

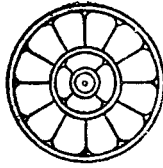
MOTHER INDIA

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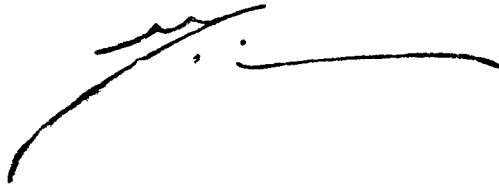


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 7

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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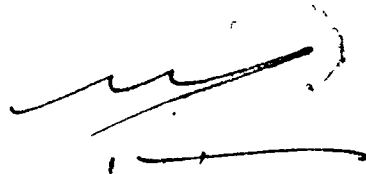
OUR MAP OF INDIA

THE MOTHER ANSWERS A QUESTION

*La carte a été faite après
la partition.*

*C'est la carte de l'Inde
véritable en oépit de toutes
les apparences fugitives, et
cela restera toujours la
carte de l'Inde véritable
quoique les gens puissent
en penser.*

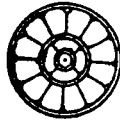
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The map was made after the partition.

It is the map of the true India in spite of all passing appearances—and this will always remain the map of the true India, no matter what people may think of it.

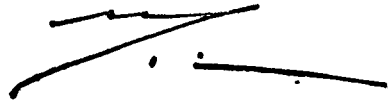
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Indeed, the good-will hidden in the things reveals itself everywhere to that one who carries good-will in his consciousness.

This is a constructive way of feeling which leads straight to the Future.



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. Mamilal, 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 15, 1939

SOMEBODY said that Russia had been threatened with expulsion from the League of Nations.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, Uruguay gave the threat. Now Paraguay should bring in a resolution to expel England and France. I wonder why the League exists at all.

P : Herbert was very enthusiastic about the League.

SRI AUROBINDO : Naturally. He was directly affected by the League and we were indirectly affected through him because he translated our books. *(Laughter)*

P : He said the League had done a lot of good work : it has established an International Labour Department.

SRI AUROBINDO : Labouring over nothing !

P : It has gathered a good deal of information.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then it may be called, instead of the League of Nations, the League of Informations.

EVENING

As usual, with a strong military step, P entered and took a few deep breaths, looking at Sri Aurobindo. C and N were stealing a smile at each other over him when suddenly C burst out laughing and P looked at him. Sri Aurobindo also looked and, raising his right hand, made a gesture as if to say, "Don't know what to make of it all."

P : My presence seems to act as a catalytic agent without my knowledge.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is how the subliminal self acts—without its knowledge.

Then Sri Aurobindo started taking his little walk in the room. When the walk was finished, P took up the thread of a past conversation.

P : Between Hegel and Kant, poor N's question was lost.

SRI AUROBINDO : What was it ?

P : N says that, just like reasonings, experiences also differ and come to different conclusions. How then can experience be a criterion any more than reason ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Experience is not a criterion. It is a means of arriving at the Trth. But experience is one thing and its expression is another. You are again putting reason up as the true judge over experience which is above reason. When people differ over experience they differ in laying the stress or in mental preference for this or that side of the experience. It doesn't mean that experience itself is invalid. It is only when you try to put it in mental language that the differences arise, because such language is too poor to express it. As soon as you bring in mental terms, you limit it.

Truth is infinite and there are innumerable sides to it. Each conclusion of reason expresses something of that Infinite. Only when reason says that it contains the whole truth in a conclusion it is wrong. If you find that experiences also differ, you have to go on adding experience after experience till you come to the reconciling experience in which all others find their places.

When you want to describe a spiritual experience, you are obliged to use mental terms which are quite inadequate. That is why the Vedantins say that mind and speech can never express the Truth. Still you can manage to express something somehow as long as you have not gone beyond the level of the Overmind. When you enter the Supermind, then... (*Sri Aurobindo began to shake his head, and resumed after a pause*)... it is extremely difficult. And if you go still further towards the Absolute, it is almost impossible.

Reason takes up one standpoint and declares the others to be false. For instance, if it speaks of the Truth as impersonal, the Truth for it is only impersonal and can never be personal; or *vice versa*. Really, both the personal and the impersonal are true; wherever there is the personal there is also the impersonal, and this holds too the other way round. When you transcend both you arrive at the Absolute.

S : Of which the two are aspects.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but it doesn't mean that they are less true for being aspects or that the Absolute excludes them. When you throw aside reason you reach the all-including Absolute.

One reasoner looks at a thing in one aspect and declares that this alone is right, another in some other aspect and swears by that. Reason to be really reasonable must have various points of view. It can't be right if its accounts don't differ. As I said, there are various sides in Reality. If the descriptions of the several countries of the world were the same, they wouldn't be true.

S : How ?

P : If you describe Switzerland and the U.S.A. in the same manner, how would you be correct ?

SRI AUROBINDO : And yet the earth is one and mankind is one !

S : It is good to have all the experiences.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but if you can't have all, it is enough to have one—because each is an approach and can lead to the Absolute.

After this, P brought up the subject of the quotations for Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine*, Vol. II, which he had been searching for.

P : About the quotation for the chapter, "Knowledge by Identity", there is a sloka which says, "One must become like an arrow piercing its mark." I wonder if that will suit.

SRI AUROBINDO : It won't quite fit, because knowledge by identity is more than that. When they speak of knowledge by identity the Upanishads mean knowledge of the Self which is all, but that is one part of such knowledge. If you can't find a quotation here, perhaps there may be something for direct knowledge or knowledge by direct awareness. You may try and see if by some luck you find any.

P : In Raja Yoga, they speak of direct knowledge by *samayama* which means perhaps concentration.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is a different thing. That comes by putting the pressure of consciousness on an object. But direct knowledge may not require concentration on one's part. The consciousness simply comes into contact with a thing and knows about it.

P : Raja Yoga speaks of siddh.s, special powers, like control over Matter, Knowledge of Suryaloka (Sun-world) and Chandraloka (Moon-world), conquest of death, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : Knowledge of Suryaloka and Chandraloka, yes, but conquest of death is a very different matter. About siddhis, it is said that they flow into one when one enters a certain state of consciousness.

NIRODBARAN

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

THE PSYCHIC BEING AND ITS ACTION

Q : Shouldn't one offer to the Mother not only good experiences and true knowledge but also all the ordinary movements of ignorance? For how else will one's lower nature be transformed?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is true that with the psychic action these things are more easily overcome. Also the ignorance etc. must be surrendered, *i.e.*, all attachment to them, justification or acquiescent habitual response must be given up. 3-1-1936

Q : We cannot be satisfied with these experiences of infinite and eternal seas of Peace, Silence, Shanti. They are impersonal. We want something personal and direct—like the Mother's presence, love, joy and beauty.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is one part of the psychic experience—the other is a complete self-giving, absence of demand, a prominence of the psychic being by which all that is false, wrong, egoistic, contrary to the Divine Truth, Divine Will, Divine Purity and Light is shown, falls away, cannot prevail in the nature. With all that the increase of the psychic qualities, gratitude, obedience, unselfishness, fidelity to the true perception, true impulse etc. that comes from the Mother or leads to the Mother. When this side grows, then the other, the Presence, Love, Joy, Beauty can develop and be permanently there. 14-1-1936

The soul's love and joy come from within from the psychic being. What comes from above is the Ananda of the higher consciousness. 16-1-1936

Q : Is it not true that our higher experiences or realisations bear a psychic stamp only when we materialise them?

SRI AUROBINDO : Right. 2-3-1936

Between psychicism and spiritualisation there is a difference. The spiritual is the change that descends from above, the psychic is the change that comes from within by the psychic dominating the mind, vital and physical. 29-1-1936

Q : Here is an experience during the general evening meditation yesterday. There was a concentration above the head. The Agni of the higher being was felt coming down and uniting itself with the fire of the psychic being. Down here the unity was experienced deep in the heart centre. What could be the aim of such an identification of the two fires? I have never yet heard of the conjunction of these fires.

SRI AUROBINDO : If the development of a higher consciousness did not bring things that were not before heard of by the mind, it would not be good for much. The unification of the psychic and the higher consciousness forces and activities is indispensable for the sadhana at one time or another. 14-5-1936

...Probably there must be something either in the physical mental (throat), the emotional vital that obstructs the descent. That may be the reason of the union of the upper Agni and the psychic fire and the push in the psychic centre—something is trying to remove the difficulty. 15-5-1936

Q : Under the present difficulties, how is the promise of psychicisation of the nature before the fifteenth of August going to be fulfilled ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Why a "promise" ? The nature has to be psychicised, but dates are not binding. 15-6-1936

Q : Has not the higher being taken a resolution to complete the psychicisation before the fifteenth of August ? If dates do not bind it what meaning will remain in the resolution ?

SRI AUROBINDO : A resolution means the will to try to get a thing done by the given time. It is not a binding "promise" that the thing will be done by that time. Even if it is not, the endeavour will have to continue, just as if no date had been fixed. 16-6-1936

Q : When one has become conscious of one's inner being and lives there, even then how is it one finds it so difficult to come into direct contact with one's psychic being ? They say the psychic is just behind the inner being ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The psychic is behind the veil and deep inside. 16-6-1936

From NAGIN DOSHI

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PART TWO : THE CONQUEST OF SLEEP

A darkness stooping on the heaven-bird's wings
Sealed in her senses from external sight
And opened the stupendous depths of sleep.

(*Savitri*, Book IV, Canto III, p. 427)

Out of her Matter's stupor, her mind's dreams,
She woke, she looked upon God's unveiled face.

(*Ibid.*, Book VI, Canto I, p. 474)

I. THE PROBLEM OF SLEEP

SLEEP, in the sense of an intermittent condition of apparent inanimation and suspense of all surface activity, appears to be a concomitant of all embodied life. For a human being, on an average, almost a third of his life's total duration is caught up in the inert dormancy of the body. Hence it is but proper and natural that the phenomenon of sleep should engage our careful scrutiny.

For man, sleep may be defined as the periodic state of more or less complete unconsciousness, during which all voluntary activity ceases and the functioning of the senses and the cerebrum or brain proper appears to be *naturally* and *temporarily* suspended.

The conditions generally recognized to be conducive to the onset of sleep are :

(1) the diminution of afferent nervous stimuli (i.e., the impulses entering the central nervous system, CNS); and

(2) fatigue, because of its depressing effect on the power of the CNS to respond to stimuli.

Sleep and the inwardisation of consciousness.—The question of sleep becomes all the more insistent in the case of sadhaks striving for a progressive inwardisation of consciousness. For, in general, man's mind is turned outwards, active only or mainly on and from the surface (*vikṣipta*); the whole gaze of his consciousness is externally orientated (*vahirāvṛttacakṣuḥ*). And the habitual trend of the physical mind whenever it gets divorced from the immediate contact with physical things is to fall into the torpor of sleep. For, this is the only type of inner consciousness to which it is ordinarily accustomed.

Now, there cannot be any spiritual life unless and until the individual being goes inward, lives within and from within, and transfers the immediate source of his dynamic becoming from out inward. "In men, says the Upanishad, the Self-Existent has cut the doors of consciousness outward, but a few turn the eye inward and it is these who see and know the Spirit and develop the spiritual being."¹

Thus, in the course of his sadhana, almost as an immediate necessity, when the aspirant seeks to reverse the gear, turn his gaze inward (*antarāvṛtta-caṅkuḥ*), enter into himself and live within, the mind, by the sheer force of its habit, takes it as a pressure to fall into slumber (*liyate*). Here lies the root-cause of the overwhelming sense of sleepiness, and often of an actual intervention of physical sleep, bogging the attempts at meditation in the case of spiritual novices who have not yet learnt how to get rid of this prejudicial habit of the mind and accustom it to a state of "ingathered wakefulness in which, though immersed in itself, it exercises all its powers."²

Sleep and the subconscious plunge.—A far more encompassing and devastatingly injurious after-effect of sleep, from the point of view of the progress of sadhana, is the general falling down of consciousness to a lower level, during the period of the body's sleep. It is due to its subconscious foundation that sleep brings about this lowering of consciousness. And this is so on the physiological plane and much more so on the psycho-spiritual plane.

The change in the activity of the nervous system during sleep manifests itself in the abolition, or at least depression, of what has been termed *critical reactivity* to external events. "In the waking state the impulses coming from the different sense organs to certain areas of the cerebral cortex are analyzed in the light of the individual's previous experience, and appropriate responses (which include movement as well as refraining from overt muscular activity) are elaborated or integrated in other cortical areas. Identical afferent impulses from sense organs will not elicit the same response in different persons. This individuality of reaction is lost during sleep and is replaced by stereotyped predictable reflexes from the lower centres of the nervous system."³

Hence it has been said : "Un homme qui dort est un homme privé de ses deux hémisphères, c'est un animal."

From the occult-spiritual point of view, it is to a state of dark inertia, heavy and unremembering, that one retires in the course of one's physical sleep whenever "one goes deeply and crassly into the subconscious; this subterranean plunge is very undesirable, obscuring, lowering, often fatiguing rather than restful."⁴

This type of heavy subconscious sleep is most damaging for the simple reason that it engulfs and washes away, so to say, almost all the results of the previous day's effort. "Thus is destroyed in a few hours of the night the fruit of many efforts made by our conscious thought during the day. This is one of the principal causes of the

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 911.

² *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 595.

³ N. Kleitman, "Sleep" in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, p. 792.

⁴ *On Yoga*, Part Two, tome two, p. 577.

resistance which our will to progress often encounters in ourselves, of difficulties which at times appear insurmountable and which we are unable to explain, so integral does our goodwill seem to us.”¹

The Mother Herself has given the explanation of this strange and depressing phenomenon associated with sleep. Thus, in the *Conversations of the Mother* we read :

“Some are very anxious to perfect themselves and make a great effort during the day. They go to sleep and, when they rise the next day, they find no trace of the gains of their previous day’s effort; they have to go over the same ground once again. This means that the effort and whatever achievement there was belonged to the more superficial or wakeful parts of the being, but there were deeper and dormant parts that were not touched. *In sleep you fell into the grip of these unconscious regions and they opened and swallowed all that you had laboriously built up in your conscious hours.*”² (Italics ours)

Thus do we see that the sadhak has somehow to prevent this nightly fall into the clutches of obscure subconscient and inconscient movements and finally to bring in the transforming light and consciousness of the spirit even into the folds of these nether regions of his being. A proper knowledge and mastery of the phenomenon of sleep thus becomes essential for the progress and fulfilment of the spiritual pursuit, and especially so for our sadhana where the goal envisaged is a total transformation of nature leading to the establishment of a divinely awake dynamic existence.

Let us then start with the inquiry how sleep is actually brought about, what is the compulsion behind its onset and what is its *raison d’être*.

Theories of sleep.—Many a hypothesis has been put forward by the biological scientists to account for the state of sleep in its purely phenomenal aspect. But it is well to remember that no proposed theory of sleep as regards its immediate causation has met with universal acceptance, since none has withstood the rigorous exigences of experimental verification. As Kenneth Walker has so bluntly stated : “Although there may be many theories, we are still uncertain as to the real nature and cause of sleep...it is better to confess that we do not understand the mechanism of sleep.”³

However, theories partial, general, and complete, have been suggested from time to time. *Partial theories* seek to explain the ‘how’ of sleep, *general theories* deal with the ‘why’ of the phenomenon without very much attention paid to the mode of its onset, while *complete theories* try to solve both the questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’.

Some of the suggested hypotheses attribute sleep to a lessened flow of blood through the brain, others to the production of certain chemical changes in the body system; according to a few others, sleep comes about as a result of the cessation of the stream of afferent impulses which reach the brain from the outside world. In outline, some of the principal theories of sleep may be stated as follows :

Neural theories.—The neural theory belongs to the category of what may be

¹ The Mother, *Words of Long Ago*, p. 35.

² P. 26.

³ Kenneth Walker, *Human Physiology*, pp 124-125.

termed *biophysical theories* of sleep; for, it postulates a physical break, during the state of sleep, in the chains of nerve cells (or neurons) of the higher centres of the brain. According to this theory, it is the mutual retraction of neighbouring dendrons that is at the basis of physical slumber.

The dendron is the shorter branch given off from the end of a nerve cell. Some cells have several dendrons and these many-branched dendritic 'processes' serve to form physical connections with the dendrons of the neighbouring cells, thus providing uninterrupted pathways along which travel afferent nerve impulses, from neuron to neuron, to reach the cortical cells of the brain. This is what is called the *waking state*.

The neural theory of sleep is based on the assumption that these dendritic 'processes' are contractile in their physical constitution and get occasionally retracted for some reason or other. This retraction and consequent separation of the dendrons of neighbouring neurons constitutes a mechanical break in the pathways of the inflowing nerve impulses, thus isolating the cortical cells from external stimuli. All mental processes are thus brought to rest and there sets in the unconsciousness of sleep.

Although ingenious in appearance, this theory cannot however be supported by any incontrovertible observational evidence. For, firstly, it is still an open question whether there exists actual continuity, or only contact, between the dendrons of neighbouring cells; secondly, no dendritic contraction has till this date been histologically demonstrated.

Theories such as *inhibitory theories* and *de-afferentation theories* that are based on the implied assumption that it is the proper functioning of the cerebral cortex that is somehow instrumental in bringing about sleep, have proved to be equally inadequate, because they fail to explain the fact that "decorticated animals and new-born infants (whose cerebral cortex is not yet functioning) can sleep."¹

Biochemical theories.—It has been observed that during the body's sleep as compared with its period of wakefulness, the composition of the blood changes, the metabolic processes in the tissues are modified and possibly there occurs some variation in the activity of the glands of internal secretion.

Humoral and chemical theories stem from the assumption that, during the waking hours because of continued body metabolism, either there are produced some specific toxic substances inhibitory to the irritability in the nerve cells or on the contrary, certain specific chemicals necessary for the maintenance of the waking state undergo transformations and get exhausted. In either case the unconsciousness of sleep ensues, and it is in this period of sleep that the toxic substances are removed from the system or, in the alternative, the helpful products are synthesized and replenished.

However, a very evident *lacuna* in the biochemical theories is the fact that "alertness and efficiency of performance are not at their best at the time of getting up in

¹ N Kleitman, *Op cit*, p. 793.

the morning, nor at their worst at bedtime at night"¹, a result contrary to what we should naturally expect if these theories were all-sufficient by themselves.

Anaemia theories.—This type of theories attributes the periodic onset of sleep to the rhythmical loss of tone in the vasomotor centre in the medulla of the brain, caused by the fatigue due to its continued activity during waking hours. The action of this fatigued centre on blood pressure becomes ultimately insufficient to maintain an adequate supply of blood through the brain, thus resulting in the loss of consciousness.

Whatever may be the individual strong points of these different theories in the field, it is probable that several factors combine to produce the state of sleep. In any case, no proposed or yet to be advanced scientific theory of sleep can do more than account for the bare physiological 'how' of the phenomenon. In the very nature of its field of investigation and of the physiognomy of its formulation, it cannot but leave unexplained the essential 'why' of the state of sleep.

Especially disconcerting for the scientist is the strange spectacle of "the rapid onset, the almost *simultaneous involvement of all the conscious areas of the brain, irrespective of their state of fatigue* and the sudden return to consciousness of the whole brain."² Biological theories have therefore come round to the view that "*sleep is a positive act and not just a mere cessation of wakefulness : it is an instinct.*"³

Yes, sleep is a positive act, but not in the superficial sense of an instinct as some investigators would like us to believe. Sleep plays a much profounder role with a far-reaching implication and importance.

It is, in fact, in its essential nature an act of response to the demand and need of individual consciousness to go inward, even in the commonality of men devoid as yet of any spiritual awakening or of the systematically developed occult capacity to withdraw at will and in full awareness from the darkened half-light of the surface existence.

Also, it is worth remembering that the body's sleep cannot and does not necessarily mean a state of blank and total unconsciousness. It is rather of the nature of a transference of wakefulness from outside to inside.

But before we come to an elaborate discussion of these points drawn from the occult-spiritual view of the phenomenon of sleep, we must first make sure what we mean by sleep and wakefulness. The question may appear at first view too simple to require any elucidation. But is it really so easy to define the borderline between these two states of our existence, or even to offer an unequivocal criterion that will distinguish one from the other ? On the contrary, a little circumspection is apt to reveal the surprising fact that most men are in reality always asleep, partially if not in full. Let us explain ourselves.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 794.

² Vide *Everyman's Encyclopaedia*, Vol. II, pp. 383-'84.

³ N. Kleitman, *Op. cit.* p. 793.

“FREEWILL” IN ŚRĪ AUROBINDO’S VISION

ŚRĪ AUROBINDO’S views on the crucial choice that must be made of the way of living, if we are really to be fulfilled and the calls of existence truly to be answered, are clear to most of us : we sum them up as “the Integral Yoga.” But we are not equally familiar with his outlook on the power to choose. Wherever there is the activity of the will, there is the phenomenon of choosing—and yet there is no warrant in this for believing that the choice is freely made and not occasioned by subtle or unknown factors other than our will itself. How exactly does Sri Aurobindo stand with regard to the problem whether the human will is free ?

A couple of points which he puts before us may appear, in isolation and at face-value, to deny man freewill altogether. First, genuine freedom of will as of consciousness and delight and being can only be in a divine state, for only the Divine is genuinely free; and so long as we are in the unregenerate condition, which is subject to ego and desire and the drive of Nature, Prakriti, untransformed by the Luminous and the Eternal, we can never speak of authentic freewill. Second, once we postulate a divine Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence, we must conclude it to have originated and decreed whatever arises and acts in the universe which is its emanation. Is there then any room left in us for freewill as usually understood ? If no genuine freewill can be except in the freedom of the Divine, can we be thought free even to choose that freedom or stay away from it ? Again, if all things are originally decreed by the Divine, is not our feeling of being real does a delusion given us for some purpose of the Divine’s world-play ? This question is akin to the time-old one : if God, having all-knowledge, has foreseen everything, have we any power to deviate from His plan, and do we not have inevitably to carry out the details of it ? Many Christian theologians have attempted to solve the dilemma : some have said that God’s knowledge is in eternity and eternity is different from time and such knowledge does not clash with free action within a different order of being; others have said, “God cannot be a true creator if He cannot create creators.” No proposition of this type is in itself satisfactory, though each may have a faint inkling of some truth which is ill-caught and ill-expressed by it. To drive a wedge between God’s all-knowledge in eternity and man’s actions in time is to indulge in a quibble : if by eternity is meant a status in which past and present and future are not a sequence but an all-at-once, an endless total Now, then every “now” of our ordinary life as well as of all existence is not something fixed by God from the past, but would it cease to be actuated by Him in the very present ? God’s hold from the past is avoided; yet unless eternity and His all-knowledge are rendered otiose and meaningless, His hold at every present moment remains complete. In the face of this complete hold, the proposition about God being no creator unless creators are created by Him is no more than a brilliant epigram if understood in a Christian context. Christianity conceives the human soul as a crea-

ture brought into existence by God at some point of time and existing with some resemblance to Him yet with no essential identity with Him. Such a soul cannot be a creator in any Godlike sense and must be entirely subject to God's endless total Now underlying and actuating all its "nows" or else to His foreknowledge in the past determining its career.

The primary *sine qua non* to be recognised for making any freewill valid is : God who originates and decrees everything must somehow be not different from our own souls. Without identity with God no freewill anywhere can be. This identity would be the truth behind the epigram about creators : only, that epigram does not openly put man's soul on a par with the Divine, does not conceive it as an eternal aspect of the Divine—an eternal aspect possible because the Divine would Himself be conceived as simultaneously single and multiple, unitary yet many-poised, essentially one but numerically not bound by oneness. Does Sri Aurobindo grant the identity? It is a cardinal characteristic of his vision, bound up with God's being One-in-Many. Unless God is at the same time multiple and single, the manifold world would have no basis in God. We should have to rest with a fundamental dualism or resort to an illusionist theory of the manifold world. Even an illusion, however, must have at least a subjective existence and it can exist, be it ever so subjectively, in nothing save God if He is the Sole Reality, and to understand such an existing is as much a hurdle as to understand God's being One-in-Many. Besides, our evolution, difficult and beset with evil and suffering, out of the Inconscient, demands that God should be such : "to explain it," says Sri Aurobindo, "there must be two elements, a conscious assent by the soul to this manifestation and a reason in the All-Wisdom that makes the play significant and intelligible." The reason in the All-Wisdom is not here our direct concern, though we may mention that it is the extreme attractiveness of the strenuous joy lying in self-concealing and self-finding, the joy which would be at the utmost when the self-concealing is the awful plunge into the sheer Inconscient and the self-finding is through the absolute opposite of the Divine. What is of pertinence to the issue at stake is the soul's conscious assent. Can the assent be an explanatory feature and a meaningful fact under any circumstance other than that the soul is free to will ? And can the soul be free unless it is not created at a certain point of time to be sent willy-nilly on a world-journey through imperfection but is a particular eternal aspect of the Divine, a mode of His manyness, so that the Divine's fiat and the soul's assent are automatically the same thing ? Sri Aurobindo's vision, therefore, is not inimical to the primary *sine qua non* for freewill, and his pronouncement on the universe's utter dependence on God's decree is not deterministic when taken in combination with his full outlook.

But a second indispensable condition has to be satisfied for freewill's validity. It is obvious that we, as we are from day to day, cannot be described as souls that are eternal aspects of the Divine. We are too obscure and weak and perverted : we have a tremendously long way to go to realise ourselves as individualised divinities. Individualised divinities we may be in our secret recesses : our daily surface existence

is pretty far from Godliness. Hence the important query: does our souls’ assent from their God-poise to the strange cosmic play confer on what we do in even our ordinary moments a true freewill? All our actions are really of our souls carrying out the free decisions they have taken in their role of divine creators; but, on our surface, are we in any sense our own souls and do we share at least some of their freewill? No freewill can be in us if even as we are, if even in our state that is human and not ostensibly divine, we have no power, however small, to choose or not to choose. Freewill can have little relevance to us if our normal selves are wanting in some touch of identity with our souls that are essentially identical with God: to exercise any freewill our ordinary moments must be identical in some degree or other with God Himself! Does Sri Aurobindo take them to be thus identical? Let us glance at his scheme of our selfhood, our soulhood. Above all manifestation and evolution is the Jivatman, our highest self or soul, the individualised divinity, a supreme transcendental form in the play of the One as the Many. Presiding over manifestation and evolution, the Jivatman projects a representative into the cosmic process: this representative is the Antaratman, our inmost or deepest self or soul with all the potentialities of the Divine in it, and it passes from birth to birth, making for evolutionary purposes a bright nucleus round which the duller tones of mind-stuff, vitality-stuff and matter-stuff are gathered, infusing its own sweetness and light into them stage by stage and developing them to serve as its transparent mediums. Through experience in birth after birth the nucleus too grows and will at last be able to offer to the Supreme, whence the Antaratman came, a full manifested personality—many-sided though single, individualised yet embracing all cosmos and partaking of all Transcendence beyond both individuality and cosmicity in time. But, while dealing with mind-stuff, vitality-stuff and matter-stuff, this true psyche here below makes a projection of itself into them, a projection which gets steeped in their tones. Now, all existence has a biune reality—Purusha and Prakriti, conscious being and Nature. Wherever consciousness plays, this biune reality is present in one form or another, openly concordant or apparently divided. We have thus in the realm of evolutionary existence a mental being facing mental Nature, a vital being fronting vital Nature, a physical being opposite physical Nature: these beings are experienced according as our consciousness assumes a mental or vital or physical poise. And all of them are representative of the true psychic Purusha. When the multi-possible Purusha of us with its centre in the psychic being stands fully back, uninvolved in Prakriti and lord of it, though not united altogether with the Jivatman above, we have a clear realisation of some measure of authentic freewill, because that uninvolved and masterful Purusha, centrally psychic, is in rapport with the totally free Jivatman. But even when the projection of the psyche into mind, vitality and matter acts as something involved in Prakriti and is the stumbling surface being of us, the self as ordinarily cognised, then also it carries a touch of freedom with it; for that involvement, that enslavement, is freely made and there remains with us the power to withhold sanction to the current play of Nature in our members and to bring about a turn towards the Perfect, the Divine, the Un-enslaved. Precisely on

that power is based Sri Aurobindo's appeal to us to lead the life divine instead of the life human. If it is asked what becomes of Sri Aurobindo's assertion that only in a divine state there can be genuine freedom of will, the answer is : he evidently means by genuine freedom of will a quality of the full experience of being not what we apparently are at present but a luminous superhuman entity that is cosmic while being individual, and transcendental while being cosmic. Such freedom we cannot experience when we are unregenerate. In our present state, obscure and weak and perverted, we are divorced from the light and strength and beauty that we are on our ultimate heights : we have not the absolute freedom of our own hidden Infinite, nor have we the puissance and prerogative of our own psychic depths; still, a dim vestige we do possess of what we have put behind and beyond us and part of the vestige is an ability to give to Prakriti's fluctuations of inertia, vehemence and harmony a Yes or a No and gradually effect a passage from our human imperfection to a supernal splendour. No freewill other than this bare ability is ours, but it is freewill none the less. And at least a faint glimmer of freewill has indeed to be there in our surface existence if we are meant to be conscious co-operators in the work of rising from humanity to superhumanity and bringing into all our constituents what Sri Aurobindo terms the Supermind, the archetypal truth of all that we are in the evolutionary process. The free assenting highest soul of us, the Jivatman, that has been creative of the world-play from its eternal poise in the Divine, cannot but keep of its vast freewill a pin-point in conscious co-operators, in minds that discriminate and argue and weigh, in beings that have enough detachment from Nature to at least enable them to study and judge Nature. On that pin-point the whole of mental human life is fulcrummed for activity, and the conceding of it is implied in the Aurobindonian outlook which holds our intelligent will to be a ray, deformed though it may be, of the Gnosis, the Supermind.

Two *sine qua nons* we have tabulated and both we have discovered to be granted by Sri Aurobindo. But there is a third which emerges from one special question concerning the dynamics of the world-play. Has the world-play been decreed from the past by God and is it going on inexorably since that old decree of the Eternal or does eternity connote an all-at-once, an endless total Now ? If every "now" of ours were what our souls as portions of the Divine had foreseen and forefixed from the past and there were no endless total Now, there might be an experience of freewill by us since we would not be bound by any past other than that in which had acted our own divine selves with whom we would be having a pin-point contact. But an endless total Now can alone explain in entirety the sense we have of freewill in the "nows" of our common life, the sense that nothing of the past, even if the past be of our highest selves, wholly binds us and that at every moment we are creative of our actions. Of course, creativity in full cannot be felt by us from our poor human standing-ground; nevertheless, a tiny bit of it we would intensely feel only when our own highest selves would be acting in an endless total Now and not merely from a deific past. The truth behind the idea that eternity and time are different orders and God's foreknowledge in the former need not clash with man's freewill in the latter seems to be just this that for an entire

explanation of the real creative feeling which we have, however pin-pointish, eternity should carry time in an all-at-once constituting an endless total Now : what the idea took no account of are the two other indispensables of freewill. Sri Aurobindo does take account of them : does he also envisage the last indispensable ? In *The Life Divine* he distinguishes three statuses in God's eternity : a timeless immobile status, supremely self-absorbed, without developments of consciousness in movement or happening—a status of simultaneous integrality of time, which is a stable whole-consciousness of the successive relations of all things manifested—a status of processive movement of consciousness and its successive working out of what has been seen in the stable vision. Statuses second and third, combined, would give us an endless total Now underlying and actuating all the "nows" of the time-movement—Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence acting everywhere and in everything and at every moment but exceeding limitation by the moments and, while it spreads out a past, present and future, embracing them also in one whole. This one whole is the deific Ever-Present, with a pin-point of which our poor human "now" coincides, acquiring thereby the fullest reality possible for its speck of freewill.

People might lift their hands in shock or protest, crying : "If all we do is, for Sri Aurobindo, traceable to the Divine's eternal fiat, the choice in an endless total Now of our highest selves, a faint spark of whom abides in the Tom, Dick and Harry that we are, what is there to make us choose good and reject evil ? If we cannot have freewill of any kind unless the Divine be taken as somehow acting in us, would anything we freely do be bad or blamable ?" The first answer is : there is a sense in which nothing is wrong, for spiritual realisation actually testifies that in a certain state of experience everything is perfect, Brahman is all and all is Brahman—but that sense is truly attained by an experience of the All-Brahman, not by a mere idea of Him, and so long as the experience is lacking we cannot speak, with living conviction or direct right, of everything being equally good. What is more, to have that very experience we have at each moment to stand away from egoistic desire which is the arch-vice, the subtle root of iniquity. To realise that all is Brahman we have to reject something as not Brahman ! This paradox has to be accepted and it provides a hint that the cry of shock or protest is irrational. The irrationality resides in that the fact of Brahman being all and all being Brahman is considered not only without spiritual experience but also without another side of the divine reality. Brahman has projected in his infinity a negation of the essentially divine and an emergence of divine values from the Inconscient. According to this arrangement by Brahman there is a constant and persistent and ubiquitous fight between the Divine and the undivine, between good and evil. Of course by "good" we must not mean always what puritanism or prudery or pacifism or any rigid rule or code sets up for our guidance : we must mean some profound urge towards surpassing our ignorance, meanness, cruelty, incapacity, ugliness and becoming like Zoroaster, like Christ, like Buddha, like Sri Krishna or, best of all, like Sri Aurobindo. There is an incumbence on us to follow this urge, since the entire evolutionary process of the hidden and negated God holds it as its secret law

and it is precisely because the attainment of the All-Brahman is also an evolutionary step, a finding of a certain side of divine reality which too was concealed, that paradoxically we have in even this attainment to follow that urge and choose good and reject evil. In man the mental being, the conscious self-evolver, the urge is an unavoidable open ingredient of his constitution and cannot help being insistent and deeply desirable. We may tend to justify the non-following of it by arguing from one half of God's truth : the vision of Pantheos. But when both halves are taken together and we do not overlook God from above calling to God from below to rise and evolve in the *milieu* of God that is all, then the urge to choose good and reject evil is found to be a decree the soul in us has passed from the supramental identity-in-difference it enjoys within the multiple yet single Divine. Surely this decree is not the only one and even its overruling at times may be deemed after the event a valid soul-act subserving God's purpose, since in God's subtle play real good may come out of seeming evil; but before an act has happened and while alternatives are still felt as possible this decree is logically the most valid, the most to be regarded, in an evolutionary scheme of Upward no less than Onward. The overruling of it may, on a back-look, prove itself justified in God's complex economy, but the overruling can never be justifiable in the moment of action. If it can, the process of upward evolution by us would lose support altogether and could never be a plan of the supreme Creative Consciousness for our freewill to carry out.

K. D. SETHNA

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TWO SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE

THE other day—many of you must have been there to see—our children celebrated, in their somewhat simple way, the 400th birth-anniversary of Shakespeare. Toeing their line I present to you today two of the great Shakespearean sonnets. The sonnets, as you know, are all about love. They are however characterised by an incredible intensity and perhaps an equally incredible complexity, for the Shakespearean feeling is of that category.

Shakespeare has treated love in a novel way; he has given a new figure to that common familiar sentiment. And incidentally he has given a new sense and bearing to Death. From a human carnal base there is a struggle, an effort here to rise into something extracorporeal; that is, something outside and independent of the body and impersonal. The sense of the first sonnet is this : the body decays and dies, even as bleak winter seizes upon the beauties of Nature or black Night swallows up the light of the day. But love lingers still—as the song of sweet birds—and the dying cadence of love curiously invokes and evokes a resurgent love in the beloved. The second sonnet hymns the soul's conquest over Death. The soul is that which is sinless in the sinful, it is the pure, the unsullied—the immortal love—in this filth and dirt of a mortal body with its crude passions. Death eats away the body, but in this way the soul grows and eats away Death. This is the final epiphany, the death of Death and the resurgence of the soul divine in its love divine.

SONNET 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

SONNET 146

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

The Shakespearean conclusion 'And Death once dead, there's no more dying then' resounds in our ears like an eco of the famous lines of Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri*—

Even there shall come as a high crown of all
 The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.

The words are perilously parallel. I say perilously because one might just think that Shakespeare was trying to be a disciple of Sri Aurobindo !

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

3. SOURCE (*continued*)

So far we have discussed only the psychological aspect of the two poets, their sources of poetry. We have tried to evaluate and assess their contents. We shall try now to study the actual source of their poems.

Milton had diverse sources from where he borrowed his concept of the poem itself and its form, the many aspects of his characters and their treatment. Whether it was from the Bible or from Greek and Latin sources, he made out of everything a supreme achievement. Critics are at variance regarding his position as a poet and we are confronted with the pointed question : Is Milton an eclectic after all ? For we seem to discover many traits, influences and their presence seems to confuse issues.

Milton has acknowledged the authority of the Apocrypha and the Book of Tobit. The persuasions of Satan tempting Eve come from this source. From the Talmud comes the concept of Adam's originally bisexual character; also the jealousy of Eve at her dream of Adam's second wedlock.

From the Latin, Greek and Byzantine sources Milton derives his ideas of the Fall of the Angels into Satanic elements; and Adam's impure sensuality after he had tasted the fruit of knowledge. From Christian sources, he got also his concepts of Eve and Mary. Saint Augustine, the Greek Bible and the books of mediaeval Europe are here some of the sources.

We can easily trace the influence of the *Aeneid* and Elizabethan literature in his invocation to the Muse, the alternate passages of narratives and prophecies and dialogues, also the shifting of scene from earth to heaven and *vice versa*. Soliloquies typify the Elizabethan influence.

Milton was also influenced by Spenser, Fletcher, and Shakespeare. From each he took something which went finally to enrich his epic. From Caedmon came the narration of the revolt of the angels and the fall of man. From Du Bartas came the description of creation and its immediate results.

What conclusion can we draw from this ? Did he piece together these ingredients, Roman, Greek mediaeval, Elizabethan, and fashion out an eclectic cocktail ? He is too much of an individualist to allow anything to touch or guide him. He is too much of an egoist to allow himself to be influenced by so many traits and so many differing voices. A man of lesser character or personality, having a high ambition but not capacity enough to build so imposing a structure, could take aid of so many sources and build from them a strange edifice. And yet *Paradise Lost* does not appear to be a patched-up device; rather there is a harmony, a balance, a central motive in all that he has created. There is a fixed aim, a will, an undeniable personality behind and a

sure creative mind that has foreseen all and carries forth the tide of the epic. Such an end we cannot trace in an eclectic.

Further, we may mistake his wideness to be eclecticism. Because his personality was broad, his intellect wide, he could house all these influences and make them his own. Also the epic needs various elements, influences, doctrines, points of view; it needs a world-ranging gaze, a universal vision that sweeps over all things and admits all things within its scope. Otherwise the epic would only reveal part of the human scene, and not show the multiplicity, the many-sidedness of man's attainments. It is because Milton wants to show this that he has admitted into his work all possible human knowledge attained up to his time.

Thus he is not an eclectic but a universal poet. He embodies the knowledge of the age, the achievement, progress, doctrine, thought, trends and ideas. But these have found spontaneous room in his consciousness and do not form a patchwork pattern.

Further, he could not deviate in his line of thinking, even though he stood apart in character. He has his own way of looking at things but he does not forge out a new way of vision. What he represents is the sum-total of the experiences and achievements but not necessarily a breaking off from the main trend. He has spoken, for example, on India. But this reference is in line with vague notions of the day. He speaks of the Ptolemaic and the Copernican systems of astronomy but we are not sure which is his own peculiar accepted theory. In all he speaks we are made aware of his range of intellectual grasp over things.

This position automatically refutes all assertions about his being one thing or another—an idealist, a classicist, an Elizabethan, all except that he was one who has founded himself firmly on theology. It is neither romanticism nor eclecticism but theology alone that forms the actual source. It is on this basis we must explore and understand his poetry. Poised on theology with reference to ideas, the concepts of the day, he wrote. Another point to note is that although he is a Puritan, a stout anti-Catholic, his theology is not strictly built on the Lutheran doctrine or even on the teaching of Erasmus. There are references to Catholic bigotry, but on the whole he is not against Catholicism as such. Otherwise he could not have based his theory on the ideas of Saint Augustine. This is all the more strange with Catholic uprisings just a few years before his time. And the taste of bitterness was yet so fresh in the mind of the English people.

In actual working, apart from his esoteric origins, he starts with theology and ends with it. He has his pagan leanings, his classical tendencies. He has his intellectual choice. But his deeper faith, that outweighs everything else, is his religious motives. There is a deep-rooted faith in Christ as the sole refuge. All else has failed. All else has not lived up to the trust he laid in them. His classical learning was of no avail, for it merely added to his pride. His knowledge was of no avail; he saw the hollowness of its capacity to solace human ills. His intellect did not give him peace. His lifeparts were loud with ambition and

remorse, claims and defection, ideals and frustration. Religion alone had the balm. This is the one spot where he could forget himself and his ego. To him religion was not a battling ground as it happened with the Holy Roman Empire or the Crusades. Theological battles were man-made, and originated in the primal curse of man's decline. The differences of the creeds were superficial. There was one point where all these differences were solved—Jesus.

Theology has a deeper meaning for him. It shows to man his cause and his origin. It reveals his beginning and points to his end. Frustration, decline, chaos and darkness are only stages. Trust in the Almighty was the sole cure. What Eve enunciated at the beginning of creation, man must bear, the result of her pride and vanity, the result of Adam's passion. Milton does not question how whole generations of humanity must endure and atone for the wrong done by one person out of pride through one act of disobedience. He can hardly explain away this absurd notion because he has a profound faith in theology and he cannot otherwise explain the lasting dark conditions of humanity. Here logic is defeated by his faith. His reason stops where theological dogma has its beginning. In fact theology and religion assert such a position. As a faithful servant of religion, he has no other way but to follow meekly.

From theology we land in faith. And faith forms the very bulwark of his poem. In fact he is inspired by it. He is guided by it.

Let us now see what was the position of Sri Aurobindo. The contention of eclecticism does not arise in his case. For in him we do not discover multiple trends, although he possessed various facets and as a modern poet such a possession is perhaps not out of place. But we have to answer another standpoint of the material thinker. This is : "Sri Aurobindo being a philosopher and a mystic, his poetry is vague and has nothing to do with man as such. Because his source is the Suprasensuous, he does not touch the earth or have human affinities. Even Milton is free from this blame, for his poem is earthly; his angels, Satan, God, Christ, no less than Adam, are palpable entities with human characteristics, they reveal anger, despair, passion, hope, pain, vengeance, love or compassion; man's mind and sense can grasp these as something definite. Can we say the same about Sri Aurobindo?"

As we have discussed earlier, Sri Aurobindo begins with the soul and this makes all the difference from Milton whose source is the mind and its adjuncts. But, to begin with, the soul is an earthly element like the mind. Only, it is conscious of its divine origin while the other veils the Divine Word and Influence by its perversion and limitation that are its essential nature. The soul has retained its purity, while the mind is oblivious of its Supramental source. One is the delegate of the world-soul, the original Fire and is a missionary and entity that is imperishable and carries on the march of man across the millenniums; while the other is a product of evolution and arises out of the involved status of the Inconscient. It has forgotten, by involuton, its Superconscient beginning. And, although mind appears to be the leader of human ascent, the soul in fact is the guide who leads the human instrument. Also, unlike the

mind which experiments, commits errors, deviates, changes and is not sure of the method or the way, the soul is conscious of the path, never swerves from the intended course and never falls into error or sin. Hence when Sri Aurobindo made the soul his source, he got rid of unsure paths, indirect approaches and always reached the target and ever revealed the very heart of Truth. He is conscious of his instrument and is aware of the many-sidedness of the issue; and his vision, awakened by the soul, takes a cosmic view leaving nothing out.

It is because he is so vast and deep in his vision, that people make the mistake to consider him unearthly. They have preconceived notions about earthliness and worldliness of a writer. They think that only to live within limits and acknowledge this limit is the unmistakable sign of earthliness and of sympathy for the world. Also there has been no writer, who after rising above the limits of human mind and life came down to create great literature. The released souls were not poets and the poets were not free from the limitations of human conditions. I am excluding from here the Vedic and Upanishadic seers. Except them we have had no great man of literature who rose up and faced the absolute Light and came down to transcribe this world-experience, soul-experience and God-experience in poetry that really echoed with the living vibrations of the Spirit. Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Kalidasa, Calderon, Hugo never crossed the borders of the sensuous and the rational. It is only in Sri Aurobindo we find the exception. Here is a great poet and great seer whose poetry vibrates with the thrilled experience of the worlds above our ken.

But this only answers half the question raised. To be concerned with earth implies having oneness with life as we find it, being in sympathy with terrestrial things and showing a sort of solution to this state of mystery. A critic may well ask : "What if Sri Aurobindo wrote from the soul ? Does it necessarily prove that he was concerned with the earth ? Is not the soul concerned with the Divine, its originating principles, and not with earth, its resultant birth ?"

If we view God and creation as two separate entities having nothing to do with each other, this question would be valid. But if we regard the two as two aspects of the same principle, one pure and omnipotent and the other an evolving mass created from the former for self-manifestation and play, the argument ceases automatically. For God, soul and world are components of the same Truth and substance and it is the dividing intellect that causes this sense of division; it is ignorance that is at the beginning of this bifurcation. Sri Aurobindo was not a common unenlightened personality and it would be sheer folly to compare him with other men or his views with theirs. When he wrote *Savitri*, the total vision and experience, the very soul of all the component elements of the creation were in his vision and soul. He began the epic not with a false idea of the world, the sin, the error. There were no preconceived notions to shut out the total experience or the vision. He did not see the universe like a vast hemmed-in sphere with the stars, planets and the earth swimming within its body. His concept was global and not mental. His experience was all-grasping and did not occupy one part of

the horizon. He had no need to fall back on either Copernicus or Ptolemy to see earth and realise its confines and position. In fact his knowledge came from within and not from without. Seen from this angle, he is deeply interested in the destiny of the earth, not in the Miltonic sense of rectifying the wrong done in the past, but to hasten the progression and cross the limits of animality and human doom. His sympathy was not born in the mind as a vague philanthropic ideal. His pity for man was not of a man but of a soul that had freed itself from the enslaving bonds of ignorance; and consequently his pity went out to aid the suffering lot of earth. Milton realised only the ethical decline, which is only a mental and religious concept embittered by adverse circumstances. Sri Aurobindo feels the very quintessence of man's groaning existence, he feels "the tears of things", the heart of grief due to man's estrangement from his primal status of bliss. Thus from a deeper pity, he extended his hand of help. He showed the path of man's fulfilment not as an abstract notion but as a definite road. In the legend and the symbol that is *Savitri* such a road is revealed, and such a pointer to something wider which can be realised by man if he so wills it. Sri Aurobindo went deeper than ethics and higher than religious dogma.

Milton had models before him : Homer, Virgil, Saint Augustine. What models did Sri Aurobindo go to ? Milton in fact was under so many influences that he apparently seems an eclectic. In Sri Aurobindo can we trace such pronounced influences ?

In actual presentation, *Savitri* has had no predecessors. For, either a poem was too abstract to be an epic or else it became a tale in narrative verse. *Savitri* is neither one nor the other. There have been no parallels in turning a legend into a symbolic poem. Romesh Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt and others that came after them gave us romantic, colourful presentations of India; the India of dreams. But none went to depict the picture of this ancient land in so much reality and beauty. And least of all did they have a concept of the mystical, spiritual side of India. They stopped short with the colour and the music.

Thus Sri Aurobindo had no influencing presence amongst his contemporaries. But India had a rich poetical tradition which began with the Vedas. There were the ages of Kalidasa, Harsha, Bharabhi, Vyasa, ending with Jaydeva and Shankaracharya. In lush description, in melodious similes we can feel the parallel to Kalidasa. In rich power of tone we can hear the accent of the *Mahabharata*, in lucid sweetness the *Ramayana*'s verse seems to be re-echoed. Sometimes Sri Aurobindo is compact like the later Upanishads, sometimes he is elaborate like Bana, sometimes he is prophetic like the *Gita*. But these are parallels, resemblances; they are not influences. The only influence that seems palpable is the life of the king and the hermit as depicted in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. But description of nature was his own. In the description of the worlds, of death, of the Divine Mother, there is no parallel anywhere in Indian literature although there are stray references or sketches in the Upanishads. The whole of the supernatural element and the debate between Death and *Savitri* are Sri Aurobindo's own.

India is the stronghold of the gods. Its pantheon is very extensive. But the gods are of either the life-level or the mind, and rarely do we feel the presence of a great overmental Godhead, except for Krishna at his highest moments as revealed in the Gita. Sri Aurobindo did not go to these either for inspiration or for models: he rejected all mental formations that have a lesser height of spiritual status. He has accepted only Death, the visible manifestation of Time, error, change and ignorance. This is an occult reality and Sri Aurobindo's mission in life and poetic creation is to oppose this god. In this way he treads a path which was not hewn out before and he had to forge his own track amid the virgin regions of the spirit and of occult realities.

He owed no debt to Western literature as well. Although his medium of expression was English, his theme, his subject, his way of looking at things were not in the least Anglo-Saxon or even European and in fact all was his own viewpoint, his own mode, his own expression. What parallels are there are incidental and not intentional. What apparent similarities are there are from an exterior point of view. In truth he went to none for guidance, for none could guide him. He had in himself the quintessence of all great poetry both of the West and of India, and yet he surpassed all.

Milton borrows openly and exteriorly. We can trace the influence, locate the guiding presence. In Sri Aurobindo there is no such borrowing, there is an inner assimilation of all that has been created, and he used this assimilation to enrich his poetry. In Milton ideas of greatness and the sense of earthly achievements are present. In Sri Aurobindo no achievements, but soul-forms, inner formation. One's source was the mind and the exterior world. The other's is the soul and the occult reality behind.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

(continued from the previous issue)

CHAPTER V

THE PROSPECTS TODAY

(Continued)

THAT "East and West and other differences" have not vanished but multiplied is due to several reasons. Behind the present crisis stands the false image of Man and Reality created by the latest faith known as Science, ably aided by industrialism, commercial advertisement, periodic wars and nationalistic jealousies. Across the sad centuries the words of *Chhandogya Upanishad* haunt us : Whoever follows this false picture of the Self must perish. Alexis Carrel brings the same evidence and the same judgment : "Modern civilization finds itself in a difficult position because it does not suit us. It has been created without any knowledge of our real nature...These theories build up civilizations which although designed for man fit only an incomplete monstrous image of man ..In truth, our civilization...has created conditions of existence which...render life impossible." It is hard to disagree. In *The Measure of Man* Joseph Wood Krutch hit the nail on the head : "How defective, therefore, is that so-called Science of Man which never really asks the questions at all and thus proves itself to be not the Science of Man, but only the Science-Of-What-Man-Would-Be-Like-If-He-Were-Not-a-Man-But-a-Machine." The error would seem to lie in what Whitehead called a bifurcation of nature. The whole thing is due to a confusion of concepts, due to the simple fact that our physicists and mathematicians have applied to man concepts that belong to the mechanical world. As a result "the sciences of inert matter have led us into a country that is not ours". It is not the claims of the mystics but of incomplete scientists that are "intolerably arrogant" and mistaken. Prodigals of perversity, the only way for us to get back home—to the Fatherland, as Plotinus called it—is the Mystic Way, of self-discovery. In this we are not being asked to forego "the blessings of science" but only to take the fangs out of her folly. As we have throughout insisted, mysticism itself is a kind of science, the science of the Whole. "Oh, taste, and see," cried one of the early modern mystic initiates, "here we are, a small family....Yet one that refuses to die out....You will find it impossible to prove that the world as seen by the mystics is less real than that which is expounded by science." The spirit and technique of science are our precious and hard-won possessions. But these can no longer blind us to the obvious and dangerous limitations of the scientific picture of the universe, or what is presented to us as the scientific picture. To mention only one. Dazzled by statistics and the impersonal methods of scientific inquiry, modern society

ignores the individual. It believes only in the reality of the Universal and the Impersonal. Man has become 'abstracted' from the universe, to which present-day social and political methods offer exact parallels. Ours is a mass culture in which the individual is lost. It was Hitler's boast that his party would "socialize the soul" of man. In the Soviet Union unpopular individuals and groups are, from time to time, scientifically 'liquidated'. Long live science !

The results of such unethical, mistaken views of man and life are there for all to see. And yet so deep-seated is the habit of mechanical reliance (*Om Mam Padme Science*) and so dazzling the triumphs of Know-How that "it will be difficult to get rid of a doctrine which, during more than three hundred years, has dominated the intelligence of the civilized world. The majority of men of science believe in the reality of Universals, the exclusive right of existence of the quantitative, the supremacy of Matter, the separation of the mind from the body, and the subordinate position of the mind. They will not easily give up this faith. For such a change would shake pedagogy, medicine, hygiene, psychology and sociology to their foundations.... It is obvious that the liberation of man from the materialistic creed would transform most of the aspects of our existence.... Therefore modern society will oppose with all its might this progress in our conceptions." Even if the alternative is, as it must be, total ruin.

From his mystical and pacifist point of view this is what Aldous Huxley had to say : "Recent scientific investigation has made it clear that the world of sense experience and of common sense is only a small part of the world as a whole.... What are the general conclusions to be drawn from the scientific picture of life's history on this planet ?" The conclusions would seem to be that the picture is incomplete. To trust this picture as the whole truth can but add to our trouble.

"No account of the scientific picture of the world would be complete unless it contained a reminder of the fact, frequently forgotten by the scientists themselves, that this picture does not even claim to be comprehensive. From the world we actually live in, the world that is given by our senses, our intuitions of beauty and goodness, our emotions and impulses, our moods and sentiments, the man of science abstracts a simplified private universe of things possessing only those qualities which used to be called 'primary'.... By using the technique of simplification and abstraction, the scientist has succeeded to an astonishing degree in understanding and dominating the physical environment. The success was intoxicating and with an illogicality which, in the circumstances, was doubtless pardonable, many scientists and philosophers came to imagine that this useful abstraction from reality was reality itself. Reality as actually experienced contains intuitions of value and significance, contains love, beauty, mystical ecstasy, intimations of Godhead.

"Science did not and still does not possess intellectual instruments with which to deal with these aspects of reality. Consequently it ignored them. This has led to the error of identifying the world of science, a world from which all meaning and value has been deliberately excluded, with ultimate reality."

The process of identifying an arbitrary abstraction from reality with reality itself has been well described by Burt in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*. In Burt's words :

"The founders of the philosophy of science were mathematical pragmatists, of a rather extreme type. They were absorbed in the mathematical study of nature. Metaphysics they tended to avoid, so far as they could; so far as not, it became an instrument for further mathematical conquest of the world... With final causes and secondary qualities banished from the world of science it did not much matter how rough their subsequent treatment... Hence if they be proved clearly false, it is important to do away with these guilty mathematical pretensions. It may be that a heavy and discouraging incubus will be thrown off just by the recognition of the fact."

The dangers of not doing so are today sufficiently real. In the words of a modern mystic whose insight we have had occasion to use before: "The modern spirit has found another light, the light of Science...the economic, social ultimate—an ideal, material organization of civilization and comfort, the use of reason and science and education for the generalisation of a utilitarian rationality which will make the individual a perfected social being in a perfected economic society...(But) this ideal, this conscious reversion to the first state of man, his early barbaric state and its pre-occupation with life and matter, is a spiritual retrogression with the resources of the mind of a developed humanity and a fully evolved science at its disposal. As an element in the total complexity of human life this stress on a perfected economic and material existence has its place in the whole : as a sole or predominant stress it is for humanity itself, for the evolution itself full of danger. The first danger is the resurgence of the old vital and material primitive barbarian in a civilized form; the means that Science has put at our disposal eliminates the peril of subversion and destruction of an effete civilization by a stronger primitive people. But it is the resurgence of the barbarian in ourselves, in civilized man, that is the peril, and this we see all around us. For that is bound to come if there is no high or strenuous mental and moral ideal controlling and uplifting the vital and physical man in us and no spiritual ideal liberating him from himself into his inner being. Even if this relapse is escaped, there is another danger,—for the cessation of the evolutionary urge, a crystallisation into a stable comfortable mechanised social living without ideal or outlook is another possible outcome.⁶ Reason cannot by itself long maintain the race in its progress; it can do so only if it is mediator between the life and body and something higher and greater within him; for it is the inner spiritual necessity, the push from what there is yet unrealised within him that maintains in him, once he has attained to mind, the evolutionary stress, the spiritual *nisus*. That renounced, he must either relapse and begin all over again or disappear like other forms of life before him as an evolutionary failure, through incapacity to maintain or serve the evolutionary urge. At the best he will remain arrested in some kind of mediary typical perfection, like other animal kinds, while Nature pursues her way beyond him to a greater creation."⁷

The prospects are not altogether hopeless. The very opposition of science to the spirit admits of a different use and intention. In a letter to a disciple Sri Aurobindo once wrote : "The condition of present-day civilization, materialistic with an externalized intellect and life-endeavour, which you find so painful, is an episode, but one which was perhaps inevitable. For if the spiritualisation of the mind, life and body is the thing to be achieved, the conscious presence of the Spirit even in the physical consciousness and material body, an age which puts Matter and the physical life in the forefront and devotes itself to the effort of the intellect to discover the truth of material existence, had perhaps to come. On one side, by materialising everything up to the intellect itself, it has created the extreme difficulty of which you speak...but, on the other hand, it has given the life in Matter an importance which the spirituality of the past was inclined to deny to it. In a way it has made the spiritualisation of it a necessity for spiritual seeking....More than that we cannot claim for it; its conscious effect has been rather to stifle and almost extinguish the spiritual element in humanity, it is only by the divine use of the pressure of contraries and an intervention from above that there will be the spiritual outcome."⁸

Here we seem to touch upon the root of the matter, or one of the roots,—the role of reason in man and history. Behind both the triumphs and terrors of Science stands this new Demiurge. What is its true function and how has it deviated from that ? what is its relation with the life of the spirit ? A triumph of individual intelligence, it now seems about to be engulfed in a collective collapse, largely its own doing. Let us trace the process, briefly, an inevitable process as it would seem.

(To be continued)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

REFERENCES

6. Cf. P. D. Ouspensky, in *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* :

"Man must become a different being....(But) then we must understand that all men cannot develop and become different beings....It may sound strange, but we must realize that it is not only rare, but is becoming more and more rare. To the question : 'Why cannot all men develop and become different beings ?' The answer is very simple : 'Because they do not want it'."

7. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, last chapter.

8. Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga*, I, 6-7.

A CHILD'S EXPERIENCE OF THE MOTHER'S GRACE

I AM yet a child of 13. I have been coming to the Ashram and I have had Darshan of the Mother at the Balcony and received Her Blessings. It is now four to five years since I first came.

I am not perhaps so lucky as my youngest sister who has seen the Mother in her dreams and also in vision a number of times, and do you know what she did on her birthday recently ? She was given some money to be offered to the Mother. But she retorted, "No, that is yours. That won't be *my* offering. I will offer what is *mine*." And there and then she took her ear-rings off and sent them up to the Mother. And what joy she felt ! The Mother on Her part is reported to have kept them with Her, and She sent the child Her word of love.

I was telling about myself. I saw the Mother in a dream in the train when all five of us—one brother and four sisters—were coming to the Ashram for our final stay. Recently I again dreamed of the Mother. I saw Her at Her new balcony and then again in the Ashram where She was sitting in Her chair and I wept in Her lap sweetly and lovingly.

But the most heartening thing happened when we were in our home town and my parents had gone to the Ashram for the Mother's Darshan and also, if possible, to arrange for our admission into the Centre of Education there.

We were left in the care of our teacher who came to stay with us in the absence of our parents. Within a couple of days of their departure our 7-year old sister—fourth in order of age—fell sick and was weeping because of the absence of our parents. The doctor told us that it was a case of flu, but the fever went on mounting. Then he made the diagnosis that it was paratyphoid. Medicine was given. The fever had gone up to 104.9. We were very much worried but did not want to write to our parents and worry them.

It was Krishna Janmashtami Day. Our teacher and another Ashram sadhak were there by the side of the child. I left for my bedroom where my other sisters and my brother would also later come and sleep. I was tired and soon fell asleep. My teacher kept watch over the child the whole night. At night I had a dream and saw the Mother in Her radiant light at one corner of the roof. Five rays were shooting from Her and falling on all of us, as if with Her assurance that we all were under Her Protection and Light and there was nothing to be worried about.

At three o'clock my sister's fever had come down to 103 and by noon to 100. Soon she was normal. I consider that it was by some working of the Mother that my sister was all right so soon and it did not prove necessary for us to write to our parents. I consider this now to be also an indication given us that when we were to be in the Ashram within a few months from then, away from our parents, we would be perfectly at home in the care of our Divine Mother.

In the meantime, we got a trunk call from our parents. We told them why we did not write to them a letter and how under the protection of the Grace of the Mother my sister was well in a short while. We assured them that they did not need to worry about us and we made my sister also speak to them on the line.

During their stay in the Ashram, our parents got the Mother's permission for our joining the Centre of Education and by the beginning of the new session, at the end of last year, we had left our studies in our home town and come to settle in the Pondicherry Ashram.

I cannot also help recalling a very recent incident when some of our group children entered the sea for swimming and were caught in a more or less deep whirlpool and carried by the current though only for a few yards. I was near and went to save them but was also pulled away; the same happened to two or three children who followed me to save us. Another boy was still further inside the sea. But we were all saved with the help of our group-captain and of other children of our group who knew swimming somewhat. I feel that this would not have been possible without the Mother's Grace and Protection. Her love envelops us all even when we may not know of its working.

Reported by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE STORY OF PURURAVUS AND URVASIE

RETOLD FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S NARRATIVE POEM *Urvasie*

(Continued from the previous issue)

CHAPTER III

URVASIE'S LIFE ON EARTH AND HER RETURN TO HEAVEN

THE goddess was won to mortal arms. And for twelve months Pururavus held her on the peaks and in solitary vastnesses of hills and snow-besieged regions.¹ All the silent sublime spaces of earth passed into his blood and grew a part of his thought. With increasing rapture, he spent twelve months in populous green forests, a happy life in sunlight and by delightful streams. The green tremulous groves, solitary rivers white with birds, sunny boughs gorgeous with peacocks, musing days and nights with roar of many beasts were all Eden round the glorious pair. In the third flower-haunted spring of love, a child was born to golden Urvasie. When the goddess woke to the child's sweet face from the maternal pangs and felt little hands groping about her breasts, she cried passionately, "O Pururavus, how long shall we waste the glad days of cheerful human life in the woods? I will go into the homes of men, hear the great sound of cities, talk with the bright girls of earth, kiss the eyes of little children, eat earth's food from man-made vessels and drink earth's water cool from jars and know all joy and labour of that blithe and busy world." He consented with a slight happy smile.

They came to sacred Ganges and to the city of Ila. When they neared the mighty destined walls, his virgin mother saw him from her pure temple and there arose a wild blare of conches. The people of Pururavus, a glad indistinguishable throng, streamed rejoicing to the lion-gate. There were traders, priests and merchants, craftsmen oblivious of their daily toil, the hammerless giant smith laughing through his beard. Little children ran all over with flowers, and girls hurried with the noise of anklets. There came matrons and old men and the large-eyed poets of the Vedic Chant. All the multitude divided before them. High lords of sacrifice, aged chiefs and great heroes with mighty tread came in gleaming armour and bearing dreadful bows. Amid the high noise of trumpets going up to heaven, they welcomed their King. A soft shower of blooms fell upon him. They all marvelled much at his heavenly bride and worshipped her half-awed. Young girls with sweet faces of delightful laughter, daughters of warriors wedded to great houses, came and embraced her and

¹ He took joy of her world-desired beauty in dim gorge, tenebrous ravine and wide snows, over precipices, under cliffs where streaming waterfalls murmured and later, in the pleasant hills.

praised aloud her beauty. Then they bound her soft immortal wrists with flowers. The girlish phalanx led her after the old heroic fashion through the gates up to the bridal streets. Amid trumpets and acclamations of the glad people they brought the child of Gods to her terrestrial home. In place of her heavenly vesture they clothed her with mortal habiliments, a clinging robe. A wifely veil was drawn over her hair. Thus the love of all the world was confined to one man's home.

Human with earth dwelt golden Urvasie and bore a race of glorious children to Pururavus. She loved that great and simple life of old, its marble outlines, strong joy and clear air around the soul and made them roseate. The sacred city felt a finer life within it. Burning inspirations breathed from hallowed poets, architects toned their immense conceptions to grace and fancy. Numberless heroes rolled back the dark barbarian border in strong joyous battle and sages saw God in their souls. High influences went forth from the city of Pururavus. The Indus and Ganges and all the intermediate lands grew with them and felt a perfect impulse. Seven years the earth rejoiced in Urvasie.

But the high Gods dwelt infelicitous in their fortunate heavens. They lost their old inexplicable rapture and thrill beneath their ancient calm. Therefore, not enduring it long, they met in Council and said to Urvasie's most beloved sister, "Menaka ! how long shall one man divide from heaven its perfect bliss ? Go down and bring her back and we shall love again our luminous halls." She heard and went to the divine gates and looked into the world. She saw the far titanic Ilian city like a sunlit stone upon the small and distant earth. From the peaks of heaven she went flashing down and came to the city of Pururavus. She stood in shadow over the palace of Pururavus. Lights were yet within. The princes sat still and young poets sang on harps of Urvasie and strong Pururavus, of golden-limbed Urvasie, the light and lovely spirit, and of Pururavus, son of a virgin. "O earth made heaven to Pururavus ! O heaven left earth without sweet Urvasie ! Behold the parents of the sacrifice ! When they have met then they have rushed together and in their arms the beautiful fire is born. O Pururavus, we hear of thee born without a father; of Urvasie born without a mother. Hast thou not brought the unquenched, unkindled fire from heaven ? Hast thou not brought delightful Urvasie ? The fires of sacrifice ever mount up, they naturally aspire to their lost heaven. Their tops are weighted with a human prayer. The soul of love mounts also towards the sky, thence came the spark but shall hardly return; its wings are weighted with too fierce a fire. Rejoice in the warm earth, O lovely pair, the green strong earth that gave Pururavus." So they sang and the heart rejoiced. Then the princes rose and went down the long white streets, each to his home. Soon every sound had faded; heaven and a few bright stars possessed the world.

But in a silent place the goddess lay with the mortal hero on the last night of the sweet passionate earth. They lay on their rich bed and the two rams which once the subtle bright Gundharvas had given to Urvasie were near. She loved them more than the tender faces of her children. These only remained to her of the unforgotten skies.

So they lay under fierce shafts of love, and once more her beloved body was embraced in the arms of strong Pururavus—once more, if never on earth again. Before he slept he wooed one kiss from her tired lips nor felt farewell in its passion.

The night darkened over the vague town. Gradually clouds came up and through them in thunderless flashes the subtle Gundharvas came stealing from the peaks of distant Paradise. Thunder rolled out and through the walls in a fierce rush of light the thieves of heaven entered and stole the rams and fled with the same lightning. Urvsie arose shuddering and knew her loss. With a lamentable cry she turned to her lord. "Pururavus, arise; they take from me my snow-white joys." Starting from his sleep when memory is far, Pururavus forgot his fate and his weak tenure of mighty bliss. He leaped up wrathfully and on one swift stride reached his bow. Before it was grasped he shuddered, his soul all smitten with a rushing fear. Alarmed, he turned towards her. Suddenly the whole room stood wide in manifest splendour, it was all lightning. And in that fierce light the beautiful figure of Pururavus rose glorious, all a grace of naked limbs. For a brilliant moment he beheld all the familiar place, the fretted huge images in the columns, the massively erect walls, the silent floor and on it the gracious fallen dress, each noble curve of the strong couch and the delicately distinct golden body and the flower-like face of Urvsie. Beside her he saw the other, her sister Menaca with a lovely smile, her one hand pressing back the shining curls blown over her with her speed. Then all faded. Thunder crashed jubilant through the heavens.

For a long while he stood with beating heart half-conscious of his loss. He gazed into the dimness for those loved outlines that were now far away. Then he went with a quiet smile and placed both his hands where she had lain such a short while ago, but found the place empty. He whispered to his own heart, "She has put her shining dress around her and gone into the cool alcove to fetch sweet water for the heavenly rams. She will stay awhile perhaps to muse upon the night and then come back to give them drink and lie down silently beside me. I shall see her when it dawns." He slept. He awoke with the dawn and stretched out his arms to find her. Then he knew he was alone.

But he would not dwell with his despair. He said to himself, "She has gone for a little into the far infinite silences to see her golden sisters. She will soon return, my heart will draw her back."

He continued his kingly toils steadfastly. He gave his greatly-destined people far-seeing calm counsels in sacred sessions and assemblies. From his judgement seat he gave unblamed sentence or large reconciliation. He kindled for desired rain the perfect trinity of holy fires. But behind all his moments there was a void. As when one desperately puts from him the thought of an inevitable fate, blinding himself with present pleasures and yet at a slight sound, a knocking at the door or a chance terrible word, he grows sick with sudden fear and the ghastly face of that dread future looks at him through the window, then he sits mutely shuddering, so to Pururavus in holy session or warlike concourse or alone a dreadful fear often made his life naked like a

lightning flash. Then his whole being shook, and his eyes gazed blindly. Soon with great breaths he repossessed his soul.

Long was his endurance. But when shocks of fear and wakeful nights wrestling with memory had invisibly worn his heart, he went into his bedchamber and saw there her dress empty of her and the forlorn bed. Sometimes he was so overcome with memory and anguish that his courage failed. The unvanquished hero lay with outstretched arms and wept. Henceforth his life was with that room. If he appeared in high sessions, or warlike concourse, men looked on him as on the silent dead. Nor did he linger but from a little stay would return silently and watch the relics left by Urvasie in hushed rooms. He often clasped the things he had hardly noticed before; sometimes he spoke to them as to living friends. Then he lost the count of days and would weep no more, but looked into the dawn with tearless eyes.

All the people mourned for their great King. Silently watching him they murmured, "This is not the august hero, King Pururavus, whose impetuous soul ruled like a calm and skilful charioteer. If the enemy's war-cry rush against our gates he would surely arise and lift his bow and in his swift chariot advance upon them like a sea and triumph and be himself among the rushing wheels."

But when spring came the King felt some touch of flowers over his numbed soul. He rose a little from his grief and lifted his eyes again to the stars. Then he murmured low. "I was not wont to despair. You have left me, cruel Urvasie, but I will pursue you, my joy in the distant heavens. Though the gods jealously guard you, I will clasp your golden limbs or my strong patience will pluck down my love from the distant stars. I am still Ila's son, Pururavus, that passionless pure strength, though fallen from the armed splendid soul which once I was." So saying he strode mightily like a King to the hall of session. There from the brooding pillars he seized a shell and blew upon it. Like a storm the sound was blown through the streets of Pratisthana. People poured out from their homes. Strong war-leaders, majestic chiefs and mighty poets came first. Behind them the Ilian people streamed like driving rain. The immeasurable hall was filled with faces. The great King, Pururavus, rose bright over them. Wonderful anticipations of immortality flashed through his eyes. "My people, I go from you. And what shall I say to you who know my glory and my grief? Now I endure no more the desolate gardens and the wide rooms empty of her. I will depart to find her under imperishable trees or beside secret streams. But since I go and leave my work behind, I give her son, Ayus, to you. Incomparable in beauty and strength he shall rule. I have planted earth with deeds and have made the widest heavens my monument. I have brought the sempiternal fire from Paradise. O people, you have shared my famous actions done in a few great years of earthly life. We have done high things together. But now I go to claim her back from the gods who have taken her."

The whole nation dumbly listened to his words. Then Ayus was crowned King with holy waters from the Ganges and with chantings of the Vedic mantras. But Pururavus went forth, through ranks of silent people with the last cloud of sunset,

up the fields and darkening meadows. A rushing splendour wonderfully arose from Ila's rock and virginal temple and shone all round the great departing King. In the light he turned and saw the mighty city vast and luminous under him. He saw the temple and streets and palace and the sea of sorrowing faces. He saw all these for a moment and disappeared from light into the forest. Then from Pratisthana a loud wail arose. But he went unlistening into the darkness.

(To be continued)

PRITHWISINGH NAHAR

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MAN-MAN

THE UNVEILED PURUSHA

GREAT cross of gold, sovereign he stood,
His arms branches of God.
In him the stone reached its manhood,
Beast pure its bright abode.

Death he transmuted with a kiss
To God's sweet golden breath.
Body of Earth, he stood in bliss,
The glorious death of Death.

The glowing tomb of Death ! At last
In Earth he clasped Her White Flame.
Chiselled by the pain of world's dark Past
He bore the secret Name,

JANINA

APOSTATE

ALL golden words ever said
Are become blind and thin,
I will not listen to words
Or hear this din.
Lost to all faith and belief
Through the dark I dare
To run lightly alone, none
To love or care,
None to detain me.
At last alone, alone !
In silence empty of anyone,
Potent and void and still...
Hush ! *Who is there ?*

MARGARET FORBES

TOWARDS THE SAMADHI

WARMTH pouring down like sun-scattered grace,
The sun-packed streets of my dream-visited town...
A pause of hot vibrant vapour—
White burning sky—smooth brow without a frown.

Sweet steaming smell of cows ready for milking—
Afternoon lull, clear, sharp, without sound—
Languid landscape passing to a single end—
Heat-laden sea-breezes soulward bound.

Feet tingled by dark nutty pebbles,
Each step a sheer joy in the incense-fume—
A flight in each secret heart to inner Infinity—
O Flower-patterned Platform, Your Bliss in every bloom !

MINNIE-N. CANTEENWALLA

TWO EXPRESSIONS FROM A PLACE

FIRST STATEMENT

If will can do the major act
Of sight which transforms
Golden vision into iron

Might these ventures
Prove an instant glory
Rather than a dull reward ?

Oh questing brain
Now learn to float
On tides that sweep
Green shores of sweetness
Holding promise ripened
In clear deeps.

How we do long
To come
Upon the waiting host. . .

AFTERTHOUGHT

How then the worthiness ?
It was born sun-splendid
In a cloak of flesh
Which melded to the always waiting bone.

Alone for lightless union of embrace—
Pure union with a power trance—
The hammer fist demanded
Some new action born in joy.

And so the rare awakening took place
The lotus fluttered on her silent pond.

Why then let judgment weight
Our flight of wings conceived
In luminous redemption's rightful plea ?

We can say nay
To slice old Gordian chain,
Serving the bonded host
Who wait below.

MARILYN WIDMAN

DOUCE MÈRE

(1)

DOUCE Mère, Mother Divine !
The Hour of God has come.
Thou hast decided to manifest.
Heaven has come down on Earth to stay;
The Earth has been taken up by Heaven as a lover by the beloved
In an intoxicating locked embrace.
The permanent bridge has now been completed.
Thou art emerging in the soul of man
From Thy early playful plunge in the bliss of utter oblivion.
Thou art awakening the inert recumbent Godhead in man unaware of himself
By showering down on him day and night, with or without his consent,
Thy light, Thy joy, Thy knowledge, Thy peace and Thy puissance.
Heart, mind and soul, nerves, flesh and limbs
Thrill with the invasion of Thy felicity and might.
The Eternal has verily occupied the house of our life.
Thy limitless vision has filled our myopic eyes.
Thy triumphant cry of things immortal rings in our ears.
Ether, water, earth, wind and fire, minerals and rose-petals,
Cinder, mire and sandalwood paste, food, wine and poison
Have become diaphanous, sacred and divine,
Priceless delicate tracery of morning frost on the window panes of Time.
Mother Divine, none can stand in the way of Thy manifestation
Because there is none else in the Universe and the great Beyond,
Because the One above has joined hands with the One below.

(2)

Aspiring souls, seekers of truth, good and beauty, the pure and the impure,
Animal, fowl and fish, creatures of earth, air and water, gnomes and fairies,
Gods and Titans, beings visible and invisible
Of this world or belonging to the subtle domains,
All who have received Thy touch of compassion,
All Thy vision has embraced, past, present and still unborn,
All who hate, fight or spurn Thy Grace,
All Thou hast loved and known and cherished,
Each bubble of water, flowers and trees, rivers, plains and mountains,

Stars and the vast pregnant spaces, the sun, the moon and the Milky Way
Shall one day let through a ray of Thy ineffable Splendour.
We are Thy children to do Thy will on all planes of existence.
Thou art cleaving through us the way to immortality and the delight of Oneness.
We are in Thee in life and death, substance of Thy substance,
As Thou art in us, breath of our breath, eidolon of our adoration.
Thou abidest as the sole Reality in the mind,
Thou abidest as love and gratitude in the heart,
Thou abidest as the true will and Force in every fibre and cell.
Ever unattainable mysterious alluring goal of the soul,
Thou art the Pole Star, silent Guide, infallible Power, hope of our hope,
Calling us to rise higher and higher and still higher to the skies
And become more and more transparent to the Transcendent Light.
Mother Eternal, Mother Divine,
Thou hast decided to manifest.
We bow down to Thee. Thy will be done.
The Hour of God has come.

NIRANJAN GUHA ROY

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

INAUGURAL SESSION

12 July 1964

IN the middle of June 1964 the idea of forming a voluntary association of the students of the Higher Course of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education was proposed to The Mother. The name, "The New Age Association", was also proposed to Her. The Mother gave Her approval to the idea and to the name. All the students of the 3 years of the Higher Course, to whom this idea was explained, voluntarily became members of this Association. Afterwards many students of the Advanced Courses and the former Higher Course of the Centre of Education also joined as members. A complete list of members was prepared on July 3, 1964 and sent to The Mother for Her Blessings. The Mother gave Her Blessings to all the members.

The Inaugural Session of the Association was held on July 12, 1964 from 9 to 10.30 a.m. in the New Hall of the Centre of Education.

At the beginning of the Session Kishor Gandhi read out the following special message which The Mother had given to the New Age Association for its Inaugural Session :

12-7-64

*"Never believe that you know.
Always try to know better.
Blessings."*

After this The Mother's recorded reading from *Savitri*, Bk. XI, Canto I, was listened to in silence. Then Manoj Dasgupta read the following passage from Sri Aurobindo's *The Hour of God* :

"The boon that we have asked from the Supreme is the greatest that the Earth can ask from the Highest, the change that is most difficult to realise, the most exacting in its conditions. It is nothing less than the descent of the supreme Truth and Power into Matter, the supramental established in the material plane and consciousness and the material world and an integral transformation down to the very principle of Matter. Only a supreme Grace can effect this miracle.

"The supreme Power has descended into the most material consciousness but it has stood there behind the density of the physical veil, demanding before manifestation, before its great open workings can begin, that the conditions of the supreme Grace shall be there, real and effective.

"A total surrender, an exclusive self-opening to the divine influence, a constant and integral choice of the Truth and rejection of the falsehood, these are the only conditions made. But these must be fulfilled entirely, without reserve, without any evasion or pretence, simply and sincerely down to the most physical consciousness and its workings."

Then Kishor Gandhi delivered his Inaugural Address in which he explained the aims for which the New Age Association was formed and the programme of its activities. This was followed by a short speech by Vijay Poddar. Both these speeches are published below.

The whole programme ended with a short recorded music by The Mother.

Before leaving, all the members and invitees personally took sweets from a bowl which The Mother had blessed by Her Touch.

All the proceedings of this Session were conducted in a solemn spirit appropriate to the high aims for which the Association was formed. This solemnity was greatly enhanced by the installation on a beautifully decorated platform of The Mother's Throne and Sandals which She had so kindly given for the occasion.

Throughout the programme the whole atmosphere was intensely surcharged with the Light and Ananda of Sri Aurobindo's and The Mother's Presence and Consciousness. It was a marvellous experience for all who attended the Session.

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OUR AIMS AND PROGRAMME

by

KISHOR GANDHI

Friends,

At the commencement of the New Age Association which we have formed I propose to make a brief statement of our aims and programme so that we may know precisely why we have formed it and what will be the plan of our activities.

The central aim which has inspired the formation of this Association is to meet the most urgent need of the present hour which is of crucial significance for the whole human race. During the last few years, as you know, The Mother has been insistently

drawing our pointed attention to the exceptional importance of the present moment in the earth's history. She has said : "There are, in the history of the earth, moments of transition when things that have been for thousands of years must give place to things that are about to manifest. A special concentration of the world consciousness, one might almost say, an intensification of its effort, happens at such times, varying according to the kind of progress to be made, the quality of the transformation to be realised. We are precisely at such a turning of the world's history. As Nature has already created upon earth a mental being, even so, there is now a concentrated activity to bring forth in this mentality a supramental consciousness and individuality. (*Bulletin*, November 1953)

This importance of the present hour in the world's history has a special significance for the Ashram because Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have founded it with the sole purpose of creating a representative group of the whole humanity which will be the first to receive the supramental consciousness and to create the first beings of the New Race. That is the reason why The Mother has declared : "The Ashram has been founded and is meant to be the cradle of the new world."

The Centre of Education has also been formed by The Mother for the same purpose, as is clear from Her Inaugural Message to the Founding Convention of the Centre of Education held on 24.4.1951. Let us recollect Her own words :

"Sri Aurobindo is present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the university centre which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the élite of to-day into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life.

"In his name I open to-day this convention meeting here with the purpose of realising one of his most cherished ideals."

It is for this reason that the present concentrated activity of the supramental consciousness which will create the New Race is centrally focussed on the Ashram and the Centre of Education. As The Mother has said, "We have here the peerless privilege of being at the very centre of the radiating light, at the source of the force of transformation." (*Bulletin*, November 1953)

But that "peerless privilege" is also a great responsibility, for it demands of us that we at least should awaken to the supreme need of the hour, even though the rest of humanity still runs in its old meaningless and disastrous rounds and, entirely opening our whole being to the supramental consciousness, allow it to transform our life completely. This is our responsibility because it is the task which has been laid upon us as members of the Ashram and the Centre of Education, and if we do not discharge it to the best of our ability we cannot say that we have been faithful to the aim for which Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have founded the Ashram and the Centre or to the call of our soul which has brought us here.

That Supramental Truth which was formerly pressing from above to descend into the earth consciousness has in February 1956 globally manifested as a whole

New World in the atmosphere of the present world and has been standing very close to earth to come down into the external physical world. In The Mother's words :

"This wonderful world of delight
Waiting at our gates for our call,
To come down upon earth..."

But now that New World is no more waiting but incessantly knocking at our gates to awaken us from our old-world torpor. If we still remain too deaf to listen to its knocking it will soon crash down our fast-closed gates and rush in with its overwhelming force to possess the earth. For the New Supramental World will no longer brook any resistance or recalcitrance of the old world; its light and power are now swiftly rising like a high tide which with its irresistible overwhelming surging waves will break down every obstruction that stands in its way. It has waited long, far too long, for humanity to get ready to receive it willingly; now it is determined to come down and settle forever on earth whether humanity is willing to accept it or not.

We here in the Ashram have this special mission laid upon us that we at least should open our gates for the New World to enter in and, through us as a representative group of humanity, radiate its influence over the rest of the world.

Because the call of the New World is now becoming 'insistently imminent and because we can now ignore it only at our peril, The Mother gave us a call last year to prepare for it and has this year put us a question which is both a reminder and a warning : "Are you ready ?"

Fundamentally, that readiness consists in our sincere, whole-hearted and conscious collaboration with the great creative forces of the Supramental World that are now insistently working to initiate a New Age in the earth's history.

Of that collaboration there are two aspects—the individual and the collective. The individual aspect is a personal endeavour which each one has to carry out in his own way, in his own line of sadhana. But equally important is the collective aspect of this collaboration because without it the Supramental Truth cannot create the New Age in the life of humanity. It is because of this special need of collective endeavour that the group-life of the Ashram has been formed.

The Centre of Education, as an integral part of the Ashram group-life, has its own distinct function in this collective endeavour of collaboration with the creative forces of the New Age. Being a distinct stratum of the organic group-life of the Ashram community it has a special role to play in the specific field of its activity.

We as students of this Centre must become fully conscious of our role and, taking full cognizance of the supreme opportunity given to us, must rise to the occasion at the present hour and fulfil Sri Aurobindo's and The Mother's expectation of us to the best of our ability.

That is the central aim which has inspired the formation of the New Age Association at the present moment.

(2)

What is our special role as students of the Centre of Education in the great work that has now to be done at any cost ? In our capacity as students, it can be mainly in the field of study and education. But we have always to remember that the aim of our study here is radically different from the usual aims followed by other educational institutions. This difference cannot be more effectively stated than in The Mother's own words :

"We are not here to do (only a little better) what others do.

"We are here to do what the others cannot do because they do not have even the idea that it can be done.

"We are here to open the way of the Future to children who belong to the Future.

"Anything else is not worth the trouble and not worthy of Sri Aurobindo's help." 6-9-61 (*Bulletin*, November 1961)

At another place The Mother has explained in some more detail the difference between the spirit in which we ought to conduct our studies here and the motives with which the students in the outside world pursue their studies. Let me read Her own words :

WHY DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES ARE NOT GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS OF THE CENTRE OF EDUCATION

"For about a century mankind is suffering from a disease which seems to be spreading more and more, and in our days, it has become most acute, it is what we may call 'utilitarianism'. Things and persons, circumstances and activities seem to be viewed and appreciated exclusively from this angle alone. Nothing has any value unless it is useful. It goes, of course, without saying that what is useful is better than what is not so. But one must first of all understand what one calls useful—useful to whom, to what, for what ?

"Indeed more and more, the races who considered themselves civilised have been naming as useful that which serves to bring, to acquire or to produce money. Everything is judged from this monetary angle. That is what I call utilitarianism. And this disease is very contagious, for even children do not escape from it. At an age when one should have dreams of beauty and greatness and perfection, perhaps too sublime for ordinary common sense, but certainly higher than this dull good sense, they dream of money and worry how to earn it.

"So when they think of their studies they think above all of what can be useful to them, so that later on when they grow up, they can earn a great deal of money.

"And the thing that becomes most important for them is to prepare to pass examinations with success; for it is with diplomas and certificates and titles that they will be able to get good positions and earn much.

"For them study has no other purpose, no other interest.

"To learn in order to know, to study in order to have the knowledge of the secrets of Nature and of life, to educate oneself in order to increase one's consciousness, to discipline oneself in order to be master of oneself, to overcome one's weaknesses, one's incapacity and ignorance, to prepare oneself in order to progress in life towards a goal that is nobler and vaster, more generous and more true ..they hardly think of that and consider all that as mere utopia, the only important thing is to be practical, to prepare and to learn how to earn money.

"Children who are affected with this disease are not at their place in the Centre of Education of the Ashram. And it is to demonstrate this to them that we do not prepare them for any official examination and competition and do not give them diplomas or titles which may serve them in the outside world.

"We want to have here only those who aspire for a higher and better life, who are eager for knowledge and perfection, who look ardently towards a more wholly true future." (17.7.1960)

You will notice from the passages that I have read how emphatic The Mother is in stressing our own distinctive attitude in the field of education and in warning us to keep away from the outside influences of the present world.

I have utilised this occasion to draw your pointed attention to these ideals which The Mother has given us to follow in order that in whatever activities we may undertake, we may never lose sight of them. I thought it necessary to state them because it is only in the context and framework of these ideals that we can define the more specific aims and programme of the New Age Association that we have now formed.

(3)

This specific aim cannot be better expressed than in The Mother's own words in the Message She has specially given for our Inaugural Session :

"Never believe that you know.
Always try to know better."

As students of the Higher and the Advanced Courses we have been studying the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother over a number of years and so we may have a belief that we know their teachings. The Mother, however, advises us not to entertain such a belief; she would rather want us to keep our zest for learning more ever keen and intense

What The Mother says applies to all knowledge but it applies with special force to the knowledge contained in Sri Aurobindo's and Her writings. About Sri Aurobindo's writings, you will surely remember what She has said :

“What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world’s history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme.”

(*Bulletin*, April 1961)

Though expressed in intellectual terms, His writings are not the products of the intellect, even of the widest and loftiest intellect. They are pregnant with measureless depths of light, they are inexhaustible treasures of truth, they are endless vistas of highest knowledge which we can go on exploring for ever.

Because of this, to entertain any belief that we know what Sri Aurobindo’s writings contain after some acquaintance with them is simply a sign of our incomprehension. Even a deep and thorough study of Sri Aurobindo’s writings should never give us that belief, for we can be sure that they will always contain depths of knowledge infinitely greater than what we could ever compass with our finite understanding. So if we call ourselves students of Sri Aurobindo’s writings we cannot truly say that we have completed our study of them after finishing the courses of study prescribed for them in the normal curriculum. In fact, even for the most earnest student it is not possible to have anything more than a superficial and sketchy study of Sri Aurobindo’s works within the limits of this curriculum because he has to finish them within a very limited number of periods allotted to them and also because he has to attend to a number of other subjects which take away most of his time of study.

This surely is a very unsatisfactory situation because The Mother has not started this Centre of Education for mere academic studies as in other educational institutions. Surely we have to include all branches of knowledge in our curriculum but we should never forget that we have to study them in the light of the central vision of Sri Aurobindo’s system of knowledge. Otherwise our studies will get out of focus, we shall lose our true perspective, get side-tracked and even lost in the endless mazes of the teeming proliferation of modern knowledge. This insistence on the need of keeping a firm grasp on Sri Aurobindo’s central vision does not really amount to any narrowing of our scope of knowledge within fixed bounds because that vision is so vast and synthetic that it can embrace in its range all the developments of human knowledge, past and present, and give to each of them its proper place and right significance in a total integral harmony. Not only so but all the past and present branches of knowledge can find in his vision ample scope for new orientations for their future developments in their tireless extensions in the as yet unknown terrains of truth.

So we need have no hesitation to extend our scope of studies in all directions; but we have to be careful to make first our foundation firm and secure, because if it is shaky and uncertain we shall lose our moorings and will not be able to assimilate effectively for our true growth the vast flood of modern knowledge rushing upon us from all sides. A clear and secure understanding of Sri Aurobindo’s central teachings is essential as a solid foundation upon which we can build the whole edifice and superstructure of other knowledge.

(4)

But to have a firm grounding in Sri Aurobindo's works is not an easy task. It needs an exceptional capacity of mind and a very austere mental discipline, of which all are not capable. It also needs a keen and living enthusiasm and a tireless zest for studying Sri Aurobindo's thought which all may not feel. But there may be some who do feel this enthusiasm and zest because Sri Aurobindo's thought has become for them a mental passion which drives them incessantly, and the high and severe austerity demanded to study it fills their heart with a boundless joy of adventure.

It is for this reason that we have kept the membership of the New Age Association on an entirely voluntary basis. The Association is meant only for those who feel that they have never known and can never know Sri Aurobindo's thought enough, and who feel an irresistible urge to know more and more of it. Those others who feel that what they have studied in the normal courses provided for Sri Aurobindo's studies in our present curriculum is enough for them may not find their joining the Association helpful. So it is left to their choice whether they join or not.

Even for those who join the Association it is necessary to bear in mind that a mere mental study of Sri Aurobindo's thought by itself is not enough for the central aim for which the Association has been formed and which I have already explained at the outset. But done in the right spirit and in the right attitude it can be a very great help in realising that aim. The situation in this case is the same as in the case of physical culture activities that we do in the Ashram. By themselves physical exercises, games and sports can give us only a healthy body. But here in our Ashram we do them for an exceedingly higher purpose. For, as The Mother has repeatedly declared, physical activities if done in the right consciousness and in the right spirit can be a very powerful means of opening the physical consciousness and the body to the Supramental Force. So also mental studies, especially of the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, if pursued in the right spirit can be a potent means for opening our minds to the Supramental Light and Knowledge that have now manifested in the earth-consciousness, and for making our mental faculties fit instruments for their expression through our thought and speech.

This can be done individually also, but if done on a collective scale, as we propose to do in our Association, it will create a general mental atmosphere surcharged with the vibrations of Sri Aurobindo's and The Mother's Supramental Light. That Light is already there in and around our Centre of Education, but if we consciously open to it, it will fill our minds and lives with its white-gold illumination.

(5)

These, in brief outline, are our main aims. Regarding our programme, it is not our intention to have any elaborate mentally preconceived plan of activities at the beginning. Rather we propose to begin on a small scale with a few activities and then let them grow in a spontaneous living manner out of our own experience.

The activities that we initially propose to undertake, and which The Mother has already approved, are the following :

(1) To hold regular periodical seminars which will provide opportunities for free talks where each one is able to express what he thinks and feels. We shall start these seminars as soon as we can fix days and hours suitable to all the members. This will also provide necessary training to the students to write articles and deliver speeches of a high quality for which there is a great need for the right kind of propagation of our ideals in the outside world through our journals and conferences.

(2) To hold Annual Conferences on a date around 15th August every year to which other members of the Ashram and outsiders will be invited. The speeches to be delivered at these Conferences will be prepared mainly by the students.

Our first Conference will be held this year itself. The Mother has already approved it. Our idea was to hold it on some date near the 15th August, but as there are two other conferences during this period The Mother has advised us to hold our Conference on some date in the first week of September. We have already started preparing for it and we shall announce our exact date and programme as soon as possible.

This is our present programme. But we do not propose to limit ourselves to it. All other activities which will promote our aims we shall undertake in future.

The last thing I wish to say is that in all matters, either big or apparently small, we shall ask for The Mother's directions and carry them out scrupulously. We hope that the Power that has inspired the formation of this Association will guide us at every step and help us to answer adequately The Mother's call for making ourselves ready for the New Age, the advent of which is imminent.

A SHORT SPEECH

by

VIJAY PODDAR

Friends,

I am here to give a short speech and it shall indeed be short. I do not know how to inspire you for the way ahead, and all that I can do is to try and express my own personal feelings towards this attempt.

We celebrate today the birth of an Association, but we celebrate still more the resolve to participate in the New Age. We are the members of this unique Centre of Education, and it is our privilege, nay, our sacred duty, to create and to live in an atmosphere vibrant with the thought and the presence of Sri Aurobindo. We must provide the torch that shall light the world, the example that shall inspire, the centre that shall radiate in its purity the light and the force of the Master.

This is our first attempt, as students of this Centre, to strive collectively towards this goal, to fuse into one our individual aspirations. What we seek is first a mental understanding but also a dynamic effectuation in our lives. We do not know the

future; we do not know for certain the path we shall follow, nor how we shall expand and grow; we do not know the difficulties that lie on the way. But one thing we do know, that it is The Mother who directly and puissantly guides us and leads us, and in whose hands we place ourselves with a child-like and care-free abandon. It is She who shall mould us and carry us through all difficulties, and therefore we are certain of our goal.

But we must take the resolution and embark on the way. The outcome of our endeavour is in Her hands, but the value and the success of our effort will depend on the zeal and the enthusiasm we bring to our task, the sincerity, the courage, the faith, and the hope with which we look towards the future.

Yes, it is faith that is needed, faith in our ideal, faith in our purpose, and sincerity in our endeavour. Then the Grace and the Blessings of The Mother are with us, and we can march securely on our way.

BATTLE FOR LIGHT

A PLAY

ACT I : Scene 8

Jnana sitting self-rapt in his place. One can feel his subtle influence acting all round and see his inner state in outer scenes. Even birds are singing songs of the coming race, the breeze carrying the message of a new world coming to birth.

Enter Shanti (Peace). She stands in a corner looking at him. A heavenly lustre brightens the beauty of her countenance. When Jnana's gaze falls on Shanti, admiration comes to his eyes.

JNANA : I was missing you so long, Shanti, you whom even the Gods cherish as the "Rose of Bliss".

SHANTI : You'll forgive my questioning, you want us to help man grow into the likeness of a God. But how rigidly he clings to his darkness ! What a pity that even when pulled up he "slides back to the mud" !

JNANA : I know, I may as well tell you, "Human I am, human let me remain," says he with an air of pride.

SHANTI : Now the point is how to make him feel the need to change his "human ways to ways Divine."

JNANA : Well, the day is not far when you'll see "Love that was once an animal's desire" has turned into a sweet madness for the Divine.

SHANTI (*searchingly*) : It is easier to overtake heaven but to turn earth into heaven is not so easy. I think, earth "loves her fall" and "no omnipotence her imperfections can erase."

JNANA : Do not lose heart, Shanti. Although God made the earth for his delight, a power far more dangerous than the human mind could conceive has usurped it and dictates its law. "It exults in man's ruin and fall."

SHANTI : Must then the earth remain flat beneath its feet ?

A sudden blast. All is dark—a thunder voice comes up—"For ever and ever more". There emerges from beneath the earth, from the depths of the Inconscient a giant figure with a formidable laughter, looking horror and destruction—and thunders on :

"I carry the fire that never can be quenched, I carry the force that never can vanquished. None must cross the frontiers of my domain. That's my command."

Jnana fixes upon it his "diamond gaze" and the demon shrinks and sinks into the depths from where it rose.

JNANA (*speaking with deep subtle meaning*): That is its nature, you see. It retires and returns with redoubled force. Till it "is slain in its own home," or transformed, Shanti, you've no place on earth.

(*Shanti looks bewildered; "all question dies on her lips".*)

JNANA (*in a grim tone*): "The call of the Divine is there in men and things" but everything is swallowed up by these forces; (*with a sigh*) and, Shanti, all, all is buried in "the breast of the Night, Death and Sleep." You follow what I mean?

SHANTI: Your words throw an important light on the mystery why "earth lies unchanged". But I am afraid...

JNANA: "Lead us from darkness to light." If this ancient prayer of the Rishis is to be realised here and now, a "Power greater than that of Evil "must be born on earth, who can plant the banner of Light in the depths of the Inconscient.

"Then hate shall dwell no more in human hearts."

(*Happiness beams forth through Shanti's eyes.*)

(*Ever-blissful Nivrutti bows herself in.*)

NIVRITTI: Lord! Lord! I saw in a vision, "a world that is from a world to be" and heard a voice that higher Powers were taking human birth "to do God's work on earthly soil."

JNANA (*looking at Nivrutti with admiring eyes*): Now I foresee a day when "the earth will be made the home of heavenly light".

This makes Jnana fall into a profound concentration. An ecstatic silence fills the air.

SHANTI: Nivrutti! Who wouldn't feel elated to hear your joyous words? Your vision is intensely revealing. Such vision is reflected in Jnana's every thought and action.

A powerful light breaks and illumines the horizon The Omniscient Mother appears in her full glory. A stream of sweetness flows from her eyes.

(*Enter Sattwa from one side with the sons of the Infinite, and Bhakti with her following from the other side. They come singing in chorus.*)

O Mother Divine,
We, children Thine,
Sing victory to Thee.
O Saviour Blaze,
We hymn Thy praise
In deep felicity.
O Power of the One,

'Tis Thee alone
 Who canst conquer the stark
 And roaring Dark
 And win for man his battle for Light.¹

MOTHER SUPREME (*turning to Jnana*) : O luminous champion of the divine cause !
 Immortality for thee—I say Yes. Tathastu. But immortality for imperfect man would
 be for him a source of eternal pain. Awake not the supreme Power till the inner
 temple is ready

“Man is too weak to bear the Infinite’s weight.”

JNANA : “Hard is the doom to which Thou bindst Thy sons!

How long shall our spirits battle with the Night ?”

All Nature dumbly calls Thee, O come, “break the seals” that bind the earth to
 pain and calamity !

“Humanity awaits its hour of God.”

“MISSION to earth some living form of Thee.

Let Thy infinity in one body live,

Immortal, treading the earth with mortal feet.. ”

THE SUPREME MOTHER (*casting her “vast immortal look” on all*) :

“O strong forerunner, I have heard thy cry;

One shall descend and break the iron Law,

Beauty shall walk celestial on the earth

And from her eyes the Eternal’s bliss shall gaze.”

ALL IN ONE VOICE : Lead us from victory to victory, O Mother Divine ! from
 Light to Light, from height to greater heights !

JNANA : O Mother of the Universe ! come with the “thunder of thy victory’s
 wings,” come with the splendour of thy triumphant glory that a new and marvellous
 creation may arise from the old.

“Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men.”

Enter Sincerity with a few rose-like blooming children.

SINCERITY : O Creatrix of the Universe ! Grant that these children of the Future
 may behold Thee in Thy infinite forms.

CHILDREN (*with folded hands in a melodious voice*) : O Mother of us of all ! Grant
 that Thy Beauty may blossom in all we do, Thy Light may shine in our heart and
 Truth in our actions.

¹ Adapted by Har Krishan Singh from a song in *Satya ka Samik*, a Hindi play by the
 author

THE SUPREME MOTHER (*giving a loving look to all*) :

“All thou hast asked I give to earth and men.
Men shall be lit with the Eternal's ray;
Living for me, by me, in me they shall live.
A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.
The superman shall reign as king of life,
The world shall be God's visible garden-house,
Even there shall come as a high crown of all
The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.
Thus shall the earth open to divinity,
The spirit shall take up the human play,
The earthly life become the life divine.”

(*Concluded*)

NARAYAN PRASAD

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER

No. 8.

August

1. *Top Priority*

The most burning question today in education (burning, because it seems to consume most of the energies of Government Commissions, School Boards and the research experts compiling educational reports) is the question of how to overcome the growing shortage of teachers.

It is suggested that all this mental energy may be burned without resolving the problem if Government Ministries and their advisers seek to maintain the *status quo* by insisting that all those who aspire to the teaching profession should undergo the accepted rigid training aimed at outmoded concepts of teaching needs—i.e. in fact the whole gamut of the educational curriculum, whether they have a love for all the subjects or not before they even get near the university or training College. (Would an athlete train for all the events ?)

How many students, who might very early in their studies have developed an aspiration to teach, are discouraged because the years of training seem far too formidable ! But such would not be the case, if those students knew they could narrow down the 'field' to one or two subjects to which they were particularly attracted.

The scale of wages could easily be adjusted to the one or two-subject teacher and graded accordingly; and with such an innovation new teachers could be trained to the required standards within months. Of course, if 'The Old Guard' insist that teaching must have the seal, stamp and authority of a profession, as, say, that of the doctor (who must "know" all there is to know about the human being—from the overt manifestations of Physiology to the most occult mysteries of Psychology), then we may never have enough teachers of the right sort.

2. *Drama in Education*

We have had quite a few enquiries as to the place Drama or Dramatics has in education. Our answer is :

a) To appreciate the values of Drama, in the true sense of the word, one has to go back over two thousand years to the early Greek drama and see the value it had then for the people as a whole, men without education, without books, without newspapers, radio or television—it was their chief means of cultural communication.

b) Drama today has the same values for us as it did for the ancient Greeks—the value of communication, through the powerful means of *mimesis*—the basis of all art.

c) Its psychological value is inestimable as we have yet to learn to measure the emotional impact of *katharsis* on impressionable minds and to use this powerful medium effectively in education.

3. *Curriculum Reform*

The growing interest all over the world in curriculum reform seems to be a healthy indication of progressive change. The only comment we would like to make is that the curricula of the past—if they ever had an aim—aimed at serving a certain pattern of society. The curricula of the future should aim at serving the highest needs of the individual.

4. *Bigger and Better Education*

One may ask : what will be the outcome of this wide-spreading fast-growing demand for Bigger and Better Education ? Just as war, during the First World War, became too dangerous to be left to the professional generals, so one might wonder whether politics is becoming too dangerous to be left to 'professional' politicians or the Civil Services to 'professional' Civil Servants. Whether these people know what they should know about educating today's youth of the nation is something else again.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT