

MOTHER INDIA

21st FEBRUARY 1970 : THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

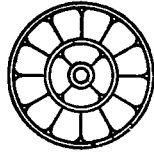
Price : Re. 1.00

All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

Subscription rates: Annual Rs. 10/-, Sh. 20/-, \$ 3/-
Single copy Re. 1.00 in India.

All correspondence to be addressed to
MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, India.

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

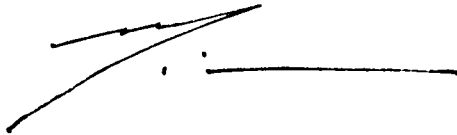


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. XXII

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE	... 5
WORDS OF THE MOTHER	... 6
THE MOTHER'S REPLY TO A QUESTION	... 7
RÉPONSES DE LA MÈRE A DES QUESTIONS POSÉES A PROPOS D'AUROVILLE	... 8
THE MOTHER'S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS ON AUROVILLE	... 10
AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO <i>From Narayan Prasad</i>	... 12
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO <i>From Dr. R. S. Agarwal</i>	... 13
DETACHMENT DURING TALKING: LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO <i>From Nagin Doshi</i>	... 14
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO <i>Nirodbaran</i>	... 16
SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK <i>V. Chidanandam</i>	... 23
OUR ASSOCIATION WITH SRI AUROBINDO A TALK TO STUDENTS <i>Nirodbaran</i>	... 28
THE MOTHER'S IDENTIFICATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS <i>Shyam Sundar</i>	... 34
A STRANGE KNOT (A Poem) <i>A. Venkataranga</i>	... 35
WORDSWORTH—MAN AND POET <i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 36

CONTENTS

THE SERVICE TREE (A Poem)	<i>Punjatal</i>	... 43
HOMER, HOMERIC POETRY AND THE <i>ILIAD</i>	<i>Jesse Roarke</i>	... 44
ASPIRATIONS (Poems)	<i>Richard Eggenberger</i>	... 49
THE REVOLUTION SUPREME	<i>Jay Holmes Smith</i>	... 50
A RIVER CALLED PREM (A Poem)	<i>Norman Thomas</i>	... 53
GIFTS OF GRACE:		
THE PSYCHIC BEING—THE HARBINGER OF DIVINE LIFE ON EARTH	<i>A Disciple</i>	... 54
THE LATEST PUBLICATIONS OF THE MOTHER'S WRITINGS	<i>Samr Kanta Gupta</i>	... 59
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE:		
SRI AUROBINDER MUL BANGLA RACHANABALI (THE ORIGINAL BENGALI WRITINGS OF SRI AUROBINDO)	<i>Review by Manoj Das</i>	... 60
SAMARPITAEN (DEDICATIONS): A COLLECTION OF HINDI POEMS BY DEVDUTT	<i>Review by Manoj Das</i>	... 61

Students' Section

THE UNIVERSAL GOD: A PIECE OF POETIC PROSE	<i>S. Siva</i>	... 62
CHRISTMAS STORY	<i>Veena A.</i>	... 63
EYE EDUCATION	<i>Dr. R. S. Agarwal</i>	... 64

Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Assistant Editor: MANOJ DAS

Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

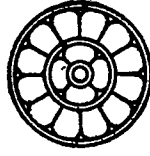
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY—2

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry—2

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No: R. N, 8667/63



FEBRUARY 21, 1970

Truth is a difficult and strenuous conquest. One must be a real warrior to make this conquest, a warrior who fears nothing, neither enemies nor death, for with or against everybody, with or without a body, the struggle continues and will end by Victory.

THE MOTHER

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Q: To allow the free working of the 'New Consciousness that descended last year, what should a sadhak do?

- 1) Be receptive
and
- 2) Be plastic



There is a
Supreme Divine Consciousness.
We want to manifest this
Divine Consciousness in the
physical life.

Blessings

THE MOTHER'S REPLY TO A QUESTION

Q. How should we help the big change in the world, about which your New Year's Message speaks?

THE best way of helping is to let the Consciousness that has come down upon earth to work in you for transformation.

9-1-1970

;

Q. What is it "to work for the Future"?

A. To begin with, not to stick to the old habits individual and national.

RÉPONSES DE LA MÈRE A DES QUESTIONS POSÉES A PROPOS D'AUROVILLE

1. Qui à pris l'initiative de la construction d'Auroville?

“Le Seigneur suprême.”

2. Qui participe au financement d'Auroville?

“Le Seigneur suprême.”

3. Si l'on veut vivre à Auroville, qu'est-ce que cela signifie pour soi?

“Essayer d'atteindre à la perfection suprême.”

4. Doit-on être un étudiant du yoga pour pouvoir vivre à Auroville?

“Toute la vie est un yoga.
Ainsi on ne peut pas vivre
sans pratiquer le yoga suprême.”

5. Quel sera le rôle de l'Ashram de Pondichéry à Auroville?

“Ce que le Seigneur suprême
voudra qu'il soit.”

6. Y aura-t-il des terrains de camping à Auroville?

“Toutes les choses sont comme elles
doivent être, au moment où elles doivent être.”

7. La vie de famille continuera-t-elle à Auroville?

“Si on en est encore là.”

8. Peut-on conserver la religion à Auroville?

“Si on en est encore là.”

9. Peut-on être athée à Auroville?

“Si on en est encore là.”

10. Y aura-t-il une vie sociale à Auroville?

“Si on en est encore là.”

11. Y aura-t-il des activités communautaires obligatoires à Auroville?

“Rien n'est obligatoire.”

12. Y aura-t-il une circulation d'argent à Auroville?

“Non. C'est seulement avec le dehors qu'Auroville aura des relations d'argent.”

13. Comment sera organisé et repartit le travail à Auroville?

“L'argent ne serait plus le souverain seigneur; La valeur individuelle aurait une importance très supérieure à celle des richesses matérielles et de la position sociale. Le travail n'y serait pas le moyen de gagner sa vie, mais le moyen de s'exprimer et de développer ses capacités à l'ensemble du groupe qui, de son côté, pourvoit aux besoins de l'existence et au cadre d'action de chacun.”

(Extrait d'un écrit de la Mère: “Un Rêve.”)

14. Quelles seront les relations des habitants d'Auroville avec l'extérieur?

“Chacun dispose de toute sa liberté. Les relations extérieures des résidents d'Auroville s'établiront pour chacun en fonction des ses aspirations personnelles et de son activité au sein d'Auroville.”

(Cette réponse, proposée par un sadhak, a été approuvée par la Mère.)

15. Qui sera propriétaire des terrains, des constructions?

“Le Seigneur suprême.”

16. En quelles langues l'enseignement sera-t-il donné?

“Dans toutes les langues parlées sur terre.”

Lu et corrigé par la Mère le 8-10-1969.

THE MOTHER'S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS ON AUROVILLE

1. Who has taken the initiative for the construction of Auroville?
"The Supreme Lord."
2. Who takes part in the financing of Auroville?
"The Supreme Lord."
3. If one wants to live in Auroville, what does it imply for oneself?
"To try to reach the Supreme Perfection."
4. Must one be a student of yoga in order to live in Auroville?
"All life is yoga. Thus one cannot live without practising the Supreme Yoga."
5. What will be the Ashram's role in Auroville?
"That which the Supreme Lord wishes it to be."
6. Will there be camping grounds in Auroville?
"All things are as should be,
just when they should be."
7. Will family life continue in Auroville?
"If one has not gone beyond that."
8. Can one retain one's religion in Auroville?
"If one has not gone beyond that."
9. Can one be an atheist in Auroville?
"If one has not gone beyond that."
10. Will there be a social life in Auroville?
"If one has not gone beyond that."

11. Will there be compulsory community activities in Auroville?

“Nothing is compulsory.”

12. Will there be an exchange of money in Auroville?

“No, it is only with the outside world that Auroville will have money relations.”

13. How will work be organised and distributed in Auroville?

“Money would be no more the sovereign lord. Individual value would have a greater importance than the value due to material wealth and social position. Work would not be there as the means for gaining one’s livelihood, it would be the means whereby to express oneself, develop one’s capacities and possibilities, while doing at the same time service to the whole group, which on its side would provide for each one’s subsistence and for the field of his work ”
(Extract from “A Dream” by the Mother)

14. What will be the relations of Aurovillians with the outside world?

“To each one full freedom is given. The external relations of Aurovillians will be established according to their personal aspirations and activities.”
(This reply suggested by a sadhak has been approved by the Mother.)

15. Who will own lands and buildings of Auroville?

“The Supreme Lord.”

16. What languages will be used for teaching?

“All the spoken languages of the world.”

(Translated from the French original which was read and corrected by the Mother on 8th Oct. 1969.)

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

Q: Is the strong will inborn or has it to be developed by tapasya? Was Buddha's will innate or developed?

SRI AUROBINDO: If Buddha had the will only after tapasya, how was it that he left everything without hesitation in the search for truth and never once looked back, regretted, nor had any struggle? The only difficulty was how to find the Truth. His single will to find it never faltered; the intensity of his tapasya itself would have been impossible without that strength of will.

3-10-1938.

From NARAYANPRASAD

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

13-8-1934

Q: During the Pranam ceremony the Mother meditates for a few minutes. On what does she meditate?

SRI AUROBINDO: Whatever is needed for the sadhana the Mother concentrates to bring that down from the Divine.

Q: When the sadhak goes to her, looks at her and bows down to her, what does she say to him in silence?

SRI AUROBINDO: Whatever is needed for the individual sadhak and his progress.

Q: During that time, what is the significance of her pressing the occiput of the sadhak?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is usually to get rid of any resistance or obstacle that there may be in the mind—such as habits of thought, preconceived ideas, wrong notions, mental obscurity, inertia, etc.

6-5-1935

Q: Now I know the secret of the Pranam. When a sadhak bows down before the Mother, she sees in him the Mother-soul and prays to her to give him love, faith or anything else according to the meaning of the flower she gives to him. In this way a certain power is developed in the sadhak unconsciously. Am I right in this understanding?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not quite like that. Mother puts the force into the sadhak and the power is felt by the sadhak sometimes consciously; but more often he receives it unconsciously. The sooner or later development of it depends on his condition and his response.

9-12-1934

SRI AUROBINDO: I had no time to write as the time about the 24th. and after was very busy. I have received your letters and am glad to see that you are open to the Force and the work is proceeding well.

The experiences you have had indicate contact with the Mother's Durga force and reception of it. The red light round the heart is the light of that force.

I think it would be better not to put the photo in the book—let the book stand on its merit with the Force behind it.

The blessings of the Mother and mine are with you and yours.

From Dr. R. S. AGRAWAL

DETACHMENT DURING TALKING

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Self: Yesterday I wrote to you about my good inner condition. But outwardly, something made me talk a lot. In spite of my knowing that such unnecessary speech would disturb the inner and higher experience I could not check it. Kindly explain what made me do it.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is always something in the physical or the outer most vital that does that. 2-4-1934

You have to learn not to allow the speaking to alter your condition or else to recover it as soon as the interruption is over. 10-5-1934

Self: At present my consciousness seems to be passing through a state of extreme sensibility. Anything new I hear or talk about goes on recurring mechanically for a long time even long after the conversation is over.

SRI AUROBINDO: You need not enter into unnecessary conversations—but the best thing is to overcome this mental habit. 25-5-1934

Self: What is lacking in my self-control is an ability to remain detached during the talk with others.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is always difficult to get. 4-8-1934

Self: When U. offered his Tambura to the Mother, some friends said, "He did so because he wanted to dispose of his instrument."

SRI AUROBINDO: What on earth do they mean? If he merely wanted to dispose of it, there are a dozen people who would have accepted. Why all this unnecessary cavilling and criticism of others? 25-8-1934

Self: These friends said, instead of offering the Tambura, U., being a singer, could have done better by offering his songs to the Mother!

SRI AUROBINDO: Very silly. People only talk for the sake of talking and criticise for the sake of criticising. There is no meaning in all that.

Self: To remain concentrated during a talk is very difficult for me.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is very usual. It is only when the consciousness is very strongly established that it remains while talking. 8-10-1934

Self: You wrote: "But at this stage it is much better to keep yourself separate and

look with a certain indifference at the doings of others." I suppose it also means not talking. What is actually meant by the last few words of your statement?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not to mind what they do or interest yourself or criticise or intervene—but leave all to the Mother. 11-10-1934

To remain aloof from the talk is what you should always do. The detachment is the first necessary condition for being free. 20-12-1934

Self: My writing comes out more easily through silence than my speech does.

SRI AUROBINDO: Talk is more external than writing, depends more on the physical and its condition. Therefore in most cases it is more difficult to get out of the clutch of the external mind. 3-10-1934

From NAGIN DOSHI

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the January issue)

(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. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. 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.)

MAY 5, 1940

P: I don't think England has withdrawn from Trondheim because of the Italian threat.

S: The debate comes on Tuesday. The Labour party is going to heckle Chamberlain. Simon, says, "Be cheerful and we will win in the end." (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: He means, "Be cheerful and we will muddle through." Hore-Belisha will now say, "I told you so."

N: Almost all papers have supported the Government except the *Mail*, the *Herald* and the *News*.

S: The papers say the Ministers are all agreed on their policy.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, Hore-Belisha also, I suppose! Chamberlain had said, "We are perfectly agreed on policy." At the end it was seen that they had disagreed all along.

N: Labour also is supporting Chamberlain.

SRI AUROBINDO: During war they stick together.

N: In the last war there was a change of ministry.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is because of general discontent. The Conservatives have to be dissatisfied with Chamberlain before they change him. The question is: Whom will they put in his place? Among Labour and the Liberals there is none except Lloyd George, but he is too old. Among the Conservatives, all except Churchill and Hore-Belisha are imbecile.

S: Chamberlain won't easily give up.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, he will stick on with his hands, feet and teeth unless forcibly dislodged. It is because there is not a single real statesman in Europe that Hitler and Mussolini are having their own way.

S: The Neutrals will lose their fear under the British strength and protection.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but Sweden is very bitter.

S: It is their neutrality that the British are accusing.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is true. If Sweden had joined, it would have been a great help.

P: The Allies could have attacked Germany from the rear.

SRI AUROBINDO: These countries think that their neutrality will save them.

N: Now Sweden is at Germany's mercy and the British can't help so effectually.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. If they want to help, they will have to do it in another way. They will have to land 300,000 people in Narvik.

N: One American paper says, "Licking rouses the British to a great impetus."

SRI AUROBINDO: That is true. They have a great tenacity.

N: A few reverses for the British will be good for India.

S: I don't think so. They won't let us go so easily.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, unless they are beaten.

P: N.N. Sircir is asking the Congress to accept the Ministry.

SRI AUROBINDO: They will say that because they are officials themselves.

N: Gandhi is now agreed to a smaller body provided they are elected.

SRI AUROBINDO: Elected by whom?

N: I mean, not nominated by the Government.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but elected by whom?

N: By the people.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then it comes to the same as Constituent Assembly. It has to be elected by the Assembly.

N: But will the Muslims agree? They will be in a minority.

SRI AUROBINDO: They can have their own elected representatives. Either the Assembly has to elect the members or each party has to give its own schemes and have them thrashed out by discussion. Only one or the other of these two prospects seems possible. The idea of the Constituent Assembly is not likely to be practicable. It will be a large body and won't reach any agreement.

N: But the Muslims will still put forward their Pakistan scheme which can't be accepted.

SRI AUROBINDO: There each party, as I said, will give its own scheme. If the Punjab Muslims, Sikhs, N.W.F., Beluchistan and other Muslims, *e.g.*, Arhars, Momins, stand against Pakistan then the League will have to drop it. Now they say that they are the sole representatives of the Muslims and the Government strongly supports them. The Congress is also half-hearted against Pakistan. But once it is shown that they are not the sole representatives the Government will have to accept the fact. At the same time it will be a Consultative Body discussing all the problems and putting them before the Constituent Assembly and the Government to be approved or accepted as the case may be.

N: But the Congress makes a demand that the Government must accept whatever agreement they come to.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is absurd. They can't bind themselves in advance to

whatever agreement. They have their own interests. You can't say that they can't have any voice in the matter. That is not practical. If you say that you declare independence and ask them to go away bag and baggage, they can't agree to it. They will do so only if they are forced to, or if they are beaten badly in the war.

P: You can't say that you will accept the Pakistan scheme, for instance, and ask them to accept it.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is, as Zetland said, all tall talk and phrase-making. It is not practical. The Congress is wrong in laying down such conditions. The Government is not going to submit to it. What they really intend to give is some form of Dominion Status as in Ireland, where India will be linked to Great Britain and not go over to any Foreign Power against her as she can if she is independent. The British want to keep India with them and slowly and gradually release power from their hands, expecting that in time we shall be accustomed to having connection with them. The Congress and other people are shouting old slogans in changed conditions. At one time the Independence cry was all right, but now Dominion Status is almost equivalent to that and in time you can be virtually independent. Besides, it is the best chance under the present conditions in opposition to charka and non-violence. Hitler won't give it, neither Mussolini nor Japan. Stalin may give autonomy but controlled from Moscow. Moreover, the first thing he will do will be to cut off the industrialists and middle class and establish a peasant proletariat.

N: The British have no interest in the Indian problem, as was shown by the poor attendance on the India debate.

SRI AUROBINDO: That doesn't mean they won't stick to India.

P: If Hitler invades India, Gandhi will declare we are all non-violent.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hitler will be delighted at it.

P: Yes, he will sweep off everybody by machine guns. Gandhi believes he can be converted.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a beautiful idea but not credible. Does anybody really believe in his non-violence?

P: I don't think so except perhaps a few of his lieutenants. Others take it as a policy. Patel does not believe.

SRI AUROBINDO: Will he face an army with his charka?

S: Gandhi is so shrewd in so many respects, I wonder how he doesn't see this absurd side of his programme. He seems reactionary in many ways. He is against armaments because they are so ruinous.

SRI AUROBINDO: I dare say they are, but how can you avoid them?

S: He is against all machinery and the use of mechanical things, *e.g.*, fountain-pens, though he is forced to use them. It would be ludicrous to carry inkpot and pen wherever he goes. Besides it would be so inconvenient as he writes whenever he gets time—and he writes with both hands.

EVENING

The radio said that Lloyd George had severely condemned Chamberlain.

SRI AUROBINDO (*opening the talk*): So L.G. has hit Chamberlain on the head? He says he is both inefficient and ineffective.

S: There will be a lively debate. We shall be able to know more about it.

P: Chamberlain may have to go.

SRI AUROBINDO: If he makes another blunder he will have to. The Conservatives also are dissatisfied.

N: An American paper proposes Sinclair's name. He does not seem a prominent figure.

SRI AUROBINDO: Nobody knows anything about him. But in his speeches he seems to be always to the point and his criticisms are sound, but I don't know how he will be as a Cabinet Minister.

P: It is really a wonder how they thought of fighting the German army with such insufficient troops

SRI AUROBINDO: Not only insufficient but ill-equipped. They have no heavy guns, no aircraft, no mechanised units.

N: They have not given out the number of men sent.

P: The odds against them are 3 to 1, says an American paper. How can they fight such a superior force with that meagre number?

N: They relied on their wonderful navy perhaps.

SRI AUROBINDO: The navy is all right. It has done good work. Even then, why didn't they destroy the German fleet at Oslo?

N: Churchill also will have some grievance against Chamberlain.

S: Chamberlain is not responsible for everything.

SRI AUROBINDO: But he is in command of both air and navy. Perhaps he will say he acted according to military advice, but the latter may have chimed with his own ideas. Britain's mine-laying also was not very successful. Otherwise how could the Germans get reinforcements? The British navy could not prevent that?

P: The navy could not go into the Baltic because of the German air force which would have attacked it.

S: What about the air force?

SRI AUROBINDO: The British had no air base in Norway.

N: They could not establish an air base in Dombas?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, that is too much inside the country. Air bases are very difficult to get. In Norway there is one good air base, Stavanger, and that was in German hands.

P: The *Hindu* says that Skagerrak and Kattegat were too narrow and shallow for the fleet to pass in.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is all excuses. The German battle-ships were passing in and out. In fact that is the only way. Russians passed their big battle-ships through

it during the Japanese war. The papers are saying that they sent the Territorials to Norway who had been trained only a few months earlier for the war. In France they have such a big army, they could easily have spared about 200,000 men. Even from England they could have spared some regular force.

S : They have sent Canadian forces, they say.

SRI AUROBINDO : The Canadian forces have never fought before. They are as good as British forces who have just read of war in books.

P : It is the French who know how to fight.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, that is because they have conscription. Everybody is compelled to undergo training and even afterwards they are called up from time to time so that they may not forget.

P : Even the French Fathers had a contempt for the English soldiers. During the last war they used to say, "Oh, the English!"

SRI AUROBINDO : You know the jingo poem of the English ?

We do not want to fight;
But, by Jingo ! if we do,
We've got the men, we've got the ships,
We've got the money too !

The Continentals say that they have others to fight for them. The Germans said during the last war, "The English will fight to the last French man. But the English will say, 'We need not be sentimental over that. We have defeated the French, Russians and Germans.'"

6.5.1940

Prabudha Bharata gave a summary of the *Life Divine*, chapter by chapter.

SRI AUROBINDO : (after reading the summary) : It is a mess—ideas are strung together without any connection. All very scrappy and loose!

P : Nolani also said something similar. How can anyone give a summary in such a short space?

S : There may be people who may find something in it. This headmaster's booklet is being asked for by some friends of mine. Have you read it, N ?

N : No, thank you.

SRI AUROBINDO : Which book ?

N : The book on your yoga, which is nothing but a heap of references. Radhanda also has written a book on your yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not my yoga, but all yogas.

N : But the title is about your yoga.

Now the talk turned on K.

S : He has gone very thin.

SRI AUROBINDO : By retirement one may get either Brahman or lose one's head.

S : But it may do good in some way.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, if one knows the way.

S : Radhanand is also in retirement.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but with the Mother's sanction. Besides, he knows the way. He has done it many times.

P : However, he talks with people whenever necessary and he is quite normal in his behaviour. Only when I had to take him to the French Police station last time, he had a shock of surprise at everything. Looking at the French flag he remarked, "Why is it here? Why is there not the Congress flag?"

SRI AUROBINDO : He thought the Congress has established Swaraj already?
(*Laughter*)

C : But he exaggerates things and always talks about himself.

S : People in retirement usually do that .

C : He had a bunch of bananas. He said they were for Sri Aurobindo, but he ate them all.

SRI AUROBINDO . He has a strong imagination. Perhaps he meant that when he ate the bananas, I ate them and when he eats I eat. (*Laughter*)

S : This K, when asked by somebody why he took to retirement last time, said, "Some Power and Will behind told me to do so and that Will is still there behind."

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the danger. No one knows where that Will will land him.

P : He seems to have or had an inferiority complex : he believes that people don't respect him and that he has no personality, etc. This led him to the resolve to pass the M. A.

SRI AUROBINDO : The M.A. will give him personality? That shows what he wants. It is because people seek personal power that retirement becomes dangerous.

EVENING

N: L.G. has used terms like yours about the war management !

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes, his speech is very truculent. This Chamberlain does not seem to want anybody with an individuality. In place of Hore-Belisha he has put in a man who knows how to do only routine work.

N: Our X is fighting on many fronts while the British are fighting only on two fronts.

SRI AUROBINDO: How?

N: He says he has to fight Imperialism, the High Command, the Muslim Ministry, *Ad Hoc* Committees, the Hindu Sabha and the reactionary press!

S: About the Hindu Sabha leaders he says, "Where were they when we were in prison? Let them come out from the high courts and fight."

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't see why they should. They haven't, like him, given an ultimatum to the British Government.

P: "And where was he when Savarkar and Parmanand were in the Andamans?" the Hindu Sabha will say.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

(Continued from the January issue)

(These Notes were not taken on the spot. They are recollections of the talks at which their author, V. Chidanandam, was present. Whatever in these talks seized the young aspirant's mind was jotted down the next day. Neither complete continuity nor absolute accuracy could be maintained. But in reconstructing from memory the author sought to capture something of the language no less than of the thought-substance. In places, later editing has been found necessary in order to clarify notations which had served merely as signposts.)

I DON'T see why people demand external signs of an Avatar. What has he to do with the external life?

Q. There must be Aishwarya?

Aishwarya is all right. But it is essentially a consciousness. What external significance can there be of an inner spiritual consciousness? Again, some people may have powers but not any higher consciousness, and generally the man who has powers goes downward in the vital movement. It is not essential that the higher consciousness should manifest itself in life and in action upon large masses of men. It is not merely a question of power. The question is what power one manifests, from where he brings it. For example, Napoleon had a certain power but that does not mean that he had a spiritual consciousness. There may be powers but no higher consciousness. As one goes higher up, he finds that the ordinary men are left far behind him, they cannot reach up to him and so his power cannot work upon them. And again you cannot expect work from the Avatar in the same way as from all men. He works directly on universal forces. He works in humanity without seeming to do anything and nobody can know what work he has done. All yogis, in general, work also like that. I have done the same. It may look ridiculous as well as arrogant if I were to say that I worked for the Russian Revolution for three years. But I did. I was one of the influences that worked to make it a success.¹ I also worked for Turkey. In India it takes time. I worked through Das. He wanted my help and it was promised. The power worked all right for some time and it stopped working when he became intoxicated with success.

¹ While Sri Aurobindo regarded the Russian Revolution in its beginnings as a progressive step, he stood against the Stalinist development of it, taking it along with Hitlerism as an arch-enemy of civilised values and of man the evolutionary being with a divine future — Editor

I know how to make money. But I have not the imagination—I won't say the will—to do it. I know easy methods but I prefer to take the more difficult path. People therefore say that I am unpractical, because I upset all the plans that are likely to succeed...

My first work is to realise and embody the new Truth. I don't believe in any work before the Truth is embodied. Even then it would not be the expression of a realisation merely on the vital plane or of the mental ego, or even of the mental or vital personality, but of the Truth. Unless the Truth is realised in myself I am not going to do my work. The result of my touching the work of others who start things in my name would be that it would go to pieces. The Truth that is working would not allow it to go on on its old lines, and the pressure of the Truth would break it. It may even be that the worker would not be able to bear my pressure. His body would be wrecked completely. The pressure necessary for transforming his mind and vital being would be so great that, when I put the pressure, I am not sure whether the physical being would be able to stand it. Something in the worker's mind generally gives a twist to what I say and puts upon it the construction it desires. One must have a sincere desire to change his mind and not have a fixed idea that what he is doing is right.

There are all sorts of visions. Some visions are only images. Some are forms taken by our vital desires. Some are mental thought-images. They don't correspond to any Truth; often they are our own creations. True visions are rare and they cannot be completely understood unless one has the right discernment and great purity in the being. Visions in themselves are of no use; what is needed is a change of consciousness. If one cannot distinguish between what comes from above and what comes from below, his mind will get disorganised. If any part of you wants visions, they may come. You then have to reject them, reject the mental insistence and false ideas about visions.

The Theosophists draw from the vital plane. Only, they have an organised mind and therefore they present things in a reasonable form. Anyone who has the least experience of these planes knows that much that is seen there is vital fancies which have no basis of reality. In the vital plane any system of construction is possible, any number of worlds; you can arrange the world order in any number of ways. These people are really moved by some vital beings who want to throw themselves on the physical plane. They want to figure as gods and be worshipped. On the vital plane you can have angels and devils and a hundred Maitreyas. The Theosophists go on accepting anything and everything that comes from the vital world. Not that there are no powers in the vital world which may be effective here but all that does not mean any very high spiritual power. In the Vāmamārga of the Tantras, they perform many vidhis which are associated with certain vital powers and if you perform the ritual the

powers may manifest in you. But that is not spiritual power. It may happen that if the present leaders of Theosophy are emotional and constantly will something to get hold of them, something may get in and if any among them has a strong personality that something may begin to preach things quite contrary to Theosophy. It would be funny. Some of the Theosophists have the power of hypnotism, the power of projecting mental constructions.

When the ecstasy comes some people manifest it and some do not. A man in whom the intellect predominates or a man in whom there is a balance between the intellectual and the psychic development may not express it. He may hold it within himself. But if a man has got the psychic being in his forefront and his intellect is not well developed, he may express it. There is nothing wrong in so expressing it. Ramakrishna used to express it. Generally there is a natural tendency in the psychic being to throw itself out. The difficulty comes when you bring it down into the vital plane where there are many chances of stumbling. The man of intellect takes a superior pose. He has a tendency to spiritual charlatanism. He plays with the thing and he plays the fool. The intellect justifies all sorts of things, offers plausible explanations. It is a rich field for the lower things. The man of heart has not got so much scope. The vital powers can always justify themselves in the mind. The vital mind twists the whole thing. Some of the vital powers are very intelligent. They, especially the Asuras, have got their own ideas and ideals. They make an organised effort for making their ideals succeed. Only the whole thing is founded on the ego and falsehood. The Rakshasa is more Rajasik, vital and violent in his demand. He does not care for control except only in so far as it helps him to gain his immediate objective. The Rakshasa as well as the Asura has Tapas. The former has his grandeur. The Asura is more intellectual, he can be ascetic on principle while a Rakshasa is not.

There are some Upanishads in which the conquest of the body by the spirit has been mentioned. The Isha & Taittiriya come nearest to what we are doing. The Isha seems to be the oldest. It forms a part of the Yajur Veda. (Though Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka seem ancient, it is due to their prose style.) The Taittiriya deals with the Anandamaya aspect, the Isha with both the Anandamaya and the Vignanamaya. The Siksha-Vali in Taittiriya, the first part that deals with grammar, is not important. It is the second and third parts that are important....

Once I used to get my best experiences in the dream state, between sleeping and waking....When I was writing *Yogic Sadhan*, a small figure of Ram Mohan Roy used to appear and pass away....What gave guidance to me in the jail may be Vivekananda or it may be a part of my own mind separating and taking form. Many of these things are mere thought-images. At that time I was opening up the vital plane and all sorts of voices used to come. The voice of Vivekananda spoke to me about the

Supermind, not the highest but the preliminary phases¹ At that time I did not know anything about it and it gave me a tremendous push.

Delvadav temple is grand in conception and great in detail. You cannot have the old culture always at its height. That is the law. In spirituality, in art, in poetry it is the same thing. In the old things you find a certain "calm greatness" founded on the spirit and all expression proceeds from that calm greatness. In modern art they substitute vital fantasies and fancies for that calm strength. Art thus becomes an effort, a straining to express what one has not got. It becomes artificial and vulgar. In ancient times what they expressed they had got. The Upanishads have not been rivalled because of their calm strength. The same in Yoga. My objection to present-day Vaishnavism is that it gives too much of an opening to the dramatising spirit of the vital world. It lacks in the calm strength of the spirit. Why should a man put on a saree? If he feels the emotion let him feel it inside. But that sort of bringing down a law of another plane to the plane where another law holds and trying to impose it there, introduces a falsehood, turns the truth of that plane into a falsehood...

I find no decadence in modern Indian art. Only in old times they had grandeur. As you come nearer our times you find the artists did finer and more delicate work; e.g. the Rajput paintings. The fundamental spirit is the same. Formerly it was thought there was a gulf between Ajanta and the Rajput schools. But the Nepalese, Tibetan and Central Asian finds prove the continuity. It is always so in the case of cultures that the earlier conception is greater and grand while later it becomes more sensuous and vital, detailed and delicate....

The psychic being or the inner guide (Chaitya guru) may be termed the 'Chaitya Purusha'. In Vaishnavism it means a portion of the Divine. The word therefore has a double significance; it is the direct portion of the Divine in man, and it is also the being that is behind the 'chit'.

Of all the chapters of *A Defence of Indian Culture*, my reply to Archer, I think that those on Architecture and Sculpture are the best. In the chapter on Painting I was somewhat tired. Besides I have a great natural predilection for those arts. Taste for Painting I cultivated afterwards. I acquired it. I did not have it by nature, as I had the other things. In Painting I can get at the spirit of the thing behind, but I don't know the technique. Really speaking I got my true taste for Painting while I was in Alipore. I used to meditate and I saw various pictures with colours, and then I found that the critical faculty also arose. I did know these things before, intellectually, but I caught the real spirit later. Even in Architecture, I don't know the technical words yet I can seize on the meaning more easily. I have no ear for music. I could never take to it. I can get at the spirit of the singer, the thing behind, I can catch the emotion.

¹ By "supermind" in the days of these talks Sri Aurobindo seems to have meant all the planes of the Dynamic Divine above the mind. What he calls here "the highest" he later distinguished as the true Supermind. —Editor.

But that is not enough in appreciating art. Dancing is a different matter. I can appreciate it... I think in the matter of predilection, we have an element from past lives. One always brings something from there ..

The cure of diseases by mantra is effected by some vital forces. It is not psychic or spiritual in its nature. The psychic does its work and does not fail. It does not try to play the God, as the vital and other forces do. In Coué it is the combination of will and faith that effects the cure, but that is not enough by itself. That is why it does not succeed in all cases. (Coué had also some power).

Something comes down automatically, when the necessary conditions are ready. I used to get fever and sometimes something would come down and reject it successfully while at other times I had to go on working out the thing again and again. I have seen that at times even the strongest faith does not succeed. Again, you may have the strongest will and yet the thing does not get done. Not that faith and will are not necessary or not useful. But they both require something else and, when that comes down, even if there is opposition success generally comes.

The sadhaka should avoid action such as demands the meeting of many persons and such as is likely to be Rajasik. That is why the old Yogins solved the difficulty in two ways; (i) by going away from the world, (ii) by a sort of clubbing together and trying to maintain the same atmosphere. When people meet you, you find that their atmosphere attacks you, pulls you down, you are thrown out and you have again to get back to your old self. When you have no longer to try to get into the poise, then it gets settled. Even then, if the Adhar is not pure there is no security. When you are strong enough then nothing is able to attack you from the atmosphere around; then your atmosphere dominates everything and the hostile forces cannot attack you even though they be there.

(to be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

OUR ASSOCIATION WITH SRI AUROBINDO

A TALK TO STUDENTS

WELL, a rainy day, ladies and gentlemen! On such days we used to play football instead of listening to the lecture, or sometimes we used to purposely soak our dress in the rain so that we might get a holiday. I don't feel today very warm; my inspiration has got all drenched in the rain, unless you pass me some enthusiasm, some warmth from your young hearts!

I have been asked to tell you something, in these two closing talks of this session, something of my association, or *our* association—that is, of a number of disciples—with Sri Aurobindo. I thought suddenly of doing it—I had fixed it in my mental calendar to do it in due order of time; but young people like sweet disorder, like our poet Herrick who likes sweet disorder in dress! And, then, they live always in the present, and I too am not quite sure of the future; therefore, perhaps, I thought, let me bow down to the call of the children and to the wisdom of the young. But the subject is rather difficult. The association here is not between two men, two human beings; it is an association between small human beings on the one side and the Divine on the other. Though it has taken a human habitation and a name, there is no human figure about whose anatomy, physiology and psychology you can pronounce an expert, medical judgement and find out at last that there is no mystery. As our Dr. Sanyal says: “Where is your psychic being? Where are all the centres you speak of, your anahata, mahapadma, etc.? Where are all these? I have dissected so many bodies; I've found none and I am a renowned surgeon!” So there you are! But I suppose that about the semblance, about the mask we knew as Sri Aurobindo, I could mumble a few words.

Our association with him is something unique, something unparalleled, only to be found in our present spiritual history. Perhaps you remember, or you have some idea of Arjuna's association with Sri Krishna, Ananda's association with the Buddha, St. Paul's association with Jesus Christ, and of others; in our modern days, the association of Vivekananda particularly and his friends with Ramakrishna and lastly, in our own time, here, the association of Pranab and Vasudha with the Mother. Our association too belongs to that class, that category, but I won't say that it is of the same stature. However, it is an association worth a thousand times dying for and double the times living for; and yet perhaps you won't be able to solve the mystery even by serving Him. So there lies my difficulty. What to speak of the Ineffable? What have we seen of the Master, the Lord, that we can speak of? Even what we have seen—the very superficial crust—we have no power to express. Still, let me try to give you some glimpse of whatever little we have seen of the great ocean-depths and the vast sky-space. But my fear is that it will be too personal as well as a little sentimental. You

will excuse me if it is so. That is why I always avoid speaking too much about these too personal experiences.

Well, memories surge up, as it were, from the backward and abyss of Time, one after another: the fateful Night, Sri Aurobindo lying helplessly on the floor of His room, the doctors rushing in, the Mother's grave concern, the consternation of the whole Ashram, the gloom, the frustration overwhelming everybody who had come for the Darshan. Then the decision to send for specialists from Madras, the anxious waiting; and in the midst of all this, the Master, the Lord lying in the bed, quietly, calmly, most unperturbed, most unconcerned. That is the first picture.

Then the doctors arrived. The accident had taken place at about 2 or 2.30 a.m.—they came at 7 or 8 in the evening: a specialist and a radiologist. Their examination, their diagnosis, their great verdict and Sri Aurobindo confined to bed for a number of months. Complication after complication, then His recovery, His learning to walk, leaning on human crutches (*laughter*), then our witnessing His life: His eating, His sleeping, His writing short poems, *The Life Divine*, the long prose masterpiece, the epic *Savitri*, autographing hundreds of books. Then our touching Him, His sacred body, touching His hair, giving Him a bath. Then His exercises in bed according to the prescription recommended by Dr. Manilal. Now and then the Mother coming into the room, with a sweet smile, sometimes with a glass of coconut water in Her hands, giving a very quick look at us mischievous fellows. All these and many other memories come. Then the memory of the famous talks, when the impersonal aspect of the Purusha has become personal, very intimate like a human being, talking with us on various subjects: politics, religion, philosophy and what not; cracking jokes with us on very trivial matters, like Nirod's snoring, P's kicking (*laughter*), so on and so forth; and the last fatal touch—His passing away, and the grand spectacle that He made us see: His whole body becoming golden. All these are memories that when you ask me about my association with Him surge up. Where shall I begin and how shall I express all these? Would you like me to cram all of them within two concluding lectures? I have forgotten also His hearing the War news, His dictation of *Savitri*. These are things that we have seen, but what we have not seen, what we have not heard from Him, that is a region which has been unexplored and will never be explored by us. That is why He has said that His life has never been on the surface. How shall we be able to know that sitting there in that room...

I have given you a rough panoramic survey of our association with Him. Now we shall start from the beginning. How was this physical contact established? You know very well my psychic and intellectual contact with Him before I met Him physically on the physical plane. That was perhaps a sort of preparation for this physical meeting. You know what happened in the year 1938—just on the eve of Darshan. That was the fateful year. People from many parts of India had come for the Darshan. I don't know if some of you were here in 1938. Perhaps you were dreaming, in some higher sphere, of coming down and taking birth! One of the distinguished visitors was Miss Wilson, the daughter of President Wilson of America. She had come all the way

from America to have the first Darshan of Sri Aurobindo. Darshan then was something of which you have no idea today. You have heard about it, to a certain extent you have made a mental formation of it, but it could not be so vivid as when seen with one's vivid eyes. You have seen the couch where the Mother and Sri Aurobindo used to sit side by side—the Mother on the right side of Sri Aurobindo, not on the left side, Sri Aurobindo with almost bare upper body, just a chaddar thrown across his chest in the Bengali fashion, His imposing body, His imposing figure right in front of you. His dhoti, immaculately white or as we say, phorash-dhay, creased, crinkled, pressed, all done under the Mother's direction, and folded and nicely put on, the *concha* as we say, reaching almost to his feet as you've seen in the picture. His hair beautifully parted in the middle, long flowing hair, very thin, silken, his beard flowing and covering the upper part of his chest. That is all about his dress and outer bearing—the outer bearing only. Whereas the Mother sitting by his side, quite a different picture: all rosy, beautifully dressed, all colourful and gorgeous, with rings on Her fingers—that is why you ladies put on rings!—wearing a crown, with an enchanting smile, really bewitching, calling as it were, not to adore Shiva, but to adore Her! (*laughter*) and that was so. In fact, Sri Aurobindo was grand, aloof, austere, Shiva-like. If you have read his poem *Shiva*, something of that sort. somewhere settled on the peaks of silence, with a faint ray of smile which could be more imagined than perceived (*laughter*) and which would give us the touch of something wonderful happening in this clay world of ours. Many of us have had, then, the experience of Shiva and Parvati sitting side by side.

This is in a few words our impression of the Darshan; and from the inner point of view, one Darshan has turned so many people's lives. One single look, one single smile, saved so many people from even their physical and material troubles, and seekers were lifted into another sphere. One single Darshan—a veritable turningpoint in their life. Sri Aurobindo said: "To every one I give a pointed look." An air of mystery, an air of sublimity which cannot be expressed by words ..seeing which Rabindranath said: "You have the word, we are waiting for it" and, seeing which, one of our doctors, trying to be poetic, said: "Sir, you look *grand* at the Darshan " Doctors can't have a better expression, you must remember, unless the doctor is a poet! (*laughter*). So that was the Darshan and when that Darshan was interrupted by a stroke of Fate—I don't know what to call it—we can imagine the disappointment, the frustration, the despair, the gloom of all these people, and particularly when they learnt of the accident that had happened to their beloved Master, you can imagine their state! One prayer, one silent prayer that rose up from the hearts of the devotees was for his well-being—they forgot their own loss of the Darshan. Even Miss Wilson who had come all the way from America accepted it with submission. From that one single gesture you can see what a great soul she was. She didn't rage, cry or lament or regret—a calm, quiet submission and a prayer for the Lord, to the Lord...

Well, two incidents stand in my mind as full of significance—I should say, cosmic

significance—which have shaken the world to its very roots, and changed the course of world events, without our least knowledge. One is the accident, the second Sri Aurobindo's passing away. The accident was a great "victory" on the part of the adverse forces. Noliniḁa gave an explanation saying that there was a war-cloud, threatening at that time, which as Sri Aurobindo had told us also, the Mother and He did not want at that time, in 1938, so very probably He took upon Himself the shadow and avoided its falling on the world for a year. That is what Noliniḁa said, and he must be knowing, must be having some perception of inner things. This does not contradict my own view when I say that the hostile forces had gained a great "victory." Dr. Manilal asked in his somewhat childlike manner, "Sir, why did it happen to You?" Sri Aurobindo, in a similar tone, replied, "Why shouldn't it happen to me?" (*laughter*) But the surface explanation He gave us was that He had not believed or thought that those adverse hostile forces would dare to touch Him and so He was not on His guard. Moreover, He was guarding the Mother, He was busy all the while guarding Her. He didn't take any cover, any protection for Himself. So these are all mystic things, occult things, very difficult to understand, and very difficult to say anything about. But these are things that have been heard from His own mouth. Had not the accident taken place, I believe things would have taken a different course, and perhaps we would have had Him in our midst and the realisation the Mother is waiting for, working for, day and night, would have been accomplished long ago. But things happen at their own time, and though He has passed away, you know very well what happened on that day. Authentic record is there that His whole body was surcharged with a golden colour and it remained so for so many days. It is a phenomenon whose like is not recorded in history. What was exactly behind this phenomenon? The Mother says that when She used to visit Him She used to notice always Sri Aurobindo bringing down the supramental light upon earth. Unfortunately, though we have lived for twelve years day and night like His shadows, we didn't see even a single hair of the tail of the supramental! (*laughter*) He didn't give us that vision. I was fortunate only in having this vision after He passed away. He thought perhaps that it would be too unfair to disappoint this poor fellow! (*laughter*) So He gave that vision which I took to be very real, material. And the meaning of it is, as we know today, that He fixed in the earth-consciousness for ever the light that He and the Mother were trying to bring down. Before that, as they have said, the light was coming down and going away; they could not fix it, but this time it was fixed. How? By sacrificing His own body. There are verses in *Savitri*:

It is finished, the dread mysterious sacrifice
Offered by God's martyred body to the world.

Mark each expression: "sacrifice", "God's martyred body", "to the world". I still remember these lines because they were some of the last He changed in *Savitri* while He was dictating. They did not read so at the beginning. They were changed to this

form at the end, before He passed away—when He decided to leave the body. You can see the purpose, and you can see the reason: martyr. So I cite these two incidents which to our level of knowledge are not so evident as to the Mother and to some others who have the right perception, the right intuition.

Now ..somewhere at 2.30 a.m. when the whole world had gone to sleep and the Mother also had retired: "it was the hour before the gods awake". Sri Aurobindo alone was awake. Light was burning in the corner room (facing Pavita's house). On many occasions, myself and my friend Nishikanto, after our midnight promenade which we took very often, used to come back—I to my dispensary, and he to his house. We passed by that corner. We would see that light burning...and sometimes I used to hear from my dispensary the tinkling of the tea cup (*laughter*) no imagination!—and I used to feel so happy. I used to listen to the music...Champaklal told me later on that a flask of tea used to be placed before Him and some biscuits and a cup and a saucer and sugar and everything. So it is not all imagination that He used to take tea...and the tinkling of the tea cup is unmistakable, my friends. So we passed by, sometimes at one o'clock, sometimes at two o'clock—we were at that time like owls (*laughter*) and enjoyed the sight of the lamp in Sri Aurobindo's room very much.

Sri Aurobindo quietly sitting down to work when all the world had gone to sleep, at midnight; that reminds me in a small way—as those of you who have read Milton's poem *Il Penseroso* will agree—of 'his lamp burning at midnight hour, Seen in some high lonely tower'. Here He was perhaps busy with *Savitri*; that might be the only time He could devote himself to His great work. The rest of the correspondence He used to finish at another time. So perhaps He was in His poetic mood, incantating some verse that He had found by inspiration, all of a sudden coming from above. .and muttering and incantating...He used to mutter...I'll tell you all that later on; so He was human in that respect. But as I said, guarding at the same time the Mother. He was passing from that room to His bedroom or the bathroom on the other side. Somehow He slipped on a tiger skin that was on the floor, and His knee struck very hard on the head of the tiger—a piece of medical information. He was divine, but He had a human body, and the body was also not too light. He fell down and there He lay. He lay down there quietly, He was not calling anybody, there was nobody there except The Mother in the other room. So he was perhaps waiting for Her to come at one time or another. Humanly He was a person who would never disturb anybody, who would never call anybody unless absolutely necessary. He would accept no service from anybody unless compelled to do so. So the Divine compelled Him to accept this. However, it seems the Mother received a strong vibration in Her sleep or in Her trance as I should say, and felt at once that something had happened to Sri Aurobindo. This is, my friends, what I referred to long ago; unity of consciousness. And She came and found Sri Aurobindo lying on the floor. At once answering the emergency bell, Purani rushed up: he was awake preparing hot water for The Mother and Sri Aurobindo at two o'clock. The Master used to take his bath at that time and with hot boiling water, my friends, no mixture, no adulteration (*laughter*), pure boiling water,

and at that time of the night ! The Mother told Purani: "Sri Aurobindo has had an accident, go and call the doctor." Fortunately Dr. Manilal was there at that time, he had come for the Darshan. If he had not been there, my poor shoulders would have had to bear the burden of the Avatar's accident. Well, he turned up and we followed. To see what? To see Him lying like a child there in His room by the door. There He was lying bare-bodied except for a dhoti, with a sort of embarrassed smile for giving us unnecessary trouble. It seemed as if for a twinkle of an eye, I saw something. I don't know whether it was due to the reflection of the light, or a hallucination or a vision, whatever you like to think: it was as if I had a glimpse of what the Vedas and the Upanishads call "the golden beauty of a god,"—the whole body bathed in golden light, the Golden Purusha. Yeats speaks in one of his poems of Pythagoras's "golden thighs, golden chest". However, that was a moment's vision. Then we were busy finding out what had happened. Dr. Manilal set about it: each movement of the limb followed by a soft 'ah'!—not more than that; a little twitching of the face and one or two answers, a few words. .. So Dr. Manilal, an expert medical man, came to the decision that it was a fracture. The Mother was all the time by Sri Aurobindo, fanning him; there was no electric fan at that time. Sometimes She was going and coming and asking Sri Aurobindo sweetly: 'Is it hurting You? Is it hurting You?' Then we doctors got busy with medical treatment, putting the leg in plaster provisionally; then we put Him to bed ..

The bell has rung .It is a long story, and my tempo is rather slow; but these things cannot be presented in any modernist 'instant' fashions. (*Laughter*).

22-10-1969.

NIRODBARAN

THE MOTHER'S IDENTIFICATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

ON April 7, 1917, the Mother wrote of a fascinating experience, that of identification with a little flower:

"A deep concentration seized on me, and I perceived that I was identifying myself with a single cherry-blossom, then through it with all cherry-blossoms, and as I descended deeper in the consciousness, following a stream of bluish force, I became suddenly the cherry-tree itself, stretching towards the sky like so many arms its innumerable branches laden with their sacrifice of flowers. Then I heard distinctly this sentence:

"Thus hast thou made thyself one with the soul of cherry-trees and so thou canst take note that it is the Divine who makes the offering of this flower-prayer to heaven."

"When I had written it all was effaced; but now the blood of the cherry-trees flows in my veins and with it flows an incomparable peace and force. What difference is there between the human body and the body of a tree? In truth, there is none, the consciousness which animates them is identically the same.

"Then the cherry-tree whispered in my ear:

"It is in the cherry-blossom that lies the remedy for the disorders of the spring."

Here we are first taken up to feel the prayer and the worship which Nature is always offering to the Divine through the vegetable world, the little flowers and the tall aspiring trees. Then we are told that, in fact, it is the Divine who makes the offering of this flower-prayer to heaven,—the Divine, indeed, who is Himself both the traveller and the goal.

The identification was so complete that the Mother could say, "Now the blood of the cherry-tree flows in my veins."

And in the end, we get an instance of knowledge by identity when the flower whispers its secret to the Mother. In principle, the knowledge by identity is "the original and fundamental way of knowing, native to the occult self in things." Of this we get a description in *Savitri*:—

A knowledge which became what it perceived,
Replaced the separated sense and heart
And drew all Nature into its embrace.

We have spoken before of the Mother's identification with the earth. And for the earth the Mother prays and works. The note of May 25, 1914 gives one prayer for earth:

"O, to be a pure crystal without stain which allows Thy divine ray to pass without obscuring, colouring or deforming it! Not out of a desire for perfection but that Thy work may be accomplished as perfectly as possible.

“And when I ask this of Thee, the ‘I’ which speaks to Thee is the whole earth, aspiring to be this pure diamond, perfect reflector of Thy supreme light. The hearts of all men beat in my heart, all their thoughts vibrate in my thoughts, the least aspiration of the docile animal or of the modest plant joins in my formidable aspiration, and all this lifts itself towards Thee, to the conquest of Thy love and light, scaling the peaks of being to attain to Thee, to ravish Thee from Thy immobile beatitude and make Thee penetrate into the shadow of suffering so as to transform it into divine Joy, into sovereign Peace.”

SHYAM SUNDAR

A STRANGE KNOT

A STRANGE knot of some wizard self is this life,
 Cunningly knit, it finds no saviour knife.
 For him who can climb up, a step is this knot
 In a difficult Rope towards the other side out.

Then left behind is the ever same lot of the world.
 Still, a lightning plays above us, a burning gold
 God-fruit on the magic sky hangs unplucked.
 The two ends of the Rope meet here interlocked

In some mystic corner, the heart's ruby core.
 Plumb deep, O Soul! the wide seas of the self explore,
 The alchemist powers lying coiled in the body's cave,
 The rich inheritance, the forgotten treasure-trove.

A diamond touch of the One alone can untie
 The baffling knot of death to immortality.

A. VENKATARANGA

WORDSWORTH—MAN AND POET

(Continued from the January issue)

POETIC EXPRESSION (Contd.)

YES, there is a lot of padding in many of Wordsworth's poems, but as he wrote a large amount of poetry the quantity of true gold is also huge. And whatever he wrote he did with care and scruple, even though they could not always result in imaginative finish as distinguished from intellectual polish. Dorothy records in her diary how her brother once made himself sick, finding a new epithet for the cuckoo. And we know how there was no facility in at least the manner of composition: he used to pace restlessly in the groves of Alfoxden or the garden path of Grasmere while composing poetry. Nor was he averse to correction and chiselling and recasting: he did believe in spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling, but he had no superficial idea of what spontaneity consisted in. It did not, for him, consist in just the first draft of a poem, neither did it lie in an uncontrolled or unselective expression. His poem, *Dion*, originally opened with a descriptive stanza beginning—

Fair as the Swan whose majesty, prevailing
O'er breezeless water on Locarno's lake—

but he resolutely cut it out because it detained the reader too long from the real subject and precluded, rather than prepared for, the subsequent reference to Plato. His principle, as declared in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, was that the poet should never "interweave a foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests". Hence, on the side of matter and substance, spontaneity lay in avoiding all imaginative superfluity, all incongruity of vision, however beautiful in itself. On the side of form and style, it was equivalent to the avoidance of what he called "poetic diction", the artificial language the eighteenth century had employed as well as the tortured language often favoured by the seventeenth century and the late Elizabethans. In the pursuit of this spontaneity of form he was often conscientiously studious. "I have bestowed," he says, "great pains on my style, full as much as any of my contemporaries have done on theirs. I yield to none in love for my art. I, therefore, labour at it with reverence, affection and industry. My main endeavour, as to style, is that my poems should be written in pure intelligible English."

By "pure intelligible English" he was at one time inclined to denote, "the real language of men in any situation", but later described it as, in his own words, "a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation". In practice he wavered between the two definitions and not infrequently went beyond either when

he achieved his greatest effects, but when understanding his criterion we must remember that in speaking of "men" he did not confine himself to his ordinary contemporaries, much less his humble Cumberland neighbours: he included also "men" like Shakespeare and Spenser and Milton, the three poets he perhaps valued most. What he really aimed at when he intuitively rather than intellectually understood and followed his theory was a certain simplicity and austerity wedded to intensity, as in lines about happy commonalty, like

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,

Or in lines of personal pathos, like

And never lifted up a single stone,

Or in lines of poignant racial retrospect, like

Old, unhappy, far-off things
And battles long ago,

or in lines drenched with the tears of things, like

The still, sad music of humanity...

The heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world.

The last quotation can serve as a good starting-point for a few remarks on Wordsworth's technical artistry. The adjectives "heavy" and "weary" with their common *y*-ending reinforce each other's sense by sound while the *w*-beginning in three words has a marked expansive effect hinting the immensity of the burden, and that immensity with its peculiar ambiguous and baffling character is brought into apt relief by the lengthy yet slackly moving and lingering epithet "unintelligible". Similarly a most skilful play on the varying sounds of *o* and *a* is part of the inevitability of those two lines of poignant racial retrospect cited already from *The Solitary Reaper*. There is perfect art, full of the sense of water hailing from hidden sources, in the many-shaded crystalline rhythm of

Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

And nothing could be finer for conjuring up both beauty and mystery than the alliterative phrase in the poem where a young woman is told that if she remains a child of nature, grey hairs will never sadden her,

But an old age serene and bright,
 And lovely as a Lapland night,
 Shall lead thee to thy grave.

Wordsworth is particularly felicitous with names of places. As faultlessly used for poetic effect as Glaramara and Lapland is the name of those remote islands in that couplet, sibilant as well as liquid, which is a masterpiece of half atmospheric half psychological strangeness—

Breaking the silence of the seas
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

An effect not so strangely evocative but as deeply and skilfully intoned is where Wordsworth says to the spirit of liberty whose chosen home he considers to be England and Switzerland, the one country full of the sea's voice and the other full of voice of the hills:

what sorrow would it be
 That mountain floods should thunder as before,
 And ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
 And neither awful voice be heard by thee!

Little room remains for doubting that Wordsworth was not incapable of careful conscious art. His many lapses are mostly due to the extreme importance he attached to whatever figured in his perception or experience: the novelty, on the whole, of both thought and feeling that formed the centre of his world-message made him rest complacent again and again with the bare intellectual statement of it—he was not so absorbingly an artist as to admit nothing without the stamp on it of beauty; but there was sufficiently the beauty-lover in him to enable the artist to function effectively not only on the sheer breath of inspiration but also on afterthought and back-view and with the help of sifting and polishing and revising. His frequently wide-awake sensitiveness to word-values is illustrated by the remark we have quoted from Dorothy about his feverish exertion to hit upon a revealing adjective for the cuckoo, and also by his own reference to Sir Walter Scott: "Walter Scott is not a careful composer. He allows himself many liberties which betray a want of respect for his reader. He quoted, as from me,

The swan, on 'sweet' St. Mary's lake.
 Floats double, swan and shadow,

instead of 'still', thus obscuring my idea and betraying his own uncritical principles of composition." Clearly, Scott's word was conventional claptrap: not only what

Wordsworth would have called the spirit of the lake remained uncaught but also the experience he had sought to convey was spoiled by an alien element. The accurate and direct communication which, together with intense sympathetic vision, Wordsworth aimed at in his poetry could indeed never be possible unless often enough he had the capacity to be, in Keats's phrase, "a miser of sound and syllable."

POETIC ARTISTRY

However, we must distinguish his artistry from Keats's. Keats was the word-craftsman *par excellence* and it almost appears as if he wanted intensity of vision and feeling more because they could electrify language into breath-bereaving exquisiteness or splendour than for its own revelatory life-enrichment. Wordsworth had the conviction that he had extraordinary things to say and that poetry was the best instrument of embalming as well as transmitting his experience. Keats was drunk with the wine of words and in order to make it always champagne instead of common claret or even good Burgundy he desired the richest and loveliest ideas and emotions to distil it from. The Muse accomplishes her end in various ways: somehow or other she wants great meaning married to great music and divers temperaments and dispositions she makes her vehicles, and it matters little what starting-point is adopted. But significant differences will be there in the poet's attitude to his creative work in relation to both manner and matter.

Wordsworth could rarely treat language as anything save a necessity: Keats could easily treat it as a luxury. Even the abundance of the former was mostly a prodigious piling up of effects economical and clear-cut; even the brevity of the latter tended to be astonishingly packed with "fine excess". In regard to matter, Wordsworth, dominated by his own definite sight and emotion, was anxious that his words should be utterly faithful to them. He had a special meaning antecedent to expression and when he cast about for the correct phrase it was for that which embodied with fine exactitude his meaning. Keats had a more fluid consciousness, a "negative capability"—as he called it—which enabled him to feel that his own self was undefined and could immediately become the self of whatever he saw, be it a tree or a pecking bird or an idle stone. He gave no importance to any fixed meaning arising out of his own previous experience or meditation: he cared only for the most beautiful significance he could get out of the vast potentialities of language at the disposal of the broad scheme or theme he had in mind. He would welcome any suggestion valuable in itself and assimilable by his subject: it would not trouble him in the least if instead of writing the poem he intended he turned out something entirely dissimilar in mood or direction. In this he resembled Shakespeare who, among English poets, was the most protean genius we know of, though Shakespeare was not so keenly conscious a connoisseur of words and threw up his wondrous wealth of them out of a masterly multifarious vitality much more vibrant than Keats's. Wordsworth resembled Milton who, among English poets, was the most firmly structured genius on record, though

Milton differed in being far ahead of Wordsworth in sustained artistry and far behind him in either poignancy or amplitude of spiritual perception suffusing and transfiguring the powerful analytic and synthetic mentality.

POETIC EXPERIENCE

In that poignancy, in that amplitude of spiritual perception is Wordsworth's uniqueness in the poetic literature of England. There have been attempts to depreciate this uniqueness, calling that poignancy and that amplitude pretence and woolliness. We may, of course, enjoy a witticism like James Stephens's apropos of the famous line in the Immortality Ode—

Heaven lies about us in our infancy—

“That is no reason why we should lie about Heaven in our old age.” But it is impossible to take seriously any detraction of Wordsworth's far-reaching spiritual quality. He was the first Seer in English poetic literature, answering in however limited a measure to the definition of seerhood current in the mystic Orient: one who has known by direct intuition and by intimate personal realisation and by concrete entry of consciousness a Divine Reality at once emanating, containing and pervading the universe, an Existence that is an infinite Consciousness and eternal Bliss and the secret Self of all things and beings.

Wordsworth's seer-sense of this Reality is not a possession always intense and all-permeating, but it forms the permanent background of his best work and at several places comes to the fore and then his poetry is the sheer speech of the Godhead residing in cosmic nature. He is not strictly a nature poet, catching felicitously the colour and atmosphere and thrill of her myriad phenomena: he is the singer of the mighty and superhuman presence whose outer face and body is she or, rather, whose manifold degree of manifestation make up her stuff and activity. Together with Shelley who was an atheist according to conventional Christian standards just as Wordsworth was according to the same standards an apostate—together with Shelley he is the greatest Yogi of pantheism that has appeared in the poetic history of England.

But we must not understand either his pantheism or Shelley's in a narrow sense which erases all distinctions between high and low, good and evil, right and wrong. If important distinctions had not been acknowledged in Reality's outer field, Shelley would never have had the ardour of the world-reformer or Wordsworth the zeal of the character-builder. But their ardour and zeal arose from something beyond the mere moral consciousness, some light of which this consciousness is itself a variable reflection, and that is why they instinctively looked for the source of all good not in the rational will but in some indescribable vastness of peace or in some ineffable wideness of ecstasy that are the hidden universal oneness of all diversities, even all contradictions. And of the two pantheists the more powerful was Wordsworth,

though Shelley was the more vivid. Wordsworth it was who awoke in Shelley the pantheist dormant within the rebel against orthodox Christianity, and Wordsworth it was who had the more massive awareness of what he called "Wisdom and Spirit of the universe", an awareness which dissolved more effectively than Shelley's feeling of the "white radiance of Eternity", the pains and fears infesting mortal life, and which replaced them with an enduring calm until Wordsworth could recognise

A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

WORDSWORTH'S PANTHEISM AND SHELLEY'S

The greater massiveness of Wordsworth's pantheism than of Shelley's derived from the fact that Shelley lived in a certain luminous detachment from flesh and blood, and the pantheistic intuition he shared with Wordsworth was not equally interfused with "the meanest flower that blows". Pantheos, for him, shone rather *through* than *in* the meanest flower, and had indeed a brighter vibrancy because of not being one substance with clay, but lacked the solidity, as it were, which Wordsworth found because he felt clay to be only the dense superficies of a single Reality whose lustre-packed interior was God. The solidity not merely makes for us Wordsworth's realisation more overwhelming in its tranquillity than Shelley's in its exhilaration: it also takes, for all the richer effect Shelley has on us, a firmer grip on flesh and blood with which it is subtly continuous; so that, by its effect, however vaguely, in even our outer being

We feel that we are greater than we know.

Shelley was like an exile from some Beyond against which the defects of the physical universe, in spite of that universe's shimmering transparency to one kind of spiritual sight, stood out grimly to another. To remove these defects he was all afire: he was a perfectionist haunted by the idealities of his Beyond and the redeeming powers necessary to bring about world-transfiguration were conceived by him as an occult company—ethereal Dreams and Splendours, "Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies". Towards such strange presences he held forth his hands, and when his ardour of world-transfiguration got increasingly frustrated a poignant melancholy sat at the core of his rapture. Although Wordsworth was no alien to earth's defects, the redeeming powers for him were no occult company but in the very activities of nature and humanity. He names his province—intra-terrestrial rather than ultra-terrestrial—when he tells the unfortunate Negro liberator of San Domingo, Toussaint L'Ouverture:

Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee, air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind

That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
 Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
 And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

Not that Shelley is without fight: after all, he has written *Prometheus Unbound* and its grand close is as heroic, as loftily strong, in the midst of the world's wreckage as this apostrophe to Toussaint. The difference, however, is that Shelley is bravely defiant while Wordsworth is bravely acceptant: the one is obsessed by earth's recalcitrance and frets to make a heaven out of what seems most earthy, the other is convinced that there is no great cause for disappointment and that the pantheistic realisation is sufficient refuge and that by its building up an inner life the sharp need is removed for wishing away the many rigidities and angularities of outer fact. Nature, in Wordsworth's eyes, has in her deep breast an asylum here and now for the anguish that frequently arises in us owing to physical vicissitudes. Shelley cannot make his peace completely with world and life and time: perhaps his most Shelleyan lines were the exquisite fragment he wrote a few months before his death and which a critic has regarded as having an unequalled intensity of aspiration:

I loved—ah, no, I mean not one of ye,
 Or any earthly soul, though ye are dear
 As human heart to human heart may be,
 I loved I know not what; but this lone sphere
 And all that it contains, contains not thee,
 Thou whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.

An insatiable spiritual idealism is in this fragment—a pantheistic ecstasy which is yet touched with an agonised dream of some perfect Beyond and thereby subtly differentiated from, though not proved less valuable in its essence than, Wordsworth's calm intuition of the omnipresent Godhead. Of course, we cannot say that Shelley is never quite Wordsworthian in mood or that Wordsworth is always untinged by the Shelleyan perception. Poetic moods and perceptions are seldom found in watertight compartments. Yet we shall not be wrong in thinking the most Wordsworthian lines to be perhaps the fragment retrieved by Mr. H. de Selincourt, suggesting no perfect Beyond but magnificently emphasising a single-selfed Within:

One interior life
 In which all beings live with God, themselves
 Are God, existing in the mighty whole,
 As indistinguishable as the cloudless east
 At noon is from the cloudless west, when all
 The hemisphere is one cerulean blue.

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

THE SERVICE TREE

THEE I salute, O Service Tree!
O selfless servant of the Lord,
Thou art our ideal of service free,
With heart and soul in one accord.

Thou camest here quite long ago,
Remembered by our gracious Master;
Slow, steady was thy growth, although
Thou wouldst have liked to have it faster.

The Mother kept Thee in Her arms,
No wrath could shake thy settled strength:
Thy greenness gathered free from harms,
Thy stature grew to lordly length.

Thy soul breaks forth as rain of gold,
Thy worship-flowers loved by us;
Thy gifts are more than we can hold,
Thy beauty shines miraculous.

Untired thou standest day and night,
To shade the Eternal's earthly bed;
Thy care's a soul-stirring sight;
To Sachchidananda thou art wed.

Grow thou within us ever so,
Receiving the homage of our soul,
That we on this blessed Earth below
May serve the Human God, our Goal.

PUNJALAL

HOMER, HOMERIC POETRY AND THE *ILIAD*

(Continued from the January issue)

CONCERNING the discoveries of the archaeologists, we have heard much; and too much has been made of them. It is true that a city or rather a fortress has been unearthed; but it would not be of much interest if it had not been factitiously connected with Homer: if it has not been decreed, that is, to be "Troy". But it does not at all satisfy the Homeric qualifications; and indeed, why should one be as simple-minded as the celebrated Schliemann, "whose faith was vindicated", and think that Homer "told the truth"—especially if he lived some centuries after the event? Certainly, on the other hand, if he "told the truth", then "Troy VIIa" cannot be the city he told about. It is too small, it is too near the Hellespont, it is on the wrong side of the river, and it is not high enough above the plain; aside from the fact that it is a fortress, and not a city at all.¹ Then again, there is no archaeological evidence that this establishment had any contact with the inland of Asia Minor, where most of the "far-famed allies" came from. All the pottery found there is from the west. And the splendid city of Homer would no doubt have been able to invent its own style of pottery; though Homer maliciously neglects to inform us on this point.

Whether there really was a stronghold that dominated the Hellespont and was destroyed by invaders is another matter entirely, important to historians but not to students of the *Iliad*. For these, it is Homer's city that is important. What really happened was probably not worth writing a poem about.

Schliemann also claimed to have discovered Nestor's cup; but what he discovered is very little like what Homer describes. In fact, Schliemann's opinions were like his excavations at Hissarlik: enthusiastic and unskilled.

And in fact, the "material facts" that archaeology has supplied to the "Homeric Question" are few, and are immaterial to the understanding of the *Iliad*. Indeed, a knowledge of the entire authentic personal history of Agamemnon and Menelaos, complete with the clothes they wore and even a photograph of Helen, would not carry us far in this direction. Archaeology has its purpose, but helping us to understand poetry is not it. Homer is not, for us, the inhabitant of a particular world; he is the creator of one. His characters live not in the historical Mykenai, but in this world of his creation.

As for the kind of world this was, I cannot do better than quote from Sri Aurobindo's great epic *Savitri* (Book Two, Canto Four):

¹ There is a forceful discussion of this matter in Rhys Carpenter's book, *Folk Tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics*.

To guard their form of self from Nature's harm,
 To enjoy and to survive was all their care.
 The narrow horizon of their days was filled
 With things and creatures that could help and hurt:
 The world's values hung upon their little self.
 Isolated, cramped in the vast unknown,
 To save their small lives from surrounding Death
 They made a tiny circle of defense
 Against the siege of a huge universe:
 They preyed upon the world and were its prey,
 But never dreamed to conquer and be free.
 Obeying the World-Power's hints and firm taboos
 A scanty part they drew from her rich store ;
 There was no conscious code and no life-plan:
 The patterns of thinking of a little group
 Fixed a traditional behaviour's law.
 Ignorant of soul save as a wraith within
 Tied to a mechanism of unchanging lives
 And to a dull usual sense and feeling's beat,
 They turned in grooves of animal desire.
 In walls of stone fenced round they worked and warred,
 Did by a banded selfishness a small good
 Or wrought a dreadful wrong and cruel pain
 On sentient lives and thought they did no ill.
 Ardent from the sack of happy peaceful homes
 And gorged with slaughter, plunder, rape and fire,
 They made of human selves their helpless prey,
 A drove of captives led to lifelong woe
 Or torture a spectacle made and holiday,
 Mocking or thrilled by their torn victim's pangs;
 Admiring themselves as titans and as gods
 Proudly they sang their high and glorious deeds
 And praised their victory and their splendid force.

*
**

Only the life could think and not the mind,
 Only the sense could feel and not the soul,
 Only was lit some heat of the flame of Life,
 Some joy to be, some rapturous leaps of sense.

This is the world that Homer gives us, and for all the splendor of his poetry it is

a small world: the largeness is in the poetry itself. For poetry is always larger than its circumstances, and comes from beyond them; and of one kind of poetry, Homer is the supreme master. He is not a poet of the vital world, with its turbulence and radiance, its light and dark raptures and despairs, its thirsts for joy and anguish, like Shakespeare and Kalidasa; nor is he a mental poet, subordinating everything to a clear, hard vision of existence, like Dante and Milton; much less is he a spiritual poet, opening deathless vistas above and within for evolving humanity, like the Vedic Rishis, Valmiki, Vyasa, Sri Aurobindo; in a sense he is lower than all these, but in a sense he is the equal of any, giving one aspect of things an unsurpassed and unrivalled expression. He is the poet of the physical world, and of men in so far as they are physical bodies; he is the master of a poetry as clear and plain and uncompromising as a landscape or a seascape in air without mist or haze, with whatever sentient beings may be present, in their most outward aspects.

He may give us the splendor of an attacking lion, but purely as seen by the outward eye. And it is so for the most part that he gives us the splendor of Achilles and his other characters; for though much of the *Iliad* is dialogue, these men and women are all on the surface, and their self-knowledge is even more slender than King Lear's. And yet they have a grandeur, the grandeur perhaps of archetypes in the World-Consciousness, and they live, one feels that they are human beings, capable of growth: and the sublimest part of the poem is concerned with the growing pains of Achilles.

Though the power of Homer comes through strongly even in a prose translation, there is a certain barrier between him and the very cerebral twentieth century man, and it seems that the *Odyssey* is now in more favor than the *Iliad*; apparently because Odysseus is the only Homeric man that a Modern man is able to feel much kinship with. But surely without belittling the *Odyssey*, we may acknowledge that the *Iliad* is the greater work. It is patently so to me; and it has been so considered, from the earliest time of which we have any record, down to the present century. But to read such a poem, one must read himself back into the right conditions; he cannot expect to find men who are fundamentally contemporaries of his own. That is in fact where the value of a great epic lies: in taking one into a different world, and expanding his horizons.

Thus in Homer, and most completely in the *Iliad*, we may become acquainted with the glories and limitations of sub-mental man. Not that Achilles and the rest do not have mentality at all: but they have only the rudiments, mostly physical and sensational mind, and have hardly begun to develop the thinking capacity. That is, they are hardly men, as we know men: they are not mental beings, and while they are sometimes visited by a tendency to thinking, they have no thoughts worthy of the name. They draw their existence from a lower level. Except in certain external features, they are not at all comparable to the far subtler, more intelligent, more cultured and highly civilized heroes of the great epics of India; they are below the old heroes of Ireland too,

So, crude and elementary though the mental processes of Odysseus are, he is relatively so thoughtful as to be a man apart in his environment.

We should like to know more about Periphetes, son of the non-illustrious Kopreus, whose mind was "One of the very best, among all the men of Mykenai"—the one who tripped over his shield.

To compare cultures may now be instructive. We will say little of Ireland, with its flexible play of intelligence and its vital mysticism; there we have a mass of legends, but no real epic, from a hand comparable to Homer's: and in fact the *Tain Bo Cuailgne* may illustrate what happens when one merely pieces things together. (Also it is saga, not epic, and reserves its poetry for interspersed songs.) But we have the great *Mahabharata*, a work immense in more ways than one.

In this poem, Arjuna has a place comparable to that of Achilles: he is the greatest warrior on the side where the author's main sympathies lie: the Kauravas being given to evil courses like the oath-breakers of Troy, descendants of Laomedon the arch-defaulter. Also both Achilles and Arjuna are wronged by an overbearing man who is their inferior by nature though not by station; and both come to question the heroic code by which they live, but end by accepting it. Yet for all the points of similarity, the contrast, the difference in the ambience and the implications, is monumental. For compared to Achilles, or without any comparison, Arjuna is a highly developed human being; and compared to the world of the long-haired Achaians, or indeed without such comparison, the world of the sons of Pandu is large, and radiant with light. In Bharatavarsha, among these great Kshatriyas and Brahmins, there is keen intellect and flourishing spirituality—a human status far in advance of that of the Achaians. In his world, Achilles fights for personal honor, and glory, as warriors understand it: so does Arjuna—but, in his superior world, he fights in defense of the superiority, he is the champion of a high and noble civilization, of which he is one of the nobler products. There is little comparison between his sense of honor and that of Achilles; and the advantage is not on the side of the Hellene. Achilles is closer to the perhaps sublime blockhead Roland, who sacrificed a whole army to his personal pride. (And the French have called themselves the heirs of the Greeks, indeed: here may be one legitimate point of comparison.) In largeness of living, expansiveness and subtleness of view, the world of Arjuna is altogether the greater, offering infinite possibilities to humanity; the world of Achilles is limited to an appalling degree. It is a world in which a little brief and problematical honor, glory among men, is really all one has.

But, for all his limitations, Achilles is one of the great characters of the world's literature, the dominant figure in one of our greatest poems. For though "sulking in his tent" does not exactly cover the case, Achilles in his wrath is an unforgettable phenomenon, known even to those who have not read the *Iliad*. He is more than a figure of literature; he is a figure of the consciousness of the race. He is a force, a fact; and however we may lament the fate of Hektor, still the living form, larger than life, that stands most strongly in our imagination, is that of Achilles.

The subtlety with which Homer portrays Hektor, and the sympathy that he has

succeeded in building for him, would seem to have obscured for many the fact that he is the inferior man. But the fact should be plain enough. Hektor is more easily understood, perhaps, and more easily identified with, nowadays; but the superiority of Achilles over everyone else in the *Iliad*, his superior nature and superior capacity for growth, and the accepting of promptings toward a better and larger life, is manifest. To think of him as a raging wild beast or a ridiculous spoiled child is to betray one's own limitations. He is a demigod.

He is the hero; and for all the pathos of Andromache, the heroine, the one who has caught the world's imagination, is Helen; who is worth any suffering, because she is "So divinely lovely, like a goddess immortal".

She is like a goddess, and Achilles is like a god. But he is far from being like a god or close to the gods as Arjuna is, or even Cuchulain; for he lives in a smaller and darker world than these. But what kind of world it is in this respect, is best learned simply by reading the *Iliad*. A Homeric theology might be concocted, but it would not be very cogent.

For the gods of such men as Homer's Achaians may be splendid powers, but they will not be found organized in any exhaustive or even coherent scheme. Homer is not a thinker, or a singer of the glories of thinking, and theology is not what we expect of him. He has been called profound for remarking that the generations of men come and go like the leaves on the trees; but his real profundity is to be appreciated less in the head than in the diaphragm. And in fact one of the Homeric words that is usually translated "heart" might more accurately be translated "diaphragm". Also the Homeric "spirit" is a vital-physical power, with nothing of the genuinely spiritual about it. There is nothing intellectual, and nothing spiritual, about these Achaians. They live in and for the body, and have only the most slight and rudimentary awareness of anything else. Their gods, Homer's gods, are not personifications of natural features or of human faculties; they exist in their own sphere, and they visit men; but this is not intellectualized. Fate, Moira, rules absolutely, in so far as anything is conceived to do so: there is occasional apprehension of something's happening "counter to fate", or beyond what is appointed: but then a god steps in to keep the balance. Except, be it noted, in one case: there the Achaians do triumph, it is said, beyond their fate, lot or portion. This line cannot be pronounced an interpolation, on the ground that it is contradictory to some fancied Homeric theology. One must not expect clear and definite formulating and philosophising here. One must feel, and enter as best he can into this alien world, by his aesthetic sensitivity and his imaginative sympathy. And he should hesitate to suppose that Homer did not take his gods seriously: a genuine seriousness does not preclude a kind of familiarity, and Homer never denies, and often affirms, that the gods have the greater power. How much greater light they may have, is another question: but it should be remembered that they are not of the old chthonic gods, the gods of darkness; and Homer may well have been the greatest religious innovator the Greeks ever had.

But the counsels of Homer's gods are dark and devious, and mortals are never sure of them; and they do not hope to understand them, in all their ramifications. As Nestor says in one place, they do not know whether Zeus is telling the truth or not; and as Zeus himself says, he never lies or goes back on his word, when he nods his head. But only small and limited truth can be given to small and limited consciousness; and Zeus indeed is the son of the "crooked-counselling" Kronos; which can be taken as another name for Time itself, with all its obscurities and perplexities: the "all-devourer" that Arjuna is given the vision of at Kurukshetra.

Thus one wonders how the disintegrators have discovered perplexity at the fact that Agamemnon does not immediately act on the admittedly deceitful dream sent him by Zeus: also that Priam does not seem to receive with a due seriousness the intelligence that Hermes is to be his guide to Achilles. Even a cursory reading of the poem should make it quite plain that Homer's people are never sure of Zeus or entirely trustful of his messages to them; and for good reason enough. Indeed this uncertainty about the gods adds much to the pathos of the celebrated final book.

(To be continued)

JESSE ROARKE

ASPIRATIONS

I

THOU art Beauty's child and walkst
 Within Her glowing robe of Light.
 Ignorance unveiled, thou shalt find
 Fulfilment at Thy Master's feet.
 For all these roads our labor treads
 Suffice to bring us nearer still
 In silence to the golden door.
 His eyes of stillness gather all
 Into Her vast immense embrace.

2

O speak to me so quietly of sounds
 That come from other spheres and joyously
 We shall lay down our lives at the Mother's Feet.
 Tell me, flowers, radiant and gleaming
 In the sunlight of Her smile, of Peace
 Descending through the realms of space
 Into our mortal atmosphere, and breathe,
 O mind and heart and will, Her crystal Fire,
 His vastness and His calm Infinity.

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

THE REVOLUTION SUPREME

WHAT does the Truth call for in this Hour of God, when the Divine Mother has told us “No words—acts”, if not *the most timely, adequate and imperative action, the Revolution Supreme*, to crown this age of revolutions and lead us on, in the Light of Sri Aurobindo, to *human survival and collective fulfilment*?

All signs confirm that the time has come for by far the greatest change in human history, a change so vast and deep and momentous as to justify our calling it “the Revolution Supreme”.

Lesser revolutions, whatever their merits, are now outdated, for we are challenged, all of us, to take up the ultimate revolution, *our imperative common cause*. Anything less would be suicidally inadequate to meet this super-crisis.

Once world tensions have built up as far as they now have, there is no comprehensive solution that can be called anything less than a *revolution*, so great and swift must the change be, to save the situation and win for us survival.

Sri Aurobindo, in 1915, in the first chapter of *The Ideal of Human Unity*, wrote of “the revolution the human intellect is beginning to envisage”...and he went on to speak of “a great change” in the long process of the evolution of world unity. Early in 1917, the year of the Russian (October) Revolution, the Master spoke, in *Thoughts and Glances*, of “the spiritual revolution” to come, and a year later, in *The Human Cycle*, he foresaw, “*still below the horizon*”, the potentiality of “*a profound revolution throughout the whole range of human existence*”. (What does this mean, if not the Revolution Supreme?) Then follows immediately His detailed picture of a coming spiritualised world society, in the light of His “spiritual realism”, and we cannot help recognising, as we read what Sri Aurobindo wrote as to the signs of the coming of a Spiritual Age, *that this age has indeed begun to dawn*.

In one of His last writings before He left His body in 1950, the Postscript chapter of *The Ideal of Human Unity*, Sri Aurobindo reaffirms the basic insights of that master work, indicates something of the revolutionary changes that must come, and follows it immediately with the gravest of warnings about the urgency of the matter, saying, “It is for the men of our days and, at the most, of tomorrow to give the answer. For, too long a postponement or too continued a failure will open the way to a series of increasing catastrophes which might create a too prolonged and disastrous confusion and chaos and render a solution too difficult or impossible; it might even end in something like an irremediable crash, not only of the present world-civilisation but of all civilisation.” This stark warning should shock every one of us wide awake, whatever his sophistication!

Only the Revolution Supreme can satisfy the surge of revolt of the uprising generation, not content with either “the Establishment” or old-style revolution. In this electronic age, which moves with the speed of light and of jet communication, the

far-Left revolution, conceived in the groping infancy of science in 1848 (the Communist Manifesto), is outdated, out of harmony with what the philosophy of science today tells us as to the nature of reality, as attested even by the greatest of Soviet scientists. Its basic doctrine of irreconcilable class conflict, inevitably issuing in class war and the dictatorship of the proletariat, will, if pressed, prove suicidal to the human family in this age of the H-bomb. And there are other ways of speeding economic and social justice, as we shall see.

Any far-Right revolution is, from the standpoint of human progress, a contradiction in terms; it would be devolution, anti-revolution.

To be sure, there are important elements of truth in both Left and Right which the Revolution Supreme will incorporate in its undogmatic, undoctrinaire Way, its symphony of integral, dynamic truth. But this ultimate revolution will respond to the pregnant fact that we are in the dawn of the Spiritual Age by an *inwardness* that superficial revolutions have lacked, *the sure and deep foundations* with which *spiritual realism* will undergird its bid to transform our human society into the whole majestic Himalayan range of a new life on the new earth.

To the youthful, whatever their age, the Revolution Supreme beckons to high adventure. The sheer drama of our human situation in this unique moment of history, and the challenge of this high hour will awaken in us who respond all-out the thrill of a thousand lifetimes, not a superficial thrill, but one enshrining supreme values and the highest individual and collective fulfilment.

The Revolution Supreme will gratefully come alive to a galaxy of charismatic leaders, *all of the greatest ones, forever living*, who are really, potently present, here and now, to our inner being, to summon us, not to the barricades but to the stars, in this astronomical age; *and here on earth*, to the grand new vistas of fraternal co-conquest of suspicion, fear, exploitation, disease, privation and every type of egoistic nonsense, under whatever banner it swaggers.

This super-galaxy includes all the heroic figures of human history who have been faithful forerunners of the Revolution Supreme. We shall invoke their inspiration and guidance, now that the climactic Hour which they strove to bring near has arrived.

Among them is one who in special measure has pioneered this revolution and who has eminent qualifications for this role, in that he combines the *inner* spiritual conquest of a Mahayogi, an explorer and master of the realms of higher consciousness, with a rich *objective* revolutionary experience and a masterful development of integral spiritual realistic statesmanship. And this is important: this person, Sri Aurobindo, has inspired the launching of what may well prove to be the unofficial but real capital for the Revolution Supreme and an ideal base for the United World Peoples' Forces at the heart of that revolution, Auroville, City of the Dawn and of the Radiant Future, Focus of Human Unity.

Because of the awesome powers science has put into the hands of man in this supreme crisis, the revolution which is to climax this age of revolutions must be an

evolutionary revolution, in *intention* and essentially a non-violent one, and *one in which, by its very nature, all the people may be victorious.*

When, twenty-four years after Hiroshima's ultimatum, "*Unite or Perish*", the great powers are still locked in desperate dead-end dilemmas, it should be easier for any intelligent being to believe that *all* must unite or *all* will perish, for that ultimatum is still addressed to *all*!

But in keeping with the accelerating tempo of this age, the Revolution Supreme will mean a rapid evolution, intent upon *speeding* economic and social justice and creative means for human fulfilment to the last man, woman and child. The coming swift increase in human unity for survival and fulfilment, and the Great Detente which dynamic peace-making will bring, will release vast new resources for *human brotherhood-in-action*. It is a staggering fact that the rival Cold War powers and their allies spend more on armament than the income of the hundred-odd developing nations combined! Imagine what the ending of this appalling drain could do to release vast new resources for development and progress unlimited!

No longer will the concepts and standards of the French and American Revolutions of the 18th century, or the Russian and Chinese Revolutions of the first half of the 20th, based as the latter are on a world outlook, a conception of the nature of reality, a philosophy of science of the middle of the 19th century, be adequate in this supercrisis that challenges all our old foundations and calls us to build the new world order on our best *present* understanding of Reality and the Laws of Life as they pertain to the radiant future.

This revolution will be a deep and integral one, involving not only the usual, too superficial, political, economic and social factors, but *also*, definitely, the *deeper ethical, spiritual and cultural elements* of that thorough-going change. It will thus be on unshakable foundations. We must foster a mighty mobilisation of moral and spiritual resources, world-wide.

This is indeed the Hour of the Supreme! However each of us may conceive the Supreme Power that pervades and governs this universe, whether personal, supra-personal, or impersonal, the time of reckoning, "Judgment Day", has come, calling for a radical Awakening and a reassessment of old values in the light of each person's best conception of that Sovereign Reality, and above all, confronting us with the opportunity and responsibility of being all out for the Supreme in this high Hour.

It can not be too often reiterated that in this supercrisis of the human family, we must have a *one-world solution*. *It must be an integral, comprehensive and adequate Answer* to the challenge of the total situation. All previous revolutions in human history have been *regional*. This Revolution Supreme will be a *world* revolution, for a New Day for the entire human family.

The present dead-end dilemmas of the power blocs must be resolved, otherwise it is only a matter of a relatively short time until the current "balance of terror" is broken and we ALL plunge into the abyss. We have had twenty-four years of search

for piecemeal and *ad hoc* "solutions", by the old ineffective diplomatic, governmental, military machinery, to no avail. The integral new approach is now imperative!

(To be continued)

JAY HOLMES SMITH

A RIVER CALLED PREM

ONCE upon a time a company of fools
stopped on the banks of a wide river.

- First Fool: "What a waste of water.
All just going into the sea."
- Second Fool: "It flows so slowly
it will never reach the sea."
- Third Fool: "It would not be noticed
even if it did reach the sea."
- Fourth Fool: "The sea is filling up. Soon there
will be no room for any more water."
- Chief Fool: "If we could find the river's source
we could dam it up so that the sea
would never overflow."

And that is what they tried to do.
But easy as it seemed, they could
not find the source. In fact they
even lost the river. Finally they
settled on a village pump which
they polished and put their names
on.

NORMAN THOMAS

GIFTS OF GRACE

(Continued from the issue of October)

THE PSYCHIC BEING—THE HARBINGER OF DIVINE LIFE ON EARTH

Pratīveśo'si. Pra mā bhāhi. Pra mā padyasva

“O LORD, thou art my neighbour, thou dwellest very near me. Come to me, be my light and sun.”

In the foregoing chapters I have dwelt on the causes of illness in Yoga and of depression. Now I turn to “the moments when inner lamps are lit”. Sri Aurobindo lays great stress on bringing the psychic to the front and making it the pivot of our sadhana. For, “when the mind or the vital or the physical consciousness is on the top”, says he, “then the sadhana is a tapasya and a struggle.”¹

My purpose is not to describe the place of the psychic and of its philosophical aspects in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga but to say something about its functions and about the progress of my sadhana under its influence, though it may be nothing but the babbling of a beginner.

Sri Aurobindo is very emphatic on the point. Without bringing the psychic to the front, no gain, however great, is a gain of permanent value. He affirms:

“One may practice Yoga and get illumination in the mind and the reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate in all kinds of experiences in the vital; but if the true soul-power behind does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come to the front, nothing genuine has been done.”²

The psychic is the delegate of the Divine in the material world. Regarding its function the Mother states: “The psychic is like an electric wire that connects the generator with the lamp; the lamp being the body, the visible form. Its function is likewise, that is to say, if the psychic wire is not there in Matter, it could have no direct contact with the Divine. It is because of the psychic presence that there can be a direct contact between Matter and the Divine. And every human being can be told: ‘You carry the Divine within you, you have only to enter within yourself and you will find him.’ ”³

Hence the psychic presence in the material world is a promise that a day will come when the world will be “the home of the Wonderful”. Until all is transformed into a luminous whole its purpose in evolution cannot be fulfilled.

¹ *Letters*, Vol. IV p. 174.

² *Lights on Yoga*, p. 48.

³ *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, part IX p. 15.

The gods are satisfied with their own status and feel no need for a change. Animals are satisfied with the fulfilments of their needs. It is only man who is never satisfied as he is. It is the psychic in him which is the source of his divine discontent.

Like a tree with its foot planted on the earth, man aspires to reach out to the Most High. Wherever there is an awakening to higher values it can be assumed that it is the influence of the psychic that is at work, though enwrapped in obscurities. It is because of its presence that even the most crude in nature feels a pinch in his consciousness, while on the point of doing an evil act.

The coming to the front of the psychic and its taking the field in sadhana is a sure sign of progress from light to light. It is the influence of the psychic that can change the very stuff and texture of our being. Every fibre of our being has to grow exclusively turned to the Divine like the turning of the sunflower to the sun. And this is possible only by the opening and development of the psychic in us.

The more we try to get out of the old rut the more are we caught in the vortex of the clamours and conflicts of our lower members. We have to proceed step by step till the psychic sets up its own government within, throwing open to our eyes new vistas, new horizons, and ultimately a new heaven and a new earth.

Let us take note of the Mother's words:

"Before the true self is known, you are a public place, not a being. There are so many clashing forces working in you."¹

But how to know our true being?

"Concentrate in the heart. Enter into it, go within and deep and far, as far as you can. Gather all the strings of your consciousness that are spread abroad, roll them up and take a plunge and sink down.

"A fire is burning there, in the deep quietude of the heart. It is the divinity in you—your being. Hear its voice, follow its dictates."²

At another place She says:

"To dwell in the psychic is to be lifted above all greed. You will have no hankering, no worry, no feverish desire. And you will feel also that whatever happens, happens for the best."³

These words of the Mother, once so mysterious and incomprehensible, are now a bright radiant truth despite the fact that what I have gained as yet is only a start.

How difficult the task is can be gathered from the fact that after all my honest strivings my psychic has not yet become the ruler of my life though its opening was there from 1934 and also its fire as can be seen from the Master's reply to my letters:

I wrote: "Last night while in meditation I saw a lotus opening in the heart, not in its natural colour but as if made of bright white light with a shadowy figure of Sri Krishna standing on it. I pray to be enlightened on the point."

¹ *Words of the Mother*—Third Series, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, I

³ *Ibid.*, III, p. 2

Sri Aurobindo answered: "It indicates a psychic opening to the Divine Love."
(30-10-1934)

Again, I wrote: "On the 5th inst. just before the Mother's coming down I saw myself with folded palms in white colour praying for Her advent.

"Yesterday as soon as the Mother's footsteps reached my ears I felt as if someone came out of me and lay prostrate on the staircase aspiring that She might walk over my body. It was followed by a fine action in the heart. Does it augur any happy sign?"

Sri Aurobindo replied: "It was a psychic movement. Evidently the psychic is coming to the front."
(7-9-1934)

The following lines will show what the signs are of the psychic coming to the front.

"When that happens one is aware of the psychic being with its simple spontaneous self-giving and feels its increasing direct control (not merely a veiled or half-veiled influence) over mind, vital and physical. Especially there is the psychic discernment which at once lights up the thoughts, emotional movements, vital pushes, physical habits and leaves nothing there obscure, substituting right movements for the wrong ones. It is this that is difficult and rare..."

Q. Once I saw the heart melting and spreading before the Mother. Has it a significance?

Sri Aurobindo: "It is a psychic experience."

To another question Sri Aurobindo wrote:

"The pink calf might be the psychic consciousness under the white light.

"The golden flame is the flame of the truth rising in the heart and the door was the opening probably in the psychical mind."
(2-3-1937)

Once I had a vision of a blazing vessel of coal in or outside the heart (I was not sure of the exact location). The Master's remark was:

"The psychic fire in that part of the being."
(1-7-1936)

Another letter of mine ran: "Five or six times I saw fire burning in the heart, sometimes like a flaming torch, sometimes rising as if from an oven. But I sensed no sign of the psychic coming to the front. Pray enlighten me a little on the point."

Sri Aurobindo's reply was:

"The psychic is open and often active and the psychic fire is there. The psychic in front and governing all the nature has yet to come."
(15-9-1936)

Once just after a descent I felt my whole being rolled up and gone deep within, steeped in peace. When the normal consciousness returned, the heart was full of the feelings of surrender and gratitude. This state continued in sleep and lasted till the next day. The Master explained:

"As a result of the descent, the consciousness went into the psychic centre."
(24-6-1935)

Another letter of mine, dated June 24, 1935, will speak how meditation grew spontaneous and effortless.

“Since I wrote my last, there has been a frequent play in me of the Mother’s power. Even when I sat with no intention to meditate the power started pouring in and the action continued for an hour or so. Sometimes the descent was followed by peace, sometimes by a burning sensation. If there was a burning sensation, it passed into one of peace after Pranam to the Mother.”

What Sri Aurobindo wrote back was:

“They are the results when the higher consciousness is trying to fix itself in the inner being.”

Once at night while praying I forgot all about myself and saw a baby quite healthy lying at the feet of the Mother. Previously also I had a similar vision.

“As it came after forgetting yourself,” commented Sri Aurobindo, “it would mean the complete psychic surrender through the abolition of all egocentricity.”

(14-7-1936)

During two weeks I felt the heart withdrawn repeating ‘Ma’, ‘Ma’, while the hands were at work. Three years before, this was not possible. I asked if it betokened any change within.

“Yes, it means that the psychic has become active within,” said Sri Aurobindo.

Once in the heart I saw a big disc of bright white light. From it emerged a white being in armour arousing a feeling that it was Arjuna.

“It was a symbol of a new luminous strength in the inner being.”

Very often I felt the forces rising from the feet upward.

“The rising upward means simply the force working to raise the being to the higher plane of consciousness.”

Once in meditation I saw in the heart a hill of pure gold with a pink-coloured pigeon.

“The psychic peace and love within—the hill of pure gold—transformation of the *ādhār*.”

One night my consciousness turned into a fort with a beautiful garden round it and it began to rise higher and higher till it reached the sky, looking luminous, and saw the moon unusually big. I inquired whether it indicated that the mind had opened to the higher consciousness.

“There is nothing to indicate specially the mind consciousness—it is an experience either of the psychic consciousness or of the whole consciousness under the influence of the psychic rising up towards the spiritual planes.”

Q. During the Pranam time, while at work, I suddenly felt as if something possessed me. I became calm and quiet. Then the whole body was filled with the force. A little afterwards I saw a young child sitting like a statue in the heart and a blood red light was falling upon him profusely, which made the whole space look blood-red.

Sri Aurobindo: “It seems to indicate the calm and stillness of the higher con-

sciousness reaching the higher vital (heart) with the result that the psychic sits there full of that stillness (like a statue) and controls the emotional nature. The blood-red light is the light of the transforming Power from above."

Q. Is psychicisation a step towards the entry into the Mother's consciousness? What is psychicisation? How does it differ from spiritualisation?

Sri Aurobindo: "Psychicisation means the change of the lower nature bringing right vision into the mind, right impulse and feeling into the vital, right movement and habit into the physical—all turned to the Divine, all based on love, adoration, bhakti—finally, the vision and sense of the Mother everywhere in all as in the heart, her Force working in the being, etc., faith, consecration, surrender.

"The spiritual change is the established descent of the Peace, Light, Knowledge, Power, Bliss from above, the awareness of the Self and the divine and a higher cosmic consciousness and the change of the whole consciousness to that."

Another question of mine was: "What was the difference between the realisation of the Self and of the psychic?"

"The Jiva is realised as the individual Self, Atman, the central being above the Nature, calm, untouched by the movements of Nature but supporting their evolution though not involved in it. Through this realisation silence, freedom, wideness, mastery, purity, a sense of universality in the individual as one centre of this divine universality become the normal experience. The psychic is realised as the Purusha behind the heart. It is not universalised like the Jivatman, but is the individual soul supporting from its place behind the heart—centre the mental, vital, physical, psychic evolution of the being in Nature. Its realisation brings Bhakti, self-giving, surrender, turning of all the movements Godward, discrimination and choice of all that belongs to the Divine Truth, Good, Beauty, rejection of all that is false, evil, ugly, discordant, union through love and sympathy with all existence, openness to the Truth of the Self and the Divine." (8-1-1937)

(To be continued)

A DISCIPLE

THE LATEST PUBLICATIONS OF THE MOTHER'S WRITINGS

THE Mother's latest *Entretiens* volumes (covering 1950, '51, '56, '57) are strikingly modern in content and style. Given as answers to various disciples, they assume, when treating the infinitesimal and the subtlest questions of life, matter and spirit, a close scientific lucidity; and they become a sheer transcription of the principles and aspects of the Real when dealing with the ever-expanding and ever-heightening inward journey of the pilgrim soul. The problems faced are countless. Though purposeful to the core, a trait dear to Science, the art of the rounded smoothness of perfection in utterance drapes the answers in the needed style. The Mother's manner, so often of austere reticence, reminds us of the Upanishadic and Vedic seers to whom words were not mere sounds but truths recreated, a force of life-transfiguration drawn from the very source of things.

In 1952 there appeared *Éducation* and the following year *Les Quatre Austerités et les Quatre Liberations*. The two should be read as complementary and companion treatises. Though slender in appearance, both of them contain a world of new light. In the first place the idea or ideal of the complete education of man is brought home. Such education is necessarily the education of the complete man—man in his body, life, mind, psyche and spirit. Thus alone can there be a science of total living. Any programme short of it leaves a part or parts in man unregenerated and that sooner or later brings down the whole individual edifice.

When the real and total education is achieved the individual is ready for a greater task—the 'four austerities' (1. Tapasya of love, 2. Tapasya of knowledge, 3. Tapasya of power, and 4. Tapasya of beauty)—leading to the 'four liberations' (freedom from all attachment and suffering, freedom from ignorance, freedom from desire and freedom from the clutches of 'material consequences').

Both the volumes are written in the characteristic style of the Mother in this *genre*: in reality they are not written but spoken—they are as simple as simplicity can be, without any of the verbosity and convolutions of the specialised science of psychology. The result is a pleasant surprise. The simple seeker can find and forge his way himself, there being no wordy confusion, no pedantry to obstruct or hinder him. This is the style that encourages the reader, consoles him and leads him from light to more light.

This short survey would remain incomplete if no mention were made of the two sweet little inspiring plays of the Mother—*Vers L'Avenir* (1949) and *L'Ascension vers la Vérité* (1954) which unfortunately so far have remained confined to the pages of the *Bulletin* and have not appeared in bookform to draw the attention they deserve, for their unique theme, their grand dialogue and elevating action.

SAMIR KANTA GUPTA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobinder Mul Bangla Rachanabali (*The Original Bengali Writings of Sri Aurobindo*) Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry and Calcutta. Price : Rs. 14.00

SRI Aurobindo's writings may be opening up hitherto sealed horizons of splendour to more and more people day by day, more and more people may be feeling "like some watcher of the skies, when a new planet swims into his ken". But that wide expanse is made of English. But after all, Bengali was his mother-tongue howsoever deliberately he might have been snatched away from it, and who can think of Sri Aurobindo not paying back the "birth-debt" to the tongue?

So he wrote in Bengali as soon as the circumstance permitted him or demanded of him to do so. About his lessons in Bengali, Nolini Kanta Gupta, editor of the volume under review, says:

"Sri Aurobindo began writing in Bengali while in England, rather in violation of his father's instructions. It came about, since, even though it did not happen earlier, he came across and mixed with Bengalis in his college days. Later he chose Bengali as the Indian language for the Civil Service Examinations. (A candidate had to take up an Indian language.) He told us an amusing anecdote: They had found their Bengali teacher in an Englishman—a *pucca* Englishman at that! A mischievous pupil one day showed him a piece of composition (in imitation of Bankimchandra) and said, "Sir, this is a piece of difficult Bengali. Can't understand. Would you please explain?" The teacher closely scrutinised it for quite some time and then gave an I.C.S.-like verdict; "This is not Bengali!"

"Sri Aurobindo took up Bengali seriously and began reading, writing and speaking it only after he came to Baroda. The first fruit of his learning Bengali came in the form of his essays on Bankimchandra, followed by translations of Chandidas, Vidya-pati and the *Kavivals*..."

Later Sri Aurobindo wrote in Bengali, not only his letters to Mrinalini Devi, but also several essays for the journal *Dharma* (1909), replies to some disciples and a few pieces to meet some other demands.

A brilliant assortment of his Bengali writings of various tones—from a personal record like *Karakahini*, deep observations steeped in humour, to profound essays on the Vedas and tender words of guidance to disciples—the volume under review all through vibrates with Spirit. The collection is most appropriately divided into eleven sections. They are: Hymn to Mother Durga, Tales, On the Vedas, On the Upanishads, On the Puranas, On the Gita, Religion and Nationalism, Nationalism, Letters, Karakahini (Prison Reminiscences), and the editorials from the *Dharma*. Sri Aurobindo's Bengali style is at once sublime and possessed of a uniquely striking

capacity to drive a point home through a disarming absence of any effort at contrivance.

Produced under the Sri Aurobindo Society's scheme to bring out the works of the Master in major Indian languages on the occasion of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary (1972), this volume stands apart for its merit of being the sole compilation of the Master's original Bengali works. The popular price of the book has been made possible through a subvention received from the Government of West Bengal.

MANOJ DAS

Samarpitaen (Dedications): A collection of Hindi poems by *Devdutt*. Published by Trivangima Prakashan, 13/24 Shakti Nagar, Delhi—7. Price: Rs. 1.50

BEGINNING with verse-tributes to the Muses of arts and their blessed instruments (such as musician Subbulakshmi and danseuse Chandralekha) the anthology ends on the delicate records of the poet's experiences of moments spiritual, appearing to trace an evolution of his mind. With boldness the poet embraces themes which a conventional poet would avoid, with fervour he treats them, and with impressive lyrical touches he leaves them to linger in the reader's mind, as in the opening stanza of "24th November: Sri Aurobindo's Siddhi Day", an inadequate translation of which is:

Earth awakens at the touch of a luminous hue,
The body's drowsy lamp flames golden-blue,
In letters of gold now Destiny writes on earth,
The horoscope of the day of Supermind's birth.

MANOJ DAS

Students' Section

THE UNIVERSAL GOD

A PIECE OF POETIC PROSE

(About this little piece by the one-time Chief Judge of Pondicherry during the French days, the author's daughter has written to the Editor: "My late father used to attempt a bit of simple poetry on rare occasions. The present lines were written for us in 1943 when we were quite small children and he was teaching us English. Perhaps other children will enjoy them and profit by them as we did.")

There is only one God.
He is all truth, beauty and joy.
We are his sons and daughters.
All religions lead to Him.
Let us love each other;
'Love of man is love of God.'

Answer the high call of Christ,
Respond to the deep music of Krishna,
Thrill to the marvellous dance of Shiva;—
Sweet rhythm, enchanting beauty!
The sun, the moon and the stars,
The blue sky above,
The green fields below:
Perfect harmony reigns everywhere.

The shady trees and the soft wind,
The melody of the singing birds,
Brothers and sisters, don't you feel
The supreme goodness and love,
The perfect order and beauty
That pervades the whole creation?

For God's sake never spoil it
By bad actions, words or thoughts.
To the beauty, add beauty;
To the love, bring your love.
Prepare the way to happiness—
By truth, knowledge, wisdom.

Break not life's music
 By hatred and disunion,
 Unkind words and evil thoughts.
 In the supreme play of God,
 In this world-drama,
 Act your part with full joy.

Health, wealth and knowledge
 Are all God-given things;
 Our body, heart and mind
 Are God's instruments:
 Use them all for good.
 'Live simply, think nobly';
 Help the poor, educate the people.

Learn science, cultivate arts,
 To bring love, peace and happiness.
 The kingdom of God is within you.
 Om! Om! hear the divine call
 For the dawn of a new world.
 Om Shanti! Om Tat Sat, Om!

S. SIVA

CHRISTMAS STORY

In the early morning of December 25, as I got up I saw that my stocking was overflooded with queer sorts of packages. One contained a piece of cake from the Moon, another carried wonderful books of fairytales from Jupiter, a third was a boxful of army toys from Mars and a fourth brought dishes of delicious food from Venus. I finished my breakfast with these dishes.

Oh, I felt so happy and so light that it seemed I could fly. And indeed I flew in the air, but I do not know where.

After some time I saw that I was on a hill. There was a cave there and so my feet dragged me towards it. When I arrived, I sat down in the cave on a rocklike chair. After I had recovered my breath, I started to explore the cave.

Suddenly I saw a dark patch in the corner. I went near, and to my surprise the patch was the entrance to another cave. One cave led to the next and so on. In this way I think I walked about ten miles.

The last cave rose up to a white ceiling. The view which I saw took my breath away. Do you know where I was?

I was in my bed!

VEENA A.

EYE EDUCATION

(Recently a well-known optician of Bombay met Dr. R.S. Agarwal who runs the SCHOOL FOR PERFECT EYESIGHT in the Ashram, and put some questions. We publish here a part of the conversation.)

Q: Is it really true that defective eyesight can be improved without glasses?

A: Almost all the orthodox Ophthalmologists of the world believe that there is neither prevention nor cure for the errors of refraction. But Dr. W. H. Bates of America proved by clear experiments and clinical treatment that defective eyesight can be improved without glasses by eye education and mental relaxation.

Q: My wife suffers from a severe headache each time after driving a car. Eye specialists find no fault in her system. Can you cure her?

A: Yes, in three days.

Q: You recommend fine print reading, but will it not cause strain?

A: Dr. Bates has made many remarkable discoveries. The most remarkable is this:

FINE PRINT IS A BENEFIT TO THE EYE. LARGE PRINT IS A MENACE.

Fine print cannot be read well unless the eyes are relaxed. Reading fine print in good light and in candle light alternately is extremely beneficial to prevent and cure all sorts of eye defects. Anyone can test this truth and fact.

Q: What is the aim of this SCHOOL FOR PERFECT EYESIGHT?

A: It trains people to get rid of eye troubles. It will create doctors of a new thought and a new knowledge to help suffering humanity.

It is high time some doctors should carefully study Dr. Bates' works and repeat his experiments if necessary. If one discards his works without proper study, then surely one is not a true scientist but like a religionist who believes in particular dogmas.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL
School for Perfect Eyesight