age which they all feel and know is coming or has already come. The frames differ, the terminologies differ, but the central feature is the same: the old order is changing and a New Order is replacing it. Individuals, separated by thousands of miles of physical distance and many more of mental, are one in sensing and perceiving the outbreak of a New Agency—some call it Light, some Deity, others Faculty—in the Earth atmosphere. Almost all the traditions in the world have converged upon the present as the destined hour for the birth of the New Age, what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have called THE HOUR OF GOD.

All this was forcibly brought home to me the other day when a leaflet found its way into my hands through the courtesy of a respected friend. It is issued by a group of seekers in Florida in the United States,¹ wedded to the Christian Faith and naturally using a language different from ours. Put in general terms, their faith and perception—and work based upon it—are this :

The Earth is now on the eve of entering into a Fourth Dimension. So long it has been the era of the expression of the material or Third Dimension on Earth. Various cycles—major and minor—are now coming to their climaxes. We are now in the final years of a “2,600 year cycle which is the revolution time of our Solar System around the Central Sun. Our planet Earth is also ending the 2,000 year cycle, called the Piscean Age. We are now in a final cleansing period, preparatory to the Golden Age. This is the long prophesied Harvest Period, the Age when all error must be swept from Earth and from the minds of those men who would remain for the millennium. For the Earth and all on it are even now in the process of being transmuted—raised to a higher vibration. We are now entering the Fourth Dimension, where all that exists on Earth, and the Earth itself, will exist in a higher state of evolution. There will be, and even now are in process, many changes in all forms of life. It is a natural step in the evolutionary progress of a planet, and will take place regardless of life existing on it. The many and varied Earth changes already in effect, as well as the weather patterns and other related phases, are but small examples of how the entire Earth is to be changed for this Aquarian Age. This is not the end of the world, but the ending of an Old Age, the cleansing of the old orders, so that the New Aquarian Age, in all of its spiritual glory, can occur.”

The seekers in Florida go on to describe how vast changes are taking place everywhere and even body-structures are being affected. New vibrations are astir and the body of man, physical and mental, is responding variously. The Fourth Dimension is essentially a God-awareness, a state of Evolution where the ‘Light of

¹ Mark-Age, 327, N.E. 20 Terrace, Miami 37.

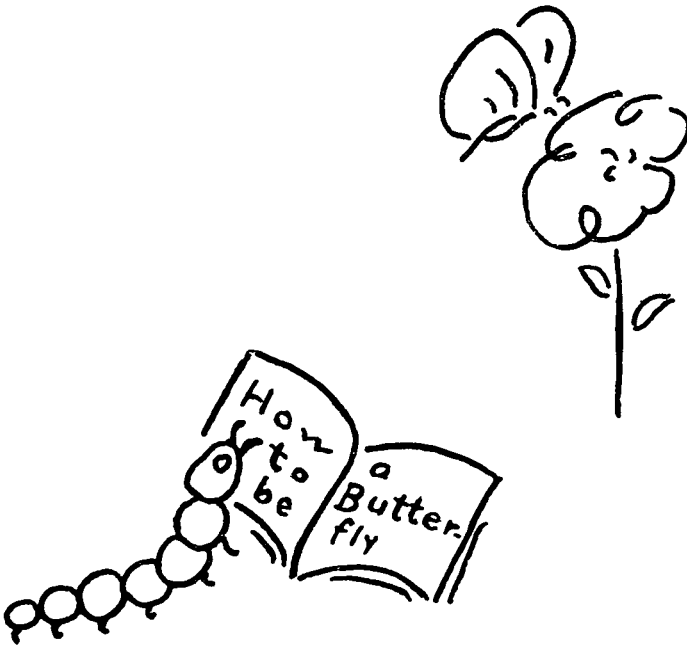
Truth' is patent, and there is an incessant pressure upon man to awaken and exercise his latent psychic and spiritual powers. "The Earth is being prepared to house a Race of a more highly developed and dedicated Man." There have come on Earth, adds the note, a large number of beings from other planets—some of them for the first time in 'fleshy bodies'—to take part in this great endeavour. The gigantic work is now in its final phase of the Preparation Period. "By 1965 there will be such a vast change in the thinking and in the desires of every man on Earth that it will be difficult for anyone to recall the turmoil and confusion which now exist here in every realm of life."

We are in substantial agreement with much that is said in this document of unusual depth. We may not be so definitive regarding the time-factor; our conception of the New Age and the New Race may be more far-reaching; but our experience and our vision are in the same direction.

The work is on. The question before everybody is what the Mother asks :

ARE YOU READY ?

PRABUDDHA



"It is not by upadesh...that the Sadhana is done, but by an inner influence."

AMERICAN MEMORIES OF THE ASHRAM

“A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.”

The Mother on March 29, 1956

As we travel westward from the Ashram at Pondicherry, somehow these words of the Mother's keep ringing within as an expression of a keynote of our visit there, and also something she said long ago : “...if I could, I would try to create a small world—oh, quite small—where people could live without having to busy themselves with food and lodging and clothes.. so that I might see whether all these energies freed by the certainty of an assured material existence would turn spontaneously towards the divine life and the inner realisation.”

• We have seen with our own eyes that there is such a place on earth where over a thousand souls have gathered—men, women and children—to work and to live, not for money but for devotion and dedication to a spiritual ideal. Never have we witnessed a greater devotion than one sees in many individuals in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. They have, of course, the great example of the Mother, not to mention the assistance of her grace and guidance, along with the combined inspiration of Sri Aurobindo and his teaching.

It seems the farther we travel from the Ashram, the deeper the impressions. There prevails an especially vivid memory of the lovely play of devotion around the central place, in the sweet peace of the Sri Aurobindo Samadhi, where there is a constant, quiet movement—the motion of offering. Always there are flowers here, arranged with exquisite beauty, and forever, so it seems, an offering going on silently : a bringing or a receiving of a flower; figures kneeling or standing in reverence; children coming and going happily, freely, perhaps with a flower or a stick of incense, or there is the unspoken offering of an aspiration in the heart with a prayerful gesture. This is a sacred place, but in a spontaneous way, no trace of a “holier than thou” atmosphere, only a natural reverence, as appealing to children as to others. Inspiration is here, beauty and faith and a pure, sweet devotion, expressed in a harmony that is like a dream, dreamlike, and yet more real than so-called reality. As I sat observing, there was a yearning for even an ounce of this devotion, so natural to the native of beloved Mother India, and generally unnatural to the Occidental. I believe that everyone would agree that India is a land where spiritual devotion has been cherished through the centuries.

One sees devotion shining in the eyes of many sincere devotees at the Ashram, a glow of love and dedication or it might be spiritual experience. Whatever, there it is, shining from within, inescapable, indescribable. We noticed many of the young people have this joyous light in their eyes. The Mother has written : “In

this place, children would be able to grow and develop integrally without losing contact with their soul." Perhaps this is the explanation, or one explanation. Moreover, they have a wonderful physical fitness and wholesomeness—obviously, body, mind, and spirit are nurtured here.

True, there are imperfections, here or there (perfection is not claimed) but who are we, how are we to see the whole, to see all of what is or is to be the outcome of this magnificent experiment that seems to be more of a miracle than an experiment (actually, no more of a miracle than a seed growing into a tree) ?

One thing comes clear : here is the promise of a new dawning. Very possibly a divine spark is slowly unfolding through the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and their Ashram.

The message of Sri Aurobindo is indeed timely for the present era. It is a message that reconciles, that is a bridge between the East and the West, the past and the present, the higher consciousness and the lower. It is all-embracing, reaching beyond tradition, yet based upon it, bringing the light of a further vision.

Yes, as we move westward, this vision and the Mother's dream, the spirit of devotion and dedication experienced at the Ashram, these impressions grow deeper and deeper.

A question comes now to mind—what expression, what way will this message manifest in the western world ? So far, the answer could perhaps be : the way may be different and yet the same, different because of infinite variation inherent in the divine, the same because of the One that is in all.

We are indeed thankful to have had the privilege of this experience. What greater reassurance than to have witnessed in the East this glimpse of a "New Light (that) breaks upon the earth" ?

LOIS DUNCAN

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

II. THE SEEKING AND THE ESCAPIST URGE

“All philosophies start in the contemplation of death.”

(Schopenhauer)

METAPHYSICS arises from man's desire to know, in a world of change and transitoriness, just where he is journeying; it arises whenever man seeks 'to map the Universe and to plot his position within it'.¹

Indeed, “the one question which through all its complexities is the sum of philosophy and to which all human enquiry comes round in the end, is the problem of ourselves—why we are here and what we are, and what is behind and before and around us, and what we are to do with ourselves, our inner significances and our outer environment”.²

It has been said that ‘an ant is never stricken with amazement, nor does a star consider itself a nonentity’.³ But a ‘divine discontent’ has seized man who occupies such ‘a strange position in the great realm of being’.⁴ Eternal is his seeking for the meaning of existence, the meaning of life and the meaning of death, the meaning of himself and that of the universe. He wonders what he is : “An outcast of the universal order ? an outlaw, a freak of nature ? a shred of yarn dropped from nature's loom, which has since been strangely twisted by the way ?”⁵

Man has been characterized as a *subject in quest of a predicate*. Indeed, “walking upon a rock that is constantly crumbling away behind every step and anticipating the inevitable abruption which will end his walk, man cannot restrain his bitter yearning to know whether life is nothing but a series of momentary physiological and mental processes, actions and forms of behaviour, a flow of vicissitudes, desires and sensations, running like grains through an hourglass, marking time only once and always vanishing. He wonders whether, at the bottom, life is not like the face of the sun-dial, out-living all shadows that rotate upon its surface. Is life nothing but a medley of facts, unrelated to one another; chaos camouflaged by illusion ?”⁶

Indeed, it is this ‘perception of a certain illusoriness, a sense of the vanity of cosmic existence and individual being’ that is in a way ‘the starting-point of the

¹ Ian Ramsay, *Prospect for Metaphysics*, p 153

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Problem of Rebirth*, p 43.

^{3 4 5 6} A. J. Heschel, “The Concept of Man in Jewish Thought” in *The Concept of Man* (Eds. S. Radhakrishnan and P. T. Raju), p. 114.

spiritual urge¹—at least for the great majority to whom the greater experience of Truth does not come ‘spontaneously without being forced to it by the strong or overwhelming, the afflicting and detaching sense of the Shadow’² permeating the whole fabric of manifested existence.

Was not Gautama, the prince of Kapilavastu, awakened to a consciousness of anguish and sorrow by the universal sight of disease, old age, death and other miseries, to which man in his embodied existence is subject? Gautama considered within himself the ineluctable facts of disease, decay and death until he determined to escape them. His *nibbida*, ‘disgust’, for bodily existence culminated in his *pabbaja*—that is, ‘going forth’ from the life of the world to the life of spirituality—that was to lead him ultimately to Buddhahood, *bodhi*, the state of Enlightenment.

But what is the verdict of this Enlightenment and other allied states? It is contended by most men of the Spirit that the essential character of all manifestation is transitoriness and suffering, *anityam asukham*, or so long at least as there is a physical world. And if this is so, “the desire of birth, the will to manifest or create has to be regarded as the original sin and withdrawal from birth or manifestation as the sole possible way of salvation”.³

As a matter of fact, all those who have in their spiritual venture sought to grow and rise in consciousness and transcend the obscurations of the unregenerate earth-nature, have found to their discomfiture that bodily existence, in general, and the body in particular are ‘the soul’s great difficulty, the continual stumbling-block and rock of offence’. Therefore it is that “the eager seeker of spiritual fulfilment has hurled his ban against the body and his world-disgust selects this world-principle above all other things as a special object of loathing. The body is the obscure burden that he cannot bear; its obstinate material grossness is the obsession that drives him for deliverance to the life of the ascetic. To get rid of it he has even gone so far as to deny its existence and the reality of the material universe. Most of the religions have put their curse upon Matter and have made the refusal or the resigned temporary endurance of the physical life the test of religious truth and of spirituality”.⁴

The traditional spiritual seeker has found the earth a rather impossible place for any spiritual being, earth-nature appears to him in Vivekananda’s simile as ‘a dog’s tail which, everytime you straighten it, goes back to its original curl’⁵. Hence, the only aim for a sane seeker should be—not to make any futile attempt at embodying or manifesting a higher consciousness here upon earth—but rather to escape from life, to get away from earth into some other higher world like Goloka, Brahmaloaka, Shivaloka, or perhaps to seek *mukti* and *mokṣa* in some supreme Absolute.

The spiritual history of man abounds in views, expressed in different terms, epitomizing this conception of metaphysical dualism that puts into sharpest antithesis the soul and the body, God and the world, the spiritual and the material parts

^{1 2 3} Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga*, II, p. 24.

⁴ *The Life Divine*, p. 214

⁵ Sri Aurobindo, *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 181.

of man. Examples are legion testifying to this widely prevalent attitude of denial and disparagement of body and bodily existence. To cite *en passant* just a few of them :

(1) *In Buddhist tradition*¹ : The Buddhist philosophy of life may be said to be based on the dual axiom, *sabbam aniccam, sabbam dukkham* ('All is impermanent, all is suffering'). And the Buddhist attitude towards the body has been summed up as follows :

(1) the body, whether of men or of higher beings, can never be the abode of anything but evil;

(2) final deliverance from all bodily life, present and to come, is the greatest of all blessings, the highest of all boons, and the loftiest of all aims (Monier Williams, *Buddhism*).

Indeed, 'the body is the sphere of suffering'; it is also 'the origin of suffering' (*Mūlinda-pañha*). Suffering, subjectively, is desire, *tanhā*; objectively, suffering lies in embodiment and matter. Consequently the human body is looked upon as a contemptible thing. The idea of *nibbida*, 'disgust', with the body is set forth in Gautama's 'burning fire-sermon' delivered on a hill, Gayāsīsa, near Gaya. And the *Vyayā Sutta* is a reflection on the worthlessness of the human body.

The body is regarded as an 'impure thing and foul, *pūṅkāya*'. It is likened to a wound, a sore. The body is the 'old worn-out skin of a snake' (*Sutta Nīpāta*). It is a 'dressed-up lump, covered with wounds...wasted...full of sickness ..a heap of corruption (*Dhammapada*). All evil passions proceed from the body (*Sutta Nīpāta*). There is no pain like the body (*Dhammapada*).

A complete release from suffering is possible only by emancipation from body and matter; hence, the *summum bonum* of Buddhism and the constant endeavour and ultimate hope of the Buddhist is the absolute escape from corporeal existence.

(ii) *In Jaina tradition*² : The suffering individual, for the Jaina, is a *jīva* or a living, conscious substance called the soul. This soul is inherently perfect, possessing infinite potentiality within; but due to its association with body and matter it has lost its shining glories and is subject to all kinds of miseries.

Bondage (*bandha*), in Jain philosophy, comes therefore to mean the soul's association with matter. This bondage is twofold : (1) the primary and internal cause of bondage for the soul is its passions and bad dispositions (*bhāva*) : *bhāva-bandha*; and, as its secondary effect, (2) the material bondage (*dravya-bandha*) of the soul, that is, the influx of matter (*āsrava*) into the soul and the latter's actual association with a material body.

Liberation (*mokṣa*) must then mean for the Jaina the complete dissociation of the soul from matter. This can be attained by stopping the influx of new matter into the soul (the process called *samvara*) as well as by complete elimination

¹ J. H. Bateson, "Buddhist Attitude towards Body" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II.

² S. C. Chatterjee and D. M. Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*.

(*nirjarā*) of the matter with which the soul has already become mingled.

(iii) *In Judaism*¹ : A. J. Heschel contests the supposition that Judaism is a world-view of unalloyed optimism. Except for the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, the rest of the Bible, as he remarks, does not cease to refer to the sorrow, sins and evil of this world. When the prophets look 'unto the earth', they behold 'distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish' (*Isaiah* 8:22). And the psalmist did not feel that this is a happy world when he prayed : "O God, do not keep silence; do not hold peace or be still, O God. For, lo, thy enemies are in uproar; those who hate thee have raised their heads" (*Psalms* 83:2-3).

According to Jewish tradition, "the design of the Creator was for a world that was to be good, very good; but then something happened, to which Jewish tradition alludes in many ways, and the picture of the world profoundly changed";² so much so that "there is one line that expresses the mood of the Jewish man throughout the ages : 'the earth is given into the hand of the wicked' (*Job* 9:24)."³

This world is thus often compared to 'night'; it is even called 'the world of falsehood'. It is a "prelude, a vestibule, a place of preparation, of initiation, of apprenticeship to a future life, where the guests prepare to enter *triclitinum*, or the banquet hall".⁴

(iv) *In Graeco-Roman Philosophy* :⁵ The Greek philosophy propounded, in the main, a dualistic antithesis between body and soul, matter and spirit. Thus in Philolaus' teaching, the human body was regarded as a *house of detention* wherein the soul expiates its guilt. Empedocles likewise accepts the doctrine of the soul's fall from its original divine condition into the corporeal state and shares the view that the human body is the disparate *integument* of the soul. In the Dionysian cult, psychical experiences of men in ecstasy gave rise to the conviction—presently appropriated by the adherents of Orphism—that the body is an intolerable fetter to the soul which can acquire hitherto unsuspected powers of the spirit once it is free from the trammels of the material form.

(a) *The Orphic-Pythagorean-Platonic doctrine of the body* : the soul, a divine element, uncreated and imperishable, has been immured within the body which acts accordingly as its prison-house or even the grave : *soma* (body) is indeed the *sema* (tomb) for the soul.

Thus in Socratic thought, "the soul is a divine stranger inhabiting this world for a brief period, and yearning for death as the release by which it will return to its true home. . . . the philosopher is the man who lives most for the soul and least for the body, so that he can be said to anticipate death and to lead here and now a dying life".⁶

¹ A. J. Heschel, in *The Concept of Man* (Eds. S. Radhakrishnan and P. T. Raju).

^{2 3 4} A. J. Heschel, *op cit.*

⁵ W. Capelle, "Body and Asceticism (Greek)" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II.

⁶ E. L. Allen, *A Guide Book to Western Thought*.

Plato's standpoint in the *Phaedo*, as also in the *Theaetetus* and *Gorgias*, represents "a harsh and rigid dualism : here, the world of illusion and illusive values, beneath which nothing permanent exists; and there, the goods which never fade away". He considered "the body as the ultimate root of all, or at least of innumerable, evils in human life, as an enemy against which the soul must fight, and as an unclean and defiling thing from which she must rid herself as soon and as thoroughly as possible".

(b) *Stoicism* : Posidonius held that the body, that *inutilis caro et fluida, receptandis tantum cibis habilis* ("flesh useless and flaccid, so apt to be hungry and demanding" : rendered from Greek into Latin by Seneca in Ep. 92,110), is an impediment to the heaven-born soul, the *daimon*, that pines in her prison-house for a return to her celestial home, the Aether, where alone full knowledge and bliss can be her portion. To deliver the soul as far as possible from the body even in this life—this, then, is the paramount task of mankind.

The *Dissertations* of Epictetus reveals a curious scorn for the body. According to him, it 'does not belong to us, but is an *allogrion* (alien, foreign). Man is 'a soul carrying a corpse' (cf. *Svavapuḥ kuṇapamva dṛśyate*.¹)

For Seneca, too,—influenced as he was by the Platonizing bent of Posidonius—the body was a contemptible thing.

Marcus, Aurelius, 'the last Roman who sat upon the throne of the Caesars', was also a professed Stoic. But he, too, "speaks repeatedly of the body in tones of passionate scorn. He reprobates it especially as the source of carnal appetites, and as tending to inveigle the soul".

(c) *Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism* : The characteristic feature of the Neo-Pythagorean sect (counting among its adherents Apollonius and others) was absolute dualism. Spirit is the principle of good while the body, like matter in general, is the principle of evil.

In his 'nobly planned and profoundly excogitated system' of Neo-Platonism, Plotinus aimed to get beyond the dualism of the Neo-Pythagoreans on both metaphysical and ethical principles. But through a curious turn of logic he too was led to declare that the 'supersensual' part of man, which was pre-existent and in union with God, has suffered disaster from having entered the body. From the union of soul and body springs all the irrationality and depravity of the soul. The great task for man is, therefore, to effectuate 'the complete withdrawal of the soul from the outer world to its own inner life'.

From this summary survey it becomes clear that the human body has been generally regarded as not possessed of any great spiritual possibility. It is rather an obstacle, a heavy weight holding the soul to earthly nature, and thus preventing its

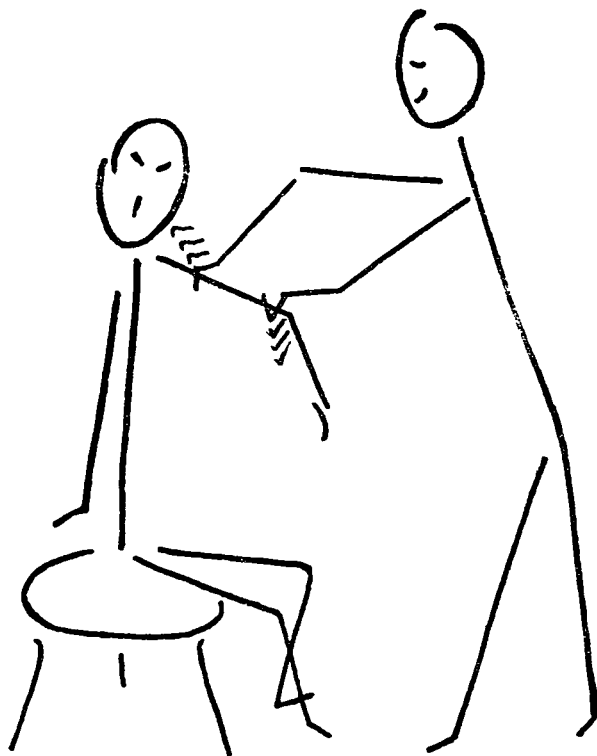
¹ "To consider one's body as though it were a decomposed corpse" (*Vidyaranyamum, Jvanmukti Vivek*).

ascent either to spiritual fulfilment in the Supreme or to the spiritual dissolution of its individual being.

But why is this universal distrust and denial of the body ? Is the spiritual disability of man's physical organisation in the nature of something intrinsic and radical? Or is it not something capable of redemption? We pass on to the consideration of these and allied questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI



“If you can keep the muscle relaxed, the treatment will be more effective.”

“EVERYBODY SHOULD READ THIS BOOK”

A Letter

Dear Amal,

I find myself unable to complete (or even to start) the comprehensive review-article you have asked me to write on Pavitra's selections from, and guides to, Sri Aurobindo's exegesis on man's future evolution.¹

I anticipated from myself yet another tyro's gloss of the Master's words and the usual banal hyperbole apropos Pavitra's God-given realisation of simplicity in the prefatory summary, the selection of quotations and the textual notes.

Feeling not at all like a self-conscious arrow leading evolution's cosmic flight, I wrote to the Mother after our first talk :

“I don't think I am equipped in terms of consciousness to comment on Sri Aurobindo's words or on Pavitra's selections. However, if you see it as part of my work I shall tackle it with alacrity.”

The Mother then wrote to you saying (in part) :

“. I quite agree to Austin's writing on the subject. Surely he will say something more interesting than those who believe they know everything and can judge everything.”

These words launched me into two months' of reading on evolution : Lamarck, Darwin, Marx, Spencer, the Huxleys from Thomas to Aldous, Bergson, James, Shaw, Wallace, Teilhard De Chardin, Jung, Progoff and Smuts. I not only gathered quotations; my days began and ended with inverted commas.

In the search for the keynote, the opening sentence, expiration pursued inspiration with instant closures. I was able to reject the metaphysical coyness of “who's Involved ?” But persisted for a few fruitless weeks with “Sri Aurobindo, Prophet of involution!” I had to steady myself.

I went to the Samadhi in the hope that the words would come. The silence that I met there was the silence I took there,—not at all dynamic. Blank-like.

What to do ? I wrote to The Mother again :

“You will recall, Douce Mere, my reluctance to write a review-article on Pavitra's anthology.

“After your note to Amal I went to work. I've read and re-read Sri Aurobindo; I've collected quotations from all the principal writers on evolution from Darwin to Teilhard de Chardin; and I have struggled to find something meaningful to say beyond *‘Everybody should read this book.’*¹

¹ *The Future Evolution of Man* Sri Aurobindo. Compiled with a summary and notes by P B. Saint-Hilaire. George Allen and Unwin, England, 18s, and paper cover edition, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, Rs. 7. 50.

“Not only has my sense of incompetence deepened, but also this tenure in the mental (the attempt to formulate) has deepened my confusion.

“Worse ..it is steadily draining the joy out of my daily life.

“Please, Mother may I be released from this assignment ?”

The underlining and asterisk were The Mother’s. She added :

“Why do you bother? This is the only wise thing to say.

Leave your review at that and you will be wise.

With love and blessings.”

So there we are, Amal :

“EVERYBODY SHOULD READ THIS BOOK.”

We may then join with Pavitra in saying “Our aim will be accomplished if the reader is induced to turn to the original works.”

Hers sincerely,

AUSTIN DELANY.

P.S. Would you ask Pavitra whether he has considered for future editions the reproduction in its entirety (13 pages) of the title-piece from Sri Aurobindo’s brochure, “Evolution” ?

REMINISCENCES OF PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER¹

“B” belonged to a high Muslim family of Hyderabad. Her father, educated in France, was the Chief Justice of Gwalior State. The Maharaja and Maharani of Gwalior were very friendly with this family. When “B” was born, the Maharani gave her a Hindu name and always treated her just as her own daughter.

When her parents died, “B” came to Hyderabad to stay with her grandparents. Her cousin “R” was so much devoted to the Mother that he went all-out in defence of her divinity. His was not the way of reason or philosophy, but of a direct “blind” faith — and he had his own reasons of actual experience in close contact with the Mother. “B” opposed it tooth and nail. As “R” did not seem to be sufficiently deep-set and ripe in yogic understanding and equality, he was extremely displeased and angry with “B”. Anyway they came to make a bet that if after going to Pondicherry “B” could get convinced of the Mother’s divinity, she would pay for all the expenses to and from Pondicherry.

As they reached the Ashram, they went to “P”’s room where the Mother was expected to come soon. They told him all about the matter. “B” self-confidently spoke of her having met very high-placed and great men and women, Indian and foreign, but never heard of a French lady being the Divine. She stressed that although “R” was nothing but childish to talk of such things she had come to the Ashram to find out for herself the truth of the matter and be doubly sure.

As they were in the midst of this talk, suddenly the Mother arrived. “R” got up from his chair and made a *pranām* to the Mother, and instinctively and instantaneously “B” too did the same. Seeing the Mother, she forgot all about her bet and her cocksureness. It was a great surprise to all, but more so to her own self.

She was so much charmed by the Mother that she started speaking highly of her. She said that she had come in close contact with numerous dignitaries, Maharajas, Governors, and even Viceroys of India, but had never felt the impact of greatness to such an extent as in the presence of the Mother. To “R”, the Mother, seemed to emit a great radiance and splendour of divine beauty.

Later, when she was alone with “R”, he spoke to her of her bet and claimed the prize. This, of course, she had to yield, but was never tired of repeating, “Oh yes, she is different, she is different from all the persons I have seen and met, I have met so many ladies, Indian and European, but never a person like her. She is like a dream. She is not at all human. She is a Goddess. She is the Divine.” She felt the divinity so emphatically that she resolved to speak about it to all she would meet when back in Hyderabad.

The Mother gave “B” a French name. She became very much devoted to the

¹ Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or the Compiler or directly to the Mother.

Mother and praised her wherever she went and whenever she got a chance. Later, once she came to the Ashram with the Maharani of Gwalior and both of them had a meeting with the Mother. She has left behind a son and a daughter, who, although not directly connected with the Ashram and the Mother, are still very respectful and devoted to her.

Once plague came to Hyderabad as a great destroying epidemic. It took toll of five hundred persons daily. "B" and her baby happened to fall victims to it. She became unconscious. Her nurse deserted her and fled from the house. When "R" came to know of it, he immediately wired to the Mother. Within a few hours, when the Mother must have received the telegram, "R" on his next visit to "B" found her drenched in perspiration. She was gaining consciousness and was well on her way to recovery. Later she swiftly recovered.

On many other occasions of illness, she invoked and got the Mother's help to bring relief to various people.

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"R" was living in the family house with a high Government dignitary in Hyderabad's famous Charag Ali Lane. He was almost a member of the family. He often used to talk of the Mother. The wife of this dignitary started taking interest in the Mother and asked many Muslim saints about who the Mother was and what her realisation might be. On her bidding, one Muslim saint came to the Ashram. He sat near the Ashram gate and meditated for some time. On return he gave the account that the Mother seemed to have a very high realisation, for, he said, as far high as he could go, he found the Mother was there.

Later, that Muslim lady from Hyderabad came to the Ashram with "B" and "R" and many other members of the family. They hired a house outside the Ashram and remained in Pondicherry for some time. They met the Mother and took coloured films of her. They were very appreciative of the Mother's greatness.

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Another high dignitary of the Hyderabad Government, who had a French wife, was suffering terribly from a kind of bone T.B. in the knee, where there was a hollow like a gun-shot. He had been to England, but had been declared incurable. He approached the Mother, and the Mother gradually cured him of this torturing disease. This brought him a tremendous faith in her, so much so that on special occasions he often came to the Ashram in his own car from Hyderabad with a dashing speed sometimes of 80 to 90 miles per hour, and never less than 60 m.p.h., affirming that when he was going to the Mother nothing would happen to him !

Reported and Compiled by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

(Continued)

JUNG'S probings into the mysteries of the psyche have revealed that "the birth of the Self signifies for the conscious personality not only a displacement of the previous psychological center, but also as a consequence therefore a completely altered view and attitude towards life, a 'transvaluation' in the fullest sense of the word." Zen Buddhism brings, or brought back, the same affirmation, in almost identical language: "The individual shell in which my personality is so solidly encased explodes at the moment of Satori. Not necessarily that I get united with a greater being than myself or absorbed in it, but my individuality which I found rigidly held together and definitely separate from other individual existence. melts away into something indescribable, something which is of a quite different order from what I am accustomed to."¹⁴

Much, if not all, of our misery is due to this inability and unwillingness to make the necessary psychological change and adjustment. Not to be born is the best, was the Greek version of tragedy. But not to be re-born is the worst. This transfer, or re-birth, is the inner sense of baptism, initiation and Brahmanic culture, the culture of the "twice-born", to which modern psychical research seems to be pointing again. "The discovery of a nonphysical element in personality, therefore, makes all the difference in the world to ethical values," writes J.B. Rhine. "Its proof of a nonphysical property in man allows a logical case to be made for volitional freedom. Without free will the idea of moral judgment would be meaningless.... Machines do not have free will."¹⁵ This is our only way of escaping the tiresome and frustrating round of a sensate culture about to end with a bang.

Mystical psychology is, however, not to be confused with stoicism and world-weariness, though there may be some common ground between the two. There is no question, writes Waite in *Lights of Western Mysticism*, that the end of Mysticism was reached by the method of ascetic life, during many past centuries. That is so, both in the east and in the west. The soul's energies thrive when the body's desires are feeblest, wrote one of the most distinguished of early Christians. But are the desires feeble or kept in check till they become feeble? And is sublimation not to be thought of? Mysticism, basically a technique of transference and transcendence, is not a tired or resolute indifference to the slings and arrows of fortune, including the dubious advantage of having a body clamouring for its own separate need. A higher formula of reconciliation, other than what the ascetics have to offer, must



be possible, even if it is not easy. Whatever happens, the individual must change his stance, his outlook and gain a different, an inner view of things. In the end, and even long before the end is reached, he remains not only unmoved by what happens on the surface, in the world and in himself, but he might also gain the power to transmute all experience into its opposite. This is not easy to do, but some power or promise of it can come early, enough to create that faith which helps one to continue. From all this it follows that for his happiness the mystic does not depend upon objects, material possessions, or social approval, all of which may be taken away. He interiorises and etherealises his values, tries perhaps what is the only worthwhile and successful transvaluation of values of which some frenzied and imbalanced thinkers, like Nietzsche, have caught a hurried glimpse without being able to actualise it in their own lives. The presence of the mystical individual is a proof of the inspiring actuality of such a transfer or re-making of man. It is in the best sense a criticism of life, the kind of life most of us lead. It is the best criticism of the actual in terms of the ideal. Seek ye, as we have sought, and you will see what we have seen, such is the mystic promise and challenge, and, as Dean Inge is there to tell us, "it is not wise to disregard it."

The individual, then, is not the ego but the self. In the daily business of living, this, of course, is not the view we take of ourselves. For the most part our identification with the ego is complete. We treat ourselves as separate beings that somehow exist in a world external to ourselves and, if we are rigorously inclined, both are made to depend on an extra-cosmic God, an outsider. Naturally, in order to know or 'realise' the extra-cosmic deity one has to abandon both world and individual and so one finds

Its liberation and immobile calm
A void recall of being from Time-made things,
Not the self-vision of Reality.

So at least most ascetic disciplines have viewed man's becoming in the world, in terms of an ultimate rejection. To quote Sri Aurobindo again :

In the beginning an unknowing Force,
In the middle an embodied striving soul,
In the end a silent spirit denying life.

But such a trenchant division or tearing away is not the only, as it is certainly not an ideal, view of things. It is quite possible to look upon the Transcendent itself as one with the universe, as something that does not exclude either the world or the individual. Of course the illumination of the individual continues to be necessary but it does not lead to an exit or excision from the universal movement. Individual realisation or salvation can have little sense if the world itself has no value, no *raison d'être*. In other words, we must accept "the many-sidedness of the manifestation

even while we assert the unity of the Manifested". As Lancelot Whyte has pointed out, today there seems to be a marked tendency, among thinkers, "to investigate experimentally whether the Oriental conception of multiple unity is not a more demonstrable apprehension of reality than the aspects under which Western thought has hitherto envisaged it." Maybe "Neither the Eastern emphasis on an undifferentiated unity of process nor the Western stress on specific differences can carry the human tradition through this century. The time has come for a new elegance : a unity of process seen in all particular forms and reconciling their differences. A fresh stress must be laid on universal principles in order to restore a proper equilibrium. But once again there is no balance in the dialectic. East and West are not on an equal footing. The West has made the modern world and the West must redeem it. Until Western science recognizes the formative process no fundamental advance is possible."¹⁶ It is this fundamental advance, in terms of a formative process, which the greater mystics represent. They are the true *avant garde*. In the spiritual experience the conscious individual, the ego, becomes the superficial point at which the awareness of unity emerges ; it is possible to extend this awareness to include all others, which would be the most real liberation—from all limits. The individual would still and always remain, but his range and content, quality and effectiveness would be totally changed.

In the inspired words of an Eastern sage : "The liberation of the individual soul is the keynote of the definitive divine action ; it is the primary divine necessity and the pivot on which all else turns. It is the point of Light at which the intended complete self-manifestation in the Many begins to emerge. But the liberated soul extends its perception of unity horizontally as well as vertically. Its unity with the transcendent One is incomplete without its unity with the cosmic Many. And that lateral unity translates itself by multiplication, a reproduction of its own liberated state at other points of the Multiplicity. The divine soul reproduces itself in similar liberated souls as the animal reproduces itself in similar bodies. Therefore whenever even a single soul is liberated, there is a tendency to an extension and even to an outburst of the same divine self-consciousness in other individual souls of our terrestrial humanity and—who knows—perhaps even beyond the terrestrial consciousness. Where shall we fix the limit of that extension ? Is it altogether a legend which says of the Buddha that as he stood on the threshold of Nirvana, of the Non-Being, his soul turned back and took the vow never to make the irrevocable crossing so long as there was a single being upon earth undelivered from the knot of suffering, from the bondage of the ego ?"¹⁷

To us, standing on the "flat land" of the ego all this reads like a suprarational mystery and so it is indeed. But it is obviously a part of human experience, known and felt, again and again, by the masters of the inner life, the human evolution. It is also not impossible to imagine and has formed part of a persistent dream and an ideal. Our empirical consciousness, the little I, is a construction, a limitation and a practical selection from world-being. But the real individual, the great I, exists too,

though it exceeds the limits of the little ego. The differentiation still holds, but it no longer separates. It is the sweetness of the Same that holds all. The individual is still necessary, but this individual unites or integralises three states of the being—individual, universal and transcendental. He is the true Person: He am I, *So'ham*¹⁸. If in the end “the individual has the power of self-discovery and entrance into the transcendent eternity and his liberation has so great an importance, it must be because he too is a reality of the Transcendence; but has to discover himself individually, because his individuality has also some truth of itself in the Transcendence which is veiled from it and which it has to recover.” To recover the reality of this hidden Transcendent (“the guest within,” to use the Vedic phrase), the Self as Freedom is, then, the nature and destiny of the individual, what he is here for.

There would appear to be nothing contradictory in such a unitarian, comprehensive view of an Essence carrying a multitude of existences, a status of the Infinite supporting an endless series of the finite, the Individual seen as a self-expression of the universal and the Transcendent at once. To a logic that is not bound to the dogmas of our proud and self-denying reason, there is nothing unusual in this unity or relation of the individual with the two other terms of existence, the universal and the transcendent. It is the simplest of mysteries, the simplest and the ultimate.

Nothing increases more the value of the individual in the world than this view of existence and destiny. The individual remains, but with an enhanced significance. In the words of the youthful champion of the ‘outsider’ cult: “The solution, as always, is for the individual Outsider to continue to bring a new consciousness to birth. . . The burden remains upon the individual Outsider.”¹⁹ The only difference being that the mystic Outsider is also an Insider, in so far as he has found his relation with the Real. He is not a maladjusted exhibitionist, whose picture of freedom is suspiciously close to being a praise of folly. The importance of the individual is dual, so to speak, for, in Sri Aurobindo’s words,²⁰

“It is through him that the cosmic spirit organises the collective units and makes them self-expressive and progressive and through him that it raises Nature from the Inconscience to the Superconscience and exalts it to meet the Transcendent. The progress of the mind, the growth of the soul, even of the mind and soul of the collectivity, depends on the individual, or his sufficient freedom and independence. In the crowd the individual loses his sense of direction and becomes a cell of the mass body. . . He has to stand apart,²¹ affirm his separate reality in the whole, his own mind emerging from the common mentality, even as his body has developed something unique and recognisable in the common physicality. He has even, in the end, to retire into himself to find himself, and it is only when he has found himself that he can be one with all.”

“It is because of the spiritual Person, the Divinity in the individual, that the perfection or the liberation—salvation, as it is called in the West—has to be individual and not collective; for whatever perfection of the collectivity is to be sought after, can come only by the perfection of the individuals who constitute it. It is because the

individual is That, that to find himself is his greatest necessity. In his complete surrender and self-giving to the Supreme it is he who finds his perfect self-finding in a perfect self-offering. In the abolition of the mental, vital, physical ego, even of the spiritual ego, it is the formless and limitless Individual that has the peace and joy of its escape into its own infinity. In the experience that he is nothing and no one, or everything and everyone, or the One which is beyond all things and absolute, it is the individual that effectuates himself. To get beyond the ego is imperative, but one cannot get beyond the Self—except by finding it supremely, universally. For the Self is not the ego, it is one with the All and the One and in finding it it is the All and the One that we discover in our self: the contradiction, the separation disappears, but the self, the spiritual reality remains, united with the One and the All by that delivering disappearance.”

“All man’s age-long effort, his action, society, art, ethics, science, religion, all the manifold activities by which he expresses and increases his mental, vital, physical, spiritual existence, are episodes in the vast drama of this endeavour of Nature and have behind their limited apparent aims no other true sense or foundation. For the individual to arrive at the divine universality and supreme identity, live in it, possess it, to be, know, feel and express that alone in all his being, consciousness, energy, delight of being is what the ancient seers of the Veda meant by knowledge; that was the Immortality which they set before man as his culmination.”

An obscure feeling impels the modern world in the same direction. If only it could be a more conscious and concerted effort !

For how different is all this from our own knowing sets delving deep into the abysses of the Existential and Irrational Man ! Not to speak of the good mixer, the well-adjusted man (But “Be not conformed to this world,” says the mystic, “but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind”), the happy consumer, the go-getter, all that makes our world what it is, the shirt of Nessus which we cannot strip off, as Jung said. He had also a feeling, not without reason, that “science has destroyed even the refuge of the inner life. What was once a sheltering heaven has become a place of terror,”—the analyst’s couch. But the need of the inner life remains, though that is not all that there is to it. “The inner life has a supreme importance and the outer has a value only in so far as it is expressive of the inner status,” says a master whom we have quoted before. “However the man of spiritual realisation lives and acts and behaves, in all ways of his being and acting... he lives in the Divine. In our present life of Nature, in our externalised surface existence, it is the world that seems to create us; but in the turn to the spiritual life it is we who must create ourselves and our world. In this new formula of creation, the inner life becomes of the first importance and the rest can be only its expression and outcome. It is this, indeed, that is indicated by our own strivings towards perfection, the perfection of our own soul and mind and life and the perfection of the life of the race. For we are given a world which is obscure, ignorant, material, imperfect and our external conscious being is itself created by its energies, the pressure, the moulding operations of the vast

mute obscurity, by physical birth, by environment, by a training through the impacts and shocks of life; and yet we are vaguely aware of something that is there in us or seeking to be, something other than what has been thus made, a spirit self-existent, self-determining, pushing the nature towards the image of its own occult perfection or Idea of perfection. There is something that grows in answer to this demand, that strives to become the image of a divine Somewhat, and is impelled also to labour at the world outside that has been given to it and remake that too in a greater image, in the image of its own spiritual and mental and vital growth, to make our world into something created according to our own mind and self-conceiving spirit, something new, harmonious, perfect.”²²

The idea of perfection is moved in two different directions : towards self-improvement and the improvement of the environment, change from within and change from without. It is easy to see that a balance and not conflict of these two impulses is what we need, though it is obvious that the inner change must lead. “The inner life once created, to convert our whole surface being, our thought, feeling, action in the world, into a perfect power of that inner life, must be our other preoccupation.... A perfected human world cannot be created by men or composed of men who are themselves imperfect.”

“To become ourselves is the one thing to be done; but the true ourselves is that which is within us, and to exceed our outer self of body, life and mind is the condition for this highest being, which is our true and divine being, to become self-revealed and active. It is only by growing within and living within that we can find it; once that is done, to create from there the spiritual or divine mind, life and body and through this instrumentalisation to arrive at the creation of a world which shall be the true environment of a divine living,—this is the final object that Force of Nature has set before us. This then is the first necessity, that the individual, each individual, shall discover the spirit, the divine reality, within him and express that in all his being and living. A divine life must be first and foremost an inner life, for since the outward must be the expression of what is within, there can be no divinity in the outer existence if there is not the divinisation of the inner being. The Divinity in man dwells veiled in his spiritual centre, there can be no such thing as self-exceeding for man or a higher issue for his existence if there is not in him the reality of an eternal self and spirit.”²³

These things, the discovery of the self and the re-creation of an outer world, “the true environment of a divine living”, are impossible without an inner living. It is in answer to this imperative need or condition that the spiritual or spiritually-minded individual has had to withdraw into himself, sometimes moving out of society altogether. The crowd or a crowded social life is not the best locale to cultivate this kind of inwardness. To that extent a mass culture is self-condemned. As Hocking writes, “Solitude, I say, is the essence of mysticism: and I add, the basis of its supreme social importance ..(for) Mysticism in its true character is precisely the redemption of solitude.”²⁴ It is necessary to add that no individual is exhausted by social adjust-

ment, there is in him something more than social. He belongs not merely to society or even to humanity, but to something over and above all these, to Infinity. The romantics were not all wrong in calling him a pilgrim of eternity. When, as has happened frequently, society forgets or forbids this, the individual, in an effort to assert his identity, has either to retire or rebel, or both, and then we have an unfortunate and unfinished civil war between the spiritual seeking and society. Luckily, "mysticism can provide its own corrective",²⁵ though it is hardly to be denied "that the mystics (sometimes) find themselves in bad company".²⁶ But, as we have throughout maintained, the individual is always necessary, he has a duty to perform which no one else can do for him. It is he who hears the call and must answer it. His *ultimate* allegiance can never be to a state or a nation but the Truth above and within, which while it includes these middle terms of his existence soars beyond these into a realm of value all its own and which no society has, as yet, succeeded in embodying. It is, as yet, a promise and a possibility,—the hope of a transformed, divine life for all people.

An occasional eccentricity or glorified selfishness does not represent the individual response at its best. Even "the opposition between mysticism and institutional life...is real, but not final; mysticism is beyond institutions but not necessarily hostile to them....What the mystic rejects is not the claim that the established forms of social life are necessary for a complete life but the claim that they are sufficient."²⁷ In any case, the individual as he moves towards his spiritual nature and freedom realises also his identity and freedom with others. This shows itself, as in the ideal of the Bodhisattva, in an increase in goodwill and charity. The spiritually realised being, the liberated individual is preoccupied, says the Gita, with the good of all being. His ethics is grounded in beyond ethics. What the mystics learn in contemplation they give out in love. The "organised lovelessness" of our own days can be counteracted only by the strivings of the mystics and saints and not by those of the Welfare State or the not-so hidden persuaders of Madison Avenue. Only when one is free can one free others. The individual in freeing himself frees others. But, as St. Bernard said, no one can comprehend what it is, save he who has experienced it. As Max Scheler used to say, "The history of the men who have been models of humanity form the centre of the soul of history, and it is by the ideal that they represent that we judge existing humans.... This is why each one of us looks into the heart of the saint for his own salvation." In the penetrating words of Simone Weil: "We live in an age which is quite without precedent : today there is nothing in being a saint. We need a saintliness proper to the present moment, a new saintliness which is also without a precedent. The world needs saints of genius, just as a city stricken by plague needs doctors. Where there is a need there is an obligation."

It is the distinction of the individual to recognise that obligation above all others. It is the only heroism that matters, the only one left to us.

(To be continued)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

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ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

I. THE TWO AIMS

(Continued)

(b) *Savitri*

Savitri is a rich contrast in every way to *Paradise Lost*. I would not compare it in a general critical manner. That is why I have refrained from making definite comparisons. But, as we go along and at the end, the beauty of both these great epics will be clear.

Savitri is not a tale of man's fall or redemption. There is no morbidity in it and no frustration; it abounds in the clear limpid flow of celestial light. The tale of the soul's ascent and of the Divine Mother's descent to conquer mortality has no facts as we understand them; and the facts that are there are merely outlines, and form the superstructure that supports the great edifice—the edifice of the conflict between the powers of Ignorance and Truth.

What is the background of *Savitri*? There is no political conflict, no blindness, no eager search to find a suitable lore to embody a message to humanity. Human passions and frustrations do not constitute its background. There is no question of ambition, neither any possibility of ego-centricity. Sri Aurobindo does not want to impart a message for misled humanity.

Savitri starts from the background of inner silence and unmoving spiritual poise. Milton has to invoke the goddess of inspiration. But Sri Aurobindo has the Muse of the Word ever with him. All true and great creation starts from the stillness of the mind—we have a sense of a witness regarding the whole panorama of the soul's progress and conflict instead of becoming one with the drama that bursts forth before us. Further, Milton ever attempts to rise whereas Sri Aurobindo is seated on his height of luminous consciousness, seeing the passage of the stars of fate, the roll of time and the cyclic progression of evolution. In one word, one is a mind attempting to reach the summit of perfection while the other is a God-conscious spirit, aware of all within and without; his drama is the outflux of his felicity; the world is in him, the mid-heavens and the empyrean, night and the void form the endless texture of his consciousness. This is the background.

To Milton *Paradise Lost* was not a symbol; it was a fact. He had not invented anything basic. All is here that he read in either Latin or Greek or Hebrew, Italian or Old English. There is here a rearrangement, or a reshuffling of themes as he

conceived fit. In Sri Aurobindo the story part of the epic is negligible. He introduced this story as a mythical peg on which to hang his magical tale of the conflict of consciousness. Also, without a story the whole would sound too intangible or incoherent, too mystically obscure to have any sense or reality. For Sri Aurobindo too has a message to give us. But he has no public to consider. He has no censoring enemies ; he has no fixed dogmatic ideal to preach. Instead, he hews a road on the untrodden depths of reality, making jewelled veridical words his instrument and rich vision-thought his content. All has been enacted in the supernal world. He merely sees the drama and describes his prophetic occult experience.

His message has two aspects. His aim is twofold. Primarily, it is to show the beauty, the force, the world-changing influence working in the earth. His is the tale of the Divine acting as the human person to elevate this fallen race of men. All that is hidden, occult, is true and tangible in his poetry. All that is rare, the miraculous, the unseized, is here caught in the web of his revelatory verse. His Divinity is not Milton's angry, ruthless and vengeance-seeking Jehovah, but the ever-compassionate, the Eternal Feminine emanation of utter sweetness and light though not without power or will.

In another aspect he shows how the soul, the evolving principle of Nature, the real quintessence of man, awakes and, after a journey that reveals the cosmic planes of life, mind and matter, discovers the supreme Godhead who is the cause of all creation.

His aim is to speak of this first supreme principle of immortality ; to show how it works in us ; how it breaks the iron knot of Death and Ignorance. It is not a sermon. He has not gathered it from arcane or divers sources. Nor has he any definite social, political aim. After all, society and politics or even religion or ethics are human constructions. So when he speaks of Man, he enfolds all his enigmas, all his problems and all his vicissitudes of fortune or nature. If man is lifted up, his entire life and environment changes. His world is transmuted. Milton saw the thing from without, while Sri Aurobindo saw the thing from within. Milton, a mental being, saw man as a fallen creature while Sri Aurobindo sees man as the evolving godhead. To Milton man's only redeemer is Jesus while to Sri Aurobindo Man's leader of the divine change is the Divine Mother herself, incarnate as Savitri.

His other aim is the forging of a new medium to express this truth—to make English, which is not yet rich enough in a spiritual vocabulary and thought, bear the ethereal and wonderful load of the spirit, to make words the vibrant instruments, living flame-flares, swift heavenly wings that carry our thought to the rarefied air of the Unknown. Language becomes in him a vehicle for the seizure of the Unseen, Unfelt and Unconceived. Here the words become luminous agents ; they are not just rhetoric, however grand and musical.

Sri Aurobindo's message is a prophetic vision of the future. It is at once a revelation and a creation. It has the wonder of a new creation. It is a message of the certainty of things to come. What he speaks is not related in the pages of a

theological scripture or retold with conviction for a few with a certain religious following. It has the air of cosmicity, a universality that surpasses the limits of Time and environment. And yet the garb is truly India.

Milton's aim could never climb that prodigious height either of vision or execution. He has the limits of a human instrument, whereas Sri Aurobindo has the advantages of a seer. Prejudices, ideas, theological concepts do not bind him. Yet these particular bonds are strongly marked points in Milton. That in spite of these disadvantages he should achieve so much is a marvel in poetry.

Is it the aim of Sri Aurobindo to speak of the far unrealised elysium, beyond the scope of man and earth? Sri Aurobindo never leaves the ground of Mother Earth. In fact, it is towards it he leans. It is to humanity that is in grief that he points his finger. He does not speak of redemption after death. He is not satisfied with the mere hope of a future.

If Milton's message is that of Christ, Sri Aurobindo's is that of Savitri, the Woman, the Saviour, the Word and the World Mother. Christ sacrifices himself to redeem humanity—a theme merely hinted at by Milton but not clearly worked out. Sri Aurobindo clearly shows us the divinity that assumes birth as Savitri, bears all the 'crosses' and 'thorns' that birth and fate can yield, and surpasses all limits, conquers death, faces the supreme godhead and yet in semblance is the 'Madran' and 'lover of Satyavan.' This is the dual role of Savitri. She does not disdain the honey of human love and yet she has come 'missioned' by the Supreme. The whole epic is a tale of her trial and her conflict with fate and death, and bears the message of man's deliverance.

Paradise Lost is not the story of Christ. It works on three levels : of Satan, man and God ; or in Miltonic terminology, passion, unfallen humanity and reason. Reason merely is there as the supreme arbitrator and forces its fiat both on man and the revolting intelligence of Satan. It is proud ; it is exacting and tolerates no breach of its law. A small act can assume cosmic proportions and can change the whole destiny of mankind which the sacrifice of the Son can only modify. This reason is distant. It sees and judges man according to its own ethical light, taking no cognizance of any human failing whatsoever.

There is a struggle between passion and reason in *Paradise Lost*. There is conflict in *Savitri* too but here the Divine as the human soul is opposing the imposition of Death. *Paradise Lost* is the tale of Satan's conflict with heaven, his schemings, actions and reactions. This conflict cannot harm heaven; it lays its ugly fingers on the first man. And it succeeds; while in *Savitri* Death finally is defeated and has to vanish, unable to find any aid either in the Void or the Inconscient or the Night.

It may be argued that the conditions are different, the aims are different. But we may answer that both the themes are identical in their essence. Both try to show some sort of way out of the conditions imposed by 'Birth', as Sri Aurobindo would put it, and the 'Fall', as Milton would describe it. Milton is concerned more with the cause of this fall and the vast drama that preceded the human decline than with man's

actual upliftment. But Sri Aurobindo is closely linked with man's ascent and, to him, the birth is not an isolated and single occurrence but an opportunity of the soul to grow. The field of man's existence is the field of man's progress. Thus, while the problem remains identical, the solutions shown in both cases are widely divergent due to the differences of outlook, vision, concept and the depth of seizing and tackling the problem. We are not here trying to judge the merit or the validity of the standpoint adopted; we are only trying to become aware of the difference.

Is there any philosophy behind *Savitri* just as there are theological dogmas behind *Paradise Lost*? To try to versify any mere philosophical doctrine is the sure way to land in a quagmire of prosaic poetry. No sensible poet would attempt such a course. But all great epics should have some sort of philosophical background, if they want to satisfy the intelligent reader. It is the significance of the substance, the largeness of the outlook, the universal treatment of the events that give an epic its proper status. In Milton the puritanical, the ethical intelligence guides the plot, creates the characters, reveals the direction of the narrative and yields the energy and the formative power. This element has its own philosophy and its own peculiar way of looking at the things of life. Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* has neither the ethical nor the mentally constructed background of philosophy. Whatever philosophy is there is not the result of dialectical reasoning, or the blind acceptance of a set and fixed dogma as its ultimate authority. It is based on vision, on intuition, on experience. Here the mind comes in only as the transmitting agent and the form it gives is the philosophy, if we may call it so.

It would be wrong to suppose that what Sri Aurobindo expounded in *The Life Divine* is repeated here in verse and that the story is merely the façade to express in a different shape his theory of Supermind. *The Life Divine* is logical even though intuition and vision and spiritual experience are there; they are not presented as something fanciful, arbitrary or vague. They are so expressed that the Suprarational truths of them are seizable by the enlightened human reason: their infinite import goes home with vast logic. The whole is a mighty edifice aimed at showing Reason that Mind is not the last culminating step and all the problems that baffle man today can be resolved in this Truth-consciousness. But *Savitri* reveals to us a different picture. Here mind is not the audience: it is the soul which is the hearer, the feeler and seizer of the light, the bliss, the power and the magic. If *The Life Divine* is a revelation, *Savitri* is a divine creation. If the former is the vision, the latter is the manifestation. And what philosophy is there is the sense and joy of upliftment and rebirth into something larger, purer, diviner. Here we find the tragedy of the Godhead that has worn the human cloak. Here is the pain inflicted on the soul by Fate and Time. There is heaven's debt and human sin and narrowness. But greatest of all is the message of a deliverance that is inevitable. Here is a message in which philosophy takes wings and the words are the echoes of something occult and true, something ineffable and undying.

In another point the two epics meet. It is the retelling of great eternal truths

in different forms. *Paradise Lost* retold the legend of creation and gave *Genesis* a greater impact of force and reality. *Savitri* reclaims for us the lost horizons of a dead civilisation which is typically Indian and gives us back its vibrant story of man's triumph over Fate. Such a purpose is in itself a great aim. With its inspiration, it creates something new that did not exist in the past lore. In its new vision it catches something that is apposite to our trend and translates for us our highest aspiration. The rhythm of our life has changed although life remains identical; hence we need a newer and fresher approach that can be in harmony with the altered pattern of our life's rhythm. It shows that man in spite of his fall (according to Milton) progresses and ever comes back to the original search for Truth. This is the Divine in us, the secret Christ the saviour. It is greater than the frown and anger of a Hebraic God and the imposition of Death. Compassion prevails over vehemence, over wrath, over misfortune. Divinity at the end outstrides the God of the Void, Death.

There is a vast gulf between the manners of the two poems' representations. We, for the moment, shall confine ourselves to the actual point at issue—the purpose and aim—the method will be reviewed in a subsequent chapter.

Savitri has another speciality. Its aim and purpose are drenched in the sheer beauty and felicity of its creative light and their presence does not stand out stark and emphatic. But in *Paradise Lost* we are not allowed to forget the aim and purpose for which this poem was written. The whole breathes a human endeavour and a strain to keep alive the great aim, the lofty and epical purpose. *Savitri* starts with an elevated air; this is a spontaneous movement, needing no external or mind-born effort. Height is native to it; breadth is natural to its very element. And yet it has surprising depths of soul-penetration, inner and psychical perception and feeling and a unity that makes the whole a marvel pattern of significance. It can afford, in semblance, to forget its aim. It almost satisfies the modern trend of 'Art for Art's sake'. But between the erratic, casual and almost capricious trend of today and that of *Savitri* there is an unbridgeable chasm. The modern trend is light, devoid of any depth. Purposelessness is its very character. In *Savitri* a secret inner guide drives the craft of its creation. While the modern trend is banal, stupid and grotesque, that of *Savitri* is rich with felicity and light, beautiful and surprising. It does not rely on crude shocks for its effects, but brings down sudden and startling thoughts like a great climax at the end of a heightened and sustained passage. Here, in spite of all this spirituality, the artist, the consummate craftsman is not missing, and so spontaneous is the flow that all 'motives' seem to be absent.

This is in short our review of the purpose and aim of the two epics. They have wide divergences and yet close affinities. They try to answer a common problem. Their manners differ; they approach from widely different angles. Now let us attempt to see what value these epics have.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

THE DAY OF THE LORD: FEBRUARY 29

DIVINITY willed and saw "the time has come" :
Lifted the golden lid, and a flood of Light
Began to beat against the walled abysm.
God's golden hammer fell on the barring gate.
Nightmares of Doom released the heart of Earth
To enshrine the Golden Presence now at last.
The dizzy empyrean glows in a human face;
A rejuvenating passion is abroad,
And Love immortal flows through mortal limbs.

This Love, this silent burning Love is Thine,
And Thine, O Mother, the Consciousness that knows,
The Vision-Light that sees, the Force that builds.
Our knowledge is this faith and certitude
That thy Word is our truth and all the Truth
Which has been and is still to be—in Thee :
The world's perfection treasured in one form.
Inheritors of Thy splendorous opulence,
Shall we Thy children hoard our indigence
As pauper gleaners of our surface wants,
And burn our moments and our energies
To keep the consuming cauldron of desire
Boiling till all is over and we pass ?
Aliens to inner and higher luminous vasts,
Deaf to the call and voices from the Unseen,
Blind to the shimmering forms behind the opaque,
We move sense—tethered in the beaten grooves—
This humdrum drift of dull precarious days
Amid familiar scenes—left unredeemed
By Thy reclaiming surge, O fiery flood !

There will be tide upon transmuting tide
Athrob from the bosom of the All-merciful,
For those who soon or late recoil and yearn.
But we have loathed and shrugged, aspired and turned
To Thee in refuge; O compassionate Force,

In this tremendous hour of Destiny,
Bestow Thy kindling grace, possess our parts,
And mould them as Thy spirit-dipped conscious tools,
Whose edge of passion blunt not in Thy hands.
Behind the gross exterior's dangling veil,
Where Thy creative spell fashions anew
The fabrics of a Bliss-conditioned life—
The grand epiphany on the subtle plane
Pressing towards the light of Matter's day—
All-guiding Love, now lead our members too,
And charge them with Thy touch of Flame and Fire,
That they may native roam in the inner worlds,
At home with the irised glories ever new.
Then shall the eye meet marvels everywhere,
Ethereal cadences ravish the ear;
The mind seize multi-stranded harmony,
The body taste the splash of scented winds,
Delight's eternal hue suffuse the heart,
And every object beam ensouled with Thee.
Cradled by this Mother-consciousness, we grow
Heirs to Thy vast sapphire beatitudes,
And godlings in Thy emerald paradise,
Where silence will be a lull on the breast of the Timeless,
And acts bright miracle-leaps on the crest of Time—
The two eternities thus poising life.

NARESH BAHADUR

LITTLE IMP NIGHT

ONLY exists a Wonder-Day
And meadows of buds pray to light,
No sombre gulfs devour the ray
Yet in each bud hides little imp Night.

Black stubborn imp cast down to sweet death
When flower-heart bursts into flame,
When petals laugh and sun's golden breath
Christens child-night with Day's great name.

So do not weep, you hearts of doom,
Around the buds it is not dark,
Nights, tiny imps, fade when hearts bloom,
Children of light break out of black spark!

Do not despair, beloved Earth,
A giant bud of bliss Thou art,
Thy Night shall die in Thy flower-birth
And the Sun of Truth open Thy heart.

JANINA

SPIRIT MANIFESTING

COMET of Superthought
Sprung from God's lyre!
Blazing your chanting sword,
Set Night afire.

Strike inward, flame of song,
outsing desire.
Numberless voices throng
into God's lyre.

Trance-hidden stars abide,
chained to World's gyre.
Use your aroused delight,
slay and aspire!

JOBST MÜHLING

DANTE MEETS BEATRICE IN PURGATORY

(From *Purgatorio*, Canto XXX)

A WOMAN, white-veiled, crowned with olive, came—
Under the shade of her green mantle, all
Her body clothed in colour of living flame.

Long years had passed since the first trembling fall
My spirit knew, love-broken in youth's hour
Before her beauty's height, but the same thrall

I stood now, caught by her secret flow of power
And needing not mine eyes to gauge the source
Of the old mighty love which made me cower.

As soon as on my vision struck the force
That through and through I had felt my boy's heart shake,
I, like a child who seeks its mother and pours

Into her ear its sudden dread or ache,
Cried thus to Virgil as I pressed me nigher :
"Not one small blood-drop mine that does not quake—

I know the signals of the ancient fire !"

K. D. SETHNA

SHAKESPEARE AND "THINGS TO COME"

April 23 this year marks the fourth centenary of the birth of Shakespeare. Tributes will be flooding the world's periodicals. Mother India offers its own little word of appreciation, based essentially on the various insights into Shakespeare's mind and work given by Sri Aurobindo in his literary writings. The essay was penned a number of years back; but, as those insights are of a fundamental nature, one may suppose that what is said here does not fall behind the times, although it may not be couched in the jargon of the "New Criticism". It has had the good fortune to have been read and approved by Sri Aurobindo himself.

UP to now Shakespeare remains among English poets a "topless tower"—sole and inexplicable. Inexplicable in his inspired prolificity, and not, as the Baconians urge, by having masterpieces ascribed to his "ill-educated" mind. It is argued that what tells against his authorship of the plays is not only their success as literature but also their being packed with versatile learning. One has, however, just to point out Bernard Shaw and ask : What efficient school-education did he have to equip him for his excellence in the field of letters ? Shaw is nowhere near Shakespeare as a creative genius, but the fact stands that, without academic education, he could write brilliantly, wittily, learnedly, that he could be playwright, dramatic critic, judge of the fine arts, authority on Socialism, and could hold forth in most competent a vein on education itself, show keen insight into the medical psychology, assimilate with a fine force biological science into his *weltanschauung*. Might not Shakespeare, while exploiting a greater artistic gift after prolonged stage-work, bring in classical allusions with which his fellow-craftsmen must have almost tiresomely familiarised him, write knowingly about legal points which a practical turn of mind such as his biography exhibits could in a most natural way seize during his contact with the motley mass of money-grubbers and their calculating clerks round theatre-land, represent with a vivid understanding military science and court-life and political practice when each man's nostrils were filled with the breath of colonial adventure, all eyes were coloured by eager observation of picturesque heroes and glittering courtiers, every head was buzzing with diplomatic questions raised by unsettled thrones and touch-and-go balances of power ?

Besides, it is not likely that Bacon who was most apprehensive about the lasting value of the English language and wished all his works to be written in Latin should have spent years creating masterpieces in a tongue he underrated if not despised.

Perhaps the most decisive proof against him is the difference of psychological atmosphere between his compositions and Shakespeare's. Shakespeare wrote on occasion like a book-worm, a lawyer, a commander-in-chief, a courtier, a politician; what he could never do was to introduce the genuine philosophical accent. The whole cast and vibration of his style is determined by a vital gusto, impetuosity or ingenuity and not intellectual contemplation; while, if Bacon was anything, he was an intellectual. Shakespeare dragged into his plays all that he was or knew : why is that element not there which most distinguished Bacon's mentality—his half philosophical half scientific thinking, the "Novum Organum" note ? If a writer creates even in part out of himself, how is it that Bacon in writing Shakespeare left his essential nature out ? Milton, Wordsworth, even Shelley had, unlike Shakespeare, an intellectual substance and their rhythm reflects it; Bacon too would have given his dramas some touch at least of an inspiration uttering in a dynamic or moved or illuminative language the ideas of the pure intelligence. Shakespeare's thought springs from an exuberance of the life-energy; a vivid excitement of feeling, of sensation, throws up rich idea-effects, but there is no pressure of the detaching intellect or the seeking for a world-view through the eyes of the inspired reason. Even the moments of what may be called his "message" are steeped in the tones of a mind fixed on potencies of passion and emotion.

For, what he offers us is the colour and complexity of the life-movement converting spontaneously its soul of multiform desire into word-music. And it is a music all his own—unsurpassed for its continual excellence in three respects. It comes from his characters bearing the unique breath and idiosyncrasy of each as well as the exact substance and stress of every experience they undergo. It comes not merely from them but also through them, as if impelled by some hidden universe of vitality focusing itself in personal moulds and motives, so that each figure vibrates with a sort of genius, a superabundant animation. Lastly, it is a speech of inexhaustible picturesqueness, the phrases are gorged with metaphor, word follows word prodigious with assimilated imagery. And by an art little short of the miraculous, this music has a ring of inevitability to suit every occasion possible. It can give us Cleopatra impatient and scornful, uttering her sense of the physical pain of death when she applies an asp to her breast, yet putting into her words all that queenly will of hers by which she takes death unto herself freely in order to satisfy her "immortal longings", her passion for the departed Antony, and not as a common necessity to which she must surrender—

Come, thou mortal wretch,
With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate
Of life at once untie. Poor venomous fool,
Be angry and dispatch.

But Shakespeare's vivid nobility can be perfect also in a tone of exquisite naturalness that holds depths of the sublime as genuine in their subdued self-revelation as the

heights when each phrase rings out massive and masterful. Cleopatra's acceptance of death as a means to reach Antony becomes an intimate sense of Antony's own all-satisfying person as soon as Iras falls heart-broken after being kissed farewell by the queen :

If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch
Which hurts and is desired.

This simile, simple yet profound, is followed by one step more in the disclosure of the sheer woman-soul in Cleopatra. When the asp has clung to her breast, the identification of death with love comes with an overwhelming force to her emotion and on Charmian's poignant praise of her—"O eastern star!"—she gives tongue to a metaphorical reprimand which is an unexcelled triumph of art :

Peace, peace !
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep ?

The sudden change, from death as the lover, to death as the lover's child distils from the crisis the entire sweetness of passion : the whole cycle of emotional ecstasy possible to a woman through her chosen mate is compassed and the psychological transfiguration of mortality stands complete. The penetrative magic employed fairly takes one's breath away by its unforced originality and a rhythmic sibilance that echoes the anxious motherly gesture on Cleopatra's part to silence all that may disturb the soothing act of suckling her imagined child.

It is precisely in perfection of expressive rhythm no less than phrase that Shakespeare's claim to be the greatest creator of poetic drama lies. He has, no doubt, a fine constructive instinct. Though the incidents he projects are unified not by conscious dovetailing but by a rambling method in which the main theme progresses as in actual life with a lot of clinging side-swirls, Shakespeare's lack of economy and adroitness is not a fault, because the crowded picture he builds up is most effective by the play of contrasts and foils it provides for etching out all the more vividly the chief characters and events. But this is so on account of the surprising way his people become real to us on a life-breath of word-music. Webster is often almost as good in pure dramatic construction, but his poetry except in a small number of half-scenes and scattered sentences contains no masterful grace of rhythmic expression : he does not play upon his metrical base with skill enough to provide a sustained justification for choosing blank verse instead of prose. Shakespeare's style leads us to feel that the turn and rhythm of prose would entirely rob his language of its living faithfulness, its onomatopoeic response to the meaning he has in mind. What writer of his day could have given us King Lear's

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
 And thou no breath at all ? Thou'lt come no more,
 Never, never, never, never, never !
 Pray you, undo this button—

where the audacity of "sprung rhythm" and dramatic anticlimax has not a streak of crudeness or bathos and is a change the unpatterned movement of prose can never emphasise ? Or take the mad Lear on the heath :

Spit, fire ! spout, rain !
 Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters :
 I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
 I never gave you kingdom, called you children,
 You owe me no subscription : then, let fall
 Your horrible pleasure; here, I stand, your slave,
 A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man.

Mark how the extra syllable at the close of lines two, three and four produces by its falling rhythm a suggestion as if Lear were breaking down pathetically after each expression of his argument and it is extremely apposite that the point of breaking down in each case is a word reminding him directly of the cause of his misery—"daughters", "unkindness", "children". Mark also the repeated sob in the last line, where the words, even apart from the meaning, seem to represent its psychology by their massed stresses and peculiarly combined tones just as those in the second convey in a like manner their particular substance of overpowering energy.

The result by analogous means in line two of Hamlet's touching plea to Horatio is well known :

Absent thee from felicity a while
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
 To tell my story.

It is impossible to read that line without difficulty and strain in the breath, especially as it follows one which is most musically smooth. *Macbeth* is, perhaps, fullest with this alert or rather instinctive skill in the use of words and their sounds : I can never forget, for instance, the impression of perfect artistry given by Macbeth's famous soliloquy when his wife has left him with an injunction to remove the filthy evidence of his deed :

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
 Clean from my hand ? No, this my hand will rather
 The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
 Making the green one red.

The point which rivets the attention is the word “incarnadine”—a strongly beautiful effect on the ear, but not that alone. Macbeth has invoked a daring comparison, blood-stained hands pitted against “all Neptune’s ocean”, and to support it he must somehow bring out the enormity of his crime, all the more when he applies a thirteen-lettered epithet like “multitudinous” to “seas”. Only a strikingly big word can prove competent to match that epithet as well as the ocean-idea, and “incarnadine” does this with unerring success. We feel that the evil with which the hand is stained is vast enough to pollute with its indelible heinousness the whole world of waters.... Nor have we appreciated Shakespeare’s art enough if we have caught no other point in the quotation. Having accomplished what was psychologically required, he could have dropped the three-foot line which prolongs the sentence by a participial clause : Lady Macbeth who now re-enters does not even finish it with the remaining two feet, and Shakespeare by omitting it would have got an obvious climax; but he was a poet-dramatist beyond the ordinary. He seems to have divined that, since the hand that committed the murder was a small thing though its offence was tremendous, the latter implication by a polysyllable was not enough while treating the ocean-idea : the sea in its turn must somehow appear small and become capable of being stained by a human limb. Hence the sonorous is succeeded by the simple, and, even as “multitudinous” was matched by “incarnadine”, “green” is contraposed to “red” : it is a device which, besides stressing more explicitly the colour-contrast between water and blood, brings down Macbeth’s widening imagination to the reality, to a mood that expresses, without obliterating his great inner sense of guilt, his desire to lay the outer ghost, so to speak, and deal practically with the limited symbol and evidence of his crime—the stained hands.

Macbeth, however, is the Mount Everest of Shakespeare’s Himalaya not only because, over and above the usual organic heat and constructive onrush, it has a more uniform poetic inspiration than anywhere else. The poetry and the drama now depict, with a keener vision than ever before, a bursting out of forces from behind the external consciousness. The supernatural takes possession of the field, and incident, atmosphere, expression are all surcharged with uncanny presences. Shakespeare has always a power to put into words the very stuff of what he describes or imagines, but here he makes language throb with a still rarer life, a deeper and more uncommon experience. In this category the most marvellous lines are those in which Macbeth conveys the terror of the voice he heard reverberating around him after Duncan had been stabbed while asleep :

Still it cried, ‘Sleep no more !’ to all the house:
 ‘Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
 Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!’

Shakespeare has found for the original turn to which he has subjected the idea of retribution a verbal scheme with a warp of repetition and a woof of variety, which com-

bines both awe and bewilderment. While the large tone of "sleep no more" stuns us by its recurrence, the different proper names "Glamis", "Cawdor", "Macbeth" perplex us and by yet meaning the same person maddeningly multiply the intensity of the curse pronounced on him. If only "Glamis" or either of the other two had been reiterated, the accumulated power would not have been so colossal; now it seems as though the dooms of three separate persons were heaped together upon the head of one at the same time that we understand through our knowing the identity behind the three names that the same individual has been repeatedly condemned. Further, the names are all majestic and answer back the dominant rhythms. The result is assonances and consonances enforcing an intricate and fearful sonority which carries in it the omnipotence of some occult cosmos of avenging life-force risen up against Macbeth.

A similar gust from behind the veil comes in Lady Macbeth's weird invocation :

Come, come, you spirits
 That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
 And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full
 Of direst cruelty : make thick my blood,
 Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
 That no compunctious visitings of nature
 Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
 The effect and it ! come to my woman's breasts,
 And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
 Wherever in your sightless substances
 You wait on nature's mischief ! Come, thick night,
 And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;
 Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
 To cry, 'Hold, hold !'

Read out the passage slow and with contained fury and you will find the blood thickening and the air full of shadows. I have heard formulas to call spirits "from the vasty deep" but none so genuine as this—a most dangerous hail to the powers and principalities that lurk beyond the surface consciousness. It is a snatch of black magic establishing a real contact with occult beings : that we do not get possessed is due to the absence of Macbethan circumstances—no man contemplating murder would be able to check himself once he has made his desire touch the mighty madness here immortalised. The poetic art is throughout perfect, but now and again it becomes more markedly effective. The climax comes when the lines—

you murdering ministers,
 Wherever in your sightless substances
 You wait on nature's mischief !—

draw out the rhythm from between compressed lips, suddenly loosen it forth into spacious and darkened vistas, unknown, unseen, yet felt as alive with strange hisses of hatred. And that phrase "the blanket of the dark", referring back to "night's pall" and "the dunnest smoke of hell", fuses the preternatural with the human, making the latter a battlefield whereon some titanic devilry would repulse the intervening grace of heaven. The vivid homely term "blanket" becomes a haunting realism pregnant with a sense of ghostly vastitudes materialising and concentrating themselves for covert action within the narrow earth-limits.

It is in such passages that Shakespeare is most true to Victor Hugo's similitude of him—a sea of sound : an elemental power not only wide and manifold, giving us humanity's universal nature, but also like the sea profound. Profound, again, in a double connotation : not merely does the word come, as always, from some depth of revealing intuition with a force of actuality—it comes, too, from unfamiliar kingdoms of life below or behind the moods he is accustomed to interpret. Like a dream-dragon with a million heads, the word-waves rise and curve and sway and dart towards the *terra firma* of the wakeful mind. In Lady Macbeth's speech they come with a slaughtering wickedness, while, in the voices that Macbeth heard ringing through the house, they emerge in a retributive wrath—a kind of action and reaction from the same occult plane. It is also a breath from there which perturbs the equilibrium of Hamlet's soul, a breath blown up on him as if his father's sepulchre

Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws.

In *Lear* the occult invades the surface existence like a tremendous storm rather than a sinister breath, whirling in an uncontrollable catastrophe the human figures : the commotion on the heath is but an outward symbol of a mysterious madness. Iago's "motiveless malignity" is another and less apparent way of hinting the incalculable behind life and its conscious aims; and it evokes against it a corresponding incalculable—the demoniac obsession of Othello :

Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.

But in the Moor's tragedy Shakespeare's eye is not cast deliberately inward on the occult. It is even doubtful whether, when he does seem to scrutinise and use the secret suggestions from "the undiscovered country", he sets himself to do it or just

happens to have his gaze turned inward without any intention to plumb the unknown. He is as a rule occupied with mirroring the subtle and large region of consciousness immediately behind external life—a near subjective background to human activity from which that activity itself is a narrower projection. Thus he is not bound as most Elizabethan dramatists to the absolutely superficial crudenesses, violences, caprices of passion; but he stands no more than a few paces of widening freedom beyond the superficialities—that is, enough to give his representation a universal human touch, a comprehensive interpreting force in the domain of life's psychology, yet not any deliberate grasp on the occult and the ultra-human, the good or evil sources mightier than the subtle human background and governing the latter by their own interplay or their conflicting velleities towards the earth-scene. When his dramatic genius was at its intensest, they somehow broke through and with their cross-currents brought about those giant shipwrecks of purpose which constitute his greatest plays. It is, however, a pity that he was not inclined to a deliberate study of the unknown, for by his intuitive style he was the one poet most gifted to do so; nobody after him has combined his ample scope, his varicoloured energetic beauty and his plucking the poetic word as if from the heart of his object.

If he had plunged still beyond the occult and felt too some lasting impression of the mystic truth, we would have had a verse vivid and compact with a godlike glow, bringing the mystical into the very senses and the flesh. But if he was little of an intentional occultist he was all the less drawn towards mysticism. It is surprising that in the multifarious world he created of characters that breathe and move and utter themselves with a vitality more royal and authentic than even ours, there is not a single individual fired with religious or spiritual passion. He did try to mirror the intellect: Hamlet is his closest vision of the intellect through the life-force. Yes, through the life-force, because, though among Shakespeare's heroes, Hamlet thinks the most puissantly, the most curiously, we have only to read

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil

side by side with Keats's

To thy high requiem become a sod

to distinguish the rhythm of the *élan vital* thinking, from that of the poetic intelligence cast into a beautiful turn of phrase but lacking the Shakespearean life-quiver. Or compare

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew

with Shelley's

From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb,

and the result is the same : the one has an impact upon what Sri Aurobindo would call the nerves of mental sensation whereas the other's appeal is from the pure intelligence in a moved imaginative moment. The contrast between

Who would fardels bear
To grunt and sweat under a weary life ?

and Wordsworth's

The heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world

is equally striking. In Wordsworth, the grey cells are changing the urgencies of an oppressed existence to philosophic values, presenting deep emotion yet with a detached contemplative air. In Shakespeare, the brain identifies itself with the guts to render coherent the being's instinctive shout of recoil and rebellion : the emotion surges up from the depths with a cutting and devouring power which does not easily allow whatever philosophic values it may have to stand with marked independence. However, Hamlet is as much of the pure intelligence in its reflective state as Shakespeare could seize; but nowhere do we come upon a mystic personation of his creative power.

Luckily, though, he did have fugitive moods which are interesting as clues to what is possible in the English language when the mystic hue enters the life-mind. There is a sonnet indicating one possibility :

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Thrall to these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward self so costly gay ?
Why so large costs, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend ?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge ? is this thy body's end ?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more :
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

This is an expression of the life-mind moulding with unrest of emotion and sensation a mystic idea. The famous lines,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will,

bear again a mystic substance intuited, with the usual vitality, from the plane of the poetic intelligence. But Shakespeare opens up in other places possibilities still more rich and rare, though it is not always that he gets the mystic illumination pure or complete. Cleopatra's

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
Bliss in our brows' bent; none our parts so poor
But was a race of heaven

fuses the intensity of a spiritual experience with a tremendous thrill of the life-force, but, instead of raising the latter to a significance beyond itself, the infinitude of the Spirit has become a symbol and suggestion of the sheer acme of that thrill. Passion has used, for revealing its own absolute pitch, for achieving its own apotheosis, the mystic light. Prospero's speech at the end of his magic performance before Ferdinand and Miranda is a complex phenomenon denoting in another way a magnificent might-have-been from a plane above that of mystic ideas :

Our revels now are ended; these our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air :
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

The meaning is clearly that each human life is like an illusion, soon to dissolve in the sleep of death, in an everlasting annihilation; and that the whole world too will pass away like a phantom into absolute nothingness. But I take this meaning to be only one side of the inspiration which tried to get through and could not have its full implication expressed because Shakespeare was not a philosophic or a mystic thinker. Prospero had spoken to the spirits after the complete fading of their masque, so he knew and believed, before delivering the present speech, that they survived even

though the masque had totally faded. Hence his premises were such as would compel a conclusion to the effect that like this masque the whole universe would vanish but like the surviving spirits something would still live behind the world-illusion. He grasped the point of dreamlike fading and pressed his analogy no further, instead of giving us an intuition of some transcendental god-self—a being, rapt and remote, to whom mind and life and matter are an “insubstantial pageant” variously conjured up by its creative imagination, a dream-interlude between a divine peace and peace. We would have been reminded of the Upanishad’s supreme Soul projecting the cosmic vision but only to dissolve it again and return to its unfeared ecstasy of repose, its self-absorbed superconsciousness. What Shakespeare manages to convey to us, in spite of the mystic motive being absent, is an impression as though he stood back in a transcendental poise and uttered his dreamlike experience of the so-called real cosmos without remembering to express the nature of his standpoint : he appears to have quite forgotten the standpoint, for otherwise he would not have so unreservedly described the actors as melting “into thin air” or used the word “baseless” as part of the data on which he drew his analogy, unless he meant that the vanished masque was not built from any stuff of fundamental or basic reality and that its seeming to be built from such substance was a mere illusion, an airy nothing, produced by the actor-spirits. The passage remains one of the most curious in literature—a high mystic inspiration which poured itself in splendid poetry with its original meaning completely negated.

But the spiritual light which should have found a temporary focus in this large and lordly language is not lost for ever. An extremely potent feel of it is conveyed by the phrase,

In the dark backward and abysm of Time,

a phrase at once keen and profound, far-reaching and mysterious with a deific presence. However, the *mantric* perfection is here as if one felt the inmost and the highest with one’s eyes shut. In a sonnet of Shakespeare’s it brims up with as dense yet more intimate a force. A line and a half catch by a superb irrelevance to their context a thrill of some eternal existence and visionary godhead :

The prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come.

That is mysticism in a *ne plus ultra* of intuition which, though coloured by the life-mind, plunges into the pure self-knowledge of the Supreme—the rarest and most unplumbable note sounded by the “multitudinous seas” of word-music that are Shakespeare. Outside the writings of Sri Aurobindo and a few of his disciples, there is little in English poetry to match its suggestive vibration—except Milton’s

Those thoughts that wander through eternity

and Wordsworth's

Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

I believe that these two lines by the later poets differ from Shakespeare's in part of their rhythmic psychology, they incorporate a colour more intellectual; but, apart from subtle differences, they bear a striking resemblance to it which can best be described as a quality of substance, style and, above all, sound conveying with an immense yet controlled power the value and figure an experience would have in a Consciousness superhuman, illimitable and everlasting. In short, we get through the poetic afflatus a touch and a thrill as of some divine level of Being where archetypes have been bodied forth whose hints and echoes are what we know as the world of mind and life and matter.

Everywhere in poetry, the aim is to fashion a word-form and a rhythm-movement that have a sense of absolute perfection : the vision must shine in a body of style and sound shaped to a loveliness irreproachable. Even the grotesque and the tragic are thus ensouled and embodied, and become therefore a source of delight which leaves us breathless by its compelling charm. For, always the poetic intuition seems to afford through an aesthetically flawless word-music an impression of divine archetypes. The thought and the feeling held by it are changed, at the very time that they make their particular human appeal, into a mask of something greater, because the words and the rhythm grow, by a beauty complete and unimprovable, a mysterious language suggesting realities transcendental in terms of realities limited by the earth-nature. If we respond in the right way of aesthesis to any line of genuine poetry, we shall find that the creative art which voices the intuition fills the substance with attributes beyond it, as if a supreme and ideal beauty wore a disguise and came vibrating into our consciousness under an alien form and meaning which yet are not opaque enough to dim the lustre draped by them. But though all genuine art has a touch essentially spiritual, it is more allusive than direct, because the substance and the living thrill are too human. Mysticism shows a way out : its art is not superior, but it is more straight in spiritual impact and fraught with wider, more luminous, more satisfying significances inasmuch as the archetypes are less allusively manifested. By several gradations, however, it leads us out, and not till we encounter the lines I have quoted do we feel that the language and the rhythm have altogether thrown off their disguises and spoken directly the transcendental in terms proper to its own authentic nature. Here it is not just the content that is extremely spiritual; the manner and the music attain too a spiritual extreme both of volume and intensity, as can be proved by a comparison with those of the other mystic instances found accidentally in Shakespeare. I have distinguished spiritual light from mystic idea, and now that light is tuned up to its last degree of revelation where it passes into the heart-throb of the archetypal

and the infinite. Perhaps examples from mystic verse written in the post-Elizabethan, more intellectual periods will help also to illustrate what I mean.

I saw them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on our days,

gives us an extraordinary spiritual substance and the language is inevitable; yet the style and the rhythm have only a very high ideative quiver—the words, though pressing beyond the pure intellect's inspiration, have not been possessed by the hues and tones of the infinite. Half-way towards the quality I wish to emphasise is

Solitary thinkings such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven

But with

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm as it was bright.

we are already within the domain of sheer revelation, though not at its centre, where-
as in

Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone

the penetration is entire : the utmost profundities are visioned and voiced in the poetic surge. From the archetypal point of view achievements like this line are the most precious poetry; one might say that they are the goal, the crowning triumph for which the artistic *enthousiasmos* aspires in secret through all its intuitive audacities.

According to the nature and sensitive openness of its human channels the *enthousiasmos* works; it has no prejudices as to moral and immoral, religious and profane, for in art the side of godhead to be disclosed is beauty. So long as the intuition comes flawless, the divinity in art suffers no wrong; it consents to be worshipped in passionate Dionysiac temples as in fanes of Apollonian calm, to lust on Sappho's lips and deny the gods with Lucretius just as excellently as to weave Tagore's song-garlands for an immortal Beloved and, through Dante, hear even the mouth of hell declare God's mercy. Else it would be curious that the largest poetic splendour the modern ages have witnessed should have burst from the one gigantic genius who cared apparently the least about religion and matters spiritual—Shakespeare. Yet, though Shakespeare will remain unsurpassed, a *mare magnum* in the poetic creation, he is not the last word spoken by the spirit of beauty. For he is not, save in a couple of brief moments, the Word that was in the Beginning; he did not purpose to identify himself increasingly with the direct poetic counterpart of the archetypal Vision that

seeks to find tongue in the cosmic flux. Through self-fulfilment in various terms and disguises of consciousness, this counterpart moves towards the profoundest, closest, most comprehensive revelation of its own beauty, and through all sovereign speech and rhythm till now it has but prepared the "things to come". However, an instrument as constantly and as abundantly intuitive as Shakespeare must be found for that revelation before human poetry can realise the plenitude which has been the dream of the wide world's prophetic Soul.

K. D. SETHNA

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Students' Section

BATTLE FOR LIGHT

A PLAY

ACT I

Scene 3

Mahamaya's Palace—The Home of Bliss

Mahamaya and Sattwa

MAHAMAYA : You think you have heroes who can walk over the little army of the enemy; but have you ever thought of the roaring might of Darkness ?

SATTWA : Tell me, Mother, I pray you, can the power of Darkness ever prevail against the sparks of Viveka's fire ?

MAHAMAYA : What can he alone do against the formidable battalions of Maya, Sattwa ?

SATTWA : Why he alone, Mother ? You'll see when Vairagya (Renunciation) takes the field the enemy will quail before him as the hare before the lion.

MAHAMAYA : Do you think Ahankar (Ego) to be a piece of dry wood which a mere touch of Vairagya can burn to ashes ? How little you know ! Terrible are these "giant sons of Darkness."

(Sattwa looks up to Mahamaya with worshipping eyes.)

MAHAMAYA : Where's Jnana (Knowledge)—the Sun-God of human good ?

(Jnana appears like a bright god.)

MAHAMAYA (*compassionately*) : My child, look at that tree, firmly rooted to the earth, reaching out its fingers to the skies ! Such is man !

JNANA (*with ardent feelings*) : The pitiable state of the sons of the Immortal—oh, I can't bear the sight ! But how to help them ?

"Heaven is too high" for human hands to reach.

MAHAMAYA : Animals have no such suffering. But man has a great point in his favour—he has a thirst, a cry in his blood for higher things which no earthly riches

can buy. A mere streamlet, he seeks the seas, a mere midge, he longs for eternal bliss !

To lead man to that goal, Vairagya, Bhakti and others were born. Go and tell them to take their respective positions.

Create at least a few who may be my fit instruments to pour my light into the darkness of the Age.

(The Mother gives a "smile that saves" and disappears.)

(Vairagya in the garb of a sannyasi bows himself in.)

JNANA : Vairagya ! If you were asked the object of your birth on earth, what would you say ?

VAIRAGYA : To guide man to the Path of Righteousness. To pierce the "heart of darkness with light".

JNANA : Natural for you to feel that way but what's to be done where not a ray of heaven's light can enter ?

VAIRAGYA (*in dismay*) : Oh, that hasn't struck me ! What to do then ?

JNANA : There's no go but to wait—till there's an inner awakening.

VAIRAGYA : How to know that ?

JNANA : Difficult, of course ! When tossed by wave upon wave of worry, man cries out to the high heavens for help—that's the moment for you.

VAIRAGYA : That would be the signal for my action.

JNANA : Yes, then will begin the war between heaven and hell. Go and take up your post.

Welcome to the realm of light whoever gives a response.

VAIRAGYA : I bow to your wishes, my Lord !

(Exit.)

JNANA (*after a pause, in an absorbed state*) : O surely a day will come when He shall descend "into a world that cries to Him for help."

Scene 4

*In Front of Vairagya's Cottage
Vairagya and Viveka*

VAIRAGYA : Viveka, it's yours to awaken in man the "powers that sleep unused".
VIVEKA . Most people are dead to all sense of higher values. For

"A long dim preparation is man's life,
A circle of toil and hope and war and peace . . ."

VAIRAGYA : You know that the Divine works through man's sins and sorrows and tears, don't you ? And so with patience, infinite patience, you've to turn their "frail mud-engine to heaven-use." Go on knocking, knocking and knocking till the "inner door" opens.

But the question is, whom to send to pierce the thick veil of darkness that covers the heart of man ? One moment. (*He withdraws into himself.*) Viveka ! We meet again.

(*Viveka goes out*)

(*Walking up and down*) Yes... she can, she alone can inspire in man the aspiration to lead him out of darkness to light :

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय
Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya

But how to sound her on the point ?... If she herself...

Enter Bhakti (Devotion) clad in yellow and in a way that gives her the appearance of a goddess. A heavenly perfume emanates from her.

BHAKTI : Yes, here is she, offering herself to your service.

VAIRAGYA (*looking at her with admiring eyes*) : O Bhakti ! Living Compassion ! You're a godsend. How would you break through their darkness ?—with thunder ?

BHAKTI (*in a serene voice*) : No, no. As a lovely rainbow.

VAIRAGYA (*moved*) : Wonderful ! When torn by earthly pangs man seeks your shelter, gracious one ! stretch out your arms to give him a taste of the joy and sweetness of your touch. Even if one is all insincerity, do not deny him your benedictions.

Your 'Love is wider than the universe.' Be you their hope and strength !

(*Re-enter Viveka.*)

VIVEKA : A peculiar-looking figure is here. She craves permission for audience with you.

VAIRAGYA : Let her in.

(*Viveka goes out and leads in a dark-complexioned figure Virakti (Disgust).*)

VAIRAGYA : Who are you in this disguise ? I seem to see in you a spy from the enemy camp.

VIRAKTI : You look shining like the moon but speak daggers.

VAIRAGYA : If you don't mind my saying so, there's the stamp of fraud and deceit on your face.

VIRAKTI (*revolted*) : I tell you, don't drive me into your enemy's camp; otherwise...

VAIRAGYA (*interruptingly*) : Otherwise you'll open your third mysterious eye and burn us to ashes ?

VIRAKTI (*vehemently*) : The power of my ordinary eye is enough to give you defeat after defeat.

VAIRAGYA (*puzzled*) . For heaven's sake do not fool people in my name. Do not drive to *sannyasa* those who are fed up with life. Won't you mind me ?

VIRAKTI (*giving a roar of laughter*) : That's exactly what I'd do. (*Coming forward and confronting him*) You'll see how I people your realm with my followers. (*She turns to the door.*)

VAIRAGYA (*following her*) : Oh, pray don't.

(*Virakti rushes out.*)

Vairagya is shocked by her blustering. After a pause, with a sigh:

VIVEKA ! I'm afraid she'll lure those to the Path who have neither inner call nor will-power. For them to take the Path would be disaster.

Ichha-Shakti (Will-Power)—wind-blown hair, face firmly set, eyes blazing like fire—storms in.

VAIRAGYA (*heartened*) : Come in. Come in. I was just thinking how helpless is man without you!

ICHHA-SHAKTI (*grimly*) : I'll never be with the whimpering folk who sing the song of helplessness.

VAIRAGYA : But do stand behind those who keep God in their hearts, have the sword of faith in their hands and courage for their armour. You're the heart within the adventurer and the warrior. Blessed, a hundred times blessed is he in whom you choose to awake. Come, let us go to Jnana. If "he puts his seal on our efforts," victory is ours !

(*To be continued*)

NARAYAN PRASAD

N. B. Almost all the phrases within quotation-marks in Scenes III to VIII are from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*.

YOGA AND LIFE

III

YOGA IS PROGRESSIVE HARMONY

THE ideal of what we have called one-levelment of Yoga and life did exist in the past, but our effort now has to be under entirely new and more complex and therefore more fruitful, even through more arduous, conditions. Also our approach will not be confined to individual perfection although that, of course, would be the key; we shall take the individual as a living organ and part of social life with all the resultant problems of social co-existence.

In India, the theoretical and practical aspects of life have not been separated. Our adventure of Yoga does not start from some outer utility but because it is the inner demand of our being and the imperative call of the time. It is a felt need that the roots of the race should be rewatered by the rejuvenating flow of a descending divine Energy, of the Power that seeks its fulfilment in a New Life, a Divine Life, on our material plane.

In taking up Yoga and harmonising it with life, our attitude will be of complete disinterestedness. No clutching at results, no grabbing of fruits. It is purely a selfless undertaking, a natural psychological seeking, a spontaneous aspiration of our being for the intervention of greater diviner energies in human affairs.

This psychological and practical approach will not seek the solution of human problems—economic, sociological and political—in the form of planning and scheming or by setting up our findings into laws and principles. The very manifestation of the divine consciousness in us and its spontaneous intervention in the problems of life will set the whole process of Yoga into dynamic life-action. The Yogic pursuit will seek, and will be, its own fulfilment. It will consist in the enjoyment of the richer and fuller consciousness, in the increase of the powers of knowing, feeling and willing, in developing all the elements of our being, and bringing an inner as well as an outer harmony and perfection into life and thereby creating conditions for higher development and progress.

It will include, as says the Mother, both “Individual transformation, an inner development leading to the union with the Divine Presence”, and “Social transformation, the establishment of an environment favourable to the flowering and growth of the individual”. Our effort will entail a twofold labour: “an inner development, a progressive union with the Divine Light, sole condition in which man can be always in harmony with the great stream of universal life” and “an external action which everyone has to choose according to his capacities and personal preferences”. Each “must find his own place, the place which he alone can occupy in the general concert, and he must give himself entirely to it, not forgetting that he is playing

only one note in the terrestrial symphony and yet his note is indispensable to the harmony of the whole, and its value depends upon its justness”.

For, says Sri Aurobindo, “All problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony.” The *real* method for the *real* solution of our problems lies in creating harmony in life, a harmony which is progressive and increasingly rich and self-existent. And harmony in life can come only if the uniting and integralising divinity of the One Reality, the source of all existence, is set into dynamic working in the basal fields of human living. A harmony has to be created between man’s deepest aspirations for high ideals and the earthly demands of life. This creation of harmony has to become our conscious occupation embracing the entire field of human activity. It has to become our attitude, our behaviour, our effort and our goal.

This is the Yoga that we contemplate, the union of the individual with the Divine, of life with the Spirit, of Nature with God, preparing a spiritualised society expanding this ideal of unity and harmonisation to the whole human race.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER

No. 4.

April 1, 1964

1. THE Mother, who celebrated on the 29th March her arrival in Pondicherry fifty years ago with a special Terrace Darshan, has said that our Centre of Education must expand. This looks like becoming a fact almost as soon as it is said. On the 2nd April the Centre of Education is to receive distinguished members of the University Grants Commission who are to determine whether this institution can measure up to the status of a university.

We do not actually know the present requirements of the Commission for university status but it will be remembered that all great universities throughout the world started from modest beginnings but were built on the foundations of a great ideal, a unique tradition or an imperative need. The Sri Aurobindo Centre of Education can claim perhaps all three. The great ideal and the unique tradition speak for themselves in the work and personalities of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The imperative need is the world-wide urgent need of a new approach to education as a whole, as the now recognized universal pressure of a student-wise rather than a teacher-wise technique indicates.

We are in the fortunate position of having the working essence of what goes to make the virtues of a university without having established a set form or a rigid traditional pattern which usually result in a type of university with the sole virtue of being merely an examining body.

Our aim and standards are high and wide. Although small in quantity we are already in a unique position to make a very valuable contribution to the needs of our country in the field of progressive and integral education.

2. B O O K S

'49% des telespectateurs americains ont complètement cessé de lire des livres.'
(Jean Delannoy)

H U R R Y ! Read all you can before television comes to you.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT