

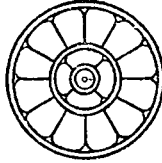
MOTHER INDIA

FEBRUARY 21, 1965 : THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

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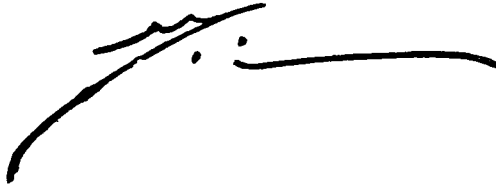


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. XVII

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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Special Supplement

A DECLARATION	<i>The Mother</i>	
THE IMPACT OF THE ANTI-HINDI MOVEMENT ON THE SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM	<i>Udar</i>	

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

The human race tolerates and accepts superior beings only on condition that they are at its service.

14-2-65

THE MOTHER

*

*

Quand le boulanger veut faire lever la pâte de son pain, il met le ferment dans la pâte et c'est du dedans que la transformation se produit.

Quand le Divin a voulu soulever la matière, l'éveiller et la faire monter vers Dieu, Il s'est précipité dans la matière sous forme d'amour, et c'est du dedans que la transformation se produit.

Ainsi c'est en demeurant au dedans d'une organisation qu'on peut l'aider à s'éclairer et à monter vers la Vérité.

17-1-1965

LA MÈRE

When the baker wants to make the dough of his bread rise, he puts some leaven into it and it is from within that the change takes place.

When the Divine wanted to raise Matter, awaken it and make it mount towards God, He threw Himself into Matter under the form of love, and it is from within that the transformation takes place.

So it is by living in the inner heart of an organisation that one can help it to become enlightened and rise towards the Truth.

17-1-1965

THE MOTHER

FEBRUARY 21

TWO WAYS OF “PRANAM” TO THE MOTHER

THERE are two ways of bowing
To you, O Splendour sweet !
One craves the boon of blessedness,
One gives the soul to your feet.

Pulling your touch to ourselves we feel
Holy and happy—we think huge heaven
Comes close with you that we may pluck
A redder dawn, a purpler even.

This is but rapturous robbery
Deaf to infinity's call
That we should leap and plunge in you
Our aching empty all

And, in the surge of being your own,
Grow blind and quite forget
Whether our day be a richer rose,
A wealthier violet.

Precious each moment laid in your hands,
Whatever the hue it bear—
A flame and fragrance just because
Your fingers hold it dear.

Make me your nothing, my whole life
I would drown in your vastnesses—
A cry to be ruled by your flawless touch,
Your will alone my peace.

AMAL KIRAN

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. 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.)

JANUARY 7, 1940

N : I had another talk with X and conveyed to him your emphasis on effort in Yoga. He was very glad. He says Y also lays stress on effort and that, according to Y, people justify their supine laziness by declaring they rely only on Grace.

S : But there is no guarantee, either, that by effort you will realise the Divine. A sloka in the Upanishad says that the Self gives realisation to those whom the Self has chosen.

SRI AUROBINDO : But the Upanishad also says later that one can't get realisation without effort.

N : Effort alone may not lead to realisation. Grace is necessary. But all the same there is no Grace without effort. All this is a little self-contradictory.

S : Some people have got realisation without effort. Suddenly they get brilliant experiences and that opens them to the higher planes.

N : X challenges anybody to show a single example.

S : Why, what about Maharishi ?

N : I thought he had to make a tremendous effort. He himself says he did 40 years' meditation, sitting in one place.

S : That was after the realisation which came suddenly and then the experience itself pulled up his lower consciousness into the higher.

SRI AUROBINDO : There are cases where the opening may come suddenly, or there is a sudden passage from one consciousness to another.

N : But the opening may close again.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not if it is a definitive experience. Then it remains all the time. If there has been only a glimpse, there can be a closing up. In my own case, there was that definitive experience in 3 days at Baroda quite suddenly. It was not the result of effort.

N : But you must have been making effort before.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not for this result. Lele asked me to silence the mind and

throw away the thoughts if they came. I did it for 3 days and the result was that the whole being became quiet and in 7 days I got the Nirvanic experience which remained with me for a long time. I couldn't have got out of it even if I had wanted to. Later also this experience remained in the background in the midst of other realisations and all activities.

N : Surely you must have been doing some Yoga earlier ?

SRI AUROBINDO : All I was doing was pranayama for 2 years and the only result of it was good health and a lot of poetry. As all that didn't satisfy me I went in search of persons who could help me.

C : What does X mean by effort ? His very effort may be the result of Grace. And you, N, formerly you were unable to meditate; now you are, because of the Grace.

N : I don't deny the Grace, but I say that effort is also necessary for the Grace to be effective. From C's point of view, even the fact of my being alive is the result of Grace; which I don't deny.

SRI AUROBINDO : Kanai may say his asanas are the result of Grace; so also X's mental asana.

N : I may ask C: "If effort is not necessary, why does Sri Aurobindo bombard me with the charge of laziness, leisureliness, etc. ?"

C : I can make an opposite quotation as my authority. Mother said that one must have complete reliance on the Divine Grace and the Grace will do everything.

P : Even that reliance requires effort.

N : In C's case there may be complete reliance, but in mine Sri Aurobindo will call for effort.

S : Sri Aurobindo's answers contradict themselves. Nobody can question his legal acumen. (*Laughter*)

N : Plenty of people complain about it. They say he says one thing to one man and quite the opposite to another. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO : Naturally. What else do they expect when people themselves are so different ?

S : I suppose your opposite statements are in connection with your letters. There are no such "contradictions" in your philosophy.

SRI AUROBINDO : No, there one has to do with general principles.

C : There are persons who see visions and have experiences as soon as they start Yoga. Others have to wait and wait.

SRI AUROBINDO : Quite true—wait, as N says, for 40 years. You may go on making an effort for a long time without any result and when you have given up all effort then suddenly you get the result. But the result is not due to the effort but to the Grace.

N : X may come to realise that, after all, effort is not everything. Grace is necessary; without it effort has no value.

SRI AUROBINDO : But X does believe in Grace. He himself said that it was by

the Grace that he was saved in that accident.

N : Yes, he said this, but at present effort has come to the front.

SRI AUROBINDO : One day he will find that his mind has become quiet and that he has started getting experiences. Not that he has had no experiences before. His body used to become absolutely still at one time and he felt the peace.

P : Yes, when he was meditating with the Mother.

When Sri Aurobindo was lying in bed a little afterwards, C began the talk again on the subject.

C : What is then meant by complete reliance on the Divine Grace ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It means what it says. (*Laughter*)

C : But I am asking a question.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, and I also am giving an answer. (*Laughter*) Don't you know what is meant by "reliance" and what is meant by "complete" ?

C : Then how and where does effort come in ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Even if you make the effort, you rely on the Grace for the result. (*After a pause*) If you have to run a race, you run it, but the result does not depend on the running. You have to depend on the Grace for the result, as is the case in giving medicines, too. One of my cousins (K. Mitra's daughter) was on the point of death owing to typhoid. Nilratan and everybody else gave up hope and said : "The only thing to do is to pray." They prayed. After the prayer they found that the girl's consciousness returned and she was all right. I was at Baroda at that time. They had wired to me about her hopeless condition. The same thing happened about Madhav Rao's son. He was dying. The doctors gave up hope. Madhav Rao wired to them to stop all medicines and to pray to God. They did it and the son was cured. I know this as a fact. Madhav Rao himself had shown me the telegram.

EVENING

It seemed the morning talk on effort did not satisfy C. He was still for Grace. So he raised the issue again. His tone was a little excited. At the time he was asking the question, Sri Aurobindo was looking at him as if he could not make out what C was driving at.

C : If a man goes on taking physical exercise every day and increases the hours of his exercise every day or every week, he will develop his health. Can it be said that a man meditating more and more will get more results ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Not necessarily.

C : Then where is the place of effort ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is not all like that—as if a man who was able to meditate one hour would be able to meditate 2 hours and then the whole day. This is not how things happen.

C : But if he simply sat on ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I said "meditate". Meditation means getting into a certain state of consciousness. Simply sitting is not meditation. If a man can get into that consciousness, then he can remain there or get still farther as he increases the time.

N : What does C mean by "simply sitting" ? Meditation doesn't come all on a sudden. One has to try to reject thoughts, concentrate, etc.

C : There are people who get into sudden meditation. Some people are quite unaware of themselves in meditation : they become unconscious or get into a state of sleep. What is that state ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the first stage. One has to pass through it to the conscious stage.

C : How does one do that ?

SRI AUROBINDO : By aspiration. Aspiration is a great thing. If one is satisfied with that unconsciousness, one will just remain there.

N : C, I find, goes at once within and his body drops this side and that.

C : Sometimes I am quite unconscious of everything. I forget myself.

SRI AUROBINDO What do you mean by "unconscious" ? Nothing happens inside ?

P : Sometimes it does : he gets a nightmare.

SRI AUROBINDO : From the tone of his speech it seems there may be a lot of activity inside. (*Laughter*)

C : Sometimes I am quite conscious of my physical position changing and bending. But I don't go to correct it.

SRI AUROBINDO : The inner state doesn't take notice of the change of the body's position. Rajangam also has no control.

C : Yes, but he is better now.

SRI AUROBINDO : Some people have to support their necks against something.

C : Why is it so ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is habitual with some. When they go inside they lose control of the body.

C : Sometimes when one is enjoying peace in meditation and somebody pokes him, he comes out of his meditation and gets disturbed, even angry. Does it mean that he had no real peace in meditation ?

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : It means that his vital being hadn't the peace and badly needs it.

C : But at times I feel an actual shock.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then you may have been in deep samadhi.

C : I remember when once Rajangam poked Radhanand, Mother said : "If you poke him like that, you will send him into another world."

N : The trouble is not so much about meditation, which I admit is difficult, but about the rest of the day. One doesn't remember at all the Divine—say, in reading, writing, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : You have to do *abhyāsa yoga* (yoga through practice).

S : N is very much in earnest. You should give him something, Sir.

P : His friends say he is completely changed.

N : Yes, yes.

SRI AUROBINDO : You are outraging his modesty. He is not making progress in the way he wants perhaps.

NIRODBARAN

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

MEDITATION AND CONCENTRATION

Q : When a sadhak has some spare time from the work assigned to him by the Mother should he utilise it in reading or in meditating—especially if he is able to meditate long ?

SRI AUROBINDO : If the power to meditate long is there, a sadhak will naturally do it and care little for reading—unless he has reached the stage when everything is part of the Yogic consciousness because that is permanent. 25-12-1936

Naturally one does not get tired if the meditation has become natural. But if the capacity is not there yet, then many cannot go on without a strain which brings fatigue. 25-12-1936

The condition of meditation (Yogic concentration) is mental quietude, there can be no mental “work” during meditation. Unless you mean meditation of the mental kind, i.e. thinking about things, but that is a different matter. 27-12-1936

Q : This morning I could not stop my thoughts. So I tried to catch them after detaching myself from the mind. But, when I pursued them, the only trace I found was voidness !

SRI AUROBINDO : That would mean the thoughts were coming up only by the quiescence of the mental Purusha and as soon as they were looked at could go on no more. Usually one has to reject them before the mind falls silent. 22-10-1936

Q : The above observation makes me ask you the question : what are these things we call “thoughts” ?

SRI AUROBINDO : They are forms of the play of mental forces. These mental forces come from General Nature and make use of the individual mind for expres-

sing themselves. Usually the mental Purusha accepts and allows the play—if he draws back and refuses his consent, then they persist for a time, but afterwards lose their control of the mind and the mind falls silent. 22-10-1936

Q : I have been advised to have some dispersion of mind in order to get over difficulties of sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO : Dispersion and sadhana are two things that cannot go together. In sadhana one has to have a control over the mind and all its actions; in dispersion one is on the contrary controlled and run away with by the mind and unable to keep it to its subject. If the mind is to be always dispersed, then you cannot concentrate on reading either or any other occupation, you will be fit for nothing except perhaps talking, mixing, flirting with women and similar occupations. 30-10-1936

The mind when it is not in meditation or in complete silence, is always active with something or other—with its own ideas or desires or with other people or with things or with talking etc... 6-4-1937

One can have no fixed hours of meditation and yet be doing sadhana. 8-4-1937

Obviously mere working or mere meditation cannot purify anything. 8-4-1937

It is not a fact that when there is obscurity or inertia, one cannot concentrate or meditate. If one has in the inner being the steady will to do it, it can be done. 7-7-1937

Q : At times, when I read a piece of philosophy or yogic literature I feel like falling into meditation. Is it not a sign of laziness in the mind ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is quite natural to want to meditate while reading Yogic literature—that is not the laziness.

The laziness of the mind consists in not meditating, when the consciousness wants to do so. 11-3-1937

Q : How is it that I can concentrate well only in a sitting posture and not while standing or walking ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is so with most people. 12-3-1937

The sitting motionless posture is the natural posture for concentrated meditation—walking and standing are active conditions suited for the disperse of energy and the activity of the mind. It is only when one has gained the enduring rest and passivity of the consciousness that it is easy to concentrate and receive when walking or doing anything. A fundamental passive condition of the consciousness gathered into itself is the proper poise for concentration and a seated

gathered immobility in the body is the best for that. It can be done also lying down, but that position is too passive, tending to be inert rather than gathered. This is the reason why Yogis always sit in an asana. One can accustom oneself to meditate walking, standing, lying, but sitting is the first natural position. 13-3-1937

Effort means straining endeavour. There can be an action with a will in it in which there is no strain or effort.

Straining and concentration are not the same thing. Straining implies an over-eagerness and violence of effort, while concentration is in its nature quiet and steady. If there is restlessness or over-eagerness, then that is not concentration. 8-8-1936

Overstraining brings inertia up. Everybody has inertia in his nature : the question is of its greater or less operation.

Q : How to set right our consciousness after coming out of sleep ?

SRI AUROBINDO : To concentrate the consciousness in itself simply, as you tighten a belt. It has got relaxed and diffused, so you have lost what you gained. Or if you have not the habit of doing that, concentrate in the remembrance of the Mother till the undiffused state comes back. 1-7-1933

Q : It is said that a sadhaka should not force the stoppage of thinking, but rather trace thought to its source of origin and watch for the real self to reveal itself from behind. Is it really a good process for silencing the mind ? Should I apply it to myself ?

SRI AUROBINDO : If you try to apply everything you read, there will be no end to your new beginnings. One can stop thinking by rejecting the thoughts and in the silence discover oneself. One can do it by letting the thoughts run down while one detaches oneself from them. There are a number of other ways. This one related in Brunton's book seems to me the Adwaita-jnani method of separating oneself from body, vital, mind, by *vveka*, discrimination, "I am not the body, I am not the life, I am not the mind" till he gets to the self, separate from mind, life and body. That also is one way of doing it. There is also the separation of Purusha from Prakriti till one becomes the witness only and feels separate from all the activities as the Witness Consciousness. There are other methods also. 17-2-1935

from NAGIN DOSHI

GANAPATI MUNI AND THE MOTHER

Vasistha Ganapati Muni was one of the most notable personalities thrown up by the Indian Renaissance in the South. He distinguished himself in several fields but his most abiding contribution has been in Sanskrit Letters where he has set a new style in hymnal literature and ushered in a New Age of direct expression. A man of deep spiritual perception and realisations, he visited the Ashram in 1928 for the Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The following extracts from three letters written, by a sadhak, on his visit, will be found interesting and instructive.

'Nayana' (father) was the term used in his circle to address him, and the writer—who was his disciple before he joined the Ashram—refers to him under that appellation.—M.P.P.

17th August 1928

NAYANA saw the Mother yesterday as arranged at 9 a.m.

The Mother and N. had joint meditation for half an hour.

The Mother's remarks after the event as related by Kn. and A. : She was highly pleased and the half an hour meditation of N. was perfect. It was one continuous, unbroken state and no sadhak with whom she meditated thus far has done so for more than three to five minutes.

N's experience of the meditation, as he said, is that whilst usually he used to feel the current emerging through his head, he now felt that an external current was very perceptibly falling on him from all sides.

19th August 1928

Nayana had his second interview today. It was for full 45 minutes.

'Do you wish to talk to me anything ?' asked the Mother.

'Yes,' said N. and spoke about his darshanas (intuitions) regarding Avatars of Sakambari¹ and Yogeshwari² and that he recognised the Mother as Sakambari and himself as Ganapati and so the Mother must consider him as her son and that he was at her service to be utilised as her instrument for Divine Work.

When N. said they were his intuitions, the Mother seems to have said : 'No, they are much more than intuitions. They are divine revelations.'

Even before N. talked of incarnations, he first referred to the Mother as Great Master. The Mother replied : 'No, I am no Master, but only Mother.'

^{1, 2} Exalted manifestations of the Supreme Shakti.

N. said : 'You are both. You supply the dynamic current. The very first day you passed your current into me. You are also Master.'

When Nayana was expatiating on Sakambari, the Mother suddenly closed her eyes and fell into a trance. N. was closely observant and described to me that he saw bright light emerging through her toe and there was a halo of light round her and the emerging current from all parts of her body was distinctly visible to the naked eye and for the time the entire room was surcharged with electricity.

25th August 1928

Nayana had a long interview this morning with the Mother—one full hour and ten minutes—of which half an hour was of common meditation.

The Mother said... that whenever she meditated with N. she felt the flow of new powers in her and that N's presence had the power to drive away asuric forces effectively and she was experiencing the phenomenon every day during soup time.

LIFE IN THE NEW AGE*

WE stand today at the cross-roads of life, where we must choose either the call of the flesh, or the smoky flame of the mind, or the call of the Spirit—the fulfilment of God in life. For those who feel their souls are yoked to the aspiration for God, Light and Freedom, who, like a young Upanishadic Rishi, cry out in divine dissatisfaction, "What shall I do with that which will not give me immortality?", our Master and the Mother have a message.

In the Gita Sri Krishna said, "Among thousands of men one here and there strives after perfection, and of those who strive and attain to perfection one here and there knows Me in all the principles of my existence" (*The Gita*, Chap. VII, Sloka III, edited by Anilbaran Roy). We have been given here this unique privilege to attain to the integral knowledge of the Divine. And since we believe that the Divine is all-embracing and total, we reject the view of those who hold that life in this world is forever doomed to be in ignorance, pain and suffering, that any idea of transfiguring it into its positive divine aspects of bliss, freedom and Immortality is merely "an inspiring dream of the impossible." We believe that "life too is a power of the divine", that there is a Divine Presence veiled behind our imperfect nature that shapes our life to an ever-increasing perfection. And it is our spiritual destiny

* A speech delivered at the First Annual Conference of the New Age Association on 6 September 1964.

that we should be able to find and fulfil in life the will of this hidden Presence—the will of the Supreme Mother.

The goal we have set before us is indeed great and difficult. For life always assumes adamantine obstinacy when pressed to cede its present forms of habits and desires. It is not without sufficient reasons that Vivekananda compared human nature to a dog's tail. For, whatever attempt we make to straighten it, "by force of ethics, religion, reason or any other redemptive effort, it returns in the end always to the crooked curl of Nature" (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 195).

And, yet there is a remedy; else the world "would be a contradiction of the truth of things, a nightmare, an impossible falsehood". The remedy has been offered to us by our Master, and we have been called upon by his divine compassion to follow his guidance. In the present lecture our endeavour will be to study life in the vision of our Master and the solution he has offered for its salvation.

Human life, such as we normally experience, is of a double nature. There is on the one side, the demands of the vital and the physical being, and, on the other, the demands of the mind. These two distinct selves within us are constantly at odds with each other. The will in the vital and the physical self seeks expansion, enjoyment and persistence of certain forms of already established pleasures. Our normal happiness is greatly conditioned by their satisfactions. This part of our being is half animal in its characteristics. But man is not merely an animal; he is a Manomaya Purusha, "the soul in the mind".

The will in the mind, on the other side, struggles to elevate life from its vital and physical clings by laws of moral conduct. It also seeks enjoyment and possession, but enjoyment and possession of things not vital and physical but intellectual, ethical and aesthetic, and to grow not so much in outward life as in "the true, the good and the beautiful." Thus, to realise in life the mind's vision of right living is the ruling passion of man. But this is precisely what he has failed to achieve. For he has not yet succeeded in organising his life in the image of the true, the beautiful and the good. All that he has been able to do so far is to effect a certain compromise between the demands of the vital and the mind by unstable moral standards. But a compromise merely shelves the problem, it does not solve it. We see that life always escapes mind's rigid formulas of right living. And when mind fails to dominate life with its abstract ideals it withdraws in disgust into the heights of mental aloofness. The result is a complete failure of the vital force which in the long run brings a decay in the life of the society and nation, arrests the progress of the external life which bogs down into the swamp of inertia. Or, life itself takes its revenge by making reason the executor of its own desires. Mind, now a captive of life-force, applies itself to the fulfilment of the vital and the physical demands. The last two great world-wars mark the lethal consequences of the unregenerated vital force asserting its will to possess the world and enjoy its domination, breaking down all lofty mental ideals of freedom and fraternity.

Thus, these two elements in us, life and mind, live in a continual war "like an

ill-assorted wife and husband”, as our Master puts it half-humourously, “always at odds and yet half in love with or at least necessary to each other, unable to beat out a harmony, yet condemned to be joined in an unhappy leash until death separates them” (*The Human Cycle*, p. 294). This double nature of man is the cause of much of his dissatisfaction, disillusionment and pessimism that we encounter today.

The root cause of our failure to give life a nobler form is not that life is essentially a negation of the good, the true and the beautiful but that our mind is incapable of lifting upward the will in life from its physical and vital urges to its spiritual status. The vital in the ignorance, as Sri Aurobindo describes it, is a “mixed flux of good and evil, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, heady rapture and bitter torture. It loves these things and would have more and more of them or, even when it suffers and cries out against them, can accept or joy in nothing else” (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 191). As we move on the way to self-perfection we become acutely aware of the obstinate persistency of this mighty opponent. All labour to lift life into the image of the divine perfection seems to end in a spiritual fiasco; a flight, a withdrawal into the happy heaven remains the only wisdom. For two thousand years since Buddha India has lived under the “shadow of the great Refusal”. As Sri Aurobindo observes, “All voices are joined in one great consensus that not in this world of the dualities can there be our kingdom of heaven, but beyond. . . . And through many centuries a great army of shining witnesses, saints and teachers, names sacred to Indian memory and dominant in Indian imagination, have borne always the same witness and swelled always the same lofty and distant appeal,—renunciation the sole path of knowledge, acceptance of physical life the act of the ignorant, cessation from birth the right use of human birth, the call of the Spirit, the recoil from Matter” (*The Life Divine*, p. 29).

But negation is not our ideal, we seek a larger affirmation. The difficulties that we confront in yoga in dealing with life arise because the ego has created a false desire-soul for its work in the ignorance. This soul of desire seeks its egoistic satisfaction of growth, possession and enjoyment. Since it is egoistic in its root, there is always a conflict, clash and struggle between our desires and needs and those of others. But our instincts for growth, possession and enjoyment are not evil in their essence. The transmuted life-force will also, says Sri Aurobindo, seek for “growth, but a growth of the Spirit in Nature, affirming and developing itself in mind, life and body; possession, but a possession by the Divine of the Divine in all things, and not of things for their own sake by the desire of the ego; enjoyment, but an enjoyment of the divine Ananda in the universe; battle and conquest and empire in the shape of a victorious conflict with the Powers of Darkness, an entire spiritual self-rule and mastery over inward and outward Nature, a conquest by Knowledge, Love and Divine Will over the domains of the Ignorance” (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 199).

To attain to such a revolutionary state of our being we must fulfil three conditions : abolition of desire, subjection of the impulses of the life-force and the mind to the guidance of the psychic being and, lastly, replacement of the ego by the true spiritual person.

Desire, according to our Master, is our "fallen aspiration" which in its essence seeks to enjoy the divine in all things. It is by spiritual discipline that we can get back to the right kind of enjoyment. To form a true relation with all things in the world we must cede our desires. Equality and absence of ego are the the infallible signs of desirelessness. True equality, according to Sri Aurobindo, means to remain "unmoved by joy and sorrow, the pleasant and the unpleasant, success or failure, to look with an equal eye on high and low, friend and enemy, the virtuous and the sinner, to see in all beings the manifold manifestation of the One and in all things the multitudinous play of the slow masked evolution of the embodied spirit" (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 201). Thus when desire and ego are slain and a calm equal wideness is established, the true vital being, Pranamaya Purusha, "comes out from the veil and reveals its own calm, intense and potent presence" (*The Synthesis of Yoga* p. 202). A new life begins to dawn upon us; we are no more a troubled and harassed creature, making a feverish effort to snatch from life as much pleasure as possible; instead we dwell in peace, calm strength and bliss.

After the vital is thus purified the psychic being comes forward as our progressive guide on the way of the Spirit. It always indicates the right method, the right step that lead to a complete spiritual fulfilment. As Sri Aurobindo says, "Its action is like a search-light showing up all that has to be changed in the nature" (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 176). "But the most intimate character of the psychic," according to Sri Aurobindo, "is its pressure towards the Divine through a sacred love, joy and oneness. It is the divine Love that it seeks most, it is the love of the Divine that is its spur, its goal..." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 177). Therefore a contact with the psychic being is the one indispensable requirement in the yoga of self-perfection.

This is, indeed, a new birth in which a sacrifice of all our works with a deep love and joy to the innermost Divine becomes the sole purpose of living. The veiled Mother begins to reveal herself within us, her dynamic presence takes possession of our life, mind and body; breaking the resistance of nature she opens the flood-gates of her transporting love.

"This cannot be a smooth and even process", cautions our Master, "alternations there are of day and night, illumination and darkness,...heights of hope and abysses of despair, the clasp of the Beloved and the anguish of its absence, the overwhelming invasion, the compelling deceit, the fierce opposition, the disabling mockery of hostile Powers or the help and comfort and communion of the gods and the Divine Messengers" (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 204-205). And yet our victory is inevitable for "the supreme Mother-Force" in whom we have taken refuge is our eternal companion. Hear her appeal to her children in the dark: "Do not give up the enemy (the adverse forces)—resist—I am with you for the fight and *we must conquer*" (*White Roses*, Enlarged Edition, p. 3). Listen also to the assuring voice of our Master: "If thy heart is troubled within thee, if for long seasons thou makest no progress, if thy strength faint and repine, remember always the eternal word of our Lover and Master, 'I will free thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve'" (*Thoughts and Aphorisms*, p. 46).

This faith in the Mother and our Master is the only shield against the assaults of adverse forces. For, truly, we cannot abrogate the difficulties; they are inevitable features in our spiritual journey. But have we not been told by our Master : "...it is the difficult that has always been accomplished and the conquest of difficulties makes up all that is valuable in the earth's history" (*More Lights on Yoga*, p. 110) ?

Our struggle to achieve a higher life is largely owing to our complex nature. For we are not made of a single piece—a pure mental or vital-physical or a pure spiritual being. There are many planes and parts of our being, each one seeking its own perfection. Thus to effect a transformation of life we must come in contact with all these "hidden stretches" of our being and cleanse all that is obscure, obstinate and impure from every part of our nature. For as long as any portion within us belongs to ignorance there is always a possibility of a fall even from our highest spiritual flight. For a better understanding of this phenomenon of our progress, I quote here some portions of a letter of Sri Aurobindo, written on June 26, 1916: "The difficulties that you find in the spiritual progress are common to us all. In this yoga, the progress is always attended with these relapses into the ordinary mentality until the whole being is so remoulded that it can no longer be affected either by any downward tendency in our nature or by the impressions from the discordant world outside or even by the mental state of those associated with us most closely in the yoga....For myself I have had to come back so often from things that seemed to have been securely gained that it is only relatively that I can say of any part of my yoga, 'It is done'. Still I have found that when I recover from one of these recoils, it is always with a new spiritual gain which might have been neglected or missed if I had remained securely in my former state of partial satisfaction" (*Bulletin of Physical Education*, August 1954).

Such a complete transfiguration of our nature cannot be accomplished by our personal effort. It is the force of the Mother that alone can bring about our victory and "diminish the difficulty and obviate the danger".

As we grow more and more into self-consciousness with her force guiding our aspiration, our fields of Knowledge and existence begin to expand. The entire physical world appears to us as a translation of the universal life-force. We can detect the sources of our feelings, emotions, sensations, passions and are able to accept or reject consciously the vital forces that press upon us. Thus we can deal with our physical incapacity, disease, fatigue by means of the influx of the pranic currents and support the physical energies.

All these and many more new experiences await us when the pure vital being comes to the forefront. But for a complete regeneration of the vital we must rise to the supramental plane. For, it is in the Supermind alone that all conflicting parts of our personality, all opposites that afflict us here, are raised to their original unity and harmony. Our union with the Supreme Mother becomes complete and all-embracing.

This is the message, the salvation our Master has offered to all of us who long to rise towards a higher and wider life.

DEBRANJAN CHATTERJEE

A SPIRITUAL CAUSERIE

ON MATTERS PHYSICAL

It is always an education to listen to Medhananda. Whether he talks to you on a serious subject or makes a remark in passing on a casual topic, there is always something new, a different look which throws a fresh light on the matter. Carrying in himself the true spirit of two civilisations, one the Western as developed in its finest strains in Europe, and the other an ancient way of life in the bosom of Mother Nature under the unveiled firmaments of the Spirit as come down in the peoples of the Pacific, he represents the best of at least two traditions. I say *at least* because I feel in him the breath of more. Judged by the facility with which he gets into the spirit of earlier civilisations like the Egyptian, Greek, etc. and the spark he communicates to you, I have no doubt he has lived them most intimately in his past lives. What is more surprising is that even among things Indian he strikes depths that are missed by many of us. He is a man of wide interests. His discerning intelligence¹ uncovers the grain, doing away with the chaff with a facility that is astonishing.

Recently we had a visit by a coach from Europe to train our girls in the Olympic events. There was a demonstration. For the item of parallel-bars a bowl had been kept on the ground with magnesium oxide with which to rub the hands so as to keep them from slipping. It was a picture of grace when the coach swiftly bent down and stood up with the minimum of movement in the minimum of time. At once it set M. in a reminiscent mood. Decades ago, he told me, he had read somewhere about the Buddha a narrative which began with the line : *The Perfect One sat down without using his hands*. At the end, it concluded : *The Perfect One stood up without using his hands*. It made a deep impression on him at that time and it came up to his mind when he saw this lady doing things with the utmost economy of movement.

This is a thing, he said, that is sadly lacking in many young people. Grace in bearing, economy of movement of the physical body and a natural rhythm in the gait, which should come naturally to those who have gone through even the elementary

¹ Like all names given by the Mother, the name chosen for him is particularly apposite : *Medhananda*, one whose nature delights in the scintillations of the intellect.

stages of physical training, are yet to be acquired. Look at any average boy (or girl) sitting in a chair reading a book. He is found spreading himself in a lackadaisical attitude, with legs either dangling loosely or in a perpetual movement without purpose. A piece of paper falls down. Look again how he picks it up. He bends sideways, stretches out one loose hand, gropes with the fingers, the leg goes in a jerk; he does not succeed at once in picking up the object; another uncouth movement, and so on.

The whole proceeding offends an æsthetic eye. It jars on a sensitive spirit that looks for beauty in the creation of God. As the Mother has pointed out repeatedly, the Divine manifests in the Physical, in the world of physical forms, primarily as Beauty—beauty of form, symmetry in proportion, harmony in movement. We see this to a certain extent in Nature below the human level. Man should use his freedom and superior power to further this movement of expression of Beauty, and not go counter to the Intention in Nature. The Physical is a mould of the Divine to manifest His glory and it is incumbent upon us to cherish and promote all that raises its value, both as a base and an effective means, for this manifestation. The physical body, the energy that flows through it, is a thing to be cherished and used to the utmost advantage. Not a movement, not a gesture should be wasted. A body so disciplined not only grows into a vehicle of conserved power but also develops a consciousness which makes it self-active. The limbs move spontaneously into actions that reflect the mood of the soul—natural *mudrās* spoken of in our ancient treatises.

This brings me to the unfortunate twist given to the Indian tradition, sometime in the long course of its evolution, by which the Physical has come to be treated with utter negligence if not with a positive contempt. I would not go in here into the reasons that led to this development. I shall only draw attention to the ruinous consequences of this deviation from the genius of the nation's soul. I do not need to point out that with the fathers of our civilisation, in the present cycle, the Rishis of the Veda, Mother Earth had equal claims on man as Father Heaven. A full-limbed body living for a full hundred summers, filling the skies with full-throated hallelujas to the glory of the commonwealth of gods and men, gathering in two hands the treasures of both Matter and Spirit, *anna* and *rayi*, was their ideal. This continued till late in the age of the Upanishads when the attention began to be directed more and more exclusively to the Spirit to the detriment of Matter. The Ascetic, the Sannyasin who turned away from the body of God in his passion for God, became the ideal instead of the Rishi who laid down the law to hold both Earth and Heaven in a happy balance. The world came to be looked upon as an illusion, as a snare to be escaped from. All that belonged to the world, the Earth, was treated as the enemy. The culmination of this movement was the deliberate neglect, the abandonment of the body—which most represents the principle of this Earth, *Prithvī*—to its own fate and an extreme preoccupation with the Soul. The springs of life dried up. And, with the disuse and failure of the life-energies, came the decline of our material civilisa-

tion. We touched the nadir. Today, things are changing, no doubt, but the weight of the legacy is there. We still look upon the Physical, things pertaining to the physical—physical work for instance—as degrading. Recently there was a report that at a national undertaking where technicians of a German firm are helping, the disparity between the visiting team and their Indian counterparts was so great that the visitors wondered how at all the plant would be run on economic lines by our men. It appears that man to man one German was found equal to three Indians in the output of work. When I mentioned this to M. he was not surprised, for, he remarked, in the West, especially in a country like Germany, they attached great value to manual work and the national mind was trained to it. Working with the hand was as important to them as working with the mind.¹ And this, he added, was so in the past in the East also. In China, for instance, a potter who designed and produced a novel porcelain jar in a unique blue was made a Duke. In India too there must have been an age when hand-work, concentration upon the physical aspect with a view to draw the best from it, was respected. He could not imagine a race of men who looked down upon the physical side—work on and in the physical—producing the magnificent sculptures and architectural wonders which exact the admiration of the world even today.

His first shock in this regard, he told me, came during the first days of his stay in India. Some light statues had to be carried to the main Ashram building from the library. He could not do it alone by himself and requested an Indian colleague of his to assist. But the latter was horrified: "It is his work," he replied pointing to a servant. My friend was taken aback. "And the statues were of Gods!" he exclaimed, perhaps in a side reference to our oft-vaunted claim of superiority as a 'spiritual people'.

It is a fact. We as a race have long lost touch with the Divinity in Matter. That is why we have developed a scale of values in which the Physical, the needs and claims of the material side of life, occupy the lowest rung.² But this has got to be corrected if we at all hope to move with the peoples of the world and take our due place as participants in the building up of a Humanity which shall be an ample figure of the Universal Godhead manifest in the highest terms of Harmony, Beauty, Peace and Joy.

The human brain, M. explains, has different areas devoted to the workings of different limbs of the body. Of these the portion related to one hand is as big as the portion connected with both the legs. That shows the design in

¹ We all know how the German race is as famous for its meticulous organisation of the material side of life as for its thoroughness in the intellectual field. History has no parallel to the gigantic effort made by the Germans in successfully reconstructing their country within a decade after the last war which brought destruction on a total scale.

² Contrary to the common understanding, Medhananda does not concede that Spirit and Matter are high and low. They are, he explains, two ends of one pole. He prefers to cite the figure of a serpent whose tail is curled up and faces its mouth. The 'distance' between the two is illusory—the mouth touches the tail. Actually the two ends are nearer to each other than to any point in between,

evolving Nature. Men have succeeded and established their supremacy over their environment and built up societies in the measure in which they have utilised the *hand*. The very word culture derives from the root *ku* which means to cultivate—dig with the hand, the hand signifying manual effort. It may be said that it is through the human hand that the Divine takes hold of Matter; the hand is the link between the gods and the physical world. (The word for hand in Latin, it may be noted, is *manus*.)

The value attached to physical work, 'doing with the hands,' was brought home to me one day in an unexpected manner. An engineer from the United States was on a visit to the Ashram. He was most highly qualified and I believe his income ran into four or five figures. In the spirit of the life of the Ashram, he offered to do some work and took on an assignment. Imagine my surprise the next day to see him kneeling on the floor with a hammer and other instruments in his hands and going it all alone. I asked myself involuntarily if any Indian engineer would have worked like that, doing even the work of a 'mechanic'. My own mentality reflected something of this general attitude in our country. It is below our dignity to do manual work. Those who do it do so out of necessity but all the while they feel that their work is 'inferior'. If some do it voluntarily—as, say, in public life—they are conscious all the time they are doing something unusual and expect commendation for their condescension. No wonder we fail in the material field.

The truth of the matter is indeed self-evident. The Mind will respond and yield its secrets only when one cultivates it deliberately, puts oneself in its service and enlarges its field of expression in oneself. So with the soul, so with the source of vital energy. So too with the physical. Unless I respect the Purusha in matter and wait upon him with devotion, discipline and application, the physical will not give its treasures to me.

Due attention to the domains of the material organisation of life is necessary to succeed in this world. But it is much more necessary, even indispensable, in a Yoga like ours which includes the full utilisation and the transformation of the Physical in its aims. The Physical is a field both for training and for expression in this Yoga. The Mother has emphasised again and again the value of physical work, the importance of the physical in the total development of man which is the meaning of our Yoga. Without perfection at the base there can be no real perfection at the top. It is a mistake to look upon the mind or the heart as superior to the body. An essay in thinking, a poem of devotional ecstasy, a piece of physical work done in the right spirit are all equal in the eyes of the Divine. As the Mother says, what makes a thing really important or unimportant, is the spirit in which it is done, the consciousness that is put into it. Even if it be to sweep a room, put all your attention and soul into it and make it as clean as a first-class operation theatre. Be thorough, be perfect, whatever the field in which you are called upon to work.

All is Divine and all shall be treated as Divine, regarded in an equal sacredness and waited upon and served in the highest measure of the sincerity. The Physical

is a concentrated expression, a meaningful formulation of the Divine. Respect the Divine in the Physical, relate yourself to the Consciousness in the Physical, organise its expression in and through you with all the fervour and delicacy you have reserved for the Lord of your being, He is not only on the heights but waits for your greeting in the depths as well.

PRABUDDHA

ON PRABUDDHA'S "THE GODS AND OUR SADHANA"

To THE EDITOR, *Mother India*,

I am a regular reader of *Mother India*, and I went through your last Dec. 5 issue from cover to cover, and I was so happy to read Prabuddha's Spiritual Causerie. Every word of it is correct from the standpoint of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and I hope you will allow me some space in your monthly or, even otherwise, send these few lines to The Mother.

Prabuddha's line of thought may be expressed as under.

In this manifested universe everything that exists does so as an expression of a certain possibility or power hidden within the Supreme Unmanifest Divine, and the Mother has addressed this—as the Supreme Lord as well. All these manifestations represent certain 'modes' of the Supreme Unmanifest Divine, to a greater or less extent. The Gods are also included in this, and though they have greater power than human beings, they too are capable of expressing only that aspect or mode of the Supreme Unmanifest Divine and nothing more ! So that in case anyone were to approach any particular god, he could be helped only on that line of manifestation of which he is chosen to be the expression.

But then what do we want as sadhakas of the Integral Yoga ? The Mother has said (I forget the exact words), "O Lord ! Let an absolutely new manifestation spring forth from Thy Unmanifest Depths", and so often the Mother has conveyed to the sadhakas that in case one has any small experience, one should neither try to repeat that nor hanker after it, but put oneself entirely at the disposal of the Mother's consciousness, so that She might guide one to that level of Her Consciousness in the manifest or even beyond that and in that alone there can be perfect freedom. And if She so chooses She might as well bring a sadhaka to a god whom he might see face to face, but even then he has not to entangle himself into that particular manifestation which is that god. This, I believe, to be the inner meaning of non-attachment and sheer sincerity.

When humanity develops into this, no man will need any god, and the gods who at present live in the *antarikṣa* will come down and walk the earth.

So a sadhaka of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga need not and should not start by having any traditional god for his daily *upāsana*, for that would some day get him into trouble and he would have to pass through what might be termed a 'spiritual obstacle'. So I am entirely with Prabuddha's approach or attitude, for on the Integral Sun-lit Path we need only Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

PRANJIVAN V. PATHAK

RISHI DIRGHATAMA

MANY of the Upanishadic rishis are now familiar to you. You have heard of Brahmarshi Yagnavalkya, Rajarshi Janaka, and some other great sages, such as Gautama, Satyakama and, among women, of Gargi, Maitreyee and a few others.

To-day I will speak of one of the Vedic rishis. Some names of great Vedic rishis must have reached your ears—Vashishtha, Vishwamitra, Atri, Parasara, Kanwa (I do not know if it is the same Kanwa of whom Kalidasa speaks in his *Shakuntala*), Madhuchchanda. All of them are seers of mantra, hearers of mantra, creators of mantra; all of them occupy a large place in the Veda. Each one of them has his speciality, each one delivers a mantra that is in its tone, temper and style his own although the subject-matter, the substance, the fundamental realisation is everywhere the same. For example, Vashishtha is characterised by a happy clarity, Vishwamitra has force and energy, Kutsa is sweetness (his mantra *Idam śreṣṭham jyotiṣām jyotih* we have all heard very often at the playground), Dirghatama is well-known for his oblique utterances, his paradoxical apothegms.¹

To-day precisely it is of Dirghatama that we will speak. Dirghatama does not mean, as the word would indicate to the layman, one who is very tall—*śālaprāṁśur-mahā bhujah*, in Kalidasa's phrase. Tama is not the superlative suffix (*most*), it is *tamas*, darkness. So, from the name itself one may naturally expect that the person was not of an ordinary category. Indeed the number of stories and legends that have been woven around the name is fantastic—queer, odd, unbelievable, impossible in every way. I need not open that chapter.

I shall speak only of what seems to me probable and believable and likely and it must be this that he passed a long time in darkness, engulfed in obscurity. The

¹ Sri Aurobindo says . "In the deep and the mystic style of Dirghatama Auchathya as in the melodious lucidity of Medhatithi Kanwa, as in the puissant and the energetic hymns of Viswamitra's, as in Vashishtha's even harmonies we have the same firm foundation of knowledge and the same scrupulous adherence to the sacred conventions of the Initiate."

legend says that he was in his mother's womb long past the due time and it seems it was of his own will. His mother's name was Mamata and his father was Uchathya. When he came out of the darkness and saw the light, it was a light strangely glimmering with all the vibrations of the long obscurity to which he had been accustomed. It was indeed the Light beyond the confines of all darkness, nescience, and yet carrying a mystic imprint of the mysteries of darkness. So he started his quest with this questioning :

"I am an innocent babe, my ignorant mind knows nothing, who will tell me of the secret seats of the Godheads ?"¹

Indeed the darkness and the blindness seem to have been the Divine's grace upon him, for his eyes turned inward to other domains and saw strange truths and stranger facts. We remember in this connection another blind old poet who even though fallen on such evil days composed a world-famous epic-poem (I am referring obviously to Milton and his *Paradise Lost*). We remember also here the deaf incomparable master of music, Beethoven. Many of the sayings of Dirghatama have become so current that they are now familiar even to the common man. They are mottos and proverbs we all quote at all times. "Truth is one, the wise call it in different ways"²—the mantra is from Dirghatama. "Heaven is my father, Earth my mother"³—this is also from Dirghatama. The famous figure of two birds with beautiful wings dwelling on the same tree⁴ comes also from Dirghatama. Another familiar and supreme mantra is imbedded there : "The immortal is in the same womb with the mortal."⁵ There are good many sayings of this kind that have become intimate companions to our lips, of which the source we do not know. When we read the mantras of Dirghatama we are likely to exclaim even as the villager did when he first saw *Hamlet* played in London, "It is full of quotations."

You must have already noticed that the utterance of Dirghatama carries a peculiar turn, even perhaps a twist. In fact his mantras are an enigma, a riddle to which it is sometimes difficult to find the fitting key. For example when he says, "What is above is moving downward and what is down is moving upward; yes, they who are below are indeed up above and they who are up are here below",⁶ or again, "He who knows the father below by what is above, and he who knows the father who is above by what is below is called the poet (the seer creator)",⁷ we are, to say the least, not a little puzzled.

The old delightful rishi—to use the epithets he gives to his Agni—and blind into the bargain, continues, his substance and manner in the same way paradoxical and enigmatic, perhaps deliberately tantalising and confusing :

"Those who are called feminine are masculine, yes, only they who have eyes can see, the blind do not know.

"The son is the seer-poet, he knows and he alone knows these things who is the father of the father."⁸

¹ 5.² 46³ 33.⁴ 20.⁵ 38.⁶ 19.⁷ 18.⁸ 16.

Then again look at this picture almost surrealistic in its boldness :

“The cow gazing upward holds with its front legs the hind legs of her calf and the calf with its front legs holds the hind legs of its mother.”¹

Needless to say these are signs and symbols and figures of a language seeking to express truths and realities of an invisible world, spiritual and occult. We are reminded of the “twilight” language of the poet-saints (*Sidhyacharyas*) of Bengal of much later days.

There is no end to the problems that face Dirghatama with his almost or apparently tormented mind. Listen once more to this riddle :

“Even he who has created this does not know it. Even to him who has seen it, it remains veiled. One who is shrouded in his mother’s womb has many children (a long line of posterity) and enters into immortality.”²

Here are some more of his aspirations, the questions that trouble him, the riddles whose solution he needs most. He calls upon the world and asks :

“Tell me, where is the end of this earth ? Tell me, where is the nodus of this universe ? Tell me, what is the meaning of the energy-flow from the energetic steed ? Tell me again, what is the word that is in the highest spaces ?”³

To these abstruse questions he himself gives, I am afraid, abstruse answers :

“This sacrificial altar is the extreme end of the earth, this sacrifice is the nodus of the universe, and this nectar of immortality (Soma) is the energy-flow of the steed and this Brahman is the Word in the supreme heaven.”⁴

About the Word, the mystery which Dirghatama unveils is an extraordinary revelation—so curious, so illuminating. In later times many lines of spiritual discipline have adopted his scheme and spread it far and wide. Dirghatama himself was an uncommon wizard of words. The truths he saw and clothed in mantras have attained, as I have already said, general celebrity. He says : “The Word is of four categories. It has four stations or levels or gradations.”⁵ The Rishi continues : “Three of them are unmanifested, unbodied; only the fourth one is manifest and bodied, on the tongue of man.” This terminology embodying a fundamental principle has had many commentaries and explanations. Of these the most well-known is that given by the Tantras. They have named the fourfold words as (1) Para, supreme; (2) pashyanti, the seeing one; (3) madhdhyama, the middle one or the one within and (4) vaikharī, the articulate word. In modern language we may say that the first one is the self-vibration of the Supreme Being or Consciousness; the second is the vibration of the higher-mind or the pure intelligence; the third is the vibration of the inner heart; and the fourth is the vibration of physical sound, of voice. In philosophical terms of current English we may name these as (1) revelatory, (2) intuitive, (3) inspirational and (4) vocal.

Now in conclusion I shall just speak of the fundamental vision of the Rishi. His entire realisation, the whole Veda of his life, he has, it appears, pressed into one

¹ 17.

² 32.

³ 34.

⁴ 35.

⁵ 45.

single rik. We have heard it said that the entire range of all scriptures is epitomised in the Gita and the Gita itself is epitomised in one sloka—*Sarva dharmān parityajya...* Even so we may say that Rishi Dirghatama has summarised his experience, at least the fundamental basic one, and put it into a sutra. It is the famous rik with which he opens his long hymn to *Surya* :

“Lo, this delightful ancient Priest and Summoner; he has a second brother who is the devourer. There is a third brother with a dazzling luminous face—there I saw the Master of the worlds along with his seven sons.”

This is again a sphinx puzzle indeed. But what is the meaning ? The universe, the creation has its fundamental truth in a Trinity : Agni (the Fire-god) upon earth, Vayu (the Wind-god) in the middle regions and in heaven the Sun. In other words, breaking up the symbolism we may say that the creation is a triple reality, three principles constitute its nature. Matter, Life and Consciousness or status, motion and light. This triplicity however does not exhaust the whole of the mystery. For, the ultimate mystery is imbedded within the heart of the third brother, for our Rishi saw there the Universal Divine Being and his seven sons. In our familiar language we may say it is the Supreme Being, God himself (Purushottama) and his seven lines of self-manifestation. We have often heard of the seven worlds or levels of being and consciousness, the seven chords of the Divine Music. In more familiar terms we say that body and life and mind form the lower half of the cosmic reality and its upper half consists of Sat-Chit-Ananda (or Satya-Tapas-Jana). And the link, the nodus that joins the two spheres, is the fourth principle (Turya), the Super-Mind, Vijnana. Such is the vision of Rishi Dirghatama, its fundamental truth in a nutshell. To know this mystery is the whole knowledge and, knowing this, one need know nothing else.

A word is perhaps necessary to complete the sense of the commentary. Agni has been called old and ancient (*Lahitam*), but why ? Agni is the first among the gods. He has come down upon earth, entered into matter with the very creation of the material existence. He is the secret energy hidden in the atom which is attracting, invoking all the other gods to manifest themselves. It is he who drives the material consciousness in its evolutionary course upward towards the radiant fullness in the solar Supra-Consciousness at the summit. He is however not only energy, he is also delight (*Vamasya*). For he is the Soma, the nectarous flow, occult in the Earth's body. For Earth is the store-house of the sap of Life, the source of the delightful growths of Life here below.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

SRI AUROBINDO ON SURREALIST POETRY

It is not my intention here to write a full case-history of the surrealist movement. It is a movement now practically dead, though the ghost of its 'bygone self' might be stalking about in various fields under different garbs. I shall not disturb the buried bones in their quiet repose. But how, without any knowledge of surrealism, I came to write surrealist poetry under Sri Aurobindo's inspiration is the freakish story I am going to tell.

We all know that Sri Aurobindo was a poet, but that he was a creator of poets as well is a fact not so widely known, perhaps. Let me cite a letter written by him on this work of his :

"It has always been supposed since the infancy of the human race that while a verse-maker can be made or self-made, a poet cannot. *Poeta nascitur non fit*, a poet is born not made is the dictum that has come down through the centuries and millenniums and was thundered into my ears by the first pages of my Latin Grammar. The facts of literary history seem to justify this stern saying. But here in Pondicherry we have tried not to manufacture poets but to give them birth, a spiritual, not a physical birth into the body. In a number of instances we are supposed to have succeeded..."

A medical man by profession, I had never dreamt that I would ever serve the Muse, nor would even my enemies have imagined me to be a singer. Yoga, poetry, medical science on the same plane would be surrealism, indeed ! True, I used to enjoy Tagore, but breathes there a Bengali who doesn't ? After coming to Pondicherry, I was astonished to find that the Yoga Ashram had a choir where adepts and fledglings were singing as a part of their Yoga with the active support of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. My 'subconscious' felt drawn towards this melodious circle, but the melody I began to produce was all but a pale Tagorean vibration and Sri Aurobindo would have none of it. I am ashamed to recollect how I pestered him for his opinion of these pseudo-poetic verses. After about a difficult and painful year of gestation in the depths of my consciousness Sri Aurobindo declared that the poet was born; but it was a forceps delivery; the passage was strenuously mental and the creation most often cheerless.

One day a poet-friend came up with a singular suggestion and said, "Give up this arduous labour; let the pen flow under Sri Aurobindo's inspiration and you will see that what you can't do for yourself the Force will do for you. That is how I write." Nonsense, I thought, but I gave it a trial all the same. A sonnet was quickly born whose face, figure and fire was baffling to my intellect but the smoothness of the process coupled with some striking spontaneous imagery sent a thrill down to my solar plexus. I had entered a new world—a Columbus-like discovery. Thenceforth the mind was kept 'windless and motionless' and the poems began to gush out

in a jet as if a tiny source had been tapped beneath the rocky bed. I felt I could go on writing hours on end. A miracle indeed and there was no doubt who was the miracle-maker. I was not the first to have the flood-gates burst open in this sudden manner. Let us remember how Tagore exclaimed about Dilip Kumar Roy that a person who had been hobbling with crutches had thrown them away and started to run ! And what about Nishikanto, also ? "A Brahmaputra of inspiration had descended into him, as soon as he started writing here," said Sri Aurobindo.

But my own poems, however brilliant, were all hieroglyphs to me as well as to other friends except Nishikanta. He found a new *rasa* in them and used to visit me regularly for a taste of the desert-honey. Though we enjoyed the queer poems, our minds were simmering with discontent at their taunting mystery. To call them non-sense would be impertinent, since Sri Aurobindo was interpreting and finding a meaning in them. At last a friend boldly asked him what the nature was of the poetry I was writing. Sri Aurobindo replied : "Nirod's poetry (what he writes now) is from the Dream Consciousness, no doubt about that. It has suddenly opened in him and he finds now a great joy of creation and abundance of inspiration which were and are quite absent when he tries to write laboriously in the mental way. This seems to indicate either that the poet in him has his real power there or that he has opened to the same Force that worked in poets like Mallarmé. My labelling him as surrealist is partly—though not altogether—a joke."

The word surrealist was utterly new to most of us. Sri Aurobindo, as was his wont, kept himself informed in his seclusion of all world-movements both inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly because he wrote once, "Don't try to throw allopathic dust in my eyes, sir ! I have lived a fairly long time and seen something of the world before my retirement and *much more after it*," and outwardly because daily newspapers and some distinguished literary journals like the *New Statesman and Nation* would carry the world's news and views into his walled-in silent ken. Very probably Sri Aurobindo saw some truth in the surrealist movement and thought it worth while to make some experiment in this field. He has made all kinds of experiments in his supramental laboratory upon himself and with others, and in the field of poetry instances are not at all rare. By injecting the divine afflatus into our guinea-pig body, he had extracted shining guineas and left out the piggish part ! But to select me of all persons for such an operation was certainly a supramental *tour de force*.

Now, what are surrealism and surrealist poetry ? I can do no better than quote from a letter written by Sri Aurobindo in answer to this query. "It is a poetry based on the dream consciousness, but I don't know if it is correct or merely an English critic's idea of it....In any case surrealism is part of an increasing attempt of the European mind to escape from the surface consciousness (in poetry as well as in painting and in thought) and grope after a deeper truth of things which is not on the surface. The Dream consciousness as it is called—meaning not what we see merely in dreams, but the inner consciousness in which we get into contact with the inner

worlds which underlie, influence, and to some extent explain in our lives what the psychologists call the subliminal or subconscious (the latter a very ambiguous phrase) offers the first road of escape and the surrealists seem to be trying to force it. My impression is that there is much fumbling and that it is more often certain obscure and not always very safe layers that are tapped. That accounts for the note of diabolism that comes in Baudelaire, in Rimbaud also, I believe, and in certain ugly elements in English surrealist poetry and painting. But this is only an impression."

For those who would like to have some elaborate knowledge, let me quote this extract from the *Listener* which gives a fair portrait of the matter: "Somewhere in mid-ocean a gibbet rises; from it hangs a glass slipper; the rope is a snake. The stem of the gibbet is full of enormous varicose veins; out of one of them springs a blue tulip."

It goes on: "For most people surrealism is something like this—a striking juxtaposition of seemingly unconnected ideas. Surrealism was born in Paris in 1924 finding definite shape in a manifesto of a poet and psychiatrist André Breton. Basically it is Freud's doctrine that 'higher reality' exists only in the unconscious. Through certain forms of associations and through dreams more and more of the real personality can be expressed and laid bare. Through the irrational imagery of dreams and dreamlike states of mind, the comfortable apple cart of existence can be upset and a new significance unearthed. Rimbaud, in spirit the earliest surrealist, believed that only by a systematic derangement of all the senses—by every form of suffering, love and madness—could the artist find 'the key to the savage parade.' Strange vast realms are explored, where (in the words of the surrealist poet Apollinaire) 'the unknown offers its flowers to whoever will gather them; unexpected fires burn with colours never seen before and a thousand unpredictable phantoms are there to which we must give substance.' The substance has been given in widely different ways, in the plastic arts, in poetry and drama.... Surrealism represents a loosening, a dissolution of form...deliberately going everywhere, doing everything and enjoying complete freedom of form."

We find then that surrealism considered Rationalism as its worst enemy and by its entry into the world of the unconscious found its surrealist deliverance.

As regards poetry which is our immediate concern André Breton declared that the surrealists are content to be silent receptacles of many echoes, modest *registering machines*. Surrealism is a pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing or other means the real process. Thought's dictation in the absence of all control exercised by the reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.

This is then the creative process adopted by the surrealist poets. We are now in a position to make a proper comparison between this orthodox kind of poetry and the one I have written under Sri Aurobindo's inspiration and decide where we come close and where we are drawn apart. I have already stated that I also made myself a silent receptacle. So is the way with all poets, I believe. But while they

feel a breath of inspiration animating them and write under its spell, its *enthousiasmos*, any creative spirit breathing into their recording machines has, for the surrealists, no place. This is the fundamental difference. Their silence is neither Wordsworthian wise passiveness nor is their pure psychic automatism the Wordsworthian spontaneous outflow. If we allow thoughts to flow from anywhere, any 'echo' to speak through the recording machine, more often than not it will be the voices of the subconscious world that will be registered, that being nearest to our 'real' world. In consequence though the poems drawn from that world may be distinguished by striking dream imagery, they will lack an organic unity. (The surrealists may not care for such a unity, their sole concern being to deliver a message.) In fact, that is what has happened with most of the surrealist poets : their poems abound in colour and images, but seem to make no sense or coherence, inner or outer: the colour merely astonishes, the images only stupefy. We know that the subconscious is like an African jungle, splendid and vast, but intricate, fascinating, and full of danger. Many surrealist poets have ended their lives in suicide, madness or some other aberrations. Only a few of them have probably passed through this subconscious belt into the deeper regions of the subliminal and cast their dream memories into fine poetic moulds. Their claim that all can be turned into poets was a myth.

My surrealist poems too are stamped with the dream consciousness, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, but they were mystic in their source and hence came from deeper layers of the dream consciousness. Though they too were characterised by unintelligibility, striking expressions and figures of the dream world, for which reason Sri Aurobindo called them 'half jokingly' surrealist, they possessed a pervasive inner sense and organic unity. All this because Sri Aurobindo's force sustained me throughout and pushed me through the chaotic subconscious belt into the deeper mystic regions of the subliminal. He says: "No poetry can be written without access to some source of inspiration. Mere recording of dreams or visions could never be sufficient unless it is a poetic inspiration that records them with the right use of words and rhythm bringing out their poetic substance." Mere silence then will tend to make us hear the 'surrealist voice' (or shall we call it 'subrealist voice?'); here is hardly the 'lovely silence where He dwells.'

Since all this may sound like special pleading with Sri Aurobindo's signature stamped on it, I should substantiate my thesis with positive demonstrations. The proof of the pudding is surely not in the speaking of it. But how to serve Bengali pudding to the English taste ? I will put two of my poems, in as close a translation as possible, side by side with a pair of surrealist poems proper to help my readers to a comparative study.

I

From where comes this unknown Creeper
On the anointed moonrise-path in the woodland ?

The blossoming waves of the murmuring heavens
 Tinge all pain with the soul-blue stream.
 The seer-sound of her compassion flowers in her hand.
 The thunder-music that booms the world's end is ended.
 In the morn that is the death of the naked skeleton
 The world-stalker proclaims a concentrated fire.
 The Dark One has put on the gold garland,
 On her delicate brow is the flame of red sandal—
 The Eternal Memory from the earth's forgotten depths
 Lightnings the first spark of the Word born of the churning.
 The eye of the white Moon in the dying night
 Pours from its blue the golden script of its dark collyrium.

II

At the day-end the golden daughter of Imagination,
 Sitting alone under the Tree
 By the rocking lake of the risen Self-form,
 Gazes unwinking. Out of the abyss-burial
 A fountain-lightning's tale of lamentation—
 A melancholy held fixed in the flowing blood of the veins—
 A curse cast from a throat of light.
 Wind-waves that have lost their perfume
 Carry off the Mantra-rays that were her ornaments
 Into the blue self-born sea of the silent Dawn ;
 The ceaseless vibration-scroll of a hidden Sun
 Creates in a sky where all is magic incantation
 A mystery-picture of the Transcendent—that luminous laughter
 Is the gold-fretted flute flowing from the inmost heart of the Creator.

HONEST FOLK

The quarrel between the boiled chicken and the ventriloquist
 had for us the meaning of a cloud of dust
 which passed above the city
 like the blowing of a trumpet
 It blew so loudly that its bowler-hat was trembling
 and its beard stood up on end
 to bite off its nose
 It blew so loudly
 that its nose cracked open like a nut
 and the nut spat out

into the far distance
 a little cowshed
 wherein the youngest calf
 was selling its mother's milk
 in sausage-skin flasks
 that its father had vulcanised

BENJAMIN PÉRET

LOVE

The neuter hand of stoic skeletons to stroke your hair
 Black as liquorice are the months of scarcity
 You shut your eyes upon the quarry of unworkable ochre
 You suck up through a hunting spear the subterranean water
 You are hypnotised in space for the leaf's sake
 To the drawing near of the invisible serpent
 The foxglove's pith.

RENÉ CHAR

(tr. by Ruthven Todd)

Now, as to these two surrealist poems proper, they seem to satisfy the surrealist theory of composition in that they were quite automatic. Whether they are also psychic would depend on what meaning we put into the word. But have they any meaning? any message? Most important of all, were they written under any compulsive stress of inspiration? The second one particularly challenges our attention by its striking images, no doubt of the surrealist kind, but the images, expressions, rhythms, do they hold together in an organic unity? I leave the reader to judge for himself.

My poems, on the other hand, may not be clear on the surface but this at least can be asserted that there is an inspiration binding all the poetic elements into a coherent whole. As to *The Creeper*, Sri Aurobindo found it a big puzzle and wrote to me :

"You have suddely shot beyond Mallarmé and everybody else and landed yourself into Surrealism of the most advanced kind. Such a line as বিবসনা কঙ্কালের মৰণ প্রভাতে¹ would make any surrealist poet's heart wild with joy. I think however you should put up a petition to your Inspiration to rein in this gallop towards and beyond the latest Modernism and give us something less progressive and startling.

"The only lines I can make something out of are the first two (the creeper of the unknown new life in the woodland path of the moonrise, spiritual opening—অভিষিক্ত² with the moonbeams, I suppose) and the third quatrain which is rather remarkable. The luminous Energy (secret in the physical centres) accepted (?) the

¹ In the morn that is the death of the naked skeleton

² anointed.

golden Garland (the Garland of the Truth) and She (this Kundalini Shakti) who carries in her the eternal Memory of all things secreted in the apparent Inconscience kindles from the oblivious depths of Earth (the material Nature) the first lightning of the Word of the churning of the Depths i.e. the first bringing of all that is concealed and undelivered in the consciousness of Matter. It is a very cryptic and also very significant poetic description of the working of the closed-up Energy in the physical centre when it wakes. The couplet *might* mean that the white-blue moonlight (spiritual light) pours the golden script of the Truth from its eyes (power of vision). The rest *may* mean a preliminary consequence of the opening in which the wave of Manifestation of Paradise comes and brightens up the anguish of the Man of Sorrows in you with a stream of soul-blue with the result that the tempest is stopped, there is the day of death for the confounded Naked Skeleton (of the dead old Adam in you) and a concentrated Fire pervades everything. After which, as I have said, the Yogashakti uncoils in your physical centres and starts serious business. Great Scott ! I think I have unexpectedly solved the riddle. Well, if my prophetic soul has rightly interpreted it, it is not 'mixed up' but it is recklessly audacious in its whirlingness of cryptic images. Spiritual surrealism with a vengeance."

As for the other poem Sri Aurobindo made of his own accord—to my utter astonishment and delight—a somewhat free interpretative rendering.¹ He wrote :

"Well, let us put it in English without trying to be too literal, turning the phrases to suit the English language. If there are any mistakes of rendering they can be adjusted.

"At the day-end behold the Golden Daughter of Imagination—

She sits alone under the tree of life.

A form of the Truth of Being has risen before her rocking there like a lake.

And on it is her unwinking gaze. But from the unfathomed abyss upsurges

The tale of its lamentation, its torrent-lightning passion,

A melancholy held fixed in the flowing blood of the veins,—

A curse cast from a throat of light.

The rivers of a wind that has lost its perfumes are bearing away

On their waves the Mantra-rays that were her ornaments

Into the blue self-born sea of the silent Dawn;

The ceaseless Vibration-scroll of a hidden Sun

Creates within her, where all is a magic incantation,

A picture of the transcendent Mystery²—that luminous laughter

¹ This rendering has already been published. So also has Nolini Kanta Gupta's of the Creeper-poem, again a somewhat free interpretative version. A few lines from both have been incorporated in the ones which, because of their more direct reflection of the typical surrealist elements, have been juxtaposed with the poems picked out for comparison with them.

Or,

A mystery-picture of the Transcendent

Is like the voice of a gold-fretted flute flowing from the inmost heart of
the Creator.

“Now I don’t know whether that was what you meant, but it is the meaning I find there. Very likely it has no head or tail [to my query whether it had any head or tail] but it has a body and a very beautiful body—and I ask with Baron, why do you want to understand ? why do you want to cut it up into the dry mathematical figures of the Intellect ? hang it all, sir ! In spite of yourself you are making me a convert to the Housman theory and surrealism. No, sir, feel, instand, overstand, interstand, but don’t try to understand the creations of a supra-intellectual Beauty.”

I need hardly repeat that if Sri Aurobindo had not sustained me with his inspirational force, no amount of ingenuity on my part could have effected such “creations”; the more so when not a word of what I had written was intelligible to me. As I have mentioned before, after this poetic rebirth I have followed the friend’s inestimable advice. I have told my mind, “Be quiet. Leave all responsibility in the hands of the Master. Good or bad, maimed or whole, whatever may be, he will suggest the necessary changes. You are free !” Yes, this freedom from responsibility whether in yoga or in life-activity, what a release it is ! Tagore seems once to have said to Abanindranath when he felt diffident about writing, “Why do you fear ? I am there !”

So I used to send up every day two or three poems and would ask Sri Aurobindo to interpret them, to choose the right word from different alternatives and enlighten me on many other details. Since the rational mind would always insist on understanding the meaning it often deprived itself of the poetic thrill even when some remarkable lines had been wafted in by the sapphire wings of inspiration. Only after receiving Sri Aurobindo’s praise, it would enthuse ! Even then, the busy mind was not so docile, it would exercise its right of revolt or, clever artificer that it is, it would slip in its own interpolations. Then would result abortions, births of monsters. Sri Aurobindo’s eye was too quick for any deceptions or accretions incompatible with the trend and tone of the poem and the poem had either to be rewritten or thrown into the “abyss-burial” of the waste-paper basket.

The creative process seems to vary with each poet. Though all are more or less passive instruments, I have not heard of a poet whose creations are an enigma to himself and possess nevertheless a coherent form and substance. In moments of quiet frenzy, as it were, poem after poem took birth till one day, to my bewilderment, I found that the surrealist element was becoming so tenuous that the poems looked almost anaemic ! The jet became very thready and the waters were hid as with a stone. Almost Job-like I cried in woe, “What is this that has happened, Guru ? Where are those striking lines and images ?” And Sri Aurobindo from his ethereal sanctuary sent the answer in his habitual calm tone, “Try to get them in another way.” Thus I realised that the experiment had come to an end. Was he satisfied ?

Perhaps, for he admitted some truth in the surrealist theory. Incidentally a new vein was introduced into the Bengali language, as there had been in it no proper surrealist poetry, far less mystic surrealist.

Now to fresh woods and new pastures. How the English terrain offered me a different greenery studded with elm or daffodil is another story I might tell another day.

NIRODBARAN

THE MOTHER'S GRACE

To

The Editor, "Mother India", Pondicherry.

Sir,

I am sending you an account of how I experienced the Mother's Grace. Kindly publish it in "Mother India", so that other devotees also may take heart from this, just as I have done by reading other people's experiences.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. E. Kunhikannan Nair.

Padmalayam,

Panniankara—Kallai, Kozhikode-3.

It is over 28 years since my husband and myself came under the influence of the Great Master and the Mother. Though we can't be called Sadhaks in the strict sense of the word, we have endeavoured to the best of our ability to follow the path illumined by them. Throughout this period we had undergone many a trial and tribulation and the Mother's Grace had never been found wanting.

But the intensity and depth of our faith was yet to be tested. Last November, we were the recipients of Her Grace in such a way that it left no room for doubt even in the most sceptical minds among our friends.

Since March last year my husband had been ill and he had to give up his practice at the Bar. At first, he didn't take his illness seriously, having kept fairly good health till then. But after some time, he consulted some doctors who advised him to proceed to Trivandrum for further investigations and if necessary to undergo an operation. Most unfortunately he didn't listen to their advice and, in spite of our protests, tried, instead, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic medicines in turn, with the result that he steadily lost weight and his condition grew from bad to worse. All our entreaties were in vain and he stuck to his decision of refusing allopathic treatment. By the end of October he had lost about 50 lbs and he couldn't move about as he used to. On October 31st, on the eve of his 67th birthday, life seemed to take a full circle. Our eldest son, who had been away for 6 long years came back home on that day. Meanwhile, my son-in-law who wanted to take the patient to a very efficiently run Mission

Hospital, had already made the necessary arrangements to take him there. On the arrival of my son, all of us went to the said Hospital. The Chief Medical Officer there—a German missionary doctor—diagnosed the disease as an advanced case of Cancer of the Stomach. He was of the firm opinion that the only remedy lay in an immediate surgery, if at all it could be undertaken, considering the extremely weak condition of the patient. On his advice we took him to the C.M.C. Hospital, Vellore. There the earlier diagnosis was confirmed and rather reluctantly (as they were very very doubtful of the result) the surgeons undertook to perform the operation, at the same time asking us to be prepared for the worst.

In that desperate crisis, the only ray of hope was my faith in the Mother's Grace, which I believed could perform even miracles. So, on 17th November I wired to the Mother, informing her of the date and time of operation. Next day—18th November—as my husband lay on the operation table, the surgeon sent for my son and told him that his father's condition was worse than what he had expected and they would proceed with the operation only if we were brave enough and prepared to face the worst. My son, in his desperation, and realising that the only alternative was prolonged agony for his father, gave his consent and asked them to proceed with the operation. When my son came and related what the doctors had said I lost even the power to think coherently. I simply lay down and prayed fervently to the Mother. Within a short while, we received a wire from the Mother conveying Her Blessings. I heaved a sigh of relief, for I felt sure that my husband would survive the ordeal.

He was brought back to the ward at 3-30 p.m., full 6 1/2 hours after he had been taken to the theatre. The next 96 hours also were very critical. I sat by his bedside and prayed, calling upon the Mother to give him the necessary strength to pull through. And wonder of wonders! his post-operative recovery was admittedly remarkable—a surprise even for the doctors—without any hitch whatsoever. Not even a rise in his temperature!

I am full of gratitude to the doctors who treated him and without whose professional skill and careful attention my husband would not have recovered from so serious an illness. But it is my firm belief, nay, conviction, that even the doctors were the instruments through whom the Mother's Divine Grace worked.

As if to complete my happiness, this made it possible for us (my daughter, son-in-law and myself) to attend the Darshan of 24th November. I was unutterably happy in that I could make the trip to the Ashram, bow down at the Master's Samadhi, and have the Darshan of the Divine Mother in a spirit of surrender and a heart full of gratitude. I write this simply to share my joyful experience of the Mother's Grace with other devotees.

Let me add, that we returned from Vellore last month and my husband is slowly but steadily picking up strength.

May we so live as to deserve the Mother's Grace always, is our only Prayer.

E. KUNHIKANNAN NAIR

REFUGE

(Translated from the Tamil verses of Kulasekhara Alwar, the Chera King and Saint.)

Though thou shouldst not spare me the anguish of the world, yet I have no refuge but thy feet, O Lord of the City of the wise begirt by gardens full of sweet flowers. If, in a keen-edged wrath, the mother cast off the babe, what can it do but cry for the mother's love ? I am like that babe. (1)

If the man whom she loves subject her to contumely, the high-born wife still clings to him; for he is her chosen lord. And I, too, O Lord of the City of the wise whose walls reach up to Heaven, I will ever praise thy victorious feet, even if thou shouldst leave me unprotected. (2)

Reject me, O Lord, and I will yet hold on to thee, not knowing another prop. O Lord of the City of the wise encircled by green fields with their glancing fish, the rightful king may cause much pain to his country's heart, not looking at things with his own eyes, but still the country trusts in him. I am like that country. (3)

The sufferer loves the wise physician even when his flesh is cut and burnt. O Lord of the City of the wise, let thy Illusion inflict on me an endless pain, I will yet remain thy servant, I will yet look up to thy feet. (4)

O Lord of the City of the wise, who didst slay the strong and cruel Beast, ah, where shall I fly for refuge, if I leave thy feet ? On the tossing sea the bird leaves the mast of the ship, he flies to all sides but no shore is visible, and he again returns to the mast . I am like that bird. (5)

Let Fire himself assail with his heat the lotus-flower, it will blossom to none but the Sun. Even if thou shouldst refrain from healing its pain, my heart can be melted by nothing else as by thy unlimited beauty. (6)

The Rain may forget the fields, but the fields will ever be thirsting for its coming. O Lord of the City of the wise, what care I whether thou heal my wound or no, my heart shall ever be thine. (7)

The rivers course down through many lands but must yield themselves to the Sea, they cannot flow back. O sea-hued Lord of the City of the wise, even so must I ever be drawn to thy resplendent glory. (8)

Illusory Power ever seeks him who seeketh thee not, not seeking thy lasting Might. O Lord of the City of the wise whose discus flashes like the lightning, I must ever seek thee, who am thy servant. (9)

(Reproduced from "Arya", Vol. II, 15 September, 1915)

GALLEON OF THE KING

February 21, 1965

FORTUNATE voyagers on the galleon of the King, rejoice, O happy pilgrims,
Long harassed by storms, hunger and privation, waves of passion,
Hunted by marauding pirates through the ages,
Held up by long doldrums of despair and slack sails of emptiness,
Ensnared by the crystalline bays within coral reefs
Which tear open bare keels with the ease of a razor blade.

Forget, O soldiers, now that the land is in sight
The giant whirlpools, irresistible downward pull drowning all yearning,
Forget the fog, the rain, the sleet, the icebergs and the biting bleak winds,
The dreadful sleepless vigils in face of starvation and certain death,
Efface the memory of the hard sacrifices made to appease an implacable Fate,
Forget the harsh words, secret plots of rebellion against your Pilot Queen.

Celebrate, O chosen delegates, your long ordeals are over.
Land-birds sing an anthem of welcome to our new home.
Dancing bits of green wood, fresh-water weeds and plants
Eagerly kiss the advancing prow of our galleon.
The laughing winds bring an incense-offering from the excited virgin fields.
The Dawn writes her message of greeting with the contour of the Eastern hills.

Remember the friendly stars on the way and the trade winds of constant Grace,
The smile of the Sun and the Moon signalling through the crevices in the sky,
The dolphins and the seagulls by daylight and the honk of the geese at night
And your anxious brothers and sisters who wait with trust in your mission,
Remember the mighty ocean that carried you so long on its bosom
And above all the sovereign vision and determination of your Captain.

O happy pilgrims, bridle your impatience, stand a while in silence.
Then lower the plank, move aside, give the Queen the right of the way.
She has steered the galleon of the King safely to the other hemisphere.
Watch Her plant on the untrodden soil the blue and gold banner of New Creation.
Stay and pray with Her in this mystic hour of hope and triumph.
Beyond the fringe of the sand lies the unsullied land of Love's adventure.

NIRANJAN GUHA ROY

NIGHT THE ICONOCLAST

WE have entered now into the dark Continent;
the air is heavy with the breath of Night;
the stars do not shine, neither is there the scent
of earth or of nature—yet 'tis a world of sight :
pattern, shape, form and design are in movement;
a rebel heart longs for remembered light.

Then by dire effort sound treads upon the dark
and footsteps leave a pattern of desire :
the call of a star-thrush echoes in the park
of remembrance, and the magic notes of a lyre
create an upward shooting flaming arc,
torn from the soul striving to aspire.

Smash the face of desire, or the dream will die—
Let the stars fall from the image of the sky.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

THE SPECTACLE OF LIFE

I SAW you breaking
Under the weight of your existence
And looked askance,
Wondering if it is a rule for a man
To accumulate years behind him
And ever be carrying the load
Of past regrets ?
While pleasures flee
Like autumn leaves from a tree;
And the mortal frame,
Which some call blessing
Some sin, dissolves silently
Into haphazard furrows
Like ravaged frontiers of a cherished land.
—And the soul
Lurking like a neglected entity
In quest of redemption, yearns
For a citadel of virtue,

Where to kindle other lamps with its flame.
 Why move in the wilderness
 Of blind passions and hatred?
 Nothing endures. Turn to your interior
 And find the destinations
 Waiting for you there.

KAILASH C. KOHLI

DESIRE OF THE TREE FOR THE SUN

*(Suggested by Sri Aurobindo's photograph in the Meditation Hall—framed
 within His symbol)*

THIS unearthly beautiful picture of Sri Aurobindo casts an overwhelming spell. The moment one gazes upon it an effortless suspension of disbelief and a cessation of mental activities take place. One is, then, left with an irresistible feeling of veneration alone.

What if I gain the whole world but fail to hearken to the Master's call whose ineffably calm gaze penetrates the very depths of our inmost being !

Lone bright Sun, has the mere glimpse of Your face, then, a power to make the flame of our aspiration rise ?

There is fire in the bosom of Fuji Yama;
 there is beauty in the moonlit Taj;
 there is massiveness in the Pyramids;
 there is compassion in the Buddha;
 there is forbearance in the "Son of God";
 there is an inexorable moulding-force in the whip of Time;
 there is a *raison-d'être* and harmony in Nature;
 but in MY MASTER there is all this and more:
 there is the acceptance of the Flesh and the Spirit;
 of earth and heaven;
 and, what is more wonderful,
 there is the transformation of the Flesh into the
 divine substance, atom by atom—
 like a diamond fashioned from a coal, or a lotus
 sprung from the mire.

BIBHASH JYOTI MUTSUDDI

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PART TWO : THE CONQUEST OF SLEEP

(Continued)

V. THE EVOLUTIONARY WAKING

“The Inconscient is a sleep or a prison, the conscient a round of...the wanderings of a dream : we must wake into the superconscious where all darkness of night and half-lights cease in the self-luminous bliss of the Eternal.”

(*The Life Divine*, p. 571)

FOLLOWING the purposeful involutory plunge of Sachchidananda into “the Inconscient’s boundless sleep”¹, commences the ‘obverse manifestation’, the inevitable process of evolution, by which the Consciousness-Force involved in the form and activity of inert material substance gradually wakes again and brings out by degrees all the hidden powers inherent in “the original self-existent spiritual Awareness.”²

Evolution is no doubt an inverse action of the involution, but not in the sense of “a withdrawing, a subtilization, plane after plane, leading to a reabsorption into the One Unmanifest.”³ It takes place in Matter itself; it is in essence the gradual emergence and heightening of the force of consciousness *in the manifest being*, leading to an ever greater manifestation of the divine Consciousness-Force in the manifested *material universe*. Thus in this progressive evolutionary awakening of the involved Consciousness and Force and its ascent from principle to principle, from grade to grade, from light to more light, “what is an ultimate and *last derivation in the involution* is the first to appear in the evolution, what was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution the last and supreme emergence.”⁴

So it is that at the end of the involutory phase of manifestation when Sachchidananda lay self-shrouded in ‘the inconscient swoon of things’, there took place ‘a slow reversal’s movement’ and was begun the process of ‘unmasking of the Spirit

¹ The expressions put within quotation marks and bearing no specific references are all taken from Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*.

² *The Life Divine*, p. 493.

³ Sri Aurobindo, *The Future Evolution of Man*, p. 146.

⁴ *The Life Divine*, pp. 759-60.

in things.' Out of the Inconscient, Existence appeared in a first evolutionary form as substance of Matter, and an apparently inconscient Energy

...made in sleep this huge mechanical world¹

Thus

In this whirl and sprawl through infinite vacancy
The Spirit became Matter and lay in the whirl,
A body sleeping without sense or soul...
Still consciousness was hidden in Nature's womb,
Unfelt was the Bliss whose rapture dreamed the worlds.
Being was an inert substance driven by Force.²

'Lost in slumber, mute, inanimate', the material universe 'awaited life and sense and waking Mind.' The evolutionary nîsus was at work to waken the 'earth-nature's heavy doze'. So, Matter's sleep was stirred by 'buried memories recalling the lost spheres' from which was made

The wide and prone leap of a godhead's fall.³

Then,

A little the Dreamer changed his poise of stone.⁴

And

A scene was set for Nature's conscious play.
Then stirred the Spirit's mute immobile sleep;
The Force concealed broke dumbly, slowly out.
A dream of living broke in Matter's heart.⁵

Thus, in Matter Life appeared and living physical beings. Consciousness, asleep and non-apparent in Matter, emerged at first in the guise of 'tranced vibrations' of plant life :

An inarticulate sensibility...
Ran through its somnolent torpor and there stirred
A vague uncertain thrill, a wandering beat,
A dim unclosing as of secret eyes.⁶

¹ *Savitri*, Book II, Canto I, p. 114.

² *Ibid.*, Book II, Canto V, p. 175.

³ *Ibid.*, Book II, Canto I, p. 112.

⁴ & ⁵ *Ibid.*, Book II, Canto V, p. 177.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

In this way

A godhead woke but lay with dreaming limbs;
 Her house refused to open its sealed doors . . .
 At first she raised no voice, no motion dared : . . .
 Only she clung with her roots to the safe earth,
 Thrilled dumbly to the shocks of ray and breeze
 And put out tendril fingers of desire; . . .
 Absorbed she dreamed content with beauty and hue.¹

Then came a higher type of awareness, the desire-sense and the desire-thrill of the primary animal forms:

At last the charmed Immensity looked forth :
 Astir, vibrant, hungering, she groped for mind;
 Then slowly sense quivered and thought peered out;
 She forced the reluctant mould to grow aware.²

But the evolutionary process was not to stop at this first imperfect formulation of conscient life. Consciousness strove towards self-finding through successive forms of animal organisms more and more adapted to its completer expression. These "luminous stirrings prompted brain and nerve" and

An animal creation crept and ran
 And flew and called between the earth and sky.³

Thus the awakening Consciousness-Force manifested in developing animal forms "a life-mind perception...and at its back an obscure consciousness-sight and feeling of things."⁴ Then, under a further compulsion of the imprisoned consciousness struggling to come out to the surface, there emerged, topping everything else so far achieved, a conscious mentality in the form of mentally perceptible sensation, and conceptual thought, and reason comprehending and apprehending and combining its data of knowledge. Thus, "man was moulded from the original brute" and evolutionary Nature, in and through man, looked for the first time *overtly* upon the world and wondered at "the works wrought in her mystic sleep" :

A Mind began to see and look at forms
 And groped for knowledge in the nescient Night.⁵

¹&² *Savitri*, Book II, Canto V, p. 178.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴ *The Life Divine*, p. 610.

⁵ *Savitri*, Book II, Canto I, p. 144.

But the travail of the emerging consciousness has not yet ended; for, the awakening achieved in evolution so far is very much maimed and incomplete, and our journey back out of 'our long self-loss' in 'the swoon of the Inconscience' towards a superconscient Light and Sight, has not yet been accomplished. "In man the emerging Consciousness [appearing] as Mind...is still a partial and limited, not an integral power of itself, but a first conceptive potentiality and promise of integral emergence is visible. *That integral emergence is the goal of evolving Nature.*"¹ (Italics ours)

Thus the cosmic sleep and the somnambulist dream-state have by no means terminated with man and his Mind-consciousness. As a matter of fact, man's present condition is at best a state of half-sleep and half-waking, a state of veritable somnambulist torpor with 'inconstant blink of mortal sight.' For, basically, *sleep* denotes a poise of consciousness in which we are completely ignorant of the fundamental truth of existence—whether individual, cosmic or transcendent—and of the Reality that is at the basis of all things; while the *dream state* signifies that particular status in which we may be aware of this "reality" but only in a distorted, disfigured and topsy-turvy way.² Man, thus, proves to be a creature asleep in most parts of his being and dreaming in the little in which he has gained partial awakening. As a matter of fact,

Our mind lives far from the authentic Light
Catching at little fragments of the Truth,³

and our normal human awareness which is really no better than 'a bright body of ignorance' is, because of the very circumstance of a separative ego-centred existence in a material, spatial and temporal universe, reducible to a state of sevenfold blindness. Thus,

"We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming; we take partial facts of being, temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence,—that is the first, the *original ignorance*. We are ignorant of the spaceless, timeless, immobile and immutable Self; we take the constant mobility and mutation of the cosmic becoming in Time and Space for the whole truth of existence,—that is the second, the *cosmic ignorance*. We are ignorant of our universal self, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; we take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as not-self,—that is the third, the *egoistic ignorance*. We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time; we take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space, for our beginning, our middle and our end,—that is the fourth, the *temporal ignorance*. Even within this brief temporal becoming we are ignorant of our large and complex being, of That in us which is superconscient,

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 610.

² cf. *anyathā gr̥hmatāḥ svapno nidrā tattvamajānataḥ* (Gaudapadaacharyya, *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*)

³ *Savitri*, Book II, Canto V, p. 182.

subconscient, intraconscient, circumconscient to our surface becoming; we take that surface becoming with its small selection of overtly mentalised experiences for our whole existence,—that is the fifth, the *psychological ignorance*. We are ignorant of the true constitution of our becoming; we take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle or the whole account of what we are, losing sight of that which constitutes them and determines by its occult presence and is meant to determine sovereignly by its emergence their operations,—that is the sixth, the *constitutional ignorance*. As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world; we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations, actions, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questionings of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal,—that is the seventh, the *practical ignorance*.¹

We see then that, although undoubtedly ‘the crown of all that has been done so far, man with his ‘intelligence half-witness, half-machine’ cannot possibly be the ultimate product of the process of evolution. For his

Mind’s insufficient self-discovery,
An early attempt, a first experiment²

is no better than ‘a toy to amuse the infant earth’. But

...knowledge ends not in these surface powers
That live upon a ledge in the Ignorance
And dare not look into the dangerous depths
Or to stare upward measuring the Unknown.
There is a deeper seeing from within
And, when we have left these small purlieus of mind,
A greater vision meets us on the heights
In the luminous wideness of the Spirit’s gaze.
At last there wakes in us a witness Soul.³

Mind-consciousness is thus seen to be only an intermediate stage

...through which we pass
On our road from Matter to eternal Self,
To the Light that made the worlds, the Cause of things.⁴

¹ *The Life Divine*, pp. 583-84.

² *Savitri*, Book II, Canto V, p. 190.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

The evolutionary awakening of consciousness has thus still to proceed until Supermind or Gnosis, the Power of Truth-Consciousness of Sachchidananda, emerges in evolution to become the governing principle of embodied material existence. For, then, the manifested being will be in secure possession of an integral consciousness and an integral Sight; there will then be no more a state of sleep in contradistinction to a state of permanent wakefulness, no longer a dividing line of demarcation compartmentalising the inner and outer domains of existence, no more any difference between the subjective and objective provinces of experience : all will then be fused into an unadulterated Unity, the evolving being will be fully aroused from the 'stone-grip' of an involutory sleep, and the cycle of self-oblivion and subsequent self-discovery by the soul descended into ignorance will be accomplished. Sachchidananda will then stand fully revealed in his robe of Matter and

Nature steps into the eternal Light.

Then only ends the dream of nether Life.¹

But that Golden Dawn, the overt emergence of the Supramental Consciousness, heralding the annulment of the nescient sleep of Night, is still lying in the womb of the future. In the meantime, has man, the mind-conscious being, got no possibility whatsoever of contacting those superconscious as well as subliminal ranges of faculties which rise high above and penetrate deep behind that particular psychological stratum to which we ordinarily ascribe the name of mentality ? As we shall presently see, the situation is not so desperate as it appears at first sight, for we shall meet with the paradox that *whereas our waking state is in fact a state of sleep, the sleep of our physical being opens the doors to a greater waking*. And therein lies the most important function of sleep with normally untapped and undreamt-of possibilities.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *Savitri*, Book II, Canto V, p. 174.

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

PHILOSOPHY

(Continued)

NEITHER pure empiricism nor didactic thought forms the background of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy in *Savitri*. It has no theological origin, either. It does not owe any debt to myths, folk lore or tradition as we see in Milton. And yet what philosophy is there does not burden by its content the poetic quality of the epic; for the whole appears native to the poem by its value of experience, the soul-value. Certainly Sri Aurobindo does not bring in the different thought-elements of the day, as did Milton, but fuses philosophy so naturally with poetry that the philosophical element appears to be very part of the poetic substance. And this philosophy lends wings, instead of adding weight, because what he brings here is not so much the formal rational mass of speculative thought, but the very breath of experience which when translated into prose becomes philosophy and when caught in verse assumes the colour of insight. What is lacking there is the pure logical sequences, the inferential steps which we find in his philosophical treatise. Otherwise the essence of his *Life Divine* and *Savitri* is the same. Behind both is the unique intuitive vision, the divine inspiration and the power of supreme experience that in one becomes irrefutable logical steps of philosophical discovery and in the other the amazing revelation of Beauty and Bliss.

Savitri accepts experience to be the one and sole criterion of evaluation. Unlike empiricism it rejects the limited vision of the senses and takes into its cosmic field all experiences of the mind, life and body that have been touched and illumined by the soul. Not only thought or sense-experience, but also the occult experience of the Nihil, of Death, of the powers and sons of Falsehood, of the gods of life and all other major experiences both yogic and occult are included in his domain. Nothing is too important or too valueless here. Nothing is too high or insignificant. All have a need, a place, a relation, a significance in the total scheme of things. We can in contrast see the position of Satan in *Paradise Lost* where this outweighs all other values.

Savitri has no such inexplicable incongruencies as are extant in *Paradise Lost*, because it does not rely on any scripture or teaching as its base. It has no theological adherences. It has set itself above all limitations that are the core of religion. It has no ethical values and does not stand on any human moral standard. Nor has it any special type of philosophy to which it clings and wants to explain all in that limited vision. And yet it accepts all that is of value in humanity and rejects no major emotion, sentiment, condition, point of view or trend. It is awake to the empiri-

ricist's point of view, the point of view of the scientist. But it finally regards all things from the station of the seer and the Avatar. Thus a rejection of common modes of thinking, seeing and feeling on one hand and an inclusion of all principal trends of humanity on the other form the background of *Savitri*.

And yet it puts forward no philosophical dictum, as does Milton, in order to explain the fall of man. It does not support one school of thought or reject another in order to affirm its stand or give value to its adherence. It does not, like Milton, start with any given premise of hypothesis which it dare not question. As regards human standards, it starts from an utter lack of premise and builds up on experiences as they come. This is another aspect of its background.

Milton gives us some data, the cause of which he cannot explain, like the presence of evil in God and the birth of sin. He merely gives us a myth. But Sri Aurobindo shows us the cause and effect of things on the testimony of a written text. He goes to the root of the problem and shows by valid occult experience the truth. Thus we get in him the answer to many of our problems about mind, ignorance, fate and divine Will. His experience does not contradict scientific findings and unlike Milton he does not waver between the Copernican and Ptolemaic theories about the cosmos. This certainty Milton lacks. This preciseness and surety, this clarity of vision, this luminosity of experience Milton is devoid of.

Critics may remark at this point that philosophy and poetry are different domains and we may not expect philosophical validity from poetry. But the poems that we are dealing with are not merely descriptive or lyrical; both of them attempt to give us the key to the vexing riddle of human existence, and this means we are entering the domain of philosophy. We cannot shirk the responsibility, once we have chosen to tread the path.

In *Savitri* one finds six major principles. These are : the Spirit, the Divine Will, the Evolving Earth, Ignorance, Soul and Grace. Milton does not recognise the presence of the Spirit, but in Sri Aurobindo this is the main all-sustaining principle. This is in Christianity the third primordial principle, which is least understood by Christians themselves. It was realized in the ancient religions, and the awakening of the reason put it behind a veil of unsure mysticism. That is why Milton refuses to acknowledge its presence. But Sri Aurobindo, seer that he is, pierces the veil of common understanding and sees the truth. To him this is the *raison-d'être* of the world, and is itself the world, is the cause and also the effect. It is the forming and creating principle : it supports existence, and all things eventually find their ultimate repose in it. It has all the potentiality manifest or unmanifest. It has a secret that no human thought can affirm or touch. And yet it is unveiled like the sun or the sky. It is also the consciousness that grows in evolution, the permanent point at rest that never changes and is the fate that seems to work out the will of the hidden infinity. It is Time as it manifests with its threefold aspects of the past, the present and the future, which in fact are one uniform wave of the eternal moment, the undivided span of the infinite. It has many modes and moods;

it has multiple manifestations. The inertia of matter, the kinesis of life, the rationality of thought, the thrill of the senses, the drive of power and the play of the gods come from its source. And yet it has no name, no traceable point where one can seize it. It has no single location; for it is the height and the depth and the breadth. It is light, it is power, bliss, beauty, grace and soul. From it all things emerge and yet all these are not its constituents. All contraries are in it and yet all harmonies. It has the day and the night, the good, and the evil, the bliss and the pain, the Gods and the Titans, the men and the worms.

All this may seem incongruities and impossibilities. But to the experiencing soul these are truths, the many aspects of the same truth and Spirit.

In fact this Spirit supports all our world with its truth and creates with its bliss and maintains all by its all-pervading consciousness. The Upanishad calls it the Brahman. It is the Reality of the Western metaphysical thinker. It is the essence of things. But the connotation that Sri Aurobindo gives it in *Savitri* is similar to the Upanishadic view, but far transcends the position of the Vedanta or Western thought, for they conceive it to be an immutable reality. Some thinkers like Heraclitus, Hegel or Bergson take up the dynamic aspect and it is only in Sri Aurobindo that we find a synthesis of these widely divergent schools of thought.

Due to limitation of viewpoint, past thinkers could not get a total conception of the Spirit. Thus some took one aspect like fire, air, water, energy, Idea, Will, or the evolutionary principle to be the complete nature of Reality and built their philosophical thinking on that basis. Spirit is all these put together and transcends them; its scope is greater than Kantian reason, Hegelian Synthesis of Thesis and of Antithesis, Bergsonian *Élan* of evolution, and the pragmatic truth of the modern age. A denial or an acceptance does not alter its status or its reality.

Because Milton was unconscious of its presence, something tangible was absent in his philosophy. He too suffered from the same defect as all other thinkers and the philosophical basis of his epic becomes unsound. Sri Aurobindo on the other hand accepts both the aspects of Spirit—that of Being and Becoming—and his poetry, standing on the total vision of this truth, assumes a status of perfection far beyond the scope of any other poet. Milton imposes on his God the limits of pure Being, thus atrophying the omnipotence of the Godhead. But the Spirit of Sri Aurobindo does not suffer from any mental imposition. He does not attribute one quality or one status or one condition to the Spirit. He does not conceive Spirit to be a Person or as having a personality. Milton's God is a mental structure, whereas Sri Aurobindo's Spirit is pure spiritual entity of consciousness, will, and joy. It is not limited by Becoming, nor is it Being alone, shut out from the domain of Becoming. It has no dogmatic will or an unchanging moral fiat. It is not intolerant, volatile, unkind; neither does it remain above, an immutable, distant consciousness, uncaring of the distress of the world.

In *Savitri* we discover another great element, the second in the series: the Divine Will. It is this that is the creative power, the forming energy behind all that

is. By its impact all awake, the evolution ascends and man's advent becomes a certainty and the coming of Superman a possibility. It is hidden in the tiniest microcosm and the widest macrocosm. In some it is overt: in others it works from within like an influence, a presence, an urge or a call. It is behind the inevitability of fate. It even determines the fall or the triumph—and itself remains unaffected by either of these, for these do not in any way determine or change its status. It is this that makes Savitri choose Satyavan, and that brings about the eventual end of death and opens the way for man to be immortal. Vicissitudes do not change its course. Altered conditions do not alter its way of working.

Divine Will is an emanation from the Spirit's creative aspect; it is there as an embodiment of force, light and immortality. It is a presence and an energy whose impact creates conditions, makes the void of ineffectual rest yield a path of motion and becoming. It is the Divine Eye looking down on the world to manifest its cosmic presence. In the primal Being that is ever immutable, this is the stirring power of becoming, manifestation and creation. It is not determined by anything else; but all are determined by its presence and power. It gives effectivity to all human effort towards progress and self-knowing. Even defeats are determined by it. For God works not only through victory but by defeat as well. This is because the Divine Will is so firmly seated in its omnipotence that triumph or decline does not alter its status, its condition, and its drive towards fulfilment. What appears to thwart its possibility is also determined by it. The world or man or moral intellect discriminates between Good and Evil, the Perverse and the Right, the Just and the Wrong. These are but partial ways of looking at the forces of the cosmos. The Divine Will does not discriminate in this perfunctory manner or distinguish in the human way of petty reasoning. All these divisions occur with the Mind's appearance and the awakening of the gods. Again, such divisions are necessary for a manifesting world. This division too is willed by the Divine Will.

And yet in the phenomenal universe of creation, there are put forth innumerable facets, trends and channels of possibilities. Out of these a few are chosen and the rest are abandoned. This is the freedom of the Divine Will. It can manifest itself in a million ways, but chooses one issue to put out its effective action. If this had not been so, there would have been an endless chaos. Seen from below, as Milton sees it, the whole aspect appears to be inscrutable and almost illogical, beyond the reach of rational comprehension. Seen from a height, as Sri Aurobindo regards it, it is the play of one Will, its choice of one kind of possibility, one pattern out of the teeming multitudinous patterns. There is nothing illogical in it. All comes from that Will and manifests that Will. Milton accepts his lot in faith and patience while Sri Aurobindo is master of the situation because his soul has seen the reality face to face. Milton cannot explain it but Sri Aurobindo reveals the truth by his intuitive vision. To one it is a source of endless suffering, while to the other it opens the locks of endless rapture. For the Divine Will does not work in a solemn way, like the Miltonic God of wrath, but works in joy, in the plenitude

of its own ecstasy, in the overwhelming abundance of its own Ananda. This is one aspect Milton missed. Not only did he miss the presence of the Divine Will, but he could not trace the source of joy that was in the Divine working.

For the Divine indeed always works in joy and this is the joy of its manifestation. As there is bliss in its unattainable trance, there is unbound joy in its putting forth of itself in the world. Because it is Divine Will and the Supreme Power of creation, it does not work in a great solemnity devoid of any ardent bliss of manifestation. Even its power, its dance of destruction, is full of rapture. In all ways it works, manifests, puts forth, creates, destroys, withdraws, reveals or strikes or saves, there is behind it and along with it the presence of joy. This bliss is the unmistakable sign and symbol of its Divinity.

But the Divine Will has a violence of rapture which would crush a common soul. Its joy is both terrible and all-seizing. It saves those who are awake, but crushes those who refuse to be awakened. Yet it has the patience of the millenniums and would wait for a century to execute a small action. Its ways are many-sided and wonderful.

It works through sacrifice and an adherence to the Divine fiat. Its workings are in submission but have no moral attitudes and seek no ethical ends. Its ways are spiritual and its law too is spiritual. None can escape it. Even the Gods obey its command. This command, however, is not a forced imposition and it calls for a glad submission to the law, that at once delivers and awakes. It is this law that brings Savitri her lost divinity and stands behind her choice, her life and her consummation.

Had there been no such law, there would have ensued complete chaos in the universe. Christianity grasped a faint echo of this truth, but its ethical leaning barred it from realising the total truth.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Education and the Idea of Mankind, Edited by *Robert Ulich*. Publishers, Harcourt, Brace & World, INC. 757 Third Avenue, New York 17, N.Y. U.S.A. Price : \$ 6.95

MOST books on education, as Robert Ulich states, concern themselves with the means or methods of education. This volume of certainly stimulating essays by eleven eminent educators of America considers the ends of education—the fundamental purposes for which schools exist.

In his introduction to this volume the editor stirs our interest with the hope of something really courageously new in the possibility of departing from the old order of what Sri Aurobindo deplures—‘teaching by snippets’—in the phrase : “If the liberal arts, or what we now often call ‘general education’, remain a mere accumulation of segments of knowledge without direction toward their depth, they will inform, but not form a person.” And,...“all the great teachers of mankind aimed at something more profound than mere instruction, acquisition of knowledge, usefulness, and efficiency...We know that every good teacher...transcends the limits of mere ‘subject matter’ toward *meaningful and universal concepts*. And through doing this he evokes in his pupils a sense of personal participation in the enterprise of civilization.”

Our hopes now start to be clouded by the usual ‘meaningful’ clichés to which so many American academicians are prone. What exactly are ‘meaningful and universal concepts’ without a special term of reference ? And—‘evokes in his pupils a sense of personal participation in the enterprise of civilization’—is this the ‘depth’, ‘more profound’ ? Surely we hope to *evoke*, or should we not say *educate*, something more than a ‘sense of participation in the enterprise of civilization’ ! Surely, ‘to know one’s self’ does not confine one to the enterprises of this world ? Perhaps professor Ulich has a universal feeling about the word *enterprise*, perhaps to him it has the sense of adventure or a bold and dangerous undertaking. Nevertheless its Latin root must leave us with the idea ‘*to seize*’—and this is rather too near to the enterprise of modern business methods, however civilized they may purport to be, to contain anything very profound in it.

‘Education and the Idea of Mankind’—as a title for a modern work presupposes a vast range of thought which could hardly be compassed by a volume of 280 pages. However, the editing of these scholarly essays under the patronage of the Council for the Study of Mankind is a literary work well worth the effort and should prove a stimulant to all who are interested in progressive thought in education. It is hoped that this one volume’s contents are only the indices to the possibility of a more comprehensive work which the subject surely demands.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

Nandi by *Prajaram Raval*. Publishers : Shri Harihar Pustakalaya, Surat, Gujarat. 1963, pp. 127, Price Rs. 2.50

Nandi is the second collection of poems by Prajaram Raval. This book with an attractive get-up contains poems on numerous topics ranging from the various phases and moods of Nature (Winter, Summer, Monsoon, moonlit night, flowers and their fragrance) to subtle inner experiences. One finds in these poems a positive attitude towards life and an evolutionary movement of the consciousness into higher and subtler planes. The author is sensitive to the stern realities of life but at the same time has a living connection with the higher levels of consciousness. The very first poem gives a clue to the aspiring consciousness of the author who heralds the advent of Immortality. The poems reflect the influence of Sri Aurobindo—as poet, as patriot and as yogi—in Gujarati literature. The author has been able to imbibe Sri Aurobindo's influence and has been able to express it through poetry. This is indeed a unique contribution to Gujarati literature.

The poems are written in a pleasant style through a variety of moods. In addition to the original poems the book contains Gujarati verse-translations of the poems of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. The translations are happy renderings. It is pertinent to note that anyone attempting translations has to overcome two types of hurdles or, to put it rightly, two types of veils which obscure the original meaning and potency of the writings. The veils are (1) language and (2) depth of experience. The expression of the original meaning in a different language depends upon the level of consciousness of the translator. The vocabulary and the shades of meaning conveyed come alive according as there is identification with the original consciousness.

R.M. PATEL

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SECOND SEMINAR

22 November 1964

(Speeches continued from the previous issue)

HOW TO BE STEADY AND SINCERE IN OUR ASPIRATION FOR THE DIVINE LIFE

IV

FRIENDS, the subject of our talk, as you all know, is : "How to be steady and sincere in our aspiration for the Divine Life." Sincerity and steadiness are the two most fundamental prerequisites for success in any endeavour, not to speak of *the Endeavour* that is Yoga. But the irony of it all is that I am called upon to deliver a speech on these two virtues which are somehow glaringly lacking in the complex jumble of personalities called 'myself'. But since such is the order of the day—to speak most on what one is least qualified to—you find me here in the pulpit, unashamed and even harbouring a secret hope of being appreciated.

The Mother, when once asked : "What is the fundamental virtue to be cultivated to prepare oneself for the spiritual life ?", emphatically replied :

"I have told you many times, but it is an occasion to repeat it. It is sin-ce-ri-ty..."

Sri Aurobindo also has told us in the same unmistakable tone :

"There is one indispensable condition, sincerity."

Let us therefore first try to understand what the Mother and Sri Aurobindo mean by sincerity. The Mother says :

"To be absolutely sincere is to have no division, no contradiction in one's being."

In other words, sincerity implies the unification of all the divergent and conflicting elements of our being. As Sri Aurobindo puts it :

“Sincerity means to lift all the movements of the being to the level of the highest consciousness and realisation already attained.

“Sincerity exacts the unification and harmonisation of the whole being in all its parts and movements around the central Divine Will.”

UNIFICATION—aye, there’s the rub. For we are in a state of being where the lower and the higher parts are like “an ill-assorted wife and husband” in an unhappy wedlock, constantly at war with each other. The only solution prescribed so far has been to appeal for a divorce. For, the moment we hearken to the higher call the lower immediately assails us with its dull inertia and waves of depression and declares a total Satyagraha far more successful than any Gandhiji could ever dream of. On the other hand, following the dictates of the lower being, there soon comes a strong dissatisfaction in the very satisfaction of the desires and the higher takes a silent revenge by a sort of undefinable cramp in the place where biologically the heart is situated.

Is then the dream of a total harmonisation of our being a mere utopia ? No, on the contrary, assert the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, this is the secret intention of Nature in her slow and steady evolution. We are called upon to participate consciously in this movement and thereby hasten the process, first in our individual life, then in the collective life of humanity in general. But that the goal may be achieved we have first to discover in us that divine element, the psychic being, which is our true self and which alone has the key to all harmony, and make it the leader of our march. This demands an aspiration constant and vigilant. We have to learn to replace our velleities by a strong intelligent will. By cultivating this dynamic will-power we shall grow more and more in our sincerity. Herein comes the question of steadiness and perseverance. For the battle is hard and interminable. Yet, to the perseverant the final victory is assured. Such an assurance should infuse in us a constant cheerfulness which has the power to change the nature of all struggle into a playful fight.

Therefore, though ill-equipped, frail and impotent, let us launch on the great Adventure, without making any bargain whatsoever, putting our entire reliance on the Mother’s power and remembering all the while the Master’s assuring words :

“Whatever the appearance we must bear,
 Whatever our strong ills and present fate,
 When nothing we can see but drift and bale,
 A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.”

(Savitri)

Friends, this Guidance is the touch of our Mother's magic hands. So let's take comfort. Thank you.

MANOJ

V

Life must have an aim. In ordinary life a man is supposed to do his duties to others, to his nation. The fulfilment of these tasks becomes the greatest aim of his life. But here, in the Ashram, that aim is of course not sufficient. Our goal is to turn our life into Divine Life, the life which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have brought down on the earth for us, the life which is now at our door waiting for our call. It is a life where the Divine penetrates into the core of our being and transforms us into the higher light and truth.

This great life is open to everyone who asks for it. This asking, this invoking, is the aspiration. The truth is given to the seeker without any hesitation but the seeker too must fulfil certain conditions. The very first condition is that his aspiration should be sincere and steady. And here comes the question put by the Mother : "How to be steady and sincere in our aspiration for the Divine Life ?"

To be sincere means that all the parts of our being must be united in their aspiration for the Divine Life. It will not do if the seeker wants the Divine only with his heart and not with his mind or *vice versa*; it has to be the call from every part of his being. The resultant call which goes to the Supreme has to be harmonised and complete in all its functions and movements. And, to be sincere also means "To want the Divine for the Divine's sake, not for fame or name or prestige or power or satisfaction of vanity."

It is very difficult to be sincere and to send such a pure harmonised call, such an ardent prayer to the Supreme. Each part of the human nature wants to cling to its old ways of life. In its own ignorant territories it is the sovereign power. Any transmutation to higher life will mean a great loss to it. It can no longer be the all-powerful monarch of its empire. So it revolts against the light and refuses to change.

In order to be sincere this hurdle has to be crossed. As in the case of all other problems, the Mother herself has told us how to face this difficulty. It is the best and only method; it may vary with the individual but the main principle is always the same.

First of all, the seeker has to be conscious of the Divine element in him, the Psychic. He must understand and feel that the aspiration of the Psychic for the Higher Light and Truth is the main aim of his life. Once the Psychic presence is felt and realised, that is to say, the difference between the Divine and the undivine is perceived, and the seeker really wants the Divine for the Divine's sake, there is nothing else to do but to listen to the inner voice and to reject all that is contrary to the Divine's Will.

The seeker must also scrutinise every nook and corner of his nature. He must find out each unwilling part of his being that refuses to participate in the aspiration

and hides itself in the darkness of the inconscience. These parts are to be treated like disobedient children. The seeker has to act upon them patiently and persistently so as to convince them of their stupid errors. They must be persuaded to give up their insistence on the vital aims and attachments, the mental preferences and the physical laziness and unwillingness to change.

But these adversaries rise time and again. The mental constructions and vital passions don the disguise of the Divine Will, the unyielding parts continue with their refusals and revolts until the person becomes integrally sincere. And thus it becomes necessary to be steady in aspiration. The continuous struggle for progress and the repeated aggression of undivine forces bring depression and doubt, fatigue and fear. To come out of these we need a firm will to do the sadhana with infinite patience and an unshakable trust in the Divine. Doubts or disbeliefs have to be thrown away persistently and patiently with a confidence in the ultimate victory.

No one can achieve this on his own, unaided and unguided. It is only with the Divine Grace on one's side, that one can face these resistances and be more obstinate than the adversaries, so as to proceed and win the battle. A constant psychic opening, a persistent rejection of lower impulses and a separation of oneself from all hostile contradicting suggestions, can bring down the calm, light, peace and purity of the Mother's Force, which alone can liberate us from all sorts of difficulties.

MITA

VI

The question itself is a renewed revelation to me, a pointer for yet another assault on the ever-baffling problem of the inner and outer harmony and a steadfast aspiration for the Divine Life.

For when we begin to analyse or study the diverse activities of every moment of our life, be it in sleep or the waking consciousness, we are aware of the great shortcoming of our effort. For as yet we are a bundle of desires, impulses and a whirlwind of thought-movements. And it is these elements which crop up either from the subconscious or our surroundings and assail us constantly. Now a clear perception of our shortcoming and how we are lured by the external life in spite of our so-called firm resolutions to live a true spiritual life, would elucidate the question under consideration. If we are asked the question, "Do you think of the Mother constantly throughout day and night and every day of the year?" the answer evidently is understood because even when one might be aspiring—say, for a considerable part of the day—the aspiration is not constant; sometimes it may be just a mechanical repetition of "*mā, mā, mā*"; and sometimes too one is inadvertently swept off one's feet by the tide of environmental circumstances (maybe a thought, a vital impulse or a physical sensation). Though the Grace is always there to help us and the helping hand never abandons those who aspire, still we are too prone to

err and too enamoured of our old habits. We cling to them forgetting our true *raison d'être*.

Even when we take up yoga with a firm resolute will to pursue it (which we often do, knowing also very well that ultimately there is no other way for us but the Divine Life), still sometimes unknowingly we betray our aim.

In yoga there are such ups and downs and rises and falls that the very fact of them staggers the seeker and leaves him dumbfounded. Often it so happens that the aspiration rises and peace and quietude descends from above and there is a constant feeling of nearness to the Mother; experiences flow and one is rapt with unearthly joy and peace. One aspires for more and more of these experiences with increasing steadfastness. Things take on different values, as if hallowed by a spiritual aura. Then the seeker, not being satisfied with what he has received and assimilating it in his being with patience and quietude, tries instead to seek beyond his present capacities impatiently and thereby invites great trouble. For even a slight deviation or a little carelessness may jeopardise his effort and may leave him naked of his experience, because of his agitated impatience. So the steadiness in yoga is not to be misunderstood in the sense that the seeker always advances steadily unhampered, without any deviation, depression or fall; in fact, it implies that these side-tracks give a greater incentive or impetus for a leap forward to the seeker who keeps his faith unshaken and never loses his confidence.

As for sincerity, it is an inner state in which the seeker is guided by his own discernment which comes when there is no division or dichotomy between his outer and his inner life. There is a unified harmony which permeates and guides his whole life in accordance with his true aim—to accept without resistance or doubt the Mother as the Supreme and Her workings as infallible.

Before the seeker achieves a steady and sincere status of being he must build in himself all the qualities that will enhance his progress and make him fit for yoga. Even if he falls he shall rise with greater certitude and renewed vigour to advance and never to accept defeat. He must keep an open heart to aspire from below and receive the peace from above; a quiet mind capable of rejecting petty and unwanted chains of thought-movements; a strong will to pursue the path and an unflagging enthusiasm; and a strong and supple body that does not shrink but keeps pace with the progress.

For the seeker who takes up yoga the difficulties that beset him at the beginning are due to his inability to build up these requisite qualities in him. So he must be prepared for them. To put it beautifully in Sri Aurobindo's language, "No Yoga can be successfully undertaken and followed unless there is a strong awakening to the necessity of that larger spiritual existence. The soul that is called to this deep and vast change, may arrive in different ways to the initial departure. It may come to it by its own natural development which has been leading it unconsciously towards the awakening.... According to the nature and the circumstances the call will come." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 78.)

“But if we desire to make the most of the opportunity that this life gives us, if we wish to respond adequately to the call we have received and to attain to the goal we have glimpsed, not merely advance a little towards it, it is essential that there should be an entire self-giving. The secret of success in Yoga is to regard it not as one of the aims to be pursued in life, but as the whole of life.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.)

Sri Aurobindo also gives us assurance in a different way to pull us through our difficulties if we keep the right attitude. To quote his words : “The house of the Divine is not closed to any who knock sincerely at its gates, whatever their past stumbles and errors.” (*On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 528.) Most reassuring are these words to those despondent seekers who are prejudiced by sin and virtue and lament with a sigh, “O ! how can I achieve the Truth with such errors and falsehood within me ?” But to man is given the power to cleanse and purify his being; only seek he must, and relying on his soul attain to perfection.

Sri Aurobindo clearly points out what should be the bases of yoga for its secure development :

“The first thing needed is quiet in the mind.”

“A quiet mind does not mean that there will be no thoughts or mental movements at all, but that these will be on the surface and you will feel your true being within separate from them, observing but not carried away, able to watch and judge them and reject all that has to be rejected and to accept and keep to all that is true consciousness and true experience.”

“The important thing is to get rid of the habit of the invasion of troubling thoughts, wrong feelings, confusion of ideas, unhappy movements. These disturb the nature and cloud it and make it difficult for the Force to work; when the mind is quiet and at peace, the Force can work more easily.”

(*On Yoga II*, Tome One, Part II, Section IV.)

“At first the peace and calm are not continuous, they come and go and it usually takes a long time to get them settled in the nature. It is better therefore to avoid impatience and to go on steadily with what is being done. If you wish to have something beyond the peace and calm, let it be the full opening of the inner being and the consciousness of the Divine Power working in you. Aspire for that sincerely and with a great intensity but without impatience and it will come.”

(*On Yoga II*, Tome Two, p. 14)

“The quiet consciousness of peace you now have in the mind must become not only calm but wide. You must feel it everywhere, yourself in it and all in it. This also will help to bring the calm as a basis into the action.”

“Equality is a very important part in this yoga; it is necessary to keep equality under pain and suffering—and that means to endure firmly and calmly, not to be restless or troubled or depressed or despondent, to go on with a steady faith in the Divine Will. But equality does not include inert acceptance. If, for instance, there is a temporary failure of some endeavour in the sadhana, one has to keep equality, not to be troubled or despondent, but one has not to accept the failure as an indica-

tion of the Divine Will and give up the endeavour. You ought rather to find out the reason and meaning of the failure and go forward in faith towards victory." (*On Yoga II*, Tome One, Part II, Section IV.)

These steps on the path of yoga look very simple in words but in the actual field of action the seeker is reminded and warned from time immemorial that this arduous adventure of seeking his soul is a path sharp like the razor's edge, full of pitfalls and unexpected dangers at every turn. Once the decision to follow the path has been taken, there should be no turning back. One has to consecrate one's whole being in order to pursue it till the end. This can only be done, as the Mother has pointed out, when one has kindled the Fire within. This Fire is kindled through constant aspiration and a turning within of all our being. Once the Fire is lit, it takes care of all our being and guides us through the darkness, consumes all our falsehood and ignorance; the more one feeds it with these elements the brighter it burns. It is the Fire that purifies and gives us enthusiasm and constant steadiness in our aspiration, that discerns and gives us the right judgement. Until that Fire is lit, the steady and sincere aspiration for the Divine Life is not effective. To quote from *Savitri* :

"In this investiture of fleshly life
A soul that is a spark of God survives
And sometimes it breaks through the sordid screen
And kindles a fire that makes us half divine."

Such a state comes only when the psychic is in the front and its light permeates the whole being and when we spontaneously recognize the Mother as the Divine Mother.

MONA

VII

"Don't you think that this subject is quite meaningless?"—a large majority of our modern intelligentsia will ask. In order for us to understand this objection, in a world still largely dominated by a so-called objective rational science which has as its gospel a camouflaged materialism, we have to know its mental make-up which is reflected in the ideas of logical positivism.

The meaning of our topic will be questioned on linguistic and psychological grounds. The title is undoubtedly a grammatically correct proposition but, whether we like it or not, it is regarded by some modern minds as a quite senseless combination of words. The positivist will point out with a self-satisfied smile that facts behind such a term as Divine Life cannot be verified by scientific means based on sense experience. Bertrand Russell not only discards metaphysical terms but questions even the value of induction-deduction : How can we be certain that, *e.g.*, Cape Horn exists without experiencing it at the same time ? he asks boldly. He con-

cludes that sense experience as a means of real knowledge has to be discarded because we never can know the thing in itself through sense experience, meaning that we are always confined to surface knowledge. Thus modern science and thought are largely dominated by the principle of uncertainty and by a cold agnosticism.

It seems that few of the intelligentsia feel the need to transcend their present position in considering such a subject. They are content to restrict their search to a horizontal line, going round in perhaps widening but never-ending circles, with the excuse that the realm of matter has still infinite secrets which must be discovered.

The open-minded and unprejudiced scientist should however accept our proposal of conducting experiments on an ascending line. Thus we can take the experience of the Divine Life or Consciousness, which gives us the key to all spirituality, as a working hypothesis which is to be verified and experimented upon by following the supraphysical processes and laws given by realised Yogis.

I suppose that most of the modern spiritual seekers are in a somewhat similar state : the Divine Life or Consciousness is not yet an unshakable experience and spiritual reality but a hypothesis which is based on some touch or inspiration or glimpse of a higher reality and in which they have immense faith.

Until we realise our goal of the Divine Life, FAITH is the Alpha and Omega of our spiritual journey. This faith in some spiritual truth supported by an iron will and a burning aspiration has to surpass the ordinary faith of men of action, discoverers, inventors, creators of knowledge, who go on until the proof is found or the action is done in spite of disappointment, failure, denial or mockery. Those who want to be successful in their spiritual endeavour have to stick to the *mantra*: "I will go on till I succeed, all difficulties notwithstanding." The believer in the Divine will add : "The Divine exists, my following after the Divine cannot fail. I will go on through everything till I find Him."

What, then, is this Divine Life we want to achieve ? I don't think that it can be described fully in mental terms. According to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, it will *not* be an escape from life into some Christian Paradise or Buddhist Nirvana or into the Nirguna Brahman of the Vedantins. The Divine Life stands for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth and for our transformation into gnostic beings, free from ego, falsehood and ignorance, after the Supermind has established itself in matter.

In order to progress towards that lofty and mentally quite inconceivable goal, personal *Freedom* seems to be indispensable.

A spiritual seeker may tend to dismiss and throw overboard all the old religious dogmas, moral and ethical codes, social traditions, etc., which hamper and stifle our inner and outer growth. I recently heard the exclamation : "We want to achieve something *new* and not that *old* stuff which has miserably failed." However, let us not forget that moral standards were and still are an important and purifying factor for most people who lead an ordinary life. Before considering ourselves to be above morality let us make very sure that we can stand the freedom which can be our

greatest helper but also our greatest enemy. Personal liberty implies, paradoxical as it might sound, a very severe self-discipline. Without this self-discipline we are likely to stumble into a deep pit, as the prey of a hotch-potch of surrounding forces predominantly vital and ignorant. This applies in variable degree to all persons not yet spiritually mature. The phrase, "Surrender to the Mother and everything will be done for you," will offer no refuge and protection for a passive and tamasic surrender leading nowhere.

The Mother wrote recently on self-discipline : "Sans discipline on ne peut rien faire de bon dans la vie, même dans la vie ordinaire—mais pour la vie spirituelle il faut une *discipline rigoureuse* pour avancer même d'un pas." In cases of exhaustion and depression she advises not to pay any attention to such a condition and to continue one's programme and discipline as usual in order to regain one's balance as quickly as possible.

Sincerity, Humility, and Simplicity also are basic requisites of the path. Sri Aurobindo writes in one of his letters : "There is one indispensable condition, sincerity." (*On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 535.) What does Sri Aurobindo mean by sincerity? "Sincerity means to lift all the movements of the being to the level of the highest consciousness and realisation already attained." (*Ibid.*, p. 536.) That is a hard job indeed. The ego, with the vital mind and a servile pseudo-intelligence as its allies, seems to be the main cause of our insincerity.

Our aspiration towards the goal must be intense, calm and strong. An inward calm and tranquillity and the cultivation of concentration are the first condition of any Yoga. A silent receptive mind is indispensable for any marked progress on the path.

Sri Aurobindo says in *The Synthesis of Yoga* that four aids help us in our aspiration towards the Divine Life. First, the *Shastra* or the knowledge of the truths, principles, powers and processes that govern the realisation. The heard or written word of a Guru or a scripture, the study of some path leading to realisation or our acquaintance with the lives of saints or Yogis can serve as useful sign-posts.

Next comes a patient and persistent action on the lines laid down by the knowledge: *utsāha*. It is certain that an ardent aspiration and faith in the Divine help to progress, but patience, thoroughness and persistence in the method are also needed.

The third aid is that of the *Guru*, his direct teaching, example and influence.

"Last comes the instrumentality of Time—*kāla*; for in all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of the divine movement." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 59.) Time is the instrument of the Divine and the soul, but to our ego it might appear as a tyrant or as a resistance.

However, let's always keep in mind that according to Sri Aurobindo "the supreme Shastra of the integral Yoga is the eternal Veda secret in the heart of every thinking and living being." (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 59.) Thus nothing can be really taught as everything is already contained within us, waiting its term to reveal itself. The sole purpose of the Shastra is to bring to light the secret knowledge within. In exceptional cases the inner divine guidance alone might be sufficient.

Self-consecration and self-surrender of the individual to the Divine is of major importance. Sri Aurobindo speaks of two movements with a transitional stage between them. The first is the process of surrender, the second is the crown and consequence of the first : a blissful state of identity with the Divine will, joy and power. In the period of surrender the individual prepares himself to receive the Divine through the instruments of his lower nature. The further we advance the more our personal, uninformed effort will dwindle away and will be replaced by the higher Nature and by the descent of the Divine Shakti. For a long time there will be both an effort from below and a descent and working from above in order to transform the ego. So long as the Divine Shakti is not fully working through our nature, a continual and always repeated refusal of the impulsions and falsehood of our lower nature is essential.

I hope that I have made it sufficiently clear that an initial tremendous and steady effort, will and aspiration towards self-consecration and complete surrender are indispensable. According to our temperament we can choose between the two main currents leading to realisation; we may take the baby-cat attitude, realising our own, impotence and putting our entire hope in the Divine Grace, yearning intensely for an opening to the Divine working. This is perhaps the shortest and quickest road we can take. We might also choose the baby-monkey attitude which is based mainly on personal effort and stern tapasya.

In a letter Sri Aurobindo advises a disciple : "In your work and acts you must do the same as in your concentration. Open to the Mother, put them under her guidance, call in the peace, the supporting Power, the protection and, in order that they may work, reject all wrong influences that might come in their way by creating wrong, careless or unconscious movements." (*On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 560.)

The best expression of aspiration for the Divine Life I find in the following aphorism of Sri Aurobindo :

"Discipleship to God the Teacher, sonship to God the Father, tenderness of God the Mother, clasp of the hand of the divine Friend, laughter and sport with our Comrade and Boy-Playfellow, blissful servitude to God the Master, rapturous love of our divine Paramour, these are the seven beatitudes of life in the human body. Canst thou unite all these in a single supreme and rainbow-hued relation ? Then hast thou no need of any heaven and thou exceedest the emancipation of the Adwaitin." (*Thoughts and Aphorisms*, pp. 78-79.)

OSCAR

WALT WHITMAN IN RELATION TO HIS AGE

WHITMAN is 'the representative voice of his age', a herald announcing great events magnificently, though often in a strange way. He is the only poet representative of the labouring, striving, searching time—the poet *par excellence*. "He belongs to the largest mind of the nineteenth century by the stress and energy of his intellectual seeking, by his emphasis on man and life and Nature, by his idea of the cosmic and universal, . . . by his intellectual reconciling vision at once of the greatness of the individual and the community of mankind" (Sri Aurobindo). A closer examination of the nineteenth-century literary and philosophical climate will be necessary before we shall be able to appreciate his place in the contemporary context.

The nineteenth century saw the culmination of a reaction against what we would call the subjugation of matter—a state of affairs which had originated with Plato. In Plato's philosophical system, the world of metaphysical 'ideas' alone is real, the sensible world is considered appearance and illusion. When applied to man this Platonic doctrine meant, first, the further elaboration of the distinction between soul and body, and, secondly, the idea of the superiority of the soul to the body as regards both reality and intrinsic goodness. The body is the source of all evil; its lusts impede our very search for truth. It is only by subjection of the body, by trying to deliver the soul from thralldom to the flesh, by living under rigorous intellectual and moral discipline, that man can succeed in reaching a state of being that approaches the ideal world—the full enjoyment of which is, however, reserved for the hereafter.

This concept, adopted in a somewhat modified form by Christianity, regarded life on earth as sheer vanity and laid more stress upon the afterlife, eternal and blissful, to be attained by the exaltation of the spirit and the subjection of the body. Both the doctrines naturally implied that between body and soul it is war to the knife and the mortification of the flesh is the only way to establish a spiritual relation with God. The influence of the Christian attitude towards soul and body was almost universally felt until the nineteenth century. A drastic reversal of these conditions was impossible as long as the fundamental principles of Christianity dominated the minds of the great majority of people: in other words, as long as almost everybody *sincerely* believed that there were such places as "heaven" and "hell" in the Christian sense of the words.

The spectacular rise of science in the seventeenth century had already forced the Church to some adjustments and to some rational justification of dogmas which had been formerly accepted on mere authority. But the great blow against the very existence of the Church came in the eighteenth century, with its fierce attacks of the French *philosophes*. The most outspoken exponent of this movement was Voltaire, who was inspired by a profound desire to annihilate the Christian faith once for all. "Let us demolish the infamous Catholic faith"—these were the words with which

he signed his letters, indicating his hostility. The Church in continental Europe never quite recovered from this blow; and it never again dominated the minds and hearts of the people as it had done before. Thus a new climate in which new systems, even if opposed to the values of Christianity, could easily flourish was created. People were no longer willing to sacrifice actual life to abstract principles, in which they did not believe any more. The nineteenth century saw the rise of materialism as a philosophical system which wanted to reverse the respective importance and value of mind and matter. It even tended to give up that old duality, consequently also the duality of body and soul which was fundamental to the Christian philosophy. Everywhere there was a tendency to reduce everything to a fundamental materialistic unity, even ascribing the human consciousness and will to some material agency. All this involved quite naturally a greater attention to the body. The poets described its qualities and its strength, they sang their sheer joy of being alive in the flesh.

All these characteristics of the nineteenth century background find, to some degree, an echo in Whitman; and in Heine and Novalis who preceded him. Heine regarded himself as the champion of the emancipation of the flesh, of the resurrection of the body, of man's liberation from the 'absolutism' of the spirit. He knew that his attitude was in direct opposition to all Christian views, that he found no better name to define his concept than "pagan". He was naturally opposed to the old Christian view of the world beyond; his view of heaven was simple: "For men to whom the earth does no longer give anything, heaven was invented."

"Heine's main concern was man's full development on earth; he wanted harmonious men (whom he called *Hellenen*) to take the place of the life-disbelievers who defiled the flesh in the name of morality (these he called *Nazarener*). Heine was probably not a direct influence on Whitman who apparently got to know him only in his later years; but then his enthusiasm and admiration for the German poet were unreserved: he found between Heine and himself a kind of *Geistesverwandtschaft*, and many parallels between them are indeed obvious. They may partly be explained by the fact that Heine's endeavours to restore the flesh to the dignity it deserves were an elaboration of what we find in Goethe, whose worship of the beauty of the human body is well-known. And Goethe was also known to Whitman.

"An almost certain influence on Whitman's formative years was Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) whom he did not read in the original, but to whom he got introduced through the work of Carlyle. In his essay on Novalis (1829), Carlyle had translated a fragmentary work of the German poet, some parts of which must have struck Whitman. A statement like this—"There is only one temple in the world, and that is the human body. One touches heaven, when one handles a human body"—must have impressed him. It is certain that they will have met with a profound response in Whitman in those years when his conception of life was still in full development." (Gustaff Van Cromphout)

**SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

NEWSLETTER

No. 2

February 1965

1. International Youth Survey—Ten Virtues

The results published in UNESCO's current International Journal of Adult and Youth Education, give a two-way indication of the ways in which young people are thinking together in east and west and the ways in which they differ from nation to nation. Such surveys may not be very accurate indicators in themselves but they do indicate a genuine wish to understand the underlying differences that go to make up the fundamental character of a nation.

In the survey the respondents were asked to place in order of preference the 10 virtues most admired—kindness, courage, self-discipline, frankness, generosity, honesty, justice, loyalty, prudence, industriousness. The three virtues placed first by each country, in order of preference were :

France : frankness, honesty, courage.

Canada : kindness, self-discipline, courage.

Cuba : justice, honesty, frankness.

India : honesty, self-discipline, kindness.

Malaya : kindness, courage, self-discipline.

The qualities placed last were : prudence (by France, India, Cuba); generosity (by Canada); frankness (by Japan); and industriousness (by Malaya).

2. Delhi Technology Institute

In response to an appeal launched last year by Sir Cyril Harrison, immediate past-president of the Federation of British Industries, contributions and promises of further support from British industry for the Indian Institute of Technology at Delhi now exceed £55,000 and it is hoped that an additional £95,000 will be raised by the end of March this year.

It will be remembered that the I.I.T. was founded by the Duke of Edinburgh in January 1959. It opened with an initial intake of 150 students, as a college affiliated to Delhi University in August 1961, and created an independent institute of technology last September.

3. Indian Nutrition

India's fourth Institute of Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition has just been opened in Madras as part of the Union Food Department's effort to improve national nutritional standards.

4. *Statistics*

Statistics show that it has taken the human race 500,000 years to achieve the present population of 3,000 million, but it will only take another 35 years to double this figure. A total of 63 million people are being added to the world population every year. Where are the teachers coming from to teach and where is the food coming from to feed them? By 2550, says a Soviet scientist, Professor D.Y. Martynov, at the present rate of increase in the population each human being will be confined to 16 square feet of land. The population by that time will have reached the astronomical figure of SIX BILLION.

5. *Question*

Could you give one basic premise upon which the Robbins Report justifies its evidence?

Answer : The investigation by the Institute of Community Studies, originally undertaken to provide evidence for the Robbins Committee, starts from the hypothesis that :

‘The pattern of higher education cannot be decided only by the aspirations of its institutions. It must also take account of the needs which students will recognise as personally relevant.’

In other words, it is just as important to know what students want as what the institutions require of them.

6. *Quick Learning*

The University of Essex has begun an entirely new course of comparative studies designed to break down insularity. The course culminates in the study of literature or government of North America, Latin America or Russia—the staff are prepared to teach a complete beginner any of the required languages, Spanish, Portuguese, or Russian, using their new £2,600, 20-place language laboratory.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

YOGA AND LIFE

XI

YOGA OF LIFE : YOGA OF THE FUTURE

Some Important Points of Detail

IN the wakefulness and vigilance of the psychic activity and under the overall and detailed immediate and ultimate guidance of the Individual, Universal and Transcendent Mother, the complex yogic working comes into full swing. With it is brisked up the piston-like process of descents and ascents of elements, energies, consciousnesses and powers of Supernature and earth-nature. There ensues a conscious and constant commerce between the human aspiration flaming for change of the lower nature on one side and the Divine Consciousness of the Mother descending to fulfil that sincere and seeking ardour with the bounties from the higher spiritual or supramental worlds of Supernature on the other. In such a multi-wayed working, it is inevitable that there should arise many practical points of detail seeking satisfaction and solution so that a certain spontaneity in the working is kept alive and flowing. It is difficult to deal with all such points, because they vary with the many-faceted and multifarious individual nature, and they should best be resolved by our deeper and higher practical sources of Guidance. Yet we may touch upon a few of them in brief to give our readers a general line of idea and attitude to be followed when in difficulty.

The establishment of a solid calmness and silence in the mind (later in the vital and the physical) is among the first requisites or rather is the first requisite of a strong and settled foundation of the Yogic working. The mind should be made free from troubled thoughts and turbulent activity either by deepened concentration in the heart, separating oneself from the mechanical mental and vital activity by an inward withdrawal from it into the witness psychic consciousness or by the descent of peace and silence from the higher sources. This process is helped by an increased rejection of disquietening doubts and by the raising of one's station of thought and action from the limited and closed mind proper to the wider, calmer and freer consciousness of the higher regions of the Spiritual Mind.

Equality has to be kept under all depressing and troubling conditions, created by the inward psychological revolutionary change of the personality or because of the resistance of external forces and influences of Nature through men and events. With it should go a steady and unshakable faith in one's spiritual destiny as well as in the indispensable and inevitable Guidance and Grace of the Divine Mother in all situations of difficulty.

If one keeps a simple and sincere attitude of utter consecration and surrender

to her, if one is deceitlessly and conceitlessly faithful to the liberating, illuminating and uplifting Divine Will, if one always keeps one's being open and receptive to the purifying and perfecting Force of the Mother which will descend as an act of her Manifestation and her Grace or in response to one's call, then there is sure to be a more or less spontaneous and smooth divine working, in spite of constantly recurring difficulties and ups and downs which one should always be ready to face, encounter and overcome.

The ways of the Divine are different from the human and one should always be prepared to accept whatever ensues in the wake of one's aspiration, incipient reliance, surrender and attitude of humility.

There should be no self-assertion, no insistence of one's ways, no self-aggrandisement of ego or seeking of glory or greatness, no hankering for power or immediate results of realisation.

One must depend only on the Mother for everything, even while putting in the needed right effort with full sincerity and in a spirit of many-wayed devoted self-offering to the Divine, whether in thoughts, in love or in works.

Even if the response from the Mother seems lacking for a time, one should always call and call on her, keep oneself open to her, keep up faith and dedication till the aid comes at the right divine moment. And this should be accepted calmly and joyfully as her *prasād*.

Sri Aurobindo writes, "To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, two that go always together—the Grace of the Divine Mother and on your side an inner state made up of faith, sincerity and surrender. Let your faith be pure, candid and perfect. An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, mental arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfactions of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obsured flame that cannot burn upwards to heaven. Regard your life as given you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, ananda of the divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body. Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth, its realisation on earth and in you and in all who are called and chosen and the conditions needed for its creation and its victory over all opposing forces."

One has to be free from all attachments and desires, one's requirements being limited to the necessities of life, which indeed are very few. There should be no hankering for possession. Attachment to food, greed, likes and repugnances, lack of will in one's being and excesses practised on one's body are unyogic movements and must be resolutely rejected and cleared out of one's being. A glad and calm equanimity in a free and desireless state of psychic openness towards things and influences divine, an openness full of faith and sincerity, is the best Yogic attitude.

One should have proper and sufficient sleep which one should endeavour to make more and more conscious. Inertia of the physical consciousness is another hindrance

in the way of bringing the higher consciousness and light to the lower levels of one's being.

One's attitude towards money should be based on "a complete self-control, detachment and renunciation of all bondage to wealth and of all personal and egoistic desire for its possession." But "to reconquer it" from the hands of the hostile forces, who virtually and mostly now hold and squander and use it wantonly, undivinely or rather anti-divinely,—to reconquer it "for the Divine to whom it belongs and use it divinely for the divine life is the supramental way for the Sadhaka." There should be neither shrinking from the money power, nor attachment to and indulgence in it. It has not to be dissipated for the gratification of one's desires or the desires of others.

During the Yogic working, voices and visions may come, but one should not attach much or unnecessary importance to them. Dwelling upon these dazzling glimpses of things and powers occult may take the seeker out of the Yogic track because of a certain undetected mix-up with the misleading vitalistic tendencies of pride, ambition or self-exhibition or many others and may impede his progress. Besides, they are only glimpses of things occult and do not always come to us in their pure form; also they do not carry us much on the path of progress. Much more difficult is it to have the Mother's descending silence, light and power and joy established in one's being without inflation of one's ego and pride and show-sense, without bringing in a sense of self-glory, greatness and importance.

Supramental realisation is a very high realisation exacting tireless effort, exhaustless patience and unshakable faith in one's divine destiny. And one can be sure in the first instance that it does not come in a few months or years or even many years. It is the culmination and crown of our aspirations and efforts. Yet it is a thing decreed, for, says Sri Aurobindo, "The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable." One should beware lest one claim too soon any of the high universal or transcendental realisations. Says he, "Follow your soul and not your mind, your soul that answers to the Truth, not your mind that leaps at appearances; trust the Divine Power and she will free the godlike elements in you and shape all into an expression of Divine Nature....The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth-consciousness; for its upward ascent is not ended and mind is not its last summit. But that the change may arrive, take form and endure, there is needed the call from below with a will to recognise and not deny the Light when it comes, and there is needed the sanction of the Supreme from above. The power that mediates between the sanction and the call is the presence and power of the Divine Mother. The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering Truth and the Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda."

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH