

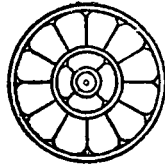
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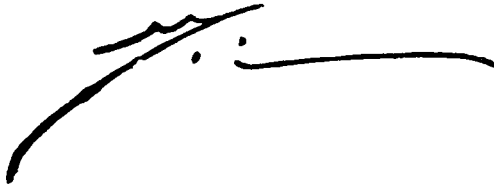


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 4

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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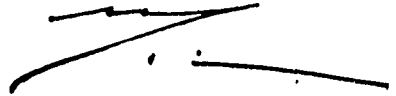
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Tout dépend de ce que tu veux. Si tu veux le Yoga, prends *tout* ce qui arrive comme l'expression de la Grâce divine, qui te conduit vers ton but, et tâche de comprendre la leçon que les circonstances donnent.

23-4-1964



All depends on what you want. If you want Yoga, take *all* that happens as the expression of the Divine Grace leading you towards your goal, and try to understand the lesson that circumstances give.

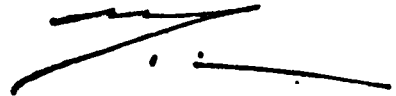
23-4-1964

Pour le Seigneur Suprême, le péché n'existe pas—toute faute peut être effacée par l'aspiration sincère et la transformation.

Ce que tu sens, c'est l'aspiration de ton âme qui veut découvrir le Divin et Le vivre.

Persévère, sois de plus en plus sincère et tu réussiras.

24-4-1964



For the Supreme Lord, sin does not exist—all defect can be effaced by sincere aspiration and by transformation.

What you feel is the aspiration of your soul that wants to discover the Divine and live Him.

Persevere, be more and more sincere and you will succeed.

24-4-1964

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. Mamlal, 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 8, 1939

S BROKE the silence by saying that he had had an unexpected visit from his patient Sh. We said that it must have been as the result of the previous day's talk. We were all amused by the information from Sh that his nerves and stomach, not his mind, were the seats of trouble : the hostile forces attacked him there. Sri Aurobindo asked : "But why the stomach ?" After this, the talk moved on to other topics.

S : What consciousness corresponds to the *Kāraṇa Śarīra*, the Causal Body ?

SRI AUROBINDO : What I call the Superconscient. It belongs to the *Vijñāna* or Supermind.

S : X, the Yogi about whom we were talking, declares that one has to go beyond the *Kāraṇa Śarīra* and he identifies it with the mental plane.

SRI AUROBINDO : What he and others mean is that it belongs to the Higher Mind or Higher Intelligence, not the *Manas* or ordinary lower mental consciousness but the *Buddhi*.

S : X says it is the root of all Samskaras which are manifested on the subtle planes. He puts the human consciousness on the gross planes but he believes that it opens to the subtle ones.

SRI AUROBINDO : The human consciousness has what I call the Subliminal which is open to the subtle worlds but of which one is not aware because the surface awareness is clouded by the ordinary human mental, vital and physical. The inner opening is to the Subliminal while the higher is to the Superconscient. There are some people who are open to the latter.

S : Terms like *Kāraṇa Śarīra* are of the later Vedanta.

SRI AUROBINDO : I go by the Upanishads where they mention the *Prāṇamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijñānamaya Koṣas*, the *Koṣa* being the root. The Upanishads define *Vijñāna* in terms of the Vedas while later it had three senses: the Truth-consciousness, the Higher Intelligence and even Science.

S : We use *Padārtha Vijñāna* or *Padārtha Śāstra* for Science.

SRI AUROBINDO : *Śāstra* is much more appropriate here than *Vijñāna*.

S (*addressing P*) : New copies of *The Life Divine* have come. They seem a little thin. Perhaps thinner paper has been used.

N : Same price?

P : You thought the price would also be thin? (*Laughter*) Nolini and I were wondering if they would send us copies.

S : Nolini and Purani get them free.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ?

P : For review.

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh! (*Laughter*)

N : Premanand has found a new trick for selling. He promises your autograph. (*Sri Aurobindo laughs.*) In that way he is like Gandhi. But now people don't crowd round Gandhi for his autograph.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ?

N : Because he charges Rs. 5 for each autograph. (*Laughter*) So they all go to Vallabhai, Nehru and others.

SRI AUROBINDO : They should charge Re. 1 then.

S : Gandhi is very clever. He is never in want of money.

N : Then, like X, he must have reached God ! (*Laughter*)

S : X gets much more money. Besides, the two cases are different, for Gandhi keeps an account of every item.

SRI AUROBINDO : Gandhi is a trustee of God while X is God himself! (*Laughter*)

S : Once as X was passing by a jail he said : "There also I have my agents."

SRI AUROBINDO : Then everybody is his "agent".

S : But these are special agents. The trouble is that he is not at all dependable. The Europeans complain, as I have already said, that he changes plans so often.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, European minds can't tolerate that. They want arrangement, method, fixed system.

N : In that case X is like Hitler. By the way, this is the fateful month for Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but the stars don't seem to be acting—perhaps because Russia has come in. Russia now occupies the stage; Hitler has quieted down.

P : Now people are hoping for something in Spring.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is due to Strauss. Hitler began too early, in November. If he had done it in December, astrology would have come out successful. Anyhow, now it is not the Hitler danger but the Stalin danger.

N : Hitler is in a difficult position. He has to face the Western front and provide also against Stalinist possibilities.

S : Why? He has nothing to fear from Stalin.

SRI AUROBINDO : If Stalin is successful in the Baltic and the Balkans, Germany will be in danger and Stalin will be all powerful in Europe.

N : Besides, there is fear of internal revolution in Germany and then of the spread of Communism.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is what Stalin hopes for. And after it Communism may spread over the whole of Europe.

S : But Stalin is not making much headway in Finland.

SRI AUROBINDO : No, he's not, except that his men have made some progress at the Isthmus, which is not much, and in the North where they have reached the Finnish defence lines.

P : Finland is now fortifying the Aaland Islands. She didn't up to now because of objections.

SRI AUROBINDO : Only Russia had objected. The League had given permission.

S : Sweden seems willing to help Finland.

EVENING

THERE was very little talk. Nobody appeared to be in the mood.

P : Have you seen Jinnah's statement, After this, Congress should have nothing to do with him.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, the more they approach him the more insolent he becomes. Is it a fact that the Momins, the section to which Jinnah belongs, constitute half the number of Muslims in India ? That is what is being said.

P : I don't know exactly.

When Sri Aurobindo was lying down, P showed him some photos of X's "mad disciples".

SRI AUROBINDO : They don't look like liberated souls! (*Laughter*)

DECEMBER 9, 1939

P (*after the sponging was over*) : At least one member of the Muslim League Executive doesn't agree with Jinnah's statement yesterday that December 2 should be observed by all Muslims and even the other minorities as a date of liberation from Congress regime.

SRI AUROBINDO : Who is that ? What's his name ?

P : I have forgotten it. The *Hindu* makes the joke that now we understand why it is said that people should retire after 60. Jinnah is more than 60 now.

N : Congress should combine with these Momins and try to come to some agreement with them.

S : It can't do that now, because it is too moral.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, it is too moral.

P : Kher has asked Jinnah to specify his charges against Congress.

SRI AUROBINDO : Jinnah won't do that; he will only make general statements.

N : Abul Kalam has also objected to having a Nationalist Muslim Conference at present. He says the time is not favourable.

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't see why it is not favourable. Politically the best thing to do is to combine the Nationalist Muslims—not only those belonging to Congress—and then try to carry the Muslim mass with them. That is the only way to check Jinnah. Even in the Muslim League there are some dissatisfied elements.

N (*after some time*) : In yesterday's paper Russia was said to be designing to attack India. Is there any truth in it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : India? I think it was Asia. I have always considered it a possibility that Stalinist Russia might attack India. It may begin with Mohammedan Asia and then come to India. If the Allies are at war with Russia, this is quite possible. Have you heard the Radio news ? I don't know why Daladier has given such a fiery speech today against Russia.

N : It is rather inopportune because it will provoke Russia.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes; Daladier has enough trouble on his hands. But he is just like that. He is a weak man, and weak men go into unnecessary violence at times.

P : But France can't directly help Finland.

SRI AUROBINDO : No, she can't, unless Sweden joins in and Norway too. Then not only France but also England can help effectively.

N : I wonder what Jinnah and his Indian Muslims will do when Russia attacks Mohammedan Asia.

SRI AUROBINDO : He will hold meetings and shout or he will blame Congress for it.

P : He will blame Nehru perhaps because of his socialistic tendencies and say that he has invited Russia.

SRI AUROBINDO : Perhaps it will be more characteristic of him to say, "I like Nehru but he is wicked in this matter."

N : He may also say that Russia has dared to invade because Congress has withdrawn support to the British Government.

SRI AUROBINDO : That won't be communal enough. He will say Congress has invited Russia to suppress and oppress the Muslims.

P (*after a lull*) : Saravan has been accepted for military training. He was a reservist.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why training ?

P : These people are to be trained for 3 months and then sent either to Saigon or kept here.

SRI AUROBINDO : There are enough troops in Saigon and, besides, in France they don't give training.

P : The first time he was rejected on grounds of health.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, he can now go to Y to make him ill. (*Laughter*). But I don't understand why he should be sent to Saigon.

S : Perhaps he and the others are very anxious to fight,

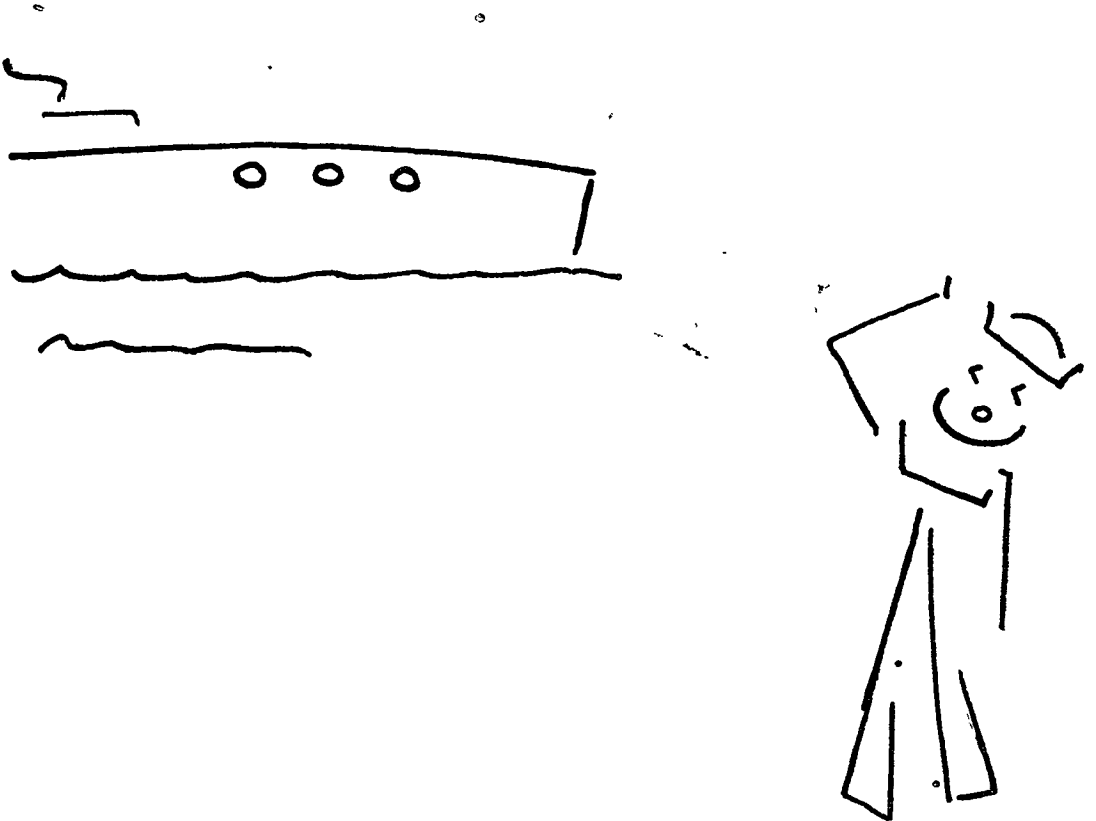
P : Yes, they themselves wrote to the Ministry that they should be called up.

S : They want to fight for glory.

SRI AUROBINDO : For food! (*Laughter*)

When Sri Aurobindo was preparing to sit down to write, C brought three copies of *The Life Divine* for his autograph. C read out the names of the buyers, which were written on a slip of paper. When his own name came, he kept silent. Then N said: "Champaklal." Sri Aurobindo turned and remarked: "You should have said, 'Who is this Champaklal?'" There was laughter again.

NIRODBARAN



"After I decided to let the Navy have its own way about everything, I didn't have any more trouble."

OLD LONG SINCE

(10)

I DO not remember exactly when I went to Madras for my studies. At the beginning of the year 1915 I made arrangements for my stay in a small house, No. 14, on Baker Street, opposite to the Law College in Georgetown. I was quite a stranger in Madras. Sri Aurobindo had written a line or two on a bit of paper as a letter of introduction.

- With that I went and saw the late Kasturi Ranga Iyengar.

I then had no idea what form my life would take in the future. What sustained me on my path was but a few ideas which I had caught from Sri Aurobindo rather imperfectly.

Life is a field for gaining experience. It is not meant for renunciation—this idea glowed as a strong inner feeling in me. I got into the habit of mixing without any restriction with all kinds of people and also indulging without constraint in food or cinema-going (talkies had not yet made their appearance). Even so, something protected me from being fully identified with this kind of dissipation. Coming back to Pondicherry I would speak out in detail to Sri Aurobindo all that I had done in Madras. As soon as I thus opened myself to him, I would feel as if I had taken a bath and imbibed a new life and a fresh energy, as if I had got a new birth.

I could then start for Madras with a care-free renovated life. What I heard from Sri Aurobindo was chiefly but one thing. Whenever I approached him for sadhana I would hear him say : “Rise a little above the head where stands the supramental plane. Concentrate on it. From there you will get what you need.”

During my stay in Madras I used to concentrate for quarter of an hour as instructed by Sri Aurobindo before retiring at night and after my morning wash. At night I would invariably have sound sleep and for the day both the peace and energy needed for work. Once or twice, however, I was subject to an unaccountable anxiety and sadness which, many years later I came to realise, was due to my not remembering Sri Aurobindo always or as often as I should have done.

In Madras when I looked at the beautiful bungalow of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, the editor of the *Hindu*, or that of Rangaswami Iyengar, the proprietor of the *Swadesha Mitran*, and the similar huge and beautiful houses and gardens of Subramania Aiyar and Sivaswami Aiyar and other big men, the question would arise in me, “Am I in heaven ?” But before any answer came to the question Sri Aurobindo’s figure would appear within me, my outer attractions would fade, a divine Ananda and a peace not dependent on outer things would dawn upon my consciousness and take my heart away from the outer world to somewhere inside.

Baker Street is a small lane. The back-doors of a section of Broadway opened on this lane. On the northern end of Baker Street, facing west, the last building was

the *Brahmavadin* press. The *Brahmavadin* monthly, I was told, had come to light with the blessings of Swami Vivekananda. The person who was bringing out this magazine was well-known as one of those who had arranged for Swami Vivekananda's voyage to America. He was a Mysorean, in charge of the press, which was located in a ramshackle house.

I made friends with him. His house was in Triplicane. Often he would spend his nights in the press itself. I, too, would now and then pass the night with him. I heard from him interesting stories about Vivekananda.

He had a younger brother. I forget the names of either for the present. The younger brother informed me that a Yogi would be coming from Kumbhakonam for a short stay in Madras. He said that the Yogi gave Yoga-diksha to his disciples at night in his subtle body. He added that any disciple relaxing himself completely at a fixed time in the night would get his Darshan as well as Upadesha. He asked me to relax myself thus. I made an attempt but to no effect. In the closed-down *Brahmavadin* press I had the opportunity of reading Swami Vivekananda's writings on various subjects. His writings did not lead me to the conveniences and opportunities of life but gave the courage to face life from within and take delight in it. The elder brother, proprietor of the *Brahmavadin* press, was subject to asthma and undergoing a lot of suffering. The days he stayed in the press he would ask me to be with him as a helper. I felt much pain at his unbearable suffering. His friendship had a refining effect upon me, which I gratefully remember.

I happened to be associated not only with rich people like Kasturi Ranga Iyengar but also with people in financial difficulty like the proprietor of the *Brahmavadin* press. Not only that. I chanced to come in contact with two Brahman Brahmacharis. Both of them were jewels. Both were called Subramania. One of them was very bold and reckless. He kept no relation with his family but devoted all his energies to ameliorating the conditions of another family in Madras. He would use for himself only a small portion of his earnings. He lived a very simple life. He was tall and lean in appearance, had shining eyes that seemed to miss nothing going on around him; he was ever active, ever occupied, always on the move as if he had no time to stand and listen to any one quietly. His countenance was a reminder of Va Ra's. That was one reason for my loving him.

The second Subramania had a job somewhere. He earned about Rs. 100 per month. He kept up his relation with his family. Even then he started spending his leisure hours with me. He lacked the courage of his elder brother. He was prone to yield easily. Through my association with him I developed the habit of seeing the movies. It was at that time I caught the idea of wandering aimlessly in life. When I described to Sri Aurobindo my way of life in Madras, he would hear me silently, but in his silence there was a pressure. That would remove darkness from my consciousness, let in light, and make it active. I grew aware of the result in course of time.

When I was in the first year of the F.A. Class in Pachchaippa College, I had the opportunity, I do not remember why, of meeting a number of times the principal

of that college, Mr. J. C. Rollo. He was a lecturer on Shakespeare in our class.

Our text-book then was *The Merchant of Venice*. His lectures were illuminating. He was an expert in playing the different roles of Shakespeare's characters himself and in teaching his students to do the same. He asked me if I was willing to teach him French; he said that being well-versed in Latin he could learn it without difficulty. He also told me that he would give me lessons on our Shakespearean text. This made me very happy. I knew very little French and so I wondered at the idea of my teaching it. But it was once a week only. In fact I did not teach him French; like culling flowers he culled from me whatever imperfect knowledge I had of French and by his uncommon capacity to learn made my knowledge of it clearer and surer. I considered myself fortunate to have his friendship at that time.

Why am I writing about those with whom I made friends or who made friends with me? It is because I find this turning back upon the events of the past from the present gives a shake to the consciousness and brings a purification in the different parts of my being and also renders easier my effort towards growth in future.

When I first started my life in Madras I was quite an unknown innocent person there. What would happen next moment was not known to me. Some months passed in this way. My inner being, too, was in a state of hazy twilight—it was wholly neither day nor night. I took it that it was Sri Aurobindo who sent me all that I came across and experienced at Madras. He was my guide and his presence and touch lay at the base of my consciousness.

Now, Subramania Bharati wanted to see Mahatma Gandhi and he invited me to accompany him. Mahatma was in Madras at that time, residing at the house of Rajagopalachari. Va Ra also was in the same house.

A strong rumour spread over the whole of the city that Rajaji had given up his highly lucrative practice and was about to start the Non-co-operation movement in Royapettah with Mahatma Gandhi's support.

People were gathering in great numbers to see Mahatma. I too arrived there with Subramania Bharati. As I was about to enter the beautiful bungalow situated in the centre of a big compound fenced-in all around, from outside I saw someone polishing shoes. It was Va Ra. I drew near him and informed him of Bharati's arrival. When he raised his head and saw me, he was very glad. He put down the shoes and embraced me. Bharati was waiting at that time, a little away on the inner side of the gate, for the answer I was to convey. Va Ra enquired about the welfare of both of us and said, "What a dilemma you put me in! It is not so easy to see Gandhiji. First Rajaji has to be informed and then he will fix a date for the interview. It cannot be arranged in hot haste." He stopped at that. As I did not have the courage to convey these words to Bharati I told Va Ra, "You come yourself and inform Bharati of what you have to say on this matter." Va Ra took Bharati to the hall inside, made him sit on a sofa and went to inform Rajaji.

When Rajagopalachari came to the hall, Bharati told him, "I have come to see Gandhiji at divine command. I must see him at once." Slightly startled and

hesitant Rajaji replied, "I shall just go and bring you the answer." He went in to contact Gandhiji. Four or five minutes later he took Bharati to him.

Hardly two minutes had passed before Bharati returned from his interview with Gandhiji. He stayed not even half a minute in the bungalow any longer, nor waited to say good-bye to Va Ra but catching hold of my hand and dragging me along he rushed out like an arrow shot from a bow.

I had no report of what had taken place between Bharati and Gandhiji. All sorts of rumours were afloat.

Next day I wended my way from Georgetown to Royapettah to see Va Ra. I entered Rajaji's house. I found Va Ra as before polishing his shoes, sandals, etc. As soon as his eyes fell on me he got up, came to me and advised me to wait for half an hour.

His work over, he made me sit down on the outer verandah—it was at about 10 a.m.—and wanted to know what I had come for. "I have come," I said, "to see Gandhiji and for that only." He subjected me to a volley of questions in this connection and at one time I asked myself, "Why did I get entangled with him?"

Was there any connection between the mental disposition of Va Ra now and that of Va Ra in Pondicherry? I could not make it out. Va Ra's humility, his kind attention—almost obsequiousness—to the guests, his hospitable way of welcoming and seating the visitors without any distinction of rich and poor—all this was a matter of surprise to me. When I saw Va Ra standing in front of Rajaji quite like a servant waiting to do his bidding I wondered several times if he was the Ramaswami of Pondicherry. When at Pondicherry he would literally drag people into debates and fight with them. He would maintain his own ideas firmly, almost violently, whether right or wrong, so much so that people would go back regretting that they had ever launched into a debate with him.

I found little relation between what I was accustomed to at Pondicherry and the words, the ideas and the ideals current at the house of Rajagopalachari. Pondicherry was a world by itself; it was entirely different from the world Gandhiji lived in. Unless there is something common between two things it is useless to draw a comparison.

In creation there is a great effort or urge seeking to establish an equilibrium. The three worlds through their mutual clash move towards an equilibrium. In the material world life appears from somewhere and is at great pains to disturb matter's dead inert poise. A constant struggle goes on between life and matter. It is a great wonder to see how life clothes itself with innumerable forms of matter, making them ever more numerous. Matter too on its part asserts its own law of inertia and immobility by resisting the movements of life, refusing to yield to life completely, driving it out finally from material forms which thereby disintegrate. Is this not a constantly recognisable fact—the fact of death and decay?

This is not all. Is not the law of the mental world at war with that of the vital world? How much the mental Purusha struggles to impose his own law on

that of life, disturb its equilibrium and prevent it from going its own way !

Men are bound by the laws of the mental world. But is there not something in the mental world itself which is superior to its laws and which, by its emergence, can control and rule and finally change them ? Sri Aurobindo says there is.

It took me several years to grasp even intellectually that the physical, vital and mental Purushas are incessantly at war with one another in this world we live in. However it is not without reason that I have thus entered into the domain of philosophy in my reminiscences.

“Don’t tell a lie. Don’t steal. Don’t hurt anyone by speaking ill of him”—such maxims I never heard Sri Aurobindo putting forth. “Sit in meditation. Raise your consciousness a little above your head, give up personal effort, meet the Shakti and allow Her to work without obstacle in you. She will do everything for you”—such are the utterances I have heard from Sri Aurobindo, addressed to me and to others as well.

I was not accustomed to the ideas that were circulated at Rajaji’s house. Va Ra too whom I saw at Rajaji’s place seemed to be a man with whom I had never had any acquaintance.

I requested Va Ra to take me to Gandhiji. Wavering a little he said, “All right. Come tomorrow.”

Next day at about 10 a.m. Va Ra escorted me to the hall where Gandhiji was staying. In that dust-free, spotlessly clean, glass-like hall Mahatma Gandhi was seated on a mat reclining upon a bolster, his face turned to the east. “Why do you want to see me ?” he asked. I stood bewildered, not being able to answer for a moment. There lay two or three bundles of printed paper in front of Gandhiji. Those who wanted to join the Non-co-operation movement were required to put their signatures on a form. Gandhiji ordered Va Ra to give me one such paper and looking at me intently said, “Will you join the Non-co-operation movement for serving your motherland ? I give you three days’ time to think over it. Come here on the fourth day.” I came out of the house and never returned.

It was, I think, the 28th of March, 1919.

AMRITA

(Translated by Parichand from the Tamil)

®

REMINISCENCES

MY PROFESSORS

II

IN an earlier talk I told you incidentally that I had a mind to say something about the English poet Wordsworth. I mentioned then that I did not come to appreciate his poetry in my school days; it happened in college, and to a large extent thanks to Professor Manomohan Ghose. In our school days, the mind and heart of Bengali students were saturated with the poetry of Tagore :

In the bower of my youth the love-bird sings,
Wake up, O darling, wake;
Opening thy lids that are lazy with love,
Wake up, O darling, wake...

This poetry belongs to the type once graphically characterised by our humorous novelist Prabhat Mukherji through one of his characters, a *sādhu*, describing the charms of the Divine Name :

It has the sweetness and the sugar
Of *sandesh* and *rasogulla*.

Indeed Tagore's poetry drips liquid sugar. To young hearts enraptured by such language and feeling, Wordsworth's

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray :
And when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child...

would appear rather dull and dreary, tasteless almost.

Let me in this connection tell you a story. We were then in college. The Swadeshi movement was in full flood, carrying everything before it. We the young generation of students had been swept off our feet. One day, Atul Gupta, who as I have told you before was my friend, philosopher and guide, happened to pass a remark which rather made me lose my bearings a little. He was listing the misdeeds of the British in India. "This nation of shopkeepers !" he was saying, "There is no end to their trickeries to cheat us. Take for instance this question of education. The

system they have set up with the high-sounding title of University and of advancement of learning is nothing more than a machine for creating a band of inexpensive clerks and slaves to serve them. They have been throwing dust in our eyes by easily passing off useless Brummagem ware with the label of the real thing. One such piece of eminently useless stuff is their poet Wordsworth, whom they have tried to foist on our young boys to their immense detriment." This remark was no doubt a testimony to his inordinate love of the country. But it remains to be seen how far it would bear scrutiny as being based on truth.

For us in India, especially to Bengalis, the first and foremost obstacle to accepting Wordsworth as a poet would be his simple, artless and homely manner :

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !

And, as a classic instance of that famous homely diction, a line that follows :

Will no one tell me what she sings ?

Who would be moved by lines such as these ?

On the gates of entry to the poetic world of Wordsworth is engraved this motto :

the Gods approve
The depth and not the tumult of the soul.

It is as if the hermitage of old, an abode of peace and quiet, *sānta-rasapadam-āśramam-īdam*. All here is calm and unhurried, simple and natural and transparent, there is no muddy current of tempestuous upheaval. That is why the poet feels in his heart the time of evening as if it were

quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration,

or else in the early morning he has the experience :

The Winds come to me from the field of sleep.

Here is an easy, natural, limpid flow, undisturbed in its movement and yet with a pleasant charm and filled with an underlying sweetness. But perhaps one has to listen intently to get at the sweetness and beauty of such lines. They do not strike the outer ear for they set up no eddies there ; the inner hearing is their base.

She was a Phantom of Delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight...

Is this not a silent opening of the divine gates of vision ?

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!

Do not these words bear us far away on some unknown wings ?

Tranquillity and a pleasant sweetness are then the first doors of entry. Through the second doors we come to a wide intimacy, an all-pervading unity, where man and nature have fused into one. This unity and universality breathe through and inspire such simple yet startling words :

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

or,

And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face,

or else this easy and natural yet deep-serious utterance carrying the burden of a *mantra* :

Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea.

Once we cross beyond these second gates we reach an inner region, a secluded apartment of the soul where poetry assumes the garb of magic, a transcendent skill lends to words the supernatural beauty and grace of a magician's art...How often we have read these lines and heard them repeated and yet they have not grown stale :

A voice so thrilling never was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides,

or,

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

This magic has no parallel, except perhaps in Shakespeare's

Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim...

(*The Winter's Tale*, Act IV, Scene 4)

Sri Aurobindo has referred to another point of greatness in Wordsworth, where the poetic mind has soared still higher, opening itself not merely to an intimacy but to the voice of a summit infinity :

The marble index of a mind for ever
 Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

(*The Prelude*, III, ll, 62-63)

Thus, with this poet, we gain admittance to the very heart, the innermost sanctuary of poetry where we fully realise what our old Indian critics laid down as their final verdict, namely, that the poetic delight is akin to the Delight of Brahman.

But even the moon has its spots, and in Wordsworth the spots are of a fairly considerable magnitude. Manomohan Ghose too had mentioned to us these defects. Much of Wordsworth is didactic and rhetorical, that is, of the nature of preaching, hence prosaic, even unpoetic although couched in verse. Ghose used to say that even the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* which is so universally admired is mainly didactic, much of it high rhetoric, with very little real poetry in it. I must confess, however, that to me personally some of its passages have a particular charm, like

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar...
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come...

Atul Gupta had seen perhaps only this adverse side of Wordsworth. He had marked the heavy hand of the metaphysician, *sthūla-hastāvalepa*, but omitted to see the delicate workmanship of the artist. However a man's true quality has to be judged by his best performance, and the best work of Wordsworth is indeed of a very high order.

Matthew Arnold brings out very well the nature of Wordsworth's best work. Wordsworth at his peak, he says, seems to have surpassed even Shakespeare. He is then no longer in his own self. Mother Nature herself has taken her seat there and she goes on writing herself through the hands of the poet.

Breaking the silence of the seas
 Beyond the farthest Hebrides,

and

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn,

are indeed two of the highest peaks of English poetry.

Sri Aurobindo has said that Vyasa is the most masculine of writers. Echoing his words we may say that Wordsworth is the most masculine of English poets. This classification of poets into "masculine" and "feminine" was made by the poet Coleridge. "Masculine" means, in the first place, devoid of ornament, whereas the "feminine" loves ornament. Secondly, the masculine has intellectuality and the feminine emotionalism. Then again, femininity is sweetness and charm, masculinity implies hard restraint ; the feminine has movement, like the flow of a stream, the

play of melody, while the masculine has immobility, like the stillness of sculpture, the stability of the hill. This is the difference between the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, between the styles of Vyasa and Valmiki. This too is the difference between Wordsworth and Shelley. The Ramayana has always been recognised for its poetic beauty ; Valmiki is our first great poet, *ādi-kavi*. In the Mahabharata we find not so much the beauty of poetic form as a treasury of knowledge, of polity and ethics, culture and moral and spiritual discipline. We consider the Gita primarily as a work of philosophy, not of poetry. In the same way, Wordsworth has not been able to capture the mind and heart of India or Bengal as Shelley has done. In order truly to appreciate Wordsworth's poetry, one must be something of a meditative ascetic, *dhyānī*, *tapasvī*,—indeed

quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration...

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

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

SPIRITUAL CAUSERIE

PRAYER

It is a first-hand report by a practising surgeon which appeared recently in the press. One day an aged Muslim lady arrived at the hospital with her ailing grandson in a push-cart. The doctor saw the patient and found him beyond recovery. It was a case of severe illness requiring a spinal operation but with practically no chances of recovery at that stage. Still, in response to the pleadings of the old lady, he had the patient taken to the operation theatre. When he was being removed, the lady knelt down in a praying posture. The operation took its usual time and the patient was brought back to the ward and left on a cot. The lady was still kneeling in the same posture. The doctor went home, leaving routine instructions with the nurse in charge to report to him after a few hours. Truth to say, he expected to hear that the patient had died. Imagine his surprise when he received a phone call in the evening to say that not only was the patient living but there were definite signs of improvement. The doctor got curious, went to the hospital to find the old lady still in prayer. Since morning she had been in that position. He felt the pulse of the patient, confirmed to himself the reading of the assistant and then tapped the old lady. She looked up with a face that caused strange emotions in the doctor. He told her that the boy

had come round and was improving. The lady burst into tears and only said, "Praise be to Allah!"

Instances of this kind could be multiplied in evidence of the intervention of new or unknown factors leading to recoveries that would be normally impossible. We read in history how, when prince Humayun was seriously ailing, his father Babar walked round and round the prince's bed and prayed to God to shorten his own life and extend Humayun's instead, and as events turned out, Humayun recovered and the health of Babar gradually failed. We were reminded of this occurrence when some years ago—it is 30 years now—a devotee wrote to the Mother appealing to Her to save his father's life which was in danger and shorten his own correspondingly. The father recovered. But on coming to know of his son's prayer to the Mother which was made without his knowledge, he was gravely perturbed and wrote to the Mother imploring Her to restore to his son his full span of life adding that he was prepared to forfeit his extended lease of life in the process. Sri Aurobindo sent him a gracious reply assuring him that things were not done on such mathematical bases and conveying to both father and son His Blessings.

So many questions arise. Is it really possible to arrest or change the course of events by the power of prayer? If so, what happens to the law of Karma? Can you interfere with its operations by means of prayer? Or, in other words, is it possible to change the workings of Nature by individual prayer?

There are indeed many sides to this complex question. But there is a central truth to which all else is subsidiary. There is one Will at work in the universe. And that Will is not a mechanical something but a divine conscient Will. All Karma, all individual wheels of Karma form part of the process of this Will. And this Will moves through a working out of the infinite possibilities which it directs to the destined goal. The Will is not a static factor pre-determined in its operations. It is a dynamic Power which takes into account the innumerable factors and forces which come into being from moment to moment and varies its workings accordingly. It is possible, says Sri Aurobindo, to get into contact with it, to touch it, to invoke it, to exert a pull on it through means like concentration, prayer, aspiration. That is to say, the human will can, through some means or other, attune and even link itself to the greater Will and move it to function according to its own seeking. The response of the higher Will is what we call Grace. The higher consents to be moved by the lower.

Thus, prayer is a means to establish a communication with the Divine Will. The more intense and concentrated it is the quicker it reaches its destination and fulfils its purpose. But this is not to say with the Mimamsakas that by means of prayers or of rituals embodying the prayers man can compel the Vidhi (Fate) to act as one desires. The higher Will has its own large lines and objectives. Whether it responds or does not respond depends ultimately upon whether what is sought for harmonises with its Purpose or does not.

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

(Continued)

III. THE VISION

“The Light now distant shall grow native here,
The Strength that visits us our comrade power;
The Ineffable shall find a secret voice,
The Imperishable burn through matter’s screen
Making this mortal body godhead’s robe.”¹

THE Aitareya Upanishad opens with a semi-mythological narrative of the nature of a parable, the parable of the creation of more and more developed forms till one, namely, that of man, was formed that proved to be adequate and capable of housing a highly developed consciousness.

*Ātmā vā idameka evāgra āsīt . . . sa ikṣata lokānmu sṛja iti.*² “In the beginning the Spirit was one and all this (universe) was the Spirit; there was nought else moving. The Spirit thought, ‘Lo, I will make me worlds from out of my being.’”³ He then created the upper and the lower worlds and the Spirit thought again, *lokapālānmu sṛja*, “Now I will make me guardians for my worlds.”⁴ And in due process the great Gods were created.⁵ These Gods wanted a habitat and sustenance : “Command unto us an habitation that we may dwell secure and eat of food.”⁶ The Spirit first formed animal kinds and brought them unto the Gods, but these latter found them to be altogether insufficient vehicles, *no’yamalam*. The Spirit finally created the form of man upon which the great Gods exclaimed, “O well fashioned truly ! Man indeed is well and beatifully made,”⁷ *sukṛtam . . . puruṣo vāva sukṛtam*, and they entered the human frame to fulfil their cosmic functions.

Man thus became the habitat, the abode (*āyatana*), of the lords of the universe, the meeting point of their realms of activity and fields of enjoyment.

Indeed, from the point of view of organic evolution, the appearance of humanity in earth-nature marked a radical break with the past, signifying a crucial step, a decisive change in the course and process of evolution. The development of the highly complex and elaborate organisation that is the physical sheath, *annamaya koṣa*, of

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book II, Canto II, p. 124

² *Aitareya Upanishad*, I. 1.

³, ⁴, & ⁵ Sri Aurobindo’s translations.

⁶ In the thought of the Upanishads the Gods represent powers of consciousness and powers of Nature.

⁷ Sri Aurobindo’s translation.

man, capacitated 'a reversal or turn over of the consciousness, a reaching to a new height and a looking down from it at the lower stages',¹ also the development of greater and subtler powers proper to the new type of being : powers of complex observation and correlation of impressions, powers of reason and reflection, the evolution of systems of thought, and the invention of symbolic speech in which transmission is effected from 'speaker to speaker instead of through the germ line.'

And so far as the purely structural disposition of the human frame is concerned, it is by all accounts a marvel product of evolution. The anterior shifting of the eyes coupled with the adoption of the vertical station has freed man from the status of earth-gazing animals and enabled him to look upward and forward and round. The complete freeing of the hands from the task of locomotion and the possession of a fine array of ten wonderfully supple fingers with the added faculty of turning the hands, palms upward or palms downward, has enabled man to become a tool-making creature and wield an incalculable influence over his surroundings. Finally, the unique endowment of the human cerebrum, the greatest tool yet developed by Nature in her long course of organic evolution, has made it possible that man manifest the powers and potentialities of mind and thus truly become Man.

But who can affirm that the human body and man's physical being are in their actuality already an unalloyed boon and his physical organization a picture of perfection? For, are we not too poignantly aware of the grossness and limitation of our present physical life, the various inconveniences of our animal body, its unregenerate earth-nature and impulses and appetites that tend to drag down man's soaring spirit and frustrate the winged visions of his soul ?

As a matter of fact, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, the material body of man confronts him with a dual difficulty, psychological and corporeal : psychological, because of its animal origin; and corporeal, because of the particular type of structure and organic instrumentation that imposes its restrictions on the dynamism of man's higher nature. The human body even at its best brings "to the physical being... a bondage to the material instruments, to the brain and heart and senses,...to the bodily mechanism and its needs and obligations, to the imperative need of food and the pre-occupation with the means of getting it and storing it as one of the besetting interests of life, to fatigue and sleep, to the satisfaction of bodily desire. The life-force in man also is tied down to these small things; it has to limit the scope of its larger ambitions and longings, its drive to rise beyond the pull of earth and follow the heavenlier intuitions of its psychic parts, the heart's ideal and the soul's yearnings. On the mind the body imposes the boundaries of the physical being and the physical life and the sense of the sole complete reality of physical things with the rest as a sort of brilliant fireworks of the imagination, of lights and glories that can only have their full play in heavens beyond, on higher planes of existence, but not here; it afflicts the idea and aspiration with the burden of doubt, the evidence of the subtle senses and the

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (American Edition), p. 746.

intuition with uncertainty and the vast field of supraphysical consciousness and experience with the imputation of unreality and clamps down to its earth-roots the growth of the spirit from its original limiting humanity into the supramental truth and the divine nature.”¹

But the question is : Are the limitations imposed by man’s body in its present state of development to be considered as something permanent and of the nature of insuperable impediments ? Cannot our physical being ever transcend its original earth-nature with its complement of unregenerated impulses and animal appetites ? Will it “constantly oppose the call of the spirit and circumscribe the climb to higher things”?² Will our physical existence be for ever subject to the conditions of animal birth and life and death, of ‘difficult alimentation’ and facility of decay and disorder, disease and senescence, and a final dissolution in death ? Will our mind and sense remain for ever shut up within the prison-“walls of the physical ego or limited to the poor basis of knowledge given by the physical organs of sense”,³ and our life-force ever bound to its mortal inhibitions ?

The Seer-Vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother assures us that the disabilities of the human body and the animal frailties of man’s physical nature will not be there for all time to come. These are in no way innate to animate Matter nor are they inexorable; they are rather of the nature of passing phenomena appearing in the as yet imperfect stages of the march of evolution, and with the further elaboration of this evolutionary process leading to the descent and concomitant emergence in earth-nature, of a supreme power and light of the spirit, of what Sri Aurobindo calls Supermind or the divine Gnosis, these limitations and liabilities, ‘obscurities and ambiguities’ of the material body of man will be transcended, the animal propensities and cravings and drives overcome, the denials and resistances and the tardy responses of the physical being surmounted, even the inconscient and unregenerated parts illumined and transmuted into their divine counterparts.

Not only this : the supramental consciousness and light and force, once directly active in the field of earth-evolution, will in due course invade and take up the very substance of the body, transfigure its ‘function and action’, liberate the body from all possibility of disorders, derangements and maladies, “substitute subtler processes or draw in strength and substance from the universal life-force so that the body could maintain for a long time its own strength and substance without loss or waste, remaining thus with no need of sustenance by material aliments, and yet continue a strenuous action with no fatigue or pause for sleep or repose”,⁴ for the whole being will be flooded “with a supreme energy of Consciousness-Force which would meet, assimilate or harmonise with itself all the forces of existence that surround and press upon the body”.⁵

¹ & ² *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, pp. 45-46.

³ *The Life Divine*, p. 240.

⁴ *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, pp. 68-69.

⁵ *The Life Divine*, p. 877

Also, "the present balance of interaction which allows physical Nature to veil the Spirit and affirm her own dominance"¹ will be reversed and in "the changed communion of the Spirit with Matter"², in the new relation between the Spirit and the body it inhabits, Matter will be seen and felt "to be the Brahman, a self-energy put forth by the Brahman, a form and substance of the Brahman".³ In the supra-mental way of living and being, the body will discard its veil of apparent inconscience, its ignorant laws of mechanical movements, and instead be luminously controlled and guided by the Truth-Will of the indwelling Spirit. Man's physical body will thus be turned by the power of the Supramental Consciousness into an entirely conscious, "a true and fit and perfectly responsive instrument of the Spirit".⁴

As a result of this Gnostic evolution, a supreme power of self-protection will be brought into play, that will confer upon the body an absolute immunity and serenity of being and a total deliverance from all suffering and pain. "A spiritual Ananda (will) flow into the body and inundate cell and tissue ; a luminous materialisation of this higher Ananda (would) of itself bring about a total transformation of the deficient or adverse sensibilities of physical Nature."⁵

The physical body of man will thus undergo a divine transfiguration and shine in the glories of "a pure and spiritualised physical existence".⁶

And finally, as if to crown all other achievements, there will come about for man the "physical conquest of death, an earthly immortality"⁷—"in the sense not of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body."⁸ For "from the divine Bliss, the original Delight of existence, the Lord of Immortality comes pouring the wine of that Bliss, the mystic Soma, into these jars of mentalised living matter ; eternal and beautiful, he enters into these sheaths of substance for the integral transformation of the being and nature."⁹

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

^{1, 2, 3} *The Life Divine*, p. 876.

⁴ *The Life Divine*, p. 875.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 878.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 880.

^{7, 8, 9} *Ibid.*, p. 240.

THE HOUR

ALONE on a vast sea
a man in a boat
rowing—

How far to the shore
he does not know
only
the way he knows
so he rows

Above him the sun
then the stars
around him the winds
the darkness
the silence
Alone he rows

When he will reach his goal
or whether
he does not know
but as long as his strength endures
he will row

Beyond the horizon
home calls to his heart
Eyes search the sea
muscles obey
through interminable hours
day after day

Now
light grows around him
within
a voice—
a subtle knowledge in the heart
or perhaps only a new scent
on the sea
in the wind
in the wind—yes—the wind—

Ah—
it will come
the mighty wind of Light
the welcome breath of Home
and drive his boat
in one great moment's
miracle of Power

Eyes alight
Senses alert
arms relax on the oars
It will come
now—
Now is not the time for rowing
the great effort that brings small result
and slow

Oars must hoist a sail
for the wind to fill
hands hold the rudder
toward the goal

Mind
heart
body
in an aspiration
unbelievably intense
unbelievably calm
await
the Miracle Hour

MAUDE P. SMITH

TWO POEMS

I

OH that with ease or strain I might ascend
Upon this pen of Love the farthest blue,
And there love-strain that victor hue
With home-strong passion's brew...
And thus released unpenned this teeming surge
Of loving dumb impotency,
This ancient pent-up hoarded brood,
A spirit vast of hoary bliss might still.

2

Yourself, Oh Master-Mother,
Yourself, yourself alone are winging,
Singing in this glad estate of things
Soul's song worlds-full overleaning your Love-car
With streaming torrents stark of boundless Love.
I was for love and love alone created,
You God-concerned in Love and Love alone are seated.

MADAS
(HECTOR ACOSTA)

THE HOUR OF GOD

THESE ever-green hills and rivers and sky-wide fields
Are my sole cherished heart-escapes no more;
Nor fancy's flight to some sequestered shore,
Where the world is not, now any comfort yields.

This fevered flux of things will never be still !
Shall I then drift with the tide, or brook to obey
The opiate drive to go my quietist way ?
An obstinate "Why confronts each active will."

Above life's lurid goals men's seeking woos
Throbs one "Not-this, Not-this" resolute refrain,
That fusing into a thrilled disconsolate Pain
In the depths of being the hope-lit track pursues

Of a secret pull articulate in the core—
A coiled-up force, a hibernating fire
From which shall quicken at last unsullied by mire
New form and hue, new rhythm, new urge and soar

That will be intimate with Infinity :
New sap and blossom-burst, new flower and fruit
Whose winsome boughs sway with the honeyed flute
Distilling in golden tunes Love's alchemy.

Now fill this dreary emptiness of mine—
O sweet arrival, fragrant Hour of God—
With a Presence that might make my very sod
Pulsate with the ecstasy of life divine.

Let a luminous shaft of thy all-potent Ray
Disturb the clinging torpor of my soul,
Till seized with the passion of its perfect role
It cleaves the veil between its Night and Day.

NARESH BAHADUR

THREE PRAYERS WHILE WAITING FOR THEE, MOTHER...

I

WHILE I was waiting for Thee, O Light,
To appear on the balcony,
I prayed :

“Before the Lord descends in the first ray of Thy gaze,
O Mother, chase away the clouds that cover my soul
As Thou art lifting at dawn the mist-veil
From the immaculate face of that deep Black Lake
In my Tatry Mountains...¹

“And then, when the Lord will come,
The luminous beam will pierce my bare being
Unto its very depths and fill it with bliss.
And the Lord will be pleased,
And He will look around Him on His happy property
At the bottom of my soul.”

2

While I was waiting for Thee before Thy Blessings,
Before my eyes would come near to Thine,
I prayed :

“Mother, let my eyes lie still like those tranquil lakes
In my Tatry Mountains,
Immobile, spread before the Lord,
Crystal mirrors waiting...
Will He permit an offering to Him of His own face ?

“And then, when the Lord will come through Thy eyes all loving
To stoop over these two lakes of calm,
He will perceive Himself in their humble felicity.
And the Lord will be pleased,
And He will smile
Seeing His own eyes looking at Him.”

¹ The Tatry Mountains are the highest and a very beautiful mountain-range in Poland.

3

While I am waiting for Thee in the lucid silence
Before the sacred hour of meditation,
I pray :

“Fill, Mother, my cells with longing ecstasy,
The same that sparkles in all those lakes of beauty
In my Tetry Mountains
When the last sun-drops caress them with glowing happiness
And when the Lord Himself is approaching after His long day journey.

“And then, when the Lord will come,
My whole being will be His luminous abode.
And the Lord will be pleased.
He will sigh with delight.
He will rest and take off His sandals
And wash His feet in the radiant waters.”

JANINA

TWO POEMS OF EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNICATION

ALTER EGO

I TRIED affliction for the spirit's edge
Dulled of perfection where
It cast a pallid wand
Of meaningless remembrance
In my glass.

Singing never stirred a throat
Too pained to pass beyond
My smile painted and posed
In natural imitation since
First birth echoed the world's choice.

So this cocoon of moment
Bursts in a bond of crying
Splendid voice—
The dialogue which we rejoice to hear

Alone in company
With another ear.

THE ACTIVE PSALMIST

My wish had lain unspoken in dumb flesh,
The wall of action papered with a plague
Of posters posing numberless designs.
Animal trickery outslipped all hungers
Raised by living fire in its patient hearth

And I had yet to greet the mirror
Recognition's face.

Then in the fluid instant
Of immediacy breath
With that revealing throb
Which marks a birth
Made voice catch yearning
As she stirred in sleep
And bodied her for this
I write to you.

MARILYN WIDMAN

MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

(Continued)

CHAPTER IV

THE IDEAL GROUP

Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?

BIRDS of the same feather flock together. Even Jesus had spoken of his "little flock". But in the development of mysticism the lonely birds have been even more common and preceded the flocks. There have been 'Outsiders' long before the term became popular. "The Outsider only exists," says the champion of the term and the creed, "because our civilization has lost its realization." To believe Mr Wilson—which is not necessary—the outsider is the salt of the earth and has always been, the hero of our time, the spiritual heir of the prophets.¹ It is his other diagnosis, of the Outsider's role in the contemporary scene, that seems to be more acceptable: "a symptom of our time and age...the Outsider is the key to the decline of the West." But, of course, Wilsonian Outsiders are not always mystics or even mystical. The true mystic is as much 'in' as 'out'. In fact he is 'in' when he is 'out' and *vice versa*!

Most mature communities have recognised the role of such individuals and profited by their presence and example. Nor have these men themselves always or often dwelt apart, though this seems to be a widely held view. As Evelyn Underhill wrote: "By the very term 'mystic' we indicate a certain aloofness from the crowd, suggest that he is in possession of a secret which the community as a whole does not and cannot share; that he lives at levels to which they cannot rise. I think that much of the distrust with which he is often regarded comes from this sense of his independence of the herd." And the herd knows how to hit hard. So, it would seem, does the lonely pioneer. His vision of God leaves him little choice. For, if "the work of the Church ends when the knowledge of God begins," mysticism cannot but be un-institutional or anti-institutional. It is, as Dean Inge has noted, personal religion in its inmost essence. The mystic, says another philosophic student of the subject, "has discovered a source of new values....(He) confronts the existing order not with the intent of pure destruction but with a new standard of what human nature really needs. In effect the mystic says to society: Here I stand with my own vision of truth, my own ideal of human destiny, my own power of judgment. How many institutions can stand the test?"²

Such being the fact, Underhill's defence of institutional mysticism, or the Church, fails to carry conviction. She feels and would like us all to believe that "the

great mystics are loyal children of the great religious institutions”, that for the mystic “it is better...that he should be within a church than outside it”. Without being offensive, it seems that she knows what is better for the mystics than the mystics themselves knew. She goes on to say that the mystic achievement “makes more valid and more actual to us the assumptions upon which external religion is built.” This is surely half the story and a poor defence. For if mystical experience justifies “external religion”, which may be doubted, it at the same time shows up its limitations no less. If, as she claims, “the great mystics were faithful sons of the great religions”, then why were the Sufis persecuted? Even Ramakrishna was a thorn in the side of the hidebound conservatives and remained unacceptable to the orthodox till such time as it became impossible to keep him out, and a new order grew up round him. So, when Underhill suggests that “the view which regards the mystic as a spiritual anarchist receives little support from history” we can only beg to differ. For what she calls “the support and discipline of organized religion” is often the very thing which not a few of the mystics, including “mystics of the church”, have been kicking against, gently or violently, but almost invariably. One reason for this is that the mystics know, far better than the conformist crowd, the difference between “historical Christians” and “new men”. In the end even Underhill has to admit the presence of two types of mystics in the Christian fold, the rebel and the law-abiding, the heretical and the orthodox. Both types must be recognised without any attempt at moral judgment. Mystics *within* the fold are also a fact, though we shall probably never know the whole history of that uneasy adjustment, between vision and authority.

But when the mystics deliberately and sometimes defiantly kept away from the group, or formed special groups of their own, such ‘distancing’ has to be looked into carefully, not necessarily from the point of view of those whom they tried to avoid and who are therefore more likely to misunderstand than those who have a sympathy for all ways of the spirit, including what might appear wayward ways. In this one must distinguish between “beyond-man” and “hostile-to-man”. No doubt the variety of mystical experience and experiment contains both types. But why have mystics been, or thought to have been, such ‘oddballs’, owing so little to social sense and responsibility? Why then should society tolerate their anti-social antics? Or is there more to it than we have suspected? And how are the mystics related to religious groups? and why were these not enough? And what about the mystical groups? How are they to be related to other forms of organization?

Most people would perhaps agree with “the commonest of criticisms” brought against the mystics, that they “represent an unsocial type of religion, that their spiritual enthusiasms are personal and individual, and that they do not share or value the corporate life and institutions of the church or community to which they belong”. In fact it has not always been a case of simple and invariable opposition: mystic *versus* society, or “My kingdom is not of this world”. An appearance of conflict, even an occasional need for it, must be admitted. But this should not be allowed to disturb

our sense of proportion. We must find out why this is or should have been so, and hope for happier adjustments.

It is well-known that each human tendency moves towards its own extreme or absolute. So does the spirit of mystic withdrawal, cutting across all social duties and mores. At the other end of the spectrum we have the image of the Welfare State or the Big Brother. In the end such extremes meet and correct themselves. So, let us hope, it might be with the mystics and society, both going their own ways would meet in the end. For they need each other, even if, like those who need each other, they sometimes get on each other's nerves. The monk, the recluse, the Timonlike misanthrope, the "rhinoceros" wandering *bhikṣu* or the lonely hermit ploughing his lonely furrow, seeking his solitary salvation, is a familiar type, more familiar than the other type, which has existed too. The voice of wisdom and admonition has not ceased : Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry ? Even Lenin used to say that the cry of a single child in distress condemned the whole world. The idea has been expressed, more than once, by William Blake :

A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage...
A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing...
The beggar's dog and widow's cat
Feed them, and thou wilt grow fat...
Every tear from every eye
Becomes a babe in eternity.

It would be an inexplicable paradox if the mystics, who are at least spiritually sensitive, should be unconcerned about their fellow human beings. So, why did they leave family, society, everything ? What was the strange compulsion that forced them to this course of action ? We shall probably never know. For these things cannot be studied as one studies "cases". One must go the whole way, at least part of it, before one can report about the lay of the land and where it leads to, and if it does not reach back to the point of departure, by another route.

The so-called flight, escape, renunciation of the individual mystic is but an arc, the circle is wider and inclusive. Withdrawal without Return makes no sense. Really, "we come back to the same world, the old-time tasks, changed, yet everything is different."³ Or, as Böhme said, in the mystic experience the world will not be destroyed, but remade. The lives of the great saints and mystics, among whom are to be counted nearly all the founders of what are called the higher religions of mankind, show the working of this principle clearly enough. In his *Study of History* Toynbee has rightly drawn attention to this fact: "Creative personalities when they are taking the mystic path which is their highest spiritual level...belong to the duality of movement...we call...withdrawal and return. The withdrawal makes possible for the personality to

realize powers within itself which might have remained dormant if he had not been released for the time being from his social toils and turmoils . . . but a transfiguration in solitude can have no purpose, and perhaps even no meaning, except as a prelude to the return of the transfigured personality into the social milieu out of which he originally came. . . . The return is the essence of the whole movement as well as its final cause." In the more poetic language of Edward Carpenter: "Then to return to be used—and then only to be rightly used, to be free and open for ever." And so those who can look beyond the apparent conflict between mystics and society know that the lives of these pioneers into the Unknown are not entirely unrelated with our social existence and destiny. Perhaps in these lives "more easily than elsewhere, we may discern the principles which do or should govern the relation of the individual to the community." Even the suprasocial helps the social, if we will but allow, that is understood.

In truth mystics do not reject society. What they are trying to do is to start a new research, for a new formula, of ascent and integration, and because it is something new it will not be easy to fit this into the old pattern which is often not plastic enough for the purpose. They have seen the visions of a new order and cannot, would not, deny its clear imperatives. In every age and in nearly every society we come across men and women, sometimes even groups of people, on whom the hold of convention has visibly weakened, who have lost faith in existing social ideals and practice and who, sooner or later, step out. Examples of such individual withdrawal or escape, protest or non-conformity have come down from the earliest ages, from Egypt, Persia, India, China, even from the primitive tribes. These were the born ascetics, the monastics, holy men, often credited with supernormal power and insight, who were among the most highly respected members of the tribe, even though apparently they did not 'belong'. It will be a mistake to look upon them merely as curiosities of cultural anthropology, as many of our 'rational', 'scientific' investigators are apt to do. If these men gave nothing back to society, as some would like to think, what about the leaders of modern society? Are we so sure how posterity, if there is one, will look back upon the captains of industry, the bosses of big business, and, above all, our experts of aerial and bacterial warfare, the natural leaders of today, men of light and learning? The earlier ascetics had a philosophy, a point of view and a code of conduct which has lost none of its edge. We can better them, if we dare, but we cannot bypass them, except to our own discredit. Really, we little know either their goal or their methods, what aims they pursue or what "orchestral evolution's theme" they serve. Misunderstanding is a small price for the pearl of great price that they seek, not, be it said, for themselves alone, but for all men, even those that deny and oppose. In the sober language of Lecomte du Noüy: "The purely human conflict (of evolution) is born from this permanent bitter struggle which has lost none of its violence today."⁴ The conflict continues, still "worthy to raise issues". That, incidentally, is one of its great services to a somnolent society, dead to ideals, and on its way to a Dead End.

Not many have responded to the call of the mystics. They were and remain a

minority, but a creative minority. Here is one of them speaking: "The mass of humanity evolves slowly, containing in itself all stages of the evolution from the material and vital man to mental man. A small minority has pushed beyond the barriers, opening the doors to occult and spiritual knowledge and preparing the ascent of the evolution beyond mental man into spiritual and supramental being. Sometimes this minority has exercised an enormous influence as in Vedic India, Egypt, or, according to tradition, in Atlantis, and determined the civilisation of the race, giving it a strong stamp of the spiritual or the occult; sometimes they stood apart in their separate schools or orders, not directly influencing a civilisation which was sunk in material ignorance or in chaos and darkness or in the hard external enlightenment which rejects spiritual knowledge."⁵ This ought to give us pause. We who pretend to judge may be among the accused. A little thinking will show that echoes of that earlier mystical thought can still be heard, for such as have ears to hear. It is only the forms of thought or practice that have changed, as they ought to, but not the spirit.

Of course no thought is needed to see that in an age of consumer economy and conspicuous waste the ideal of the ascetic will sound archaic and quite unacceptable. And yet—who does not know?—a certain kind of asceticism or high discipline is indispensable for any superior activity or achievement. Making money, waging war, and going to the moon are no exception, however questionable might be the motives for these noble undertakings by the well-adjusted majority. Modern science itself would have been impossible without subtle and special disciplines of body and mind, a faith in the unseen. The ascetic we have always with us. It is not enough to point to the excesses and absurdities of the tribe. *Mutatis mutandis*, one might point to the destructive intent and application of science, and condemn the whole show as a diabolic and insufferable perversion of the will that is no better, indeed much worse, than the absurdities of a few ascetics. Two can play at that game.

Today when we are living no longer "in the delicious intoxication induced by the early successes of science, but in a rather grisly morning after", the life of the spirit should call for far more careful and intelligent consideration than what we have given it so far. Society being what it has almost always been, the isolation of the mystic, who is often but not necessarily an ascetic, has been a condition of his experiment with truth. The fact that so many, among them some of the best that society has ever produced—the fact is conceded even by such crude and confirmed critics of the mystical and monastic life as Gibbon and Frazer—had to move out of the society of their own periods is a sufficient criticism of the un-spiritual social organizations under which they had to live—and rightly refused to live. The fact did not escape Underhill. In the very first paragraph of her well-known and sympathetic study of Mysticism she could not help noting that very frequently the mystics have been driven to their position in spite of, not because of, society; and she points out how "branches of the human family produce sporadically and often in the teeth of adverse circumstances a curious and definite type of personality". As Tillich has noted, the religious answer has always the character of 'in spite of'. As regards

Christian mysticism, this is what Gerald Heard has to say: "The mystical tradition of Christianity...has never been appreciated save by the few, never systematized into techniques, and always suspected by the authorities—the theologians and administrators—and by the masses. And not only has it been intuitive and esoteric, but almost an underground movement always subject to the accusation of antinomianism and heresy."⁶ The antinomy was inevitable and yet we have permitted ourselves the optimism that a time may come when mysticism will be normal and part of the social setting. Not, let us hope, through the use of drugs⁷ but a better understanding and the availability of disciplines within the social framework. It is true there is sometimes a certain defiance in the ascetic's code and gesture, a kind of *noli me tangere*. If he cannot win, he will not submit either. If he cannot integrate, he will at least affirm.

Whether the Kingdom of God is here or hereafter, it has first to be reached within and then adjusted to the outer world. Without going within there is no hope or chance of that discovery. Faced with a crisis—and such crises have been fairly frequent, indeed to the mystic and the saint life is a perpetual crisis⁸—the responsible individual has two ways open to him: he can use violence or he can use ways of peace. He can be either a Lenin or a Gandhi. That will depend on what kind of man he is and the thoughts he has. Both the ways are forms of radical, revolutionary import, and both have been tried, again and again. It is sheer blindness to say that only military and political revolutions deserve to be considered and that the ways of the mystics and saints count for nothing. Perhaps "More violence, less revolution." Who knows? Great changes in human life and attitude do not take place with the beat of drums, or dropping of bombs. "Smash or go on to higher things. So far no civilization has ever met the challenge successfully."⁹ It is easier to smash and if no civilization has met the challenge successfully, a small minority has, on behalf of a society that has almost disowned them and paid them with nothing but misuse and misunderstanding. An Age of Noise and Nuisance can hardly be expected to appreciate the more human and humane ways of the mystics. A grasping civilization can hardly believe that there have been men who have preferred to be left out or stay behind, men who have spurned the advances of the bitch goddess (the only one left in the pantheon) and welcome sacrifice and still do. Our values must change before we can talk intelligently about mysticism and the nature of the help offered by it to our society. St. Joan spoke a little too much like a Shavian heroine when she told the people that they did not deserve a saint. But there was some truth behind that show of temper.

(To be continued)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

REFERENCES

1. But, the suspicion is recurrent, among Mr. Wilson's ideal figures many are but a variation of the Underdog. The closeness should not surprise. Maybe "because civilization has created the Underdog and is creating more of his sort every day, and when it describes him it is looking in the mirror. You need only think for a moment of the men who are furthest away from him in everything that matters to realize that society is never likely to go the whole hog in working for mental, spiritual and physical balance....The Romany gipsy and the saint came nearest to being in possession of their own souls. Civilization outlaws the one and still martyrs the other." Philip Toynbee (ed), *Underdogs: Anguish and Anxiety*, 255.
2. C.A.Bennett, *A Philosophical Study of Mysticism*.
3. Rufus M. Jones, *The Eternal Gospel*, 184.
4. Lecomte du Nouy, *Human Destiny*, 109.
5. Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga*, 1,3.
6. Gerald Heard, *The Human Venture*, 270-71.
7. Let one example suffice: "The Anaesthetic Revelation is the Invitation of Man into an Immemorial Mystery of the Open Secret of Being, revealed as the inevitable Vortex of Continuity", revealed through heroin, marijuana, mescaline, happiness pills and others to follow. O. Brave New World, that has such addicts of the Absolute in it! O Transcendence without tears! See also P.D.Ouspensky's *A New Model of the Universe*, chapter on "Experimental Mysticism".
8. Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, 43: "The saint is one who knows that every moment of our human life is a moment of crisis."
9. Colin Wilson, *Religion and the Rebel*, 320.

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

2. VALUE (*Continued*)

THE value of a thing depends on the character, the composition, the elements of its nature and on its essential merit as a creation on one hand and the receptivity of its audience on the other. People ascribe value also according to the trend of the age. But there is such a thing as the thing-in-itself which ever remains unalterable. In short, all these are veritable problems not easy to solve rightly or satisfactorily.

Before we discuss the problem of value it would be good to cast a glance at the mentality of the periods at which these epics were composed. England had felt the wave of the renaissance which veiled or put aside momentarily the strong religious sentiment that had marked the history of medieval England. But once the vibrant impulse had passed, the religious issues continued to be the mainstay. We find the Catholic risings and the Puritanical answers to them in a most sanguinary form. This period is the least productive of literature. Even Milton had to wait till the clamour and passion had died down. And when he finally was ready to create a lasting epic, he found an altered country, strongly monarchical in its sentiment. 'Will these Royalists value my creation?' That was the question he had to ask himself.

SRI Aurobindo too came in a period of unrest, but this was a ferment of awaking—this was the stirring of a new consciousness. The old pattern of thinking and beliefs was past. A new horizon of vision and creativity had opened up. Literature also had to put forward a new step to equal this new movement. Thus on one hand we see a decadence, and on the other we see an awakening. The former checks all literary creation, the latter enhances it. And, in both cases, the poetry is the highest put forth in the period. But, while *Paradise Lost* was well received owing to its Biblical content, *Savitri* is understood and appreciated only by a few outstanding minds because of its spiritual character, its mystical approach and its lofty vision. Milton was a poet who turned into a politician and, when politics failed him, he returned to his first love, the Muse. Sri Aurobindo also started as a poet. He became a supreme Yogi. Yoga uplifted his poetry, enriched the tone, structure and value of his creation, whereas politics merely made Milton bitter, disheartened, remote and almost a cynic. Milton lived in his mind's distant world, while Sri Aurobindo lived in the all-pervading Spirit. This is our background for the assessment of value.

Let us commence with the thought-value. This is the foundation of all poetry. In Milton the thought arises out of the pure and lucid intellect; it is classical in its height. It does not stoop to the level of romance or passion. But its height does not have intensity. Its value is in its clarity and in its sonority, even common proper names seem to possess here a magical loftiness. This thought lacks the exuberance of youth, the ecstatic beauty of nature. Its beauty lies in its moderation and exactness. It has an extraordinary sweep and its images are bold and finely defined. But it is ever severe. It escapes the artificiality which we meet with in Pope or Dryden. It is sincere and noble. It has no vulgarities either of approach or execution. All

its parts in Milton are in harmony, the different images that come are there not as a struggling, incoherent multitude but as a unified mass of mental pictures. Being pure, it implies no admixture of any sensory or emotional elements as in Shakespeare. It creates clear mental images and does not evoke any sensational or nervous response.

But the thought-substance of *Savitri* starts from a different domain. Not height alone is its scope. It does not begin on the level of intellect but surpasses the common flight the human mind is used to. Its values are spiritual, its measure and purpose belong to the spirit. It is neither classical nor romantic and yet has the quintessence of both. Although it does not adhere to the set forms of either, it takes the essentials of both and builds its own peculiar form. Thus in *Savitri* we find the beauty of an *Endymion*, the colourfulness of a *Faerie Queene*, the elevation of a *Paradise Lost*, and the vividness of a Shakespearcan play. Its thought has a vastness, a height and also a profundity. It is quick, slow, tender, powerful, intense, fiery, or unbelievably sweet. While the value of thought in *Paradise Lost* lies in clarity and sonorousness, the value of it in *Savitri* is a varied multi-tonal richness.

Next we may see the value of ideas in both. But before we begin, let us define 'idea', which in popular parlance is synonymous with thought. Idea is the pure and unmanifest part from which thought emerges as an emanation. Thoughts have forms, definite structures. They have trends, affinities and disharmonies. They have types and have, last of all, levels. The idea is a seed, it can give rise to many thoughts. It is the pure essence, the unmixed source.

The ideative value of *Paradise Lost* is in its theology and metaphysics. The idea-source of Milton is religion. From religion he derives all his thoughts. The form being classical and pure, his ideas seem almost Hellenic in content. But ruling from behind is the religious mood, the ethical spirit. They are the fountain-head of all his creation. His background is metaphysical and mixed with the religious idea; he produces a work whose value, next to being literary, is purely ethical. This element guided his inspiration, impelled his creation. If Shelley's value lies in his spontaneous seizing of truth and beauty by means of intuition, Milton's value lies ideatively in his ethics, religion metaphysics. These go to form the whole of what he was and believed and created. In fact his whole personality stands on this firm bedrock. And it was this element which was the cause of his popularity. Its value went to build up his fame.

But Sri Aurobindo's ideative value lies neither in ethics nor in religion nor in metaphysics. His ideas spring from the occult plane of truth that reveals all, gives the needed intensity, vision, colour, power and sweetness. If ethics is the heaven of Milton, Sri Aurobindo's is that of sheer Beauty, Bliss, Eternity and Immortality. His ideas are the rays that suddenly drop from the celestial ethers and burst forth a new epiphany. They are not the slow or ponderous waves that visit Milton. They are not the heavy, sad, calculating cautious steps with which Milton forged his way amid controversies and quibbles. There is no need for rhetoric here. Also his value lies in his vision and audition rather than in his thought. These build the thought-substance, and give it a coherence, a luminosity, a spontaneity which no

mere intellectual thought could give. The intellect's construction is a made-up thing, while the truth that is heard, seen, felt by identification with it is more concrete and real. We are not discussing here the poetical value or the value as it stands in itself. We are considering the value of ideas which do not affect the value of a poetic creation. Ideas have their grades and hierarchies; they have a higher origin and a lower source. But the poet receiving ideas may or may not command the purity, the height. He may make a masterful use of ideas from a lesser level; while ideas received from an ampler altitude may have a poor manifestation here.

Sri Aurobindo's ideative value lies in his masterly use, his sovereignly skilful use of the ideas that visit him. He does not fall into a flat sing-song nor does he rise to a false pedantic height. His ideas are not abstract symbols, too remote to be understood by intelligence. They come as a series of revelations, ushering in newer, fresher worlds of surprise and beauty. But Milton's ideation is not revelatory. It is born on the heights of the poetical intelligence at its best and comes to the flatness of a rhetorical poetry at its worst. His ideas have power; they are male, virile; but their power is controlled by the mind of the poet.

Sri Aurobindo's value of ideas lies in his variety and many-sidedness, while Milton has only one or two aspects. He brings variety not so much by new or fresh ideas but by the skilful use of metaphors and the tonal character of words. That is, it is not substance but form that lends variety to him. This is due to his exclusive reliance on ethics, religion and theology, whereas Sri Aurobindo draws his ideas from the endless planes of the spirit. Hence Sri Aurobindo's ideation is rich, varied, multi-featured, having many levels of beauty and power.

Next we shall consider the aspect of truth-value. How far does *Paradise Lost* or *Savitri* reveal truth and what is its value? Truth has a local or general aspect; it has also a divine aspect. Under the first head we have truth of ethics, truth of religion, truth of one's own personal creed. Under the second we have truth of cosmic nature, truth of consciousness and spirit and the supreme transcendental truth that is yet unmanifest on earth. By truth we do not refer to any factual veracity, not any strictly moral element. Truth in essence is what exists in the authenticity of the spiritual consciousness. The nearer one is to the sheer and luminous Sun the greater is the truth. At the same time a difference from it does not imply falsehood. A lesser truth is not false, because it is not opposed to it. We therefore have no right to denounce *Paradise Lost* as basically false for starting from a lesser world of Truth. The notion of a Lie is a moral notion and has no place in our consideration here.

What truth Milton arrives at is the highest he could attain. He was utterly sincere in his pursuit, and his value of verity we cannot deny. It may be put forth that none would be false if he could. Conditions, environment, achievement and status determine this. In this particular case the value of truth lies in the sincerity and the following up of its tenets.

Milton set himself to write about a theme of which he had no direct experience but which he had read about in the theological texts and in the writings of his con-

temporaries or predecessors. I mean by direct experience the occult grasping of man's beginning and his fall. In other words, he took what was a symbol in the theological myth to be irrefutably true. He gave a physical validity to the occult phenomenon that was human creation. This was his primal falsehood. But it was generated not so much in his insincerity as in his incapacity. He was by nature a physical-minded poet, having deep roots in materialism like most people of the Western race. To speak in symbols or believe in pure abstraction was beyond him. Still less was the possibility for him to translate the symbol that had come to him into something tangible as the poet of *Savitri* has done. It may be pointed out that the mistake lay less in Milton than in *Genesis* itself. In that case the question of falsehood does not arise.

Savitri starts with a legend and, making this its *point de depart*, reveals an occult truth. Sri Aurobindo is conscious of the limits of the legend and overcomes them boldly by an alteration that makes the weakness of the tale the strong point of the epic. He is sincere to the highest truth he has come to reveal. He has direct experience of the worlds of life, mind, soul, the gods, the utter void and the super-conscious domains. He knows their place, meaning, their evolutionary character, their nature and becoming. Milton on the other hand has never experienced the presence of the angels, God, and the higher realities. Hence they float before us in a vague mist, some fleeting replica of the mind's fancy or at best some projection of one's highest ethical self. God or Christ are what Milton has conceived, and mixed with this concept is what he has imbibed by way of education. Thus, we clearly see his ethical beliefs but we can go no great distance towards getting any view of his experience of God.

But he has seen crookedness, sin, insincerity, falsehood, the dark side of humanity; these are palpable; they are not vague theological concepts, nor unsure gropings of the mind towards some unreached ideal. Hence the value of truth of his Satan, night, chaos, is so great. This may have been a failure from another point of view; yet it is a great triumph as far as the picturisation of evil is concerned.

And yet this triumph is limited. For he has revealed successfully only one side of the total cosmic whole effectively and truly. In Sri Aurobindo this error has been overcome. He sees both Good and Evil, God and Death, man and his fate and depicts them like a painter executing a vast world-canvas where nothing is lost and all have an equal meaning and place. He does not set a prominent position to Evil; nor does he paint the Godhead as the one victorious element. All is seen like a witness. This does not lessen the truth-value of this work.

As I have remarked earlier, truth has many facets and grades. Milton arrives at a lesser pitch of truth while Sri Aurobindo rises to an ampler height surpassing all common horizons of codes and ethics. The truth of Milton is ethical; its value lies in his conviction, his sincerity. The truth of Sri Aurobindo is spiritual, its value lies in his experience, vision and his close faithfulness in expressing them.

(To be continued)

THE MISTAKE ABOUT MACARTHUR

REPRODUCED FROM THE *Mother India* OF APRIL 21, 1951

(General Douglas MacArthur died on April 4 this year at the age of 84. Recipient, from his own country, of the Medal of Honour and 20 other decorations for gallantry and extraordinary valour—decorated 37 times by other Governments—acknowledged by all as one of the greatest military commanders of his time and perhaps of all time—he was yet subjected to the disgrace of a summary dismissal on April 11, 1951. It was less than a year after he had been specially called at the age of 70, from his post in Japan of U.S. Commander of the Occupation, to take charge of the Korean War. In that war he achieved at Inchon, by landing behind the enemy lines, a sensational success which completely routed the North Koreans. Later, owing to massive intervention by the Chinese near the frontier between North Korea and China, his troops suffered a disaster at Suchon. But he soon dug in for an indefinite seesaw battle. And he was convinced that, given a free hand, he could yet inflict total defeat on the enemy. He resented the military limitations imposed on him by President Truman and the United Nations. When Truman dismissed him, the majority opinion was that one who would have brought about a World War by his foolhardy policy was removed. Some believed that MacArthur should have been curbed without being disgraced. Mother India was the only journal—at least in Asia and Europe, if not in America also—to go all out to defend him. Its article, inspired by the spiritual vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, has thus an historic importance—all the more because, as the Postscript added after 13 years shows, its argument has been justified by what happened later in Korea itself.)

THE dismissal of General MacArthur from supreme command of the U.N. forces in Korea is one of those acts whose consequences can be averted only by what we may conceive as God's grace. To hail it as a far-reaching decision in the cause of peace is to be blind to the real nature of the Korean War.

This war is being waged against powers that are bent on arresting man's evolution and fixing him into a cast-iron type in which the creative intellectual and spiritual possibilities of the individual are annulled and every human unit is reduced to an efficient machine serving the materialistic dogmatism, the collectivist tyranny and the imperialist ambition of a small group that has under Stalin's leadership enthroned in its heart the Titan as opposed to the God in man. The war, therefore, is one on which the whole future of civilisation hangs. If in any way it ends in favour of the Communist dictators, if it does not drive home to them the determination on the democracies' part neither to appease them nor to compromise with them, if it makes them believe that they can succeed in even a small measure in their attempt to spread their totalitarian tentacles, it will have been fought in vain and the blood, sweat and tears of thousands will have been wasted.

The people who can see this war to the right conclusion are those alone who carry like a fire in their minds the sense of its real nature. Of course it cannot be expected that every anti-Communist should understand the metaphysics of the distinction between the God in man and the Titan (or, as we say in India, the Deva and the Asura). But there are both thinkers and men of action who feel intensely the sinister character of Stalinism and when a person becomes almost an embodiment of that intense feeling he qualifies to be a leader of the campaign against this evil—provided, no doubt, that he is not a narrow fanatic with uncontrolled and un-directed energy. If he is one with a wide and various experience, clear and many-sided vision, positive talent for organisation and administration and, to crown all, genius in military matters, then he is *par excellence* the crusader, so to speak, who can deal the crippling blow to the arch-enemy of the Light that is upon man's face.

Such a one is General MacArthur. He seems as if born with the mission of checking Communism. Nobody can hold a candle to his clarity of insight into Stalin's ruthless and conscienceless ambition to dominate the world and put permanent fetters on the human mind. Nobody can come anywhere near his brilliant grasp of Far-Eastern strategy and his dynamic leadership. The only charge possible against him is that he makes uninhibited pronouncements on political issues. But let us look at his chief pronouncements.

He declared a long time back that Formosa was vital in any fight with Communism in the Far East and that therefore it should not be exposed to invasion from the mainland. This is but the bare truth and the Korean War has fully borne it out and the U.N. can ignore it only at the cost of all liberty in Asia and of all security in the Pacific. MacArthur also said that Mao Tse-tung intervened out of no fear for the safety of hydroelectric installations on the Yalu River but with the one aim of driving the U.N. forces into the sea. This again is nothing save the truth: the so-called Chinese "volunteers" have openly stated their aim to expel those forces from all Korea. MacArthur has recently affirmed that the Chinese Nationalists now entrenched in Formosa should be allowed and aided to open a second front on the Chinese mainland. It is difficult to understand why Chiang Kai-shek whose representative has still a seat on the Security Council should not be permitted to help the U.N. effort in some way when the U.N. has branded Red China as aggressor. The justification for neutralising his troops in fairness to Mao whose plans for invading Formosa are also being nullified by the U.S. Seventh Fleet is no longer there, since Mao has hurled himself into the Korean arena. At least, there is no lack of wisdom in urging the U.N. heads to contemplate the use, direct or indirect, of the trained troops that are lying idle in an island next door to Korea and that could by a diversion relieve a little of the pressure on the G.I.'s.

Finally, MacArthur has chafed against the restrictions placed on him as regards bombing Chinese bases beyond the Yalu and although he has scrupulously observed the restrictions he has warned the Reds that if they do not conclude a truce with him they will only create conditions in which the bombing of Manchuria will be

inevitable. Here too is common sense and an attitude which promises greater results with an enemy of Mao's type—especially in view of the giant build-up reported to be in progress on the Manchurian border. The hysteria we often find the moment there is any talk of carrying the war into the enemy's country can do nothing but harm : Mao must be made to feel the U.N.'s readiness to take all measures necessary to stop him from being a pernicious intruder in Korea. It is almost certain that the Chinese interventionists have been camouflaged as "volunteers" in order to keep their Government uncommitted and leave a loop-hole for their getting out of Korea without much official loss of face in the event of things becoming too hot. A firm threat to bomb Manchuria would even today send Mao's troops scuttling home. World War III is more likely to be averted than incited by a resolution to stand no nonsense from Peking.

Even MacArthur's dictum that the Chinese would not intervene because of the crossing of the 38th Parallel or because of the "home-by-Christmas" offensive was not beside the mark. Substantial intervention took place on account of the U.N.'s hesitation in condemning Mao as soon as the first batch of "volunteers" was sighted—a hesitation that had never been expected. Everything that MacArthur has said has been a sign of genuine sagacity—and nothing that he has done has exceeded the political decisions taken by the U.N. His sole crime of commission is that, apart from making pronouncements of a political character, he offered a truce to the Chinese Communists ahead of the U.N. It seems that the U.N. had an identical proposal ready and had sent the General the whole plan for his comments. He, instead of just commenting, took it upon himself to forestall the offer. This has very understandably riled his chiefs—particularly embarrassing has been the minatory finger waved by the General at the Reds. Not that the chiefs at home are blind to the necessity of attacking Manchuria if Mao sends out a second mammoth force, especially with large-scale air-support, as he is rumoured to be on the point of doing. But they are inclined to be soft and suave, they do not wish to bristle Mao up, they still expect a change of heart, they do not believe that only the shaking of a fist in his face would make him sit up and take notice. In other words, they fail to realise the kind of force that is at the back of the Communist offensive—the Titan, the Asura, who can never be mended but only ended, since there is nothing evolutionary about him. No one in his senses wants a World War : what is wanted is the resolute containment of Communism in the hope that Communism may end by internal disruption and revolt; but when part of the containment is the hurling back of armies that have broken the peace and committed aggression the slightest softness will tend to undermine the military effort and give an extra lease of life to the aggressive tendency. The MacArthur gesture is the only right one. If he made it out of turn, he might deserve a reprimand, but to give him the sack is folly indeed.

This folly will be sheer manna to Mao. Either he may take advantage of it by coming to some sort of truce that would give him an opportunity to strengthen himself more while giving the U.N. the false impression that he means peace, or else he

may hasten to launch a second attack in the conviction that with the removal of the greatest, wisest and cleverest embodiment of dynamic anti-Communism from the field he would be able to administer to the U.N. such a shaking as would drive them into more and more conciliatory actions. The basic attitude of the Soviet world towards the change of command is not appreciative in the least. The Russian *Literary Gazette* sums up the change as merely "convincing evidence of the confusion in the camp of the American war-mongers" And it adds: "Now when the failure of Wall Street's policy is plain, Truman has decided to remove the compromised General. However, regardless of who conducts it—MacArthur or his successor Ridgway—the policy of aggression can only end in disgraceful failure." Surely, such an attitude is hardly conducive to Mao's arriving at any settlement worth the U.N.'s while. It can only spur him to exploit MacArthur's absence to the top of his ability.

On the Korean front, therefore, the exit of MacArthur can only spell harm. Has it done any good on the home front? Britain had been reported to be very fidgety over the Supreme's airing of independent views. But there was no sign of any future split between Britain and the U.S.A. Mr. Attlee's Government would have been satisfied with a strong reprimand. There appears to have been no valid reason to set Britain at ease by so drastic a step as giving MacArthur his ticket of leave. Britain is quite misguided in pleading for kinder treatment to Mao's regime: her persistent recommendation for a seat in the U.N. to his delegate and her constant advice to Truman to be as amiable as possible towards Mao without actually licking his boots are things to be discouraged rather than afforded consideration, for evidence is daily mounting that Red China, far from following a policy of caution and restraint, is increasingly living up to the disdain voiced at the very start for neutrality and is getting further and further integrated with Stalin's totalitarianism. Time would have convinced Britain how dangerously wrong she had been and whatever fissure had been observed between her mind and America's would have closed. In any case, the fissure was never irremediable. The British Government, though clearly gratified at MacArthur's removal, had not at all expected it and was genuinely surprised. In the international sphere, this removal was in excess of the need of the hour.

In the United States, it has proved an issue controversial in the extreme. There is a crack in public opinion from end to end. MacArthur is not less a hero with the Republican Party than Truman with the Democrats. And this is but natural, for he is, to say the least, as vital to the anti-Communist war as the President himself. The two are the double centre of effective inspiration in this matter. The absence of either from the immediate official drive against Mao would be a most regrettable loss to the cause. What has happened is worse. It sets the one against the other and half of America will tend to lose confidence in Truman. As a result, the fully concentrated and concerted attention the Korean problem demands will be lacking. We expect that MacArthur, after a legitimate attempt at self-vindication, will gallantly refuse to head any direct opposition to Truman. He seems too good a patriot to create radical distraction at a critical time like the present. He seems too good a soldier to make him-

self a real stumbling block in the midst of a battle where the main thing is to ensure a united push. But he is bound to defend himself and a smouldering grudge against the President is bound to remain in that percentage of the nation which constitutes the Republican Party—the high percentage of nearly 45. Such a grudge cannot help diminishing in subtle ways the co-operative spirit at the moment and within a year's time it may even spell the fall of Truman, which would indeed be a deplorable turn of events. Let us hope the uproar caused by the President's precipitate action will soon die down. But what will repair the damage done by lopping off one half of the admirable double centre of anti-Communist inspiration which has so successfully enabled the free world to hold its own against Stalin in the crucial test of both mind and body in Korea ?

When we say all this, we must not refuse to appreciate the ticklish position in which MacArthur now and again put Truman. It was never easy to keep him within the limits of official orders. We should be unjust to the President if we denied the exasperation which the Supremo caused him on more than one occasion by his personal relationship with Chiang as well as by his forthright utterances to the press. Truman had reason to complain. But the complaint could be legitimate only if MacArthur were not too big for the post of a mere general obeying orders framed by politicians not always sure of their own minds. The cure for the somewhat anomalous situation lay in clearer grasp of objectives at the top and in going as far as one could in making the post big enough for the man. At least, it might have been remembered that there was no actual disregard by MacArthur of directives concerning the campaign itself : whatever his frettings at the short sight he often found in his directors, he never took the bit between his teeth and ran away. His differences remained on the plane of ideas. So long as he did not exceed his orders in the field itself, he should never have been penalised by a curt dismissal. Even his jumping the official gun by that offer of truce was not serious enough an offence from the concrete and practical point of view : it did not mean any genuine subjection of the political department to the military. A soldier in command is entitled to some initiative and, when the soldier happens to be endowed with military genius of the first order as well as with far-reaching vision of the evil of Communist expansionism, much should be forgiven him. To dismiss him is an immeasurably greater blunder than any independence of thought he may show in matters generally considered as falling outside a soldier's scope. The free world can only pray that the consequences of this blunder may not prove too serious.

“ARGUS”

POSTSCRIPT : APRIL 30, 1964

The contention of the article that China was Stalinist through and through and bent on Communist expansion has been proved true by her subsequent aggressions as well as by her rift with Russia for debunking the Stalin-cult and for seeking

co-existence rather than war with the West.

The further contention that Mao would hardly be induced by the dismissal of MacArthur to arrive at a real settlement was proved by the inordinate length of time before the Panmunjom negotiations, after the truce, were concluded. The radical restraint put on MacArthur was certainly taken to argue confusion and weakness on the practical side and no genuine consideration of China on the theoretical side.

Several other contentions have equally been supported by later facts. But the most notable thing is the statement on the Chinese "volunteers" and MacArthur's policy of threatening to bomb the Chinese bases beyond the Yalu. The article argued that the Chinese were really prepared to give in if they could be made to understand the threat as genuine. It held that nothing except the MacArthur gesture was of use in the Korean field and that this gesture would never have precipitated a World War but prevented the Korean conflict from ending in a stalemate. Now, R. H. S. Crossman has written in the *New Statesman* (London) of 21 February this year (pp. 292-93), reviewing *The Korean War* by Robert Leckie and *Korea : The Limited War* by David Rees :

"The Korean War is full of dramatic irony. . . . But the most ironic episode of all was the way the war ended. For months, the Panmunjom negotiations had been conducted by both sides with boneheaded bloody-mindedness, which excluded any chance of agreement. Suddenly, the atmosphere changed. Was it because in Washington Mr. Acheson, who dared not negotiate for fear of being called an appeaser, had been replaced by Mr. Dulles ? Was it because Stalin was dead ? These changes made an enormous difference. But both authors are in little doubt that the immediate cause of the armistice was Mr. Dulles's brinkmanship : his calculated threat—leaked through the Indians to the Chinese—that if they did not sign on the dotted line straight away, the Americans would abandon the conventions of limited war and carry atomic bombardment to the Chinese cities. Apparently this threat was made with British agreement—and it worked. There is grim humour in the thought that MacArthur had to be got rid of before an American President could take the supreme MacArthurite gamble—a gamble repeated on a later occasion by President Kennedy."

Yes, the supreme MacArthurite gamble has been vindicated, but too late in Korea and at the price of a stalemate rather than with the resounding triumph which the great General would have achieved for the free world.

"ARGUS"
(K. D. SETHNA)

WORLD UNION

I

WORLD Union will hold a five-day World Council from the 15th August 1964.

The Mother sent her blessings and the following guiding definition to World Union to serve as motto and programme:

“A World Union based on the fact of Human Unity realising the truth of the Spirit.”

The Mother has also approved the following programme for the first World Council, which was sent up to her :

1. The World Council will open as a conference of its members and special invitees from the Ashram, India and abroad. At the inauguration of the conference guests from the Ashram and Pondicherry town will be invited to attend.
2. An eminent special invitee familiar with the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother will be asked to preside, and another such invitee will be asked to inaugurate the conference.
3. The subjects before the conference will be :-
 - i) Conscious Evolution and Destiny of Man.
 - ii) Review of World Forces, Spiritual and others, leading to world unity.
 - iii) Creative Collaboration between Science and Spirituality.
 - iv) Collaboration with other Non-Governmental Organisations of the world during United Nations Year of Cooperation 1965.
4. The conference will organise a seminar on “Conscious Evolution and Destiny of Man”.
5. World Council members will meet, during the available time, when the report of the work done so far, plans for future work and statements of income and expenditure and the future financial requirements will be presented and the members will be called upon to elect the Executive Committee for the next three years.
6. The conference, the seminar and the meeting of the members will take about five or six days.

We pray Your Guidance as You think best irrespective of our ideas in the matter.

Your devoted children,

sd: AMBALAL,

MAGGY.

It is quite all right.
With Blessings

sd: MOTHER.

II

Sri Aurobindo believes that Nature in her trend of pushing human society towards larger and yet larger aggregations will eventually, possibly in a measurable time, succeed in bringing about an outward unity of mankind, either by an increasing closeness of *common interests*, or thanks to the force of a *common uniting sentiment*. This international unification must or is likely to culminate in either a centralised international control through a World-State or a looser world-union in the form of a close federation or a simple confederacy of the peoples for the common ends of mankind. The last form is the most desirable since there will be sufficient scope for the principle of variation necessary for the free play of life and healthy progress of the race, the preservation of the national basis and greater or less freedom of national life, but with the national interests subordinating themselves to the larger common ones and full separate freedom to the greater international necessity.

But a unity by political and administrative means is precarious and quite mechanical. The unity of the human race can only be secured and made real if the *religion of humanity* (at present the highest active ideal of mankind) *spiritualises itself* and becomes the general inner law of human life. A religion of humanity means the growing realisation *that there is a secret Spirit*, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to *live out* this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us, oneness with our fellowmen will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of co-operation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life.

(Based on *The Ideal of Human Unity* by Sri Aurobindo)

World Union has come forward with the resolution of trying to foster this Spirit in the light of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It is indeed a welcome movement.

PRITHWINDRA

Students' Section

BATTLE FOR LIGHT

A PLAY

ACT I

Scene 5

Bhakti, in whose "tongue lingers the honey of paradise", is seen under the shade of a tree, the symbol of an abiding shelter, with Jnana in whose "every act a secret sweetness breathes".

BHAKTI : Few, "few are they who tread the sunlit path". Oh that they knew the mystery of surrender ! Their call from below and the Mother's response from above

JNANA (*in a soft tone*) : Vairagya thinks he can, in a trice, kill Ignorance who has "lulled the Omniscient into nescient sleep".

(Vairagya in whom there is "god-born strength "comes in.)

Vairagya, I ask you, how shall a liberated few release the world ?

VAIRAGYA (*firmly*) : It is only a few that lead, and the many follow.

JNANA (*in a meaningful voice*) : The few have blessed the earth time and again. Even Avatars have come and gone but the earth remains ever the same, black as coal.

VAIRAGYA (*with force*) : Because stronger, far stronger is evil in the human heart. People are born in the Night, die in the Night without aspiring for the Dawn. In vain is their "hunting for pleasure in the heart of pain".

JNANA (*shakes his head mysteriously*) : Not in vain ! "A hidden Bliss is at the root of things."

VAIRAGYA (*with emphasis*) : But "the Bliss that made the world has fallen asleep" and earth is "watered with sorrow's tears".

BHAKTI (*sympathetically*) : "Yet every creature hunts for happiness" as "yearns an obscure moth to blazing light".

JNANA : Vairagya, I can assure you, "for joy and not for sorrow earth was made".

VAIRAGYA : Why is earth then rolling in agony, my Lord ?

JNANA : Pain is the hammer of God to straighten out its crookedness. "Grief is the cry of darkness for the Light."

VAIRAGYA : It looks that there's no end to her tears.

Jnana (*in a solemn tone*) : Vairagya, I repeat,

“Escape cannot uplift the abandoned race

Or bring to it victory and the reign of God.”

VAIRAGYA (*bewildered*) : Reign of God on earth ! Vain, vain is your longing to build heaven on earth.

“Where Matter is all, there Spirit is a dream ;

If all are the Spirit, Matter is a lie.”

Pray, do tell me how the Real and unreal can meet.

JNANA (*calmly*) : There are no two : “This whole wide world is only He and She”, two cotyledons in one seed.

(*Looking up and “seeming to see the unseen”*)

Vairagya, you look at an “unfinished world” and say God is and all else is vain. You forget—

“The Infinite holds the finite in his arms.”

VAIRAGYA (*growing impatient*) : I know only one law—

“He who would turn to God must leave the world ;

He who would live in the Spirit, must give up life.”

But the great obstinate world resists this truth with all its might.

JNANA : There's in human nature a secret enmity to the Divine that impedes God's work on earth.. .

VAIRAGYA : And that evil is too deep to uproot, too hard to break.

JNANA : Yes, it is evil that “binds the earth to calamity and pain”.

VAIRAGYA : There ! I told you. That's why I've hardened my heart and am determined to do my work. To slay the evil we must slay the Ego first. Lord ! Let us blow the bugle. Give us the command and we march.

JNANA : You want to wage war on Ahankar (Ego) and his teeming forces. Is there any chance of victory, I ask ?

VAIRAGYA (*emphatically*) : Let him face us in the battlefield. Give us your command. Give us your blessings. And victory is sure to be ours.

JNANA (*in a low voice*) : Go your way and see to what it leads you.

(*Exit Vairagya.*)

(*Bhakti looks to Jnana with pleading eyes.*)

JNANA : Bhakti, why have you kept silent ?

BHAKTI : All the while I've been thinking: must man remain wandering in darkness for ever ?

JNANA (*in a stirring tone*) : Man is not born a football for Evil to play with, nor is evil his lot. A blind God is not the architect of the earth.

BHAKTI (*her face brightening up*) : Tell me, tell me more.

JNANA (*in a moving tone*) : Man stands helpless. "His little mind keeps him tied down to little things." But the saving light is also there, concealed. The secret can be "caught only by the spirit's eye".

BHAKTI (*pleadingly*) : "All that denies must be torn out and slain." That seems to be the one thought that dominates Vairagya's life and action.

JNANA : Know this to be the secret of secrets :

" . . Light comes not by struggle or by thought."

In the mind's silence the Omnipotent Mother works. The only need is surrender.

BHAKTI : What a revealing truth ! The difficulty is : people want peace and happiness but not the Giver of Peace. Can there be sunshine without the Sun ?

JNANA (*looking around*) : Shanti (Peace) must be in our ranks. Why hasn't she turned up yet ?

BHAKTI : She seems to be in a swoon.

JNANA : Swoon ! Why ?

BHAKTI : Out of fear.

JNANA : Good Heavens ! Strange ! What makes her fear me ?

BHAKTI : She is afraid lest you should plunge her into a dungeon in man, infested with snakes and scorpions.

JNANA : I wish she could be an oasis in a desert ! I'd be pleased if she helped men grow divine. Do persuade her to join us.

(In a thoughtful vein)

If the "Divine creation is to be realised on earth", we must invoke the Supreme Power. The earth must be graced by the touch of Her Feet.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

—

HINDUISM

THE question "What is Hinduism?" often arises because Hinduism cannot easily be defined or classified as can sectarian religions like Christianity and Islam. The Hindu religion allows within its fold all creeds and sects, various dogmas and methods of worship. The variety is so rich and profuse that to the superficial eye Hinduism does not seem to exist as a religion. For all appears to be chaos within it—there only exists, according to that eye, an established Hindu social system.

It is true that there is a firm Hindu social system, for it forms part of the whole of Hinduism. But Hinduism does not limit itself to a part of the whole life of the individual or of the nation. Other religions merely see to fulfilling certain needs of the Spirit as Art and Science are said to fulfil aesthetic needs and demands for Truth. But Hinduism permeates all life, individual and social, and in this sense it is more a religious culture than a religion. That is why we find in it numerous sects, various different and often opposite ways of thought, for "all life and thought are in the end a means of progress towards self-realisation and God-realisation". In this sense, the aim of Hinduism repeats that of evolutionary nature—to divinise human life, in all its forms and activities. It recognises itself as being a link between humanity and spirituality.

For indeed, the highest spirituality is not bound by creed or dogma, it can bear no limitations but moves freely on the heights. But in order to arrive there man needs "some scaffolding of dogma, worship, image...on which he can stand while he builds up in him the temple of the Spirit. Only when the temple is completed can the supports be removed, the scaffolding disappear. The religious culture which now goes by the name of Hinduism not only fulfilled this purpose, but unlike certain other credal religions, it knew its purpose. It gave itself no name because it set itself no sectarian limits, it claimed no universal adhesion, asserted no sole infallible dogma, set up no single narrow path or gate of salvation; it was less a creed or cult than a continuous enlarging tradition of the Godward endeavour of the human spirit. An immense many-sided and many-staged provision for a spiritual self-building and self-finding, it had some right to speak of itself by the only name it knew, the eternal religion, *Sanatana dharma*".¹ Hence the freedom that is allowed to Sannyasis, liberated from all bondages and attachments and credos, to range in the Spirit.

And yet all the different trends should meet somewhere, there has to be some unifying cohesive factor, otherwise Hinduism cannot exist, it will only be an amalgam of various sects. Indeed Indian religion enunciates four basic necessities. First, it establishes a Reality, supreme, eternal and transcendent, which governs all existence. Secondly, it stresses the need for the individual to prepare himself in order to expe-

¹ All the quotations in the article are from Sri Aurobindo's *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, Part III, Chapters I and II, pp. 137-175.

rience this Reality. To achieve that, therefore, is laid down a well-founded and always-enlarging way of knowledge and spiritual or religious discipline. The human being can approach the Supreme because he has within him a spark of the divinity by which he can commune or unite with the Eternal, for the Eternal has manifested himself in the world and he inheres in all Existence. This he may do, through various paths. "Follow this great spiritual aim by one of the thousand paths recognised in India and you are at the core of the religion." One of its basic ideas is "the manifold way of man's approach to the Eternal and Infinite....For in each finite we can discover and through all things as his forms and symbols we can approach the Infinite; all cosmic powers are manifestations, all forces are forces of the One....The One Godhead manifests himself in the form of his qualities in various names and godheads. The God of divine Love of the Vaishnava, the God of divine power of the Shakta appear as two different godheads; but in truth they are the one infinite Deity in different figures".

Also each individual seeks the Eternal in his own way—"Man approaches God at first according to his psychological nature and his capacity for deeper experience, *svabhāva*, *adhikāra*. The level of Truth, the plane of consciousness he can reach is determined by the inner evolutionary stage."

Lastly, for those who do not have the *adhikāra* or have not reached a sufficiently developed evolutionary stage, Hinduism provides a code of personal and social discipline of mental, moral and vital development. This last contribution is characteristic of Hinduism, we do not find its parallel in any other religion. Indian religion "has left out no part of life as a thing secular and foreign to religious and spiritual life". But, though down the ages it has impregnated Indian life, essentially it remains a spiritual, not a social, discipline.

It is because it is a conscious force that Hinduism has been able to continue, living and active, for thousands of years. It has, at its basis, kept up the fundamental rule of all cosmic creation and evolution—Unity in Diversity. Supple and plastic, it has yet never lost its order and degenerated into chaos.

Since the very earliest Vedic times, it has sought to fulfil its aims. In the Vedas we are told that we are here, on earth, to conquer Death and Darkness and to attain Immortality. This we can achieve by following the Law (*ṛtam*). The Vedas speak of the Supreme behind the universe who is characterised as Satyam, Ritam, Brihat—the Truth, the Right and the Vast. He is the One of whom the learned speak. But the common man of those times was physical, close to the soil. To him were not revealed these secrets, for he would only distort them. The Vedic religion catered to the physical needs of the common man by giving him certain injunctions and actions (sacrifices) which would teach him a standard of conduct. But these very injunctions were, for the initiates, profound symbols revealing the Divine. This early religion had two facets, an esoteric or hidden one, and an exoteric one meant for the layman.

In the Upanishadic age, men were no longer so physical-minded; hence the Vedic ritual did not seem all-in-all and completely revealing of the Divine to them. On the

other hand, they had also lost the inner esoteric significance behind the ritual. The Mysteries were forgotten, but the spiritual urge to seek and find the Supreme was very strong. And unlike as in other ancient cultures, where the age of the Mysteries was followed by stark intellectualisation, in India there now appeared the Age of Intuition and of direct experience. Through meditation and sadhana, the Sages of the Upanishadic age recovered the lost meanings of the Vedas. They now re-enunciated them, not through symbols but in clear precise language. Thus the esoteric meaning was now for all to know and feel, and religion became broad-based.

The next age is the Purano-Tantric age, when the Spirit descended into the vital imagination of man. It contains myths and legends which, though often fantastic, are gigantic in conception. Among the new ideas which the Puranas introduced are those of the Trinity and of the Avatar, the descent of whom is described as an evolutionary process. Each age has the Avatar that is best suited to its development.

This was also the age of the Sutras, of the classification of all human activities and knowledge into Shastras—for each activity must lead to a higher God-activity. That is how, through the remarkable idea of Samskaras, Hinduism permeated, regulated and uplifted the whole of life. Each human being, in all his stages and activities, has certain Samskaras to fulfil by which he will be uplifted.

In the Tantras, we already find a deviation from the Vedas. The Tantras are called Agamas, as opposed to the Nigamas or Vedas. The Tantras assert that Prakriti or Shakti is not to be rejected, if one wants to attain to the Supreme. According to the Vedic philosophies, it is by withdrawal from Prakriti that one reaches the Ishwara. But Tantra says that Shakti alone can lead one to Shiva. Shiva is immutable, inactive. Shakti is the indispensable intermediary realisation. Tantric thought gives us many injunctions about bodily and vital activities by which this can be gained. This was a necessary development, for in that age the Spirit was descending into the lower parts of man's being.

The Tantric system can be divided into two sections—the Dakshina Marga or the way of Knowledge, the Vama Marga or the way of Ananda. Knowledge and Ananda are the two characteristics of Shakti. But later the Vama Marga fell into disrepute because the spiritual Ananda degenerated into lower vital enjoyment. Yet it was a bold experiment and a necessary one, although it seems to have ended in temporary failure.

Then followed the development of the Bhakti schools of Vaishnavism and Shaivism, for now the need for the approach of the heart, through love and adoration, was felt. Both Vaishnavism and Shaivism are very old cults; Shiva and Vishnu are mentioned in the Vedas, but they come into prominence only in Puranic times. Many ecstatic saints now appear, specially the Vaishnava saints of the South called the Alvars. The Alvars seek to refute Shankara's theory of Adwaita, for to them God is not the only reality—the Soul and Prakriti too are separate realities. In Ramanuja's Vishishtadwaita, Soul and Prakriti are separate aspects of God; in Madhwa and the later Vaishnavas, Soul and God and Prakriti are separate entities,

Both Vaishnavas and Shaivas find their self-fulfilment in adoration and surrender to the Lord.

During the middle ages, we find a kind of stagnation in the religious and cultural life. The forms and rituals fossilised, became rigid and fixed. Many saints appeared, which shows that the spirit was still active, but there was a general decline in the culture.

In the middle of the 18th century, when the stagnation was at its lowest, Raja Rammohan Roy appeared on the scene. He was a social reformer and sought to reform Society by eradicating many evils of the social and religious life which had set in down the ages. He established the Brahmo Samaj. He discarded idol worship and based his new sect on Brahmanism and not on the Vedas. Later, Keshabchandra Sen allowed many tenets of Islam and Christianity into the Brahmo fold. Almost parallel with the Brahmo Samaj—which has by now almost faded out—rose the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Movement in India.

The Arya Samaj was started by Dayanand Saraswati. It was not, like the Brahmo Samaj, a result of the Western impact. It was a spiritual movement based on the Vedas. But because it rejected the Gita and the Puranas it did not become popular except among the educated and rational few.

The Theosophical Movement began with psychical research and occultism. Though it is often unsatisfying in its conclusions, it is still a living force—but it failed to reawake the Soul of India or to synthesise all truths.

This synthesis was achieved by Sri Ramakrishna, who accepted the truths of all paths and all religions though his follower, Swami Vivekananda, was an Advaitin. But the latter spread Indian religious thought to the west—so that he awakened a national pride in our culture. He also demanded social upliftment, in order that his countrymen might become self-conscious beings and not live like animals. After him, though Gandhi came and gave an ethical tone to the national life, his was rather a retrogressive movement, for he advocated a return to the past. India has to march forward, and though she may utilise all the past realisations, she cannot fully attain the aim enunciated by the Vedic Rishis except by following the grand synthesis of the Sadhana of Sri Aurobindo. His is the Integral Yoga that effectuates the total divinisation of human life and establishes the true Kingdom of God on Earth—and thus fulfils the primal aim of Hinduism.

BERNARD SHAW ON HINDUISM

FROM A LETTER TO ENSOR WALTERS

“I AM writing this in the Gulf of Siam after inspecting a remarkable collection of religions in Egypt and India. The apparent multiplicity of Gods is bewildering at the first glance; but you soon discover that they are all the same God in different aspects and functions and even sexes. There is always one uttermost God who defies personification. This makes Hinduism the most tolerant religion in the world, because its one transcendent God includes all possible Gods, from elephant Gods, bird Gods and snake Gods right up to the great Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, which makes room for the Virgin Mary and modern Feminism by making Shiva a woman as well as a man. Christ is there as Krishna, who might also be Dionysos. In fact Hinduism is so elastic and so subtle that the profoundest Methodist and the crudest idolater are equally at home in it” (Feb. 1933).

YOGA AND LIFE

IV

STAGES OF HARMONY

WE said in the words of Sri Aurobindo, “All problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony.” If we study history minutely, we shall find that the deeper cause behind all historical events has been Nature’s secret urge for harmony and unity. The measure of stability and welfare, the measure of peace, the development of culture and science and general all-round progress in human relations and activities on happier and higher levels depended on the measure of harmony and mutual understanding between individuals and societies.

There are three principal aspects of the evolutionary process of Nature’s growth into, or push for, harmony and unity: harmony evolved, harmony being evolved and harmony yet to be evolved.

In Darwin’s theory of evolution, it is the past achievement in harmony that is important. It is the past which determines the future evolutionary process. In the West, the habit is to look to the past, to search for the invariable antecedent for the growth of future harmony and progress. If a personality has to be explained, one looks to the functions and behaviour of instincts which belong to the bodily life of man. A balance or harmony of the physical and nervous elements of his life becomes the

basis and the first means of any growth of higher faculties. The harmony that has been achieved belongs to this inferior level.

Now this basic harmony of bodily life has to be exceeded. Nature's next aim is the evolving of mental life and bringing about harmony between the physical, nervous and mental elements. Mind has to come out of the enmeshment of bodily life. This harmony can come if the mental being can lead life and body and not be led by them as in the animal. "The true human existence," says Sri Aurobindo, "only begins when intellectual mentality emerges out of the material and we begin more and more to live in the mind independent of the nervous and physical obsession and in the measure of that liberty are we able to accept rightly and rightly to use life of the body." Ouspensky views this evolution of greater and wider harmony in his own way. He says, "In looking at the vegetable and animal worlds we may think that in some immense and incomprehensible laboratory of Nature there are produced one after another a series of experiments.... Gradually we begin to see a system and a definite direction in the Great Laboratory.... The task of the Laboratory is to create a 'form' evolving by itself, that is, on the condition of help and support, but with its own forces. This evolving form is man." Here harmony achieved is at the vegetable and animal level and harmony being achieved is at the human level for creating a 'form' evolving by itself, consciously. He adds, "...in mankind such an evolution can only be conscious. It is only degeneration which can proceed unconsciously in man."

This conscious evolution at the human level is the conscious Yoga of man, experimenting and preparing for a more evolved, more conscious and more perfect 'form'. At this stage with the entry of a new spiritual element, a new psychic faculty, the next stage of evolution to be achieved will commence bringing full play of the conscious Yogic working.

Bergson says about the harmony achieved at the inferior level, "a very inferior organism is as well adapted to the conditions of existence, judged by its success", and asks, "why does life, which has succeeded in adapting itself, go on complicating itself more and more dangerously... why has it gone on? Why unless it be that there is an impulse driving it to take ever greater risks towards its goal of an ever higher and higher efficiency?"

Bergson's driving impulse, his "*élan vital*", is what we may call the inner urge, the life-push, the aspiration in Nature to achieve ever higher and higher harmony, and thereby more and more complicate, coordinate and integrate the new-evolving faculties which Nature makes to emerge in higher and higher types of organisms. His "efficiency" is the harmony which Nature seeks to create in the evolving life.

Both Bergson and Ouspensky hint at the "appearance of a new and higher type of man". This great purpose of evolutionary Nature, which is yet to be fulfilled, *i.e.* a higher harmony at the post-human or super-human level, is the promise of the future.

We cannot fail to observe that even where harmony at the mental level has been achieved, there is always a constant feeling of imperfection, some balance or

equilibrium is lacking. At this level, the harmony has not been attained to its perfection. It means Nature has still other involved faculties and elements in her which need to be evolved or which seek harmony at the physical level along with the mental faculties.

Bergson believes that intelligence being utilitarian in its outlook concerns itself with immediate rather than with more ultimate aims. A faculty capable of considering the interests of others, he says, must intervene to counteract the influence of intelligence. This faculty, according to him, is intuition which is translated in men more or less in terms of their feeling for spiritual values. We can only understand the evolution of life, he says, "if we view it as seeking for something beyond its reach, something to which the great mystic attains".

Genius and intuition and inspiration are rare phenomena and have not yet been stabilised in life. We have inspiration from some unknown and hidden sources, we have flashes of intuition but they have not yet become stabilised as abiding and permanent lights to illumine, elevate and guide our hazy changing life. They visit a few chosen individuals, and even in them they are not always all-sure. Yet they are indications of a new manifestation of Nature and a promise of new faculties evolving and stabilising themselves in full harmony with the bodily life.

A true poet writes from inspiration and he says that his best moments are moments of inspiration and, without them, whatever the amount of concentration he may exercise, he never succeeds in his writings to the same extent as when he is inspired. This shows that this faculty is not normal to man. It comes when it likes and, when it does not come, one cannot do anything. Yet if a few persons are capable of having it, if they are able to contain and express it effectively, other individuals too can grow and manifest it in themselves. Human nature being alike, inspiration can become a dynamic force for a fuller and more perfect life.

Proper investigation will also reveal to us the various degrees of inspiration. So if we can tap their source and the psychological methods of their working, expression, manifestation or cultivation, and create proper conditions for the needed harmony at the ordinary human level as much as possible without stifling or diluting their power and dynamism, we can be sure that a greater and more enlightened future is in store for man, and its advent can be quickened by a conscious effort on his part, which we term Yoga.

And this adventure of Yoga is particularly in the richer and higher ranges of faculties, in the spheres of deeper, wider and more luminous consciousness. These may yet open us into greater and deeper mysteries of the Unknown, the Beyond, and reveal to us the secret of All-Existence and Knowledge, All-Delight and Love, All-Will and Power—divine counterparts of the limited faculties of human knowing, feeling and willing.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE RAMGARH VALLEY

ITS NATURAL GIFTS AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS

RAMGARH seems to have been a favourite name in our history, as we hear of many Ramgarhs in different parts of the country. There is a Ramgarh on the Kashmir border, one in Bihar, where the Congress once met, but this is on the Kumaon hills in Naini Tal district unique for its natural gifts and many cultural associations. The valley of Ramgarh is a wide open space with a stream flowing in the middle, rich in agricultural and horticultural products and enjoying a mild hill climate in summer as well as in winter. All around it there are hills, high and low, covered with miles and miles of fruit orchards. In spring, the pink and white flowers of peaches, apples, pears and apricots stretching limitlessly are a veritable feast for the eyes and a gladness for the soul. And during the fruit season the trees laden with richly coloured fruit are a marvel of a sight which one does not tire of.

The cultural associations of this area too are most interesting. The highest peak there is named after Gagar Rishi and a small temple stands conspicuously to commemorate him. Rabindranath Tagore too had taken a fancy to this area and wished at one time to locate his Vishwabharati there. Pt. Motilal Nehru once came and stayed there to recoup his health. In 1920, Shri Narayan Swami out of love for solitude and tapasya chose a spot on the bank of the stream in the valley for his Ashram. He lived long there, built up a good personal library and enjoyed his living enormously. His impact on the people around him was very profound indeed. They universally admired him for his nobility, dignity and learning. Out of attraction for his association many more people were drawn to the valley, who built their cottages for summer living on the hills.

In appreciation of the personality and beneficent help of Swamiji the people resolved to create an educational institution, which now stands there as Shri Narayan Swami Inter College. During the last twenty years of its existence, it has afforded marvellous educational facilities and produced young men, some of whom have risen high in life and even rendered distinguished public service in the wider sphere of the country.

The institution through its association with Shri Narayan Swami has had from the very beginning an idealism of its own. It aimed at an emphasis on the moral and the religious side of personality. Later when Birla Education Trust became associated with it, the institution undertook to develop an orchard of its own and afford to the students facilities of a direct contact with land and nature and training in agriculture, fruit and flower cultivation and bee-keeping.

The institution now seeks a further extension inasmuch as from the next academic year, beginning in May 1964, it proposes to have a residential school for the

middle class, expenses not exceeding Rs. 75 a month, and thereby afford to Delhi parents, in particular, the opportunity to have their boys grow up and receive education in a healthy rural area on the hills.

A middle class public school there will transform the life in the valley and also serve as a boon to the Delhi parents of modest means.

The Ramgarh Valley and the wider area around have been the object of exceptional interest and attention and have shown during the last half a century a wonderful development. It is interesting that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother too felt favourably inclined towards the valley and five years ago a Himalayan Centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, was started. This Centre called Tapogiri, seeks to bring and add to the place a spiritual inspiration, characteristic of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo. Tapogiri collaborates with the authorities of the Narayan Swami institution in organising, as best it can, a truly integral education for the students and enriches the general social life of the area.

The valley also attracted the late Shri R.N. Muttoo, who edited his internationally known *The Indian Bee Journal* from there for twenty years or more. He has been a pioneer in India for scientific bee-keeping and will be remembered as such for long. And the Ramgarh valley will share this distinction with him.

But, above all, Ramgarh is Himalayan Tapobhumi, consecrated to Shiva, the Lord of Tapas, the spiritual power. How wonderful will it be if the valley becomes a cradle of a new light and learning and power, rich with the deepest traditions of yore and equipped with the efficiencies of modern times!

INDRA SEN

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER

No. 5.

May

1. It was certainly anticipated, if not actually expected, that there would be some, several or numerous enquiries and questions put to this department. They have been numerous and varied. Those that could be have been dealt with personally and those that were beyond our resources we have been able to direct to other founts of knowledge and reference. There are a few which may be published in this Newsletter.

a) *What is meant by 'streamed classes'?*

In education, the term means : the division of a class of children grouped according to their abilities and intelligence—*i.e.* bright boys and girls in the A stream.

b) *What is, in England, 'the Comprehensive School' ?*

It is a grammar school that has been amalgamated with a technical school. It enables students to enter courses that would not be available to them if they had to make a firm commitment at the age of eleven if they failed their eleven-plus exam.

c) *What practical value has the Department of Research to the Centre of Education ?*

The value this department has for our Centre of Education is at least five-fold:

- (i) It acts as a central information bureau.
- (ii) It is a link between teachers in other countries and ourselves.
- (iii) It is a depository for the experiences of other teachers dealing with the same subject in different ways.
- (iv) It acts as a refresher to teachers seeking to improve their teaching by widening their horizon of thinking.

(v) It is an instrument with which we can search for New Ways, New Methods, New Ideas that may help us to 'fight the battle of the future against the past that seeks to endure; so that the New Things may manifest and we be ready to receive them'.

d) *What is the object of the Department of Educational Research ?*

To assure an extensive interchange of ideas, information and documentation by which teachers and students may be stimulated to benefit from the experience of others.

e) *What is the most outstanding difference between the old and the new methods of teaching ?*

Today, the emphasis is on a student-activated class rather than a teacher-dominated class.

2. THE NEW ALPHABET

'tw bee, or not tw bee : that iz the kwestion.'

Britain's education Minister Sir Edward Boyle pronounced that the new Initial Teaching Alphabet is a remarkable success.

Developed by Sir James Pitman, grandson of shorthand's Sir Isaac, the I.T.A. aims to overcome the disparity between the sounds that children know in their heads and the symbols they see on the page.

The 40-odd phonemes (distinct sound units) of English are spelled in 2,000 different ways, and the letters vary bafflingly in their capital, lower case, printed and handwritten forms. I.T.A. erases inconsistencies by linking specific sounds to specific symbols. All the lower case alphabet has 44 characters—24 of the existing 26 Roman letters (no q and x), plus 20 new ones that are mostly typographically linked diagraphs such as *th* and *ch* written together.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT