

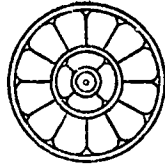
MOTHER INDIA

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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XVII

No. 5

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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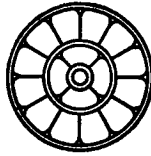
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

THE Lord is always victorious in His way—not in the human way—according to His will, not according to the will of men.

The Lord is always present, only we do not realise it

*

*

When somebody lives in a higher Consciousness, the vibrations of this higher Consciousness are manifested in whatever this person does, says or thinks. These higher vibrations are manifested by the very fact of the presence of this person upon earth.



TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

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

JANUARY 15, 1940

N : There is a difference of opinion between A and P regarding something A has himself written. The sentence is : "What we give in dross we get back in gold." A means that even if our devotion, our love for the Divine is not pure at the beginning the Divine accepts them and gives the reward. P is unable to accept it. P says, "The sentence should begin : 'What we give up as dross...'"

SRI AUROBINDO (*after a little while*) : Well ?

N : Well ? Which is correct ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It may be either. A has written it and he knows what he means.

C : I think A wants to know whether what he says is a fact. K was telling me—she studies with P—that she understood it in A's sense while P doesn't agree. P says it can't be true.

SRI AUROBINDO : Does P mean to say that only when one is perfect the Divine will accept the offering and give the reward ? Then it would be very difficult for any human being. A is quite correct and it is a fact. Human nature is imperfect and impure. Whatever one offers at the beginning will be flawed because it is an offering of an inferior nature : the Divine accepts it and gives his response.

N : X will now withdraw his objection against Z, which we discussed yesterday.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ?

N : He met him yesterday at a social function at M's place. How can he say now that Z is not doing your Yoga ?

C : I hear X had also an hour's interview with Z.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then he may have thrashed out the question. But what the objection is I don't understand. Z is doing my Yoga in his own way. All people haven't the same nature. Everybody has his own way of doing my Yoga.

N : If you say that, I suppose he won't have any objection. Only he won't call it your Yoga. He seems to say that in your Yoga you stress acceptance of life.

SRI AUROBINDO : We don't accept life as it is. In that case what is the use of

the Ashram ? We may be as well at Calcutta. Does X object to Z's seclusion ?

N : Yes, and also Z doesn't do any work.

SRI AUROBINDO : But Y, against whom also X has objected, has heavy work to do. There are other disciples who are not doing any direct work for the Ashram. What about them ?

N : From his point of view they are not doing your Yoga.

S : Work or no work, the chief thing is somehow to realise the Divine. Each may do it according to his own way.

SRI AUROBINDO : Quite so.

N : But then one can realise God in utter seclusion. That won't be this Yoga.

S : Sri Aurobindo's Yoga will begin after the realisation.

N : There is another charge we hear very often from some people. They say that they don't find any outward sign of progress even in people who have been staying here and doing Yoga for 10 to 15 years.

SRI AUROBINDO : Have they the vision to see the inner progress ?

N : But there should be some sign in the outer being. They say they are just as angry, jealous, egoistic as other people.

SRI AUROBINDO : These things belong to the outer being and they are the last to change. That doesn't mean that there is no inner progress or no experience.

N : Nothing should be visible outside ? In Raman Maharshi, for instance, they say one can see or feel peace, calm, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : Is there nobody in the Ashram who is quiet and peaceful ?

S : In the world also you find people who are not jealous, who are peaceful, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : How will you find out then without inner perception ? Maurice Magre saw peace and inner beauty in many faces, which he didn't see outside. For us it is nothing compared to what is yet to be done. All the same, it is something. I see light in many people here, which I don't see in worldly people.

N : They say about Z also that they don't find any sign by which he can be said to have done any progress.

SRI AUROBINDO : But every time I see him I see the stamp of a Yogi on him. Of course he is not a siddha but one who is doing yoga.

P : It is not always easy to make out, especially in people who follow an ordinary profession. I met Lele; nobody could say that he was a Yogi. He moved about just like an ordinary man.

SRI AUROBINDO : One must have the vision. There are other signs also, signs in the eyes and face, which one must know.

S : Yes, one must have the vision. But for a long time, I hear, you have been dealing with the physical. So there should be some reflection in the outer.

SRI AUROBINDO : The physical means the physical consciousness. When that work is done, the effect may be seen on the outer physical.

N : But something may be reflected before the final achievement ?

SRI AUROBINDO : May be or may not,

EVENING

C : Many thefts are committed in the Ashram. Do you know who the thief is ? Or perhaps you don't want to know and wish to play the part of Ignorance ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Why would I know ? It is not my work. It is the concern of the police. You are asking like those people who ask me about the share-market or horse-racing in Bombay.

C : The Mother said she is much bothered by these thefts. She wants to know—

SRI AUROBINDO : Does she ?

C : She sees and knows many things—

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, she sees many things that she doesn't want to see. It doesn't mean that she will see this also. We are not concerned with it and she does not use her inner power for these things.

C : Then it is not that you can't know; only you are not concerned with it. That is what I wanted to find out.

SRI AUROBINDO (*after some time*) : What is the result of the conference between the two great powers—X and Z ? (*Laughter*).

N : I don't know. I haven't met X. I meet him only once a week.

P : Then he will complain against you too.

N : On the contrary, it is he who is not available now.

P : Then he is not doing Śri Aurobindo's Yoga, either.

JANUARY 16, 1940

P : I read in *Kalyan* that somebody has conquered death.

SRI AUROBINDO : Conquered death ? How ?

P : He knew when exactly he was going to die and he died at the very date and hour. How it is conquest of death, I wonder.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is knowing the date of death, not conquest.

P : They write that he was, according to his own calculation, to die on a certain day but it was found that that day was inauspicious; so he postponed his death to a few days after and on that day he died. So they say he conquered death.

SRI AUROBINDO : Conquest of death is prolongation of life, not the knowing of the date of death. That many people do. Kashi Rao Jadav's father died according to the exact date and moment found out by an astrologer.

P : Dayanand Saraswati also had control over his death. He was poisoned by his cook at the instigation of a Maharaja's concubine. Dayanand was the Guru of this Maharaja and he rebuked the Maharaja for his passion and his running after women. So this concubine was enraged and tried to poison him. He was poisoned many times before this but somehow he knew in time and used to vomit out. But this time he was off his guard. The doctor examined his blood and said that it was humanly impossible for anyone to be alive with such a big quantity of poison

in his blood. But Dayanand controlled his whole system. What happened after some days was that eruptions came out all over his body and he died as a result. He came to know about the cook and asked him to leave the place. Otherwise he would be caught and punished.

SRI AUROBINDO : Sakaria Swami also had Yogic control. One day he saw a mad dog coming. He held out his hand for the dog to bite. After the bite, he didn't allow the poison to go into the system but localised it. When the Surat Congress was over, he got excited and thus lost control and the poison spread in his body. He got hydrophobia and couldn't drink water. He said, "What is this nonsense ? I, who was a trooper in the Mutiny and drank water from the puddles, can't drink water ?" He drank water and died.

S : Could he exercise that control in sleep also ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, Barin knew him. At one time he was his disciple.

S : Yes, Barin has written about him.

SRI AUROBINDO : Bijoy Goswami also was poisoned by Sannyasins but by the process called *stambhan* he controlled the effect, they say.

S : Barin speaks of Lele also....He recounts how Lele warned him against terrorism.

SRI AUROBINDO : Doesn't he speak of the ditch ? And do you know the story of how he was asked to cut his tongue loose from the lower palate ?

P : They do that in Khechri Mudra.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. He simply refused. They said, "You Bengali coward !" He replied, "Bengali or no Bengali, I am not doing it." (*Laughter*)

P : But this Mudra is very dangerous unless one's vital being is pure.

SRI AUROBINDO : I am afraid Barin's wasn't quite pure ! (*Laughter*)

P (*after some time*) : To go back to X and Z : X said to Z that he couldn't remain without company, etc., like Z. This is rather a compliment to Z.

N : It seems people from outside are at once impressed by Z but not by Y. Only after they have had a talk with him they are much impressed.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is partly due to the appearance. Z has an impressive appearance. Y has a wide and subtle mind. (*After a while*) He has a remarkable mind—original.

LEAVES FROM MY ENGLISH DIARY

A PERSONAL RECORD

I WENT to England in August 1955. But the decision to go was taken almost at the end of July. There had been correspondence before with the British Council which had invited me to participate in the Colloquium at Oxford on Contemporary British Philosophy. I replied to the representative, who was known to the Ashram, asking for two occasions to represent dynamic Indian thought, each exposition to be of 20-25 minutes' duration. Altogether there were going to be about 26 such talks. The reply was not encouraging; still I sent it to the Mother to know if she would want that I should accept the offer. She did not approve, and I wrote to the British Council at Oxford pleading my inability to attend. Then the Director wrote a letter pressing me to accept the invitation as he would try his best to help me in making contacts, though the committee that arranged the programme might not want an exposition of thought other than that of the Oxford school.

I sent the letter to the Mother. She suggested I could accept the invitation. I did; but it was nearly the end of July; and getting a passport and booking a berth in a steamer had all to be done. Money for the voyage had also to be obtained. I left Pondicherry in the beginning of August and there was much uncertainty in the minds of many Ashram friends about getting accommodation in the steamer from Bombay as reservations usually are done months in advance. But I felt that things would somehow get arranged. And place was found for me, on the 12th of August, in the *S. S. Carthage*.

The first days at sea were stormy and it was raining heavily. Even some of the crew were sea-sick. The passengers naturally were worse. I recovered after two or three days. The name 'Carthage' had reminded me of the steamer by which Sri Aurobindo had returned to India in 1893. After Aden I went to the Captain and asked him whether we were on the same boat that had voyaged to India in 1893. He brought out the log-book and showed me that the old *Carthage* had been recast in 1926, but fundamentally it was the same *Carthage*. I was much moved when I knew that I was going to England to work for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother by this boat. Such coincidences have occurred more than once.

When I accepted the offer to go to England I had a threefold idea of the work to be done : 1. To convey to the English people some idea of Sri Aurobindo's life and work. 2. To awaken interest in his intellectual and cultural contribution at the Universities and among the intellectuals. 3. To gather whatever material was available of Sri Aurobindo's life in England from 1879 to 1893. In fact I undertook the voyage in the spirit of a pilgrim; because Sri Aurobindo had lived for 14 years in England it was a place of pilgrimage for me. Generally people undertake such jour-

neys for a change, for enjoyment or for studies or for commerce. None of these was my motive. I was conscious that I was undertaking a responsible task alone in a foreign country at three score years. From packing suitcases to preparing programmes and reserving seats, everything had to be done by myself with the load of responsibility weighing on me.

After Aden I had no sea-sickness and was in fair condition when I reached England. Letters of introduction to the India Office were there, but when I saw the working of the India Office in London I gave up the idea of using them. It lacked regularity, organisation, cleanliness, efficiency and a living sense among the workers that they represented "free India". The British Council gave me all possible help it could, I must note with gratitude.

The most discouraging discovery was to find that only a few in England knew about Sri Aurobindo and his contribution to English literature and language.

The work in England started on 30th August, and lasted upto 2nd December 1955—a period of three months and three days.

The following is the list of meetings addressed :

- | | | | |
|-----|------------|--|--|
| 1. | 4.9.1955 | At the Study Circle. | 31 Queens Gate Terrace,
S.W.7. |
| 2. | 6.9.1955 | Y.M.C.A. London. | 41 Fitzroi Square, W.1. |
| 3. | 11.9.1955 | Hindu Association of Europe. | 35 Polygone Square, Euston. |
| 4. | 2.10.1955 | Indian Association. | Leeds University. |
| 5. | 17.10.1955 | Small group at Philip
Bagby's place. | 5 Beaumont Road, Oxford. |
| 6. | 21.10.1955 | Indian Institute of Culture. | 62 Queens Gardens, W.2.,
London. |
| 7. | 22.10.1955 | Gujrati Mandal. | 35 Polygone Square, Euston. |
| 8. | 23.10.1955 | At the Study Circle. | 31 Queens Gate Terrace,
S.W.7. |
| 9. | 28.10.1955 | The Royal India Pakistan &
Ceylon Society. | Ulster room, Overseas
House, Park Place, St.
James St. S.W.1., London. |
| 10. | 9.11.1955 | B.B.C. Office | Manchester Broadcasting
House, Picadilly. |
| 11. | 20.11.1955 | Study Circle. | 31 Queens Gate Terrace,
S.W.7. |
| 12. | 20.11.1955 | (Evening) Spiritual Circle of
Miss Alison Bernard | 4 Wimple Mews W.1. |
| 13. | 25.11.1955 | Cambridge Group. | Friends Hall, Cambridge. |
| 14. | 1.12.1955 | Ramakrishna Mission. | London. |

I interviewed 80 to 90 intellectuals during the period and was at Cambridge, Oxford, Leeds and Durham Universities and had the pleasure of offering Sri Aurobindo's photograph and a set of his books to be kept at Cambridge and Leeds

Universities. The broadcast from B.B.C. was on the air on 19.12.1955. I had, incidentally, met many professors of philosophy at the Oxford Colloquium and at other Universities, and conveyed to them information about Sri Aurobindo.

The information about Sri Aurobindo's stay in England was gathered from diverse and even apparently accidental sources. For instance, the information about the various houses occupied by him was found from letters of his brother Monomohan to Laurence Binyon. I knew of the fact of correspondence between them and also about Binyon's letters to Monomohan given to the Calcutta University and lost during the period of the Japanese aggression. Finding out Mrs. Binyon's address I wrote to her asking if there were letters of Monomohan to Binyon. I had a faint hope that they might throw some light on Sri Aurobindo's life in England. She replied after two months and sent me the letters which furnished four addresses of the houses in London and also information about the places they had visited in England. The confirmation about the identity of the houses was obtained from the London County Council.

On 30th August 1955 the *Carthage* disembarked at Tilbury in the afternoon and I reached 23 Pembridge Villas in the evening, a home for Vegetarians.

On 31st August 1955 I got an appointment with the British Council. I was totally ignorant of the address of the Council! Mrs. Vivian Morton sent a phone-call welcoming me and so did Miss Doris Tomlinson, who said she was free only between seven and eight in the evening, as she was in charge of an organisation which served as a refuge for about 125 old people. Mr. Peter Cromton Chalk, a friend who had been a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, had stayed here in South Kensington, Queens Gate Terrace, helping Doris in her work. He had come to Pondicherry in 1952 and stayed in the Ashram for about three months. I had written to him from East Africa where I had gone in April 1953, inquiring about the possibility of visiting England for Sri Aurobindo's work. His reply was very sad and written in a mood of depression as he found such a great apathy in England about higher values of culture. Peter died on November 12, 1953.

The phones that I received on my first day in London gave me the impression of persons who were groaning under a great load of work; all seemed to be working under some invisible whip.

I felt that very day—the first day in England—that from buying stamps from the post-office to finding information about Sri Aurobindo's life I had to depend only on myself. Nobody was there who could help me. By the grace of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, there was the will to translate resolve into action and my body was strong enough to help me in that.

I must also confess that the situation was like a challenge of the Unknown and this had also its part in awakening the sense of a new adventure for which I felt enthusiastic. At the same time I was not free from a heavy sense of responsibility and even anxiety. It was like swimming in strange waters. So I left the house at 7 o'clock in the evening with a sort of curious feeling: "Let us see what happens,"

At the same time my faith in Sri Aurobindo's work was unshaken. I walked in London as if I had been familiar with it.

I reached 31 Queens Gate Terrace at about 7-30. Miss Tomlinson, Doris, met me at the gate, and pleaded she had been very busy during the day. I asked her whether Peter had lived here. She said it was true. I said: "I want to visit his room." She was very happy and led me to the room through a narrow path. I felt his absence as I missed his active help which would have been that of a fellow-disciple. He had known something about Sri Aurobindo's mission during his visit to Pondicherry. I stood silent for some minutes and then told Doris: "I am going to attempt what Peter wished with all his heart to do. Now I cannot have his help except the inner, but I will not allow that the beginning he has tried to make should fade out."

I remained in England from August 30 to December 3, 1955. During this period my centre was London from where I used to go to different places.

On the 31st afternoon, I went to the India Office and wanted to use Mr. Kher's letters of recommendation. But the Commissioner—Mrs. Vijaya Laxmi—was away on the continent. I met Mr. Rozario, in charge of education, who was sympathetic. He phoned to the warden of the Indian Y.M.C.A., Mr. Abraham, and fixed up an appointment on the 6th of September to meet the inmates and guests, and give a talk to them there (Indian Y.M.C.A., 41 Fitzroy Square W.I.)

On 6th September 1955, I reached the place at 6.30 p.m. and found there was no notice on the board about the meeting. The warden, Mr. Abraham, was not present. I went down into the cellar and tried to play table-tennis with some boys. The Indian students playing there lacked manners. Those at the billiard table were gambling and quarrelling. It was nearly 6.45. That was the time fixed for the talk.

I went to the telephone girl and told her: "Please tell Mr. Abraham when he comes that Mr. Purani whose talk was scheduled to take place at 6.45 came here—as arranged through Mr. Rozario of the India Office—but, finding that Mr. Abraham was absent and no preparations had been made for the meeting, he has gone back."

Somehow there was a stir in the atmosphere; the telephone girl asked me to wait and within two minutes Mr. Abraham was there making excuses. I had seen him without knowing that he was Abraham—busy with the luggage of an American lady who was going out.

He asked me: "Would you like to see this new building of the Indian Y.M.C.A.?"

I: "I have seen enough of cement and brick. If you had come a little earlier there might have been time for it. But I am interested in living people and the time for the meeting is already past."

He became a little serious, left me in his office and came back shortly after and begged pardon and after a few minutes he took me to the evening dinner where the talk was to be given. There were about 40 or 45 students; the atmosphere was too light and artificial—nothing in it that was indicative of Indian Culture. My mind sank into depths of sorrow on seeing the condition of an Indian institution in a foreign

country—its mismanagement, lifelessness and the slave-mentality of those who had come out here. "These men," I said to myself, "will go back to India with the holy mark of 'Europe-returned' ! How would they help India in making progress ? Their main aim would be to start with a nice pay or get quick promotion on the claim of their being 'foreign-trained' ! Their basic attitude is : Indian Culture is no good; salvation of India lies in imitating Europe."

I ate nothing that evening. I went from table to table talking to the young people. I found there was no enthusiasm in them for the prospect of meeting a compatriot. I thought : "Nothing external matters; the first thing is to change one's own inner being. Everything depends upon the change of consciousness."

The President of students was one Mr. Varma studying for post-graduate medicine. Perhaps, they had other kinds of visitors than myself. Many of them might have thought me to be someone who had some axe of his own to grind. At the end Mr. Varma introduced me and said I would tell them something about philosophy. I began : "Mr. Varma wants me to speak to you on philosophy but as you have all taken food it is natural that the circulation of blood moves towards the stomach and it is needed there. I would not like to turn it towards the head. I will briefly tell you one or two things not about philosophy but about life."

The summary of what I spoke is as follows :

"I never wanted to come to England. You youngmen can hardly realise the emotional upsurge in one like me who had dreamt of Indian independence in his young days. I see before my mental vision the 16th century, adventurous navigators voyaging to India and a relation of commerce being established. It ended in the economic domination and political subjugation of India by England. There was a thin streak of cultural contact also. This cultural contact brought about the renaissance of India culminating in her independence. Thus India owes a deep cultural debt to this little island,—she got so many things from England including the love of freedom. Now that India is free England cannot compel her to do anything. It is now more than ever necessary that India should try to repay the cultural debt to Britain. How can that be done ?

"In fact there are two differing standpoints being given to the world today. One is that of Bertrand Russell and his followers who believe in a rational use of the atom-power and an increasing application of scientific discoveries to life as the solution. The other standpoint is that of leaders of thought like Gandhi, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo who in various ways insist on the psychological change in man as the way to solve human problems. Increase in technical knowledge or economic advancement cannot solve the real problem which concerns man's psychology, for the crux of the difficulty lies in man's present constitution. So long as man remains what he is, he is bound to invite troubles, difficulties, problems and even disasters. Up to now, the mere outer development has given rise to a universal conflagration; it has not led to unity and harmony. This means higher ethical and spiritual values should be given a greater importance than economic and other values. That need

was illustrated during the second world war. It started with a struggle for frontiers and for economic markets and raw materials. But when the war really got into its stride the allies appealed to abstract principles—freedom of speech, of association, and of belief. The Atlantic Charter was declared as embodying their aims.

“Man has to awaken those greater potentialities that are lying dormant in him. As man has sounded the potentialities of Matter, he can equally sound the potentialities of the Spirit. Some may say that it would amount to a belief in something invisible, and even impracticable, because these powers are not seen, are not tangible and therefore not real. Matter alone is real according to them. Equally it is asserted that Spirit is real and holds unlimited powers within it. Man has to become greater than he is; he has to exceed his present self. It is man’s effort to exceed himself that gives him his cultural values and moulds his life in their image.

You, young men, who live in this country, should try to activate in you the effort for inner and outer perfection, to live and embody in your life some element of our spiritual culture. That is the easiest way of repaying the cultural debt we owe to this country. You should remember while you are studying here that you are ambassadors of our culture, you are representatives of it. Is this too high an ideal, is it a tall order? No. One can begin from where he is; everyone has some understanding of what is good and what is bad. One can begin to climb from there and one may find that there is an inner deity in everyone of us which when awakened can lead us higher and higher till we reach the Truth.”

The students and Mr. Abraham were a bit puzzled, probably because they found my address rather out of the ordinary run. Anyhow a good number of them came enthusiastically to see me off at the bus-stand.

(To be continued)

A. B. PURANI

WHAT IS A CHANGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS ?

(Continued from the May issue)

III

WE may now consider the extent of the distortion that an individual suffers in his perception and experience. This distortion is of three kinds : (1) The imperfect perception and experience arising from the imperfect nature of the instruments themselves—the physical senses, the sense mind, the vital mind, the thinking mind and the ego-sense. (2) The distortions proceeding from the unperceived and uncontrolled impact of the submental and subconscious movements. (3) The distortions due to the influences that work on us, unperceived, from the environmental consciousness. There are also the deceptions and evil forces that proceed from the inner consciousness when we are unpurified by the psychic fire and the false mixtures into which psychic perception is diluted in the initial stages.

In the surface consciousness, there is a wrong reception of the touch of things. Man seeks to find the essence of being and receives instead a crowd of contradictory impressions. This is so because of the egoistic ignorance in the mind of thought, the heart of emotion and the sense which responds to the touch of things.¹

Thus the desire-soul becomes the cause of a triple misinterpretation of the *rasa*, the delight in things, so that, instead of figuring the pure essential joy of being, it comes rendered unequally into the three terms of pleasure, pain and indifference.

The thinking mind adds to this cause of unrest and incertitude. It questions everything, erects systems of certitude but finally accepts none of them as certain, affirms and questions the evidence of the sense, follows out the conclusions of the reason, but undoes them again to arrive at different or quite opposite conclusions. It continues this process—*ad infinitum*. Thus there is a breaking of bounds only to move always in the same spirals.²

The self-knowledge based on the separative ego-sense is also imperfect. It is only a knowledge of our superficial mental activity and not of the subliminal self and the superconscient self. Again, it is only a knowledge of being and becoming as limited to the individual self and its experiences. The rest of the world is to it not-self, an outside existence presented to its separate consciousness. Thirdly, the true relation between the being and the becoming has not been worked out on the basis of perfect self-knowledge. To this partial knowledge, either the world appears as an effective dream of self or the self appears as a mental construction.

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 204.

² *Ibid.*, p. 373.

It is only when we have seen our self and our nature as a whole, in the depths as well as on the surface, that we can acquire a true basis of knowledge. A knowledge by identity, a knowledge by intimate direct contact, a knowledge by separative direct contact and a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact are the four cognitive methods of Nature. The first way of knowing is illustrated in the surface mind only by our direct awareness of our own essential existence. The second way of knowing, that of a simultaneous separation and partial identification, is illustrated as when the whole consciousness seems to be a wave of anger, the self of life being carried along in the movement of Nature; but there is a self of thought also which observes and permits the passion for the sake of the experience. Similarly a part of ourselves becomes the thought and another part can stand apart from the mental energy and direct the mind's action consciously. Thus the knowledge of our internal movements is of a double nature, separation and direct contact. The third way of knowing, that of a knowledge by separative direct contact, is ordinarily the method of our reason in observing and knowing our inner movements. All the observable movements of our physical being are known and controlled in this way, which is both separative and intimate. We feel the body and what it is doing intimately as part of us, but the mind is separate from it and can exercise a detached control over its movements. The fourth way of knowing, that of a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact, is illustrated in our knowledge of the world outside us and its movements and objects. Our world-knowledge is made up of the imperfect documentation of the sense image, an intuitional interpretation of it by perceptive mind, life-mind and sense-mind, and a supplementary filling up, correction, addition of supplementary knowledge, co-ordination, by the reason. Even so our knowledge of the world is narrow and imperfect.¹

Integral knowledge is possible only when knowledge by identity is achieved with regard to our many-dimensional being, God, Nature and Man.

These are the distortions of the surface self. But the submental and subconscious factors lead to distortions of a worse kind.

The subconscious in us is also sometimes held to include a vital or physical substratum which can be called the submental. It includes the purely physical and vital elements of our constitution and bodily being unmentalised and uncontrolled by the mind, all that dumb occult consciousness which operates in the cells and nerves and all the corporeal stuff and adjusts their life-process and automatic responses. It also covers those lowest functionings of submerged sense-mind which are more operative in the animal and in plant life.

The waking self is only a wave of the secret urge of the subliminal and the subconscious. The subconscious is also a concealed consciousness which the individual does not know and cannot govern. Rather it knows and governs him. In the subconscious the inconscient struggles into a half consciousness. The surface physical

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 470-74.

consciousness retires into this intermediate region when it sinks back from the waking level. It is the ante-chamber of the unconscious through which its formations rise into our waking being. Our past or persistent habits of mind and experiences leave their mark on the subconscious and have there the power of recurrence. In its effect on our waking self this recurrence often takes the form of a reassertion of old habits, impulses dormant or suppressed, or as a subtle result of these rejected but not erased impulses or elements. This is the true subconscious part in us.

The risings of the subconscious are mostly automatic, uncalled for and involuntary, for we have no knowledge and therefore no control of the subconscious.

But it needs to be controlled, because it is the unconscious in the process of becoming conscious and it is a support and even a root of our inferior parts of being and their movements. It sustains and reinforces all in us that clings most and refuses to change, our mechanical recurrences of unintelligent thought, our persistent obstinacies of feeling, sensation, impulse, propensity, our uncontrolled fixities of character. The animal in us—the infernal also—has its lair of retreat in the dense jungle of the subconsciousness.¹

To bring in light and establish a control there is indispensable for any integral transformation of the nature.

This is possible for us only by drawing back into the subliminal or by ascending into the superconscious and from there looking down into these obscure depths.

Even when we have seen something of our depths and heights, there are deceptions which we have to face continuously. Thus there are many formations which can be mistaken for the psyche, a subphysical shadow-form of the being, a ghost or vital formation reproducing the man's surface life-mannerisms, the inner mind or the vital self mistaken for the psyche, etc.

There is the valley of the false glimmer, the state of consciousness in which the demons of the vital plane or the false gods of the mental or subtle physical are able to invade and hold the consciousness because it is, as yet, unpurified by the psychic fire. A mixture of the ego can produce strange distortions in us even on the higher planes of consciousness.

IV

How, then, can we straighten, deepen and heighten our responses to the world and make them integral? How can we bring about this change of consciousness, freeing ourselves from imperfect responses and from distortions and evolve towards a richer status of being through a significant becoming?

This can only be done by opening up within ourselves the inner, psychic, circum-conscious and superconscious layers of our being. Our surface personality is only a bubble on the ocean of our existence. Just as the subliminal mind receives all those

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 654-55.

touches of things which the surface mind ignores, so also the inner vital responds to the *rasa*, or essence in experience, of these things which the surface desire-soul rejects or ignores. Self-knowledge is impossible unless we go behind our surface existence, which is a mere result of selective outer experiences. If we lived only by the surface desire soul, we could no more change or advance than the plant or stone.¹

There is, in the subliminal self, an inner mind, an inner vital being of ourselves, an inner or subtle-physical being. There are here inner senses, a subliminal sight, touch, hearing. The subliminal has a direct power of contact with the universal consciousness and its mental, vital and subtle-physical planes. It can present to the consciousness visual, auditory, tactual and other images and vibrations belonging to other planes of existence. It can also present images or sounds that are symbolic rather than actual. It can become directly aware of the thoughts and feelings around us and see their movements. It can even forecast or see ahead the farther action of the universal forces.²

The subliminal extends itself into an enveloping consciousness through which it receives the shock of currents pouring upon us from the universal mind, universal life, universal subtle-matter forces. These, unperceived by us on the surface, are perceived and admitted by our subliminal self and turned into formations which can powerfully affect our existence without our knowledge. If the wall which separates this inner existence from the outer self were penetrated, we could know and deal with the sources of our present mind energies and life action and could control instead of undergoing their results. But we must learn to live in our intraconscience before we succeed in controlling our circumconscience.

The psychic principle in us also develops a soul personality, a distinct psychic being to represent it. It remains behind the veil in the subliminal part and acts through intimations which it throws up on the surface. As the psychic personality grows stronger, it increases its communion with the psychic entity behind it and exercises a strong control against false mixtures. It then begins to turn the mind and heart and vital being in the direction of what is divine.

The Upanishads speak of the Waking Self (which is the surface consciousness), the Dream Self (which is the subliminal being) and the Sleep Self (the superconscient). It is possible to regard these as three states of consciousness in which is embodied our contact with three different grades of self-experience and world-experience. These are also three different orders of one Reality, which is known in its ultimate or fourth state as the incommunicable Self (Atman)³

The ascent towards Supermind is marked by a gradation, a climbing of degrees. The Superconscient unfolds itself to us as Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind and, finally, Supermind.

In order to bring about an integral transformation, we have to discover the secret

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 205-6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 482-83.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 404-5.

nature and full extent of our ignorance. It is a many-sided self-ignorance. We suffer from a sevenfold ignorance : (1) The original ignorance, *i.e.* ignorance of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming. We think that partial facts of being or the temporal relations of the becoming are the whole truth of existence. (2) The cosmic ignorance or ignorance 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. (3) The egoistic ignorance or ignorance of our universal self, our infinite unity with all being and becoming. We take our limited mentality, vitality and corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as not-self. (4) The temporal ignorance or ignorance of our eternal becoming in time, taking this little life in a small span of time and in a petty field of space for our beginning, middle and end. (5) The psychological ignorance or ignorance of our large and complex being even within this brief temporal becoming, of that in us which is superconscient, subconscient, intraconscient and circumconscient to our surface becoming. (6) The constitutional ignorance or ignorance of the true constitution of our becoming. There is something in us which constitutes our mind, life and body and determines their operations by its occult presence and is meant to determine them sovereignly by its emergence. We lose sight of it and take all three or any two of them for our true principle or the whole account of what we are. (7) The practical ignorance. As a result of the six ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world. We are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations and actions and return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questionings of the world.¹

Integral knowledge means the cancelling of this sevenfold ignorance by the discovery of a sevenfold self-revelation within our consciousness : (1) the knowledge of the Absolute as the origin of all things. (2) The knowledge of self and of the cosmos as the Self's becoming, a manifestation of the Spirit. (3) The knowledge of the world as one with us in the consciousness of our true self. (4) The knowledge of our psychic entity and its immortal persistence in time beyond death and earth-existence. (5) The knowledge of our greater and inner existence behind the surface. (6) The knowledge of our body, life and mind in their true relation to the self within and the superconscient spiritual and supramental being above them. (7) The knowledge of the true harmony and true use of our thought, will and action and a change of all our nature into a conscious expression of the truth of the Spirit, the Self, the Divinity, the integral spiritual Reality.

But this is not an intellectual knowledge which can be learnt and completed in our present mould of consciousness. It must be an experience, a becoming, a change of consciousness, a change of being. The integral knowledge can result only by a change of consciousness. The true individual, the spiritual being, then emerges, individual yet universal, universal yet self-transcendent.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 583-84.

The interaction of our larger hidden being and our surface personality is the main secret of the rapid development that operates in man once he has passed beyond the lower stages of mind.

Integral knowledge is possible only when an individual has experienced the triple transformation—the psychic, the spiritual and the supramental, with a fourfold self-expansion at each corresponding step. To be or become something is greater than thinking, feeling and doing. In fact, thought, feeling and deed are the means through which the being enriches itself and attains a continually higher status.

Now, in order to *be fully*, one has to be wholly conscious of one's being. Unconsciousness or half-consciousness or deficient consciousness is not fullness of being. Secondly, to *be fully* is to have the intrinsic and integral force of one's being, since consciousness carries within itself the force of existence. Whatever is the conscious will of the spirit, that all the existence must be able harmonically to fulfil. Lastly, to *be fully*, is to have the full delight of being. This delight too must be intrinsic, self-existent, automatic, it cannot be dependent on things outside itself. All pain and suffering are a sign of imperfection. "To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight of being and to live in this integral completeness is the divine living."¹

Again, to *be fully* is to *be universally*, be all that is, be one with the being, consciousness and delight of all. This is a necessary condition of the integral divine living. Similarly, to be universally, one must be also transcendently. One must transcend not only the individual formula but the formula of the universe, for only so can either the individual or the universal existence find its own true being and a perfect harmonisation.²

(*To be continued*)

V. K. GOKAK

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 909.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 907-10.

AN INQUIRY INTO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY IN LIGHT OF ŚRĪ AUROBINDO'S PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the May issue)

III. REVIEW OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

The Expansion of Science

Murphy writing on the history of modern psychology said that in the nineteenth century two great forces appeared to have been affecting psychology : (1) the unbelievable development of science and the resulting technology; "...specifically the concepts that life and mind were themselves proper subject matter for science..."; and (2) the expansion of democracy and of a nearly universal education.

Experimental psychology was under way even before Darwin proposed his theory of evolution, but his biological approach "...gave psychology the physical underpinning which it had wanted since the time of Democritus."

Respect for science became perhaps the chief hallmark of modern thinking; and the makers of psychology, sensitive to the demand and wanting the respect, moved swiftly forward to show how man himself might become the object of science.

This trend was most forceful in Germany and the United States, the two countries where science was most highly respected.¹

Science and the social sciences. Murphy said it became evident early in the twentieth century that the challenge of science extended beyond first expectations. If science was to be employed in the study of the individual, so might it be employed in the study of the group :

...if the interrelations of his tissues and of his sensory and motor acts are proper subject matter for science, so are the interactions of men in their linguistic, their economic, their political behavior.

The preliterate societies became the subjects of scientific investigation as they were more easily studied. The sociologists, psychologist and psychiatrists began to conceive of social science in association with science. This had a profound effect upon psychology.

¹ Gardiner Murphy, *Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology* (New York : Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), p. 430.

Essentially, said Murphy, it caused psychologists to see that the phenomena they had explored in their own societies were not necessarily universal or ultimate expressions of human life. The investigations of cultural anthropology caused, through a comparative study, the revision of concepts about "...that very plastic and unformed human nature which could be moulded into such very diverse products as were described by the ethnologist."¹

Gestalt Psychology and the Retreat of the Experimentalists

These conceptions began to unite with those of the Gestalt psychologists who upheld, according to Lindgren, "...that a whole act, process, or situation possesses essential qualities that disappear when the relationship between the parts is dissolved or suspended."² Murphy said the Gestalt psychologist noted that the individual reacted to factors beyond the stimulus or circumstance which the experimentalist designated; "...it became evident that much which is not explicit in the situation as defined, much that is half-hidden or even completely ignored in the social context is highly relevant." Thus, it seemed that providing strict control of the given experimentation without awareness of essential but "...unacknowledged social determinants ..." was ultimately to 'strain at the gnat and swallow the camel.'

As a result, said Murphy, those who sided with a physiological point of view and the laboratory approach limited themselves to investigations "...in which those larger external factors could be ignored without very serious consequences." On the other side those who considered science a scheme applicable to all subject matters began to probe into a widening range of problems.

The Effect of New Scientific Theories

Operationism and the relativity theory. But two scientific movements, Murphy said, struck psychology at nearly the same time : the theory of relativity and operationism. The relativity theory, though a physical theory indicating "...that all time-space measurement is relative to a frame of reference,..." held even greater import for the social sciences than the laboratory sciences, as it became obvious that "...observations are relative to a context." Like Gestalt psychology the relativity approach showed that the *total* conditions governing a response must be defined and recognized. Operationism came to psychology from physics insisting that all concepts be carefully "...defined in terms of the concrete operations by which their places in an event are determined."³

The field theory. Another scientific concept that influenced psychology, was the field theory which, according to Lindgren, indicated that people's behavior was a result of their living in a field of forces that caused them to behave in various ways.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

² Henry Clay Lindgren, *Educational Psychology in the Classroom* (New York : John Wiley and Sons, 1956), p 208

³ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 431-32.

“...changes in the field produce changes in the behavior.”¹

The environmental theory. Closely related to the field theory, the relativity theory and operationism was the theory that psychology is the science of the environment as much as of the organism; Murphy said in part, “it is the specific observable form of their interaction that makes psychology.”²

In connection with these theories Murphy stated that the perceptual apparatus of the observer and all that he is, is a part of the field situation just as fully as any member participating in the observed group.

Conclusions on the new theories. Murphy concluded that psychology must pay attention to the extended situation in which the individual functioned as well as to the individual himself. “...These various new difficulties and problems facing psychology had become inescapable by the decade of the thirties...” But marked national differences existed within this general framework and as a result of political events became more striking.³

National Differences in Psychology

In considering psychology from the viewpoint of national differences, Murphy indicated that some of these differences have become “...relatively unimportant in these recent years not through the enriching effects of cultural diversity...” but because of political and economic conditions that have caused psychologists to increase and gather in one country; “...far more than half of all the psychologists in the world are today in the United States...” The more speculative European psychologists had not exerted as great an influence as they might have without this imbalance.

Trends in Europe and Asia. Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland and the Scandinavian countries had made worthwhile contributions, but they had been relatively dependent upon German, French, British and American sources. According to Murphy neither Japan, China, nor India had developed a modern psychology (as contrasted with Hinduism and Buddhism, their ancient wisdom) The psychologists of the Soviet Union were, in part, “skeptical of the whole Western approach.”

...With dialectical materialism on the one hand, and emphasis upon social molding of the individual on the other (to the virtual neglect of all intrinsic psychological differences), the Russians appear to be determined to work out their own new psychology, free of what they regard as bourgeois preconceptions.⁴

Psychology in the United States. While the socio-political factor in the psycho-

¹ Lindgren, *op cit.*, p. 210.

² Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 432-33.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 432-33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 433-40.

logy of Soviet Russia could be easily seen, it might be more difficult, but equally fascinating, to see it in recent American history. According to Murphy, American society depended upon science and technology; in part, its "devotion to exact science has led to the feeling that exact quantification is fundamental, so that almost automatically those problems become important which permit quantification."¹ The conditioned response in which the dog produced saliva that "...could be measured drop by drop..." opened the way for the study of all behavioral phenomena. The organization and operation of the mind became the object of a quantitative and rational science.

Murphy stated in part that studies of personality, "...even with tests whose reliability and validity could be ascertained,..." were questioned until growing clinical services gave them economic support; and still today this newer approach"...

...has somewhat the character of a relative from the country whose pronunciation makes one wince..." According to Roback, psychoanalysis was considered for a long time to be "...an excessively crude imitation of a serious science..." but experimentation, operationism and psychosomatics had made it relatively acceptable.²

Parapsychology

Men who had been trained in the German laboratory dominated the American psychology of the twentieth century and "rapidly wrested psychology from control by philosophy in American universities."³ Thus, said Murphy, not only methods, but concepts also were required to fit the current standards. A most obvious illustration was the case of parapsychology or experimental studies in psychic research. A great deal of careful work and experimental investigation had been carried out in long distance telepathy; but the research was not given careful consideration. "...Titchner had said that no scientifically minded psychologist believes in telepathy..."⁴ Helmholtz had stated that neither vast and reliable testimony nor his own senses could make him accept telepathy "...since it was manifestly impossible..."⁵

Investigators from several American and British universities gave evidence of extrasensory phenomena. However, said Murphy, it was thought that such phenomena, in part, "did not fit in. Perhaps they were fraudulent; perhaps these psychologists were incompetent; at any rate the practice was not one with which one could afford to waste time." Brennan, Murphy, Roback and Müller-Freienfels stated that even today these matters were given little recognition by psychologists. New studies were published in the *Journal of Parapsychology*, Murphy noted, but it was not widely read.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 433-40.

² Murphy, *op. cit.*, (pp. 433-40; and A. A. Roback, *History of American Psychology* (New York : Library Publishers, 1952), pp. 225-43.

³ Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 437.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

...There was no reason to be surprised that emotion arises in this very human situation among those who resort to ad hominem arguments. This is a very familiar story in the history of science; for one is dealing with a foreign body in the science of today, and there is trouble in digesting foreign bodies.¹

The Question of Wholes and Parts

"But the most acute of all issues in contemporary psychology..." was the issue of *wholes and parts*. It was the old question, to some extent, of "Aristotle's forms versus Democritus's atoms," but it was expressed today, said Murphy, as evolutionary holism, the organismic view and "...the indivisibility of the 'living system'..." as opposed to laboratory analysis of units of behavior. Both approaches were useful and, thus, it was difficult to make a final choice between them. One may appraise the spirit of modern psychology by trying to discover why this controversy continued. Few psychologists had speculated on the integration of these two ways of thinking; "...they remain, by and large, determined to vindicate either the analytic approach or the organismic approach."²

Psychology Minus Science

Analysis versus organicism was not the same as the issue between those who found that the essentials in life transcended the concepts of science and those who sided with the scientific outlook. Murphy stated that this latter distinction was still recognized in European psychology, although it had never received much credit in American psychology. It remained to be seen, he said, if the theory that human functions can be attributed to principles other than those of science is one of great importance. But the question of wholes and parts continued to be close at hand; the fact that it was difficult to imagine a decisive test "...which would convince any atomist that an organismic principle appears, or vice versa..." might lead to the conclusion "...that neither formation is very well attuned to the actual life of the organism..." If the issue could not be decided by any immediate evidence or by any conceivable evidence, the hope of achieving an integrated conception of the human being based upon all the sciences might not be fulfilled in the present age.³

Conclusions on Modern Psychology

Both Murphy and Peters conclude that psychology could continue to develop and progress "...while the warfare of ideologies continues both outside and inside the laboratories and clinics..." Man had come to believe that reality could be dis-

¹ Robert Breman, *History of Psychology, From the Standpoint of a Thomist* (New York : The Macmillan Company, 1945), pp. 237-39; and Richard Muller-Freienfels, *The Evolution of Modern Psychology*, trans. W. Beran Wolfe (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1935), p. 469; and Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 440-41; and Roback, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

² Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 444-45.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 444-45.

covered at least to some degree, said Murphy, and that this endeavor was worth every effort. There was every hope for psychology as long as the spirit of inquiry was kept alive, "...without which psychology will promptly curl up and die."¹

(*To be continued*)

MILIANA DRACHMAN

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 445-56; and R. S. Peters (ed.), *Brett's History of Psychology* (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 725.

A GOD-LOVER'S PLIGHT

VOIDED of self, in the lasso of Her Love,
 I'm tamed to the drum-beats of Her jugglery,
 A monkey stripped of will I dance and move
 To the dandling whims or the rhythmmed fancies free
 Of Her mind-vexing mystic flute. Compassionate She
 Tramples my proud and puzzled mentality;
 When I look through, nothing but Love I see.

I stand self-stripped, bonds-broken, Hers, alone;
 Whatever world-sympathy brings for me a glow,
 There falls Her lightning stroke and all is done.
 No more world's passion-flowers in me blow.
 Life's murky depths Her Love must ceaseless churn
 And make hell's nethermost darkness for Her yearn,
 Until Love's crown and sceptre sun-like burn.

The more I turn to Her the more I find,
 Life's false firm boards slipping below my feet,
 All certainties betray, yet leave my mind
 Faithful as ever. Not even doubt can cheat
 My heart of flinted faith. If it is She
 Who blanks my mind, yet She alone can free
 Me from my night of soul and its agony.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE "I" WHO WANTS TO DO YOGA

(A LETTER)

I DID not reply to your first letter because I thought you would soon be in Pondicherry to exemplify concretely the good news you had conveyed to me that the Mother had approved of your resuming your stay in the Ashram. Your second letter puts off that exemplification for a time. So I am hurrying to reply, particularly as you say you are pestered by a metaphysical question without having the capacity to give a metaphysical answer !

The way you have stated the question carries in itself an answer, though in negative terms. You have said in effect : "If it is the ego who wants to become conscious of the soul and ultimately becomes conscious of it, he must be a very fine fellow. So his existence should not be grudged and his disappearance and destruction would be a misfortune. In addition, there would be the problem why he should be interested in following a course resulting in suicide." Well, it should be pretty clear from the contradictions inherent in this statement that the ego cannot be the "I" who wants to do Yoga and grow conscious of the "real I", the soul, who loves the Mother.

Evidently, if there is going to be a continuity between you who are an aspirant and you who will be aware of yourself as the soul, there must be something in common between the two, something that makes the transition and will know that it has done so. If "knowledge", if "awareness", is implied in the whole process, it is logical to say that what makes the transition is fundamentally "consciousness". Consciousness gets identified with this or that state of being—with the ego at the beginning and with the soul later. Whatever the consciousness identifies itself with, that is the state realised. Here we have the first step of the solution.

The second step will be clear when you consider that you are trying to do Yoga and to realise your soul. Such an aspiration can come only if something in affinity with the Yogic condition and with the soul is already there in the consciousness which is you, along with its identification with the ego. Mental man has always, within his ego-consciousness, a projection made by his soul, a projection which mingles with his sensational, emotional and conceptual being and creates in that being all that we call idealism, the sense of values, the courage to live up to them, the aspiration to become better and better, "the desire of the moth for the star" and the longing to realise more and more the truth of the world and of oneself. It is this psychic projection into the ego-consciousness, which is the part of you that could not be happy outside the Ashram and that the Mother has allowed to come back and start exulting and agonising once more in the heavenly hell that is the Yogic passage from the hell of ordinary life to the heaven of God-realisation.

I hope all this is simple enough to pull you out of what you term "the fog" and save you from being "an old foggy" if not "an old fogey" !

K. D. SETHNA

AN ENGLISH IMPRESSION OF SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

(The Hon. Mrs. Momca Parish visited the Ashram some months back. After returning to England she wrote to us on receipt of the Mother India of March 1965 : "I found it most interesting." Among other things, that issue had contained Mr. K. D. D. Henderson's account of his visit to the Ashram. We are happy to publish now the following valuable little article from the pen of Mrs. Parish who, we learn, had recently the pleasure of meeting Mr. Henderson.)

THE ladders and links between the world of the five senses with which we are very familiar and the less familiar world of the spirit are built by man after he has spent much time in silence. We must pass from the distractions of the outer world to the very within of ourselves before we hear the rhythm of the Cosmos. Between these worlds lies a thick veil of forgetfulness; but, with effort, the beyond can be brought back to consciousness and then made manifest to the senses. This will transform the world and permit it to mirror more perfectly the beauty of the beyond.

Are these thoughts too abstract ? In the Ashram in Pondicherry you can see this happening. I was primarily impressed by an attitude of listening, as if there was on earth an open channel, and man, using himself as receiving sets, was expressly orientated to catch impressions from beyond the sense world. Each individual made an act of surrender in the silence. "Not my will but Thine be done." There was a conscious effort, both individual and collective, to tune into the Great Will, the Will of the Divine.

I well remember once the story of a person who expressed the view that it was God who did everything down to posting her letters. How can this be ? Is it not still a strange thought that the Great Power should do such a small thing ? Yet do you not visit the postbox differently if it is the Divine in man that takes the letter ? Do you not speak differently to the postman ? And do you not see the post office with new eyes ?

In the Ashram human beings have become actors. Each and everyone was surpassing himself by playing out in daily life a role which needed Divine Energy and inspiration. The result could be seen in the caring, one for another, the infinite patience : for Time becomes immediately expendible when the egotistical will has been renounced. In the Ashram a limitless vision is behind and linked to the minutest detail giving it strength and purpose. Indeed we know we are not what we can be; our sin is our falling short of the perfection which we know we do not reach. It is not, however, by concentrating upon our failure that we reach success, but by courageously attempting to let the Divine live and act through us. So in the Ashram a great inspiration is harnessed to a practical programme which is building, through men and women,

order, cleanliness, simplicity, and finally pockets of perfection. Look around the factories, the farms, the houses and shops, and you will see this order and growth towards perfection. One is surely quite at liberty to call it a manifestation of the Divine.

I have remarked upon the spirit of caring; the order and thoroughness, and the efficiency; there is one more aspect of the Ashram to which I want to draw attention.

To Beauty.

Believe in perfection in the here and now and you will begin to get Beauty. Stretch out a Divine hand to act and you will find rhythm in the movement, feel with sensitivity, employ colour : manifest rhythm and colour in this world; plant a garden, care for it, and finally all bursts forth in Joy. Beauty and Joy abound in the Ashram.

Man is the transformer between spirit and the material world. The Ashram is a school for all to learn how to tune their transformers with skill so that the suffering of the world can be banished and the new Direct Link between God and Man can be restored.

THE HON. MRS. MONICA PARISH

TWO POEMS

TO A MARIGOLD

WATCHING your fiery disc that seems to glow igniting
 Diadems of suns in sun delighting,
 I wonder what flaming petals crown me too, as I stand
 Holding you, beautiful one, in my hand.

TELEPATHY

Dwelling in the isle of isolation
 With but the delicate communication of voices from afar
 Ponder not on pain and tribulation,
 For in the heart-beats of each constellation
 Diamond bright the waves are
 Echoing every star.

MARGARET FORBES

THE SUNLIT POETRY OF SIDNEY LANIER

FROM a surface view, the union of the American states is perhaps richer in its poets than it deserves to be; and the subject of these remarks is one of its greatest, and one whose gift it has been least able to appreciate and assimilate. Though he is read and enjoyed by a few, the present dominant "authorities" neglect and scorn him, and would bury his work and his reputation forever, if they could. But I suspect that they cannot; for the very qualities that make him so antipathetic and odious to the "modern" consciousness are those that may well make him an impetus and a help to the awakening of mankind in a larger consciousness, toward a spiritual age. He sings, and he soars, he is open, generous, and high-minded, a poet of air and fire: he believes in the reign of light, and his life was an aspiration toward it, and toward an increasing of it in the world. But at present he remains but little known in his own country, and elsewhere hardly at all.

His life was not easy, and not long. He was a Southerner, born and bred in the beautiful state of Georgia, and five years of his early manhood were given to the so destructive Civil War (in which Walt Whitman nursed the sick and wounded, "with malice toward none")—five years in which his vitality sank to a low ebb that, upon his release, passed into tuberculosis. The days of the "Reconstruction" were difficult even for men in perfect health, and the struggles which he endured increased the hold of his sickness upon him, until it conquered. But still, through all, the dominant mode of his life was faith, and cheerfulness, and love, and he has left a legacy of rare beauty behind him.

He was a musician as well as a poet—a born musician, of very exceptional ability—and his verses are among the most musical in English. He was a careful prosodist, and wrote an excellent treatise on the subject, *The Science of English Verse*. His work progressed and grew continually, in beauty and scope and power, and though it was not given him to develop to the height and fulness of his vision and the vast splendor that he felt to be his potentiality, his capacity and being, he has given us a few perfect poems, that can stir and uplift the heart toward its unclouded glories.

One of his earliest pieces, *Nirvana*, seems to be mainly a versification of some Buddhist scriptures he had been reading. But it is an intensely personal production, extraordinarily sympathetic and powerful and clear, for one born in Western circumstances; and it would seem to have expressed an ideal, and a partial realization, that was always with him, or behind him: though it became increasingly a Nirvana of the Mahayana kind, a Nirvana that works in the world, and indeed is the world, when seen aright—the kind of Nirvana that leads to the arising of the Maitreya from his lotus posture, in the elevating transformation of existence.

As his horizons and vistas expanded and his capacities increased, his forms became more elaborate and his rhythms more varied and sure. In the marsh country

of southern Georgia, near the sea, he wrote one of his best poems, *The Marshes of Glynn*—a hymn as broad and intricate as the marshes themselves, a paean of the beauty, the mystery, and the divinity of creation. Here is a part of it :

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on th watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God :
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies :
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God :
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

When he wrote this, he was strong in the accepted knowledge that he had not long to live, and that he would never develop his gifts fully : he was strong in the serenity of acceptance of all as coming from God, and content to work as he could, returning the gift to the best of his power, dedicating his all to the divine truth which visited him with glimmers and gleams, and high ensouling rhythms and harmonies. In his best work achieving a rare felicitous blend of exact observation, clear musical expression and living supple form, all united and given meaning in the devotion of his growing and deepening heart, he strove, and he looked upward, and awaited the issue with a quietly ardent faith. In another marsh hymn, *Sunrise*, he made this declaration :

Thou chemist of storms, whether driving the winds a-swirl
Or a-flicker the subtler essences polar that whirl
In the magnet earth,—yea, thou with a storm for a heart,
Rent with debate, many-spotted with question, part
From part oft sundered, yet ever a globed light,
Yet ever the artist, ever more large and bright
Than the eye of a man may avail of :—manifold One,
I must pass from thy face, I must pass from the face of the Sun :
Old Want is awake and agog, every wrinkle a-frown;
The worker must pass to his work in the terrible town :
But I fear not, nay, and I fear not the thing to be done;
I am strong with the strength of my lord the Sun :
How dark, how dark soever the race that must needs be run,
I am lit with the Sun.

Surely he spoke the truth, and his soul, whatever its limitation of capacity and vision, was a sunlit one. He sought "room, and grace enough of bound" to encompass truth, and to live it, and his lines are sunlit, his songs inhabitants and vaticinators of an air more clear and clean, sparkling with tints of gold, and promises of fulfilment.

Toward the end of his life he saw the progress of mankind as an enlargement of personality, a pure unfolding beyond the knots and the hardness of egoism, humanity one harmonious, peaceful and radiantly aspiring garden of beautiful flowers, in all variety.

JESSE ROARKE

INTEGRAL YOGA AND THE GODHEADS

(A LETTER)

I AM tempted to write these few lines after reading Sri Pranjivan V. Pathak's "On Prabuddha's 'The Gods and Our Sadhana'."

Two questions were submitted to the Mother as far back as the year 1955. I do not remember the exact words used then, but the substance of the questions was like this. Can we celebrate Buddha Jayanti, Christ Jayanti, Rama Jayanti, Krishna Jayanti, Mahavir Jayanti, by placing the photo of the godhead concerned in front of the photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and offering flowers to the said godhead and invoking the said godhead?" The other question was: "Can we invite a person or a sannyasin,—not interested in the integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—and hear his discourse?"

The answer conveyed was characteristic of Her as usual. It was: "Mother says, She has no objection."

Looking at the answer, superficially, one would be tempted to think that one can invoke any godhead he likes. But if we look at the answer, in the right spirit, a great problem arises. The Mother can have no objection, could not have any objection, because when the Creatrix of the Universe, whom She embodies, manifested the universe and formulated its Laws, the first Law was 'Freedom'. And as long as the Law is not changed or repealed, the Mother acts according to the precepts of the Law and so in the fitness of things She cannot have any objection, if anyone wants to invoke some godhead instead of Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. But does it behove us—who profess to be sadhaks of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—to invoke other gods? The main question that arises is of our faith in the Mother. Have we accepted the Mother as the Divine Mother, the Supramental Mother? If yes, can She give or not give what the other gods can give? The other question that arises is, "Can other gods give us the Truth of the Supermind?" Now, anyone, who has read even a little of Sri Aurobindo's writings, knows that up till now no Avatar has come to manifest the Truth

of the Supermind. And if no one came to manifest the Truth of the Supermind, how can the other godheads give us the Truth of the Supermind ? And if we have accepted the Mother as the Supramental Mother, it is plain that She can give us the Truth of all the planes. So, where is the necessity of invoking other gods ? The very idea of invoking other gods is certain proof that even though we say that the Mother is the Supramental Mother, it is only a lip homage and we do not believe, deep down in our heart, that She is the Supramental Mother. So, to my mind, the very fact that we harbour the idea of invoking other gods, goes to prove that we have not accepted the Mother as the Supramental Mother and, till that is done, no true progress in our sadhana is possible. To a sadhak of the Integral Yoga, the Mother must be the Alpha and Omega of the matter.

V. V. SHETH

WHOM GOD PROTECTS

THE LIFE-STORY OF A SPIRITUAL ADEPT

(Continued from the May issue)

5

KUDA felt much better after the assurance; still the unexpected cause of fear lingered in his mind the livelong day and was a cause of distraction at his hour of play. He recounted all that had happened to Parvati and Bidhu when he met them. Parvati said that here were Rakshasas (giants) who offered human sacrifices to the Goddess. She too had often seen the Kapalik. Kuda fully believed what she told him and on several occasions during the day he remembered the large terrifying red eyes of the Kapalik. At night in bed before he fell asleep, many were the thoughts crowding into his head.

Their bedroom was a large one. Bidhu's parents had a large bedstead and Kuda and Bidhu slept in a smaller one. For a long time that night Kuda was awake and as he lay he heard much of the conversation of Bidhu's parents. He did not understand much but was aware that they talked about him, and also that the master wanted to sell him to the Kapalik. Bidhu's mother was against it and argued a good deal with her husband. But he fell asleep before they had reached any decision.

In a day or two, as nothing untoward happened, Kuda, once again busy playing about, forgot the incident of that morning. One morning, about ten days later, appeared once again the fierce Kapalik at their door. Once again he talked for some time with Bidhu's father and left. Fear made Kuda maintain a safe distance from

his object of terror, but a premonition of danger was with him the whole day and increased a great deal more when in the afternoon Bidhu's father said to him, "Come, let us go and visit the goddess Kali in a temple that you have not seen before."

At these words Kuda felt a great fear taking a more concrete shape in his heart, and it entirely covered up his ever cheerful countenance. He asked, "Is Bidhu coming too with us?"

His suspicion was greater because so far Bidhu's father had never taken him out in this manner. So he looked at him anxiously as he asked about Bidhu.

It seemed to him as if Bidhu's father replied more sternly than was usual for him. "No, he will not come," said he.

Without daring to ask why, he said, "Let me go and tell mother that I am going out."

The master knew that Kuda, too, addressed Bidhu's mother as his own, and also that she had a great affection for him. He, then, caught Kuda by the hand and drawing him forcibly closer said, "There is no need to go in and ask permission of your mother."

Till now Kuda had never been treated so roughly and this surprised him and frightened him as well, but his curiosity got the better of his fright and he kept quiet.

On the road the master tried in many ways to distract Kuda. Their way was along the bank of the Ganges; after about a couple of miles the master stopped near a rising plot of land. There was a biggish hut there hidden amongst trees; behind it was an old dilapidated temple from whose crevices big and small saplings of an Asvatha tree were growing. While Kuda was looking at all these in great surprise, a man, very thin, dressed in red robes, with a big vermilion mark on his forehead, came out and asked Bidhu's father by signs to come inside the hut.

The place looked the very Kingdom of Darkness. On the floor of a room nearby they saw a huge leopard-skin spread and on it was seated the Bhairav totally naked. At the sight of him Kuda shouted with fear, "I do not want to remain here; O master, take me home!"

He remembered Parvati's words that they were Rakshasas, who sacrificed men to the Goddess. The Kapalik then cast a very keen look on Kuda; one knew not what the boy saw in that look, but he at once became tongue-tied. When he was brought to the Kapalik, the latter told him, "Sit here." Immediately Kuda sat down without a word and began to sway as if sleep was beginning to envelop him. He did fall asleep but when and how he remembered not at all.

When Kuda regained his senses he found a profound darkness all around, an utter stillness, as if it was the dead of night. In front of him were arranged all the paraphernalia of a *puja*, a lamp was burning in a corner with quite a bright flame. As he turned he was startled to see the naked Kapalik, a lantern in hand, a towel on his shoulder, gazing at him. In that chiaroscuro his aspect was terrifying.

"Sit up," said the Bhairav, and Kuda did so mechanically. In his heart he felt neither fear nor sorrow, nor any pleasure; he hardly knew if he felt anything at all.

Addressing someone within, the Kapalik called, "Anadi."

As the man entered he said, "I m going for my bath and taking the boy with me too. I shall take the lantern as well; you keep everything ready."

Then he turned to Kuda. "Come along," he said and, holding his delicate hand, went out. When they came out of the bushy tract into the open, in the light of the lantern Kuda saw a jackal which slunk off cautiously as the light fell on it. The Kapalik addressing the animal said, "Go away now and come later, the Mother has prepared a sumptuous meal for you to-day."

Soon they reached the Ganges. Keeping the lantern on the ground, the Kapalik took some water from a vessel, sprinkled it on Kuda's head and body, reciting a mantra. Kuda shivered once as the water touched his body, then became steady as before. Now the Kapalik, mumbling in an inaudible voice some mantras, took Kuda by the hand and stepped into the river.

Perhaps there was something uneven in the water, not discernible then, but the Kapalik after a step or two began to tremble and slipped into deeper water; simultaneously his grip slackened and Kuda became free. The Bhairav was making strange groaning sounds through his mouth. Kuda, too, fell down at the shock but recovering himself stood erect.

The Kapalik was trying to say something but the words were not articulate enough to be understood. Kuda stood just where he was and was watching bewildered; he was not clear about his thoughts.

The Kapalik seemed to be making frantic efforts to stand but all was futile—he began to tilt on one side and lose his strength. He could raise only one hand and a leg in his efforts to reach the bank but he could make no progress. What had happened to him ?

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Gradually Kuda began to feel that the influence that possessed him was passing—as if this great effort of the Kapalik, in a natural manner, had broken the spell and brought Kuda to his normal self again. He was an innocent child six or seven years old, hardly a boy yet, and as he was under the influence of an occult action he took some time to realise what did actually happen; when he did understand, however, he remained quite calm; thought for a moment what he could possibly do in the circumstances and then very cautiously advanced a step or two in the water. Then that pure and simple-minded godly child caught in his two hands the hand of the Kapalik and began to pull him with all his might towards the land.

Infinitesimal was his strength, too feeble even to budge an inch the huge frame of the Kapalik. When he realised how futile was his small strength and effort here, he began to look round helplessly.

The deep darkness of a new-moon night had obscured the surroundings; the feeble light of the lantern seemed to deepen it further. Myriads of brilliant eyes seemed to look down upon him from the skies, yet he was not the least bit afraid.

A little way off he could discern the faint outlines of a few boats at anchor but how was he to inform them that help was needed here ? He could see no way out. Some more time elapsed. Then finding their return inordinately delayed, Anadi arrived at the spot. He little understood at first what he saw before his eyes; an unknown fear made his heart throb.

At the sight of Anadi the Kapalik made many signs with his hand and began to speak a lot, it seemed, but Anadi could distinguish nothing more than a long drawn-out groaning whose import he could not comprehend. At last in great agitation and fear he asked Kuda, "Tell me, my boy, what has happened."

Kuda's reply was short, "He has fallen in the water, bring him out." What more could a mere boy know or understand ?

Nonplussed, Anadi stood still for some time; then when he heard Kuda's words, he seemed to realise that to haul the Bhairav out of water was the first thing necessary now. He, Anadi, was not of a robust physique but as there was no hope of any help he got ready and went in; after a good deal of pulling and tugging he did succeed in bringing the body on to the bank, but it slumped like a sack as soon as his hold was released.

Anadi saw that one side of the body had become quite paralysed; three years previously the Bhairav had suffered a mild attack, he remembered, and he knew now that this one would be fatal and he would never recover from it.

Who could have foreseen this sudden attack of paralysis ? It was even beyond the wildest dreams of Anadi. Now the problem was to bring the Kapalik to the ashram, but there was no one close by to help. Moreover, that day was the great ceremony of his final realisation, every arrangement had already been made, and yet his sudden calamity had come upon him. "Why has the Goddess turned away from him? There must be some reason somewhere why the Goddess had withdrawn in anger, thought Anadi. It might yet be possible to treat and save him as he was still alive, but it was impossible to carry his huge frame to the ashram single-handed. He could discern a few boats at anchor a little way off; the occupants of them must be all asleep as no light shone anywhere, and he desisted from going to fetch them for the needed help.

The Kapalik was lying quite motionless and still, as if all physical strength had been drained away from him. When Anadi let the light from the lantern shine on his face he saw that although his body was quite immobile his eyes were yet shining with an unusual brilliance; it was so unnatural and frightening that Anadi recoiled a step or two and a shiver passed through his body. Now he sincerely wished that the Kapalik would die.

Then a sudden resolve seemed to enter into his mind and he took up the lantern in one hand and, holding Kuda's with the other affectionately, he said, "Come, my boy, let us go."

Kuda, by now, was quite himself; he said, pointing to the Kapalik, "Must he remain here ?"

Anadi said, "He will not live much longer now. We are quite incapable of carrying him back to the ashram. Come, let us go back and see what we can do there."

Thus they departed and the moribund Kapalik was left alone on the river's bank in the darkness. It was the day he had long looked forward to as the day of fulfilment—perhaps, even a few hours before he had imagined the realisation well within his grasp.

(To be continued)

PRAMODE KUMAR CHATTERJEE

(Translated by Kalyan K. Chaudhuri from the Bengali)

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

PHILOSOPHY

(Continued)

MILTON conceives man as a fallen godhead, and woman as his indirect creation who leads him to his ruin. Science by its biological inquiry disproves this doctrine. Sri Aurobindo by his spiritual experience and revelation rejects this summary definition of man. Such a definition is not only malicious but also untrue. It does not evaluate his being, his attainment, his cult of progress and determination to know. Judged by this hypothesis, man becomes a disgrace to God's creation, because he has, of his own free will, chosen evil. It seems to dwell too harshly on his failings and too little upon his higher nature. It is a superficial view; it comes from an early race of men of strict moral prejudices, who see life from the narrow slits of their ethical principle without any consideration for any other values. Christian philosophy attempts to justify this standpoint and thus safeguard outdated and antiquated theories that no longer apply to the progressive man. Milton, the vanguard of such a way of looking at things, continues this doctrine. He rejects the pagan Greek viewpoint, although he accepts its presence in poetry. The eternal burden of sin is laid on man.

Man, in *Savitri*, is the progressive soul, the mind that questions, the life that toils, the body that is the vehicle of a greater influence and presence. There is no stigma of so-called sin or of evil in his inherent nature. But these as concepts enter

with the growth of thought which wants to curb the vagaries of life-instinct and energy.

Woman is not the by-product of man. She is a complementary creation, with an independent being and capacity for growth and for attainment of perfection. She does not lead man to fall, but man declines owing to the lure of his own animal nature. In her essential nature, woman has something of the divine Energy, the creative principle and power.

Seen from a purely spiritual standpoint, sex is no difference and the difference is only superficial and not essential. Difference occurs on account of circumstances, tradition and prejudice. And this cannot become the source of a philosophical argument.

It is only a convenience of nature to carry out her biological purpose. Psychologically woman is nearer to the life-forces than man and hence tends to be more elemental than intellectual. Man is farther from life than his companion unit, and hence is more abstract, impractical and aloof. The life-forces awake in him less severe responses. His emotions are less all-embracing.

In *Savitri* Man and Woman are such and something much more. Savitri the woman is not tied to her home or her kin or even to her nature. She is a conscious embodiment of the Divine within and above. She comes with a mission and her life, mind, thought and emotions join together to aid this mission's labour. What is weakness in a common woman is a strength in her. She has a will stronger and more male than any man's, greater than any god's and even more august than fate. Her character is a sweet and ineffable blending of love, pride, will, obedience and humility. As a daughter, she is submissive. As a wife, she shares her husband's fate. As a divine being, she obeys her highest nature.

Her mother is not divine; but she is the portrait of a womanhood sublime and noble. She has a generous character, a height of nobility, but in action she is one submissive to her lord. Thus we see in her the blending of two opposite trends: submission and noble aloofness, the ideal of the Aryan woman. And this must be so : Savitri could not have been born from a vulgar or ill-tempered woman. The mother of an incarnation must in some way reflect a height of character and a nobility of temperament.

Ashwapathy is not an ordinary man. A king by birth, he is an aspirant to the higher life whose quest results in the descent of the Divine Mother. He is the mind that wants to surpass itself and realise something of the greater Mind. In him is the fire that forges his character and makes him the true Aryan, the conquerer of his lower self, the master of nature and becoming. And yet he is not an ascetic. He does not forget his duties as the leader of his people. He does not forsake his duties to his clan, family or the nation. Also he obeys the dictates of his higher nature. But he is only an instrument for the descent of the Divinity; he cannot and does not become the vehicle which the Divinity comes to save and uplift. He makes the possibility of man's endeavour the last pinnacle of his aspiration.

Satyavan is the soul. No richness can lure him. No defeat can deject him. No death can stop his progress. He has been chosen as the vehicle for the showering of the Grace of the Divine. He is the lover, the lord on one hand and on the other the servant and child of the Goddess. He does not impose his will on her. He knows her to be the centre of his being, the *raison-d'être* of all his life. He is overwhelmed by her love which leads him on.

Man and woman can, if they outgrow their lower animality, become leaders of perfection. Their love can be the channel of an endless joy instead of a servile torture by the lower nature. The stigma of evil that is usually laid by the ascetics on human relation is shown in *Savitri* to be the source of unspeakable delight, because both Satyavan and Savitri have outgrown their failings of ignorant attachment to the flesh, desires, impositions and demands. Thus while Milton harps on the failings of man and woman, Sri Aurobindo reveals their true nature and their place in the world.

Savitri is not only the typical woman, she is also the incarnation of the Godhead as opposed to Milton's Eve, the gateway to perdition. The former delivers humanity, the latter aids man to fall. The Avatar, as conceived by Sri Aurobindo, has a special significance. Here is not the relatively limited concept of Indian thought, nor the strict and limited idea of the Christian. Sri Aurobindo accepts only the progression of the incarnation that is in the former; he rejects in the latter the view that Christ was the sole incarnation, although he accepts him as one.

An incarnation is the forerunner of the Divine on an evolving earth, and the more the earth progresses, the more the Divine reveals himself, from an ever larger height of consciousness, power, existence and light. Indian religion implies this but does not bring it out clearly. He is the link between the higher transcendence and the lower hemisphere of the cosmos. He is both human and divine; he is man and god. He accepts the sacrifice of man and raises it up to heaven. At the same time his own existence is a sacrifice to humanity. He in one sense pays back God's debt to earth and earth yields its debt to heaven through him. He makes it possible to uplift man, to render effective his aspiration and his call. He comes to hasten the steps of evolution. He is the living embodiment of the Divine compassion.

Such a phenomenon is necessary for the explicit reason of the gulf that exists between man and the supreme consciousness due to the omnipresent shadow of ignorance. Christianity terms this condition the Fall; Indian thought conceives it as Avidya, Ignorance. Christianity has failed to see the inner and true meaning of Ignorance and the resultant separation of the two consciousnesses and has given it a crude and mythical garb, so too it has failed to see the incarnation as the evolving steps of the Divine. Thus it has missed in both cardinal points the essential truth. Indian thought had seen the truth with the Upanishadic vision. But with the codification that ensued with the Puranas, the spiritual values became mythical, abstract or mental formations that had lost the sense of the veridical and the reality of the spiritual experience. Sri Aurobindo brings back the real significance of the Avatar and shows its inevitability in *Savitri*. He has shown us how and why this great phenomenon

became possible; not by any outer evil or abstract Avidya, but by the inner separation that ensued because of the presence of Ignorance. A delivering, linking and unifying element was necessary to undo the resultant occurrence.

Being so, it cannot be an isolated principle of a Christ or Krishna. A single incarnation cannot undo what has been wrought by millennia of separation from the source. One incarnation can hasten the step but he cannot achieve in a day what took a great Night of God to build. Savitri too is not a lonely divine occurrence; she follows a line of Avatars that preceded her and that made her advent possible. She stands for a synthesis, perfection, unification of all that has gone before her; and her episode that we see narrated in this great epic is but a fraction of her full life and her achievement.

But Christ is shown by Milton as the one result of God. He has no predecessors and no followers. His life is all of his existence that we see narrated in the Gospels. And it leaves many questions unanswered and many problems unsolved. We are not told the reason of his coming or his birth, and the failure of his mission on earth leaves us in doubt about the validity of the Biblical interpretation of Christ. He does not triumph like Krishna, Buddha or Savitri, and in spite of his miracles he endures defeat. But if he was shown as an evolving incarnation, a step in the great line of Avatars, his actions, failures, place and work would bear another meaning than that ascribed to him by the Bible. He came to awaken the misguided, ethical-minded, stubborn and primitive tribes of Israel. His failure is apparent and due to those people's inability to accept him as the Messiah. He is the incarnation of love, a new principle so far amongst such primitive beings.

By making Christ the only incarnation of God, the Bible circumscribes not only Christ but God himself. Much of what happened in earlier or later religious history remains unexplained due to this limitation of attitude. We cannot seize the logic of the divine working, nor does the full significance of this incarnation of Christ come home to us. The Bible covers up this deficiency by ascribing to its God a limited character, a limited personality and a limited field of working. And at the end it becomes so involved in the labyrinth of its own thinking that it has no alternative but to describe God's ways as inscrutable.

Inscrutable certainly they are—but not to the prophetic vision of the seer. Here Sri Aurobindo triumphs where the Bible fails. He has no faith to adhere to; no institutional church or dogma to believe in; no fractional truth to accept as the whole. Thus his concept of the incarnation escapes the collapse we find in the Bible. To him an incarnation is an occasion of God to reveal himself; it is an opportunity given to earth to prepare more and more for the fulfilment and consummation. Each incarnation comes with a message and a particular mission. Each comes at a particular juncture of human history, in a great crisis to lift up man and tide him over this ordeal and makes this ordeal an occasion for a progress.

Then there are greater incarnations and smaller ones. Some come to usher in a new age. Others come to aid the larger advent. Some open up a new field of

consciousness and there is an upliftment, *changé*, progress and a re-orientation. Some are swift; others are slow. Some work from behind; while some prepare as a latent power, an inner influence and a presence.

Savitri is more than a mere incarnation. She is the supreme consciousness descended on earth to make possible man's transcendence of his mind. This presupposes that all other incarnations of life and mind, of love and emotions have gone before her. Now man has become sufficiently roused so that he could transcend his limited mind and human workings. With such preparations, man can change his destiny with direct intervention from above.

Her mission is to make futile the intervention of death in the march of man to his undying state. She comes to upset the iron-clad laws of Nature by ushering in her supreme personality and, in the teeth of fierce opposition, she succeeds. She comes to make man what he really is in his essential nature : not bound to ignorance, but conscious of his own divinity. He no longer shall oppose the divine working within himself by answering to the baser and untransmuted portions of his being. This has been the cause of past failures of the divine incarnations on earth. Savitri comes to change the entire being of man. She is missioned to uproot Ignorance from his consciousness, so that a full and happy manifestation of the Divine might be possible.

This concept of divine incarnation represented in Savitri is only a symbol—the symbol of some veridical fact that is in actual existence in the earth's consciousness today. The struggle and the hardships, the sacrifice and the pain she suffers are not figments of fiction of imagination; only their conditions and circumstances have been altered to keep pace with the story. In contrast *Paradise Lost* is only the fancy of an early religious people as portrayed in *Genesis* and the Gospels. The occult reality of man's birth and fall and the spiritual truth of Christ's descent are not so crude a tale. Milton's poetical genius could not transmute the base metal of a crude folklore into a real and living tale whose figures are realities, whose message is veridical.

(*To be continued*)

ROMEN

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PART TWO : THE CONQUEST OF SLEEP

IX. THE CONQUEST OF SLEEP

Thine is the shade in which visions are made;
 sped by thy hands from celestial lands
 come the souls that rejoice for ever.
Into thy dream-worlds we pass or look in thy magic glass,
 then beyond thee we climb out of Space and Time
 to the peak of divine endeavour.
(Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. II, p. 122)

He has seen God's slumber shape these magic worlds.
He has watched the dumb God fashioning Matter's frame,
Dreaming the dreams of its unknowing sleep,
And watched the unconscious Force that built the stars.
He has learnt the Inconscient's workings and its law...
Its somnolence founded the universe,
Its obscure waking makes the world seem vain...
He must call light into its dark abysses,
Else never can Truth conquer Matter's sleep
And all earth look into the eyes of God.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book VI Canto II, pp. 509-10)

WE have seen in the course of our study of *longue haleine* on the occult nature and function of sleep that the periodic spells of dormancy of our body *need not* prove to be an unavoidable evil nor a handicap to our spiritual growth. In any case, our physical sleep does not *necessarily* mean an abeyance of consciousness of the whole of our dynamic being, nor a nightly falling down, nor even an interruption in the pursuit of our sadhana. On the other hand, this may be transformed, if we know how to do it, into a *sleep of experiences* giving us an access to the inner domains of our being.

But whatever may be the value of the sleep-existence, to live in the dream-world at the price of the suspension of our waking awareness cannot be considered a laudable achievement in the Yoga of Transformation of Life. We have to bring out and call down the riches from our subliminal depths and superconscient heights and make these an acquisition of our waking life. Our physical consciousness has to be

“spiritually awake”¹ and “as open in the waking consciousness as in sleep.”² We have somehow to “arrive at a point when one remains outwardly conscious and yet lives in the inner being and has at will the indrawn or the outpoured condition”.³

It is thus evident that the irresistible bouts of unconsciousness of sleep to which our body’s waking status occasionally succumbs cannot but be viewed as a sign of imperfection in the prevailing organisation of our physical being. What is then necessary is that—and this must constitute an essential element in the total transfiguration of our bodily existence—*sleep must be raised from the level of necessity to that of a free acceptance*, as and when so willed, as an indrawn absorption of our consciousness.

Thus the mastery over our nights should be followed by the attempt at an absolute conquest of sleep. But is this total victory over physical sleep at all feasible in the present human body? And, if not, what are the essential conditions that have to be met before this prospect for bodily life enters the field of realisable possibilities ?

By way of answering these crucial questions we propose to put forward two related problems and venture some tentative solutions thereof.

HOW TO REDUCE THE HOURS OF SLEEP ?

On the purely physico-vital plane, sleep has for its essential function the restoration of the nervous physical energies of our fatigued bodily system. But for an effective fulfilment of this function, it is absolutely necessary that our sleep-life should be calm and reposeful, relaxed and luminous. But very rarely do our nights measure up to this criterion : these are, more often than not, more fatiguing than even our days for reasons which often escape us.

But the Mother has warned us that if we get up not so well refreshed in the morning, it is because of a formidable mass of *tamas*. “It is *tamas* which causes bad sleep. There are two kinds of bad sleep : the sleep that makes you heavy, dull, as though you lose all the effect of the effort you put in during the preceding day; and the sleep that exhausts you as if you were passing your time in fight.

“...Two things you must eliminate : falling into the torpor of the inconscience, with all these things of the subconscious and of the unconscious that rise up, invade you, enter into you; and a vital and mental superactivity where you pass your time in fighting literally terrible battles. People come out of that state bruised, as if they had received blows—and they did receive them, it is not ‘as if’ !”⁴

A. Relaxation : Now, since the total time interval needed for the recuperation of our energies is in inverse ratio to the quality of repose that we attain in our sleep, the very first procedure we must adopt to cut down the duration of our nightly sleep is to practise the art of complete relaxation of body and mind, a short period of which proving to be more refreshing than hours of restless sleep. In the recommendation

¹, ² & ³ *On Yoga, II*, Tome Two, p. 576

⁴ *Bulletin*, Vol. XII No. 4, pp. 87-91.

of a Buddhist author : "Relax each portion of the body deliberately and consciously; then close the eyes and try to visualise utter darkness. Feel yourself floating in a silent void, and deliberately empty the mind of every thought and feeling by imagining such a condition as Swinburne's "Only a sleep eternal in an eternal night"¹. And the author concludes that, once the proper knack is acquired, even a short duration of this exercise will produce an abundance of fresh energy and a clean-swept and invigorated mind.

Be that as it may, this negative method of relaxation cannot take us very far on our road to the conquest of sleep. It should form rather the essential preliminary step to a far more effective and spiritually beneficial one : to become conscious in our sleep and deliberately utilise our nights for progress.

B. Conscious utilisation of nights : At this point we would like to dispel a possible misunderstanding that may arise in connection with this suggestion for a conscious utilisation of our nights. There may be a lurking fear in some minds that this attempt at the cultivation of the vast fields of our nights, instead of bringing in a more reposeful and therefore a more invigorating, sleep, would on the other hand affect its depth and detract from the efficacy of our nightly rest which is so salutary and indispensable for our physical health.

But this fear and doubt have got no basis in fact. For, as the Mother has assured us, it is only the useless and uncontrollable and mostly subconscious activities in our sleep that make our nights more fatiguing than the day. On the contrary, "if our night granted us the acquisition of new knowledge, the solution of an absorbing problem, the establishment of contact in our inner being with some centre of life or of light, or even the accomplishment of some useful work, we should always get up with a feeling of vigour and well-being. It is the *hours wasted in doing nothing useful or good that are the most fatiguing*."² (Italics ours)

This conscious cultivation of our sleep-existence for reaping fruits for our inner growth is then the second essential element of our endeavour to make the state of physical sleep a real restorer of our energies.

But the gain acquired even in this way seems to be limited in its scope so far as our main problem of drastically reducing the hours of sleep is concerned. For that we have to become conscious masters of another significant phenomenon of our sleep-life : the possibility of entrance into the "*susupti* of Brahman or BrahmaloKa."³

C. Attainment of Sachchidananda immobility : Once before we have already made a passing reference to this state of luminous rest in sleep. As a matter of fact, for sleep to be at all worth the name fulfilling its role of the restorer of energies, it must be either one "in which there is a luminous silence"⁴ or else one "in which there is Ananda in the cells."⁵ The rest of our sleep-life is an *attempt at sleep, not sleep* itself. To quote

¹ The Buddhist Society (compilers), London, *Concentration and Meditation*, p. 44.

² *Words of Long Ago*, p. 42.

³ *On Yoga, II*, Tome Two, p. 577.

⁴ & ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

from the Mother a passage to which we have already referred :

“There is the possibility of a sleep in which you enter into an absolute silence, immobility and peace in all parts of your being and your consciousness merges into Sachchidananda. You can hardly call it sleep, for it is extremely conscious. In that condition you may remain for a few minutes, but these *few minutes give you more rest and refreshment than hours of ordinary sleep.*”¹ (Italics ours)

Sri Aurobindo too has treated this topic on numerous occasions. Thus, to quote from him only one passage :

“In sleep one...passes from consciousness to deeper consciousness in a long succession until one reaches the psychic and rests there or else from higher to higher consciousness until one reaches rest in some silence and peace. *The few minutes one passes in this rest are the real sleep* which restores,—if one does not get it, there is only a half rest.”²

But, as a matter of fact, this brief Sachchidananda period of “luminous and peaceful dreamless rest”³ that “gives sleep all its restorative value”⁴ cannot be had “by chance; it requires a long training.”⁵ Indeed, our ordinary sleep, even when it is of the best variety, is mostly taken up with our actual *travelling* towards this state of Sachchidananda immobility and our return journey to the waking awareness, without very often ever reaching the state at all.

And even if we reach this state on some rare occasions, “it is done unconsciously as it is. If one wants to do it consciously and regulate it, one has first to become conscious in sleep.”⁶ And then can the prospect possibly open up before us of reducing the hours of sleep to a bare minimum.

But even this cannot altogether eliminate the necessity of sleep. The reason is twofold, physiological and occult-spiritual, to whose consideration we now turn.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *Conversations with the Mother*, p. 27.

² *On Yoga, II*, Tome Two, p. 577.

³ *The Life Divine*, p. 382.

⁴ *On Yoga, II*, Tome Two, p. 578.

⁵ *Conversations with the Mother*, p. 28.

⁶ Sri Aurobindo, *Elements of Yoga*, p. 107.

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

THIRD SEMINAR

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(Speeches continued from the May issue)

HOW TO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD IN THE IMPULSES OF ACTION

VII

THIS is one of the many problems facing specially those who have a sincere will and aspiration to follow the path of yoga, to live truly and consciously, and not as 'unconscious beings', a mere plaything in the hands of divergent forces. As for those who are well satisfied with the ordinary life as it is, and do not feel any need or urge at all to look beyond and rise higher or go deeper in consciousness, such problems do not generally exist.

Let us see, first of all, what exactly is meant by the expression "impulses of action". Broadly, it can be taken to mean the motive force behind, which impels us to some action; it is the urge or impetus which we feel at the basis of any action; in short, it is the desire or will to act.

"Action in the world is given us first as a means for our self-development and self-fulfilment," says Sri Aurobindo.¹ The Gita tells us—

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ अ०४ श्लो. १७ ॥ (Gita chap. IV. verse 17)

"One has to understand about action as well as to understand about wrong action and about inaction one has to understand; thick and tangled is the way of works."² Each action is dominated or governed by a particular impulse; and each impulse is motivated from behind by a particular force or a combination of forces, divine and undivine. The quality or nature of an impulse depends on the forces which drive it from behind. The impulses may be lower, crude and ego-centric, as well as higher, refined and noble, or a combination thereof. The higher impulses uplift us, whereas the lower ones debase us.

¹ *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 304.

² *The Message of the Gita*, p. 74.

We perceive a higher impulse when we are somewhat high up the ladder of consciousness and are open to its higher planes, and when our psychic being is awake and in front. Similarly, when our state of consciousness is low and quite ordinary, we are open to the impulses of the lower forces which motivate our actions.

At times, without thinking or willing beforehand, we act spontaneously, as if urged by some inspiration or intuition, or propelled by some instinct or impulse. As Sri Aurobindo observes, "...man constantly does work of various kinds by a spontaneous impulse, intuition, instinct or acts in obedience to a natural necessity and law of forces without either mental planning or the urge of a conscious vital volition or emotional desire."¹

And it so happens that we do not have to make any conscious effort for discriminating whether a particular impulse is right or wrong. We become aware of a wrong movement, *i.e.*, when the impulse is actuated by the forces of ignorance, just by a subtle indication, some slight inner uneasiness, some faint suggestion and so on. Similarly, when a particular act is right, *i.e.*, the impulse behind it is generated by the right force, then we feel inwardly supported, a subtle sense of plenitude, an inner calm and joy.

Generally, however, in all our impulses of actions, truth and falsehood are generally blended together, so that it is difficult to discriminate between the two.

Now, in order to discriminate between truth and falsehood in our impulses for any action, we must grow conscious of the nature of the impulse, its origin, *i.e.*, the source from which it is derived, as well as the state of consciousness in which we find ourselves at the moment of a particular action.

And, the basic necessities for this, as it is in all other matters in the field of yoga, are tranquillity and equanimity. Our mind must be stilled to such an extent as to resemble a calm and transparent sheet of water which perfectly reflects an image in its totality without any distortion whatsoever. A clear and quiet mind is essential.

Then, for a correct and unbiased discernment of the impulses, we must rise above all mental preferences and prejudices, we must free our mind of all preconceived notions and ideas, and try to get ourselves detached from the problem in question and stand aside, as it were, because we can never arrive at a correct judgement if we get ourselves entangled or involved in the problem itself.

The Gita lays down very clear and revealing injunctions as to the right way of doing actions, the true attitude, which implies the true impulse, that we should have for doing any action—

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ अ० २ श्लो. ४७ (Gita chap. II. verse 47)

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।

असक्तो ह्याचरन् कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ अ० ३ श्लो. १९ ॥ (Gita chap. III. verse 19)

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 305.

“Thou hast a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits; let not the fruits of thy works be thy motive, neither let there be in thee any attachment to inactivity.”¹

“Therefore without attachment perform ever the work that is to be done; for by doing work without attachment man attains to the highest.”²

Now, it is not possible for the mind to judge unerringly and arrive at a perfect discrimination between truth and falsehood, however much it may try with all the logic and reasoning faculties at its disposal. Because mind is not the instrument of knowledge, though it is our instrument *par excellence*.

So, we shall have to rise above and go beyond the mental consciousness, and station ourselves on a somewhat higher platform of spiritual consciousness which will offer us a global view of the problem at hand. Away and detached from the limitations of the mind, in the calm wideness of the spiritual consciousness, it will be possible for us to impartially observe our impulses for an action and come to the right discernment of truth and falsehood contained in them. It is not the action itself which very much matters, but the driving forces which from behind influence us and impel us to act in a particular manner.

So, the other way is to go behind the impulse to discover the source where it originates, the forces—good and bad—which goad us to a particular action. In the silence of the depth, beyond our egoistic and superficial consciousness, in a calm concentration, we can sincerely scrutinise the situation in order to arrive at the correct discrimination between truth and falsehood in our impulses of action.

Now, each one of us has his or her own law or truth of being of which we should try to be conscious by concentration and reflection; and it is essential to be in a state of constant awareness of the truth of our being. If our impulses of action are in accordance with or derived from this inherent truth of our being, then they are certainly the right impulses kindled by the forces of Truth. In the same way, we should try to detect whether there is some concealed desire or ambition, a demand, a vanity behind the impulses of an action, in which case we may be sure that it is motivated by the forces of obscurity and falsehood.

In short, all that helps to elevate our consciousness and widen our outlook, all that helps to bring us closer to the Divine—to its light and height, peace and presence, harmony and beauty—is moved by the impulses of Truth; in the same way, all that lowers our consciousness and arrests our inner progress and draws us away from the Divine towards ignorance and obscurity springs directly from falsehood.

The best and the surest way, of course, is to come in contact with the psychic being deep within. “It is the very nature of the soul or the psychic being to turn towards the Divine Truth as the sunflower to the sun,” says Sri Aurobindo.³ He

¹ *The Message of the Gita*, p. 36.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 174.

comments further, "Unerring in the essence of its will, it is obliged often under the pressure of its instruments to submit to mistakes of action.... Yet is there a divination within it which makes it a surer guide than the reason or than even the highest desire, and through apparent errors and stumblings its voice can still lead better than the precise intellect and the considering mental judgment."¹ We should aspire in a silent concentration on the problem to be solved, and take a plunge into the fathomless profundities and dive deeper still, and open ourselves in a sincere self-giving to this secret Divine Presence, our inner Light and Guide which can automatically and spontaneously lead us to the Truth and pin-point as to where the falsehood lies. To quote Sri Aurobindo, "...it points the way to the Truth, automatically distinguishes the right step from the false, extricates the divine or Godward movement from the clinging mixture of the undivine."² Extremely difficult though the process may be, it is all the same worth our toil and trouble.

The purpose of this discrimination between truth and falsehood is, of course, to avoid and eliminate the wrong impulses either by rejecting or by converting them, and to be consciously moved and guided by the impulses of Truth alone. For this, it is necessary to attain a certain mastery over ourselves, a hold over the outer circumstances and the unseen forces and factors which, to a great extent, influence and determine our actions. The Gita enjoins—

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि ॥ अ० २ इलो. ४८ (Gita chap. II. verse 48)

"Fixed in Yoga do thy actions."³ We should try to be conscious of the Divine's Will in us and silently open ourselves, in a sincere collaboration, to this secret Will so that the Divine's Light and Power may work unhindered in and through us. As Sri Aurobindo observes, "Not desire, not attachment must drive him, but a Will that stirs in a divine peace, a Knowledge that moves from the transcendent Light, a glad Impulse that is a force from the supreme Ananda."⁴

ROSE
(MANJULA SEN)

VIII

Each of us has, some time or other, to face this problem. As life comprises actions, this question is of the utmost importance in our life, specially here in the Ashram.

We often ask ourselves : "Shall I do this ? Is it right to do it ?" Many times we are put in difficult situations where we cannot decide whether a certain action, big or

¹ *Ibid.*, p 175.

² *Ibid.*, p 176.

³ *The Message of the Gita*, p. 37.

⁴ *Op cit.*, p. 306.

small should be done or not, whether it is a good action or a bad one, right or wrong. Of course, at times it is very easy to decide that, because from our childhood we have been told by our parents and teachers and the elders not to do quite a number of things, the disobedience of which would result in punishment, either now and in this world or later and in the next. These forbidden fruits and the addition, later on, of social and moral laws, religious injunctions, sense of duty, books, etc., create within us a sort of psycho-mental being, which is generally known as "conscience". This conscience, as it is said, pricks us when we do a bad or wrong action and thus helps to keep us on a more or less right path. But conscience speaks mostly on broad and general lines and has little to say on most of our little daily impulses and actions. In this case the reason helps.

"Thinking twice," as it is said, can often help us to decide between the "shoulds" and "should-nots". But quite often we are carried away by our impulses, our emotions and feelings, pushed by our desires : we become so eager to do a thing and get so excited about it that we find all the justifications for doing it. Reason then becomes a tool to justify what we want to do, mind becomes the instrument of the vital. Reason is therefore insufficient to decide between the right and the wrong.

The best solution, I think, is to try to remain calm and quiet, to stop thinking about it and to try to go deep within and hear the "little voice of the psychic", as the Mother has called it. When we do or contemplate doing something which is not right, we feel deep within the heart an uneasiness. This is the little voice of the psychic. If we do not take heed of it, after a while it stops saying anything. So we have to try to hear more and more the voice of the psychic till the psychic itself comes to the front and takes up the burden of life and dictates all our actions even to the smallest details.

But this is not a small task and takes a long time to accomplish. In some cases an easier method is to ask oneself : "If I do this, will it in any way serve the Divine ? Since all my actions should be an offering to the Divine, will the Divine accept such an action as an offering ?" Or one may ask oneself : "Will this action help or hinder me in my progress ? Will it take me *towards* or *away* from my goal ?" Then answer sincerely and act accordingly.

But in all cases, in every little impulse of speech and action of our daily life, the most effective and the easiest way is, I believe, to feel or, if that does not come easily at first, to imagine concretely the Mother's presence and, as Sri Aurobindo has said, "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you; because She is, indeed, always present." "Will *She* approve of the action ?"—the answer will show us whether the action is right or wrong.

RUKIYA

IX

The general tendency is to act without reflection. However compelling the impetus may be, if only we could stand back and see, it would save a lot of mishaps.

The Mother says : "You must always step back into yourself. . . . Even if you are in a hurry to do something, step back for a while and you will discover to your surprise how much sooner and with what greater success your work can be done".¹

If we look down and follow the road, however crooked or bent it may go, it will always appear straight to our eyes. Instead, if we look ahead, we would see it very clearly and the prevision would help us prevent more danger. The Mother repeats : "Never decide anything without stepping back, never speak a word without stepping back, never throw yourself into action without stepping back".²

First of all an absolute peace within is necessary. The Mother asks us to keep always our peace, resisting all temptation to lose it. With a turbulent and troubled mind, nothing can be seen, nothing can be decided. The Mother states again : "A very very quiet head is indispensable for a clear understanding and vision and a right action".³ It is a clear vision that can view the impulse and discriminate the Truth from the falsehood. With that, we must be able to discern the eternal Will, the divine impulse from the caprice of ego, and need and passion and desire, or preferences.

By remaining quiet, we can get into contact with the highest consciousness within our reach. There we can wait for an answer to our call to the Divine Force. Only in the calmness of our being can we hear the silent voice within. Then, we shall be moved by God only, by the highest Truth only. As the Mother says : "Let the vast peace of the Divine penetrate you entirely and initiate all your movements".⁴

SELVI

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After all the speeches were over, Kishor Gandhi, in his concluding remarks, said that when the Mother was asked to give Her own answer to the question which was the subject of the Seminar, She had replied : "The answer will appear in the February (1965) number of the Bulletin. Everybody will be able to read it there."

As this number of the Bulletin has already been out, the answer published in it (p. 89) is reproduced below :

"Those who wish to help the Light of Truth to prevail over the forces of darkness and falsehood, can do so by carefully observing the initiating impulses of their movements and actions, and discriminate between those that come from the Truth and those that come from the falsehood, in order to obey the first and to refuse or reject the others.

"This power of discrimination is one of the first effects of the Advent of the Truth's Light in the earth's atmosphere.

¹ *Words of the Mother*, Third Series, p. 58.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

³ *Words of the Mother*, Fourth Series, p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

“Indeed it is very difficult to discriminate the impulses of Truth from the impulses of falsehood, unless one has received this special gift of discrimination that the Light of Truth has brought.

“However, to help at the beginning, one can take as a guiding rule that all that brings with it or creates peace, faith, joy, harmony, wideness, unity and ascending growth comes from the Truth; while all that carries with it restlessness, doubt, scepticism, sorrow, discord, selfish narrowness, inertia, discouragement and despair comes straight from the falsehood.”

Then he read out the following three letters of Sri Aurobindo (published in *On Yoga II*, Tome One, pp. 672-75) pertaining to the subject of the Seminar, about which, as he had mentioned in his introductory speech, the Mother had remarked : “This is simply marvellous and answers most perfectly the question. Nothing more is needed.”

(1)

“If you want the consciousness for true actions very much and aspire for it, it may come in one of several ways :

“1. You may get the habit or faculty of watching your movements in such a way that you see the impulse to action coming and can see too its nature.

“2. A consciousness may come which feels uneasy whenever a wrong thought or impulse to action or feeling is there.

“3. Something within you may warn and stop you when you are going to do the wrong action.”

(2)

“[To be constantly governed by the Divine :] A constant aspiration for that is the first thing—next a sort of stillness within and a drawing back from the outward action into the stillness and a sort of listening expectancy, not for a sound but for the spiritual feeling or direction of the consciousness that comes through the psychic.”

(3)

“As for the feeling from within, it depends on being able to go inside. Sometimes it comes of itself with the deepening of the consciousness by bhakti or otherwise, sometimes it comes by practice—a sort of referring the matter and listening for the answer—listening is, of course, a metaphor but it is difficult to express it otherwise—it doesn’t mean that the answer comes necessarily in the shape of words, spoken or unspoken, though it does sometimes or for some; it can take any shape. The main difficulty for many is to be sure of the right answer. For that it is necessary to be able

to contact the consciousness of the Guru inwardly—that comes best by bhakti. Otherwise, the attempt to get the feeling from within by practice may become a delicate and ticklish job. Obstacles : (1) normal habit of relying on outward means for everything; (2) ego, substituting its suggestions for the right answer; (3) mental activity; (4) intruder nuisances. I think you need not be eager for this, but rely on the growth of the inner consciousness. The above is only by way of general explanation.”

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Finally, on behalf of the New Age Association, Kishor Gandhi thanked all those who had come to attend the Seminar and also those who had participated in it.

After that the Seminar ended.

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

DISCIPLINE OF LANGUAGE

THERE is magic in words properly used, and to give them this magic is the purpose of discipline of language.

Some quite intelligent people have been lured into thinking that a concern for words is out of date. Others allow themselves to believe that to speak and write sloppily is somehow an emblem of the *avantgarde*.

The truth is that in no other time in history was it so important to use the right words in the right place in the right way to convey what we have in our minds. We need the proper use of language to impose form and character upon elements in life which have it in them to be rebellious and intractable.

A glance at our environment will show that our high standard of living, brought about by our mastery of science and technology, is menaced by the faulty use of signals between men, between ideologies and between nations. By misinterpreting signals (which is all that words are) we create disorder in human affairs.

Communication of ideas is an important human activity. When we invented writing we laid the foundation-stone of civilisation. In the beginning the power of words must have seemed like sorcery, and we are compelled to admit that the miracles which verbal thinking have wrought justified the impression.

Words underline our whole life, are the signs of our humanity, the tools of our business, the expressions of our affections, and the records of our progress. As Susanne Langer says in 'Philosophy in a New Key' : "Between the clearest animal

call of love or warning or anger, and a man's least trivial word, there lies a whole day of creation—or, in modern phrase, a whole chapter of evolution."

This language has such transcendent importance that we must take pains with its use.

In business there is no inefficiency so serious as that which arises from poverty of language. The man who does not express himself meaningfully and clearly is a bungler, wasting his time and that of his associates.

The key word in all use of language is communication. Thoughts locked up in your own breast give no profit or pleasure to others, but just as you must use the currency of the country in which you are travelling, so you need to use the right currency in words if you are going to bring your thoughts into circulation. Many centuries ago Paul the Apostle wrote in these cautionary terms to one of his churches: "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?...ye shall speak into the air."

The workmen engaged in building the Tower of Babel were craftsmen, skilled in their trades. Take away their tools: they will replace them. Take away their skills: they will learn anew. But take away their means of communications with one another and the building of the Tower has to be abandoned.

How serious the problem of communication is in business may be revealed in this sentence: your letter's only justification is the critical three minutes when it must stand, naked and unexcused, fighting the boredom and inattention of the reader.

The environment of your letter—up-to-date letter-head with embossed symbol, double weight paper, deckle edges—these do not amount to much. Sour notes in music do not become sweet because the musician is in white tie and black tails.

What counts is simply this: to say what you mean with precision and accuracy in plain language. A true definition of style is "proper words in proper places with the thoughts in proper order." A scrupulous writer will ask "What am I trying to say? Do these words express it?" A word does not serve well which does not excite in the reader the same idea which it stands for in the mind of the writer.

There is no easy way of choosing words. They must not be so general in meaning as to include thoughts not intended, nor so narrow as to eliminate thoughts that are intended. Let the meaning select the word.

A word is ambiguous when the reader is unable to choose decisively between alternative meanings, either of which would seem to fit the context.

A great deal of unclear writing results from the use of too many broad, general words, those having so many possible meanings that the precise thought is not clear. The more general the words are, the fainter is the picture; the more special they are, the brighter.

Socrates pointed the way toward clarity in the use of language when he demonstrated to his disciples that they would get nowhere in their dispute about justice unless they agreed upon clear definitions of the words they needed. He made sure that they were talking about the same things.

If you look back over the past week's differences of opinion expressed in conferences, memos and letters, you will be surprised by the number of times you said, or someone else said : "Why didn't he say that in the first place ?" That refrain is monotonous in business offices and workshops.

There is only one way to make sure of the communication of ideas; to demand that what is being said to you shall be said in terms understandable to you, and to discipline your own language so that it says what you want it to say.

If you are just beginning to write, make it your first rule to be plain. If nature means you to be a fancy writer, a composer of odes or a trail-blazing author like Joyce or Stein, she will force you to it, but whatever of worth you turn out even then will be based upon your developed skill with words.

Meantime, say what you have to say, or what you wish to say, in the simplest, most direct and the most exact words. Someone who has no better employment may pick holes in every third sentence of your composition, but you have written in such a way as to satisfy the common sense of those who read to find meaning.

The plain way of writing conceals great art. By avoiding pomposity, ambiguity and complexity you attain simplicity, which is the greatest cunning because it conveys your meaning into the mind of another straight away, without effort on his part. It carries with it, too, a feeling of sincerity and integrity, for who can be suspicious of the motives of a person who speaks plainly ?

What words are

Words are the only currency in which we can exchange thought even with ourselves. It is through words, which are the names for things and actions, that we perceive the events of the world.

Because of this universal importance, we need to be as clear-cut as we can in their use. Inexactness to some degree is inevitable, because thought can never be precisely or adequately expressed in verbal symbols. Words are not like iron and wood, coal and water, things we see and touch. Words are merely indicators, but they are the only sensible signs we have enabling us to describe things and think about them. In the darkness of night we talk about the sun, knowing that the word 'sun' presents a picture to our hearer; we write about the 'sparkling ripples' caused by the stone we cast into a pool knowing that our description presents a motion picture to our reader.

What we need to do is keep our thinking and speaking language under the discipline of meaning. We cannot shape ideas and develop an argument without choosing and ordering our words. Many people have far better ideas than anyone knows : their thoughts either beat about in their heads finding no communication package in which to emerge or they come out distorted and in fragments.

A big vocabulary

Knowledge of words is not burdensome. Words are pleasant companions, delighting in what they can do for you whether in earnest or in fun, in business or in love.

The true dimension of your vocabulary is not, however, the number of words you can identify but the number of words you can use, each with its appropriate area of meaning.

With an adequate vocabulary you are equipped to express every shading of thought. Too often in the ordinary intercourse of life we let this wealth of words lie inert and unemployed. We work a limited number of words to death. We exist in voluntary word poverty. We do coarsely what might be done finely.

One road to language mastery is the study of synonyms, words that are similar yet not identical in meaning. Two words that seem to be the same may have very much in common but also have something private and particular which they do not share with each other, some personality natural to the word or acquired by usage.

Everyone recognises the difference between child and urchin, hand and fist, mis-statement and lie. There is an overtone of meaning which causes a mother to resent your calling her child 'puny' instead of 'tiny'. People persist in confusing 'instruction' with 'education' when discussing our school system. The former is furnishing a child with knowledge and facts and information: the latter is a drawing forth from within, opening up fountains already in his mind rather than filling a cistern with water brought from some other source.

Study the different shades of meaning expressed by the synonyms of general words like 'said'. When should you use 'maintained'? Under what conditions would 'claimed' be more appropriate? Look at the different effects produced in your mind by substitution of these and other words for 'said' in this sentence: "He said, asserted, implied, assumed, insisted, suggested, that the police were doing a good job." And try the substitutes for 'looked' in the sentence "John looked at Mary"...glared, gazed, leered, glanced.

We may use 'arrogant', 'presumptuous', and 'insolent' almost interchangeably in loose talk, but when we examine them with care we find three distinct thoughts: claiming the homage of others as his due: taking things to himself before acquiring any title to them: breaking the recognised standard of social behaviour. There is a world of difference between the meanings of misconduct, misbehaviour and delinquency and between vice, error, fault, transgression, lapse and sin.

This discrimination may appear trifling to some and tiresome to others. The writer who wishes to think clearly and express his thoughts clearly—and is there anyone who will admit that he wishes to be a bungler in thought and speech?—will see its virtues.

New words

A man should revise his language habits from time to time in order to keep pace with life and custom. There are more things to think and communicate about every day.

It may seem wise to some pedants to say that the words of a century ago are the best words but we cannot go through life using language of the last century any more than we can get along with the language of Cicero. Imagine that superb orator stand-

ing before our Senate to explain a bill having to do with nuclear war-heads and the probes into space. The point is that if Cicero were alive today and used words for these things he would use them so as to make his meaning crystal clear.

Good writing demands more than the addition of words to our vocabulary and the breaking of slovenly habits. It requires interest in language that inspires us to seek the best instead of muddling our thoughts and our communications by using the second-rate just because it is handy.

Besides concerning ourselves with individual words, we need to be careful to use the proper sort of language fitting the occasion. If a lawyer talks over the bridge table as he does to a jury; if the electronics engineer uses his trade language to explain to his wife how to change a fuse; if a business man uses factory language in writing to a customer these people are pretentious people or people who are not interested in their purpose of communicating ideas.

Every business, every profession, every trade and every sport has its jargon. Specialists acquire words and ways of saying things which are handy in their work and this is quite natural and proper. Jargon has its place within their interested group, but use of it makes communication with outsiders difficult.

Wilful Offences

Besides the imperfection that is naturally in language, and the obscurity and confusion that is so hard to be avoided in the use of words, there are several wilful offences and neglects which men are guilty of whereby they render these communication signs less clear and distinct in their meaning than naturally they need to be. Politicians particularly should pay attention to the niceties of language so as to address us meaningfully.

The deformation of meaning for political ends has become a common practice. Every cautious reader has to pick his way carefully through a sea of adjectives which qualify and change words of which he knows the accepted meaning. The political interchanges in newspapers and in Hansard contain words which are obscure and undetermined in their meaning.

Skill in disputing is not the same as skill in communicating.

A man is specific when he walks into a store and asks for a tube for his radio, television set or movie projector. He says : "PAT 1673", or whatever the number may be. It is evident that when we learn to talk about social matters the way we talk about electronic tubes we shall begin to manage our political and moral affairs as efficiently as we now deal with technical matters.

Our language has become a tired and inefficient thing in the hands of journalists and advertising writers. Their abuses and misuses are not the slapdash errors of unlettered hacks, but the carefully conceived creation of educated men and women. Their distortions are conscious devices, gimmicks to catch attention.

E. B. White, the distinguished essayist, wrote of Madison Avenue language : "With its deliberate infractions of grammatical rules and its crossbreeding of the

parts of speech, it profoundly influences the tongues and pens of children and adults...it is the language of mutilation."

A survey of words used in national magazine advertisements was made a few years ago. The most frequently used words were what are called the "floating comparisons"—words which are meaningless without points of comparison. Samples are : "new", whatever the reader imagines that to mean; "more, faster, longer lasting" without stating "than" something; "easy, wonderful, famous, magical, gentle", and so-called "proofs" like "tests prove, doctors recommend".

In newspaper headlines the short words, not the correct words, are sought. They reduce "treaty" to "pact" and also refer to contracts, agreements, conventions covenants, armistices, pledges and truces as "pacts". They make any attempt or offer a "bid" and every superintendent, admiral, governor, manager, director and gang leader a "chief". A proclamation or enactment is an "edict". Every thief, robber, embezzler, swindler, housebreaker and pilferer is a "bandit". Such looseness is not the soul of wit but it is the death of meaning.

A Pomp of Words

A pomp of words does not make a letter or an article wise, and yet the conviction that profundity of thought is evidenced by complexity of language is astonishingly widespread.

Some writers, more interested in words than in ideas, fall in love with a word and make excuses to use it. They have even been known to make lists of pompous words to which they refer when dictating letters, imagining that they are thereby impressing readers. More than two centuries ago the Commissioner of Excise in England wrote to one of these searchers for novelty: "I am ordered to acquaint you that if you hereafter continue that affected and schoolboy way of writing and to murder the language in such a manner, you will be discharged for a fool."

To help us to discipline our language we have devised semantics and syntax. The first is "the science of the meaning of words," and the second is concerned with the manner of putting words together properly.

The power of words rightly chosen is very great, whether those words are used to inform, to entertain or to defend a way of life. Confucius summed up the need for right choice when he said : "If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what ought to be done remains undone, and as a consequence morals, art, justice and the business of life deteriorate and the people will stand about in helpless confusion."

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

NEWSLETTER

No. 6.

June 1965

1. *Two Important Aspects of Future Education : Research and Creativity Research*

Recent research has confirmed that educational attainment is the combined result of innate ability and of environment both at school and at home.

Professor S. Wiseman of the University of Manchester School of Education says that the large literature on learning theory often seemed irrelevant but it was part of a slowly growing body of knowledge which in ten years' time would have a more prominent role in educational discussion.

The theory of teaching has recently been dominated by the idea of predetermined development, which means the removal of moral blame for school failure and the rise of the idea that the child should not be pushed because his talents would unfold on their own. It also implies that training could not transcend maturation and that the teacher might not be necessary except as a passive agent.

Creativity

In spite of the fact that Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* is not so widely publicised throughout the world, the power of his creative thought is certainly lightning the lamps of open minds seeking a break-through to a new era of creativity. Consider the words of Dr. E. Paul Torrance in a paper presented at the Education and Space Age Conference of the Minnesota Chapter of the Air Force Association U.S.A. Dr. Torrance says : "Much will be required of the creative potential of today's school children. Threats to man's survival challenge us...to search for new ways of helping children to realize this creative potential. We know not what man may become. *But there is no evidence that human evolution is drawing to its close.*¹ I suspect that man of the 1960's will appear to be as naive and brutish to future generations as the cave man seems to us."

We are slow to modify educational objectives even if we are aware of them. Colleges and universities are still teaching only the psychology of learning, almost never the psychology of thinking. But, if we sincerely wish to help the youth of the nation and do something constructive, there has to be a drastic revision of our awareness of objectives and when we have found the objectives of our particular subject we shall see that those objectives can only be reached by producing more men and women who can think creatively and enter the higher levels of mental consciousness.

¹ The italics are mine.

Arnold Toynbee once said : "To give a fair chance to potential creativity is a matter of life and death for any society."¹

2. *Science* (Prediction or Intuition ?)

In 1945, A.C. Clark, a British electronics engineer who later became a first-rank science-fiction writer, published in *Wireless World* a far-sighted article which set out in detail his theory that earth satellites on high orbits could act as relay stations transmitting telephone and TV to the whole earth. He actually selected the exact orbit—22,300 miles above the earth—which nearly 20 years later the TV satellite 'Early Bird' follows above the equator today.

3. *Art*

With all this talk of computers entering the field of art, perhaps the dilemma expressed in Aristotle's contention that slaves are essential to civilisation can be solved by the intelligent and extensive use of the machine—to give us more time and leisure for the art of living ? After all, when we consider that Aristotle had to fix time without a watch, compare degrees of heat without a thermometer, observe the heavens without a telescope and the weather without a barometer : in fact, of all our mathematical, optical and physical instruments he possessed only the rule and compass—the rest was makeshift—when we consider all this, it is surprising that we have not more time today for the 'art of living'.

4. *France*

M. Jacques Rueff, the economist, was formally received into the Académie Française last month (April), taking the place of Jean Cocteau. This is the first time that an economist has succeeded a poet.

5. *South Africa*

The high school in the small town of Brits, Transvaal, is the first school in South Africa to establish a nature reserve of its own. It will be opened in 1967.

6. *Australia*

In 13 New South Wales metropolitan and 21 county primary schools the pupils are being grouped according to their ability in individual subjects.

England

The C.S.E.—The Certificate Of Secondary Education—the new examination starts this year. It recognizes for the first time the competence of teachers to examine their own pupils. The C.S.E. arose from recommendations of the Beloe report of 1958. Candidates take it in the fifth year of secondary education on a single subject basis.

Thought of the Month

"But thought nor word can seize eternal truth."

Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

¹ A. Toynbee, *California Monthly*, February 1962.

FRUSTRATION

(O—ZIS INGLEESH)

How can I zis Ingleesh *speak* ?
When tous les temps all rules I *break* !
And quand je dis
Chol-mon-de-ley—
Ce n'est pas vraie,
Il est Chum-lee !
Mais jamais, jamais must I dis,
Pour Monsieur Bottomley, Bumlee !
This would be un grand horreur—
Mais never, never 'de rigueur'.
And *both* is not
The one in *bother* !
Nor *rove*, my Love,
The same as *dove*.
Et regardez *thread*,
Who looks like *bead*—
Mais je dis comme *head*,
Et l'autre comme *read*.
And Ah-ah the *boot*,
Who looks like *foot*—
Mais non, je dis comme *shoot*...
Up wiz zis I cannot *put*.
Mon teacher daily make me *work*,
And tell me zat I must not *shirk* !
Zen she laugh and say to me—
"Ai spoke it well, when ai woz thrrree".
A crazy tongue, do you know *what*,
They go for sailing in a *yacht* !
Sauve qui peut ! for have you *heard*,
Ziz they say to sound like *word* !
I say no *more*, the *hour* is *four*,
Et sum wun frappé sur mon *door*.

LEENA

“RELAX—LET GO”

A SURE WAY TO HEALTH

THE benefits of releasing ourselves to the Mother, through relaxing our thoughts and feelings in quiet practice of regular prayer, can never be truly measured. Those who have done this know its fruits well and rejoice. Those who have not are missing one of the greatest blessings they can ever experience.

Without consciously knowing it, we burden ourselves every day with thoughts of concern over our personal affairs and over someone else's ways of doing or living. We weigh ourselves down with emotional pressures and criticisms of self and others, with doubt and fear and anxiety. As these thoughts and fears accumulate and as we carry them over from day to day, the body then bears the weight and shows the effects of it. The muscles, the organs, the glands, the myriad cells and atoms within the body-temple become burdened.

The tremendous truth, however, is that this is not necessary. There is a way of release from this kind of pressure. The way is one of true spiritual relaxation, letting go all to the presence and power of the Divine Mother. “I will give you rest” is the invitation and the promise. We have only to take Her word and release ourselves to the presence, make a habit of doing this in order to live in lightness, ease and peace.

If we want to live as unburdened and as free, light and strong as She, we must be willing to give up all the burden of our personal self for Her sake. The easy way is the narrow way, the way that is so narrow there is no room for the “BAGGAGE” of the human self.

We must “LOSE WEIGHT”, the weight of the personal mind, the human feeling, until all such baggages are dropped in deference to the Divine Mother. We think we are willing to do this, but we need only look at our own thoughts and emotions through one day to realize that we have hardly begun to do it. We are continually looking for a place to “lay our head” and for a situation in which to settle, and for a condition outwardly on which we may rest our hopes and dreams and desires. As long as we do this we are not relaxing or letting go.

If you wish to begin to help yourself mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually, here are a few suggestions. Find a quiet time and a place where you will not be disturbed for a few minutes. Relax your body physically, either in a chair or a bed or on the floor, whatever is the most comfortable for you. Next, begin the process of release by starting with the thing, person or circumstance that is giving you the most difficulty.

Now talk to the Divine Mother as if She were near you : “Mother, I release myself into your keeping. I give up my mind and all its thoughts.” Be still, utterly quiet for a moment. Then whatever has been within your mind needing release, release

it specifically. Be exceedingly specific in every release. Let all thoughts come to the surface as you continue to repeat a statement such as the above.

Do not hurry or gloss over what should be released. You will find that the more thoughts you let go, the more will others, for a while, gradually come to the mind—little petty comments made, small human opinions or judgments of the past. Let them all come forward without fear. Be impersonal in this and do not be afraid to face them. Look at the worst in your self and in others. Face all the lions and dragons of the human mind in calm assurance, whether these concern the emotions or the body or the life. Do not try to work on them, for they are the Mother's responsibility, not yours.

When you have finished releasing that which you most wish to accomplish, whatever you have the time for at the moment, go on about your work of the day with thankfulness and do not look back. If you tend to return to thoughts about the situation, say to yourself : "This is in your hands, Mother, and further release will come in my next quiet moment with You; thank you, Mother." Then let go of the problem as completely as you can. When your next quiet time of prayer is permitted, resume where you left off and begin again, going through the thoughts of the mind, releasing one by one the thoughts that need release, *all the desires, needs, ambitions, goals, unhappinesses, happenings, trials, challenges, longings—good, bad and indifferent. Release everything; hold back nothing.*

You will find this becomes a time of great joy, you will hardly be able to wait from one prayer time to the next to release yourself into the Mother's hands. Yet you will even release the appointed time of prayer to Her Wisdom. You will truly find there is nothing in which to be anxious, nothing in which to be sorrowful, nothing about which to be disturbed or angry, because you are delighted to give up your mind, heart, soul, body and life to the One who knows just what to do about them.

She is indeed the Way, and The Truth, and The Life. When you have released all to Her Way, to Her Truth, and to Her Life, holding nothing back—when you have given all to Her—you will see what you have wanted to see for so long—that you are Free with the Freedom of the Mother...

DR. G. J. VYAS

THE PROBLEM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE

It is obvious that riots and burnings and the stoppings of trains will not solve the question of a *lingua franca* for India. Even an amendment of the Official Languages Act may prove to be a stop-gap arrangement. What we need is a long-term view that takes into account all the issues involved.

For the sake of clarity, let us not mix up the issues. They may be roughly summarised thus.

The first question we have to answer is : what purposes do we expect the common language to serve ? Is it primarily intended to foster the sense of national solidarity and a closer understanding among the different linguistic areas ? Or is it to act merely as a convenient channel of communication between the Central Government at New Delhi and the State Governments at their respective headquarters ? It has been tacitly assumed by many that the two objects are practically the same. The assumption need not be correct.

Secondly, how would the *lingua franca* affect our international relations ? Would it make for a closer understanding of India by the nations that count ? Would it help us better in our dealings with them, in "projecting" ourselves in the way that serves our interests best ? This is an aspect of the question which is apt to be ignored in our enthusiasm for this or that language. It is obvious, however, that a *lingua franca* for India is not merely a domestic question.

Thirdly, how would the common language affect the business community ? What medium of communication would they prefer, both in their dealings within the country and outside ? We pride ourselves on the achievements of the export drive. We look forward to India becoming one of the leading industrial and commercial nations of the world. At the same time, we try to encourage and invite foreign capital by providing them with a congenial "climate". Language is an important element in this context.

Fourthly, what is the medium of instruction that we should adopt in our schools and colleges ? How far, and with what results can the *lingua franca* be made a compulsory subject in our scheme of education ? Here, the question will have to be considered separately in respect of the elementary, the secondary and the university stages of the education. Nor can we forget that India's economic growth is closely linked with a high standard of technical and professional education. It is obvious too that a certain number of our students must be sent abroad to complete their education.

And, last of all, what will be the impact of a common language on the future of India's cultural development ? Will the adoption of a *lingua franca* mean a comparative neglect of the regional languages, many of which have a rich heritage of the past and present ? This is an aspect of the question that has received the least atten-

tion in recent discussions. Yet on a satisfactory answer to this question will depend to a large extent the future of India, if we are not to live by bread alone.

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It may be noted that the question of a common language is not a new problem in our history. It has existed throughout the period for which we have literary and epigraphic records. A brief glance at the past may not here be entirely out of place.

Right from the time of the Rigveda to the epoch-making Linguistic Survey carried out by Grierson, India has been recognised as a land of many tongues. It might help us in our problem to know how, with so many different languages, we managed to exist at all.

Very early in our history, thanks to the work done by the Rishis of the Vedas and the Upanishads, the prose-writers of the Brahmana works, and the great epic poets of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, a fine common medium of cultural expression developed in the form of the Sanskrit tongue. There is reason to believe that it was widely accepted as the common spoken language, *bhāṣā*, until the work of the grammarians and especially the great Panini (8th to 5th century B.C. according to different estimates) stereotyped its forms and made it the language of the élite. From that time onwards, till the coming of the Muhammedan invaders (in the 13th century in North India and a century later in the South), Sanskrit in the form now familiar to us—the Classical Sanskrit of modern historians—remained almost uninterruptedly the “official language” of India; the break occurred early in its career owing to the advent of the Buddha.

Buddha is supposed to have told his disciples that his doctrines had best be brought home to the common man in the dialect which the latter spoke, rather than in the learned Sanskrit. This gave a strong fillip to the local dialects, the Prakrit tongues, and a literary form evolved out of the eastern and central dialects into what is known as Pali, in which the scriptures of early Buddhism, the Hinayana, came to be written. As Buddhism was at one time a strong force in northern India, Pali became a serious competitor to Sanskrit for some time as the medium of cultural expression. And several monarchs who had strong leanings towards Buddhism purposely discarded the use of Sanskrit and widely used the local Prakrits in their edicts and other inscriptions. Asoka (in the 3rd. century B.C.) seems to have given the lead, and his example was followed by most of the foreign and native dynasties—the Scythian, the Indo-Greek, the Kushan and the Andhra—who ruled in north India and the Deccan till the coming of the Guptas in the 4th Century A.D.

From the time of the Guptas, Sanskrit had no serious rival in north India. It remained the sole language of official business. It was the medium of all higher learning, even in the predominantly Buddhist universities of Nalanda and Vikramsila. Most of the great poets, dramatists and prose-writers wrote in Sanskrit. And when the Indian scholars and priests and adventurers, Hindu or Buddhist, went to Central

Asia, China, Korea, Japan, Tibet and the Eastern Archipelago, it was the books written in Sanskrit that they carried with them. Itsing, the Chinese pilgrim who visited India in the late seventh century, had to spend some time in the East Indies brushing up his knowledge of Sanskrit at the local seminaries before he set foot on Indian soil. One may safely say that at least from the fourth to the twelfth century, Sanskrit was the *lingua franca* of north India.

South of the Vindhya, it enjoyed that position a century longer. Here too, there was a short period, a few centuries preceding the coming of the great Pallavas (in the 6th century), when Prakrit seems to have been favoured as the language of officialdom. And it is possible that earlier still, during what is known as the Sangam Age, the early classical period of Tamil literature, Tamil may have been preferred to Sanskrit in the royal courts of the deep south. But from the sixth century onwards, Sanskrit dominated the scene, both as the language of culture and of official documents, until the coming of the Muslim invaders. Even then, it maintained its old position south of the Tungabhadra, under the patronage of the Vijayanagar kings, well into the sixteenth century.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI