

MOTHER INDIA

APRIL 24, 1970

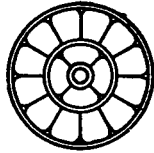
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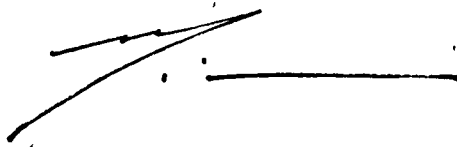
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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Vol. XXII

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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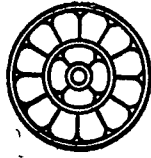
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Questions: One of the main problems of the present world is that the population has increased enormously in the last 100 years.

- (1) How have so many souls evolved in such a short time?*
- (2) What will be the destiny of the world in regard to its population? Will the numbers go on increasing with the current speed or will there be at a certain period a drop without any artificial means?*
- (3) In case the population decreases in the future, what will be the fate of so many souls that have evolved so far?*

*There is a Supreme
Consciousness that governs the
manifestation. His wisdom is
certainly much greater than ours.
So we need not bother about what
will happen.*

Blessings

There is a Supreme Consciousness that governs the manifestation. His wisdom is certainly much greater than ours. So we need not bother about what will happen. Blessings.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of March, 1970)

(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat incomplete form. We now give, in a new English translation, the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother herself at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968).

Mother, what does "a powerful Yoga" mean ?

A powerful Yoga ? You don't know what "powerful" means ?

But here Sri Aurobindo says, "This intellectual preparation can indeed be the first stage in a powerful Yoga, but it is not indispensable."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, 1955 Edition, p. 92)

Yes. A powerful yoga is a very complete yoga, which contains many things, takes in many elements. So this element of intellectual knowledge makes the yoga more powerful.

Is it the same as the integral yoga ?

Not quite. An integral yoga is that which comprises all the parts of the being and all the activities of the being. But the activities of one being are not as powerful as the activities of another; and the integrality of one being is not as total as the integrality of another. You do not understand ?

If all your being, as it is, participates in the yoga, it becomes for you an integral yoga. But your participation may be very weak and very mediocre compared with that of someone else, and the number of elements of consciousness which you contain may be very small beside the elements of consciousness contained in another person. And yet your yoga is integral for you, that is, it is done in all the parts and all the activities of your being.

You know, I had a cat which was doing yoga. Well, the yoga of the cat could not be as powerful as the yoga of man, and yet it was as integral, it was quite complete; even its body took part in its yoga. But its way of doing it, naturally, was not human.

Mother, what does "the moving idea-force" mean ?

It is an idea which gives you the will, the enthusiasm and a power for realisation. A dynamic thing is that which tends towards realisation and gives you the push towards realisation.

Here Sri Aurobindo writes, "But still the greater and wider the moving idea-force behind the consecration, the better for the seeker."

(Ibid., p. 93)

Have you never felt the difference between a small idea and a great idea, a narrow idea and a wide one ?

But, earlier, Sri Aurobindo has said that if this is accompanied by a self-giving, that is enough. Later he says that if it is wide, it is better.

Listen, I am going to give you quite a concrete and material example. You offer your purse; it contains three rupees. Your neighbour offers his purse which contains fifteen. Well, the gift of fifteen rupees is bigger than the gift of three. That's all.

But, from the moral point of view, if you have given *all* that you have, you have done the maximum you could have done, nothing more can be asked of you; you understand, from the moral point of view, from the pure spiritual point of view, not from the point of view of realisation. From the pure spiritual point of view the gift of your three rupees has exactly the same value as the gift of the fifteen. And even he who gave fifteen rupees, if he has kept back one, his gift is less integral and less pure than yours in which you gave only three. Consequently, it is not on that plane that the thing must be seen. But from the point of view of the material realisation it is undeniable that fifteen is more than three, for all those who know mathematics!

(Silence)

Mother, the message you have given this year, will you explain it a little ?¹

The message I have given this year, what is your objection to it?

Does it imply that there will be great victories this year ?

This means perhaps a very simple thing: that it is better to let things happen without speaking about them. If you ask me, I think that is what it means. That it is much better to say nothing of what will happen before it happens. Otherwise it becomes what I call beat of drum, what could be called tom-tomming.

¹ The New Year Message of 1956: "The greatest victories are the least noisy. The manifestation of a new world is not proclaimed by beat of drum."

It is like those who ask: "How will this come about?" We shall see how! Wait, at least we must get a surprise!...And I reply, "I know nothing about it". For I put myself immediately in the consciousness of the world as it is, to which is announced that extraordinary things are going to happen, and which is quite incapable of imagining them—for as I told you once, if one begins to imagine them, that means they are *already* there. In order that you may be able to imagine something, it needs to exist, otherwise you cannot imagine it.

Yes, in our higher being we can have a very clear, very exact, very luminous perception of what it is. But if one comes down into the material consciousness, one is obliged to say, "Well, I know nothing about it." When it will be there, I shall tell you how it will be—and probably I shan't even need to tell you, you will be able to see it. I hope you will be among those who will be able to see it. For that again, there are those who won't be able to do so.

And so, what's the good of going round telling people: "It is there, you know, it is like this." They will reply, as in that play which was staged here: "But I, I see nothing!" Do you remember, it was in *Le Sage*? You don't remember that, in *Le Sage*, the messenger says that the Divine is there hearing you, that He is present? And then someone replies, "But I don't see Him!" It is like that.

It is like those people who come to visit the Ashram and who say, "But there is no spirituality here!"...How could they see it? With what organs?

But, still, I do hope that when something manifests, you will be able to perceive it.

Naturally, if all of a sudden there were luminous apparitions, or if the outer physical forms changed completely, well then, I think even a dog or a cat or anything whatever would perceive it. But that will take time, that's not for the immediate moment. It is not for the moment, it is farther off, for a much later time. Many great things will take place before that, and these will be much more important than that, mark it.

For that, that is only the flower which blossoms. But before it blooms, the principle of its existence must needs be there in the root of the plant.

If there is some manifestation, will it be purely spiritual, that is, will only those who do yoga be able to perceive it, or will there be its consequences in the world of facts?

My child, why do you put this in the future?

There have already been for years, extraordinary, fantastic consequences in the world. But to see this, one must know a little; otherwise one takes them for quite normal and ordinary things—because one does not even know how they happen.

So this will be perhaps exactly the same thing; there are likely to be formidable changes, fantastic actions, and, good heavens! men will say, "But this, naturally, this is like that", because one does not know how it comes about.

An action in the world?—It is constant. It is something which spreads and acts everywhere, gives out everywhere new impulsions, new orientations, new ideas, new acts of will—everywhere. But still, as one does not see how it happens, one thinks it to be what is called “quite natural”.

It is quite natural, but with another naturalness than that of ordinary physical Nature.

Indeed, it is logical enough to say that one must be aware of the Spirit to be able to perceive the work of the Spirit. If you are not aware of the Spirit, how will you be able to see it at work? Because the result of what the Spirit does is necessarily material in the material world; and it being material, you find it quite natural. What do you know of what Nature does, and what do you know of what the Spirit does? All that Nature does—I am speaking of material Nature—one knows very little of it, almost nothing, since one must constantly learn about things which upset all that one believed to have known before. And so, how to distinguish between what is the work purely of Nature and the work of the Spirit through Nature? One must know how to distinguish the one from the other. And how to distinguish them, when one’s consciousness is not quite limpid and sure of what the Spirit is? How to recognise It, and how to see Its Work? This seems to me very simple logic.

The world will go on. Things will happen. And there will be perhaps a handful of men who will know how they have been done. That’s all.

And if one were, at the present time, suddenly precipitated, without any transition, into what the world was, let us say, two or three thousand years ago; oh! even less than that perhaps—one or two thousand years ago, it would be such a suffocating contrast that probably very few people would be able to bear it. But as this came about “like that”, with the amiable slowness of Nature, with all her fantasies, one finds it quite natural and does not even notice it.

It is not an image, it is not fine words when it is said that if one enters the true consciousness, if one changes one’s consciousness, well, the world itself changes for you. And it is not only an appearance or an impression: one sees otherwise than one does in the ordinary consciousness; relations are different, causes are different, effects are different. And instead of seeing only something which is not transparent (one cannot see what’s behind, it is a surface, a crust; it is only that which is seen, and one cannot even see what moves it, what makes it exist) everything is turned inside out, and it is that which appears artificial and unreal, and almost inexistent. And so, when one sees things in that way, in a normal way, you know, without straining oneself, without being obliged to practise meditation and concentration and make formidable efforts to see things like that, when it is one’s normal, natural vision, then one understands things in a completely different way—naturally, the world is different!

There is a preliminary passage which is indispensable, and those who have made it, this little preliminary passage, well, there are all sorts of things, all sorts of speculations and questions which they can no longer put to themselves.

But truly, to come back to our point, what I wanted to say very simply is that one

day, at the time I was asked for a message (I give it because I am asked), I am asked and told: "Oh! we want to print it, couldn't you send it to us?" Then, what do I do? I look at the year that is coming (to be able to speak about it, I must look at it), I look at the year which is coming, and then, looking at it I see at the same time all the imaginations of people, all their speculations and all their inventions about what is going to happen in this so-called wonderful year. I look at that, and at the same time I look at what it is—what it is already beforehand, it is already like that somewhere—and immediately I know very clearly that the best thing to do is not to say what it will be. And as people expect a lot of flourish and proclamations, I said what I said, that's all. Nothing more. That is all I meant to say: "Let us not speak about it, if you please, that is better, that is preferable." I haven't said anything but that: "It is better not to speak about it, don't make a lot of noise about it, because that does not help. Let things happen in accordance with a deeper law, without being bewildered like one who does not know and looks on."

And above all, above all, don't come and say: "You know, it will be like that." Because that is what makes the thing most difficult. I don't say that what has to be will not be, but it will perhaps come with many more difficulties if one speaks about it. So it is better to let things happen.

And after all, if one wants to be very moderate—very sober—one has only to ask oneself: "Well, in ten thousand years, this realisation which we are achieving, what will it be? An imperceptible point in the march of time, a preparation, an attempt towards future realisations." Oh! it is better not to get so excited. Let us do all that we can and let us keep quiet. That's all.

Now, there are people who need a little whipping, as one whips cream. But they should go to the poets, not come to me. I am not a poet, I am content with doing. I would rather act than speak.

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of March)

(These talks are from the Notebooks 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 11, 1940

N: So Chamberlain has been forced to resign.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not forced. He has himself resigned. That was the only thing to do. Now what is wanted is a national government.

N: Does it mean that all his ministers too will have to resign?

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. The King asks the Prime Minister to form his new Cabinet.

N: I don't understand why those small countries could not form secret treaties.

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps for fear of discovery. But they could at least send some deputies to make some secret arrangements, deputies who would act all on their own responsibility.

N: L.G. has given a complimentary epithet to Hitler by calling him extraordinary.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he has an admiration for Hitler.

S: Others have called him a mad dog.

N: In the Ashram feeling is divided. Some are for the British and some for Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO: For Hitler?

S: Not exactly, but they are anti-British.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not a rational feeling. How can India, which wants freedom, take sides with somebody who takes away freedom from other nations?

S: Feelings are not rational.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then the subjection of India will be justified in other countries' eyes?

P: This parachute-dropping seems to be a new method of warfare.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it was first devised by the Russians. But I don't think it can be very effective. It can be effective for sabotage or in places where there

is no military organisation. Russia used it in Finland and that is because the Finnish frontier is near and there too it was not so effective. The parachutists can be very easily rounded up.

EVENING

S: The Rotterdam aerodrome is in German hands. I wonder how they were able to take it.

P: By parachute-dropping probably.

S: The Germans are landing in Dutch and French uniforms, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that is one of Hitler's plans. Rauschnig, his one time confidential secretary, says that Hitler's plan seems to be that plenty of such uniformed Germans will land in Paris one day and capture Paris. People will be so amazed that they will forget to put up any resistance. This Hitler seems to have a romantic head.

S: Why is England landing troops in Iceland? What danger could there be?

SRI AUROBINDO: They could as well do it on the North Pole.

S: After all they have taken an initiative. Since they could not do it anywhere else, why not in Iceland?

SRI AUROBINDO: Hitler may be mad, but not so mad as to attack Iceland.

MAY 12, 1940

N: Churchill seems to have formed an able and effective ministry.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

N: Attlee has been made Lord Privy Seal. What is that?

SRI AUROBINDO: Saying Yes or No.

N: Like being given, as you said, the Duchy of Lancashire? Chamberlain is President of the Council.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is also something like that.

S: He could have been left out.

SRI AUROBINDO: He has a great influence still among the Conservatives. Halifax could have been Secretary for India and Eden Foreign Secretary. In that case the India policy would have been less stiff in combination with Linlithgow.

Dr. Rao: Hoare-Belisha and Simon seem to be promoted to the Lords.

SRI AUROBINDO: Kicked upstairs?

P: In India the British Government do not seem to be inclined to make any further move.

SRI AUROBINDO: No. They can't. They have said that compromise with the Muslims has to be effected. They have given the veto to Jinnah, and Gandhi also has done the same by saying that the Hindu-Muslim problem has to be solved before the question of joining the ministry. In that case Jinnah will see his advantage and will stick out for the best terms.

S: The Congress seems to be irrational in saying that. The Congress people resigned from the ministry because of the Imperial policy, not because of the Hindu-Muslim question.

SRI AUROBINDO: Now the Muslims will say that their allegation about the Congress injustice is true.

P: Y considers Hitler a Kshatriya emanation.

S: Oh, he is furious against the British and is in sympathy with Hitler. He says the British have become old now by their long domination.

SRI AUROBINDO: German domination will be young and new?

S: Both are equally old.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, Germany is older than the English people. The latter are an Anglo-Saxon mixture.

N: Germany is racially purer.

SRI AUROBINDO: That's humbug. The Germans are as much a mixture of Slavs, Nordic Alpines and Celts. Nietzsche was a Slav. Kant was born in Pomerania and was a Slav.

S: Goebbels says that the Allies attacked the Ruhr. So the Germans had to protect the Netherland's neutrality.

SRI AUROBINDO: Does he think anybody will believe in such stories? They are probably meant for home-consumption. If the French had wanted to attack Germany they would have done that before the completion of the Siegfried Line.

N: Y does not believe in the British news.

SRI AUROBINDO: What one devil says is true and what another devil says is a lie? (*Laughter*) The British Air and Navy give correct news. It is the Military that doesn't.

N: Are the Dutch good fighters?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know. They have not fought since the time of Napoleon.

S: That is a long time.

P: If they had made some treaty or pact with the Allies—

SRI AUROBINDO: The neutrals wanted to make the best of both worlds. If Germany does not attack they remain neutral. If she attacks, they know that the Allies will come to their help. Still, it would have made a great difference if plans had been made beforehand so that they could at once have taken up their positions.

S: I told Y what you had said—namely, that it is dangerous for us to support Hitler. For some days he keeps quiet and then goes off again. But he does not say anything outside.

SRI AUROBINDO: That does not make any difference. Somebody else may speak to an outsider and thus it goes out.

MAY 13, 1940

EVENING

S: Germany is not finding any resistance in North-East Holland.

SRI AUROBINDO: The important part is the East. In the North-East they have no defence. The defence comes after the canals. It seems that Hitler did not expect any resistance from Holland. It was reported to him that the Dutch were bad soldiers and would soon give up the fight.

P: He has been disillusioned. In Belgium the Germans are trying to outflank the Maginot Line.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. If the Belgians had had foresight like the French, they would have erected defences along their Dutch frontier.

N: Italy is trying to be belligerent.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. But then I don't understand why she has sent all her ships abroad. They will all be caught if she joins the war.

N: No revolution is likely in Poland and Czechoslovakia?

SRI AUROBINDO: Now it will be foolish. If they revolt, they will be massacred. Only after some Allied victory they may have a chance.

N: We don't hear of Allied air attacks. Only Germany is taking the toll.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Allies are attacking behind the German lines and bombing the troops also, only they don't speak of it. Essen was bombed. (*Addressing P*) It appears that Germany has worked out by some mathematical calculation that if they sacrifice 90,000 people they can then make a breach in the Maginot Line and France will have to make a sacrifice of about 1,000,000 to break through the Siegfried Line. I don't understand how they calculate.

MAY 14, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO: Germany seems to have discovered some new methods of capturing forts.

S: They have made a considerable advance in Belgium.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. In the last war also it was like that. They made a rapid progress at the beginning and that, the French say, was because the British Soldiers were running away at the approach of the Germans.

N: If that is true, they will do the same now too.

SRI AUROBINDO: One English correspondent said that the Germans were rushing like wolves.

P: From Cologne, any Belgian town, it seems, is only 30 minutes' flight by air. So they can attack very easily by air.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but air flights can't decide a battle. It is the land army on which victory depends. In France the Germans proved inferior to the French, but elsewhere they proved superior.

N: Is Amery better than Zetland?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, he is a diehard, I think.

P: In the *Kalyan*, one of Bejoy Goswami's disciples has written that in his last days Goswami was at Puri during *danyagna* and by that he ran into heavy debts. When he fell ill he was advised to go to Calcutta, but because of his debts he could not leave Puri. His disciples managed to pay off the debts. I don't know if he died at Calcutta.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, he died at Puri. It is said he was poisoned. By *sthambhan* he stayed the effects but was ultimately overcome.

P: He used to feed and take care of many people. He seems to have said that poor people without food can't accept the message of spirituality. So they must be fed first. It was done in so extensive a way that his disciples ran into debts and became poor themselves.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then their spirituality must have deteriorated when they became poor!

P: Goswami said they should not think of the morrow. Whatever they had they must distribute to the poor.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not thinking of food and distributing food to others are two different ideas without any connection between them. Spirituality does not depend upon that.

P: Their idea of God is that He is all love and compassion. So we must also try to be so and relieve other people's misery.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is all sentiment and nobody will believe that God is all compassion. Feeding other people does not cure poverty, it relieves it only. That is the fallacy of philanthropy. To cure poverty one has to find out the cause. And it is not true that poor people can't accept spirituality. All ascetics are poor.

EVENING

Radio said that Germany had occupied Rotterdam and separated Holland from Belgium.

SRI AUROBINDO: What are the Allies doing? After sending an advance army they seem to be trying to sit comfortably in the rear. And the Germans won't let them have any comfort.

P: They don't seem to have any plan of action.

N: The only plan seems to be to fall back according to plan.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they are sitting behind fortifications. And if they have any plan it is quite inadequate. War news also is very obscure nowadays.

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF 1920-1926

(Continued from the issue of March 1970)

(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.)

THE Gods have their own form and also their own dress; the dress is their blue or other light which expresses their nature or circumstances associated with it. Similarly the psychic being, the vital being, the subtle-physical being have their own dress. It is better that one's psychic dress is kept secret and not shown off—the external physical being must not imitate that dress, for there is always a tendency in the vital being to caricature the truth....One may be an Indian, but his mental or vital being may take a European dress. An Indian may wear European dress but his psychic being may be Indian. Some people feel a certain vital force in a particular dress. Many of our habits are vital; for instance, cigar-smoking is a vital habit, a habit of the vital and nervous being. It puts the vital and nervous being into a condition that is not clouded by the physical. Balzac, whenever he used to write, put on a particular kind of dress. As one advances in sadhana, one discovers one's psychic name and dress.

Dr. Bucke, in his book on the cosmic consciousness, studies the subject in a very trivial way and classifies the experiences of all people from Christ and Mohammed down to Madame Blavatsky. These Europeans, when they break out of their mind and brains a little and stumble upon a new thing, begin to generalise without waiting to see quietly what the thing is like. They do not allow the experience to get settled. If Bucke had waited to see how what he calls the cosmic consciousness comes, what are the conditions, what it really is, he would not have made the generalisation that the cosmic consciousness must come all of a sudden. Then, again, it is not necessary that it must come to everyone in the very same form in which it came to him—with a column of fire. If he had waited he would have found out that his experience had two elements, the mental and the psychic, to which the vision of the fire was due. But Christ and Carpenter had not the same experience. When I first got the cosmic con-

sciousness, I called it the passive Brahman,—I did not go away into unconsciousness. I was fully conscious on the physical plane. Also, it lasted not for a few moments, as Bucke lays down, but for months. I was then sitting with Lele and it came to me as soon as I could quiet the mind completely. I saw it above the mind and it was that which was reflected in the mind. I saw the world and all the people as in a cinema; the world appeared very small. What Bucke and these people get is some sense of the infinite on the mental plane and they begin to think that they have got everything.

The spirits in the phenomenon of automatic writing are not the real departed souls. They are beings from the lower vital and physico-vital planes, their range of consciousness is far wider than that of man who is on the physical plane and is therefore limited in his range. It may be that when a person is dying, one of his personalities is taken up by some force and then it comes and tries to represent that person. It is one reason why in some cases the information given is true. These spirits delight in getting worship. They cure diseases and do many miracles. They generally try to pass off for Christ or Rama or Krishna, if the subject accepts them. If you have the discrimination, you can detect them. But generally the atmosphere of the company is such that these spirits go undetected...

X has the ordinary foolish feminine attachment to and love of children and the ordinary conventional mind. She must throw these away if she is to progress. She had some aspiration in the mind and she got something there but she was careful to keep her vital being untouched and she can't get on further unless she asks for the truth there also.

Y ought not to feel the ascetic tendency, but must combine life and Yoga. There is growth by meditation and growth by life. She ought to be unattached and try to bring the higher consciousness to bear upon life. She must do actions from that consciousness; meditation is one half of the development, while being able to keep the right attitude all the time is the other half.

Q: Is complete transformation possible without having a Shakti?

Why not? Transformation would be complete if one could bring down the thing that you have got in the mind and the vital being into the physical being also, into the very cells of the material body. The conditions are that you should be able to keep the same deep peace, wideness, strength and power and plasticity from the mind downward to the very cells. When that basis is ready, the working from above begins. The transformation does not require a Shakti. Incarnating the Divine in the body means incarnating your own Divine Self that is in the supermind. It is something quite different from your present self. It is full of the knowledge, power and Ananda of the supramental plane. And yet it is not merely an impersonal being but a Person. The conditions for that being to come down and work are that you must have the peace. Transformation is a personal affair. I do not quite see what a Shakti

has to do with it. Is your question about Shakti a prologue to an application for marriage? I do not object to a Shakti if there a genuine case. You should not mix up yourself with me.

The function of the Shakti is something special. In my own case it was a necessary condition for the work that I had to do. If I had had to do my own transformation only or give a new yoga or a new ideal to a select few people who came into personal contact with me I could have done that without having any Shakti. But, for the work that I had to do, it was necessary that the two sides must come together. By the coming together of Mira and me certain conditions are created which make it easy for you to do the transformation. You can take advantage of those conditions. But it is not necessary that everybody should have a Shakti just because in my own case it was necessary. You cannot generalise like that from one case. It is not a question of great or small. It is a question of your being less complex than I am. If you had to do all the things that I have done you would never be able to do it. And before you can have a Shakti you must first of all deserve a Shakti. The first condition is that you must be master of all the movements of Kama or lust. There are many other things. One thing is that there must be complete union on every plane of inner consciousness.

Q. If the Shakti is there, then would all the conditions be fulfilled?

Do you think that because there is a meeting between the two in the central being or somewhere else the whole thing is done? There are many personalities and in order to have complete perfection you must know the value of personality in the world. What is the true personality in you? The various personalities on each plane of the Purusha and the Shakti must all agree. It is a long and arduous sadhana that you must undergo before such a complete union can take place. But all this has nothing to do with the transformation as such.

You can't judge—from the present-day speed in your sadhana—what it would be next year. There was a time when I had to give up the idea of doing the thing in my life-time. There was a great push in the vital being trying to do the thing very soon. Then I learnt to give up all these ideas and to leave it to God to do whatever He likes. The vital being is easily elated and the physical being is easily depressed. One has to get rid of both these movements. At no time even in the periods of depression did I lose my faith. I knew that the thing had to be done and would be done but I did not know whether I would be able to do it in my life-time or whether somebody else would do it. The periods of depression were never long....I find this year—1926—far better than all the three years past.. .The last time I had fever was in February 1909. It has never since returned...

Maheswari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati are four powers of the supramental. The first, Maheswari, is wide consciousness, being, knowledge,

peace, no haste nor violence. Mahakali is power itself. Power is her chief aspect though there are other minor aspects of her. Mahalakshmi is splendour, beauty, harmony and opulence of the supermind; while Mahasaraswati is the goddess that knows, knows every detail in the supramental work. Lakshmi as people generally see her is the goddess of wealth in the mind and vital; money is only a form of wealth. Now the money-power is in the hands of the lower forces. If Mahalakshmi were presiding over that power, the movement would be different.

The soul of poetry is the perfect expression of vision and beauty in word. The vision may be intuitive or psychic, and beauty may be psychic or vital. Vedic poetry springs from intuitive vision, as in: "State after state is born; covering after covering becomes conscious; in the lap of the Mother one wholly sees." This is an intuitive expression of the movement of the opening of the soul. No words could express that movement better. Vision is not enough. The expression must be perfect. The devotional songs of Jayadeva or of Bilwamangal or of the Christians are not perfect from the point of view of expression, though there may be vision behind; nor is there much of the psychic element in these devotional poems. The Veda is mainly intuitive; not that there is no psychic touch in the hymns. The hymns are full of wideness, light and wisdom. Many of them come from the illumined mind. There are some which have a psychic touch also.

The Isha Upanishad is inspirational poetry. The style comes from something greater than the intellect. . . Psychic poetry moves you deeply. Intuitive poetry is more impersonal. Shelley's

The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar,
From the sphere of our sorrow,

is an example of psychic aspiration and psychic expression. The Japanese pictures of the moon and the trees have the psychic element in them. Kalidasa is not psychic, he has a certain vital power and aesthetic expression. *Ramyām vīkṣya* is not psychic. It has the dignity of thought, it is a mental statement. The psychic feeling does not bother about statements or long compounds. It is something behind our normal being, while intuition is something above. It gives you the sense of an inexpressible Beauty.

Q. Valmiki?

How do you mean? The Ramayana is epic poetry. But here and there you get the psychic touch: for example, the slokas of Kausalya when Rama is banished.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

“SWAN OF THE SUPREME AND SPACELESS ETHER...”

AN APPROACH THROUGH SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY TO A POETIC VISION

HAVE we here a contradiction in terms or a suprarational truth? What point is made by the words “spaceless ether”? Nineteenth-century physics accustomed us to the ether as a medium permeating space and transmitting electromagnetic waves. In the twentieth century, the Michelson-Morley experiment and Einstein’s relativity theory discredited the ether as a space-filling medium and left us with empty space. But this space, according to Einstein, is capable of structure and in that sense cannot be an insubstantial void and may be called “ether”. The poetic imagination down the ages has also identified ether and space and given the latter name to the clear sky, the upper regions beyond the clouds, spatial extension in its essential purity. In short, ether and space seem inseparable, whether we function as poets or physicists. Can we separate them simply by terming the ether “supreme”? Again, how is a “Swan” with its three-dimensional shape to be fitted into something that is “spaceless” or unextended? Can the non-extension accommodate it merely by being designated “supreme ether”? Poetry may have—as Coleridge phrases it—“a happy valiancy”, but is not this whole poetic expression of Sri Aurobindo’s an impossible violence?

I

Let us first get an idea of the class of “realities” to which the expression may refer. It occurs as a culminating symbol at the end of the poem, *Ascent*, an experiment, technically, in “free quantitative verse with a predominant “dactylic movement” and, inspirationally, in “overhead poetry”. We shall leave the technical aspect aside. The poetry is of a type in which both the clear and the mysterious come on the breath of an incantation from a masterful height of realised spiritual consciousness. When the clear is achieved, then, unlike as in “the heritage of Symbolism”, the work of the post-Mallarmé poets like Valéry, Rilke and the later Yeats, the shades and shimmers of the Beyond are not caught into an intellectual chiaroscuro but what looks such is rather the art-pattern of some lucid-linguaged revelatory power other than the sharp-phrased interpretative intellect. A philosophical atmosphere is there, yet shot with a luminosity and wideness of significance exceeding thought. In *Ascent* it is this kind of atmosphere that meets us almost throughout, preparing the final paradoxical picture.

Sri Aurobindo begins with asking the “Spirit immortal” to soar
Away from the turning Wheel, breaking the magical Circle,
out of “the grey and the little”, “the cry and the struggle”, the known universe of

ignorance and continual rebirth, as well as out of all supra-terrestrial domains where the soul may sojourn. The command is to press upward into “the Silence”, “the Alone and the Absolute”—and the adjuration runs :

Vast and immobile, formless and marvellous,
 Higher than Heaven, wider than the universe,
 In a pure glory of being,
 In a bright stillness of self-seeing,
 Communing with a boundlessness voiceless and intimate,
 Make thy knowledge too high for thought, thy joy too deep for emotion;
 At rest in the unchanging Light, mute with the wordless self-vision,
 Spirit, pass out of thyself: Soul, escape from the clutch of Nature.

But Sri Aurobindo does not stop here. He next calls on the “Spirit immortal” to outgrow even the Alone and the Absolute. He summons it:

Out from the Silence, out from the Silence,
 Carrying with thee the ineffable Substance,
 Carrying with thee the splendour and wideness,
 Ascend, O Spirit immortal,
 Assigning to Time its endless meaning,
 Blissful enter into the clasp of the Timeless.
 Awake in the living Eternal, taken to the bosom of love of the Infinite...
 Thy heart close to the heart of the Godhead for ever.

Thus there is a Supreme that embraces both time and timelessness, and in order to reach this Reality where the divine secret of all temporal vicissitudes lies hidden—the secret of their fulfilment rather than their annulment—the human aspirant is told not only—

Soul, exceed life’s boundaries; Spirit, surpass the universe—

but also:

Outclimbing the summits of Nature,
 Transcending and uplifting the soul of the finite,
 Rise with the world in thy bosom,
 O Word, gathered into the heart of the Ineffable.

Nature is not abandoned: all her parts are retained in their essence within what Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual metaphysics terms “the psychic being”, the true inner individual, the deep dweller in man’s “bosom”, who has descended from the Transcendent, the Supreme, as a portion of that Eternity’s and Infinity’s Supernature, “the heart of the Ineffable”, into the cosmic phenomenon and evolves there to consummate all the yearnings of the cosmos—the mind’s search for total knowledge of subjective and objective events, the life-force’s quest for endless happiness and irresistible power and unlimited conquest in Nature’s realm, the physical form’s seeking for stability and health and perpetual organic persistence within an ever-growing harmonious society. The true psyche represents the whole drive of earthly evolution. When it rises to the Supreme, there goes with it the entire universe’s agelong ache for fulfilment

in terms of mentality, vitality, corporeality, modes of an all-round spatio-temporal existence. Establishing a relationship of love between itself and the Supreme Godhead, it lays the basis for a return upon the Nature left behind, with the riches of a Plenary Supernature, a divine mentality, a divine vitality, a divine corporeality. Alluding to that basis, Sri Aurobindo gives the injunction:

One with the Transcendent, calm, universal,
Single and free, yet innumerably living,
All in thyself and thyself in all dwelling,
Act in the world with thy being beyond it.

Here we have an anticipation of the *grand finale* of the poem, where the Soul-Word of manifestation that has gone back to its source in the Ineffable to recover the all-transforming truth is told:

One with the Eternal, live in his infinity,
Drowned in the Absolute, found in the Godhead,
Swan of the Supreme and spaceless ether wandering winged through
the universe,
Spirit immortal.

We may note that before we come to this vivid conclusion the poem's spiritually philosophical atmosphere combines already with its clarity a mystery projected in either challenging concepts—like "Single and free, yet innumerably living"—or adventurous images—like "O Word gathered into the heart of the Ineffable." At the very close the roles are reversed. We have mystery confronting us and breaking across the philosophical atmosphere with a sheer epiphany, as it were, of the Invisible made visible in its own direct right. But the challenging concepts and adventurous images of the preceding poetry are not effaced: they play their subsidiary roles and waft to us, like background music, the atmosphere of spiritual philosophy. And the burst of pure sight is mediated, so to speak, by the lines:

One with the Eternal, live in his infinity,
Drowned in the Absolute, found in the Godhead...

Here the Single and the Multiple seem reflected in the two sections of either line. But surely we cannot just equate the Single with the Transcendent and the Multiple with the cosmic? No doubt, we may say that the ultimate Plenitude is at once the Eternal that is timeless and spaceless and the Infinite that is all time and space—at once the Absolute that is an undifferentiated whole and the Godhead that is a whole where every part is fulfilled in its individuality. But in the Godhead a part finds its fulfilment without really being separated from any other, without being subjected to separation even in appearance as in this world of ours. Similarly, in the Eternal's infinity space and time are not agents of division as in our cosmos: they constitute an archetypal cosmicity. That is to say, the two lines we are considering do not yet figure the spatio-temporal phenomenal universe we know. We are still in the Beyond, but the Beyond as foundational to the Here. It is only in the Swan-line that we get a precise indication of this world of ours: "wandering winged

through the universe”. But that indication is not the entirety of the line: it is what follows by poetic logic and spiritual emergence from the first half of it. The first half embodies in a startling symbol the thought struck out in the concept of the archetypal cosmicity in the latter sections of the two preceding lines. With such a vision of its significance we are in a position to come to grips with the details of its apparently impossible violence.

For, what exactly do we mean by an archetypal cosmicity? Primarily, there are in it the perfect divine originals, models, counterparts, supporting truths of our world of matter, life, mind, soul. Nor are these truths mere static marvels locked up high above, allowing no more than transient reflections of themselves in the flux of phenomena, reflections that are fragmentary and inaccurate. What is high above is being slowly worked out here below: the phenomenal flux is evolutionary and through the aeons it evolves the archetypes. And the evolution takes place because on the one hand the archetypes press down from their lofty position where they are for ever manifest and on the other hand push up from their own involution in our world where they lie concealed. If they lacked this double presence and action, there would be a cleavage and shortcoming in existence: the Divine would not be everywhere in one shape or another and everything would not have a divine aim.

Secondly, the archetypes are what Sri Aurobindo calls Real-Ideas, the creative movements not of Mind but of Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness. In our mental consciousness, “we regard thought as a thing separate from existence, abstract, unsubstantial, different from reality, something which appears one knows not whence and detaches itself from objective reality in order to observe, understand and judge it; for so it seems and therefore is to our all-dividing, all-analysing mentality. The first business of Mind is to render discrete, to make fissures much more than to discern, and so it has made this paralysing fissure between thought and reality. But in Supermind all being is consciousness, all consciousness is of being, and the idea, a pregnant vibration of consciousness, is equally a vibration of being pregnant of itself; it is an initial coming out, in creative self-knowledge, of that which lay concentrated in uncreative self-awareness. It comes out as the Idea that is a reality, and it is that reality of the Idea which evolves itself, always by its own power and consciousness of itself...”¹

Thirdly, the whole Supermind is within each Real-Idea, for all the Real-Ideas are the whole Supermind determining itself in various modes. Each Real-Idea is thus packed with all the infinite potentialities or possibilities of the Supermind yet having one particular potentiality or possibility brought forward for realised play. “Therefore all is in each as well as each in all. Therefore every seed of things implies in itself all the infinity of various possibilities, but is kept to one law of process and result by the Will, that is to say, by the Knowledge-Force of the Conscious-Being who is manifesting himself...”²

¹ *The Life Divine* (Sri Aurobindo Library, New York, 1949), p. 121.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Fourthly, one Real-Idea does not clash with other Real-Ideas, for there is a single vast Consciousness which contains and relates all Real-Ideas in itself as its own movements. "Therefore, always, in all mutations and combinations, a self-existent and inalienable harmony."¹

In the light of this fourfold character of the archetypal cosmicity we may probe further the question of space and time. All cosmicity argues relation of event to event, object to object: in other words, time and space. But, when all is in each and each is in all and everything is held within one Consciousness variously disposed, time and space are only that Consciousness viewing itself in extension; and in this extension our past, present and future would be regarded in one view, all points and regions would be contained in a single survey. There would be an eternal present infinitely stretched out, an infinite expanse eternally indivisible—and both would be a fact of Spiritual Being. Again, inasmuch as the Consciousness of Supermind is a cosmic vision which is all-comprehensive, all-pervading, all-inhabiting and upholds by its immutable unity the variation of its self-deployment it exceeds the successions of time and the divisions of space: it is in that respect timeless and spaceless. Yet this is not a pure unitarian Consciousness, in which Spiritual Being does not cast itself out into any kind of self-extension and, if it contains cosmos at all, contains it in potentiality, not in actuality—in an implicit rather than an explicit form. The sheer timelessness and spacelessness of such a Consciousness are different from the Supermind's transcendence of time's successions and space's divisions. The latter is what we may call unsuccessive time and undivided space. The former's high concentration of unity in unextended Being is translated here into extended Being in which there is an equality of oneness: Supermind pervades its extension as One, inhabits as One the multiplicities of its cosmos, it is everywhere at once and single and equal. Space-time here coincides with the spaceless and timeless. By the very nature of Supermind's intimate relation with the absolute Unity where all lies latent it is just such a paradox as we encounter in that Swan-line of Sri Aurobindo's. And just by this paradoxicality Supermind stands as the parent of our space-time universe and secretly governs it.

2

We now begin to see the appropriateness of the several components of Sri Aurobindo's phrase. Taking space and ether to be inseparable we asked whether we could separate them and render the latter "spaceless" with the help of the additional adjective "supreme". The answer is Yes. Unless the space or ether concerned is of the kind we have considered, unless it is supramental and therefore "supreme", it cannot coincide with spacelessness to make the equable extension of the One, in which multiplicity is not divided. The very noun "ether" occurs in the ancient spiritual tradition of India in companionship with the adjective "supreme" to denote such an

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

extension. In the Rigveda, I, 164, 39, Rishi Dirghatamas speaks of the Vedic hymns as “existing in a supreme ether, imperishable and immutable, in which all the gods are seated”. The Rigveda, V, 15, 2, further says: “By the Truth they hold the Truth that holds all, in the power of the Sacrifice, in the supreme ether.” The reference to the sitting of all the gods joins up with our question whether a three-dimensional shape like the “Swan” could be accommodated in spacelessness by the latter being designated “supreme ether”. The answer, again, is Yes, for the same reason: we can understand the bird’s three-dimensionality as being precisely of that equable extension which is space at once stretched-out and undivided. The Katha Upanishad, V, 2, having this space-ether in mind, makes room there for even our Swan by name: “The Swan that settles in the purity...born of the Truth—itself the Truth, the Vast.” The ever-free Spiritual Being, the unsullied Soul, the inmost Perfection which is the source and the goal of all phenomenal existence is, of course, what Sri Aurobindo, following ancient Indian symbolism, calls “Swan”—and it is a most appropriate description not only because of the beauty and purity it conjures up but also because the white wonder is an organism, a living unity in which the numerous parts are no aggregate but diversifications of the unity: a single life-power pervasive of all its parts by multiplying itself and becoming them is here. In organic unity as distinguished from mechanical collectivity we have a suggestive approximation to the oneness-in-manyness of the Divine—and in the dazzling loveliness of the Swan-image we have this Divine’s perfection approximately suggested.

On the collocation “spaceless ether”, which is the core of the Aurobindonian phrase’s paradoxicality, we can obtain a direct verbal gloss by culling some passages from Sri Aurobindo’s own books.

Harking back to Upanishadic utterances he writes: “‘Brahman is in all things, all things are in Brahman, all things are Brahman’, is the triple formula of the comprehensive Supermund, a single truth of self-manifestation in three aspects which it holds together and inseparably in its self-view as the fundamental knowledge from which it proceeds to the play of the cosmos.”¹ The triple formula is stated in our poem itself, with the third limb put first:

Single and free, yet innumerably living,
All in thyself and thyself in all dwelling...

And the same formula is dealt with at some length when Sri Aurobindo explains: “For integral self-possession we must be not only one with the Self, with God, but with all existences. We must take back in the right relation and in the poise of an eternal Truth the world of our manifested existence peopled by our fellow-beings from which we had drawn back because we were bound to them in a wrong relation and in the poise of a falsehood created in Time by the principle of divided consciousness with all its oppositions, discords and dualities.... In other words, besides the consciousness of the transcendent Self...we have to accept and become the cosmic

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

consciousness..."¹ "This realisation of all things as God or Brahman has, as we have seen, three aspects...First, there is the Self in whom all beings exist. The Spirit, the Divine has manifested itself as infinite self-extended being, self-existent, pure, not subject to Time and Space, but supporting Time and Space as figures of its consciousness. It is more than all things and contains them all within that self-extended being and consciousness, not bound by anything it creates, holds or becomes, but free and infinite and all-blissful. It holds them, in the old image, as the infinite ether contains in itself all objects. This image of the ethereal (Akasha) Brahman may indeed be of great practical help to the sadhak who finds a difficulty in meditating on what seems to him at first an abstract and unseizable idea. In the image of the ether, not physical but an encompassing ether of vast being, consciousness and bliss, he may seek to see with the mind and to feel in his mental being this supreme existence and to identify it in oneness with the self within him. By such meditation the mind may be brought to a favourable state of predisposition in which, by the rending or withdrawing of the veil, the supramental vision may flood the mentality and change entirely all our seeing. And upon that change of seeing, as it becomes more and more potent and insistent and occupies all our consciousness, there will supervene a change of becoming so that what we see we become. We shall be in our self-consciousness not so much cosmic as ultra-cosmic, infinite. Mind and life and body will then be only movements in that infinity which we have become, and we shall see that what exists is not world at all but simply this infinity of spirit in which move the mighty cosmic harmonies of its own images of self-conscious becoming."²

Sri Aurobindo carries the ether-metaphor on to the second aspect also of the triple Vedantic formula. Asking whether the existences that make up the cosmic harmonies are only images, empty of any informing reality, within the all-containing Self, he answers: "Not so ..As the ether both contains and is as it were contained in the jar, so this Self both contains and inhabits all existences, not in a physical but in a spiritual sense, and is their reality. This indwelling state of the Self we have to realise; we have to see and ourselves to become in our consciousness the Self in all existences."³

To complete his exposition, Sri Aurobindo continues: "This Self that we are has finally to become to our self-consciousness entirely one with all existences in spite of its exceeding them. We have to see it not only as that which contains and inhabits all but that which is all, not only as indwelling spirit but also as the name and form, the movement and the master of the movement, the mind and life and body... The individual mind, life and body which we recoiled from as not our true being, we shall recover as a true becoming of the Self, but no longer in a purely individual narrowness ...We shall come to feel all the consciousness of the physical world as one with our physical consciousness, feel all the energies of the cosmic life around us as our own

¹ *On Yoga, I: The Synthesis of Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1956) pp. 421-22.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 423-24.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 424-25.

energies, feel all the heart-beats of the great cosmic impulse and seeking in our heart-beats set to the rhythm of the divine Ananda, feel all the action of the universal mind flowing into our mentality and our thought-action flowing out upon it as a wave into that wide sea. This unity embracing all mind, life and matter in the light of a supramental Truth and the pulse of a spiritual Bliss will be to us our internal fulfilment of the Divine in a complete cosmic consciousness.”¹

Our approach through spiritual philosophy to Sri Aurobindo’s poetic vision is now complete. As “overhead poetry” is at work here, the canons of the ordinary poetic imagination, no less than those of theoretical physics, are surpassed. There is really no contradiction in terms.

3

We may end by a few comments on the sheer poetry of our line. The dominant sound-effect is of *s* and *w*, with an undercurrent of *n*. A sweep of sibilance asserts some poise of high-breathing power that is sovereign. The *w*-alliteration has an active widening influence, as if setting this power free in open expanses. And we may mark how the very initial word “Swan” includes the *w*-influence potentially, as it were, and how the very last word “universe” echoes the initial note of sibilance. There is a significant rounded harmony. And both these words carry the *n*-ring which becomes emphatic in “wandering winged”. The present participle “wandering” is irreplaceable by anything synonymous, just as another form of the same vocable is the inevitable touch in Milton’s

Those thoughts that wander through eternity.

Not only a plunging puissance but also a sense of freedom in all directions is conveyed by this vocable. Further, its opening syllable—“wan”—chimes most suggestively with the same sound in “Swan”, so that the act of wandering proceeds, so to speak, from the very nature of the bird. Neither “travelling” nor “voyaging” nor “journeying” would have this aptness. They would fail also to alliterate with “winged.” The alliteration is of capital importance to clinch the connection between the ideas behind the two words. Besides, the *n*-resonance with its haunting thrill would fail to go home so definitively from those substitutes. Again, “winged” cannot give way to another word in order to suit such synonyms. For it is absolutely essential if the poet is to indicate the loosening forth of the Swan’s transcendent power into a cosmos-covering mastery.

All in all, a perfect verbalising and rhythming out of the meaning in a varied manner is present, and the great length of the line as compared with the rest of the poem drives deep into us the ultimate magnitude of the spiritual achievement the whole piece pictures.

If any poetic phrase in world-literature comes up to the blend of literary sur-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp 425-26.

prise and satisfaction we have here, it is the fourth line of the first stanza in Mallarmé's sonnet *Le Cygne* (*The Swan*):

Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui
 Va-t-il nous déchirer avec un coup d'aile ivre
 Ce lac dur oublié que hante sous le givre
 Le transparent glacier des vols qui n'ont pas fui!

We may English the stanza:

Virginal, vivid, beautiful Today—
 Will it tear with a stroke of drunken wing this lone
 Hard lake where haunts mid hoar-frost's overlay
 The transparent glacier of flights unflown?

Sri Aurobindo himself has picked out the fourth line for special praise and called it "magnificent", and he has commented: "This idea of the denied flights (imprisoned powers) of the soul that have frozen into a glacier seems to me as powerful as it is violent." On being told of the usual interpretation of the poem in terms of Mallarmé's poetic situation, Sri Aurobindo has said: "The swan is to my understanding not merely the poet who has not sung in the higher spaces of the consciousness, which is already a fine idea, but the soul that has not risen there and found its higher expression, the poet, if Mallarmé thought of that specially, being only a signal instance of this spiritual frustration. There can be no more powerful, moving and formidable expression of this spiritual frustration, this chilled and sterile greatness, than the image of the frozen lake and the imprisoned swan as developed by Mallarmé."

In view of this gloss, Mallarmé's phrase makes a very pertinent juxtaposition with Sri Aurobindo's. Poetically it matches it: philosophically it polarises it with an equally expressive audacity. For, the Aurobindonian bird comes forth as a symbol antithetical to the Mallarméan. It is the Soul completely triumphant instead of being splendidly defeated. In the world-wandering yet world-exceeding Swan we get the all-consummating counterpart to the French poet's ice-bound *Cygne* of flights unflown.

K. D. SETHNA

THE MOTHER

THE PRESIDING DEITY OF THE ASHRAM

THE greatest achievement of the world's spiritual history is the fact that the Supreme Mother, the presiding deity of the universe, has been moved to take a human birth. Sri Aurobindo has symbolically figured this fact in his *Savitri*. Let us listen to Aswapathy's prayer:

“O Wisdom-Splendour, Mother of the Universe,
Creatrix, the Eternal's Artist-Bride,...
Mission to earth some living form of Thee,
Let Thy infinity in one body live,
Immortal, treading the earth with mortal feet.
Let a great word be spoken from the heights
And one great act unlock the doors of Fate,
Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men”—

and to the response:

“O strong forerunner, I have heard thy cry.
One shall descend and break the iron Law,
Change Nature's doom by the lone Spirit's power”—

and to the assurance:

“Beauty shall walk celestial on the earth,
Delight shall sleep in the cloud-net of her hair
And in her body as on his homing tree
Immortal Love shall beat his glorious wings.
Strength shall be with her like a conqueror's sword
And from her eyes the Eternal's bliss shall gaze.”

The realisation of this assurance is expressed in clear terms by the Master in the following:

“The One whom we adore as the Mother is the divine Conscious-Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many-sided that to follow her movements is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates.”¹

The Master further declares:

“The Mother's embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo the first transformation necessary for that to be possible.”

¹ *The Mother*, pp. 35/6.

But why are we not granted the joy of seeing her full glory and recognising at all times the Presiding Deity of the Ashram for what she is? The answer is:

If she appeared in her full glory should we be able to stand before her? And then could the purpose of appearing among us be served? She is always in her full effulgence in her domain. Says Sri Aurobindo, "Even as it is the Mother has to come down towards the lower consciousness of the sadhaks instead of keeping always her own. The Divine has to veil himself in order to meet the human."

Elsewhere he has said:

"...the Mother by the very nature of her work had to identify herself with the sadhaks, to support all their difficulties, to receive into herself all the poison in their nature .. and fight them out."

Another question that baffles the mind: Since she is the Supreme Mother Herself, to whom are her *Prayers and Meditations* addressed? Where was the need for such a "cry"?

"Cry" not for herself but for suffering humanity, for the redress of the ancient sorrow of the earth.

The following excerpts may serve as the key to understanding the position:

"...the Mother has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it into the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to god-like life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda.

"In her deep and great love for her children she has consented to put on herself the cloak of this obscurity, condescended to bear the attacks and torturing influences of the powers of the Darkness and the Falsehood, born to pass through the portals of the birth that is a death, taken upon herself the pangs and sorrows and sufferings of the creation, since it seemed that thus alone could it be lifted to the Light and Joy and Truth and eternal Life."

Let us turn to some of her Prayers:

"O Lord, I cry to Thee: make me a burning brazier which consumes all suffering and transforms it into a glad Light pouring its rays into the hearts of all!

"Grant my prayer: Transform me into a brazier of pure love and limitless compassion." (February 2, 1914)

"Let me be Thy herald among men, so that all who are ready may taste the beatitude that Thou grantest me in Thy infinite Mercy, and let Thy Peace reign upon earth." (February 8, 1913)

"...Thou art all, everywhere, and in all and this body which acts is Thy own body, just as the visible universe in its entirety: it is Thou who breathest, thinkest and lovest in this substance which, being Thyself, desires to be Thy willing servant." (November 19, 1912)

In the above another thing must have struck the readers: the physical identification which the Mother had with the Divine even before she graced Pondicherry with the

touch of her Feet. There are scores of her "Prayers" to show the depth of her feelings for the earth. I quote one in which she beomes one with the earth and prays:

"...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 the 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."
(May 25, 1914)

Here, one can see a dual personality in the Mother—the human and the divine elements blended in an astonishing manner. In the beautiful words of Sri Aurobindo: "...the human in front, the Divine behind."

"When the Divine descends, he takes upon himself the burden of humanity in order to . show humanity how to become divine."

"The Divine does the Sadhana first for the world and gives what is brought down to others..."

At another place he says:

"Mother has taken the body because a work of a physical nature, including a change in the physical world, had to be done. Some have come with her to share in the work, others she has called, others have come seeking for the light .."

Now a word about her mission:

Buddha found the world full of miseries and said Nirvana was the only way of escape. But only a few escaped and the world was left as it was. Sri Aurobindo has gone to the very root of the cause of human miseries. He holds that the root cause of all the sufferings of the world is its domination by the forces of the nether regions—the subconscious and the inconscient. Unless they are conquered in their own domain the law of deformation and darkness, disease and death cannot be annulled from the earth consciousness. Until "the inconscient's seal is lifted from our eyes" we cannot "grow vessels of creative might."¹

Herein lies the uniqueness of the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's life-long sadhana.

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ "The boon that we have asked from the Supreme is the greatest that the earth can ask from the Highest, the change that is the most difficult to realise . Only a Supreme Grace can effect this miracle."

SRI AUROBINDO

OUR MOTHER'S DARLING

O THOU, our Mother's darling Service Tree,
O dedicated servant of the Lord,
Thy beauty blessed of godly greenery
Is soul-profound and rich beyond all word.

As I behold thy grand and graceful form,
An emerald glory of Eden come to light,
I feel thy hidden heart, love's wonder warm
Slow-stealing into mine, a blessing bright.

My kith and kin thou art, my very soul
In thee I see and glad I am of it;
Around thee shines the occult aureole
Of Him, embodied Brahman, the Infinite.

Pulsating is thy plumage with the life
Of gods come down to earth for work divine;
Thy grandeur thousand-armed is radiant, rife
With goodness, Shiva's all-auspicious sign.

In thee the emblem blue of heavens high
Is held green-hued upon our dreaming Master
Whose grace has sought thee out to vivify
Dust with the life of worlds of vision vaster.

Thou art our great ideal of service sweet:
By day, by night, untired standing here
Before our God's all-gracious lotus-feet,
O bring them to our hearts more clear, more near!

1-3-1970

PUNJALAL

A TRIBUTE TO LOIS DUNCAN

FOR all who have had the good fortune to visit the Sri Aurobindo Center in Sedona, Arizona, the presence of its founder Lois Duncan is a most living one. Almost it seems that her passing away serenely while resting on the night of March 12, 1970, leaves no break in contact with a spirit bright and gentle, indomitable in courage, generous in giving of self, kindness itself in every act of the giving.

With her husband Nicholas, Lois cherished, guided, and kept as a continuing source of spiritual growth the Sri Aurobindo Center. There and especially during the yearly April 24th Seminars, many Americans have had their first contact with the works and force of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, their first opening to the great world transformation coming with the transformation of man's consciousness.

Long steeped in Indian thought of the *sanātana dharma* and well-travelled in India, Lois Duncan came to know of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, of the Ashram in Pondicherry, through Margaret Woodrow Wilson, a personal friend. Treasuring as she did every relationship in the Consciousness of the Divine, Lois never ceased to grow in that Consciousness and saw death as merely a passage to the next "adventure of consciousness and joy".

"Now I must tell you," she wrote a sadhak in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, "that I have not had one moment of fear of cancer....Long, long ago I had an experience that convinced me that I am *not* the body. It took away all fear of death." More than fearless, she was—is—one of the vanguard of the spirit and read *Savitri* regularly, closely, intensely almost, not for its beauty alone—Lois loved beauty and created it wherever she was—but as a guide to the infinite worlds before her pilgrim soul.

The attitude in which she met her final ordeal was in fact as full of light as that which built the Sri Aurobindo Center in Sedona. Letters from her friends there have described "the indescribable beauty that has radiated from the darkness of the experience into which Lois plunged so deeply and which we, within the limits of our awareness, shared. It has been, is being, an experience of profound change for all of us ..We who gathered in our full numbers those Sundays looked at each other with new eyes. We loved each other; we were closer than brothers and sisters, we were not separate but indissolubly bound in experience.. The Mother often seems almost tangibly present these days."

That experiencing of Oneness, brought about through Lois waiting at the threshold of her next "adventure of consciousness and joy", was a continuation of her work for the conquest of truth during her life. How fitting it seems, and how triumphant an affirmation it is, that the founder of the first Sri Aurobindo Center in the United States should exemplify the Mother's 1970 Birthday Message "With or without a body the struggle continues and will end by victory."

SEYRIL

TELEVISION AND THE NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

THIRD REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, AUROVILLE

WHEN the communications satellite is put up over India in 1972 the greatest and most dynamic confrontation of the East and the West in the history of the world will have begun. The peak of Western technology will be joined with the peak of Eastern spirituality. Television is coming to India at the same time that a new consciousness is descending on this land. To be ready for the momentous event we must prepare ourselves on every possible level. An important problem will be to try and understand the psychological nuances of the age-old problem of a meeting between the East and the West.

One of the reasons why the West is the West is that it has produced tremendous technological feats of communication like television, seemingly under its own powers, and it has feared subjective spiritual experience. One of the reasons why the East is the East is that it has discovered many valid ways to spiritual experience but it has feared trying to communicate them.

The West has feared subjective spiritual experience until now because it has had no real need or time for it. Through discipline, hard work, and a huge enthusiasm Western man has pioneered the "good life" and the fantastic new powers of the electronic age. Subjective spiritual experience does not produce atomic energy, electronic brains, rockets to the moon, or the electronic marvel of television. These things were produced by dogged hard work and an astounding professional know-how, and there seems to have been no real time or place for subjectivity. Inner spiritual experience has not been taken seriously or it has even been shunned as a kind of poetic, or neurotic, or effete substitute for hard work and the vigorous enthusiasms of the really contemporary Western man. In recent centuries even Western religion has concentrated on productive action rather than on contemplation. The Pope talks about Biafra and birth control. If he holds an occult key to the inner transformation of man, he has been, apparently, afraid to use it. At least we hear little or nothing about it. So the West seems to have become immersed in action, achievement, technology, the "good life".

Yet there has been some serious questioning lately about how good this "good life" really is. Wars are still being fought, racial prejudice still exists, many politicians are still corrupt, the needs of the human vital are not being satiated or even quieted in the lands of big business, high standards of living, and material power. The young are restless with what seems to be a total lack of existential security. They do not seem to know where, why, or how they fit. They will try any "trip". Their new word is "soul" and they are searching for it everywhere. Many are looking towards India with a kind of desperate hope. They want direct experience, not membership in some

club that they did not choose to join in the first place. They seem to be after the deeper levels of existence not found in prosperity alone or through the most magnificent technological achievements in themselves. Certainly there is a Divine Presence in the "good life" and in the new powers of the electronic age, but the new seekers seem to be demanding that the Presence in the powers reveal Itself. The new seekers of the West do not seem to be quite as aggressive and sure of themselves nor do they seem to be as afraid of subjective spiritual experience. With the arrival of global television they will be able to look to India on a large new scale. Should not India be ready to accept their look and to receive their desperate hopes?

If the aggressive West is getting over its fear of spiritual experience, perhaps the inscrutable East can get over its fear of communicating. The East has feared the communication of spiritual experience until now mainly because it has been judged impossible. Deep spirituality is beyond emotional thrill, mental formation, beyond the rich insights of great art. It cannot really be talked about, written about, or painted in a picture. The very attempt to do so is seen in the East as a sign of self-deception and egoism. Many of the greatest Indian mystics, therefore, have ultimately become silent and almost totally withdrawn into their own ecstatic and ineffable loneliness. No one hears of them. Some legitimate spiritual visionaries, however, will answer questions, but their answers are usually very simple, almost rudimentary. The real influence they have over the small, exclusive groups which gather around them does not derive from any answers they give or from any system. It derives from their actual, living presence among their disciples. This living force must be experienced for its mysterious power to be believed. It cannot be painted or photographed. Most pictures of Yogis look like advertisements for the side-show of a circus. Even motion pictures lose the mystery of the living presence. It has to do with the synchronicity of certain vibrations and forces happening at a particular place at a particular time. According to Carl Jung this synchronicity is the metaphysical insight behind studies like astrology, numerology, and the hexagrams of the book of *I Ching*. He says in his introduction to the book of *I Ching* that synchronicity is "a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality. Since the latter is merely statistical truth and not absolute, it is a sort of working hypothesis of how events evolve one out of another, whereas synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers." The only artistic medium which can handle synchronicity is, of course, live television.

There is no reason why full spiritual communication cannot happen electronically as long as it is actually happening "live". Through television, the Eastern fear of communication can be overcome. The communication of mystical presence will no longer be impossible. We can only begin to imagine what would happen if the Mother ever decided to appear "live" on global television. This opportunity will be offered to her in the not too far distant future.

In the immediate future we have to face Eastern fears on a more practical level. How can the disciples of the great spiritual leaders contribute to practical television programming now and thereby prepare the way for the great living moments of the future? There is a fear involved here of a more humble kind, the fear that the disciple has of becoming a guru. It is a fear which exists because it is well known that even in describing the techniques or approaches to spiritual experience the teacher's own deepest contacts are sometimes dissipated. This fear is overcome in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. In a Yoga which demands total transformation there is no question of becoming a guru in the traditional sense. The process of personal transformation is to go steadily on until a new stage of evolution is reached. We are being led by the Mother, but the paths are so new and so far beyond the mind and the old forms of communication that even she finds it impossible to describe what is happening. We know that it is happening through the Mother's presence and our own inner experiences. Because we experience so much and so very little at the same time, we know that the process is not finished. In the light of this living process, therefore, we should look at television as a means of our own transformation and as a means of a global offering to share. We can become a part of offering the opportunity of involvement in the spiritual processes of the new evolving consciousness. As a matter of fact, is there any choice? Total transformation implies communication, and if there is a new consciousness descending on the world, a new stage of evolution about to be reached, what else is there really worth communicating? With the confrontation of the East and the West so imminent, so crucial, and about to happen in such a dynamic way through television, it is up to India to lead the way in peaceful surrender—not a surrender to any human force, but a surrender to the Will of the Divine.

The Mother's New Year's message for 1970 is, "The world is preparing for a big change. Will you help?" As usual, she speaks with utmost tenderness, the quintessential Mother talking to her children, but it should be clear to any child aspiring for maturity, that behind her tenderness is a stern command. Will we help? If our aspiration for the new consciousness is sincere, we have no choice.

MARCH, 1970

WILLIAM T. NETTER

THE REVOLUTION SUPREME

(Continued from the issue of February 21)

It is strange but true that the first qualification of the Revolution Supreme, its first claim on our interest and allegiance, is that it strikes us at first sight as just too formidable a job, too big to be accomplishable. Indeed it may seem at first glance a proposal conceivable only by megalomaniacs!

But second thought convinces us that, in such a supercrisis and one-world situation, the prime proof that here is the job we *all* must tackle is precisely that it looks impossible! It appears so, because we are so addicted to *assuming* that it must be left to the old forces, now discredited. It has proved obviously too much for them. Having left the peacemaking job hitherto to the old diplomatic-bureaucratic-military-industrial complex, and waking up to the fact that, in a quarter century since Hiroshima's dire warning, those forces have only succeeded in moving the human family nearer the abyss, we, the planet's sovereign people, shall now take over the job ourselves. The all-important task must henceforth be shouldered by all of us whose lives and values are at stake, the United World Peoples' Forces.

It is not that we are supermen, free from all the foibles of the professionals, but that we are relatively freer from the old discredited system which has made them its captives, and are determined to make a radical new approach to peacemaking.

When communications were primitive, the peacemaking job was relatively simple. You were aware only of your immediate neighbours. But now, with our one-small-world consciousness and situation, our peacemaking task is global. Yet we continue to go at it in the old piecemeal fashion, even in the United Nations. No wonder world peace eludes us, even so long after Hiroshima's grim warning! The Revolution Supreme intends to wake us up to the size of our peacemaking job today and tomorrow, and to get us to tackle it in the same sensible integral way as you find in any efficient enterprise.¹

The Revolution Supreme makes a positive, creative, integral approach to our world's major peacemaking problems. We can no more neglect any one of them than the commander of a ship can ignore any serious breach in its hull, or a health officer any single epidemic, or a fire warden any fire. When integrality has become the keynote of the age, the old piecemeal peacemaking has become an intolerably dangerous anachronism. As responsible world citizens we shall take steps to end it.

Of course, this does not mean that we expect a quick global peace, just because we adopt a global conception of the peacemaking task. We shall plan to advance carefully according to our developing resources and priorities, and it will be a long, hard cam-

¹ See "A Great New Hope" at the end of this instalment.

paign. But as more and more of us come to see this secret of the way to a warless world and are inspired to a great new hope, the revolution will gain momentum and bring not only individual and organisational but also governmental resources and forces into the campaign, and will make victory feasible *in our time*.

The second qualification of this revolution is that it seems too "far-out", too advanced, too idealistic to be practical. Here is what Sri Aurobindo wrote in *The Ideal of Human Unity* in 1918: "The pure application of ideals to politics is as yet a *revolutionary method of action*¹ which can be hoped for *only in exceptional crises*; the day when it becomes a rule of life, human nature and life itself will have become a new phenomenon, something almost superterrestrial and divine. That day is not yet." But we have noted how "exceptional" he sees the present supercrisis to be. And is this Supramental Age not to be "superterrestrial and divine", yet with a down-to-earth "spiritual realism"?

Facing the immensity of this task, we now have before us the electrifying recent example of what can be done when there is an adequate mobilisation of resources, with dedicated, disciplined and determined personnel, tackling an otherwise impossible job, in the space project culminating in the Apollo 11 lunar triumphs. If 400,000 men could accomplish that, for such a purpose, who dares set a limit to what the awakened and mobilised manpower and resources of the entire human family can do in the Revolution Supreme for survival and fulfilment? Surely providence has set before us this inspiring example at just the right moment of history.

There are said to be some 600,000,000 persons sufficiently alive socially to be members of the non-governmental organisations of this planet. Surely they are mobilisable when their all is at stake. And let us not forget that in this climactic revolution, while the initiative must be with the people, the momentum of their awakening and mobilisation will progressively bring the resources of their governments also into the great united endeavour. *Together, unitedly, we can do it!*

There are Aurobindonian grounds for optimism concerning a notable spiritual advance of humanity under the inspiration of the Revolution Supreme. Sri Aurobindo has observed, concerning the spiritual change in human nature that he saw on the horizon of the Spiritual Age (a half century ago) :

"After all, there is no logical necessity that the change cannot begin at all because its perfection is not immediately possible. A decisive turn of mankind to the spiritual ideal, the beginning of a constant ascent and guidance towards the heights, may not be altogether impossible, even if the summits are attainable at first only by the pioneer few and far off to the tread of the race. And the beginning may mean the descent of an influence that will alter at once the whole life of mankind in its orientation and enlarge for ever, as did the development of his reason and more than any development of the reason, its potentialities and all its structure."

Then follows the climax of Sri Aurobindo's study in *The Human Cycle*, a series

¹ All italics ours.

of four chapters on the Spiritual Age which is dawning. Again, let us follow the Master in our faith-full realistic optimism, *mindful of the mighty Divine Force at work today*, mightier since 1956 and New Year 1969.

The new *psychological* approach to peacemaking is mandatory—we repeat, the moral, spiritual, educational, scientific and cultural, the *deeper* elements, and not merely the *superficial* political, diplomatic, military, economic and social elements of our life.

Looking at the world scene today, we see clearly that it is only that climactic revolution that can prove an adequate response to the challenge posed by the Communist forces, spearheaded by Mao Tse-tung. They contend, and Mao the more insistently, that, short of violent revolution, the unprivileged will never get justice, *in time*, under the present capitalist and bourgeois regimes. “Justice delayed is justice denied.”

Must we not admit that, under the old self-seeking, consciously or unconsciously hypocritical, fumbling and erratic politics and its enormous, too-wooden bureaucracy, there is truth in their contention? This is the more so in the new developing nations, which have taken over the old colonial regimes with their entrenched economic exploiters, and with often inadequate training for efficient administration; also with a poor standard of citizenship and therefore statesmanship, consequently easily falling under military dictatorship or flirting with chaos.

Our United Nations Secretary-General has long been emphasising that the most dangerous world problem is the growing gap between the “have” and the “have-not” nations. (It varies from Rs. 26,400 per year, per capita, Gross National Product in 1966 in the U.S.A., to Rs. 16,000 in Sweden and Switzerland, to Rs. 650 in India and several other countries and Rs. 300 in Rivanda!) *It is highly significant that U Thant recently stressed the importance of the development of a peoples’ “Third Force” on the world scene.* That is an essential element of the *only* solution. But this Force must be a thoroughly awakened and aroused New Citizenship, alert, creative, determined, and alive to the necessity of speeding economic and social justice, intent upon resourceful peacemaking to achieve the Great Detente which alone can release mankind from the monstrous burden of the present armaments race. It is a fact so gigantic, so monstrous, that we must keep on repeating that, to the stupid shame of this generation, the arms expenditure of the Cold War powers exceeds the national income of all the hundred-odd have-not nations of the world!

Our present “Free World” society, with its old style politics and bureaucracy can neither compete successfully with the Communist appeal to the great majority of our fellowmen who are underprivileged and fast awakening, nor prevent a suicidal climax of the Cold War, nor satisfy the aspirations and demands of our rebellious youth, depressed minorities and wretched masses—and most significant, it cannot fulfil the demands of our own true nature collectively, our nation-souls, our professed immortal ideals.

Let it be clearly recognised and frankly acknowledged among us that the only adequate alternative to Communism, with its rigid restrictions on human rights and freedoms, its class hatred, its suppression of truth, its conspirational tactics, is our

relatively voluntary commitment to the speeding of economic and social justice to every man, woman and child on earth. This will require :

1. A vast and deep Awakening to the ethical imperative of this objective, this standard of world familyhood, and its demands concerning each person's finances and "standard of living". We must keep the strongest *moral* pressure on *all*, including Gandhi's trusteeship emphasis, so that a new high level of *voluntary* response is soon achieved.

2. Let it be understood that, while every effort is being made to free the present vast disarmament funds for speeding economic and social justice to all, we recommend that *adequate legal measures* be added to society's *moral* pressure, to enforce the required economic equality through taxes and penalties. Let those inclined to resist be reminded of the dire alternatives on the world scene today, either go under that "inordinately rigid state socialism" (as Sri Aurobindo calls it) that is called "Communism", with all its intolerable loss of freedom, its bureaucratic tyranny, or undergo man's final war, forced on mankind by Communist dogmatic Marxism. Drive home the fact that there is no *laissez faire* or liberal alternative!

There is a great truth-issue at the heart of the dead end dilemma of the Cold War (to which we refer later) whose resolution is crucial for the issue of economic peace with justice for all. A reliable, truth-based peace requires our exposé of the failure of Marx's economic predictions in considerable measure, and the necessity, therefore, of a truly scientific reassessment of the world's economic resources and forces, free from political dogmatism of Left or Right.

Disarmament will free resources for speeding economic justice enormously, while productivity can be vastly heightened in many ways by the new high morale of the Revolution Supreme.

In Sri Aurobindo's *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, and *Messages of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, as a whole, and in a large part of *Essays on the Gita* and the climactic portions of *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, *The Life Divine*, and *The Supramental Manifestation on Earth* we are shown the Way to the collective realisation or *fulfilment* of mankind, including the changes that must occur in our human society for that happy divine consummation.

Sri Aurobindo leaves us in no doubt, specially in *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Human Cycle*, that the old politics—self-seeking, petty and blundering, with its uncreative bureaucracy, often corrupt—and the old egoistic type of nationalism, *must go*, and He clearly implies that they should be replaced by what we suggest may be called "*the New Citizenship and the new True Statesmanship*".

A GREAT NEW HOPE:

The New Creative, Dynamic, Integral Peacemaking of the Revolution Supreme (*In briefest outline*)

AFTER twenty-four years of post-Hiroshima fumbling by the world's governments in the old ruts, with the persistence of dangerous dead-end dilemmas confronting the major powers and their allies—dilemmas which, unless they are resolved, can lead only to “the abyss” for all of us—let the world make *this radically new approach to peacemaking*, “the New Way”—“radical” because going to the root, the core of Reality:

1. From the “false” (the Mother’s word) and egocentric, the dangerously competitive, the *superficial* way of diplomatic, political, military, economic *manoeuvring*, to the sincere and cooperative and *deeper* way, *the human approach* to peacemaking—psychological, ethical, spiritual, as well as educational, scientific, cultural (whence UNESCO)—the enduring *inner* foundations of peace. These deeper human factors must come to govern the political, economic and social elements of our human life. This change is dictated by elementary wisdom for survival, plus, as well as by Truth.

2. From peace as overwhelmingly a *governmental* concern, the plaything of *professional politicians*, to *peace as the people’s business, their first business*. This is a highly *participatory age*, and it is imperative not to leave peacemaking to the professional politicians, diplomats and generals, habituated to the old discredited and worn-out ways. Yet our attitude is not *anti-government*. “The sovereign people” must take their destiny into their own hands.

3. Let this new peacemaking be a major concern of “the New Citizenship” and the new “True Statesmanship” which must grow out of it. This New Citizenship is destined to become a worldwide united world peoples’ bid for a new high responsible standard in public life, replacing the old politics.

4. From piecemeal, *ad hoc reacting* to emergent critical international situations, and therefore impulsively *improvising*, to the integral, comprehensive and adequate Way to peace and to progress unlimited—creative, *preventive* peacemaking. Therefore *from drift to plan*, as with respect to other important national and international matters. It is incredible that in these twenty-four years since Hiroshima’s warning, “*Unite or Perish*”, the UN has not evolved a master-plan for survival—what madness!

5. From routine, dull, cautious, even timid peacemaking *gestures*, to creative, imaginative, resourceful, courageous, dynamic, substantial peacemaking. All, all is at stake for all of us!

6. The *Master-key to peace*, as Sri Aurobindo has shown us, is the awakening to *nation-souls* and their growing dominance over the *national egos*. This seems a simple remedy, but it is profoundly wise, in tune with the universal Laws of Life, and it has rich creative potentialities we must explore and develop.

7. From mutual Cold War reacting, with dangerous frustrations all over the world scene, we must advance to the Revolution Supreme (see our memo on it) with the maximum of creative, positive action and with potential victory for ALL, including the speeding of economic and social justice to every person on earth, in the ways proposed in our memo, and otherwise. This will be a revolutionary change, indeed!

8. As the fruitage of the foregoing, resulting in a new depth of human unity, and not otherwise, the United Nations can be transformed into an adequate custodian of the world's peace, or be superseded, establishing peace on a reliable foundation.

Each of the above eight elements will bear *pondering*, before it begins to come alive in our minds and pictured as real, and not mere words. Specially the sixth and seventh have vast and deep and urgent implications.

The Integral Way of Sri Aurobindo's Master-Spiritual-Statesmanship now demands nothing less of us than the adventure of integral, creative, all-out peacemaking. The integrality of this eight-fold Way and of the fourteen elements of "Revolution Supreme Action" is a must! It truly revolutionises peacemaking. This can inspire around the world *a great new hope*, beginning here.

We see this new, integral, fundamental, inner, truly scientific Way, a living synthesis of scientific and spiritual development, in contrast to *the old outmoded egoistic and anti-scientific way*, a misbegotten offspring of the doomed and passing age of materialism and rationalism, now quite out of harmony with the emerging new philosophy of science, wherever scientists are free men, not cowed and bound by anti-scientific, dogmatic, totalitarian ideology of the Dark Age of Science of, say, 1848 (the Communist Manifesto). Out of harmony also with the spirit and outlook of this New Age and therefore calling for the great change. (Encouraging examples of the great scientists, Dr. V.A. Fok and Dr. Sakharov, in the USSR.)

The Revolution Supreme is *the Way of the New Dialectic*, not the old zig-zag with its Marxian over-emphasis (specially in this H-bomb Age) on *anti* thesis, therefore on inevitable, irreconcilable class conflict and people's war, (Mao's fixation, *thus far*) but *the new spiral*, emphasising *supplementary truth* and the will to a *reconciling higher synthesis* blending spiritual and scientific development, transcending the old egoistic nationalism and in tune with the nation souls.

Let us trust the Divine Force, with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo inspiring and guiding us, and with Sri Aurobindo dynamically in our midst, to lead us through, with faith also in the potentialities of the Auroville-Unesco partnership as a providential opening.

(To be continued)

JAY HOLMES SMITH

HOMER, HOMERIC POETRY AND THE ILIAD

(Continued from the issue of March)

HOMER is not just a poet; he is an epic poet. This is the first thing to remember about him, whether for putting him into English, or simply for appreciating him. It is especially important to remember it today, for it seems to have become a point that is especially difficult to understand.

The word "epic" has suffered as much misuse as the word "tragedy", until neither word retains much meaning at all in common parlance. But common parlance has nothing to do with Homer, and nothing to do with epic. The first and chief thing to remember about an epic is that it is a poem; not a novel or a series of pictures, or an actual earthly happening or complex of such happenings. It is a heroically conceived and executed poem of heroic events, with unity and a profound meaning to be divined by struggling men. Things that occur on the earth are at best raw materials or starting-points for epic, they are not epic itself; and to speak of an "epic battle", for example, or an "epic voyage", is to strain the term too far.

But the word "poetry" itself is becoming meaningless by being extended too far. Thus we have talk of the "poetry of life" or the "poetry of motion" or the "poetry of concreteness", or almost anything else but the poetry of words, that is, poetry itself. Not wanting to admit that they do not like or understand poetry, people try to confuse it with things that they can consider important and set some value upon. But Homer did not live in such a world, and cannot be given to such a world on its own terms.

It is surely a fair inference that an audience listening to recited or sung poetry, in a tradition carried on for centuries, likes what it gets. What Homer's audience got was poetry, words combined to the best advantage with subtlety and art, arranged in a very definite meter, and powerfully rhythmical. It was not spew, or the "poetry" of incompetence. It was words, telling a great story in a beautiful, strong and lifting way. Of course not being lyric, much less anticipating modern ideas of lyric, it was expansive, and varied, and not always at its highest pitch. It was concerned with building to climaxes and then receding, though never falling below a minimum high level; it was ongoing, and it carried the listener in a large enhancement of his life. It was a sweep, not an *aperçu*, a series of events, not the expression of a private emotion. It was expansive, and discursive, and finely rhetorical: the reply of Achilles to the embassy, or at least what he says to Odysseus, has been considered the greatest piece of rhetoric in Greek literature.

Which is not to say that it is not also great poetry. For most of this befuddled century of ours (so besotted with bad and empty rhetoric), it has been the puerile and ignorant fashion to decry rhetoric, and insist upon "pure" poetry; and the pitiful results are before us. One of the Muse's chief instruments has been scorned, and the

Muse has departed. Rhetoric being skill in the ordering of words, none whose business is the ordering of words can do without it. For serious poetry of any scope, as indeed for every utterance that is meant to be understood, rhetoric is essential. A personal lyric may do with a minimum of it; but the more exclusively and jealously personal a poem is, the less it is likely to have to give to anyone, save its author. Homer does not play little private games like this, and, as Dorothy Sayers has remarked in connection with her admirable translation of Dante's *Commedia*, to anyone who knows what he is talking about, "rhetoric" is simply a term of description, and not one of abuse, and the greatest ages of poetry have been also the greatest ages of rhetoric. The issue is not between rhetoric and poetry, but between the skillful, the powerful and significant use of rhetoric, and the unskillful, the feeble and frivolous use of it. There are many examples of the latter; but this is only to say that the task is not an easy one, not that the necessary instruments should be rejected.

Homer, being an epic poet, is of course a poet who is discursive, and on a monumental scale. This need not trouble anyone who understands that language itself is necessarily discursive—even a grunt being so, in so far as it consumes time in the utterance; but there seem now to be some who do not understand such things very clearly, and who think that they would like poetry to be non-discursive. I wish them good fortune, but I do not see how their goal is to be achieved. For even the Japanese haiku depend as much on their discursive as upon their presentational qualities. They are subtle and careful arrangements of words, not just "pictures", they have form—that is, their own poetical form—and they have rhythm and sound; they appeal to the ear as much as to the eye: for they are true poetry. In fact the discursive, the presentational and the aural qualities of poetry are equally important; poetry is indissolubly akin to both painting and music; but it is nothing without the language, for it *is* the language, and to present images is to do nothing poetically, if not to give a new beauty to a discursive context, or provide new material for poetry to work on. Time and space are required, for the development and best use of the image; flow and expansion are necessary; and they do their best work in powerful rhythm and harmonious sound. Homer knows his business, and he never supposes that something like "field-fire-whoosh"—even this being discursive—is superior to "So they swept on, like the blazing fire". One who wants images only had better turn to painting, and let poetry alone. If the image were all-important, poetry would not be so notoriously difficult to translate, and one might see Homer plain in plain prose.

But one cannot do this, and we have some very plain prose to prove it. He must be given in poetry, and this means that, at the minimum, he must be given in an adequate meter, adequately handled. The problem of such a meter is one of the long-standing and great problems of poetry, and it is a pity that there are so few now, that have any serious interest in such a serious subject.

But the fact is that for quite a while now the really serious problems of poetry have been shunted aside, also the serious powers, and of course poetry itself has gone with them. Dwellers in a workaday, dull world have adopted the cult of the work-

shop; and for the most part they turn things that are over-worked, or that are only "work", with no inspiration at all. And laboring with an illusion of self-sufficiency as they do, they have cast aside all standards of workmanship in verse (here is a "paradox" indeed!), merely floundering. For the verse, the living body and expression, must be perfected by the Muse; and to them in their progress She is even less than an idle fiction. But to Homer She was far more than even the more or less living fiction that She was to Pope, and he does not call upon his goddess merely by convention. Though he may not have been inspired in a wild Dionysian way, inspired he surely was—with the Apollonian light that is far more than the wooden-headed latter-day speakers of "convention", "cold mentality", etc., can understand. One who would translate Homer must not forget this; and he must give him adequate form, with adequate language: language not entirely of the everyday uses of mankind.

For Homer is not colloquial. His language may have been accepted by the people, but it was accepted as the language of poetry. This is not to say that he never uses plain, everyday words, such words as were considered "low" in Pope's time. He in fact uses such words abundantly: but he does not do it in a colloquial, prosy, folksy way. He does it loftily, metrically, remotely, and his plain words are continually being mixed with words that his audience never spoke at all; and also being used themselves in forms that were foreign to the ear of the market-place. The *Iliad* is conventional, traditional, artificial, mannered, and "literary" throughout: and ("paradox" again, for those who collect them) it is natural, spontaneous, and freely and meaningfully flowing as only great and highly disciplined art can be. It shows everywhere the irresistible power of significant content wrought by and into and itself creating a great and exacting form. The two, form and content, are not separable in the greatest poetry, or in any genuine poetry, and neither can be dispensed with: and in fact there is no such thing as pure form without content—there can be only schematism, and every line is unique, like every leaf on a tree—any more than there is such a thing as content-in-itself, with no form at all. In great poetry there is great content-form, with mutual worthiness.

But English has never had any accepted poetic language of Homeric proportions, and I have not felt that it was part of my business to try to invent one. I have used for the most part the ordinary diction of prose, while having no antipathy to an occasional rarefied locution; of course continually trying, by the meter and the rhythm, to keep the language on the necessary high level. I have used inversion too, wherever the meter called for it or wherever I pleased. If one cannot reproduce all the peculiarities of the Homeric diction, or hope to present a Homer in English that sounds to modern ears just the way Homer's Greek did to his contemporaries, one can still attempt to impress the reader with the fact that the *Iliad* is poetry, which is a language elevated and removed from prose, and is not bound entirely by prose usage.

To those afflicted by a certain modern horror of the word order inverted, I can only say that I neither share nor respect their difficulty, and that I have no wish, for the sake of some theory or notion, to truncate or hobble the expressiveness of the great

English language. Inversion is not only quite legitimate and grammatically correct: it is also sometimes more expressive than the colloquial or direct form. One has only to think of Milton's "durance vile" (now a cliché, and still more powerful than anything any self-conscious cliché-avoider has written recently), or Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine*. Poetry at its best, its greatest and highest, is a power of divinity, and will not be confined in any of the narrowly utilitarian moulds of the moment. Homer will not come to them; and one must be "poetical" to render him adequately.

Words are not the dead counters that so many people try to make them: they are living powers; and they have their greatest, that is, their poetical, force, when they are rhythmically and metrically disposed, as are the heartbeats and the breath and the periodicities of nature; when they are brought to, or better when they are found in, a harmonious flowing of unity-in-variety. And here of course the very choice and employment of the words themselves is a major factor: it is they, and their arrangement with one another, that make the meter and the rhythm. Which is another reason why the choice of the diction, the deciding on what sort of language to use, is a paramount question.

Here there is nothing given, and each man is on his own; he must do what commends itself to him. I think that the problem is not really soluble, except on these terms. English is one of the greatest languages for poetry, and has produced a galaxy of poets second to none: but it does not offer easy solutions, and it requires one to throw himself into the ocean, as it were, and sink or swim. I have accepted these conditions; and I have been concerned, in this respect, mainly with writing a verse that I myself could enjoy—all the while, of course, taking care for the presentation of Homer's meaning as powerfully as possible, at the true epic elevation.

It may be said in this connection that even the King James language will not do the job, epic grandeur at least though it does have, and hexameter though there is in the Authorized Version: in support of which latter contention a few quotations may prove interesting and instructive. Thus:

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?—
 and
 I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy—
 and
 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive—
 and
 Praise him loud on the cymbals, the brazen cymbals high-sounding—
 and
 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel—
 and
 God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet—
 and many more, including:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.

This last injunction, be it said, the disintegrators would seem to have taken to their hearts; though it may be doubted that the promised reward has come their way. For their faith would seem to have failed them, and their patience to have been worthy of a greater cause: that of the study of Homer's poetry itself, and the acceptance of him as the great poet he is.

It is the hexameter that is the main thing, and will give the greatest power, and the only really adequate power, to any translation of Homer. Of course it is not easy; but one does not expect a great verse measure to be easy, or available to anybody who may care to give it his important attention. The real masters of English blank verse may perhaps be counted on one hand. The thing is, that English hexameter is possible: and not only that: for it if were finally naturalized, understood, thoroughly accepted, then English would have two great measures, and would greatly have increased its scope and capacities. Then surely it is worth seriously trying.

(To be continued)

JESSE ROARKE

THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

THE VISION AND THE REALISATION IN SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

(Continued from the January issue)

CHAPTER XIV

THE CONQUEST OF MORTALITY

Let deathless eyes look into the eyes of Death,
An imperishable Force touching brute things
Transform earth's death into immortal life.

Savitri, Book X, Canto IV.

For this she had accepted mortal breath;
To wrestle with the shadow she had come
And must confront the riddle of man's birth
And life's brief struggle in dumb Matter's night....
Whether to bear with Ignorance and Death
Or hew the ways of Immortality,
To win or lose the godlike game for man,
Was her soul's issue thrown with Destiny's dice.

Ibid., Book I, Canto II.

And yet I know my footprints' track shall be
A pathway towards Immortality.

Sri Aurobindo, *Last Poems*, p. 5.

Naturally, the release from subconscious ignorance and from disease, duration of life at will, and a change in the functionings of the body must be among the ultimate elements of a supramental change, ... if the transformation of the body is complete, that means no subjection to death

Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga II*, Tome One, pp. 10-11, 14.

A CERTAIN mystic with prophetic vision has aphoristically stated that 'a day will come when death will be a sin'. The implication is that death is not a necessary accompaniment of all manifestation of life, it is no more than incidental and hence eradicable if only certain conditions could be fulfilled. And in the victorious march of the evolutionary life here upon the earth-scene, these conditions are bound to be met today

or tomorrow, thus rendering anachronistic the meek and helpless submission of the life-spirit to the siege of death.

We have already seen in the course of our study what the various factors are that have made inevitable the intervention of death. In this concluding chapter we may restate them in somewhat different terms as follows:

Any attachment to limited being and to things perishable is totally incompatible with the prospect of the physical conquest of death. In the words of the Mother: "If you wish to escape from death, you must not bind yourself to anything perishable."¹ Did not Etana² fail in his quest after the 'Herb of everlasting Life' simply because at the penultimate step the attachment to his past and limited being overpowered him and he implored the soaring eagle on whose outspread wings he was being carried heavenward, to interrupt the ascent and bring him back to his habitual abode?

The sense of egoistic separativeness from the unhindered play of All-Life is the second contributory factor that ultimately dissolves the individual life in death. The Upanishadic Rishi emphasised this point when he declared: "He who sees separation here proceeds from death to death."³

The urge of all-consuming hunger that the individual in his egoistic self-limitation insatiably feels becomes in the sequel the harbinger of death. For in the cryptic utterances of the ancient Indian mystics: "Hunger is death."⁴ "Anna is eaten and it eats; yea, it devours the creature that feeds upon it, therefore it is called *anna* or aliment."⁵

Sexual impulsion is a particular form in which manifests the blind drive of hunger felt by a separative ego. But a body given over to the functioning of sex cannot in the very nature of things escape the clutch of death. This was already hinted at in the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh wherein it is shown that the indomitable hero Enkidu fell a sudden prey to death after he allowed himself to be seduced by a courtesan of Istar.⁶ It is of deep import that the Mother has announced that a supramental body—a body that will transcend all subjection to death—will be a sexless one. This strange interlocking between sex and death will be fully investigated in a subsequent part entitled "THE CONQUEST OF SEX".

A total victory over Time is another achievement that one has to secure if one would seek to enfranchise the body from the obligation of death. One must reach a state of consciousness involving even the consciousness of the body when one would be able to exclaim with the mystic of the Mahabharata: "No time ripens for me, time is not my Lord."⁷ It is worth noting in this connection what the Mother has very recently pronounced on the subject of indefinite durability of a physical body:

¹ "The Fear of Death and the Four Methods of Conquering It", *Bulletin of Physical Education*, February 1954.

² Babylonian mythology

³ *Katha Upanishad*, II.1.10.

⁴ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, I. 2.1

⁵ *Taittiriya Upanishad*, II. 2.

⁶ *Vide*: D. Mérejkovsky, *Les Mystères de l'Orient*, p. 299.

⁷ *Kālas na pacyate tatra*

Na kālas tatra vai prabhūḥ.

“What is quite worth noticing is that one must change one’s sense of time if one is to be in the state of consciousness where waste does not exist; you enter into a state where time has no more the same reality. This is another thing. It is very special, it is an unnumberable present.”¹

All the disabling factors mentioned above have come into play as appendages of the besetting obscurity of cosmic Ignorance whose vassals we at present are. And unless this Ignorance is eliminated at its base there is not the least hope of attaining to earthly immortality. Thus, Trishanku² was balked in his attempt at a physical ascension to heaven, and the vessel of *amṛta* or the life-giving nectar is carefully shielded from the eager grasp of Asura-consciousness (*amṛtam sumhṛtameva cakṛire surāḥ*).³ A flaming sword that turns every way is indeed keeping the way of the tree of life⁴ so that its fruit may not be undeservedly usurped by the ignorant consciousness of man.

But even if this state of cosmic Ignorance is subjectively abrogated, that will not suffice to confer upon the body the boon of immortality. For that to happen, the body consciousness itself, even to its subconscious foundation, has to be totally illumined and the bodily instrument made infinitely receptive and pliable to the demands of the indwelling Spirit, with a capacity for progress that knows no bounds. It has been well said that ‘ageing begins when growth ceases’; also that to ‘avoid dying one day, one would have to be incessantly reborn.’ Sri Aurobindo has pinpointed the basic issue when he says :

“The physical being could only endure, if by some means its physical causes of decay and disruption could be overcome⁵ and at the same time it could be made so plastic and progressive in its structure and its functioning that it would answer to each change demanded of it by the progress of the inner Person; it must be able to keep pace with the soul in its formation of self-expressive personality, its long unfolding of a secret spiritual divinity and the slow transformation of the mental into the divine mental or spiritual existence.”⁶

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, p. 75.

² *The Ramayana*.

³ *The Mahabharata*, Adiparva, 14.50.

⁴ *Genesis*, 3.24.

⁵ Footnote appended in the original: “Even if Science—physical Science or occult Science—were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and pass on to a new incarnation. The material or physical causes of death are not its sole or its true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual necessity for the evolution of a new being.”

⁶ *The Life Divine*, P. 532.

THE SECRET SELF IN THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the January issue)

CHAPTER 4

REMEMBRANCE

SOME people say: "We start the day by trying to remember the Divine and we are full of good intentions and only too willing to carry them out—then why do we lose touch so soon and easily forget all about our good intentions?"

Forgetfulness is due to a division in the nature; the being is not wholly consecrated to the Divine.

The Mother has said that in all intellectual pursuits or physical activities your one motto should be: "Remember and Offer".¹

Perhaps the whole secret lies in this very spirit of offering, of dedication and service. As much as one offers oneself to the Divine, in that measure one remembers the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo has said: "Do everything as if the Mother is looking at you, for She is indeed always present."

The crux of the whole matter lies in the attitude with which we do the work, the attitude with which we think and feel.

If the consciousness is divided in purpose, the first difficulty is already established.

It is of course this division of the parts of the being which brings about conflict and disharmony—an economic wastage of energy to say the least of it.

Man must have a central purpose for his thinking and action; in the ordinarily successful man of the world this central purpose is the 'ego-self'. He arranges and organises all his attributes around this focal point and so brings about a measure of concentration which becomes effective for his purpose.

According to the concentrated effort put forth is he successful. And if there is added to this a liking, a joy or perhaps a love for the work, then the effectivity is so much more enhanced as to draw near to perfection.

But in Yoga this would be rather like putting the cart before the horse. One usually enters the Path of Yoga with a love for the Divine, and on the crest of the wave, in the ardour of this love, one offers oneself and all one's actions to the object of one's love. The central purpose of our life becomes the focal point upon which to direct our thoughts and actions. The centre of emphasis is shifted from the ego-

¹ *Words of the Mother.*

self to the true Self—the psychic being or the *chaitya purusha*, the soul element in man which evolves from life to life.

It is the joy of self-sacrifice, of self-giving, of renunciation of self, by the lover for the Beloved, where everything is an action of love, every thought aspires to that Bliss of Union, every feeling and emotion lives again that Delight and every movement is made as an act of consecrated service offered on the high altars of Agni whose fire burns in the secret centre of the heart as a Flame of Remembrance never to be extinguished. Then there is no question of forgetting, for the Divine Himself has taken up the sadhana as He has taken up His abode in our hearts.

One must aspire and go on aspiring, longing, praying, seeking, searching, yearning for the Presence—until It is established in the heart of the Peace, in the centre of the purified Self.

When the consciousness is no longer divided, when you are wholly consecrated to the Divine Life, then you will have the awareness of being helped and supported by the Divine, but until then you can find a great help in remembering through the act and thought and feeling of *offering* all to the God within you. Is this not a most marvellous thought that *God is within you*: yes, you! even you: and when you fully realise what it means—*how can you possibly forget?*

Some small voice says, “But how can we know this is true? How do you know anything is true? Can you judge of any one thing as to whether it is true or not true?”

This is one thing which all the great spiritual men, including Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Lao Tze and Ramakrishna, are agreed upon—from the Vedic Rishis to the Greek Mystics, from the spiritual lights throughout the world and through all time the cry has been the same: “Gnothi Seauton”—“Know Thyself”; “Tat Twam Asi”—“Thou Art That”: God is within thee! Once we even believe this to be a truth, once we declare ourselves on the side of the great Teachers of the past, once we have the bare trust or some faith in their words—then we are forced to do something about it: we *cannot* forget it.

Imagine for a moment that a doctor has just examined you for what you thought was a stomach disorder; you have a sharp pain in the abdomen. The doctor, whom you *know* or *believe* is a qualified man, says you have a live worm or serpent living inside your stomach: *could you forget it?*

Then ask yourself, “Are all the great Spiritual Masters to be doubted when they say with one accord—‘God is within you!’”

The Mother tells us: “the condition to be aimed at, the real achievement of Yoga, the final perfection and attainment, for which all else is only a preparation, is a consciousness in which it is impossible to do anything without the Divine—by constant aspiration you increase your remembrance and you diminish the forgetfulness. But this should not be done as a severe discipline or a duty; it must be a movement of love and joy.”²

¹ *Words of the Mother*, Part One, p 43.

Humanity ordinarily does not feel the need of the Divine, except when in trouble or in moments of fear or great anxiety—when it has no one else to turn to for help or consolation. But where does a child turn when it is hurt? To its mother. It is the principle of the Divine Mother that man turns to when all else fails—family, friends, wealth and the world; none can give the assurance or the aid, none can offer true guidance and compassion, as She will. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme that upholds us and the universe and as such She mediates between the human personality and the divine Nature. It is by a constant aspiration to know Her, to be one with Her, to serve Her, to offer all to the Divine through Her that the Path of consecration and devotion becomes 'The Sunlit Path' and the way becomes clear and we remember the Divine in all things—so that if His Presence drew away from us, even for a moment, we should cease to exist.

(To be continued)

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

GOD'S HOUR IS COME

O MOTHER Sweet, O Mother of all the souls,
 Thy world-wide reach of Grace is an epic of Wonder,
 Thy tides of joy are washing all gloomy shoals,
 Our enchanted hearts to Thy lassoing Love surrender !

Thy luminous Peace is possessing our troubled living,
 Thy uncompromising Love has seized hate-powers,
 Thy word is giving and more of selfless giving
 So that Thy life of spiritual joy be ours.

We must be always faithful to our faith
 And lay our humble all at Thy saviour Feet,
 Their steps are the luminous prints lighting our Path;
 It is sweet to embrace Them, rest on Them most sweet !

If we hold on to our sincerity,
 Even here, even now the Hour of God can be.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

ARIKAMEDU

THE GRAECO-ROMAN LINK WITH PONDICHERRY

THE history of Pondicherry can be traced to the period dating back to the Augustan era in Roman history. That there was a Graeco-Roman link with South India is proved by substantial evidence put forth by Western geographers and historians, supported by picturesque revelations in Tamil literature. This is further confirmed by concrete proof offered by the finds in a place called Arikamedu about five and a quarter miles south of the town of Pondicherry.

It is on record that two groups of emissaries went from India to Rome about the beginning of the Christian era. The existence of three lighthouses on the coast of Cholamandalam is indicated by A. H. Warmington in his book on trade between India and Rome. One of them was at a place called Podus. Ptolemy, the geographer, has referred to the same place as Podukai and Podakka even as early as 150 A.D. All these three names point only to Pondicherry. Although it was thus known that South India had commercial transactions with Greece and Rome in the centuries just before and after the beginning of the Christian era, it was only in recent years that concrete proof has been rendered available to the historians and the archaeologists through the excavations at Arikamedu.

It was in the year 1937 that the first information reached Professor Jouveau Dubreuil of the French College in Pondicherry that some urchins had picked up a few gems and beads, while playing near the mounds at Arikamedu. He was immediately attracted to this place. What a joy it was to him, when he found that one of the gems contained an intaglio of King Augustus of Rome ! He exclaimed, "Nous avons là une véritable ville romaine." Following this chance discovery, he started his investigation in all earnestness. He found an ardent and worthy compatriot in Rev. Brother L. Foucheux of the Petit Seminaire High School. Together they directed their tireless pursuit of excavation. Mr. V. Golubew of Indo-China confirmed in 1939 that the finds in Arikamedu were vestiges of Roman trade with India. But unfortunately, the Second World War took Prof. Dubreuil away from Pondicherry. However, Mr. Surley, the Director of the Public Works Department of the French India Government, continued this worthy pursuit with the assistance of Rev. Bro. L. Foucheux from 1942 onwards. In 1944 Dr. Ayyappan of the Madras University and Dr. Mortimer Wheeler, Director of Archaeology of the Government of India, with the permission of Monsieur Bonvin, the Governor of French India, followed up the work left incomplete by Prof. Dubreuil. Although such excavations had been carried on for the preceding thirty years in places like Taxila, Mohenjodāro, Haroppā and Chanhudāro, what was done at Arikamedu was the first of its kind in South India.

The excavators laid bare a warehouse and a factory built by the Romans 1800 years ago. The building on the north was 150 feet long and the one in the south contained two apartments separated by strong walls. Two huge tubs were also sighted. A big needle made out of the horn of a rhinoceros, showing Roman workmanship, was found in this place. It bears indications that it was meant for weaving a very delicate texture of cloth. We may infer that fine cloths like muslin, highly prized by the Roman ladies and referred to by poets and writers, were manufactured here. Broken bits of Arretine ware, Italian mud pots, two-handled jars and shreds of Amphorai discovered here bore ample testimony to the wine trade between India and the Mediterranean countries. The special feature of the jars was that they could maintain the coolness of water kept in them even in the hot summer. Some of these jars and glazed shreds of pottery contained writings in Greek and some in Brahmi letters. One of them was round in shape with flowery designs in the centre. Italian Arezzo wares with Vibi and Vibioni signatures give the clue of 50 A. D. for date. China pottery was also found.

Two gems containing artistic designs made by the Graeco-Roman artisans, two similar but incomplete ones, gold beads, needles, stones, combs, Roman lamps, rosaries, small wheels, nails, mosaic stones, sundials, a statue of Vinayagar, a woman's head with a tuft, a beautiful smoking pipe, toys of various types of animals and birds, glass vessels with silver platings, a mother with a baby in her arms, various patterns of earrings and other kinds of rings made of Sangu and brass were some of the important finds in Arikamedu. Two rings, one with the crest of King Augustus and the other with the figure of Cupid and the Eagle discovered here, were at first kept in the museum at Hanoi in Indo-China and later on brought to the Romain Rolland Library in Pondicherry. A large pole of eight feet, apparently the mast of a sea-craft, was also found in Arikamedu. These articles proved that European goldsmiths, gemcutters, carpenters and manufacturers of cloth were engaged in the factories run in this place under the direct supervision of the Romans. Copper coins were struck in a mint at Arikamedu for payment of wages to the workmen. It is worthwhile remembering here that there is a reference to the unique craftsmanship of the "Yavanas" in *Manimeghalai*, a Tamil work of great merit.

Various interpretations are adduced for the genesis of the name Arikamedu. "Aringam" is one of the names of Buddha. From the statue of Buddha found in this place, it is inferred that Buddhism must have flourished in this place. It would not fore be incorrect to say that the name Arikamedu is a mutilated form of Ariganmedu. "Aaru" in Tamil means a river, "medu" means a mound, therefore "Aaruku medu" could mean "a mound near a river". Calling places on a high level "medu", as in Gorimedu where JIPMER is located, was a common practice in these parts. "Arika" also means "to corrode". Arikamedu would thus mean "a mound that has been corroded". It is believed that this place must have taken this name from the twelfth century A. D. A place of such historical importance is now a lagoon closed by a sand bar.

Arikamedu would not have come to the notice of the present generation but for the indefatigable services of Prof. Dubreuil to the cause of Indian history. He was a bachelor wedded to the study of Indian history, particularly of South India, through the inscriptions, figures and mode of construction of the pillars and walls of the temples, in which South India abounds. He spent all his salary as a Professor of Science, augmented by a remittance from his aunt in France, in a study tours. This historian died in France under not very good circumstances. Had he stayed in India without offering his services for the war, he would have farther enriched the field of Indian history, particularly of the Pallavas. His spirit, however, pervades the surroundings of Pondicherry and Arikamedu, inspiring the students of Indian history to follow in his footsteps.

In this context we may present some more information on the Graeco-Roman link with South India. There is ample proof to show that the Romans had trade with Syria, Babylonia, Arabia and India during the reign of King Augustus between 23 B.C. and 14 A.D. The wool from Syria and amber from the Baltic Coast were taken to Rome through the seas 120 seacrafts left the Red Sea port of Myas Harmos during summer every year and were wafted by the monsoon winds to the west coast of India. After landing the cargo in India, they proceeded to the East Asian countries including China. Some of the mutilated remains and vestiges of Roman culture and civilisation noticed now in Britain, France, Syria, India and North Africa vouch for the spread of this culture through these traders.

The Graeco-Roman influence was a theme for poets. The great English poet Shelley, singing of Greece, has recorded that the Greeks ruled the present from the past. He wrote:

On all this world inherits,
Their seal is set.

The patriotic Tamil poet Subramania Bharathi, who stayed in Pondicherry and sang some of his soul-stirring songs and poems from its soil, has in one of them referred to the Yavana (Greek) trade of the Tamilians. We learn from the great Tamil epic *Silapathikaram* that the Greek mariners settled in Tamilnadu and lived in separate apartments provided for them by the South Indian Kings. They brought sweet-smelling wine from the Mediterranean countries and offered it to these kings in specially made double-handed wine jars. The Pandya kings engaged them as their bodyguards, cupbearers and sentries at their forts and palaces. Kaveripoompattinam referred to in Tamil literature as Paghar is very near Karaikal in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. The wind-wafted cargo vessels from the Mediterranean coast touched this Chola port and discharged cargoes of gold and other rare commodities. They took, in return, pepper, muslin and peacock feathers. The Tamil poet Uruthirakannanar in his *Pattinapalai* gives a picturesque description of the cargo heaped along this coast and how the goats and dogs went atop the stacks and gambolled on them as though on hillocks. There were also many storehouses in this port where customs officials gave clearance to the cargoes by affixing the seal of the

Tiger—the symbol of the Chola Kings. Korkai Pandianadu and Muzuris in Seranadu (West Coast) were also seats of such a sea-borne trade. A temple to Augustus was built at Muzuris called Cranganoor now named Kodungalore on the West Coast.

Thus history speaks through Arikamedu of things that are two thousand years old, as old as the *Tirukural* and the Sermon on the Mount.

GEORGE MOSES

Students' Section

PARROTS

A TRUE TALE

NOT a memoir but a fresh, recent incident—the true tale of a prank at my tiny age of sixty-six! After leaving the Higher Secondary students at the examination hall in our adjacent Colony of Hauz Khas, I saw on my way home two parrots in a beautiful cage on the lawn of a lovely little cottage. I could not resist picking up the cage.

I brought the parrots straight into the Nursery Hall. The children spontaneously jumped out of their seats and shouted in a chorus, “Parrots! Parrots!! Parrots!!!” and they enjoyed themselves, their faces all lit up.

An hour later the cage was sent to the Zoo attached to the Mother’s Nursery and Primary School, where all the classes had their share of enjoyment and exhilaration by turns.

One of the Higher Secondary students, a girl, said, “Sir, the parrots are very nice. From where did you get them?” I told her how I had come by them. At this a boy sharply said, “Sir, that is theft!”

I said, “Everything belongs to God and is for our enjoyment, so I brought the cage.”

On this, both of them exclaimed, “Sir, then it means we can pick up anything from anywhere?”

I said, “No, you can’t do that.”

“Sir, then what is the criterion for doing it?”

I said, “You have to become gods.”

“How?”

“That you will know and learn if you keep up the aspiration for a higher life.”

In the meantime a circular was sent around by the School and distributed in the round-about colonies inviting fresh admissions in the Nursery classes, in which the exciting information was given to the parents that a Zoo was being established in The Mother’s School for the entertainment and education of children who had attained the age of three, where parrots, pigeons, peacocks, monkeys, rabbits and deer would be lodged. To our misfortune this handbill was delivered also at the house of the owner of the parrots.

Next morning an elderly person with a white kurta and dhoti appeared in the School in the early hours and approached the authorities and the Principal to have a look at the Zoo. The School authorities were very happy and proudly conducted him

to the Zoo, hoping happily that after seeing the Zoo he would surely admit his grandchildren into the school. When asked his name he introduced himself as Mr. K. C. Mukerjee—a Bengalee but a resident of Bulandshehar, a nearby district town of U.P., speaking fine and polished Urdu.

On entering the Zoo, Mr. Mukerjee shouted, "Here are my parrots and my cage," and he tried to pick up the latter. The School staff was bewildered to hear this and one of the members protested, "But these parrots have been brought by our Chairman himself, Shri Surendra Nath Jauhar, for the Zoo."

Mr. Mukerjee snubbed him and said, "Maybe, but these parrots are mine."

The whole batch including Mr. K. C. Mukerjee came to me and one of the members said, "Sir, why did you bring the cage of parrots belonging to this gentleman without informing him?"

Mr. Mukerjee sharply intervened, saying, "Mr. Jauhar has the liberty and authority to take away anything even from the inside of our house."

All the people standing around burst into laughter and at the same time were astonished and baffled.

Mr. Mukerjee was, however, worried and asked for the cage to be given to him immediately, saying that his wife was very sad and dejected at the loss of the parrots and he was anxious to relieve her anxiety.

I told Mr. Mukerjee, "Why don't you bring your wife and both of you settle in the Zoo here along with the parrots?"

Mr. Mukerjee said, "We are already in the larger Zoo of Bhagwan—the Lord. This part of the School—your Ashram—is meant for gods and we have not yet attained that stage."

In the meantime I had ordered the cage to be brought. I took Mr. Mukerjee in my car and delivered the cage to his wife. She was very much relieved and was extremely happy to receive back her parrots. She said that she had developed great intimacy with and attachment to these birds. All the day she would be conversing with them. Sometimes the parrots would call her and she would respond and sometimes she would call them, "Mithoo! Mithoo!!" and the parrots would respond.

But lo! in a week's time a number of fresh parrots in two beautiful cages were offered for the children's Zoo by Mrs. Mukerjee.

SURENDRA NATH JAUHAR

*In every hour loosed from the quiver of Time,
There rose a song of new discovery.*

.....
*Each day was a spiritual romance,
As if he was born into a bright new world...*

SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*.'

**SRI AUROBINDO STUDY SEMINARS, TAPOGIRI
RAMGARH (NAINITAL), U.P. SUMMER SESSION,
June 2, 1970**

Subject: "Let India Work for the Future and take the Lead."

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

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

THE MOTHER

WHAT is it 'to work for the Future'? It is to work with the head and the heart firmly set on the goal, the aim, the thing to be done, the progress to be achieved, undeterred by the handicaps of the present and the past.

We should be clear and sure about the aim of unity, harmony, a higher consciousness, a clearer will, a larger love and be concentrated on it and more so in radically changing times like the present.

The past leaves with us its limitations, its divisions, its failures and its partial successes. The partial successes should be pointers to the greater successes of the future and its limitations, divisions, failures should no longer limit our energies for the greater successes we are turned towards.

The present times, in particular, are a demonstration of the inadequacy of the past standards. The call is, therefore, for an all-out mobilisation for a new creation, for a profound massive urge towards the future.

This is essentially the attitude of the spirit in us, which is ever young and ever forward-looking. The mind, life and body in us are much governed by the unconscious, mechanical repetitions and are subject to senility and death. They are always inclined to cling to dead forms. The spirit is not. It creates new forms again and again.

India with her experience of the spirit in her long cultural history is best fitted to see the signs of the times and approach the present juncture of human history with the all-creative attitude of the spirit. This would be working for the future.

The signs of the times, as we see them physically, are already effects of a spiritual change that is in action. The dawning spirit is calling us all to respond to it and facilitate and share in the new life.

‘Let India work for the future and take the lead’ is Mother’s advice and message. We look forward to pondering over it and considering it in various ways, in the whole and in details.

INDRA SEN

PROGRAMME

A whole day excursion in the middle of the session to “Mountain Paradise”, the Ashram orchard there, has now become a regular feature. So the seminar will be there. Four days and Two sittings each day will be devoted to the subject. Meditations, personal study and free contacts and associations in addition. Common mess will be provided as usual.

MAIN PAPERS

1. Eternity and Time, Past, Present and Future, the Attitude of the Spirit in us (from original sources).
2. “And the earth grow unexpectedly divine” (a paper all in the words of *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem).
3. “Let India work for the Future and take the Lead”—Indra Sen.
4. A paper by Arvind Kumar Srivastava.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR STUDY

Some fresh reading material in English and Hindi from Pondicherry.

EYE EDUCATION: LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

SCIENCE has greatly progressed; man can land on the moon and the news can spread all over the world in a minute. But what a pity that Ophthalmic Science seems to be two hundred years backward. Almost every eye specialist believes that there is neither Preventive nor cure for defective vision. For such defects as myopia, hypermetropia and presbyopia they prescribe glasses and help the patients to see well but there are many cases where glasses fail to work as a palliative even. Any rational mind will think that Ophthalmic Science is yet in a very imperfect stage. But the School for perfect Eyesight, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, cures the patients of defective vision by means of eye education and mental relaxation. I shall tell you how I came to know about it.

My daughter Vijay Laxmi, aged ten years, was semiblind; doctors failed to improve her vision even with glasses. We were greatly puzzled and worried. Fortunately my daughter went to the Divine Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram on her birthday. The Mother, after seeing her, advised her to go to Dr. Agarwal. "Who is Dr. Agarwal?" I enquired at the gate. A few days later my friend Mr. Bableswhar took us to the School for Perfect Eyesight to meet him. There were many patients waiting to meet the doctor. At the appointed time the doctor carefully examined my daughter and after the examination he sat quiet. When I enquired whether there was any hope of improvement, he called a boypatient who had been almost blind about a month before, and now had gained perfect normal vision. "How could it be?" I doubted. Then I asked the boy personally how he had been and now how he was. It was a great relief to me when the boy narrated the story of his cure. Yet I wanted to know more from the doctor. "Your daughter too will become all right, have patience and supply the materials that I need for her treatment," the doctor said. We felt very happy and the next day I bought a set of colour pencils, a ballpen, a few note books, a ball, etc. and came to the Eye Clinic.

The assistant applied Resolvent 200 to the eyes of Vijaylaxmi and asked her to face the sun with her eyes shut and move from side to side. After a few minutes she washed her eyes with a pink lotion and sat comfortably to do palming. Then she played with a ball, did some drawing, swayed her body, eyes and head and wrote down some letters from the chart. At times she was taken to the darkroom to practise gazing at the candle flame. My daughter greatly enjoyed the treatment whenever she was called to the clinic. At home I had advised my wife not to scold her at any time and to help her in her eye exercises.

The results of this kind of treatment were wonderful. From the very day her vision began to improve both for distance and near. She began to read very small letters of the Reading Test type. By gentle blinking the expression of her eyes and face changed; formerly she used to stare at objects and in this way had developed the habit of squinting. She reads her books well now, and all this has been achieved in a month's treatment.

HEBALLI

P.A. TO THE LT. GOVERNOR, PONDICHERRY