

MOTHER INDIA

MARCH, 1967

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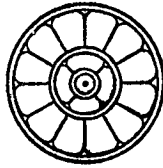
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XX

No. 2

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE PRESENT HUMAN CIVILISATION AND 1967*

On 5th March 1963 a child had a meeting with the Mother.¹ In the course of his talk with Her, he asked Her the following question :

“Mother, on 30th August 1945 You had said : ‘I cannot promise you that the Divine’s Will is to preserve the present human civilisation.’ Can You *now* say that the Divine has decided to preserve the present human civilisation ?”

On hearing the question the Mother concentrated for a long time with closed eyes. Then opening Her eyes She said in a distinct tone : “It will be *settled* in 1967.” She emphasised the word ‘settled’ and once again said : “Do not change my words : It will be *settled* in 1967.”

* First published in *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, Nineteenth Number, 1963.

¹ The word “child” here is meant to denote “the Mother’s child” in the Spiritual Sense. No implication of the questioner’s age is intended. (Editor)

THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE
FOR
THE EXHIBITION OF "MEDITATIONS ON SAVITRI"

ON February 10, at 10.30 a.m. there was a gathering at the Ashram Exhibition Hall to attend the opening by K. Amrita of the display of 460 paintings done by Huta of Sri Aurobindo's epic *Savitri*, along with a large number of pencil sketches by the Mother herself, which had served as their inspiring basis. At the very entrance stood the sign in the Mother's own hand : "Here is *Savitri*." What one understood from it was that the spiritual vision embodied by Sri Aurobindo in his poetry was truly caught here in line and colour. Many spectators, faced with such an outburst of crowded canvases bearing legend-images and symbol-shapes, felt a little dazed at first. But, when seen with the proper attitude, the paintings proved an unforgettable experience, at once elevating, revelatory and delightful. At the end of the whole series was Huta's statement :

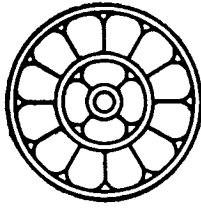
"All can be done if the God-touch is there."

This is what Sri Aurobindo has written in *Savitri*. I feel that the painting of the pictures exhibited here is explained only by this line. For the task which the Mother had given me was so immense, so beyond the capacity of the little instrument She had summoned, that only Her Grace working in Sri Aurobindo's Light could have seen me through...

I am deeply grateful to the Mother for her constant personal guidance —outward as well as inward. And what shall I say of the Presence of Sri Aurobindo, helping all along ?

I thank the Mother also for making possible a study of the Epic with Amal Kiran.

A number of devoted organisers and attendants helped the success of the Exhibition. The Exhibition continued up to March 5. The inauguration of it on February 10 was made the outward act of an inward opening by the Message the Mother had sent. This Message is reproduced on the opposite page.



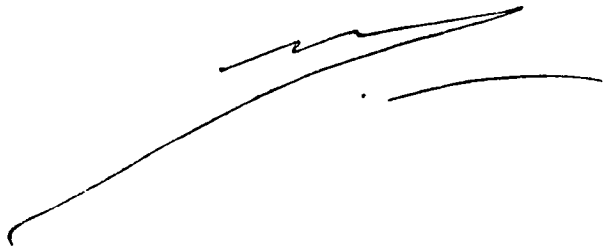
The importance of
Savitri is immense

Its subject is universal.
Its revelation is prophetic

The time spent in its
atmosphere is not wasted.

Take all the time necessary
to see this exhibition. It
will be a happy compensation
for the feverish haste men
just now in all they do.

10-2-67.



AN UNPUBLISHED NOTE BY SRI AUROBIDDO

(From a letter, dated 3.7.1933, of Sri Aurobindo about his early narrative poem in blank verse, Love and Death, of his Baroda days we already know : "The poem was written in a white heat of inspiration during 14 days of continuous writing—in the mornings, of course, for I had to attend office the rest of the day and saw friends in the evening. I never wrote anything with such ease and rapidity before or after.... I don't think there was any falling of the seed of the idea or growth and maturing of it; it just came,—from my reading about the story of Ruru in the Mahabharata; I thought, 'Well, here's a subject,' and the rest burst out of itself...." Below is a Note about the "story", found recently among Sri Aurobindo's papers. The exact date is not available, but it was certainly written earlier than the letter from which we have quoted.)

THE story of Ruru and Pramadvura—I have substituted a name [Priyumvada] more manageable by the English tongue—occurs in the introduction of the *Mahabharata* : the death of Pramadvura by the snake brings it among the prolegomena to the great snake sacrifice of Janamejaya. But it is told without any poetical circumstance or aim at beauty, and has never seized the imagination of the people like the story of Savitri, nor has it been taken up by any later poet for an ampler and more poetic treatment. Yet the idea, the recovery of the wife in exchange for the gift of half the life of the husband is sufficiently striking and deserved a better fortune.

TALK ABOUT POLITICS

Q : Why do people talk so much about politics ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Because it is a subject on which one can talk without thinking.

(August, 1933)

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.)

FEBRUARY 13, 1940

P : Some Chakravarty, a final-year medical student, has written to you through Nolini that his father Bhuban Mohan Chakravarty had been your Bengali teacher.

SRI AUROBINDO (*extremely surprised*) : How ? When ? Where ?

P : That is the mystery.

SRI AUROBINDO : My only Bengali teacher was Dinen Roy—unless he had another name.

P : “Chakravarty” and “Roy” are a little far off from each other.

S : Besides, how can he be the son of that teacher ? Sri Aurobindo has been here for a long time.

SRI AUROBINDO : That won't be a test, for he could have been a teacher long before the son was born.

P : He writes that he can produce a most authentic proof—a letter you have written to his father.

SRI AUROBINDO : I ?

P : Yes, and he can send the letter if you want. He has asked for a loan from you to carry out his studies. He will repay you afterwards.

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh, that is the reason ! (*After some time, to P*) Have those articles been sent off to the *Indian Express* for the Special Number of February 21 ?

P : I don't know. I shall ask Nolini. Is there anything wrong ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Radhanand, in his article on the Mother, has claimed that she is an Incarnation. That is a thing we have not yet said publicly.

P : Radhanand said that whatever he had written had been gathered from talks, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : The body of the article is all right. But at the beginning he makes this claim.

P : We can then send a modification.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. Simply state that it is the birthday of the Mother,

Two days later we saw that the article was published as it was, along with a poem by Radhanand.

In the morning the Mother told a very interesting story to Sri Aurobindo. She said : "J has written that she and her son want to go on an outing for a few days, stay in a bungalow and return just 2 or 3 days before Darshan. She wants to know what I would say. I have seen that she doesn't want to know. Already they went once and found that the bungalow was occupied by another European. Finding no room, they came back and said that they would start again a few days after. I clearly saw that if she went some accident would happen to her and she would miss the Darshan as she had done before."

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh, did she miss once ?

MOTHER : Yes, it was when she went to see her son. They don't take a hint. Then she wrote to me that they couldn't go as they couldn't get hold of a chauffeur. I was tempted to write that the Divine Grace (*here Mother spoke in French what she had wanted to write to J. The sense seemed to be that the Divine Grace had saved her.*)

FEBRUARY 15, 1940

EVENING

P : Jinnah is getting impossible. He says that India is one country but with two nations in it—Hindus and Muslims.

SRI AUROBINDO : Two heads on one body ? Why two only ? As the *Hindu* points out, there are other minorities that can also claim to be separate nations—five or six heads !

P : Vallabhbhai Patel says that the British Government is keeping up the division by playing one party against the other.

SRI AUROBINDO : What else does he expect ? So long as there are parties, the Government will act like that. If they don't do so but leave India, the Russians may come in and do the same thing.

FEBRUARY 16, 1940

N : I met Charu Dutt this morning. He seems to be an interesting man.

SRI AUROBINDO : In what way ?

N : Well, the way he talks, the unlimited stock of anecdotes he seems to have. He was saying that when they were starting the *Bande Mataram* C. R. Das insisted that Bepin Pal should be the editor while they insisted that Sri Aurobindo should be the editor. Dutt told Das : "We have persuaded him to come from Baroda to take up the editorship of the paper."

SRI AUROBINDO : What ? Who persuaded me ? I came myself to start a Nationalist movement. There was no C. R. Das at that time. In fact, Bepin Pal had

himself started the paper with Rs. 500 as capital. When he went on a tour of West Bengal he asked me to edit it for the time-being. I had accepted the principalship of the National College for Rs. 150 a month.

Tilak was coming to Calcutta as President of the Congress. We wanted to have a militant programme and our own organ. So I called a meeting of the extremist leaders—there we decided to have a paper and Subodh Mullick offered to finance it.

Shyam Sundar and Ghose were not pleased with Pal's editorship. They said he was too moderate and when I was dangerously ill—the illness almost took me away—they published my name as editor without my consent and in Pal's absence. I called them and remonstrated strongly. They said they wouldn't have anything to do with the paper if Pal remained editor, and so he was pushed out.

N : Dutt also said to Das : "We have brought Sri Aurobindo from Baroda almost against the Maharaja's wishes. The Maharaja is soon coming to the Congress. What will he say ? "

Sri Aurobindo : Which Congress ? How could he attend the Congress ?

P : Perhaps some industrial Congress or Exhibition. Some such thing was taking place at that time in Calcutta.

Sri Aurobindo : In Calcutta ?

P : I am not sure if in Calcutta. But on that side.

EVENING

N : X has suddenly developed a soft corner for Anilbaran. He was saying to Dutt: "Have a talk with him. He is the one man whom we can present to others."

Sri Aurobindo : Because of his shining face ? (*Laughter*)

N : He has made surrender practicable in his own life, X says. One day Anilbaran asked X to sing and gave a high tribute to his songs—psuychic, wonderful development, etc. From that day perhaps X softened down. (*Sri Aurobindo began to laugh.*)

C : Anilbaran is extremely clever. He knows very well how to please a man. Looking at my pictures, he would exclaim : "O Champaklal, it is wonderful, marvellous ! " Then, looking from increasing distances of 1 foot, 2 feet and 3 feet he would go on : "Admirable, excellent !"

Sri Aurobindo (*laughing*) : And you were pleased in spite of yourself. (*Laughter*)

C : Now I don't believe what he says. Akbar Hydari told him : "Only the Mother shows me my faults and mistakes ; everybody else praises me." Anilbaran asked me : "Was Hydari hinting at me ?" (*Laughter*)

S : Where did he learn this art ?

Sri Aurobindo : You mean it may be a Yogic siddhi. (*Laughter*)

N : It seems Tagore was asked his opinion of *The Life Divine* and he said : "All that about sadhana in solitude I don't understand." Charu Dutt replied: "How

is that ? You yourself had to retire in a boat for writing poetry. And I have seen you meditating all alone in the early morning. Then how can you make that remark ? Can you write poetry in the market-place ?

Sri Aurobindo : And I was doing Yoga even during my political activity. The solitude is only a temporary period in sadhana.

N : Dutt had a discussion with Tagore over Nishikanta's book, *Alakananda*. Tagore's point is that he can't believe that a man can remain unmoved and calm and tranquil amidst pain and suffering, sorrow and distress. If a man falls from a height, how can he escape being hurt ? he asks.

Sri Aurobindo : It is not the question of being hurt. The question is of remaining unmoved and unshaken by the hurt.

N : Tagore himself in *Prabasi* speaks of unperturbed peace.

Sri Aurobindo : Yes, but that should be the ideal, it is not realisable in life : that is perhaps his view.

N : But he says one must have it.

Sri Aurobindo : Yes,—have it as an ideal.

N : Am I to believe that in this long period of his life he has not met a single man like that ?

S : He may not.

Sri Aurobindo : Why shouldn't he ? If he hasn't, he should be sent to Finland and he will see many people there remaining calm and tranquil in the midst of all knocks and attacks.

NIRODBARAN

AUROBINDONIAN VIEWPOINTS

A LETTER

II

It is a pity a genuine traveller like you of the *via mystica* does not follow to the full the finger of light Sri Aurobindo points ahead of us. Will you pardon my daring to suspect that the "critical intellect", which keeps you dissatisfied and which you wish to keep in action, omits to criticise certain magnificent spiritual philosophies of the past sufficiently and fails to interpret Sri Aurobindo with the requisite piercing through from words to their meaning? How else am I to understand the overweight you give to pronouncements of long ago which come from realisations apt once but not necessarily for all time and "the hurdle of anti-mentalism" you encounter in the Aurobindonian world-view with which you are in sympathy in several respects?

I have touched already on past spiritual systems. I should like now to figure out clearly what your "hurdle" consists in. You urge that metaphysical idealism has been held by a number of leaders in the mystical field and that not merely through intellectual activity but also through mystical experience. Your faith in it seems to be strengthened by Sir James Jeans's exposition of modern physics in his lately published book, *Physics and Philosophy*. According to you, Berkeley's view of mentalism was a limited and imperfect one, only a beginning in fact, but a beginning in the right direction, which agrees with the trend of present-day physics.

When you ascribe anti-mentalism to Sri Aurobindo you are at once right and wrong. Right if you mean that he does not accept the mental consciousness in any form as the world-creator. Wrong if you mean that he does not accept consciousness at all as the creator of the world. Mind, to Sri Aurobindo, is not a synonym of consciousness : it is just one degree. Are you ascribing anti-mentalism to him by yourself employing the word "mind" broadly to signify consciousness and thinking he assumes for matter an existence outside consciousness altogether? I can quote you passages galore from *The Life Divine* to demonstrate that when a broad sense is read into the word "mind" Sri Aurobindo is not anti-mental in the least. Here is one : "The world is real precisely because it exists only in consciousness ; for it is a Conscious Energy one with Being that creates it. It is the existence of material form in its own right apart from the self-illuminated energy which assumes the form, that would be a contradiction of the truth of things, a phantasmagoria, a nightmare, an impossible falsehood." Sri Aurobindo is anti-mental only when the sense is narrowed. Correctly, the sense should be narrowed: else we confuse the issue at stake. I for one act the anti-mentalist with the narrow sense in view, and if I aver that the drift of Science is away from Berkeley I must

be taken to mean not that modern physics thinks matter contains its own explanation but that, in the first place, it does not agree to Berkeley's foundational premiss—"matter exists wholly as a percept of our consciousness"—and that in the second place, the term "mentalism" or "idealism" is *mal à propos* in science as in philosophy.

On page 203 of *Physics and Philosophy*, which is the most admirable of all his publications, Jeans says that before mentalism "can be seriously considered some answer must be found to the problem of how objects can continue to exist when they are not being perceived in any human mind". Is it not evident that Berkeley's foundational premiss is negated by Jeans? And once it is negated, what remains of Berkeley? You will argue that Berkeley postulates the mind of God as that in which objects when unperceived in any human mind exist. But this is an arbitrary step on the Bishop's part. If our percepts are sufficient, God's mind is not required; if they are not, why choose God's mind rather than matter's independent externality? Berkeley's final conclusion flatly contradicts his initial premiss. Logically the conclusion should be solipsism: as Hume reasoned, we have no right even to speak of many human minds, we must reduce other human beings to the same status as objects and they must be deemed a percept in the experiencing mind: I who perceive am the sole mind: everything I perceive—person or object—is my idea! Surely, Science, assuming both the plurality of scientific observers and the common field in which they work, cannot hold any truck with Berkeley's foundational premiss: it cannot be dubbed Berkeleyan in its tendencies.

Can it be dubbed mentalist or idealist at all, even though in an un-Berkeleyan way? In my opinion, whatever holds matter's explanation cannot be described as "mentality" or "ideas" if by these things we mean, as we strictly should, either the contents of our own small consciousness or anything akin to their peculiarity on a large scale. I therefore maintain further that for Science, as for any other branch of knowledge, no mind of any sort can be the *fons et origo* of the universe. Science may be drifting away from materialism and it may be legitimately doing so, though the legitimacy is not granted by all scientists; nonetheless, Jeans is not justified in his mentalist inferences. Perhaps I am puzzling you by blowing hot and cold. Let me state my view in some detail, also glancing *en passant* at Jeans's philosophical position.

According to *Physics and Philosophy*, in order to explain what happens in space and time to the world of "matter and radiation" that we know, we have to construct mathematical formulas which are such that they imply a substratum to which our perceptual experience of matter and radiation in space and time do not apply at all. What kind of substratum is this? Jeans argues that since all mechanical models of it based on perceptual experience fail us and since the new mathematics is the only representation we can make and since this mathematics is mental, the universe's substratum is likely to be one of thought in a universal mind existing free of the

phenomenal world but acting as the origin of it. To such an argument certain scientists retort by asking us to understand that the new mathematics is purely a conceptual scheme by which we connect phenomena and that to speak of its corresponding to any substratum-reality existing as a universal mind, is misleading : an abstract device within our own minds, correlating phenomena, is all that we can regard as existing besides those phenomena themselves with their queer character which puzzles the model-making engineer beloved of classical physics.

I personally do not want to cast my vote for or against the retort. My own point in the discussion is that, even if our present mathematics and the hypothesis underlying it are correct and serve as a sign towards an originative reality immaterial and free of the phenomenal world, it is hopelessly inadequate to consider it a universal mind instead of a consciousness higher than the mind. The universe's substratum must be such as would be able to produce the world of phenomena which we name physical, it must be able to hold the origin of matter and radiation in space and time. Jeans seems to think a universal mind fulfils this condition. You agree with him. Of course I must not forget you have mentioned not only Jeans but also mystics as bearing you out. Mystical evidence is certainly to be given importance. Yet I make bold to submit that if mystics have spoken of a universal mind as holding in its mental stuff a full and final origin of matter and radiation they have ill-chosen their language as much as Jeans has done. A simple consideration will elucidate my point.

Mentalism can describe a universal mind only by analogy from the nature of mind known to us. What is that nature ? A universal mind would differ in many respects from the individual mind. Suppose we grant that, unlike the individual mentality, it does not labour under the defect of perceiving in matter and radiation an objectivity beyond itself, an objectivity which cannot be equated with its own perceiving. Would it even then be adequate ? If it is still to be a mind and not a higher form of consciousness it must have some characteristic affinity to our mode of being, to something in our awareness of the subjective world if not of the objective. The utmost we can do is to concede the universal mind an experience of the so-called objective world as though that world were subjective to it, so that it knows objects as its own stuff put out for play. In that case, as long as its stuff is mental, it must hold physical objects in the way we hold what we name our mind's subjective contents. As we evolve and arrange and order our conceptions and feel them to be emanations of our own self, the universal or cosmic mind would deal with matter and radiation. But just as we are aware of a background of which our self appears to be a projection and our thoughts a semi-mysterious substance which we do not feel to be entirely controlled by us as our own, so too the cosmic mind would be conscious of a secret background and the physical objects which are its substance would be a half-mystery which it cannot master and shape to integral perfection. The cosmic mind would not escape the dim sense that it is working out what it receives from it-knows-not-where and that, while its working out is as if it were acting in itself and by its own rights, it is being used by some power vaguely present behind it. Its own

triumph of unity would be a harmony of arranged accords and discords—it would have an organised equilibrium haunted by an internal incapacity for a perfect ordering and outflowing of things. As we individuals are conscious of depths unplumbed within us, of a check upon our subjective life from backgrounds unknown, of a limited sway over our own thoughts, of a bound to our creativity and our will, even so the cosmic mind must feel in its consciousness of matter and radiation as its own mental stuff an inherent absence of fullness and finality.

If we assert that there is no such absence we are talking of a status of consciousness to which it is illicit to apply the name “mind”. An infinite consciousness, omniscient and omnipotent, limiting itself freely and without the least ignorance or incapacity may be spoken of as mind in the broadest of senses, but then the term we employ loses all meaning. It becomes a synonym of consciousness in any and every degree. In the West the tendency to “mentalise” everything is habitual. But when we cast about to examine consciousness in the world around, we discern several degrees. The animal’s is one degree, the plant’s is another, the metal’s as shown by Bose’s detection of a power of response to stimuli is a third. We may generalise beyond the metal and say that a hidden consciousness resides in the atom itself. But it would not be proper to class all these degrees as mental : they are obviously sub-mental. On our own level we may conceive an extension, a universality. We may go on conceiving a diminution of many defects, but we cannot blot out every resemblance to the ideative stuff and self that is mind as experienced by us. Remove every shade of likeness and you will have only consciousness in common and nothing mental.

Indeed we may aver that the sub-mental is really the mental concealed or involved, but when we reach the mental stage and widen and intensify it to the furthest, do we come to the ultimate ? Are we not obliged to overpass the mental frontier if we speak of an omniscient and omnipotent consciousness ? Are we not compelled to speak of mind at even its widest and intensest as the Beyond-mind concealed or involved ? I think we are, unless both psychology and language are to be amorphous and inaccurate. No mind, universal or cosmic though it may be, can possess the essentials of being the first and last reality. It must always be an intermediate light. No doubt, a universal mind exists and mystics have experienced it, but if they have not experienced a greater reality which puts it forth as an instrument, they have not found an all-containing, all-constituting, all-penetrating, all-creating consciousness. Neither by physics, metaphysics nor mysticism can we ever hope to make mentalism adequate to a consciousness absolutely and ultimately originative of spatio-temporal phenomena from a poise free of space and time.

The cosmic mind can only be a particular mode of action adopted by a far superior consciousness which is spiritual and not mental. The principle of all mind is endlessly to divide and endlessly to aggregate : to measure off, limit and depiece, then put the pieces together and keep adding up to arrive at a whole. Evidently such a principle must be there for the Spirit to originate the physical universe of divisibility into infinitesimal units and of diverse heaping up of those units to make objects. Evidently

such a principle is also responsible for the ignorance which shuts us off from the Spirit's light, for ignorance means the fragmentation of the Infinite, in which the fragments stand apart, forgetting the Infinite that makes them one and striving to reach it by being added up. Division and fragmentation, however, do not *per se* cause ignorance. At their root, they are just the Spirit's self-play of multiplicity. As long as the basic unity is not lost, there is no lapse from knowledge. The dividing and fragmenting mind, therefore, is in essence a movement of the Spirit: the creative Gnosis, following its one-yet-multiple trend, brings about the divine archetype of mentality. In that archetype there is no ignorance, since the mind movement is fully aware of itself as formulated by the Spirit and undivided from the Spirit. This mind-movement is not self-sufficient as would be by definition the universal mind which mentalism supposes to be final: it is part and parcel of a supra-mental reality. A new projection from the archetypal mind which is in union with the supra-mental blaze of knowledge is needed to render ignorance possible. That projection is the cosmic or universal mind—mentality unliaisoned with the omniscient and omnipotent Spirit. The lack of liaison does not affect the archetype with ignorance, it affects only the projection. Ignorance occurs when, though the archetype is aware of the mental cosmicity it has formulated as an instrument, the instrument becomes oblivious of the power formulating it, even as one side of a man's personality sometimes forgets the many-sided whole of which it is a portion and becomes exclusively concentrated in itself.

The ignorance that is ours would not be there without the cosmic mind becoming ignorant. Of course the cosmic mind is not completely ignorant, the complete ignorance takes place when a total plunge is made by the Spirit into a self-formulation at the opposite pole of its supreme knowledge. We physical beings are evolutes out of the total plunge: we rise, as the Vedic hymn of creation has it, out of a darkness that is wrapped in darkness, we are emergents from a sea of the "unconscious", a formidable abyss of black self-loss. So our ignorance is a special one. Behind our individual mentality there is a purer individualisation which is less ignorant, a standpoint of the cosmic mind. Experiencing that standpoint and breaking from it into the cosmic mentality we reduce our ignorance as much as we can without exceeding the mind-formula divided from the Beyond-mind. Yet the true knowledge is not there until the division between us and the Spirit is destroyed. The integral destroying is in the Sun of consciousness which is the Vedic and Upanishadic description of the Gnosis. There are lower grades of mystical experience in which, despite the division not being there, the dynamic use of the Spirit's knowledge is less intense, less luminous, less effective. It is these grades that mystics mostly attain, grades from the Overmind downwards to the frontier where the cosmic ignorance starts on that *descensus Averno* ending in the terrible catastrophe of the "unconscious" from which our world evolves. At even the lowest grade above that frontier something more intense, more luminous, more effective than any universal mind is attained. The first country of the cosmic ignorance is the universal mind itself, cut off as it is from its spiritual and supra-

mental source. Consequently, I rate mentalism an error for its failure to look further than this mind and to discern as inevitable to this mind the vague feeling of a profundity and a puissance hidden behind and above.

I may, in justice to Jeans, remark that he uses the terms "mind" and "mentalism" about the universe's substratum when what he actually intends is, as he phrases it in one place, "a consciousness superior to our own". So my quarrel with him resolves at bottom to one of terminology. My quarrel would be of more than terminology if he were a Berkeleyan, which he surely is not in his present book, believing as he does that things in the universe "cannot be mere constructs of our individual minds and must have existences of their own." He differs from the materialists inasmuch as he opines that the way we can best understand in physics the course of events creates the likelihood of a universal substratum analogous in character to mathematical knowledge—that is, a substratum of consciousness. His argument may be right or wrong; but I agree with his central thesis about consciousness and differ only from his use of the word "mind" to cover "spirit".

I think my quarrel with you is also due to the same reason. If you drop "mind" and "mentalism" and urge that the physical world has no reality independent of and outside a basic consciousness, every Aurobindonian will shake hands with you and say "Right-O !" According to Sri Aurobindo it is a spiritual and supra-mental Gnostic consciousness that has originally emanated the physical world as one particular infinity of its multi-infinity substance and force, knows it with complete identity both static and dynamic and is working out divine possibilities in what it has emanated as apparently the very opposite of all that is divine.

K. D. SETHNA

LIFE IN SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

(Continued from the issue of February 21)

THE PATH OF SURRENDER

ONE is prone to think the road to the Divine through surrender is strewn with roses : one has not to undergo any severe austerities, only surrender. But, unless one reaches the depth of his being and casts his anchor there, one cannot hope to fathom the Divine's mysteries. It is true that on taking recourse to surrender all can be done by the Divine but we must deserve first, then desire. We have to pay the price, we have first to win His favour.

Till the Divine takes up the charge of the sadhana surrender cannot grow into a joyous experience.

This means inner surrender, and the core of inner surrender is trust and confidence¹ in the Divine. The Master lays down : "if one has this, no other tapasya is needed but this alone."²

So simple an affair ! What then makes people spend twenty or thirty years and yet find that the path "stretches, stretches endlessly" ?

"The full significance of surrender comes when one is ready." For that, one has to do a "systematic and intensive sadhana". Mere devotional approach to God will not take us far.

"At first surrender can be made through knowledge by the mind." But the problem that confronts a beginner is : how to turn the streams of turbulent thoughts and conflicting tendencies Godward, how to make them surrender ?

A novice crying in the night for light asked whoever appeared to him spiritually advanced : "How to surrender ? Is it not said that if once one says, 'I am Thine', him God accepts ? Every morning I invoke Him and say, 'I am Thine, I am Thine', yet why don't I find any change in me ? How to know that I have been accepted ? Why don't I feel that I belong to Him ?"

In search of a Guru he went to Rishikesh. There he met and questioned some of those who lived on green leaves alone, or kept standing on one leg all day. But nobody's answer could satisfy his soul. He prayed day and night to find or be shown the way. He wanted such a Guru as would sway his being by the majesty of his soul.

Disappointed, he came back. Once by a stroke of fortune he met P, a person connected with Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He asked him the same question. For

¹ "The less help from men, the more from God."—Vivekananda.

² For details, see *On Yoga*, II, Tome 1, pp. 562-65.

days together he was kept in suspense, being asked every time to 'come tomorrow'. Yet far from being disgusted he got more and more attracted towards P. He wondered how that man, living in such luxury, could speak words that touched him to the core. "If he is such," the novice thought, "how great must be his Guru ! "

At last one day P placed in his hands a typescript of *Words of the Mother*, Chapter IV. As he read the first paragraph, tears of gratitude welled up from his eyes. His heart's voice rang out, "Here is my Guru !" Even then the rich man would not let him into his 'Meditation Room'. But the day he was asked in, he had an experience which opened a new vista before his eyes.

'Pressure' and 'resistance' were the terms often used in common parlance among sadhaks in the early 'forties. M had just joined the Ashram. He could not understand what 'pressure' signified. On being questioned, Purani said, "Wait, wait, you will see." And in time M himself experienced what pressure was. His sadhana was not only a call to battle but proved to be a churning of the ocean from which surged up poison more often than nectar. Now, he understood why for two years he had not been allowed to stay here.

If there is water below the boat, one push is enough to make it float on the river. If it is stuck in the mud, hundreds of pushes would not move it an inch. Such is the case with opening.

The experience A had during his third visit B had after years of stay. Once someone told B he never lacked his *Words of the Mother* (Third Series) wherever he went. This book had been with B for eight years but he never opened it, nor did the idea ever occur to him of what he should do to make the surrender effective.

All things wait for their time. When the time is ripe, one can feel oneself in tune with the truth enshrined in the words of the Mother and the Master.

"Surrender is the decision taken to hand over the responsibility of your life to the Divine.... 'I do not belong to myself,' you say, and give up the responsibility of your being to the Truth. Then comes self-offering : 'Here I am, a creature of various qualities, good and bad, dark and enlightened, I offer myself as I am to you, take me with all my ups and downs, conflicting impulses and tendencies—do whatever you like with me'"¹ And this is the first step.

We get a clue here to how we can make our self-offering a living one. But after a time the impulse loses its force. Sadhana again appears dull and dry. The question that is common to seeking hearts is : Why does this happen ?

Seekers of Truth love to read the life-stories of saints and sages in the hope of knowing how the rays of Grace cleft through thunder-clouds in their lives. Anandamayi Ma, while in sadhana, once resorted to the hills to remain absorbed, living on meagre meals. Inspired by this fact X resolved to remain exclusively turned to the Divine in thought and deed at least for a month. But he could not remain in this state for more than five or six hours at a stretch ; beyond that his being

¹ *Words of the Mother* (Third Series).

refused even to think of the Divine. This served to open his eyes to how far he was yet from an exclusive turning.

Three weeks later he thought of concentrating in the heart. That too proved hard ; the restless thoughts would not allow him to concentrate there. In his attempt to pray from the heart he found that all prayers came from the mind.

After more than a year he had the first taste of concentration in the heart by hearing a *mantra* repeated there and it was followed by a series of experiences. These were, however, passing phases of the sadhana. Again and again dull and dry periods intervened. By looking within he found that as yet not even the will had awakened to keep him exclusively turned to the Divine. To be in constant touch with the higher consciousness was a terrible job for the vital self.

“Sadhana appears bitter,” says Sri Aurobindo, “like poison in the beginning because of the difficulty and struggle, but in the end sweet as nectar,...because of the joy of realisation, the peace of liberation.”

Life in Yoga has been taken to be a desert without an end. “To suppose that Yoga is dry and joyless is a misunderstanding.” When the “hidden springs of sweetness” break out no earthly joy can compare with them.

From X’s spritual diary we learn that when he was once seized by depression a thought passed into his mind : “Nothing have I gained as yet of permanent value. Years have passed and I am as empty as when I came.”

One day he chanced upon “Radha’s Prayer” by the Mother, framed and hung up in a friend’s house. He asked himself if he had been able to fulfil even one condition laid down there, if he had at least been able to turn his thoughts to the Divine ! The prayer acted on him like a *mantra*. One great advantage of its repetition was that whenever he did anything that was not for the Divine he felt a prick in his consciousness, “Was it for the Divine ? Was this a right movement ? ”

Then dawned on him something new. He began to study his own movements. To his surprise he found how tightly he had been tied to even petty things. Once having lost a handkerchief with a few pice tied at one end he went out in search of it. Then he said to himself, “I am a sadhak ; so much attachment to a piece of cloth ! ”

The Mother says, “...If the Divine wants you to enjoy anything, enjoy it ; but be ready too to give it up the very next moment with a smile.”

Before proceeding further let us consider why, knowing a Truth, we fail to live it.

Mental sincerity helps us to see our weaknesses, the dark spots in our nature, our incapacities and failings. But this is not enough. One must learn to live it ; mere recognition of defects cannot take us far.

“It is only when the power of sincerity descends into the vital” that there is an urge not only to see and understand but to do and achieve.

“Without vital change one remains at best a witness, one has an inner perception or consciousness of the Divine but in actual living one lets the old nature go its own way. It is the sincerity in the vital, its will to possess the Divine and the Divine

alone...that brings the most dynamic change. Sadhana instead of being a mental occupation, an intellectual pursuit, acquires the urgency of living and doing and achieving..."¹

The joy of sadhana cannot be realised without peace in the vital and purity in the heart. The Master goes so far as to say, "Those who have not that or do not aspire to get it can come here and live in the Ashram for ten or twelve years and yet be as restless and full of struggle as ever."

On the other hand, experiences of inner cleansing and psychic purity are so elevating, so overwhelming that one's whole being is flooded with gratitude. One begins to feel the Divine has given him much more than he could give Him. Y came to realise this long after. That happy trend induced him to take delight in feeling that his sadhana was on a voyage to new shores.

Darkness lit up by beams of experiences led him to infer that what the Master had written to someone might well apply to him.

"The quietude and silence which you feel and the sense of happiness in it are indeed the very basis of successful sadhana."²

It would be foolish to gloat over a bit of experience, for there is yet a long journey to cover.

The Master wrote to someone :

"Most in doing yoga live in the mind, vital, physical, lit up occasionally or to some extent by the higher mind and by the illumined mind'. "³

Why ? Because "the push to drown oneself in the Divine is very rare".

"It is only when the surrender is complete that the full flood of the sadhana is possible."⁴

How to make the complete surrender ?

To obtain an answer we must delve a little into the deeper levels of our sadhana.

SURRENDER OF THE VITAL BEING

The first difficulty is the stiff resistance of the vital being. It refuses to budge an inch from its old rut. To quote the Mother, "It seems to be, in the human being, the most difficult part to train." And then there is the rigidity of the physical mind. It goes on repeating and repeating the same thing a thousand times.

Here begins the battle, the battle between the spiritual mind that wants control and the rebellious vital.

Of course, tranquillity in the mind⁵ is the first positive result of sadhana and, the Master says, "It is a great step". But swinging between disturbance and calm

¹ Adapted from the editorial of *Advent*, 1945.

² *On Yoga*, II, Tome I, p. 639.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 529.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

⁵ "An ordinary man's mind is never quiet."—Sri Aurobindo.

goes on for a long time till the light conquers and calm and truth are accepted by all the parts.

This is just a small beginning. But we hasten to quote :

If “the psychic being and the heart and the thinking mind have surrendered, the rest is a matter of time and process....The central and effective surrender has been made.”

In this context it is necessary to cite another letter :

“The opening is the same for all. It begins with an opening of mind and heart, then of the vital proper—when it reaches the lower vital and the physical the opening is complete.

“But with the opening there must be the full self-giving to what comes down, which is the condition of the complete change. It is the last stage that is the real difficulty and it is there that everybody stumbles about till it is overcome.”¹

Now, why even if there is a full opening does not one find oneself *en route* to the sunlit path ?

If one layer of the lower regions opens today, another raises such a stubborn resistance the very next day that there remains no go but to wait for the Mother's victory in us.

A man, left to himself, is nothing but a bundle of habits and weaknesses. It is only the man on the path who can say what a fight he has had to give to his own nature to free himself even from one of them.

Take the simple example of ‘fear’. It is innate to our nature. Yet until we can pull it out we can have no experience of true freedom.

One more example. Sri Aurobindo has said somewhere that a yogi looks to the Divine Grace for everything. When one learns not to look to others with an eye of hope the freedom it brings is immense.

But the lower elements in us defy true reliance. How hard it is to make the lower vital surrender will be clear from the following.

P had in his possession a good many letters from the Master. Rare was his devotion to the Mother. He was a lover of beauty. He always preferred to offer the best he could procure. Once he wrote : “My aspiration is not to possess the Divine but to be possessed by Him; to be enjoyed by the Divine and not to enjoy Him.” An ideal approach, indeed !

The reply he received was truly soul-stirring :

“All parts are essentially offered but the surrender has to be made complete by the growth of the psychic self-offering in all of them and in all their movements.

“To be enjoyed by the Divine is to be entirely surrendered so that one feels the Divine Presence, Power, Light, Ananda possessing the whole being rather than oneself possessing these things for one's own satisfaction. It is a much greater ecstasy to be thus surrendered....”

¹ *On Yoga*, II, Tome 1, p. 582.

Such a firm *ādhār*, such a fine opening, yet all his life P had to suffer from an indomitable resistance from his lower vital. Terrible was his battle with his own nature. It never consented to submit to the higher force, and despite deep experiences he had defeat after defeat, and later the vehemence of the lower grew so strong that the higher could find no chance to peep in and it retired. Then his past rose up as if in arms. But never did his heart fail to raise its call to the Mother. One must move forward trampling his way across the battlefield of life in sadhana.

Time and again the Master has said that this Yoga cannot be done unless the lower gives a willing consent to change. It is this that requires lifelong *tapasyā* in one form or another. A life may pass yet one may find himself stuck where he was.

That is why we have to remember the Mother's warning :

"It is not sufficient to have a positive movement, there must also be a negative movement of rejection." If the obscurities lie "buried somewhere", "you may be sure that even after thirty, forty or fifty years you will always be at the same point, you will not have changed. There will be always something that will wake up suddenly and devour your experience."¹

Another point worth noting : in spite of the Mother's working, why do we stumble ?

In Sri Aurobindo's Yoga personal effort has to be gradually replaced by the Divine taking up the sadhana. "There will be a sort of transfer, a taking up of the forces at work in the personal Adhar."² That is the whole secret of the sadhana pursued here.

When this transition takes place one is able to feel that it is the Mother in him who does the sadhana.

One can feel the descent of the Mother's Force possessing one's system, part by part, when there is no resistance. The Force generally descends from the crown of the head but can start from other parts as well. K used to feel its action from the lower parts and then it would rise higher and higher. Once in meditation he lost all sense of his body, though fully conscious within. Then he felt his consciousness getting out of the body and rising up into the sky. The body lay immobilised as if dead. Next day he heard a voice : "Today you will have a taste of real Samadhi." Thereupon rose a prayer from within, "What shall I do with Samadhi, Mother? I was born to do Thy service."

The very next moment there appeared before his inner sight a pit, deep and wide and densely dark. The gaping pit told upon his nerves and he faltered. Now arose another prayer : "If there is the least bit of sincerity in me, may the Mother guide me to do Her will." And his consciousness took the plunge. A threadlike ray of light led him deeper and deeper into the pit. The moment the movement of light stopped, the meditation broke off. A standstill condition persisted for years and then a severe struggle, like a tug-of-war, ensued.

¹ *Bulletin*, November, 1966, pp. 23, 27.

² *On Yoga*, II, Tome I, p. 567.

A question poses itself here : When one is blessed with such a fine opening and clearly feels the action of the Yogic Force, should not all be an easy walk instead of one's being forced into a tug-of-war ?

Working of the higher Force demands full opening of the parts concerned. Any resistance anywhere, and at once the Force recedes.

At every step a battle awaits us. For every bit of ground there is a bitter fight. Nothing would give up its hold on us, not to speak of its lack of submission to the Law of Light. How long the forces of Darkness can keep us wandering about in the wilderness is common knowledge.

Says Sri Aurobindo : "The world will trouble you so long as any part of you belongs to the world."¹

At this level of development one has to press on inch by inch. The one thing that appears most trying and tiresome is long periods of unrelieved dryness and seemingly futile waiting. To add to this, there is no knowing when the hard-earned gains may be swept away in a split second, unperceived. The toil has to be persisted in till another spell of heavenly touch nerves up the effort. That is why experiences are for us like welcome showers upon a thirsty earth.

DETAILED SURRENDER

A tiny rose—not bigger than a pea-flower—has been named by the Mother "Detailed Surrender". Many of us loved to offer this particular rose to the Mother, in preference to bright and blooming roses.

"Mere talk of surrender," writes the Master, "will not do, there must be a push for radical change." This cannot be done unless and until "the knot of ego is cut in each part and offered free and whole".

When sadhana comes down to the physical² it seems to be at a halt. In order to make a surrender of all preferences, habits, movements, even the sense of necessity must go. To sum up, one must surrender one's character, the very way of his living, as the Mother puts it (*Bulletin*, November, 1966, p. 45).

It is here that we stumble. How to change our lifelong habits, tendencies and movements that lie ingrained in the very cells of the body ?

The only remedy is to bring the sadhana to the subconscious.³

On the surface the water in a pool may appear transparent, crystal-clear ; but

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 582.

² " the physical consciousness is like a stone, what it calls surrender is often no more than inertia". (*Ibid.*, p. 565). "To open it is a herculean task."

³ " .some of these parts are still subject to the inconscience and subconsciousness and to the law of the nature,—mechanical habit of mind, habit of life, habit of instinct, habit of personality, habit of character, the ingrained mental, vital, physical needs, impulses, desires of the natural man, the old functionings of all kinds that are rooted there.. refuse to give up their response to the lower law founded in the Inconscient; and seek to reaffirm them there as the eternal rule of Nature" (*The Life Divine*, American Ed., p. 825).

just drop into it a piece of stone and dirt will swirl up and darken all the water. So is the case with our mind. However one meditates, knee-deep mud remains hidden below the surface.

Describing an experience, a sadhak inquired if it indicated the beginning of peace of the vital. The reply he received was :

“Yes. The difficulty comes when one goes down into the physical and sub-conscious to have it changed ; the consciousness then takes its station in the physical and this kind of delay, slow movement, absence of movement becomes common. To be quiet and cheerful is the proper attitude in this stage.”

All this might throw some light on how complex is our way of sadhana. If one refuses to enter into all these complexities, one cannot hope to move towards the divine life. No surrender, no transformation.

All that opposes the rule of Light must be conquered. There is no other way. But our defects will pursue us even to the gate of heaven.

Many stages have to be passed before one can hope to breathe in a new air. The sadhak referred to above had been passing through various troubles for years. To his question why, though the Mother's Force was active in his body, he suffered so much, Sri Aurobindo wrote :

“You have made a great progress and ought to have sufficient peace and psychic support to go through the tedious physical period without becoming depressed or impatient. As one had to pass through the perturbations of the vital, so one had to pass through the inertia of the physical consciousness in order to change matter. Keep the aspiration or the will steady or if neither comes keep faith and the turning to the Mother ; the higher consciousness will come down into the layers of the physical consciousness and prepare it for the final movement.”

When the physical mind is at rest and the vital falls quiet and the body is so purified as not to fall an easy victim to illness the relief one comes to feel is almost like release from a long-suffering torture. Then the peace that pervades the being or the sense of emptiness that emanates from it wipes out even the traces of the struggle from the memory. And no price appears too great for it.

As the Master gives us the promise that one who cleaves to the path sincerely may be sure of his spiritual destiny, we patiently await our “Hour of God”.

We need not tax the reader with more problems of which there is no end. Let us finish with one instance.

After a long and keen struggle one of us got an initial control over his temper. In the beginning and for many years the more he tried, the more he failed. At last came a stage when he became conscious the moment anger tried to thrust in. He heard the word “Patience” or else “Don't speak”, or some word of the Mother flashed across his mind and the anger died down.

Then he reached the happy stage when he could mostly accept the fury of an angry man and pocket it. Still he marked that he was not able to get rid of the elements of anger altogether. At times he saw, before he could be conscious, the outer being

flare up. Here he stood utterly helpless. It showed that some control was there but not mastery. Mastery would come if the frontal being consented to change. How to induce its consent? It is like an animal.¹ However clean you may wash an elephant, the moment it comes out of water it sprays its body with dust. Other Yogas do not care to bring a change into this part of our nature but we are enjoined not to bypass it.

“Our aim is not only liberation of the Purusha but complete transformation of the Prakriti also.”

The one thing that X found very helpful was to follow the rule :

“If you have faults and weaknesses, hold them up before the Divine to be changed.”²

For months together whenever he started some physical work, an unutterable sense of fatigue came over his limbs. No sooner had he offered it to the Divine than he felt a relief. This gave him a fillip to make further experiments. Its efficacy cannot be felt until there is a definite change in one's nature.

The Rishis have spoken of the Yogic path as the razor's edge. With what smoothness and ease the Mother leads us along the Path will be remembered with loving gratitude for ages to come. It is perhaps unprecedented in the history of spirituality.

When we suffer we forget she is divine; when something in us resists and revolts she “forgets” she is divine and stoops down to our level to give soothing balm to our bleeding wounds. She knows the tortures to which a true sadhak is at times exposed.

In order to believe, our mind always runs after miracles. “Miracle is a moment's wonder.” Yoga is a spiritual battle and one must be ready for adventures.

How difficult it is to lay the true foundation of a life in the Spirit, in comparison with a miraculous but transitory change brought about by a touch, can be better imagined than expressed. We have given only stray glimpses of the way of sadhana. The time has not come to write the history of Transformation.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ ‘As for the external being, it is always a difficult animal to handle’ (*Letters*, Fourth Series, p. 461).

² *On Yoga*, II, Tome 1, p. 583.

PENTECOST

BEFORE the carbon's greed
Embodied coal ;
Before the ferns' dull shrine,
Faith gleaned this fire.

To-day deep roots
Extoll oblivion,
Avoid the star-thrust lark's
Linked halo-song.

Have you with brooks
Shared caddis, laughter winged ?
The summer thorn's
Deft plundering of sours,
Her latent dark
Grown purple in the sloe ?

Has April frescoed sweet
With cuckoo-call,
Within your veins
Reared tenuous walls
Of high unchiselled green ?

Then dream's ordained
Explosion, beech tree fused,
May cobble self's
Raw footsole with a sun.

MOGER

TRANSLATIONS FROM IQBAL

(*Continued from the issue of February 21*)

Saqi-nama

Ah, fill the cup, the blazing spring arrives !
O Saqi, pour the veil-consuming wine—
The wine aglow with the throes of Time's first dawn,
That flashes forth Creation's mystery.
Bestow upon the youth heart's anguish-fire,
Transfuse the passion of my love and gaze.
Flows ceaseless the resounding force of life,
Fleeing from every object as it goes.
The planets and the stars it constitutes,
In the elements' meshes yet disconsolate.
It is the one in the many ever involved,
But everywhere distinctive and unique.
Conflict and contradiction it abhors,
For neither you are I nor I am you.
With you and I it makes the multitude,
Itself retiring deep in the heart of the hum.
The mountain crumbles by its mighty power,
Fairies and Gabriel into its trap are drawn.
The caravan of Existence knows no rest—
Fresh grows each moment its magnificence.
Dost thou conceive Life is a mystery ?
Impetuous zest for flight alone is life.
To get entangled first, then seek release
All smarting, fluttering soothes its aching nerves!
Life entered into this world of hard contest
Only to find itself pursued by Death—
The irresistible dire antagonist !
But by duality's urge, in wedlock joined
Both burst from mounts and forests, host on host.
From the bough of this dual life flowers drooped and fell,
And on the self-same bough appeared in bloom.
Life transient seems to ignorance, but in truth
Its vanishing footprints only emerge ahead.
So swift to dash and quick to reach, its flight

Is a single breath from the world's first Day to the last.
 This wave of breath is a sword, whose edge is self ;
 Self is the secret lodged in the core of life ;
 Self is the waking of the universe ;
 Self is rapt glory of the manifest
 And the mute Alone—the sea rolled in one drop.
 Though born of two, yet unaffected, apart
 It glows serene through darkness or in light.
 Behind Time's Beginning lies, Time's End in front—
 No final stop it faces either way.
 Shifting its lines of quest, turning apace
 Its glance, it is on the move eternally—
 Journey sustains its lasting permanence.
 Involved in struggle from Creation's Dawn,
 In human clay it shaped its ultimate form.
 The self is mirrored seated in thy heart
 As is the sky in the pupil of the eye.
 This world which has to obey the fiat of Death,
 This huge commotion of mere hue and sound,
 Sheerest idolatry by the eye and ear,
 This world where life is only to eat and drink
 Is the initial station in self's long ascent—
 O traveller, not thy own supernal home.
 Not from this earth comes thy immortal fire—
 The world's for thee, not thou art for the world,
 Across this rock of obstacle hew thy way.
 Break through the charmed confines of Space and Time.
 There are yet other worlds unmanifest :
 Existence is inexhaustible in its themes.
 Self is the lion of God whose ordained prey
 Is all this world, the earth and the firmament.
 Who is not waiting for thy great exploits—
 The bold adventures of thy thoughts and deeds ?
 All evolution's purpose is but one :
 Thy self at last should stand revealed to thee.

(Concluded)

NARESH

WESTERN CLASSICAL CONCERT MUSIC

TIME's flight is suspended
Only the Moment unending rolls on where
Worlds float about
Like forms in an iridescent Eldorado.

The moon gleams
Rivers and lakes glisten
Gnomes and elves frisk about
And the Little Mermaid pines for the Prince.

Storms riot
The sea roars
Armies clash
Horsemen gallop wild
And the thunder laughs sinister amidst lightnings.

Then tranquillity soothes the weary earth.

My Spirit disembodied timeless
Glides through the ages
An airy substance
It hardly feels its entity
Save that it bears
An unappeasable pain
Of delights gone by
In former lives innumerable
In former worlds unaccountable
In former shapes indescribable.

Aimless pain-enraptured
It glides on
And on
Though
Babylon crashes
Egypt fades
Pluto rapes Proserpina
The little brook tells her sad story to the bereaved mother

Orpheus stoned to death goes a-floating
 Greece dies : Odysseus journeys on through strange worlds
 Aeneas abandons unhappy Dido : Rome crumbles
 The knell rings
 But dead Lazarus rises up
 A castle broods over a lake upon a still starry night
 A boat passes across the lapping waters
 And a flight of white birds stabs the heart of darkness
 The captive Lady bewails her lover
 A knight loiters
 Pale and haggard

And my Spirit full of
 Scars of delight
 Roams through the universe
 Space seems small for its motion.

Music the balm on the scars
 Music the epic-song of the Soul's adventure
 Eternity caught in a moment's melody
 Vanished joys bubble in the tunes
 Sounds crack into images
 Worlds bloom into shapes of joyance.

For the sun shines
 Butterflies quiver in the breeze
 Flowers muse in the meadows
 A band of gay maidens dance the farandole
 Swans glow in the lake
 Dewdrops bask on green leaves
 Squirrels frolic
 Rivers chant
 Winds eddy
 The Soul's in a swirl
 Thunder booms
 And the senses shudder
 But the sky's clear again
 Stars whisper tales of remote harmony
 The sea is calm
 Peace overhangs.

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PART THREE : THE CONQUEST OF FOOD-NEED

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1966)

XII. THE MYSTERY OF MATTER

“...The question may be raised whether, not only at first but always, the divine life must submit to this necessity [of material alimentation]. But it could only deliver itself from it altogether if it could find out the way so to draw upon the universal energy that the energy would sustain not only the vital parts of our physicality but its constituent matter with no need of aid for sustenance from any outside substance of Matter.”

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation*, pp. 50-51)

“The material universe is only the façade of an immense building which has other structures behind it, and it is only if one knows the whole that one can have some knowledge of the truth of the material universe.”

(Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga II*, Tome one, p. 230)

“Our substance does not end with the physical body; that is only the earthly pedestal, the terrestrial base, the material starting point...There are behind our gross physical being other and subtler grades of substance with a finer law and a greater power which support the denser body and which can...be made to impose that law and power on our dense matter...”

Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 239)

To solve radically the problem of material alimentation, the body must discover some appropriate means to replenish and renew its gross substantial existence without needing any outside material aliments. But is this operation at all feasible? How can the material needs of the body be met otherwise than by the incorporation of matter itself ?

If these misgivings have to be adequately resolved we must first inquire into the mystery of Matter and try to find out what physical substance *essentially* is.

If, indeed, the common-sense view of Matter represents its whole truth or if

Matter is the primary datum and the basic reality, all else being derivative and 'departmental activities of Matter', then there is not much prospect for the kind of solution we have envisaged above. It is no doubt a fact that till recently men of science conceived of nature as a mechanical system consisting of lumps of matter moving about in a fixed frame of space and time in accordance with certain specifiable laws. One of the primary principles assumed was the Principle of the Conservation of Mass according to which matter can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only undergo transformation. But with the advancing tide of knowledge the position of the traditional mechanist has become untenable and matter has lost much of its 'tangibility'. Its essential nature seems to be shrouded in an inscrutable mystery and along with the naive common-sense conception of matter many other well-entrenched concepts and notions have had to be thrown overboard. The advent of the Theory of Relativity, of Quantum Mechanics and Wave Mechanics has dealt a death-blow to the traditional mechanical picture of physical facts.... "All that seems to have been left by the Theory of Relativity is the presence of matter. Force has gone; simple location has gone; absolute motion has gone; but what still remains are bodies moving through space-time. The Special Theory of Relativity, however, brought Einstein to the conclusion that mass and energy were not essentially different; that energy is equivalent to mass and mass represents energy, and that there is a simple quantitative relation between them. This *identification of mass with energy* leads us to suspect that *matter may be resolvable into something more ultimate.*"¹ (Italics ours)

Indeed, recent developments in physics have established the fact that there is no essential difference between Matter and Energy. The study of the structure of matter on the one hand and that of the nature of radiation and its interaction with matter have revealed that the dual aspect of Wave-Corpuscle is a common feature both of radiation and of the fundamental particles of matter. Whereas electromagnetic waves behave in certain respects as a shower of corpuscles (called 'photons'), matter itself in certain circumstances exhibit the characteristics of waves. Matter and energy are thus fundamentally the same and, what is more, they are interconvertible.

In point of fact, the creation of electromagnetic radiation from matter and the creation of matter from radiation both have been experimentally achieved and these have come to substantiate Einstein's famous equation $E=mc^2$ which incidentally established the fundamental identity of matter and energy. The materialisation of energy in the process of pair production (*e.g.*, the production of an electron-positron pair by the materialisation of a photon or quantum of electromagnetic energy) and the release of energy in the process of nuclear reaction so demonstratively symbolised by the atomic bomb prove beyond any shadow of doubt that there is no unbridgeable chasm separating the form of substance from the form of energy.

These epoch-making discoveries of modern science are of great import from our

¹ Errol E. Harris, *Nature, Mind and Modern Science* (1954), pp. 380-381.

point of view. For if energy, and not matter, is proved to be the primary reality and matter only a derivative phenomenon of energy, this at once offers us the necessary clue to the solution of the problem of substantial replenishment of the body without the aid of any material aliments. It is through the process of the direct tapping and materialisation of energy that the New Body can very well meet its material needs. And since energy is not limited to its physical forms alone but rises through an ascending scale, as we have seen in the previous chapter, to forms subtler and still more subtle, there is no conceivable limit to the effectivity of the whole operation. What is needed is the discovery of an instrumentation through which this materialisation of the superior grades of energy may be effected for the body's needs. But the supra-mentally transfigured body will surely bring into play the necessary instrumentation. And we may well conceive that in the New Body "material organs as we know them at present would be replaced by centres of concentration of force and energy that are receptive of higher forces and that would, by a sort of alchemy, use these latter for necessities of physical life."¹

About the process of materialisation of energy the Mother says :

"Those who have practised occultism sufficiently know the process of materialising subtle energies to put them in contact with physical vibrations. This is a thing that not only can be done but is done. There is there a whole science that has to be perfected, completed and which evidently must be used for the creation and action of new bodies that will be capable of manifesting the supramental life in a material world."²

But apart from this process of luminous materialisation of energy, the New Body may renew its material stuff through the materialisation of substance of subtler grades. For it is not at all a fact that there is only this gross material foundation and for the rest the play of various energies. In fact, "there are, quite certainly, other states of Matter itself,"³ and "even within the formula of the physical cosmos there is an ascending series in the scale of Matter which leads us from the more to the less dense, from the less to the more subtle."⁴ And when we reach the highest term of this series, 'the most supra-ethereal subtlety of material substance or formulation of Force', it is not a void or nihil that lies beyond. Rather, there is an ascending series of subtler formulations of substance intervening between the inconscient substance of gross physical matter and the utterly self-conscious pure substance of spirit.

But to comprehend these discoveries of occult-spiritual science, we must first try to have a clear notion of what matter or substance *really* is. In attempting this conceptual clarity, we cannot do better than to quote *in extenso* from Sri Aurobindo's own writings on the subject :

"In a certain sense Matter is unreal and non-existent; that is to say, our present

¹ The Mother in *Bulletin*, Vol. IX No. 3, p. 123.

² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³ *The Life Divine*, p. 231.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

knowledge, idea and experience of Matter is not its truth but merely a phenomenon of particular relation between our senses and the all-existence in which we move. When Science discovers that Matter resolves itself into forms of Energy, it has hold of a universal and fundamental truth; and when philosophy discovers that matter only exists as substantial appearance to the consciousness and that the one reality is Spirit or pure conscious Being, it has hold of a greater and completer, a still more fundamental truth....

"We shall understand better if we go back...to the original principle of things. Existence is in its activity a Conscious-Force which presents the workings of its force to its consciousness as forms of its own being. Since Force is only the action of one sole-existing Conscious-Being, its results can be nothing else but forms of that Conscious-Being; Substance or Matter, then, is only a form of Spirit."¹

"Energy seems to create substance, but, in reality, as existence is inherent in Consciousness-Force, so also substance would be inherent in Energy,—the Energy a manifestation of the Force, substance a manifestation of the secret Existence. But as it is a spiritual substance, it would not be apprehended by the material sense until it is given by Energy the forms of Matter seizable by that sense."²

"...The sharp division which practical experience and long habit of mind have created between Spirit and Matter has [not] any fundamental reality. ...Substance is the form of itself on which it works, and of that substance if Matter is one end, Spirit is the other. The two are one : Spirit is the soul and reality of that which we sense as Matter; Matter is form and body of that which we realise as spirit....

"Substance, we have said, is conscious existence presenting itself to the sense as object so that, on the basis of whatever sense-relation is established, the work of world-formation and cosmic progression may proceed. But there need not be only one basis, only one fundamental principle of relation immutably created between sense and substance; on the contrary there is an ascending and developing series."³

"Our present view of Matter and its laws [do not] represent the only, possible relation between sense and substance, between the Divine as knowledge and the Divine as object.... There are, quite certainly, other states even of Matter itself; there is undoubtedly an ascending series of the divine gradations of substance; there is the possibility of the material being transfiguring itself through the acceptation of a higher law than its own which is yet its own because it is always there latent and potential in its own secrecies."⁴

"There must be in the nature of things, an ascending series in the scale of substance from Matter to Spirit⁵.... There are a series of subtler and subtler formulations of substance which escape from and go beyond the formula of the material universe....

¹ *The Life Divine*, pp. 215-216.

² *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22.

⁴ *Ibid* pp. 230-31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

These gradations of substance, in one important aspect of their formulation in series, can be seen to correspond to the ascending series of Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind and that other higher divine triplicity of Sachchidananda. In other words, we find that substance in its ascension bases itself upon each of these principles and makes itself successively a characteristic vehicle for the dominating cosmic self-expression of each in their ascending series."¹

"There are different planes of substance, gross, subtle and more subtle going back to what is called causal (Karana) substance. What is more gross can be reduced to the subtle state and the subtle brought into the gross state; that accounts for dematerialisation and rematerialisation."²

This last remark of Sri Aurobindo along with what has gone before makes it clear how the New Body can possibly dispense with the need of any material alimentation. For, one need not limit oneself to the principle of gross physical substance alone : one can very well draw upon the substances corresponding to the supernal ranges of our being.

But even this does not exhaust all the possibilities. For we should not imagine that the New Body will after all remain bound to the present principle of physical substance : only it will bring into operation hitherto-unknown new processes that will enable it to harness the supernal grades of energy and substance for satisfying its material needs.

As a matter of fact, "the ascent of man from the physical to the supramental must open out the possibility of a corresponding ascent in the grades of substance to that ideal or causal body which is proper to our supramental being, and the conquest of the lower principles by supermind and its liberation of them into a divine life and divine mentality must also render possible a conquest of our physical limitations by the power and principle of supramental substance."³

There would no doubt remain a material base for the New Body, but it will be 'a new earth with a divine structure', having for its stuff the supramental substance, in which the Earth-Mother will finally reveal her unshrouded divine splendour.

And with the evolution of this nobler physical existence here upon earth, when the 'divinely human body' will make its appearance, the problem of material alimentation will lose all its validity and the divine destiny of the body will be amply realised.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *Ibid*, p. 235.

² *On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 233.

³ *The Life Divine*, p. 240.

THE TRAGEDIES OF AESCHYLUS

(Continued from the January issue)

Let us now return to the metaphorical works. It will be very difficult again to determine what metaphors were invented by Aeschylus. All the same, his tragedies being the oldest form of extant tragedies, we can accept much of his metaphorical imagery to be of his own invention. Along with these images we must place some of his felicitous expressions too. In *The Suppliant Women*, for instance, the king says,

What dark word trembles in thy thought ?

or else,

Or if his tongue shoots out one dangerous word...

Or else read :

Till hearts be wounded and men's anger stirred,
The wound that speech hath stricken speech can heal.

Hear the Chorus invoking,

O Father, planter of the Garden, Lord,
Thou of the Healing hand—

or saying,

Whose gentle laws make straight
The tangle of mortal fate.

Or there is Danaus' observation,

And multitude they here shall find, with feet
And fists well toughened in the noonday heat...

Or the Chorus singing in an alliteration,

They launched their blue-eyed barque
Bulded of bitter wood ;

Their hate hath found its mark,
 And here they swarm, a lewd
 And black-limbed multitude—

and breaking into a direct simile,

Maddened with lust, they stride,
 Shameless as dogs, and naught
 Holy can pierce their thought—

or praying,

O Zeus, in thy hands, come what may,
 The scales of Fortune shift or stay.

In *The Seven Against Thebes* we find the passionate Scout reporting :

Out of those hearts of iron breathed a flame
 As when a lion's eyes in battle glare—

Or,

Fence every post before
 The war-storm bursts. Even now its billows roar.

And the chorus of women sings in terror :

Nigher and yet more nigh,
 A winged thing in the sky,
 It roars, like torrent's roar
 In the hills, sweeping all before,
 Rending the mountain stone.

And, further,

Till the walls blacken with the smoke of death
 And war, the madman, War, the scourge and rod
 Of peoples, mocker of the ways of God,
 Fills all with its hot breath.

And again the Scout comes back,

And Tydeus in his rage, athirst for blood,
 Hurls, like the sun-mad hissing of a snake,
 His taunts at the wise prophet...

And further :

In front that buckler bears, in blazon proud,
A fiery night of stars without a cloud,
And gleaming midmost on the central bars
A moon, the eye of night, the star of stars.

In *Prometheus* we hear the hero say,

He had in rage this body hurled,
That neither man might gaze on me
Nor god, as now when, pang by pang,
A blown leaf in the wind I hang,
And they that hate me laugh to see—

or

Blind hopes I planted in their hearts to dwell.

And lo sighs,

Oh, answer ! Break thy silence ; and fulfil
A virgin's prayer, whose pilgrimage is pain—

or addresses *Prometheus* as

Thou star of blessing to mankind ! Alas,
What brings thee most unhappy, to this pass ?

And *Prometheus* says,

From here, first turn thee toward the rising day ;
O'er the world's unploughed acres make thy way...

And, further, about *Zens*,

...Oh, let him there
Sit crowned and fearless, strong behind the glare
Of crashing skies, and ever in his hand
Turning the death-shaft of his levin wand—

and, in reply to *Hermes*,

...let his jagged flame be hurled,
With white-winged snow and earthquake let the world
Be racked till chaos comes...

and in continuation,

In vain thou troublest me, like one that cries
Against the sea-wave...

and again,

I care not, let the fire be thrown,
Two-bladed, curling. Let the sound
Of thunder and the agony
Of warring tempests rack the sky
Till hills, uprooted from the ground
By his wild wind be tossed and riven.

In *The Persians* we find the Chorus opening with:

For all the strength of Asia born,
Like hounds at a young master's horn
Baying, away hath flown...

And the Messenger reports to the Queen :

The tangled forest of his beard so red
Hath dyed a costlier crimson ; he lies dead.

In the *Agamemnon*, the Chorus sings :

...Why weep before the hour ?
For come it shall, as out of darkness dawn.
Only may good from all this evil flower...

And we have uplifting imagery in Clytemnestra' speech :

And slumberous incense o'er the altars glowed
In fragrance—

or a faithful observation about a wife :

True to one voice and fierce to others all.

And the Herald says,

We drove like sheep about our brain the thoughts
Of that lost army, broken and scourged with knouts
Of evil...

The Chorus, again, describes Helena,

For her sons were with the dead,
And her life one lamentation
'Mid blood and burning flame.

And then :

Call it a dream of peace untold,
A secret joy in a mist of gold,
A woman's eye that was soft, like flame,
A flower which ate a man's heart with pity,

In Clytemnestra's speech we find :

But for me,
The old stormy rivers of my grief are dead
Now at the spring....

And further,

...I greeted my lord, O watchdog of the fold,
O forestay sure that fails not in the squall,
O strong-based pillar of a towering hall ;
O single son to a father age-ridden ;
O land unhopèd for, seen by shipwrecked man ;
Sunshine more beautiful when storms are fled ;
Spring of quick water in a desert dead...
How sweet to be set free from any chain !

The Chorus sings :

All will die like dreams, and creep
To the unthought of and undone.

Cassandra is described by the leader of the Chorus :

The strange maid needs a rare interpreter.
She is trembling like a wild beast in a snare.

And she in her prophecy describes Clytemnestra :

Why lies as with a wolf this lioness lone,
Two-handed, when the royal lion is gone ?

The Chorus in the *Choephoroe* describes Electra as :

My daughter, rare as gold is rare,
And blither than the skies behind
The raging of the northern wind.
Are these thy prayers, for what is prayer ?

And Orestes' decision to kill his mother runs :

And I, the beast, the serpent, even I
Shall slay her ! Be it so. The dream speaks clear.

The Chorus sings :

For Justice is an oak that yet
Standeth ; and Doom the Smith doth whet
His blade in the dark.

The Furies in *The Eumenides* chant :

My breath is as a fire flung far and wide,
And a strange anguish stabbeth at my side.

Most of these metaphors, owing to their variation from the proper form, and being unusual, give elevation to the expression at once. And these are, according to Aristotle, the certain marks of genius, consisting in a quick discernment of resemblances.

Lest the plays should become suffocating in their lofty altitudes, Aeschylus has, as we have seen often, artistically introduced more humane speeches, sentiments and characters right in the midst of the superhuman and titanic ones. Most of his Chorus, therefore, consists of either tender-hearted young virgins (as in the *Prometheus*, *The Seven Against Thebes*, or in *The Suppliant Women* in contrast with the bronze-like unflinching masculine colossus of Prometheus' stature or with Eteocles' determination, or else with the relentlessly pursuing mass of the fifty Egyptian princes), or of aged men (as in the *Agamemnon*, where a coward like Aegisthos also comes into play, in contrast with the stern, foreboding and almost unbelievable woman-character Clytemnestra, rendered so convincing in the perfect "imitation" practised by Aeschylus). This use of contrast is quite similar to a master-composer's by switching over to minor keys in order to bring in more variety and interest in the mighty surge of the mediant major. It shows that, though Aeschylus was mainly concerned with arousing the heroic qualities in men and, himself an initiate, exclusively manifesting the great religious values of his realisation through sheer

drama, yet his artistic self could not but react to the delicate shades of human sensibility. For instance, the pen that could produce an epic description of the seven heroes guarding the seven gates of Thebes—which reminds us of similar descriptions in the *Mahābhārata*—could also with such grace describe the sleepless nights of Menelaus after the elopement of his beloved queen Helena. The same love of minute detail makes him stoop to create the dreamy lyrical fascination of Io's state of mind under the erotic spell of Zeus, or the lights and shades in the disconnected speeches of Cassandra.

Tragedy, according to Aristotle, "is an imitation of action that is important, entire, and of a proper magnitude—by language embellished and pleasant, but by different means in different parts—in the way, not of narration, but of action—effecting through pity and terror the correction and refinement of such passions."

And Aeschylus, the father of tragedy, anticipates this definition so well and executes it so majestically that, down the ages, his tragedies have been looked upon as the very symbol of sublimity. As we have them now, "music, dance, and spectacle are all gone, or, as it were, veiled," writes Gilbert Murray; "one feels them in the background behind the rhythm of the poetry. Only the words remain; and the words have, as so often in Greek things, an almost magical power of recreating the very remote past..."

(Concluded)

PRITHWINDRA MUKHERJEE

SEPTEMBER

To catch the clock in her inspired measure
Was my scarlet impulse once.

Driven by black steed chariot
With brazen spokes
I answered every clanging summons
To rash act.

Then white wings blotted out
The withering sunlight in swift blood.

I hope instead
For that full smile
Which waits to be relived.

MARILYN WIDMAN

TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN THE SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

THE question has at times been put to us : Why have we introduced Technical Education in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram ? And there seems to be implied in the asking that there is some incongruity in the idea which to us is but a natural and obvious development.

Hence I have been forced to think about it and to find reasons to explain this to others, if not to myself.

To all of us here who practise the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, everything we do is quite natural and congruous. If there is any question at all, it is : Why do we not do more ? The Yoga encompasses every aspect of human endeavour and nothing need be left outside its orbit. Yet we do realise that there are some things that may have to await the proper time for their introduction.

Though the search of knowledge and hence Education is the very essence of Yoga, formal education on lines recognised by the world was started comparatively recently. From a limited syllabus it has grown very rapidly, as could have been expected, and technical education is but one of the later extensions. There can be really nothing surprising in that !

To each one here is given the opportunity to express himself as fully as possible according to individual inclinations and aspirations. While the poet and painter and artist are given full encouragement and scope to develop and progress, the engineering technologist also is not denied. In fact, for the organisation of the Ashram, it was necessary to have Engineering departments for maintenance and production almost from the very start. It was here that those with technical knowledge and skills could express themselves as much as a painter on his canvas.

But with the introduction of a formal educational system there came children who did not have this knowledge and skill, yet did have the desire to acquire them and so naturally technical education perforce had to be made available to them.

But enquiry in this subject follows the same approaches as in the other subjects. The guide lines of education given by Sri Aurobindo are as valid for technical education as for the arts and humanities. And in following these lines, technical research can arrive at perhaps more startling results than in other subjects, because it deals with material and concrete facts where the progress can be more effectively demonstrated whenever demonstration is necessary.

Sri Aurobindo has shown us that knowledge exists within us and has only to be awakened. That is the main approach of our whole system of education. The teacher is there not to put knowledge into the students but to help awaken that which is already there in each of them. The teacher is really the guide rather than the instructor.

All knowledge, all "discovery" or "invention" is already there, pre-existent, in some plane of consciousness, quite apart from the mental plane of course but yet reachable by the proper method. So far, in the world, all efforts have been to extend the range of mental knowledge, mostly assuming that this is the only realm of knowledge. But we know this to be very far from the truth because the mental plane is where the knowledge is organised and developed—the knowledge itself coming from elsewhere. It is this elsewhere that we must reach if we are to have real knowledge.

But in order that the knowledge, if and when it does come into the student, be properly understood, used and developed, the mind of the student must be prepared. It is here that our technical education plays its greatest part.

In this present world where technology has advanced so much, where the great complexities of matter and physical forces have been studied in so much detail, the new knowledge that now comes is also much greater and will need much better instruments to receive and utilise it. Hence we have to take our students along established paths of science and engineering, so that they may know much of what has come down already and thus be prepared for further descents of knowledge.

This, in brief, is the general line of our approach in technical education as indeed it is in all our other branches also.

With this now understood, can anyone still question the necessity of technical education in the Ashram ?

But before leaving the matter here, let us examine some of the specific questions that have been raised in this connection.

It was once put to me that technical education implies some commercial aspects and it was felt that in an institution like ours which has such a high philosophical approach, this commercialism might be vitiating. There is some force in this argument—not only for technical but for every kind of formal education. An economic advantage seems to be the primary goal. But, I assured the questioner, such is not at all our objective. We are not training our children to get jobs or earn their living or even to get degrees or diplomas. Our objective is to awaken them to knowledge so that it comes to them to enrich their beings and develop their personalities—so that they can better express themselves in their aspiration. To the teachers themselves and to the older students, our education is a part of the *sadhana*—conscious and deliberate; to the younger students the spiritual growth may not be consciously sought but it arrives nonetheless.

The question then arises : To what practical end is all this technical education if it is not to serve Society and earn a living for oneself ? To this we can answer that the Ashram is expanding so rapidly that we ourselves have need of all the persons trained without their having to go elsewhere for service.

Then of what value are they to the country ? This is rather a naive question. If any institution in the country grows and develops, is not the country richer thereby ? And particularly an institution such as ours.

Then we are asked : Have we the necessary facilities and equipment to teach and train students in modern technology which has become so highly specialised and instrumentalised ? Well, we do not—as yet. Modern equipment for technical teaching and testing laboratories are costly and we cannot have all that we want for lack of the money needed. But we do have some to meet the more basic needs, which we have bought from the educational grants we have been recently receiving. As the amounts available were not large, we have had to be very careful and selective in our purchases with the result that we have better equipment than would normally have been had with the money sanctioned. More equipment will be necessary of course, much more, and this will depend on the munificence of future grants.

But the point to be really stressed is that equipment by itself is not sufficient. We know of some places which are magnificently equipped but where much of the stuff is unused or rarely used. It makes a very good show and the list is most impressive on paper. We have never thought of making such a showing—and that is why we have not clamoured for costly equipment, remembering that some distant frontiers of scientific knowledge were reached with the aid of two bits of wood and a string.

Then the inevitable question of syllabus crops up very frequently. A very rich syllabus seems to satisfy most questioners; only a few remain to ask how these are followed. We here are rather chary of fixed syllabi. We do have general guide lines but we keep ourselves free to alter these considerably as we go along and as occasion demands. A rich plasticity of both teacher and student is what we always try for.

The question of standards is another frequent one. Here there is a deal of divergence between our view and that of most educationists. While for them the norms have been set at the levels of degrees and diplomas, to us this has no meaning. We do not pump knowledge into the student which he can bring out in due course at examinations and thus get his degree or diploma, and arrive at the “standard”. We insist rather on an integral development where body, mind and spirit move forward together ‘to a large synthesis’. We do not set our standard in some dusty corner of a master’s room but on a hilltop so that “man too may rise to greater heights, his being draw nearer to the gods”. I know that this will offend many educationists who have themselves very sonorous degrees of which they may be proud, but many know also what little worth these degrees have except to give a status, and that most of one’s real knowledge comes in later life—after leaving college.

So we try here to do away with these vanities and to get our students interested in the quest of knowledge and growth rather than in academic degrees.

Another yardstick often applied in assessing the worth of a system is in the length of the courses. This normally guides the layman’s judgment but nevertheless the question must be met.

Our present Course of Engineering is envisaged as of six years’ duration after

the equivalent of Matriculation, as against perhaps a little more in other systems. But it must be remembered that our six years will be more packed than the years of the others. Our hours of work are longer and holidays much less. In a year there is only one break of a month and half—not really of holidays but of development in other spheres. Throughout the year, also, we do not indulge in all the state and national holidays with which our country is beset. We rather prefer to honour these days more fittingly by work than by relaxation.

The question of teaching staff is quite pertinent, however. Frankly, our present resources are a bit strained. The kind of education we give here calls for teachers of a particular development, and not necessarily of high academical stature. We have had to draw on our engineering personnel from the departments of the Ashram. But this has the great advantage that all the teachers are practising engineers who can therefore more forcefully bring home to the students the engineering precepts that they profess. And, all being disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, they have with the students that fraternity of “guru bhaism” which makes more for a healthy exchange of ideas and inspiration than for didactic pronouncements.

Above all, it must be remembered that the Science of Engineering deals with material objects and material forces which are not really automata following inexorable laws but which have their own secret consciousness. It is our endeavour to discover these inner mystic recesses and sources of action and by identifying our own consciousness with theirs to serve and be served by them.

This bringing down of a new consciousness into the world and the awakening of even the consciousness of Matter is one of the high aims of our Yoga. It is the greatest adventure and experiment the human race has ever attempted. Is not this an objective worthy of the support and encouragement of all men of vision ? Our country has not lacked in such men. The great technical achievements of our Rishis in the past was possible because of the benign conditions which surrounded them. That inheritance cannot wither and our sacred land will blossom into a new richness with the realisation that Matter and Spirit are not divided but act together for the fulfilment of Man.

UDAR

THE PROBLEM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1966)

XV

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION MOVEMENT (2)

THE National Education movement, as we have indicated earlier, owed its true impetus to the Partition of Bengal in 1905. This was the crucial event for which the country had been preparing as it were. When it came, things took such a decisive turn, in education as in the other fields of the nation's activities, that it was nothing short of a revolution, a revolution less bloody perhaps than the French or the Russian, yet fraught with no less important results.

History seemed to move with lightning rapidity.

Towards the end of 1903, Lord Curzon publicly announced that he would take away Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong and the adjoining areas from the Presidency of Bengal and add them to Assam. This led immediately to a series of protest meetings and a large number of tracts and newspaper articles. Curzon next undertook a tour of the affected areas to find out for himself how things were shaping. The tour convinced him that a major surgical operation would be needed if the festering gangrene of sedition was not to corrupt the entire body politic. But now he proceeded cautiously and in secret. Nothing more was heard of the Partition scheme for the next twelvemonth, and our trusting leaders were lulled into the belief that their petitions had borne fruit.

Meanwhile, in February 1905, the revised scheme of Partition had reached the Secretary of State in London and he had given his approval. At last, on July 6, the English-owned papers in Calcutta published the details, and the Government came out the next day with an official announcement. Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions of Bengal would be joined with Assam to form a Lieutenant Governor's Province to be called East Bengal and Assam, West Bengal would combine with Bihar and Orissa to form a new Governor's Province. This was to drive a wedge into the heart of Bengal, a sinister attempt to divide the Bengali-speaking people so as to reduce them to political impotence.

The reaction to this high-handed act was immediate. On the 13th July, the Bengali paper, *Sanjivani*, which was edited by Krishna Kumar Mitra, an uncle of Sri Aurobindo, came out with the suggestion that the only fitting reply to this act would be for the people to boycott British goods and cut off all connections with officials and official bodies. The suggestion had been prompted by Sri Aurobindo himself, and at once it caught the imagination of the people, even in the

remote corners of Bengal. There was a spate of public meetings all over the Province, particularly in East Bengal and resolutions were passed demanding the boycott of British goods as the only fitting reply to the Government's obduracy.

It was at this stage that the students entered the scene, and began to play a part in the national upsurge which was to be blessed by Sri Aurobindo in his prophetic utterance in *Karmayogin*: the future belongs to the young. As early as the 17th July, that is, within four days of the publication of *Sanjivani's* appeal, the students of one of the Calcutta colleges vowed themselves publicly to the boycott pledge. This was followed by a series of student meetings in Calcutta, and on the 31st July, the students of all the Calcutta colleges assembled at a mammoth meeting to record their views on the Partition. By now it was clear that the Boycott, both of British goods and of the British-inspired scheme of education, was going to receive a fair trial. That it failed in the end was not due to any fault of the students.

The first direct step taken by the students in the matter of education was to declare a boycott of the impending examinations for the Master's degree at the Calcutta University. Three of the most brilliant students of the year, including Radhakumud Mukerji the future historian, issued a manifesto calling upon the candidates for the M.A. examination due to be held in November to abstain from it. This was in September, 1905. In October, the Government practically forced the issue by its ill-famed Circular, known as the Carlyle Circular. Carlyle was the name of the officiating Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal and he merely acted as the mouthpiece of the Government's policy. This Circular deserves more than a passing notice.

We have referred above to the vow of a general boycott taken by the students of Calcutta late in July. On August 7, the Moderate leaders, not to be outdone in their zeal for the new sentiment that had already been expressed in no uncertain terms all over Bengal, called a meeting of the citizens at the Town Hall of Calcutta. This was the first "official" recognition of the boycott agitation by the acknowledged leaders of Congress politics in Bengal. The meeting duly passed a number of Resolutions, protesting against the Partition and supporting the boycott of British goods. To pass a Resolution was one thing, to give it practical effect was quite another. It is here that the students came in, and infused into the movement the daring and enthusiasm of which youth is capable.

All over the Province they held meetings and organised processions. In the big towns and small they went from door to door begging the residents to discard their fine Manchester cloths and take to coarse Swadeshi home-spun. They visited the shops and tried to dissuade the customers from buying. Here they were almost treading on the toes of the Law, for violating or at least interfering with the right of the citizen to buy what he chose in the open market. That their efforts were not quite unfruitful was evidenced by the fact that very soon the Calcutta wholesale dealers in Manchester cloth began sending frantic telegrams to London and wher-

ever else they could think, to help them save their souls and prevent the ruination that stared them in the face ; the Puja season was approaching and the stocks remained unsold. Manchester too reported a steep fall-off in fresh orders from India, and its voice was felt in Parliament and Whitehall. An echo of all this sounded harsh in the ears of the Indian bureaucracy. It was now time to act. Particularly obnoxious was the new battle-cry, never yet heard in the Congress gatherings. This was 'Bande Mataram.' Who uttered the first cry and where and at whose instigation will remain a matter for historical research. But the effect was electric, both in its impact on the people, especially the student community, and on the temper of the ruling class. The latter practically lost its head. The Carlyle Circular of October 1905 was the first sign of madness.

"The use which has been recently made of schoolboys and students for political purposes," so the Circular proceeded to inform all the District Magistrates of Bengal, "is absolutely subversive of discipline and injurious to the interest of the boys themselves. It cannot be tolerated in connection with educational institutions assisted or countenanced by Government." What did the Government propose to do ? Well, the Government had in its hands the power to withhold grants-in-aid on which the schools and colleges largely depended. There were other weapons too in its armoury, and here was an occasion to let them loose. "I am therefore to state for your information and guidance," the choleric Carlyle proceeded to add, "that unless the school and college authorities and teachers prevent their pupils from taking public action in connection with political questions or in connection with boycotting, picketing, and other abuses associated with the so-called Swadeshi movement, the schools or colleges concerned will forfeit their grants-in-aid and the privilege of competing for scholarship holders, and the University will be asked to disaffiliate them." And supposing the educational authorities failed in this duty of saving the Manchester mills from closing down and thus preventing the Empire from collapse ? "They must immediately submit a report to the District Magistrate, giving a list of boys who have disregarded their authority, stating the disciplinary action taken to punish them."

The Circular produced an unexpected result. It led to a mass exodus of students from schools and colleges in many parts of Bengal. That made the coming of National Education on a Province-wide scale a necessity.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

NINTH SEMINAR

27th November 1967

(Continued from the issue of 21 February)

What is true Love and how to find it?

II

“Love and Ananda are the last word of being, the secret of secrets, the mystery of mysteries.”¹

“To approach God by love is to prepare oneself for the greatest possible spiritual fulfilment.”²

—SRI AUROBINDO

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम्

(Gita IX-33)

“Thou who hast come to this transient and unhappy world, love and turn to me.”

Love with Delight is the mighty and mystic Force secretly upbearing the entire creation. Supreme Love together with Knowledge and Power forms in fact the Great Axis round which rotate the wheels of creation, and from which evolve the ever-new manifestations, more and more glorious, more and more divine. It is because Love sustains it that this vast universe is moving progressively, in spite of its apparent disorder and disunity, in profound harmony towards a definite goal and destiny. Love is the mediating link between the Creator and the creation. Without this Divine Love penetrating and upholding each atom the creation would have long crumbled to pieces. “Of all forces acting in the universe,” says the Mother, “love is the most powerful, the most irresistible; without love the world would fall back into the chaos of inconscience. Consciousness is indeed the creator of the universe, but love is its saviour.”³

¹ *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 690.

² *Ibid.*, p. 623.

³ *Bulletin of Physical Education*, August 1953, p. 83.

It is out of infinite love that the Supreme made the great sacrifice of plunging himself into the dead and dark Inconscience so that it could slowly awake from its ageless slumber, and be gradually illumined with the light of the spirit as it would re-emerge in multitudinous forms from the depths of the Inconscience where it originally hid itself, and that finally by following an evolutionary course, it could be turned into a material paradise where the fully evolved souls could achieve even physical immortality at will. And that will be a miracle which only the Supreme Love in conjunction with the Supramental Light and Power can perform. "The manifestation of the love of the Divine in the world was the great holocaust, the supreme self-giving," observes the Mother. "The Perfect Consciousness accepted to be merged and absorbed into the unconsciousness of matter, so that consciousness might be awakened in the depths of its obscurity and little by little a Divine Power might rise in it and make the whole of this manifested universe a highest expression of the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Love."¹

It is out of intense love and compassion for the earth and her children that the Supreme himself incarnated as the Avatar in every epoch (समवामि युगे युगे), accepting all the miseries of the earthly existence, so as to personally guide and speed up the course of evolution which is otherwise very slow and tardy. "The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the divine,"² writes Sri Aurobindo. And not unoften they had to meet with quite adverse and even inhuman treatment from the very people they came to save. And still they always pardoned these ignorant men and blessed them that they might grow conscious and recognise their faults.

In the present epoch which may be called the beginning of the Supramental Age, Sri Aurobindo and the Divine Mother herself have incarnated on the earth to hasten the descent of the Supramental Truth—Consciousness for the earthly transformation. And this Ashram can be said to be a repository of the Love Divine, the true Love, because of their direct presence here. The Mother tells us, "The divine Love is there, with all its intensity, all its power, a formidable power, but who is aware of it?... You are literally bathing in an atmosphere altogether vibrant with divine Love and you are not aware of it."³

The Divine in his love not only smiles but smites as well. Mahakali has as much love for her children even as she strikes, as Maheshwari has in her benign grace. After all both are aspects of the same Divine Mother. "God is our wise and perfect Friend," remarks Sri Aurobindo, "because he knows when to smite as well

¹ *Words of the Mother*, Fourth edition, p. 107.

² *Essays on the Gita*, (1959) p. 200.

³ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, November 1959, p. 67.

as when to fondle, when to slay us no less than when to save and to succour.”¹

“In its essence, at its origin love is like a flame, a white flame which overcomes all resistance,”² says the Mother. All other loves are a derivative and diminution of this Love. As the divine Love descends lower and lower down the planes of consciousness it gets more and more deformed. In the human being, love is altogether deformed and diminished, and finally there is no difference between human love and animal love where the true essence of love is hardly perceptible, it being an admixture of only lower vital desires, passions and impulses. This is what usually goes by the name of love in human society. “It is for this reason that the Divine Love which is at the heart of all creation and the most powerful of all redeeming and creative forces has yet been the least frontally present in earthly life, the least successfully redemptive, the least creative,”³ writes Sri Aurobindo.

“The Divine Love, unlike the human, is deep and vast and silent.”⁴ “As supramental Truth is not merely a sublimation of our mental ideas, so Divine Love is not merely a sublimation of human emotions ; it is a different consciousness, with a different quality, movement and substance,”⁵ says Sri Aurobindo.

Of course, human beings and even animals are not always necessarily devoid of any true element of love. At times, in some human beings, mixed with the lower element some amount of deeper or psychic love also can be perceived. But still it is bound to be coloured by animal elements naturally involved in humanity. As Sri Aurobindo observes, “usually the psychic element in human love, even where it is present, is so much mixed, overloaded and hidden under the others that it has little chance of fulfilling itself or achieving its own natural purity and fullness.”⁶ “It finds the fullness of its fire and ecstasy more easily when it is lifted towards the Divine.”⁷

In a devotee, the true love for the Divine is marked with a sincere self-giving and self-consecration to the Divine, with the spontaneous feeling of joy of adoration. In fact, as Sri Aurobindo points out, “One can love divinely only by becoming divine in nature ; there is no other way.”⁸

Among the domestic animals also, this psychic element is often perceptible. Cats and dogs, cows, horses and elephants, and so on, that live with men have a very intimate feeling, a spontaneous respect and gratitude for men. And in them this expression of love is very true and natural as it is not touched by the narrowness of mind.

Now, in order to find true love what is very necessary is to purify our emotions and also our understanding, and turn them Godwards. Otherwise there is

¹ *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, p. 83.

² *Bulletin*, February 1961, p. 89.

³ *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 189.

⁴ *On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 734.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 724.

⁶ *On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 730.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 794.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 734.

every chance of confusing vital love with true love. It is necessary to rise above all selfishness and meanness and grow into wideness, generosity and nobility of heart with a spirit of self-giving without any demand.

In fact, the Mother says, it will not be possible for a human being, at his present level of consciousness, to bear the divine Love in its original purity and plenitude. To us it will appear so cold and distant that we shall hardly be able to breathe in its contact. Only if it is diluted and deformed to a certain extent with the vital vibration, or else clothed in psychic vibration, will a human being be able to perceive it.

So we shall have to grow conscious of our psychic being deep within, since it is this which contains the essence of divine Love. "The most intimate character of the psychic is its pressure towards the Divine through a sacred love, joy and oneness. It is the divine Love that it seeks most, it is the love of the Divine that is its spur, its goal, its star of Truth..."¹ writes Sri Aurobindo. But it is an extremely difficult task. Only by a true sincerity and aspiration together with a constant openness and receptivity to the Mother's Force and Guidance from within can one expect to realise true psychic Love pure and divine. "All true truths of Love and of the works of Love the psychic being accepts in their place; but its flame mounts always upward and it is eager to push the ascent from lesser to higher degrees of Truth, since it knows that only by the ascent to a highest Truth and the descent of that highest Truth can Love be delivered from the cross and placed upon the throne,"² observes Sri Aurobindo. We are not to eliminate human love altogether; what is needed actually is to transmute it into divine love.

Now, individual realisation of this Love is not enough; it is necessary to realise the Divine Love in its universal and transcendental aspects also to make our realisation total. "Love at its origin," declares Sri Aurobindo, "is a self-existent force, an absolute, a transcendent... That self-existent transcendent Love spreading itself over all, turning everywhere to contain, embrace, unite, help, upraise towards love and bliss and oneness, becomes cosmic divine Love; intensely fixing itself on one or other to find itself, to achieve a dynamic unification or to reach here towards the union of the soul with the Divine, it becomes the individual divine Love."³

In fact, Love will find its perfect expression in the gnostic being when the life will be totally divinised. For him love will be the joy of a diverse identity and union of soul with soul. "The power of Love supramentalised," Sri Aurobindo tells us, "can take hold of all living relations without hesitation or danger and turn them Godwards delivered from their crude, mixed and petty human settings and sublimated into the happy material of a divine life."⁴

And then, since Delight and Beauty are an inalienable part of Divine Love, one must not overlook these two parts of Love also. One has to go down to the deepest

¹ *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 177.

² *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 178.

³ *On Yoga II, Tome One*, p. 744.

⁴ *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 191.

depth of Love in order to perceive the golden glow of divine Beauty and Delight. Sri Aurobindo says, "To bring the Divine Love and Beauty and Ananda into the world is, indeed, the whole crown and essence of our yoga."¹

"The Divine Love may not be able yet to manifest on the physical plane, humanity being what it is, as fully and freely as it would otherwise do...It is there waiting to be understood and accepted and meanwhile giving all the help you can receive..."² says Sri Aurobindo. "As it is all-powerful, some receptivity must be prepared upon earth so that the effects may not be shattering,"³ observes the Mother. In fact, Sri Aurobindo has already made it clear in a letter of his, the Mother tells us, that the earth is not plastic or receptive enough to contain this Love. Material substance, including the physical consciousness also, is so rigid that in case the Divine Love in its essence manifests on earth, it will be like a bomb-shell. The Mother says, however, "That does not prevent Love in the form of Grace from acting everywhere and always, working almost unknown but constantly."⁴ So now it is for the earth and humanity to get inwardly prepared, to be more and more plastic and receptive so as to receive and assimilate and manifest the Divine Love that is covertly brooding above.

For this we shall have to totally exceed ourselves, the humanity as well as the animality in us endeavouring to rise to our divine height, which means radical transformation of our being and consciousness. In fact, the Mother's Love and Grace aided by her supramental power alone can effectuate this miracle in and through us. Only we must have an infinity of patience with absolute trust and confidence in the Divine Mother. "When the day will come," declares the Mother, "for the manifestation of the supreme Love, for the crystallised, concentrated descent of the supreme Love, that will indeed be the moment of Transformation. Because nothing will be able to resist That."⁵

ROSE

III

Love as an entity is almost undefinable. It has its psychological element, its social and religious ways of expression, its literary interpretations and finally its spiritual culmination. Love is a cosmic and divine puissance; it is also individual as a mode of approach or linking and fusion. Love has a myriad ways of manifestation; its expression in fact is infinite. Had we sensitiveness, we could almost discern it in the very soil and stones. It manifests itself in animals and plants and finally in man in whom we discover its multiple modes. In its true form and subs-

¹ *On Yoga II*, Tome One, p 723.

² *Ibid*, p. 724.

³ *Bulletin*, February 1961, p. 91.

⁴ *Bulletin*, February 1963, p. 27

⁵ *Bulletin*, February 1961, p 91

tance, love is an elemental and divine power, a tangible sign of the grace of the Absolute for the earth, and each instrument mirrors this puissance according to its receptivity and nature, be it as an individual outflowing or as a cosmic manifestation.

Love has been the perennial subject of the littérateurs. The great epics of the world speak of two elements : love and warfare. It is the favorite subject for the poet of the *Khanda Kavya*, dramatists, novelists and lyrical poets. We have before us a whole ocean of such work and we cannot so readily give examples : there are Kalidasa, Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Milton, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, to mention only a few. In fiction love has a special place if we pass through Boccaccio, Tolstoy, Maupassant, Dickens, the Brontes, Zola, right up to our present-day fiction. Many of these fiction writers express the physical aspect of love and are often crude and vulgar in presentation.

To sum up: we regret that none of these littérateurs have done justice to love as an eternal power except Sri Aurobindo. They have failed due to many causes : exotic influences, false idealistic trends, Victorian abstractions, crude implications and vagueness of approach.

In Sri Aurobindo love becomes not a crude misrepresentation that is allied to sensuality, but a profound and lasting emotion that unifies two souls which are one in essence but dual in actual earthly manifestation. Love in Sri Aurobindo empowers a man or a woman to rise to great heights and commit unimaginable feats of sacrifice. This sacrifice is not a compulsion, it is a glad act of offering. And without the fire of sacrifice no love can attain its true pristine purity. For love is not a mere interchange of ideas, emotions, feelings but an absolute offering of what we are, or can be, with all we have, the surrender of all our volitions, cognitions and ideations, the raising and giving of all our impulses, actions and becomings. In *Love and Death*¹ Ruru gives us a first glimpse of this love which is so puissant that it overcomes all obstacles both human and Stygian and wins back his dead love, Priyumvada. In *Urvasie*² Pururavus awakes to a new existence and Urvasie feels an alien feeling of love and tenderness which she had never felt before in heaven. Love makes Pururavus abandon his royal heritage, family line, even his earthly existence to attain the goal : the union with Urvasie. Modern psychologists may term Pururavus' condition a condition of infatuation. Ancient Sanskrit literature may term it a condition of love-sickness. But, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, it is neither this nor that but a condition brought forth from the estrangement of Pururavus from his complementary self, his other self known to men as Urvasie. In *Savitri* we get the true essence of love. Love here is the link between Satyavan and Savitri. Savitri is prepared to leave her earlier royal environments, dissociate herself from her self which knows the truth about the fate of Satyavan. The whole of his existence is mapped before her occult vision; yet her

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. I, pp. 85-115.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 39-82.

love is stronger than all these; even all the lures of liberation, all the fatal words and revelations of Death, even the worlds of utter darkness cannot stop her single-aimed course. Even the gnostic power and its luminous veil cannot change her unswerving will.

This is love as exemplified in Sri Aurobindo. He reveals that love not only moves men and women, it creates their destiny and is the sanction of the Supreme.

Psychologically, love is an emotion like other human sentiments. In Sri Aurobindo and the Mother it transcends the human instrumental nature and is a link between the soul of man on one side and the divine Reality on the other. This is because the human soul has emanated from this Reality and is put forth into the terrestrial world with a definite mission of advancing the evolutionary progress. In the relation between man and the Divine, therefore, is the true love and not between man and man or man and woman. For, the relation between these are fraught with alien and distorting elements of jealousy, possessiveness, demand and last and darkest of all, lust. Even when man expects something from the Divine, there is a break in the spontaneous purity of the relationship. Love in its essence is not a barter, but a total consecration. Human love flourishes either on exchange or on a one-sided traffic of getting all one wants by force. According to Ramakrishna there are three types of love : the *Uttama*, the best, which is a total consecration, *Madhyama*, the medium, the barter, and *Adhama*, the lowest which gives nothing but snatches all without consideration or repayment.

In the lowest type of love, if we can term it love at all, there is a constant strife, disharmony, followed by frustration and dissipation. For nature cannot tolerate this disequilibrium and the recipient in the long run must pay for this greed with misery.

In the middle we have the usual human love, which lives on exchange and interchange. But even here man cannot save himself from the strife and disharmony because his lower nature clamours for possession, egoism and satisfaction of lower hungers and needs. The self-contentment and self-centredness debars a greater and purer love to be, which lives on selflessness, nobility, and sacrifice. But the moralist mistakes altruism for highest love. Between altruism and true love there is a wide gulf : one has behind it a hidden taint of glory and fame, the satisfaction of feeling oneself superior. In its origin altruism is a mental virtue while true love lives in the soul and expresses itself through the heart.

Of all psychological centres the heart stands closest to the soul which stands behind the heart and makes the heart its opulent instrument. Other centres are either too aloof to feel the waves radiating from it or else are not refined enough to feel its vibrations. For example, the brain is too preoccupied with thought movements which are too abstract and cold to feel the wave-breath that rises in the soul. Our common life centre is crude and extrovert : it too is alien from the soul's domain. The soul in its turn is far from all these clamouring elements. It is shy, calm, happy and ever turned inwards towards the divine origin. Only the heart standing between the abstraction of the brain and the crudeness of the common life centre can harbour

the delicate and miraculous soul-strain. But it is not easy to come into contact with the soul : the heart itself is often enveloped by a myriad sheaths of desires and cravings that rise up from the life centre or is pulled down by morbid influences of the lower life or even is ruled and shadowed by inertia and physical habits and routines. Often there is a mixed emotion which does not allow the soul to come forward and express itself.

In Yoga love has got another import. There is a whole doctrine and school which bases itself on love as a way and method of approach to the Divine. But love devoid of knowledge and work (which is an active path of sacrifice) often degenerates into weakness. Hence Sri Aurobindo's approach is integral : love coupled with action and knowledge as preparatory ground for the divine intervention which completes and fulfils our yogic effort and adventure. Love in his Yoga is a powerful and effective medium, but love which is active and dynamic expressing itself in work as a sacrifice, and in knowledge which is the flame of the spirit illumining and guiding our entire nature. For we do not seek only to open one part of our being to the divine radiance : we do not want our love to be limited to Bhakti as refined and living emotion, but as a light that guides, as a flame that removes all obstacles and as the sun that transfigures all our nature. That is, we do not want to limit the work of love in one sphere of our existence and perform a circumscribed role.

Love is a great link between the seeker and the sought. For essentially both these are one indivisible whole and separation is only an illusion which we overcome by our effort and by reliance on the divine grace. Love is the living sign of the Divine in us and a pointer that we are one with Him. What is needed is the awakening to this great power and the directing of our energies towards this union. We must feel the pressing need to *be* that and remove all obstacles by a profound all-absorbing aspiration.

But if we are motivated by desires of any kind, or are impelled by ambition, or harbour in ourselves any sense of possessiveness or attachment, we can never attain the precincts of pure love. Or if we offer our sacrifice of love to a human agent, we would also commit the greatest possible of blunders, for our goal is the Divine and if we get trapped on the way in a limited human soul, we limit our ideal, our goal, and cripple our effort. Many seekers have been misled by this falsity, for purity in human relations is almost impossible and if we are enamoured of the Divine alone we should worship it as our supreme ideal without any human go-between. It is possible to discover the Divine in a man or woman, but the difficulties that stand in the way and the purity that is demanded of us in spirit and approach are so great that it would be easier to go directly to the Divine without all these interventions. Let us not harbour any false notions on this account. For no relation other than with the Divine endures at the end : and if we must love our fellow men, let us do so through the Divine and not in a roundabout manner. Linking ourselves with another human being exclusively, moreover, brings to us the limitations of the person loved, adding to our own defects and deficiencies. This mars our progress. By a linking with the Divine this is avoided.

Cannot then pure love exist between human beings ? There is so much literature written on this theme; are we to negate all these literary creations ? Love is the prime mover of the poet's imagination. The poet attempts to depict the ideal love amid a world created by his creative genius. But in actuality the facts are otherwise. Man or woman in his or her essential being is untarnished and in their origin all souls have affinities and there are some souls which are counterparts of each other. But unless there is a definite divine mission, these souls do not meet and work together in the terrestrial atmosphere. Such a meeting of souls is a rare incident. Oftener we meet souls with whom we have no affinity and with whom we are fated to exist and work side by side without sharing each other's deeper truths of spiritual reality.

The discovery of true love is a miracle. Although it exists everywhere, its pure manifestation is always a surprise and delight. We cannot discover it by intellectual seeking or by external effort or even by any process of asceticism or askesis. The manifestation of true love needs certain psychological temperamental attitudes and conditions. There must be a certain awakening and purity in the consciousness so that the soul could come forward with its miraculous warmth and all-embracing sweetness. Love visits men and women at the very beginning of their amorous adventure before the flesh has crippled and shadowed its pristine purity. It visits the first love of a mother for her offspring before demand and possessiveness have replaced the utter sweetness and wondrous felicity. In other moments it is distant, vague, making its presence felt by a sign or a faith and a reliance and a certitude. But this discovery could have been a lasting light of our existence had we known the secret, had we recognised this soul to be our true guide, our true essence; had we shifted our regard and insistence from the physical, the phenomenal and the superficial and felt this soul to be the centre of our life and cause of our becoming, then love too would have manifested in us, not as an ethical principle or an altruistic ideal, but as a true link between the human and the Divine, between all human souls which are awakened enough to feel its vibrations. The discovery of the soul is thus the discovery of love. And this process is a whole path of sadhana indeed.

While other paths proceed by the discovery of the illumined intelligence, or the higher life centre or emotional centre, Sri Aurobindo's Yoga begins with the discovery of the soul. This discovery brings us at once into direct contact with the Divine and love between the soul and the Divine alters the very basis and goal of our existence. We see and feel things with another vision and heart. Things which were closed books to us suddenly reveal their true nature. And this change of consciousness gives us two opposite results. On the one hand, we become aloof from and indifferent to common vibrations, interests, values and ways. We lose interest in things that pass, in things of the world, in common ties. On the other hand, we get linked with the Divine, our nature grows warmer, subtler, more intense, capable of greater sweetness, of lasting delight, of sustained intensity. This is because there is a reversal of consciousness. The indifference to externalities and superficialities is not a sign of a cold nature, but a shifting of the sense of values, a change in the framework of our

consciousness which has become deeper and subtler, wider and more refined. In fact we grow sympathetic to the heart of things; instead of being moved by external ways and modes, we commune with the sources of things, of ideas, of facts, of actions and of development. What we love now are not beings and their external natures; we come to be enamoured of souls which are part of the Divine, hence integral parts of our true being. We lose track of attachments and desires and their results of separation and sorrow. This is because our discovery of the soul and finding of true love has brought with them a sense of permanent union which no external vicissitudes can change or vanquish. This union is the epitome of all love and Yoga. From this condition we move to a new world, a new nature, a new dawn of spiritual perfection.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

THE POET'S EXPERIENCE

You are reading a poem of Keats, an essay of Lamb, a novel of Meredith or a play of Shakespeare. You are engaged in solving a mathematical problem or a crossword puzzle. You are playing chess, rowing a boat or singing a song. Suddenly your mind is arrested by something you do not know and a line suggests itself to you :

My heart hungers for a sight of you.

You do not know what to do with it. You ask yourself, What does the final YOU stand for ? Is it your lover or beloved ? Say you are married, have children too ? Is it God ? God knows ! And is God so important in your life ? You forget the line for some time. Later in the day you are playing with your little son. You are teasing him, saying, "I will starve you tonight if you do not share your sweet with me." Instinctively you leave the child, rush to your study and write out,

My heart hungers for a sight of you,
Starved many days, though fed with dreams...

And you cannot proceed. You have spent the whole day or many days. You are face to face with some domestic or other problem. Just to escape from it you take up the lines and try to continue. You write a number of lines that make no sense. At a stage you find yourself writing,

Though fed with delicacies from Life's own streams;
Though fed with hopes, both false and true.

Again, a halt ! You write the first line as a fifth line, tell yourself it is over.

Sometimes a line may arise from what you are reading. "Where are the songs of Spring, aye, where are they ?" You spring from Keats to another world leaving his Autumn far behind, and hear,

I will not be a Cuckoo and move with Spring,
Then Life would leap not amidst death,...

You try to continue and write,

Blossom, fruit, bareness, I would not sing,
Existence would be an easy breath.

You show the stanza to a friend; he finds the second part rather flat. You write again,

I will not be a Cuckoo and move with Spring,
Then Life would leap not amidst death,
And offer me a richer fare to sing
Than the mere luxury of breath.

Your friend may find the second part worse than before. You try to go back to the state when the lines came to you; you find the effort useless and decide not to alter the stanza further. But you want to complete the poem somehow. It may occur to you now that you had begun another poem in the long past but had not proceeded beyond the second line. You had then contemplated upon those moments in life when time seems to have a stop and those delights are glimpsed that resemble what are called heavenly joys. You had written,

Moments' epitomes of Eternity,
Earth's versions of Heaven's bliss,...

Now you make the first line here the last line of your poem on hand.

There would be little seeking, struggle, strife,
That would bring my heart a fathomless cry,
No year's glimpses of the whole of life,
Nor moments' epitomes of Eternity.

"Earth's versions of Heaven's bliss" may wait for ever for a truer poet than yourself to hew out of it, perhaps, a masterpiece you will never be capable of.

Reading could influence you, sometimes, more directly. You read Arnold's *Growing Old*. Immediately you may say to yourself,

What is it to grow young ?

Sooner or later you may arrive at a form like this :

What is it to grow young ?
Is it as it is sung,
To be swayed by the God of Love,
To place beauty and grace above
All other things of life,
To see all world as Man and Wife ?

Is it to be without fears,
Without doubts that come with years,
To be sure about a goal

And saving of many a soul,
 To be governed by a Vision,
 And a sense of divine mission ?

Or an abundance of energy
 To which life is revelry,
 All passion and no thought,
 Calmness unknown or unsought,
 Folly in its thousand shapes,
 Reminding one of angry apes ?

But how to conclude it ? That will be a problem now. You manage to round it off with a stanza which may not be very satisfactory :

Freshness and transcendence,—
 Are they not Youth's essence,
 Other qualities, elements,
 Mere accidents of incidents ?
 Perhaps the essence lives with age
 At least in the seer and sage.

How far inferior it is to Arnold's poem in evolution of thought and feeling is obvious to anyone.

And yet you find a sheer joy in writing the verse. Part of it comes from the fact that there is very little labour involved here, not even what is absurdly called labour of love as though one felt a sense of labour where there was love. A line or two are given to you in some way or other. There is joy when you concentrate on the lines and wait for more. You see something else than your conscious self almost dictating to you. It is often some layer of your own unconscious; in great poets or at rare moments in your own life a higher force than yourself, conscious or unconscious, may inspire you. In any case, if you are true to yourself, you can never feel arrogant or proud when you create something readable or even great. Did not the supreme singer Shelley declare that no poet can say, not even the greatest poet can say, he the is author of a work ? How fortunate are you if you are a poet or even a writer of verse ! You are not like a doctor, lawyer, engineer, scholar, teacher in feeling that it is your proficiency or efficiency that has led to your triumph. And, also, none else can have your feeling of "an ampler ether, a diviner air" while you are living in your world.

When you can have such a unique experience what does it matter whether you are among the immortals or whether you work perishes immediately ?

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

AN ASPIRATION VIGILANT, CONSTANT, UNCEASING

A SERMON-STORY

To achieve the goal of the Integral Yoga, there must be “an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing—the mind’s will, the heart’s seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature” (The Mother).

But how to drive this truth to the very core of our being ? No amount of discussion will do the thing. In ancient times the Knowers resorted to the method of *Kathanuyoga*, to bring the truth home. Here I am reminded of an incident in the life of Sri Krishna.

We all know that Arjuna was very much loved by Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna himself has said it in so many words in the Gita. Sri Krishna used to give the example of Arjuna every now and then. One day Sri Krishna repeated the name of Arjuna so many times that his Queen Rukmini got wild and flared up : “Well, Sir, will you tell us how Arjuna is related to you ? What has he done for you ? What spell has he cast on you ? It seems he has purchased you outright. Are you his slave ? Why repeat his name before us all the time ? Please, tell us what he is to you ? We all are fed up with his name, will you please explain why you are so much attached to him ? ” Sri Krishna did not reply, but gave his usual enigmatic smile, because explanation would not appease the angry Rukmini.

Some days passed and then in the dead of night, Sri Krishna got up and began to run, even without putting on his sandals. Rukmini got up, caught hold of Sri Krishna and asked, “Where are you going in so much hurry? Is there a fire? You have not put on your sandals even. Please tell, where are you bound for ?” Sri Krishna said, “Arjuna remembers me and so I am going to him.” On hearing the name of Arjuna, Rukmini was exasperated, got furious and said, “Are you mad? Have you gone mad ? Do you mean to say that in the dead of night Arjuna is remembering you—as if he had no other business—and to such an extent that you should go to him running ? Arjuna would be sleeping at this time and Subhadra must be fanning him. Still, if you are bent upon going to him, let me accompany you, so that I may also see how Arjuna remembers you.”

So Sri Krishna and Rukmini went to Arjuna’s palace and inquired of the door-keeper what Arjuna was doing. They were informed that Arjuna was sleeping and Subhadra was fanning him. On hearing this, Rukmini looked at Sri Krishna with mocking eyes as if saying, “See what your beloved Arjuna is doing and what you were telling us.” Sri Krishna did not reply but entered the chamber of Arjuna.

Arjuna was fast asleep and Subhadra was fanning him. Sri Krishna occupied a couch and Rukmini sat by Subhadra. Some time passed and Rukmini asked

Sri Krishna to come near her. Sri Krishna asked the reason why. Rukmini said, "I want to make sure whether what I feel is right or not. I feel as if your name is coming out of every pore of Arjuna's body incessantly—it is said that there are 35,000,000 pores in a human body—I would like to know whether I am right."

Sri Krishna said that he was very much exhausted and that he was not inclined to move. Now it happened that God Shankara and Goddess Parvati had come for consultation with Sri Krishna, but, finding him absent from his palace, had come to Arjuna's palace to see him. Shankara sat by Sri Krishna and Parvati took her seat by Rukmini. Rukmini asked Parvati whether it was true that Sri Krishna's name was coming out from every pore of Arjuna's body. Parvati replied in the affirmative. It so happened that Brahma and Sarasvati had also some business with Sri Krishna and they came to Arjuna's palace in search of him. Brahma sat by Sri Krishna and Shankara while Sarasvati took her seat by Parvati. Rukmini inquired of Sarasvati whether it was a fact that Sri Krishna's name was coming out of every pore of Arjuna's body. Sarasvati also replied in the affirmative. And then all of a sudden it was revealed to Rukmini why Sri Krishna was mad after Arjuna.

Arjuna's aspiration for Sri Krishna was vigilant, constant, unceasing.

VALLABH SHETH

**SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND RESEARCH**

NEWSLETTER

No. 3

March 1967

1. Education of the Future

The other day I was asked by the Secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Society and the Auroville Project, to put forward certain notes that would suggest the trends Education would take in the future as a basis to plan for the international education Auroville would require.

I would not presume to prophesy, but it is not so difficult to have a fairly clear vision of the lines along which education is heading when one is deeply concerned with all the many different possibilities one sees emerging in countries that already have the means to experiment with the best equipment and conditions of research, as well as a large backing from the government.

The great centres of learning throughout the world have become what they are, not through any publicity or propaganda but by virtue of the inherent truth they have represented throughout the years. That truth is the foundation upon which they stand and upon which they can evolve and develop. It is either built around a single great teacher or a series of teachers, or a number of minds have collected for a purpose to break through into new understandings of our world, the universe and man. In other words, a tradition of the search for knowledge, beauty and truth has been established at one place by certain individuals at a certain time in the culture or history of the people.

The Project of Auroville naturally lends itself to such a centre of learning in our time. It will stand firm on the Great Synthesis of Integral Knowledge of Sri Aurobindo. It will stand firm on the Mother's spiritual manifestation of his Great Ideal and on her spiritual and practical guidance, the tenets of which have, from time to time, been emphasised in these Newsletters.

It is Sri Aurobindo's vision of future education that a time will come when the students' day will not be cut up into snippets of learning where no account is taken of the meeting points of all subjects of knowledge. Rather, the student will discover the knowledge within himself and the teacher will be a friend and guide to create a climate of learning and interest to that end.

The Mother has told us that education begins while the child is still in the womb. Prenatal education will have to be taken into account with the children of the future because already we see we have to deal with quite a different and more advanced consciousness in the children of today than we had fifty years ago.

Pre-kindergarten and head-start schools are an accepted fact in most advanced countries today and extensive physical education for very young and progressively for growing children is considered a first necessity for a healthy nation. The Mother has spoken of a comprehensive vital education, where the power and passion of the senses and the emotions are guided towards a creative fulfilment; and a mental education that aims, not at collecting a mass of data and information but at entering into the realms of mental discovery and creative thought which would open higher reaches of mental and spiritual consciousness. She has said that in our concept of future education we should be more concerned with "living souls than brilliant students." This concept echoes through the ideas of quite a few progressive minded teachers in different parts of the world today and can be summed up in the tendency now to hold as suspect too much lecturing to students, the tendency to lean towards a student activated class rather than a teacher dominated class.

Modern science and technology will obviously play a great part to help manifest this ideal of the future and it is quite easy to envision the impact such teaching aids would have upon a developing country like India. In most parts of India it was not necessary to go through the industrial revolution—from the age of oil lamps to the gas age, from the gas age to electricity—no, a number of villages took the step of progress direct, from oil lamps to electricity. And so it will be with the modern teaching aids of the future. It may not be necessary to go through all the painful and expensive steps of programme learning with all its various trial-and-error experiments. We shall go straight to the latest computer teaching machines that the ingenuity of man can design, and open and closed-circuit television will be a normal feature of every classroom.

The Auroville Project stands to gain not only a tradition of learning founded on the guidance and teaching of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother but the most up-to-the-minute technical equipment man can possibly design.

If one asks what outer form this International Centre of Education is to take, one can best describe this as a growing and progressive extension of what we have already seen in process of becoming over the past twenty years.

When the need for expansion has been necessary, we have expanded. When the need for equipment has arisen, it has come. The Centre has gone on growing and progressing in both its two present streams of instruction; the one, more or less traditional, but with a flexibility which allows individual expression to each teacher, the other what the Mother has called "Vers la Perfection", a form of "Free Progress Classes" where the students are left to form their own timetable and their own discipline and to discover much for themselves. It is envisaged that the future International Centre of Education in Auroville will have, as its character, instruction in all the major languages of the world; facilities for a representation of the education and culture of all nations under the most ideal conditions of inner and outer progress. All aspects of physical education will be possible, games, sports of all nations, such as yachting, riding, golf, cricket, tennis, baseball, rugby, soccer, basketball, swimming, squash,

athletics, etc. Extensive sportsgrounds and swimming pools, golf courses and lakes for boating and water skiing. Sea bathing and yachting, surfing and skin-diving will be created on an international and Olympic basis. An art centre is planned to include the art forms of all cultures known to man with all the facilities for reaching the beautiful, expressing the Divine through all aspects of creative work, thought and music.

Science and Art need not divorce themselves from each other any longer; they can merge into a synthesis and harmony where they find a meeting point and so complement each other to form an integral joy of discovery leading to greater worlds of existence, consciousness and bliss.

Auroville was once, fifty years ago, a "Dream" in the vision and consciousness of the Mother; today it has become an actuality in the process of manifestation as a living tribute to the philosophy and teachings of Sri Aurobindo. Fortunate indeed are those who will take part in this Great Ideal.

2. *Thought of the Month*

"The true basis of education is the study of the human mind, infant, adolescent and adult. Any system of education founded on theories of academic perfection, which ignores the instrument of study, is more likely to hamper and impair intellectual growth than to produce a perfect and perfectly equipped mind."

Sri Aurobindo, *A System of National Education*, p. 1.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT