

MOTHER INDIA

AUGUST 15, 1970

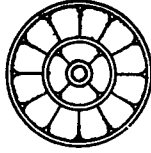
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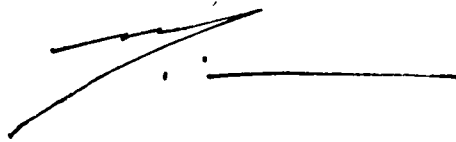


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXII

No. 7

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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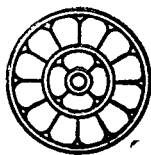
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

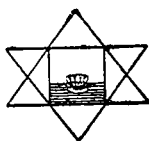
LIFE has a purpose.

This purpose is to find and to serve the Divine.

The Divine is not far, He is in ourselves, deep inside and above the feelings and the thoughts. With the Divine is peace and certitude and even the solution of all difficulties.

Hand over your problems to the Divine and He will pull you out of all difficulties.

3.7.70



THE MESSAGE OF AUGUST 15

Even the body shall remember God

SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*, Book XI, Canto 1

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of July)

(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.)

February 1, 1956

Sri Aurobindo writes here: "It is possible, indeed, to begin with knowledge or Godward emotion solely or with both together and to leave works for the final movement of the Yoga."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 105)

What is this knowledge ?

THERE are three principal paths of yoga: the path of knowledge, the path of love and the path of works. So Sri Aurobindo says that this depends on the different cases and people. There are some who follow more easily the path of knowledge, others who follow more easily the path of love, of devotion, and others who follow the path of works. He says that for the integral yoga the three must be combined and something else added, but that everybody cannot do everything at the same time and that there are people who need to be exclusive and to choose one of the three paths first in order to be able to combine them all later.

The path of knowledge is the well-known path of Rajayoga, in which one practises detachment from his physical being, saying: "I am not the body", then detachment from his sensations: "I am not my sensations", then from his feelings, saying: "I am not my feelings", and so on. One detaches oneself from thought and goes more and more within until one finds something which is the Eternal and Infinite.

This is a path of meditation, which is truly the path of self-knowledge seen from the point of view of the divine reality. It is the path of meditation, concentration, of a retreat from life and action. This was the one most practised in the old yogas.

Or again, the path of devotion and love, as did Chaitanya or Ramakrishna.

This book (*the first part of "The Synthesis"*) is entirely about the yoga of works, of action, that is to say, the finding of the union with the Divine in action and in work, and in the consecration of one's work to the Divine. That's all.

Sweet Mother, "...the consecration of works is a needed element in that change. Otherwise, although they may find God in other-life, they will not be able to fulfil the Divine in life."

(Ibid., p. 105)

Why these two words: "God" and "the Divine"?

I don't think that Sri Aurobindo contrasts them. These are only ways of speaking. He does not set one against the other.

What does it mean?

It means that they go out of existence to find the Divine, to find God, a God who is outside life; they themselves go out of life to find Him. Whilst in the integral yoga it is in life that the Divine must be found, not outside life.

There are those, for instance, who consider life and the world an illusion, and think it necessary to go out of this in order to be able to find the Divine, whose nature, they say, is the very contrary of that of existence; so Sri Aurobindo says that they will perhaps find God outside life, but will not find the Divine in life. He contrasts the two things. In one case it is an extra-terrestrial and unmanifested Divine, and in the other it is the Divine who has manifested in life and whom one can find again through life.

Have you caught it?

Mother, when one is identified with the Divine in the higher part of the being whilst neglecting the lower parts—neglecting life—does not the Divine, in the part where one is identified with Him, advise one to attend to the lower parts?

And if even before beginning, one has decided that it should not be thus, perhaps one makes it impossible for oneself to receive the advice of the Divine!

For, truly speaking, every one finds only that of the Divine which he wishes to find of Him. Sri Aurobindo has said this by turning it the other way round; he has said (I am not quoting the exact words, only the idea): what you expect of the Divine is what you find in the Divine; what you want of the Divine is what you meet in the Divine. He will have for you the aspect you expect or desire.

And His manifestation is always adapted to each one's receptivity and capacity. They may have a real, essential contact, but this contact is limited by their own capacity of reception and approach.... It is only if you are able to go out of all limits that you can meet the total Divine as He totally is.

And this capacity of contact is perhaps what constitutes the true hierarchy of beings. For everyone carries in himself the Divine, and consequently everyone has the possibility of uniting with the Divine—that possibility is the same in all. But according to each one's capacity (fundamentally, according to his position in the divine hierarchy), his approach will be more or less partial or total.

It could be said—although these words deform things a lot—that the quality of the approach is the same in every being, but the quantity, the totality is very different .. It is very difficult to explain with words, but if one may say so, the *point* at which you are identified with the Divine is perfect in itself, that is to say, your identification is an identification perfect in itself, at this point, but the number of points at which you are identified differs immensely.

And this is very marked in the difference of the paths followed to approach the Divine. Generally people set limits; they limit themselves by excluding all that is not exactly the path they have chosen, for this is much easier and one goes much faster—relatively. But instead of following *one* road, you go forward in a sort of movement which could be called spherical, where everything is included, which takes in all the possibilities of approach to the Divine, naturally the result is much more complete—and it is this that Sri Aurobindo calls the integral yoga—but the progress is much more difficult and much slower.

He who chooses the path of knowledge (and also in the path of knowledge a special method, for everyone has his own method) and follows it, eliminating from his consciousness and life all that is not it, that person advances much more rapidly, for his seeking pursues only one aspect and this is much more direct, immediate. And so he rejects, rejects, rejects all that is not that, and reduces his being just to the road he travels. And the more you want your approach to be integral, the more naturally will it become difficult, complicated, long, laborious.

But he who follows only one road, when he reaches his goal, that is, when he is identified with the Divine, his identification in itself is perfect; that is to say, it is truly an identification with the Divine—but it is partial. It is perfect, it is perfect and partial at the same time.

It is very difficult to explain, but this is a fact. He is truly identified with the Divine and has found the Divine; he is identified with the Divine—but at one point. And so he who is able to identify himself with the Divine in his totality is necessarily, from the point of view of the universal realisation, on a much higher hierarchical plane than the one who could realise Him only at a single point.

And that is the true meaning of the spiritual hierarchy, it is for this reason that there is a whole spiritual hierarchical organisation, otherwise this would have no ground, for from the minute you touch, you touch the Divine perfectly. the point at which you touch Him is a point perfect in itself. And, from this point of view, all who have united with the Divine are as perfect in their union—but not as complete, if I may say so.

Do you catch a little what I mean?

What I wanted to ask, Mother, was whether in the part where they are identified, after their identification, they do not find that this identification is not complete, that is, that they have left behind other parts of their being, and that they must begin once again?

This may happen.

This may happen, but generally they have so well eliminated from themselves all that was not that, that nothing remains for them to find out that the identification is not perfect. They have the experience of identification, they are lost in the Divine. From the personal, individual point of view, that is the maximum they can hope for.

It is not that what you say is impossible, I think that indeed it is possible—but it is rare. It is not frequent. That would mean that in spite of their work of elimination they have preserved in their consciousness something which would be able to feel that they are not entirely satisfied.

After the identification, this is no longer the position, for example, of master and disciple, the Lord and the aspirant. At the moment of identification that relationship disappears; there is no longer any master or disciple, any Lord or aspirant: all is the Divine. Consequently, who receives the lesson? That could only be if there were an element of consciousness which did not participate in this identification, because it needed another approach than the one it had. And all would depend on the perfection with which the aspirant has eliminated from his being all that is not the single road he follows. If one keeps latent in one's consciousness elements of devotion or love, for instance, then if one has followed the path of knowledge, well, at the time of identification they will miss something. And then they will be in a condition to understand that their experience is not complete. But if they have been so well eliminated that they no longer exist, then who will notice that the union is not perfect? The union is perfect in itself at this given point. It is purely a phenomenon of consciousness.

(Turning to the child) In your consciousness there is still the idea that you unite with "Something" which knows more about it than you and will make you recognise the error you are in. But that no longer exists after the identification! That is just the first contact, but not the identification.

In identification there is no longer any difference between that which is identified and that with which one is identified: it is the same thing. So long as there is a difference it is not identification.

I say that by any road whatever and by eliminating all that is not this road, it is possible for everyone to be perfectly identified with the Divine, that is to say, to become the Divine—but at one point, the point each one has chosen. But this point is perfect in itself. I do not say it contains everything, I say it is perfect in itself, that is, the identification is perfect—but it is not total.

They have the full bliss?

Perfect bliss—perfect bliss, eternity, infinity, and everything.

Then what's the difference?

The difference exists only in the manifestation. By this identification, of whatever

kind, one goes automatically out of the manifestation, except at the point where one is identified. And if, in the path one has followed, the goal is a going out, as for instance with those who seek Nirvana, if it is a going out of the manifestation, well, one goes out of the manifestation, it is finished. And once one goes out of the manifestation, there is no longer any difference or any hierarchy, it is finished, one has gone out of the manifestation. That is it, you understand, everything depends on the aim one pursues. If one goes out of the manifestation, one goes out of the manifestation, then there is no longer any possibility of any hierarchy whatsoever. But as soon as one enters the manifestation, there is a hierarchy. That is to say—if we take the realisation of the supramental world—everybody will not be on the same level and made in the same pattern, and with the same capacity and the same possibility. It is always that illusion, isn't it, of a sort of indefinite repetition of something which always resembles itself—it is not that. In the realisation, the manifestation, there is a hierarchy of capacity and action, and of manifestation. But if the aim is to go out of the manifestation, then quite naturally, through whatever point you go out, you go out.

All depends on the ideal one puts before oneself. And whilst you go out because you have chosen to go out, to enter into "Pralaya", there is all the rest of the universe which continues. ... But that's totally immaterial to you. As your aim was to get out of it, you get out of it. But that does not mean that the rest also get out! You are the only one to get out, or those who have followed the same aim and the same path as you.

(Long silence)

That is precisely the problem which faced both Sri Aurobindo here and me in France: is it necessary to limit one's road and reach the goal first, and later take all the rest in hand and begin the work of integral transformation; or is it necessary to go step by step, not leaving anything aside, not eliminating anything on the path, taking in all the possibilities at the same time and progressing at all points at the same time? That is to say, should one retreat outside life and action until one reaches one's goal, becoming conscious of the Supramental and realising it in oneself; or should one embrace the whole creation and with this whole creation go gradually forward towards the Supramental?

(Silence)

One can understand that things get done by stages: one goes forward, travels a certain distance, and so, as a consequence, takes all the rest forward; and then at the same time, with a simultaneous movement, one travels another stage and again takes others forward—and so on.

That gives the impression that one doesn't advance. But everything is on the move in this way.

Sweet Mother....

I wish that one does not lapse into accidentals again. If you have understood what I said and it is on that you want to put a question, put it.

No? Well, then, it is better to meditate.

(To be continued)

COURAGE AND FAITH

A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

THE illness you had and the depressing suggestions and fearful shapes came as an adverse attack, the other visions of the Powers of the Mother and the assurances you received were the answers that came through your psychic being calling the Divine. Whatever adverse things present themselves you must meet them with courage and they will disappear and the help come. Faith and courage are the true attitude to keep in life and work always and in the spiritual experience also. It is the fire of aspiration and the fire of faith and courage which you saw coming up from the mountain. The mountain is the symbol of embodied consciousness based upon the earth but rising up towards the Divine.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD'S ACTIVITY

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

(This letter dates back to the middle or late 'forties, because it is found to have been dictated to Nirodbaran and not written in Sri Aurobindo's own hand. Dictation of letters was done mostly after 1945, during which year hand-written communications were last received by Dilip Kumar Roy, Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna) and one or two others. The present letter is of special interest for several reasons. First, it sounds a personal autobiographical note. Secondly, it bears pointedly on the relation of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga both to India's spiritual tradition and to the varied life of man in general. Thirdly, it touches directly upon a particular activity in the world, about which not much is traceable in Aurobindoman literature: business.)

As usual you seem to have received some very fantastic and sensational reports about what you call the mill business. There was no "mill" in question, only S's small foundry and C's equally small oil factory. S was in difficulties about her affair and came to the Mother for advice and offered to sell, the Mother was prepared to buy on reasonable or even on generous terms on certain conditions and use it, not on capitalistic lines or for any profit, but for a certain work necessary to the Ashram, just as she uses the Atelier or the Bakery or the Building Department. The Ashram badly needs a foundry and the idea was to use C's machinery for making the soap necessary for the Ashram. The Mother told S that she was sending for R and if he consented to run these two affairs, she might buy but not otherwise as the Mother herself had no time to look after these things. R came but found the whole thing too small and not sufficient for the purpose or for some larger work he wanted to do; so S had to be told that nothing could be done. That is the whole affair. Where do you find anything here of capitalism and huge profits and slums and all the rest of it?

I may say, however, that I do not regard business as something evil or tainted, any more than it is so regarded in ancient spiritual India. If I did, I would not be able to receive money from Ambalal or from those of our disciples who in Bombay trade with East Africa; nor could we then encourage them to go on with their work but would have to tell them to throw it up and attend to their spiritual progress alone. How are we to reconcile Ambalal's seeking after spiritual light and his mill? Ought I not to tell him to leave his mill to itself and to the devil and go into some Ashram to meditate? Even if I myself had had the command to do business as I had the command to do politics I would have done it without the least spiritual or moral compunction. All

depends on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principles on which it is built and the use to which it is turned. I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, *ghoram karma*, and I have supported war and sent men to it, even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action. But Krishna calls upon Arjuna to carry on war of the most terrible kind and by his example encourage men to do every kind of human work, *sarva karmani*. Do you contend that Krishna was an unspiritual man and that his advice to Arjuna was mistaken or wrong in principle? Krishna goes further and declares that a man by doing in the right way and in the right spirit the work dictated to him by his fundamental nature, temperament and capacity and according to his and its dharma can move towards the Divine. He validates the function and dharma of the Vaishya as well as of the Brahmin and Kshatriya. It is in his view quite possible for a man to do business and make money and earn profits and yet be a spiritual man, practise Yoga, have an inner life. The Gita is constantly justifying works as a means of spiritual salvation and enjoining a Yoga of Works as well as of Bhakti and Knowledge. Krishna, however, superimposes a higher law also that work must be done without desire, without attachment to any fruit or reward, without any egoistic attitude or motive, as an offering or sacrifice to the Divine. This is the traditional Indian attitude towards these things, that all work can be done if it is done according to the dharma and, if it is rightly done, it does not prevent the approach to the Divine or the access to spiritual knowledge and the spiritual life.

There is, of course, also the ascetic idea which is necessary for many and has its place in the spiritual order. I would myself say that no man can be spiritually complete if he cannot live ascetically or follow a life as bare as the barest anchorite's. Obviously, greed for wealth and money-making has to be absent from his nature as much as greed for food or any other greed and all attachment to these things must be renounced from his consciousness. But I do not regard the ascetic way of living as indispensable to spiritual perfection or as identical with it. There is the way of spiritual self-mastery and the way of spiritual self-giving and surrender to the Divine, abandoning ego and desire even in the midst of action or of any kind of work or all kind of work demanded from us by the Divine. If it were not so, there would not have been great spiritual men like Janaka or Vidura in India and even there would have been no Krishna or else Krishna would have been not the Lord of Brindavan and Mathura and Dwarka or a prince and warrior or the charioteer of Kurukshetra, but only one more great anchorite. The Indian scriptures and Indian tradition, in the Mahabharata and elsewhere, make room both for the spirituality of the renunciation of life and for the spiritual life of action. One cannot say that one only is the Indian tradition and that the acceptance of life and works of all kinds, *sarva karmani*, is un-Indian, European or western and unspiritual.

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF 1922-1926

(Continued from the issue of July)

(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.)

STYLE belongs to the vital being. This means that style depends on the character, the sensitiveness of the man's life. It does not mean that a strong vital being makes for good style. Good style has no necessary connection with mere vital strength. And what goes together with style, what style expresses, is substance, the substance of life.

The true classical manner is in the lucidity, the calm, the perfection of form. The true romantic manner seeks the picturesque. In Kalidasa there is the union of the two manners. Idealism belongs to the romantic: it romanticises the ugly and vulgar, shows the object not as it is (not as shown in certain schools of realism) but as the mind feels it should be. The lesser romantic poets bring excitement and extravagance.

Wordsworth realised unity with the world in his physical consciousness—that is, in his body consciousness. The Presence he saw in Nature is the silent Purusha: he saw this Purusha through natural scenes and objects. In Whitman we have the turbulence of life and mental imagination.

There is something psychic in nature which appeals to the psychic being in us. The psychic being is not always open in people. It is often undeveloped. And only when it is open can they feel the delight in Nature. If the cry of "Back to Nature" means going to Nature expecting things with the mere mind, one may not find that delight. One must not be satisfied with something vague in Nature, but make a conscious effort to enter into Nature's spirit.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

AT THE FEET OF SRI AUROBINDO

SOME REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS IN PONDICHERRY

(These reminiscences, written in the Ashram, are of Jaya Devi who lived for a long time there and died at a ripe old age. Those who knew her in Pondicherry remember her last as a frail old lady with a most angelic face, through which the very soul of devotion to the Divine seemed to come out in a soft radiance. She wrote originally in Bengali. The present English translation is by Dr. Sisir Kumar Ghose.)

I

FAR back in 1926, I had an urge to visit Rameshwar. My younger brother Upen (Dr. Upendranath Banerji) casually said to me: "Sister, let's go to Pondicherry, you'd be able to see A.G. there." The initials stood for Aurobindo Ghose. "Let us," I replied. We decided to leave in June (Bengali Asharh). Expecting to meet A.G. at Pondicherry we came here. The day after reaching Pondicherry, at about 8 in the morning we went towards the Ashram to have A.G.'s darshan. While going up the stairs I was so upset, thinking: "How shall I look at him?" But again the thought followed: "Why are you so worried at the prospect of meeting a great soul?"

On the verandah of the house where Anilbaran was later to stay, A.G. was sitting in a chair. What a wonderful sight! It was as if light were flooding out from all sides. He was engaged in reading a newspaper. Holding the leg of his chair I sat down on the floor. With a smile he asked me: "From where have you come?" "Sir, we are from Calcutta." "What brought you here?" "I had a desire to visit Rameshwar. But Upen said we should go to Pondicherry because a Mahapurusha lives there and I would be able to see him. I agreed and so I have come to see you." "Won't you be going to Rameshwar?" he asked. "No. I shall not go there any more. Having seen the living Rameshwar, I have no need to see an image of stone." "Well, this human Rameshwar that you have seen, do you have faith in him?" "Oh yes, I have full faith," I answered.

Hearing this, he placed his hands on my head and gently said: "Then you may stay here." "I have planned to stay for only three months. How shall I stay longer than that?" I asked. "Have you no attachment to the world and are there no obstacles ahead? Better not to return to Calcutta. Stay and see how things develop," he said. There was some more talk, about the nature of my sadhana and my chosen deity (ishta devata). I answered frankly and fully. Yet I had a feeling that all had not been told.

Those days there were no Bengali ladies staying in the Ashram. I used to visit him every day. He would make me sit near him and listen to everything carefully.

After four or five days I asked A.G.: "Why are these chairs here?" "They are for people who listen to my words and practise meditation—they sit in these chairs." Somehow I didn't like the idea. So I said: "Lord, this doesn't look proper. That the sadhaks, your disciples, should be sitting in the chairs along with you doesn't look nice. Better to have mats or carpets on the floor. While you sit in the chair, the rest can sit below." He only smiled a little and kept quiet. Two days after, I noticed that the chairs had been removed and a *durree* spread out on the floor.

In those years the Ashram was less crowded and I used to go and see him every day. One day I asked him: "Lord, why do they call you A.G.?" "A.G.? Who says A.G.?", he counter-questioned. "These sadhaks speak like that, I have heard it." Then he said, with a smile: "Well, it's a good idea of yours." Seven or eight days later, I found on the notice-board: "Sri Aurobindo." I was told the Mother had given that name. This made me rather happy.

After two days, I went to see him with a pair of garlands which I had woven with my own hands and rolled inside a handkerchief. Looking at the hidden object in my hands he asked: "What is it you have brought?" "A pair of garlands," I answered. "What will you do with garlands?" "One I shall place round your neck and the other at your feet," I chirped gaily. Pleased with my reply, he said: "Well, give me one, and there, within the house, is your Mother, go and give her the other garland." "Lord, where is the Mother? In which room? I do not know anything; please guide me a little." He then explained: "As you go up the inner staircase you will find a room in front. The Mother lives there. You will give the garland to her." "Lord, permit me to go there," I said. Smilingly he agreed: "Yes, now go."

I came down, wondering with whom to go. But, I also thought, what was there to worry about in going to the Mother? "Oh my mind, take me there. When the Lord has said so, I will certainly be able to meet her." On reaching down with this thought, I found Purani's wife Lilavati standing in front. I said to Lila: "Dear sister, please accompany me a little." "Where to?" inquired Lila. "First let us go up the inside staircase. Then I shall tell you," I said. "Then let us go," she answered. After we had gone up the stairs we saw a room in front. I went inside with the garland in hand. There I saw the Mother standing, in a red-bordered sari. She came a little closer to me and I offered the flowers and made my pranam to her. The Mother had a veil on, and when I gave her the garland she was smiling, but since I didn't know any English I couldn't speak with her. After a while, I came away. Lilavati followed suit. When she had come we went to our respective places.

Next day, at darshan, I said, "Lord, I was able to meet the Mother. She was standing inside the room. But since I didn't know English I could not talk with her. So I came away after giving the flowers to her. Lord, I wish I were independent and could learn many languages and move about freely from place to place. Make me

a man. I have no wish to stay a woman any longer." He smiled and said: "Very well. What's the worry? You'll be free, men and women will become equal. What is there to be afraid of?" "Let me go now," I said. "What will you do when you go down?" "Oh, someone becomes angry. He says, 'You talk with him too long and I don't get any chance.'" "Who is the person that speaks to you like that?" These words from the Lord made me uneasy. "No," I hurried to add, "he isn't quite angry, he just says..." "No, you do as you are doing," the Lord said. Since the Lord put it like that, I stayed on a little longer before going away. On the other hand, X was quite angry. Barinda¹ and he wanted to know what had happened. "The Lord asks me to stay on and he makes many enquiries. It all takes time. This inconveniences X and he gets annoyed," I told Barinda. "A.G. loves to hear Bengali. So he goes on talking with you. What's there to get upset about?" said Barinda. "No, X doesn't really get angry, but his darshan is delayed, that's what he says." Then I returned home.

One day in the early hours I was sitting near the window of my room on the upper storey of the Guest House.² All of a sudden I noticed a young person, seventeen or eighteen years of age, near the window below. But how handsome and radiant! The entire road seemed to be lighted up. A small stick or baton in his hand, he was tying up a number of beautiful white cows to the window below and running and playing with them. I saw it all so clearly. The night was nearly gone, and a faint light was trickling through the dark. A little afterwards it all brightened up, but there was nothing more to be seen. At the time of darshan I asked: "Lord, what is the significance of this that I have seen? And oh, how beautiful!" "How did it strike you?" he asked. "I thought it was Sri Krishna; who else can have such beauty, such radiance?" "Who could that Sri Krishna be?" he asked. "Who else but you?" I answered. "You think it was I?" "Yes, of course." Then he said: "What you have seen is true and well," and he put his hands on my head, adding: "Well, well."

Another day at the time of meditation I saw in a vision that I had gone to a big hall full of lotuses, out of which flames of light rose up and my eldest son was blowing them out. But the lights would come up again. Next day I asked him: "Lord, why did I see it like that during meditation?"

"Within you the light has shone. Your son is trying to put it out. He will not succeed. Nothing to cause worry."

(Part 2 in the issue of December 5)

JAYA DEVI

¹ Barindra Kumari Ghose, Sri Aurobindo's youngest brother==Editor

² At present the Children's *Dormitory* behind the Playground

SRI AUROBINDO—PERFECT GENTLEMAN

A TALK ON JUNE 12, 1970

FRIENDS, some of you at least must have been amused, others intrigued by the title of today's talk. Some of you may even smell some irreverence because we have been accustomed to hear of Sri Aurobindo as the Lord of Yoga, as the supreme Poet, and the greatest Philosopher—to talk of him as a perfect gentleman is rather to bring him down to our own level, because we also claim to be some sort of gentlemen. I was told that the Mother was amused to hear of this title, but I throw the whole responsibility or irresponsibility of it on the Mother's shoulders, because it was she herself who in a piquant situation remarked: "Sri Aurobindo is a perfect gentleman, I am not a gentleman." Well, it came as a shot from a cross-bow. We laughed at this outburst of temper, being familiar with her strangely changing moods, but still at this off-hand remark of hers, I was somewhat taken aback, and it made me think a bit. Earlier I had read—and most of you, students, teachers and professors must have read too—the celebrated piece by J.H. Newman on "A Gentleman". When I read it I thought it was something Utopian which could not be found in this world of ours—Newman's description seemed unrealisable. And when the Mother brought into our view Sri Aurobindo as the example of a perfect gentleman, I thought: "Yes, if there is anyone in the world who can be styled a perfect gentleman, it is Sri Aurobindo!" Now, for those of you who are not familiar with this passage, I shall read out some extracts, so that you may be able to see why I make this seemingly exaggerated statement.

Well, in the very first sentence, we find almost the quintessential character of a gentleman. Newman says: "It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain... He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than take the initiative himself." In the Gita it is said, if I remember correctly, that a yogi never begins anything. Then—"the true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast;—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint or suspicion, or gloom or resentment; his great concern being to make everyone at their ease and at home...he guards against unreasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate. he is seldom prominent in conversation...he never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ear for slander or gossip; he is never mean or little in disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments... He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles."

I think this is enough to give you some idea of what a true gentleman is like. From the description that I shall try to put before you, you will be able to judge for yourself how much this passage is applicable to Sri Aurobindo. For my part, I can say—correlating these two—that in every fibre of his being Sri Aurobindo was a perfect gentleman. I have chosen this subject because the others are beyond me, and on this one I can speak with some authority because, as most of you know, we had the great good fortune to come close to him, to see him face to face, to touch him, even to breathe him (but not to taste him!)—so a subject about which I may claim, not egoistically, to have some confidence.

But before I plunge into it, let us go back a little and see whether Sri Aurobindo the gentleman was also a “gentle boy.”

Very little is known of his childhood, of his youth, as a matter of fact of his whole life. You know he has said that his life has not been on the surface. It has been shrouded in deep mystery, except when he chose to lift up the veil now and then—that’s all.

Now about his childhood. It was in 1956 or so that our artist sadhaka, Pramode Chatterji, made a painting from Sri Aurobindo’s boyhood picture, and brought it before the Mother. We were there sitting by her side. The Mother remarked (as I noted down at the time, not knowing that it would be used today): “You have caught something of the spontaneity and freshness of the nature and something candid with which he came into this world. His inner being was on the surface. He knew nothing of this world.” So that was an authoritative statement from the Mother. Another statement we have from his eldest brother, that he was a very nice and gentle boy except that he could be very obstinate.

Then what about the period of his youth in England? At the beginning, the brothers were very comfortable, affluent, but suddenly something went amiss: they found themselves in great penury. All the three brothers were almost stranded; the father for some mysterious reason stopped their allowances. Gray’s *Elegy* says about some poor people: “Chill penury...froze the genial current of their soul”. That was not the case with Sri Aurobindo. He took it calmly, quietly, in spite of 2 or 3 hard years, missing a square meal, living on some sandwiches, 3 cups of tea, some sausages, and in the cold climate of London without sufficient warm clothing. But, as he has written to me, poverty was no terror for him, nor an incentive. He said that I was talking like Samuel Smiles! Then he failed in the I.C.S. riding test; he did it, as you know, deliberately by remaining absent as if by a tangle of unavoidable circumstances: in order not to hurt his hopeful father, not to inflict any pain on him, he had to resort to a trick.

Well, I would not like to dwell long on the early period; I want to come as soon as possible to the period when I was an eye-witness. But these are very interesting sidelights at any rate.

At Cambridge, his tutor took upon himself, coming to know of the strained circumstances of his pupil, to write to the father in a somewhat cold tone, that the son was running the danger of being hauled up at the court failing to pay up some arrears.

The father at once sent the remittances but wrote an admonishing letter to the son, Sri Aurobindo, that he was too extravagant! Sri Aurobindo said to us, smiling: "When we had not even one sufficient meal a day, where was the question of being extravagant?" But he had no feeling of resentment or bitterness towards his father; whenever he spoke of him it was always with affection and tenderness.

Then we come to the Baroda period. There again we know very little except that he knew nothing about money. He said to us: "Yes, the Maharaja offered me a job saying he would pay Rs. 200. My brothers accepted, for they knew no better than I; and the Maharaja bragged that he had bagged an I.C.S. for Rs. 200!" However, Sri Aurobindo left behind a reputation of fair play, sincerity, honesty; he was loved by his students and all those who came in contact with him, though he wasn't a social man at all. He had a few chosen friends, lived a very simple life, and yet he could command the respect and honour of almost all the people there, high or low, with whom he came in touch or who heard his name. Even the Maharaja of Baroda, held him in high esteem. But Sri Aurobindo showed his mettle once. The Maharaja issued a circular that all the officers must attend office on Sundays, and even on holidays. Sri Aurobindo didn't go. Then the Maharaja wanted to fine him, and Sri Aurobindo said: "Let him fine as much as he likes, I am not going", and the Maharaja gave up! He saw that Sri Aurobindo couldn't be bent down by such threats.

The most revelatory remark of the period, that has come to us was from his Bengali tutor, Dinendranath Roy, who, I suppose, was the first to say, because he lived closely with Sri Aurobindo. "Aurobindo is not a man, he is a god."

Next he comes to Calcutta, to the political field which, you know, is not much better today, or is perhaps worse. Sri Aurobindo said to us, quoting C. R. Das's opinion that "the political field is a rendezvous of the worst kind of criminals", and that field, when Sri Aurobindo worked in it, he raised to a level of sincerity and integrity, at least in his own example, even if others didn't always follow. He shunned crookedness, duplicity, lust for power and all the other vices of political life. Sri Aurobindo's 'soul was like a star and dwelt apart,' and he raised the political consciousness of at least some people to his own level and he did it all because he was through and through sincere—"Sincerity," Carlyle has said, "is the greatest virtue of a great man", and all of us know very well the Mother's emphasis on sincerity. There is a line in *Savitri* referring to Savitri herself, which can be as well applied to Sri Aurobindo by a change of gender:

His mind, a sea of white sincerity,
 Passionate in flow, had not one turbid wave.

In all the political disputes and negotiations, some of which are reflected in his speeches, there was never a tinge of meanness, of duplicity or crookedness, that is so common, even so much courted by the politicians. Thus he acquired the esteem of all and sundry, friends and foes. The young students loved him, the young revolutiona-

ries adored him, and all the others respected him for his integrity, for his sincerity, for his self-sacrifice.

Also, there are one or two instances of his domestic life which will be illuminating. His younger brother Barin writes that when they were living together in Calcutta their sister Sarojini used to complain to Sri Aurobindo about the misbehaviour, the rude conduct, of the cook. Sri Aurobindo paid no heed, he kept quiet; finally Sarojini applied her 'brahmastra'—began to weep. Now Sri Aurobindo had to do something; he called for the servant, and everybody was waiting for something to happen. Addressing the servant he said, "Well, it seems you are behaving rudely. Don't do it again." That was all, and all those people were so disappointed—much ado about nothing! And the cook went away smiling.

The second instance. Political leaders have come to meet Sri Aurobindo. He wants to go and meet them, he sees that his slippers are missing. What has happened? His 'mashi' had the habit of putting on his slippers and knocking about, so Sri Aurobindo called out, 'Mashi, Mashi, people have come to see me; bring me back my slippers.'

There is an instance, too, from jail. He was living for a time with all the young prisoners in one cell, and pandemonium was let loose: songs, dancing, shouting. But Sri Aurobindo was most unconcerned with what was going on there. He was absorbed in his own *sādhana*, in one corner. One day those youngsters sat together and began to discuss a very momentous affair. "Why does Sri Aurobindo's hair shine so much? Where does he get oil from? We don't get a single drop!" So a great problem was to be solved. But how to find the solution? They said someone could go and ask, but nobody dared to. Then a young chap of 16 or 17 said, "I'll go." He went and asked, "Sir, your hair is shining; where do you get oil from?" Sri Aurobindo placed his hand on his shoulder and very calmly and softly said: "Oil, my boy? I don't use any"—"But your hair is shining"—"Yes, it is shining as a result of my yoga." The boy went back satisfied. In all these examples you see that he was a gentleman and I don't need to multiply instances. I can say, again slightly adapting a verse from *Savitri*:

All in him pointed to a nobler kind.

Let us come now to our own period in Pondicherry. The early years of Pondicherry life—when he was living with his young comrades, sharing the same food, even sharing the same towel—are common knowledge.

In 1930 or so, the period of correspondence began. Those of you who have gone through these volumes of letters must have noticed with what great patience and indulgence he has again and again written about the same subjects, to so many people in different ways, without the least annoyance or displeasure. You'll be very much amused to hear what kind of questions some people used to ask. I've heard that someone asked: "When I walk, shall I put my left foot first or my right foot? When I put sugar in the milk, shall I stir it this way or that way?" and Sri Aurobindo answered them calmly and quietly, in a serious manner. Well, of course, I had my share too, of

such foolishness as you know very well. He had given me the great privilege to ask him anything. I have attacked his yoga, I have called him inconsistent—with impunity! But calmly and affably, and in a very indulgent tone, he has borne all. Those who have read the correspondence will be able to confirm it.

Then we come to the routine which he gave me when once I told him that he had plenty of time to concentrate. He wrote: "From 4 p.m.-6.30 p.m. afternoon correspondence, newspapers. Evening correspondence 7.30-9.00 p.m. 9-10 p.m. concentration. 12-2.30 a.m. bath, meal, rest. 2.30-5 or 6 correspondence, unless I am lucky." Once he wrote: "Correspondence suspended, resumable on notice. But under cover of your medical cloak you can carry on, only mum about it. Otherwise people might get ideas and give you a headache." I quote another letter in which he sweetly admonishes me to become gentle with the patients. He writes: "Well, I don't know why, but you have the reputation of being a fierce and firebrand doctor who considers it a sin for a patient to have an illness. You may be right but tradition demands that a doctor should be soft like butter, soothing like treacle, sweet like sugar and jolly like jam". So throughout the correspondence this was the tone. Though my correspondence was specially seasoned with humour, with all people he was always gentle, very patient.

Now about the Darshans. Some people used to grumble—myself one of them—saying: "You are so grand, aloof, austere, we are afraid of coming to you." He replied to me: "O rubbish! I am austere and grand, grim and stern! every blasted thing that I never was! I groan in an un-Aurobindian despair when I hear such things."

After the correspondence, when we came face to face, we had the privilege to serve him when he was confined to bed, after the accident. One day when after my duty I had gone to have my rest, suddenly the person on duty came to call me: "Sri Aurobindo is calling you, something has gone wrong." I was very much perturbed, ran upstairs, but when I came near, he said, "Oh, it is nothing, it is nothing." He was so apologetic in his tone as if he had put me to inconvenience by calling me. Then, pointing to his right thigh, he said, "There has been some pain here for sometime, can you do anything?" Sri Aurobindo was not a person to call somebody because of a slight pain. It must have been very acute and he must have been suffering badly for a long time. But it was just like him to say: "Oh, it is nothing!" and offer me an apology! Fortunately by some adjustment the discomfort was set right.

Now a second instance, Dr. Manilal, who was our chief, advised that we should give Sri Aurobindo some massage. He had departed for Gujarat, leaving me in charge, and the time that could suit Sri Aurobindo and us was a very odd one—4 o'clock or so in the early morning. Two or three of us began to massage—the lower part of the leg particularly and he suffered the torture for sometime. After a few days he called me and asked: "Is this massage necessary? You see, these early hours of the morning are the only time when I have some sleep: unless it is absolutely necessary, can it be postponed or stopped?" I said: "Certainly we can stop it." That's the way he acted.

Now, during the massage we used to talk to him, asking many questions and he answered them. One typical answer of his was 'Perhaps'! To three out of four questions he replied, "Perhaps." Then one of us asked. "Why do you answer by saying 'perhaps'? Can't you give a definite answer?" He said: "When the supramental will descend, I'll give a definite answer."

One day, the Mother brought the report of a sadhaka flying into a temper and belabouring somebody, and it was not the first or the second occasion. So the Mother said to Sri Aurobindo: "I ask for your sanction" (in the French sense). He heard her quietly and said: "Let him be given a warning." No more than that!

Then, when he was writing *The Life Divine*, sitting on the bed, there was no ceiling fan at that time, just a table fan 2 or 3 metres away. As you know, the Pondicherry current is both weak and unreliable; the fan was just like the waft of a tiny bird's wing. But he was in another consciousness: whether there was a fan or not did not matter to him in the least. He was writing and writing quite absorbed. When the writing was over we saw his whole *dhoti* soaked and his bedsheet underneath drenched with perspiration: he was sitting, almost literally, in a small pool of water! No complaint in the least. Then sometimes even that fan would stop, thanks to the whim of the Pondicherry electricity, but he would not ask to be cooled by a hand-fan. One of us on duty would fan him, and he would accept it, but would never ask for it.

And whenever he needed anything, he would look this way, that way, to see if the attendant was free or engaged. After being sure that he was free, he would say: "Could I have this? Could I have that?"—always in a mild and detached tone. I may mention that he could be even quite impersonal. Purani records in the early period a typical instance of Sri Aurobindo's nature. Somewhere, on the terrace perhaps, they were all waiting, and Sri Aurobindo came out of his room with a telegram in his hand and, looking at nobody, said: "I suppose this telegram has to be sent." And this was his way with us too. Those of you who have read the Talks must be thinking that we always had a familiar relation with him. In fact there was for at least half the day an impersonal attitude on his part towards everything—a notable distance which yet had nothing of an aloof "superiority."

Another instance. He was lying in bed, the ceiling fan had been installed. It was revolving at great speed. My colleague Satyendra was on duty, and he felt Sri Aurobindo wanted something; so he went and asked "Sir, are you looking for something?" "Oh, no...is Nirod there?" "No, Sir, he is not there." Sri Aurobindo would not say anything further, but Satyendra pushed on: "Can I do anything?" "I was thinking if the speed of the fan could be reduced!" "I can do it, Sir" "Oh, can you?" Well, he inquired for me because at the very beginning, as are the Mother's ways, she had given me the charge of the fan and some other things; Sri Aurobindo wouldn't violate that rule!

Again, he went without a real direct bath for quite a long time because there was no convenience to give it to one who had had a fracture. He had to be satisfied—well, that is our human way of putting it, for satisfaction or dissatisfaction did not apply

to him in the least and it was we who were satisfied or dissatisfied—with only a sponge bath for 6 months or so—until the new bathroom was made. And his long hair went unwashed for quite a time. He didn't mind at all. Not that he was indifferent to bathing or was trying to imitate Louis XIV who had only two baths in his life, one when he was born and the other when he died¹—so goes the story. It was not that at all (you have noticed in my earlier statement that he used to take his bath at 2.30 a.m. daily), but his principle of life, as all of us are aware, was that he would not initiate anything, he left himself, entrusted himself, completely to the Divine or to the Mother. He knew very well that whatever had to be done would be done at the right time. He had no worry, he had no concern.

Once a colleague of ours, very much impressed by Sri Aurobindo's look, tried to make a plaster-cast, with the aid of a so-called sculptor from outside. He took great pride in it, and began to show it to people—a select few. The Mother came to know of this and didn't like the idea at all, and she came and reported it to Sri Aurobindo—such and such a thing was being done and the man should be asked to hand over the cast at once. So there you see the Mother is not a gentleman! She can be Mahakali. Sri Aurobindo did not take such a serious view of it, but said: "All right, I'll speak to him." When the disciple came up, he called him, and in a very quiet and affectionate manner explained to him the impropriety of his action.

Again, another sadhak—I am not complaining against sadhaks, I am only trying to bring out what I have proposed to do: Sri Aurobindo's natural character—another sadhak used to write letters critical of some actions of the Mother. Sri Aurobindo tolerated them once, twice, thrice, answering his points, but when it became a little too much he said to me, a little vexed perhaps—"Why does he write like that about the Mother?" That was all. One thing that Sri Aurobindo didn't like is that the Mother should be criticised, and one thing that the Mother doesn't like is that Sri Aurobindo should be criticised! But when he answered—I know because at that time he used to dictate letters to me—the tone betrayed nothing of the irritation or vexation—all he sent was very calm and quiet reasoned argument. And to this same sadhak, when once he was finding it very difficult to stay here and wanted to leave the Ashram, Sri Aurobindo wrote back—the sadhak told me himself—"I beg of you, I pray to you." Sri Aurobindo saying this to a disciple, however cherished he might be—what humility! It reminds me of Sri Krishna, who, it seems, washed the feet of the Brahmins in some sacrifice. So there you have Sri Aurobindo.

About his food we saw that his lunch started being at 10 o'clock and gradually shifted to 3 or 4. He waited patiently—perhaps I shouldn't use this adverb, it is too ordinary—he just waited without a word till the Mother would be free from her work and bring the food. Only on a single occasion, later on, after 1945 or so, we heard him saying, "I am terribly hungry." Not that he was taking anything in between—at times a simple glass of water. He was very much concerned that the Mother should not be, in any way, tied to his convenience or comfort.

His whole programme was made in such a way as to suit that of the Mother. And he left us an injunction—perhaps it is not the right word—that the Mother should not be kept waiting in any case. We must keep things ready. Because, as you know, from early morning till late midnight, every moment is precious for the Mother; so he didn't want her time to be wasted.

Well, I shall finish by giving one instance more—from our Talks. The full Talk will be in the next issue of *Mother India*.¹ War was on, Hitler was in the ascendant. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother declared that Hitler represented a hostile force and so we must all side with the Allies who were on the side of the Divine. But still many in India and Europe were much enchanted by Hitler and wanted him to win. And even in our camp, knowing very well that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were supporting the Allies, some had the temerity to wish for Hitler's victory. Of course the root cause was not that they loved Hitler but that they did not love the Britishers, India's rulers. So when Sri Aurobindo heard about it, he told us:

“It seems it is not five or six of our people but more than half that are in sympathy with Hitler, and want him to win. It is a very serious matter. The Government can dissolve the Ashram at any moment. The whole of Pondicherry is against us. Only because Governor Bonvin is friendly to us, they can't do anything.. . If these people want that the Ashram should be dissolved, they can come and tell me, and I will dissolve it instead of the police doing it. They have no idea about the world, and talk like children. Hitlerism is the greatest menace that the world has ever met.”

Mark the tone. From what depth of sorrow Sri Aurobindo must have said this. He could easily have sent away all these ignorant and harmful people.

Now, if I have been able by all these instances to prove to you that Sri Aurobindo was a perfect gentleman, I'll be satisfied. If you demur to the common appellation 'gentleman', let us call him a Supramental perfect gentleman. But the one impression that he has left with us is that he was Shiva. He had a magnanimity such as the verse in *Savitri* suggests:

A magnanimity as of sea or sky
Enveloped with its greatness all that came.

Indifferent as it were to everything that was going on in the world, his gaze fixed far away and yet in his cosmic consciousness supporting all things and each one of us—that is the impression that always floats before my eyes whenever I think of Sri Aurobindo.

NIRODBARAN

¹ See the June issue, published on the 26th of that month.—Editor.

LIGHTS ON THE PATH

PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES

(Continued from the issue of June)

(It was the year 1931. At that time there was a special Soup Distribution by the Mother in the late evening in the place now known as the Reception Room. About an hour before it, the Mother used to come to the Prosperity Room, the General Stores, just above. A fixed number of disciples would collect there, and the Mother would spend the time giving talks (later put together by a disciple present and published as the Third Series of the Mother's Talks) or she would play "guessing-games" in which the disciples' powers of intuition would be tested and developed. At a certain period there was a reading of passages from Sri Aurobindo's works. Each day one or other of the disciples would concentrate a little and open a book anywhere with his finger or with a paper-cutter and strike upon a passage for reading. The Mother herself did the same. This procedure went on from March 18 to May 2. A copy of the passages remained with the Editor of Mother India who was one of those attending the happy soirées. We are now publishing them in a series, both for their intrinsic value as lights on the path of Yoga and for whatever subtle side-lights they may throw on the inner movement of those who found them.)

PUT away all egoism from you, disregard joy and sorrow, disregard gain and loss and all worldly results; look only at the cause you must serve and the work you must achieve by divine command; "so thou shalt not incur sin."

*Essays on the Gita, First Series, p. 94.
(Found by Satyen, March 26, 1931)*

This integral God-love demands too an integral work for the sake of the Divine in yourself and in all creatures. The ordinary man does works in obedience to some desire sinful or virtuous, some vital impulse low or high, some mental choice common or exalted or from some mixed mind and life motive. But the work done by you must be free and desireless; work done without desire creates no reaction and imposes no bondage. Done in a perfect equality and an unmoved calm and peace, but without any divine passion, it is at first the fine yoke of a spiritual obligation, *Kartavyam karma*, then the uplifting of a divine sacrifice; at its highest it can be the expression of a calm and glad acquiescence in active oneness. The oneness in love

will do more. it will replace the first impassive calm by a strong deep rapture, not the petty ardour of egoistic desire but the ocean of the infinite Ananda. It will bring the moving sense and the pure and divine passion of the presence of the Beloved into your works; there will be an insistent joy of labour for God in yourself and for God in all beings. Love is the crown of works and the crown of knowledge.

This love that is knowledge, this love that can be the deep heart of your action, will be your most effective force for an utter consecration and complete perfection.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, p. 494.

(Found by Pavitra, March 26, 1931)

The actions are all given up to the supreme Master of action and he as the supreme Will meets the will of sacrifice, takes from it its burden and assumes to himself the charge of the works of the divine Nature in us. And when too in the high passion of love the devotee of the Lover and Friend of man and of all creatures casts upon him all his heart of consciousness and yearning of delight, then swiftly the Supreme comes to him as the saviour and deliverer and exalts him by a happy embrace of his mind and heart and body out of the waves of the sea of death in this mortal nature into the secure bosom of the Eternal.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, pp. 210-11.

(Found by Tajdar, March 27, 1931)

Our...completer vision reveals to us a living infinite, a divine immeasurable Being from whom all that we are proceeds and to which all that we are belongs, self and nature, world and spirit. When we are one with him in self and spirit, we do not lose ourselves but rather recover our true selves in him poised in the supremacy of this infinite. And this is done at one and the same time by three simultaneous movements,—an integral self-finding through works founded in his and our spiritual nature, an integral self-becoming through knowledge of the Divine Being in whom all exists and who is all, and—most sovereign and decisive movement of all—an integral self-giving through love and devotion of our whole being to this All and this Supreme, attracted to the Master of our works, to the Inhabitant of our hearts, to the continent of all our conscious existence. To him who is the source of all that we are, we give all that we are. Our persistent consecration turns into knowledge of him all our knowing and into light of his power all our action. The passion of love in our self-giving carries us up to him and opens the mystery of his deepest heart of being. Love completes the triple cord of the sacrifice, perfects the triune key of the highest secret.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, pp. 41-42.

(Found by Purushottam, March 28, 1931)

The very first necessity for spiritual perfection is a perfect equality. Perfection in the sense in which we use it in Yoga means a growth out of a lower undivine into a

higher divine nature. In terms of knowledge it is a putting on of the being of a higher self and a casting away of the darker broken lower self or a transformation of our imperfect state into the rounded luminous fullness of our real and spiritual personality. In terms of devotion and adoration it is a growing into a likeness of the nature or the law of the being in the Divine, to be united with whom we aspire,—for if there is not this likeness, this oneness of the law of the being, unity between that transcending and universal and this individual spirit is not possible. The supreme divine nature is founded on equality.

The Synthesis of Yoga, Arya, Vol VI, p. 134.
(Found by Champaklal, March 28, 1931)

The equal Divine Presence in all of us makes no other preliminary condition, if once this integral self-giving has been made in faith and in sincerity and with a fundamental completeness. All have access to this gate, all can enter into this temple; our mundane distinctions disappear in the mansion of the all-Lover. There the virtuous man is not preferred, nor the sinner shut out from his Presence; together by this road the Brahmin pure of life and exact in observance of the law and the outcaste born from the womb of sin and sorrow and rejected of men can travel and find an equal and open access to the supreme liberation and the highest dwelling in the Eternal. Man and woman find their equal right before God; for the divine Spirit is no respecter of persons or of social distinctions and restrictions: all can go straight to him without intermediary or shackling conditions. "If," says the divine Teacher, "even a man of very evil conduct turns to me with a sole and entire love, he must be regarded as a saint, for the settled will of endeavour in him is a right and complete will. Swiftly he becomes a soul of righteousness and obtains eternal peace." In other words, a will of entire self-giving opens wide all the gates of the spirit and brings in response an entire descent and self-giving of the Godhead to the human being, and that at once reshapes and assimilates everything in us to the law of the divine existence by a rapid transformation of the lower into the spiritual nature. The self-giving forces away by its power the veil between God and man; it annuls every error and annihilates every obstacle. Those who aspire in their human strength by effort of knowledge or effort of virtue or effort of laborious self-discipline, grow with much anxious difficulty towards the Eternal; but when the soul gives up its ego and its works to the Divine, God himself comes to us and takes up our burden. To the ignorant he brings the light of the divine knowledge, to the feeble the power of the divine will, to the sinner the liberation of the divine purity, to the suffering the infinite spiritual joy and Ananda. Their weakness and the stumblings of their human strength make no difference. "This is my word of promise," cries the voice of the Godhead, "that he who loves me shall not perish."

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, pp. 108-10.
(Found by Anilbaran, March 29, 1931)

NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN INDIA'S HISTORY

(I)

A CLUE

STUDENTS of India's history are often perplexed when they fail to discern a purport in the mass of details and the confused torrent of events which is all that one sees in our textbooks and learned tomes. Yet a purport there must be, for history is not a tale signifying nothing. What we need is a clue that can serve as a guide through the perplexing mass. The clue must be one that can be applied, not to any particular period or phase of our growth but to the entire field of Indian history.

Sri Aurobindo provides such a clue.

"India, shut into a separate existence by the Himalayas and the ocean, has always been the home of a peculiar people with characteristics of its own recognisably distinct from all others, with its own distinct civilisation, way of life, way of the spirit, a separate culture, arts, building of society. It has absorbed all that has entered into it, put upon all the Indian stamp, welded the most diverse elements into its fundamental unity. But it has also been throughout a congeries of diverse peoples, lands, kingdoms, and, in earlier times, republics also, diverse races, subnations with a marked character of their own, developing different brands or forms of civilisation and culture, many schools of art and architecture, which yet succeeded in fitting into the general Indian type of civilisation and culture. India's history throughout has been marked by a tendency, a constant effort to unite all this diversity of elements into a single political whole under a central imperial rule, so that India might be politically as well as culturally one. The political history of India is the story of a succession of empires, indigenous and foreign, each of them destroyed by centrifugal forces, but each bringing the centripetal tendency nearer to its triumphant emergence" (*Message to the Andhra University*, 1948, and *The Ideal of Human Unity*, Chapter 5).

In this brief survey, we shall confine ourselves mainly to the political history, bringing out where possible its bearing on the question of cultural integration.

THE UNDATED CENTURIES (TO C. 600 B.C.)

THE PROBLEM OF INTEGRATION

Whatever view we may take of our origins,—whether we accept the old traditional accounts preserved in insufficient detail in the Vedic, Epic and Puranic records, of

autochthonous peoples gradually spreading themselves over the whole of the sub-continent, or the modern "Orthodox" account of rude Aryan tribes from beyond the north-western hills invading and gradually driving out from north India and confining to the south a highly civilised indigenous race of Dravidians whose relics are to be found near the banks of the Indus and the Ravi,—the problem that faced the mind of ancient India seems to have been the same. The problem was: how to create out of these warring peoples and tribes a homogeneous whole and a stable form of political unity. The problem arose largely out of the facts that the number of these tribes or peoples ran to more than a hundred (according to the Epic tradition), each of them was ruled by an aristocracy (with a king at its head who acted as *stratēgos* or leader in war) violent in habits and impatient of a rule of law, and each region or people was imbued with a strong sense of superiority over all the rest, each was desirous of conquering its neighbours and ruling over them; war remained for a long time their normal mutual relationship.

The solution of the problem was attempted partly through cultural integration, and partly by political means.

CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Cultural integration implies a subtle process aimed at an inner, a deep spiritual and psychological sense of oneness that can efface more or less the antagonisms natural to the ego. To achieve its ends, it has to appeal to all that is highest in man—his religious feeling, his love of the good and the true, his idealism; to be of any lasting value it has to shape the education and social structure of the people with a conscious aim. We shall examine in outline how these methods of approach were adopted during the period in question, and with what measure of success.

In the Vedic age, the institution of sacrifice was the main instrument used to cement the religious feelings of the common man. The sacrifice was extolled as the most potent means of propitiating and invoking the gods for all one's needs; the forms of the sacrifice were laid down in their minutest details; the prayers to accompany the offerings were codified in Samhitas, these latter becoming the universally accepted scriptures. The gods of Vedic worship formed another bond of union; those who worshipped them were the Arya, a title to which all aspired. The gods were described as upholders of Truth and Right, the guardians of the moral law; one who transgressed the moral law was at once spotted by their spies and punished. The ethical law, *dharma*, too became a strong unifying factor. Already in the Brahmanas, there is an attempt to fix the moral standard: men are to act in a particular way because that is the way of the gods. In the Upanishads, there are brief enumerations of the moral code, which in the later periods were to figure so prominently. In the Brahmanas and the Upanishads, the educational system, too, with its recognised methods and curricula, provides a common basis of culture for the three higher castes (including the *viśaḥ*, the *vaiśya* of later terminology, who formed

the bulk of the population). The social organisation based on the differences in psychological type and economic function provided a place for all men in a harmonious whole; this was to be a strong basis of unity, for a long time to come.

The post-Vedic period when the Sutras and the Great Epics took shape continued the work of cultural integration on more or less the same lines, with certain important differences of detail. A new pantheon was rising, with the Trinity of Brahma-Vishnu-Maheswara at its head and a few minor gods and goddesses related to this Trinity; the Vedic gods (like Agni, Indra, Prajapati) were still held in esteem but they were visibly losing their importance. The new pantheon had to be provided with a new mythology, a new mode of worship, new psychological concepts and physical forms. There was also in evidence a strong sectarian feeling in favour of one or other of the great Triad, especially Vishnu and Siva; a new syncretism was developed with a view to smooth over sectarian rancour. The greatest contribution of the new age was in the elaboration of ethical ideals; *dharma* became the watchword. But great care was taken to emphasise the fact that although there were certain norms of conduct (like truthfulness, forbearance, etc.) to which all were expected to conform, the duties of each man varied with his station, his position in the social hierarchy, the stage of life (student, householder or forest dweller) or even the particular region to which he belonged. This wise elasticity made for universal adhesion. The education too became sufficiently diversified to attract students of all types, but every student, at least of the higher castes, was given enough grounding in the ancient Vedic tradition to keep him at heart loyal to the national culture. The social organisation became more rigid in its hierarchies; this, in spite of obvious disadvantages, gave to each man his assured place in the social scheme and an opportunity to develop the skills in his particular profession.

By the end of the period, the Rishi—mythical or actual composer of the Vedas and Brahmanas, teacher and guardian of the Vedantic lore, codifier or enumerator of the social and religious law—had acquired a position of such eminence in the mind and heart of men that India was well on the way to becoming a single cultural unit; the Rishi took the place of king or emperor who in other centres of civilisation formed an early nodus of unity. Two other factors helped in India. One was the institution of pilgrimage, the other was language and script. The sacredness of mother earth and the praise of certain rivers (*nadīstuti*) appear in the Vedic hymns. By the Epic period, many of these rivers and others not mentioned in the Veda had become objects of worship; and a large number of places had become sacred spots (*tīrtha*). These rivers and sacred spots became the objects of pilgrimage; as they were spread all over the land, from one end of the country to the other, they became the meeting grounds of peoples from every region. All-India tours of pilgrimage (*bhārata-darśana* is the latest and more fashionable style) naturally promoted an all-India spirit. Language helped in no small measure. The language of scripture, the archaic Vedic tongue, even when it had long ceased to be understood, was the only language used during our period for purposes of worship; it

had a strong unifying effect, like Latin in mediaeval Christendom. The spoken language, Sanskrit (*bhāṣā* of the early grammarians) must have had regional variations, but it remained the sole literary tongue—the vast body of Epic literature was composed in this spoken language—and provided a strong bond of unity not only among those who could read it but also among those who could not, for the bards and singers (*kuṣī-lava*) took it to the people: witness the story of Lava and Kusha in the Ramayana. Several Prakrit dialects derived from Sanskrit must have already developed by the end of our period, as the Asokan inscriptions of the third century B. C. suggest, and Tamil may have been developing a literary idiom if the rich products of the Sangam age could come into existence around the beginning of the Christian era. But the significant fact for our present purpose is that a common script (Brahmi), highly elaborate and therefore presuming a long anterior development, could be used by Asoka for the edification of the common man, in his rock and pillar inscriptions all over India (except in the North-Western frontier areas where another script, Kharoshthi, of non-Indian origin had to be used) down to the latitude of Nellore (Chitaldroog district in Mysore). This implies that the whole of India had long been made familiar with a single form of writing which could be understood by all. Those who read the same script tend to feel that they are culturally one.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

THIS TWILIT MIND

THIS twilight mind is a quaint creature of some paradoxical mud,
 Illusion-fed, it buys a brief bubble with the soul's enormous blood.
 From the false flicker of faint matter's soon fading flush
 How can it create the enduring fire of undying bliss-hush,

Or how by its roaring rocket flight reach the being's beatific whole?
 Unless we live the sheer divinity of the deep diamond soul,
 The slaves of life, yoked to hunger, with each breath we sign doom.
 Oh! the mind must stop, in the spirit's high and sky-vast room,

Arrested to a jewelled dream, absorbed and alone, motionless and still,
 Beyond the passion-packed perfidious sphere, a rapturous hill.
 Then dig, O Soul! the channel of the self down from the eternal spring
 For the laughing luminous waters—of which the immortals sing.

A rain of splendour shall yet surprise the prostrate earth,
 A lightning burst of the unexpected end the rule of death.

A. VENKATARANGA

A POET'S SINCERITY

"ALL writing of poetry," says AE, "should be preceded by a passionate desire for truth and when the poet is writing he should continually ask himself, 'Do I really believe this? Is this truly what I feel?'" AE was himself a poet—but I am afraid his dictum cannot be taken at its face-value.

We must not ignore the fact that a dramatist can be a poet. A dramatist speaks through a multitude of characters. No doubt, he often packs them with responses he has personally made to the world, yet nowhere does he write an accurate story of his own attitudes, and he writes great poetry through his villains no less than his heroes. Surely he cannot be believing all that his figures utter or even sympathising with all their feelings. If AE's dictum is correct, a dramatist like Shakespeare should never have penned quite a number of celebrated speeches such as Iago's or Lady Macbeth's, for he could never have answered satisfactorily to AE's "posers". We have to recognise that a poet's function essentially is not to transcribe his own convictions and experiences but to put himself into all sorts of minds and hearts and get with imaginative intensity what one might express if one held certain convictions and underwent certain experiences. This "if" is at the root of the poetic process. The poet is fundamentally a dramatist, and when he writes about personal things the man in him is merely one of the various parts he has the capacity to play!

It may be argued that such cannot be the case, since he is already identified with the beliefs and feelings of the man in him whereas he has to attempt identifying himself with those not his own. But to produce poetry from the former he has to face them anew as if he were not already identified with them: the same searching pressure and penetration which he gives the latter is required here also. Both are treated as material to be worked upon: what poeticises both is an essentially dramatic gesture of imaginative intensity. That is why few poems record exactly what the man has believed and felt: there is an exploring, in greater or less measure, of what the "tones" of consciousness can be—deep within, far around, high above his actual state. The actual state is subjected to an imaginative transformation.

Wordsworth's famous Immortality Ode tells of the soul's existence before birth, and tells of it so sincerely and splendidly that one cannot help thinking Wordsworth actually held the belief if not had also a mystical and psychical memory of prenatal existence. Wordsworth was far from anything of the sort: on being questioned, he clearly disclaimed it: he had only an experience in childhood of a glory everywhere, in Nature and himself, a light and laughter of the Divine. The Ode as originally composed was much shorter and bore no passages about the soul's existence before birth. The profound psychical passages came later and were a further imaginative plumbing of the life-substance he had already plumbed imaginatively—his thoughts and emotions when a child. He was mystically dramatising. And yet he conveyed the impression of

a splendid sincerity, as though he had put to himself AE's queries and after having been able to return an emphatic "Yes" composed the poem. A poem's sincerity, therefore, cannot be restricted to AE's all-too-simple formula of a passionate desire for truth.

How then are we to account for it? Can we say that to be imaginatively intense is to ring authentic? Not quite, for though our explanation is correct it does not say enough. It does not bring out the inevitability, the finality and the absoluteness of form we intuit in a poem. The ancients hit the nail on the head when they spoke of the poet, in the act of creating flawless art-form, as an instrument of hidden divine powers. We too preserve the ancient idea in the term we often employ in treating art: inspiration. But we burke its full contents. As long as we fail to accept with open eyes the miraculous working by which perfect beauty shines out in a poem, we shall never explain why a poem rings authentic without our needing to ask the poet, "Do you really believe this? Is this truly what you feel?" The sincerity of a poem has, at bottom, nothing to do with personal beliefs and feelings: it is a touch from behind the veil.

That AE should have overlooked this touch is rather curious. If ever a man could give evidence for inspiration, it was he. Song, he records somewhere, came to him spontaneously, without any conscious mental effort: it fountained from inner depths, whole and perfect. There is here indicated a play of forces that are beyond the poet's personality and though their nature is, as a rule, adapted to the bent and colour of that personality they are something greater than he and have a direction of their own. No sooner do we bring them in than the man's beliefs and feelings stop occupying the centre of the stage. Images dawn on him, significances flash across his thought, emotion-charged words fly through his consciousness, leaving his own beliefs and feelings far short of them. Not out of his own personal life but from some superlife behind, whose channel he is, does the poetry take birth, and it is quite possible that at times it is born not just suddenly and with a range beyond him but even in contradiction to what he really believes and truly feels!

The "divine afflatus" is the master-key to our understanding the poetic process. We do not need to put it aside because all poets do not act as if they were helpless reeds through which a mysterious wind blows its music. For the "divine afflatus" is always there in genuine poems: only the way of receiving it is not the same. AE had no travail to go through in getting his lyrics—they magically floated out to him. The one poet who in our time was as haunted and as much made a mouthpiece by unseen presences as AE, though in a different style and from a different plane, was Yeats; yet Yeats was the very opposite in method of composition. His rhythmic enchantments from "dove-grey fairylands" and from the "odorous twilight" of the Celtic Gods were created bit by bit, by patient brooding over single phrases or lines, writing and erasing and rewriting, deliberate self-critical endeavour. His habitual way of receiving inspiration after the first impact from within was by acute concentration and a massing of the energies of the consciousness to break open, block after block, the passage of the inner to the outer. The laborious method resulted in the secret spontaneity of inspira-

tion, the "divine afflatus," bursting forth with a perfect grace equal to AE's and sounding in all places the note of sincerity.

A desire for that secret spontaneity and not for truth as envisaged by AE should precede song. Of course it is generally granted that poetry must not be valued according to philosophical, religious or scientific standards of truth, just as it must not be valued according as it edifies us morally. Beauty is what the poet is after and it was to uphold his freedom from allegiance to anything except beauty that the slogan of "Art for art's sake" was raised. Unfortunately, with the raising of this slogan beauty came to be improperly understood, and art's independence grew a justification of empty glitter, decadent decorativeness. Perhaps in a reaction against the misuse into which the slogan fell, people like AE insist on beauty being not enough. Their real meaning is that art must be vital and deep. Yes, art must be vital and deep; but that solely implies that the artist must not capriciously and cleverly make up things: there must be a serious turning towards inspiration so that his work may have a godlike stamp. It is an inaccurate narrowing down of the godlike in art to fasten on it the ordinary connotations of truth or goodness, even as it is a superficialising of it to deem art a mere beautifying applied from without. It is also an illegitimate viewing of art to set up actual beliefs and feelings as an indispensable condition.

The right questions a poet should put himself while writing are: "Am I true to the visionary urge of inspiration entering my mind? Is my expression of feeling moulded by a sense of irreproachable beauty seizing like a godhead my heart?"

K. D. SETHNA

WHEN...

WHEN the far calls near and the sound is heard
 Of silent songs in tones of gold,
 In tireless rhythms, rapture's dance,
 The one who treads divine with feet unscathed
 The burning breast of earth, the One
 For whom the ages yearn has come.
 Oh mighty hand, heal all our scars,
 And wipe the stain of tears from eyes
 That never clear could never see
 Thy Face, that makes of sun a moon,
 Reflecting Thy Omnipotence.

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

SOLILOQUIES AT TURN OF NIGHT

I

ALAS! A fumbling poetaster still
Am I, pure neophyte; and, twin, lament,
How many aeons slumbering lie until
This stripling sadhak fans his ashen bent
For yogic lore into a knowing's flame?
These dubious days unman one's word, one's life:
When shall I grasp the Glory and the Name?
I'll hazard all for some kind surgeon's knife
Which from thick flesh of unperceptive night
Will render to my hands, of hope long nude,
A single ray of deep embedded light—
Till then, I'll count no smiling certitude.
Hierophantic muse, from solar peaks pour down
Thy Word, now vigil give its tardy crown.

II

No, no! I'll not permit the diamond throne
Of self's uniting kingdom to be claimed
By any royal sire who must atone
For having banished or summarily maimed
A life-loved prince: my passion to define
I'll speed you, soul, to drink on nectarous heights,
While schooling artist's eye a laser-line
To trace between your Protean delights.
Sweet gods, for raptured moments do not ask
That later of their source I speak the fool.
Then dayspring laughed; the strength that seized my task
Created me its moment's conscious tool.
Thy hand, my Lord, Thy hand took mine and wrought
The perfect phrase, sun-poised beyond all thought.

WILLIAM JONES

AT THE SAMADHI OF SRI AUROBINDO

A PEACE, immobile peace is reigning here,
A solid something stands supporting all,
A living breath trance-held frees us from fear,
A Deity deep-enshrined, quick to our call.

With arms of adoration ever-green
And flowers of gold in showers this Service Tree
Has worshipped with deep-rooted yet unseen
Devotion here its Lord unceasingly.

The thousand-armed great Lord of heaven, the Sun,
Has drawn his light from this Samadhi's heart;
The stars have learnt to wink from the winkless One,
Who dwelling everywhere dwells here apart.

The moon is but His smile the heavens caught
Through their long vigil bearing fruit at last,
Home of the immortalising Nectar, sought
By gods and demons from the Ocean vast.

It is because He is here that all the Good,
The True, the Beautiful has come to stay
With us on earth, beneath the emerald hood
Of tree-turned Shesha with the Lord in clay.

We, earth-born soul, have now one thing to do—
To worship and to serve and work His will
Of life obeying laws of God we woo,
And make this planet home of the Ineffable.

PUNJALAL

4/5/70

O SEEKER OF TRUTH

I

EVEN IF THY GOAL IS FAR

O SEEKER of Truth, waste not thyself in tormenting tears. They but veil thy pathway. Shed thy memories of falls and failures, for they but shroud the vaster vision of thy destiny.

Dare the dark days and stumbling nights.

Deem the thorns of thy path are but to test the strength of thy thews. Consider the hurdling hills and crags meant to measure thy faith and the quality of thy determination. Make the stones and puddles thy friends. Glance at the snakes and leopards with looks of love, at the tangled trees with the sight of a saint, at evil and hate and treachery with the eyes of a seer.

Calm thy mind and muster the courage of thy soul that stares at fate with a frown. Follow the faith that glows within the depths of thy being, thy silent and immortal self, that knows and can clear its course through the labyrinths of life.

Follow the command of thy heart which hides in it the voice and vision of the all-viewing Vast and the power of the victorious Will. Let the light that glimmers within thee become for thee a torch-fire that clears the clouds, illumines the path, enflames to ash the forms and forts of falsehood and effaces the imps and ghouls of gloom.

Let the goal be far, let the obstacles be numberless, let the heights and gulfs be challenging, let the forests be frowning and devouring, the streams tumultuous, the skies cruel and threatening, let the birds and beasts be ravenous, but loosen not thy hold on this heart of exhaustless power, this course of magic might, of measureless strength and unswerving will, this deep of immortal nectar, of light limitless that faints not, flickers not, of faith unfaltering.

Care not for stumbles, for now thou holdest in thy firm grip the wand that can tame all hostility and opposition, make all resistance powerless.

Hold on to this heart of fire, this staff of faith, and mind not if thy goal is yet far, very far.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

SRI AUROBINDO'S *PERSEUS THE DELIVERER* AN APPROACH

SRI Aurobindo has been recognised more as a mystic and a yogi than as a literary man. His essays on the Gita, his commentaries on the Vedas and the Upanishads, his metaphysical text *The Life Divine* have established his fame as a mystic philosopher. But that he also possessed a brilliant and wonderfully fecund creative spirit is revealed by his poetic and dramatic works.

Generally, his plays have their source in either western mythology or Indian classical legend. Almost all his plays were written early in his life and are romances. *Rodogune* is a dramatic romance about the tragedy of the Parthian princess Rodogune and her master and lover, Antiochus. *The Viziers of Bassora* also deals with a Persian romantic story: that of Nureddene and his slave girl, Anice-aljalice. *Eric* derives from a Norwegian story, and *Vasavadutta*, is naturally Indian in its atmosphere. In *The Hero and the Nymph*, Sri Aurobindo recreates the *Vikramorvasie* of Kalidasa.

In *Perseus the Deliverer*, Sri Aurobindo broadens the implications of a Greek mythological story and transforms it into a consummate work of art. Though the story has been taken from a European source, the play presents the Indian insight of life. In order to analyse the play and indicate the changes that Sri Aurobindo made to achieve his purpose, it is necessary first to give the outlines of the Greek legend of Perseus.

A king of Argos called Acrisius had a daughter named Danae. The oracle said that she would have a son through whom Acrisius would lose his life. This frightened Acrisius very much and he had a large brazen room constructed under the earth for Danae to live in. She was never allowed to see the light of day nor to meet any man. But Zeus desiring her came to her in a shower of gold. Their son was Perseus. Acrisius, terrified by this development, placed Danae and the child in a chest and cast them adrift on the sea. They were borne to the island of Seriphos, where they received shelter from Dictys, brother of Polydectes, king of the island. Polydectes fell in love with Danae but his love was not returned. By then Perseus had become a strong young man and Polydectes asked him to undertake a dangerous adventure, the obtaining of the head of Medusa, thinking that Perseus would be destroyed in the attempt. But the gods favoured Perseus and, aided by Athene who gave him the enchanted sword Herpe, winged shoes to bear him through the air, her shield or aegis and a cap of invisibility, he eventually succeeded in his quest. While returning to Seriphos he came to Syria and found Andromeda, daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopea, King and Queen of Syria. She had been chained to the rocks by the people of Syria to be devoured by a Sea-monster as atonement for her mother's impiety against the sea-god Poseidon. Perseus killed the monster, rescued and wedded Andromeda.

Sri Aurobindo is perhaps the first Indian writing in English to choose a mythological story such as this for the theme of a drama.¹ He has used only the bare outlines of the story to create an imaginative, romantic piece of art. When once asked why a creative artist should write only about problems, Sri Aurobindo replied, "What a stupidly rigid principle! Can X really write nothing except what he has seen or experienced? What an unimaginative man he must be and how limited! I wonder whether Victor Hugo had to live in a convict's prison before he created Jean Valjean. Certainly one has to copy faithfully from life. The man of imagination carries a world in himself and a mere hint or suggestion from life is enough to start it going.... One must be able to see that human nature is one everywhere and pick out of it the essential things that can be turned into great art."²

Sri Aurobindo saw, in the legend of Perseus, material which could be developed into a work of art by giving it a variety of colour and meaning, a "romantic story of human temperament and life impulses on the Elizabethan model".³ Recognising the influences which had acted upon his art, Sri Aurobindo said: "...anachronisms romp in wherever they can get an easy admittance, ideas and associations from all climes and epochs mingle; myth, romance and realism make up a single whole."⁴ But the basic spirit is certainly Indian, showing the power of love and the divine potentialities in Man. The play seems to portray symbolically the battle between the good and the evil spirits, a battle waged by the Devas against the Asuras. Though the characters are indirectly the instruments of these spirits, they are pictured as full-fledged individuals with their merits and drawbacks, "for here the stage is the human mind of all times..."⁵ The characters who were in the original myth merely the puppets of fates and oracles have been developed to become flesh-and-blood human beings. Characters, who before yielded submissively to primitive ideas of sacrifice and other superstitious beliefs, have grown from their primitive consciousness into men who, whatever the difficulties they encounter, depend on their own thoughts and deeds.

The play begins by evoking surroundings of tumultuous ocean which set the right atmosphere for the prologue in which the conflict between Athene and Poseidon is initiated.

This prologue is reminiscent of the prologue to the play *J.B.* by Archibald Macleish and to that of the story of Harishchandra, and it serves as the key-note for the whole play. Athene and Poseidon struggle to establish their supremacy over each other: neither is prepared to yield and they eventually agree to a war between representatives of their powers.

The play starts with a conversation between Cireas, a servant in the temple of

¹ It is reported that his elder brother Manmohan Ghose has also treated the story; but his work, if it exists, is still unpublished.—Editor.

² *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, 3rd Series, pp. 55.-56.

³ *Perseus the Deliverer*, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Poseidon, and Diomedé, the slave girl of Andromeda. The language is, naturally, in prose-order, with its "indecorous gaiety". Diomedé immediately reveals an aspect of her character in this exchange, a haughtiness and trickiness which she maintains throughout the play. Círeas makes fun of her, saying, "Has your mistress Andromeda sent you then with matin offerings to Poseidon, or are you walking here to whip the red roses in your cheeks redder with the sea-wind?"

Diomedé is not intimidated, but replies with her characteristic fearless gaiety:

"My mistress cares as much for your Poseidon as I for your glum beetle-browed priest Polydaon. But, you Círeas? Are you walking here to whip the red nose of you redder with the sea-wind or to soothe with it the marks of his holiness's cudgel."

While the conversation continues in the same manner, a shipwreck is observed and both Diomedé and Círeas are disturbed. The whole play revolves round this shipwreck and the two merchants saved from it are seen on the stage. Then Perseus descends from the clouds on winged sandals.

A more human element enters the play with the appearance of Perseus. After his long travel through solitudes, the sound of the sea beside human habitations stirs him to exclaim:

O even

The wail of mortal misery I choose
Rather than that intolerable hush;
For this at least is human. Thee I praise,
O mother Earth and thy guardian sea, O Sun
Of the warm south nursing fair life of men.

.....

...You are grown dear to me,
You smiling, weeping human faces, brightly
Who move, who live, not like those stony masks
And Gorgon visions of that monstrous world
Beyond the snows.

Love of life bubbles from the radiant youth Perseus, and he expresses it in his reply to the merchant Smerdas, who was shipwrecked and who is in anguish at having lost his wealth:

Yet life, most beautiful of all, is left thee.
Is not mere sunlight something, and to breathe
A joy!

Perseus is also aware of the tragic phase of life. When he is relaxing in a romantic surrounding, entertained by Cydone, the slave-girl of Iolaus, he is suddenly alarmed and says:

Happy Cydone,
 Who can lie here and babble to the river,
 All day of love and light and Iolaus.
 If it could last! But tears are in the world
 And must some day be wept.

Perseus has come to destroy "evil and a harsh religion". He is not a mere instrument of Athene; he has all the qualities of a human being, but his consciousness is of greater than human dimensions. As he has risen above evil in his own being, the gods have chosen to use him to help man become aware of his evil potentialities and conquer them. However, Perseus does not lose his own essential human-ness:

Though great Athene breathes Olympian strength
 Into my arms sometimes, I am no more
 Than a brief mortal.

We see Perseus act just like a human being to save his fellow-men:

I war not with the gods for thee .
 Yet since each man on Earth has privilege
 To battle even against the gods for life,
 Sweet life, lift up from Earth thy fellow's sword;
 I will protect meanwhile thy head from onset.

But we must not forget that for all his human qualities and characteristics Perseus is also, if not primarily, acting as the gods' instrument. It is Athene's power working through him that gives him the confidence and strength to march towards his goal. At a crucial point he says to Iolaus:

This is no hour to speak or plan but to act.
 A presence sits within my heart that sees
 Each moment's need and finds the road to meet it.

Throughout the play Sri Aurobindo portrays Perseus as a man capable of loving. It is the love he has towards his fellowmen that makes him pursue the action. Finally it is the love that conquers evil . There is an undercurrent of a romantic love-story which is gradually evolving towards perfection. Even before the meeting of Andromeda and Perseus, the love-relationship between them has been established. We see Perseus enchanted by the name of Andromeda;

Andromeda!
 It is a name that murmurs to the heart.

Andromeda sees the bright Sun-god in a dream and a desire for him lurks in her heart. But it is only after much craving and anguish that they meet and she is given to Perseus as a gift for saving the country. Their long delayed union recalls Athene's words to Poseidon in the Prologue:

For through the shocks of difficulty and death
Man shall attain his godhead.

It is not by ruthless force that Perseus succeeds in delivering the people of Syria. It is the spirit of power and love which, combined in him and strengthened by his pity for Andromeda, goads him on to triumph over all obstacles. Indeed we may say that Perseus symbolises the union of love and power—and love in him, though centred on Andromeda, radiates out to all humanity in the shape of Syria's people.

(To be continued)

K. S. LALITHA

TEARS

MAYBE that tears will bear witness one day—
When accounts are to be made
And when called upon,
There shall appear a pure lake
Of tears,
A mirror of the soul.
The eye of the Lord of days
Will then gaze deep into that
Crystal pool
And will clearly draw
All past accounts
To weigh.
Then shall he call forth
Deep from his heart
The weeper of the lake
And say,
"Rise now,
You are washed."

GEORGETTE COTY

THE REVOLUTION SUPREME

(Continued from the issue of June)

THERE are two major areas of Truth whose creative partnership can become a potent peacemaking force—science and spirituality, or scientific development and spiritual development.¹

Let us explore the potentialities of a resourceful and adventurous collaboration of science and spirituality for the unity that can mean survival, peace, progress for all.

We begin with the weightiest, most solid fact of life: *The world is ONE; all life is one*: we are all sprung from a common source; in all essentials we are really a unity. Both science and spirituality bear witness to this sovereign fact.

This unity is basic and enduring; our differences are superficial and transitory. It is not that we have to import the unity. It is HERE! Let us *wake up to it and strive to live up to it*.

But how? A merely *intellectual* awakening will not do. It must be an awakening *where we live*, on a deeper level of our nature, the spiritual or psychic or soul level. In fact, it is the intellect—the ordinary rational mind—that has all along been the mischief-maker, habitually stressing differences, while the ego, the selfish nature, magnifies and exploits these differences, these human foibles. Some differences may seem rather important for the time being. But scientific progress has put into man's hands such vast powers for destruction that we can no longer afford to stress dissimilarities to the point of "the mutual ruin of the contending parties", as Marx put it a century before Hiroshima. Let us therefore try to grasp the secret of human unity. If superficially, on the level of the rational mind, we are divided, we must turn to our deeper nature, in which our Oneness is the great Reality, and build a dynamic partnership between science and the spiritual resources with us. The present supreme crisis makes this imperative. Only thus can we enjoy the marvellous progress which the march of science has opened out before us.

Science and Spirituality are well-matched. They have an affinity in ways which have everything to do with unity and peace. Both have an open-minded, experimental approach to truth, following the light without prejudice, wherever it leads. Science deals with *objective* truth, apprehensible by the senses and the reason, spirituality with *subjective* truth, apprehensible by the super-sensory faculties, intuition and still higher levels of consciousness. Both are strongly progressive in their outlook.

¹ I reproduce freely from my brochure, "Science and Spirituality in Creative Collaboration", published by World Union.

Man's conquest of nature has meant his learning to use ever more subtle and potent forms of energy—water, wind, steam, electricity, atomic energy. Note the trend. The old gross materialism of a century ago is simply nowhere today. We suggest that it is time to abandon the old-fashioned dualism between spirit and matter and to regard them as two faces of the same coin, two aspects of the one Reality. As with the colours of the spectrum, we cannot tell where one ends and the other begins.

While spirituality has been much misunderstood and neglected, science has won the respect of modern man for its attitude towards truth, its phenomenal achievements and its service to humanity. We must capitalize on this respect for science in order to save science and all its works from destruction, invoking the saving power of a dynamic spirituality as the true creative partner of science. For science, despite its achievements, has serious limitations.

SCIENCE POTENT BUT LIMITED,

There are three massive problems of the human dilemma which science cannot solve; they can be solved only by an integral spirituality. (By "integral spirituality" we mean one which is not escapist but which embraces the whole of life for its progressive transformation.)

The first major problem of man which science cannot solve may be stated thus: At the heart of the divisions that imperil peace and prevent progress is the human ego. Be it the individual or the collective ego, *egoism is the mischief-maker, breeding rivalry and conflict*. What can tame the ego and supplant it with unselfish brotherly love or creative altruism? The late Dr. Pitirim A. Sorokin, eminent social scientist of Harvard University, and his colleagues of the Research Centre in Creative Altruism, in *Reconstruction of Humanity* and other scholarly works, have shown us that the only hopefully adequate source of dynamic altruism is "the super-conscious" (*i.e.* a level of consciousness above the ordinary reasoning consciousness) which has been tapped by the spiritual giants of all time and of whatever religion, even of no particular religion in some cases. A dynamic and integral spiritual development is the only adequate cure for the divisive ego, the first problem of the human dilemma.

Second, there is our need—a desperate one in an age like this—of a wisdom beyond the operations of our fumbling intellect or rational faculty. Here again it is evident that those who have explored and penetrated into not only the realm of intuition but still higher levels of the super-conscious—the saints and sages and seers—characteristically are possessed of a wisdom above mere knowledge, a true synthetic spiritual wisdom, in place of the ordinary analytical, critical, mental knowledge.

The third need, again a crucial one in this age of fearful powers loosed upon the world scene by science in the service of the State, is that of discovering and utilising creative *spiritual* powers that can master the potentially destructive mate-

rial forces. Recent pioneering spiritual experimentation reveals the reality and potency of spiritual power available to higher ranges of consciousness.

This brings us to one of the most hopeful things about the science-and-spirituality approach to world peace. It would seem most likely to succeed in commending an integral, creative, progressive spirituality to those who have assumed that they must choose between religion and materialism, whether the avowed materialism of the Communists or the practical materialism of many moderns anywhere in the world. This approach would offer an attractive and dynamic third alternative. It would stand the best chance of building a great and growing bridge of understanding and common aspiration and unity across the Cold War chasm.

How can science and spirituality work except together, since each needs the other and the world needs both in creative partnership? Appearing before the world arm-in-arm, each acknowledging the validity and necessity of the other, they can help to dispel from the minds of men a false dualism and its resultant division and conflict.

The spiritual urge without the scientific attitude tends to obscurantism and superstition. Science without the spiritual approach tends to suicide—in the gross sense, world destruction and, in the subtle sense, the loss of one's vast potentialities for spiritual development.

An integral spirituality can lift the horizons of men as they awaken to the call to participate consciously in further evolution, and in so doing encourage the consummation of the dynamic master-concept of the nineteenth century, that of evolution, in the fulfilment of the master-concept of this century, integration. While science has built up an impressive array of testimony to the inherent unity of all life, it is only a profound spirituality that can testify to the deeper reaches of the Oneness.

And let us keep ever mindful that only an integral spirituality can solve the triple dilemma of modern man—the problems of egoism, wisdom and power—and save science from contributing to the suicide of the human race in having loosed a Frankenstein it cannot tame.

In the unity of science and spirituality there is strength for the pursuit of still greater unity, a unity adequate for the challenge of the age, *Unite or Perish*.

The time is now for this dynamic part of the Revolution Supreme, a mobilisation of scientific and spiritual resources for a grand assault on division, conflict, ignorance, disease, poverty and war. Considering the temper and pace of world events, there is no time to lose.

(To be continued)

JAY HOLMES SMITH

A VISIT TO AUROVILLE

A LETTER

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, Nov. 1969

Dear.. ...

You must have seen many pamphlets about the dream city "Auroville" but I saw its hesitant steps with my own eyes and I wish to share the experience with you. On a blistering noon in October some friends and I went to the site which is some way from Pondicherry. The general secretary of Sri Aurobindo Society, Navajata, accompanied us to explain the many details of different projects.

As we left the city, lush green fields waved their banners in ecstasy. Tall coconut trees clapped their long branches to the music of wind, and the blue sky leaned down, perhaps it wanted to be part of the earth's drama. Enough of poetry; let me come back to the dream city, which I hope will become a living poem one day. We reached the outskirts of Auroville. Navajata pointed to a new building on the right and said that it was "Auro-garage". All the vehicles which were used for Auroville were repaired here. They were of all kinds: jeeps, cars, buses.

We went first to see 'Promesse' which is on the edge of Auroville. The well-known French architect Roger Anger has turned toll-collectors' barracks into fine flats. Each flat has a bedroom, dining room, kitchen and store-room on the ground floor, while the terrace is changed into a wide room. Its windows are so wide that when they are open one has the illusion that it has no windows at all. Each flat has deep verandahs on each side and the roof projects far out to protect the flat from rain. The very simplicity of design makes these flats very attractive. Opposite these flats where Auroville workers are living, there is a mess. It looked like an ordinary large cottage from outside. It had a thatched roof, the door and window were also made of bamboo and palm leaves. But the floor was made of cement and instead of curtains it had coloured mats on its windows. This slight change had a magical effect on the appearance of the place. The serving counter has a rough wooden plank and someone has carved figures on it. This mess serves food to people who don't cook at home.

In between the flats and the mess there are three maternity homes. They are truly flats because each house is meant for one patient only. Each house is supported by cement pillars so that the base does not touch the ground. The idea is to avoid damp. There is only one large room with two wall almirahs, a long cement table and another side-door which opens into a small garden. Navajata said that this was so arranged to allow women to come out in sunlight or to let the baby have a sniff of fresh air. Each home will be air-conditioned. There is a cement flower-pot attached to the outside wall near a glass window, so that flower-loving women can plant something and watch it grow. There is one corridor between all the six homes and women can go from one to the next in privacy. The Mother has given a fine message to the maternity centre : "Maternity homes for the children of God."

Further down the road there is an experimental cottage constructed by the Rural Construction Research Centre. The Centre aims at building cottages that are cheaper, more comfortable than the traditional ones. This particular cottage was a hexagon. Two corners made one room. Here also the roof reached out to protect the rooms from rain : the traditional cottages have no such roofs. Each corner had two glass windows. In the central space where all the rooms meet there is a common kitchen. The same research institute has made a chair for relaxation. It looks like a gigantic football from a distance. It is also made of bamboos and palm leaves. When I went near it I found a round door and round windows. It is meant to be used on the beach for relaxation. As I looked at it I thought it looked like a womb and perhaps one could feel the same security and peace as in one's mother's body. We were about to leave 'Promesse', so I looked round to stamp its picture on my mind. Tall trees surrounded the place, further out green fields waved their leaves gaily. Well, here is a place which gives one the chance to feel one with nature, to savour its beauty, and at the same time gives the sophisticated city comforts to which we are accustomed.

As we were entering the Auroville location, Navajata told us that far out a factory was getting ready to make flour. The Mother has called it "Auro-food".¹

The first object we saw in the Auroville-site was a Ganesh Temple. It is tiny as compared to temples in general. Navajata said that the land could be bought only on condition that the temple would be kept intact and the god worshipped daily because the owner of the land had a miraculous cure by the grace of Ganesh. The land around the temple had been turned into an orchard. It had mango trees and Auroville workers had planted lemon trees and cashew nuts. This was Auro-orchard. From here we went to 'Hope'. Here too experiments in building cottages are going on. 'Hope' is going to be an experiment in international co-operation. The French, the Swiss, Italians, Indians, all are working together to create an ideal village of the future. This will be a self-contained village complete with mess, hospital, library, school and playground.

About two miles from 'Hope', a German is building his home. The private road to his home is lined by graceful Eucalyptus saplings. He is looking after some farms. His house, called Auroson's Home, is still under construction but the farm-store was almost ready.² It had a ground floor and first floor. On two sides of the first floor wooden triangular terraces looked out and the rest was roofed. As far as the eye could see green fields sparkled like emeralds in the background of the red soil. I saw something else when we came down. The unfinished home had clay horses about three feet high near the gate. Some had riders also. These toys horses are a common sight in South Indian villages. They are kept on the borders of the village under the open sky. Usually there is a huge human figure behind them which is known as Ayyappan, the protector-god of the village. The villagers believe that if they give him horses he will look after and protect the village and for this work he would ride all night. These are simple but fine specimens of rural art.

¹ The factory is working at present —Editor

² Since this was written Auroson's Home has come near to completion.—Editor.

Now we saw the land that was given to a group which is called 'Forecomers'. They have come from Canada and the United States. They are planning to build a dam on this land. This dam would serve a double purpose. The monsoon here is violent and stormy and it carries away much of silt and turns it into an impossible up-and-down land. The dam would provide water for the whole year instead of a couple of months, preserve the silt and keep the land more even and fertile. This group runs a school for village children.

From there we turned in a different direction. We went to see a wonderful eccentric person. His name is Bob. He has built his hut in a deserted place. His is a real hut. It has neither electricity nor running water. He cooks his food on a charcoal stove. It is a hut like many others in South India. He has been living in it for more than a year. He too is doing research in construction with local materials, such as bamboo, palm-leaves, etc. We saw his temple where he meditates. It is full of windows and the roof is hexagonal. Palm leaves don't take common paints easily due to their surface texture, but Bob is confident he will one day paint them in any colour. Before trying his colours he treats the leaves with an insecticide. He had the most unconventional garden. It was not in front of the hut but on the road leading to his hut. Its hedge was part stones and part shrubs. The stone-wall was interesting because Bob had used different pebbles and stones found about Auroville. Not content with that, he had made some coloured tiles and fixed them too. It gives the impression of modern painting from a distance. When we reached his garden he came running from a nearby field. He had only a loin cloth on his body and a piece of cloth around his head. His feet were covered with sticky wet clay. It was one-thirty in the afternoon. The Indian tropical sun had turned his face crimson. He was perspiring but he looked happy. He had been planting seeds in the age-old Indian fashion. We said good-bye to him. Navajata told us that when somebody asked Bob whether he was working in Auroville for the good of the country or for humanity, he said, "No." His answer was quite different. He said, "Auroville will be the fulfilment of man's age-old aspirations."

We reached 'Auro-model'. One section of this place is called 'Aspiration'. We saw many huts. They had cement flooring and the roof was made of palm-leaves. They had interesting three-cornered windows. To open them one has to swing them up and bolt them to the ceiling. These huts had nothing but windows on three sides and only one side had a solid wall. Following the modern trend of architecture they are built on uneven ground. No effort has been made to level the land. So we saw huts sitting on mini-hillocks and in mini-valleys. Navajata told us that these huts were made for students from France. They had read about Auroville in French newspapers and inspired by its ideals they had asked for the Mother's permission to come and work for it. The Mother gave them permission. They travelled in cars and caravans from France to India and since then they have been working here. Many more have come after them. We saw Australians, Spaniards, and students from Morocco also. One of them is planning landscape gardening for this section. We saw their

kitchen and dining hall which were still under construction. The kitchen had a square chimney not over the ovens but in the centre. The reason was that it was not made as an outlet for smoke but for removing all kitchen odours. We were told that other young men had gone out to construct a motorable road in some other part of Auroville. Seeing this hard-working lot I wished my educated countrymen could see them and learn the dignity of labour.

We visited the 'Mother-Child Care Centre'. This Centre is situated near a village. It had a large cottage. The walls were full of colourful posters in English and Tamil. Each poster depicted either fruits, vegetables or grains and gave the list of vitamins and nutritious elements they contain. They also explained which part of the body profited by these vitamins. There was a small room with a wooden bed and a wash-basin. Navajata said that Dr. Satyabrata Sen and his doctor friends who worked in JIPMER hospital came here after their hospital duty to treat the villagers. They are engaged in a research work in the rural health of India. They hope to discover deficiencies common to villagers and find out cheap and easily available food to remove them. The Centre gives free milk to children and expectant mothers every evening. There is a Tamil gentleman who lives here to look after and organise the place. It seems some time back the water-scarcity was so bad that the village decided to move out. When Auroville workers came to know about it they drilled a well and put two pipes in the village. We bade good-bye to the people here and moved on.

Before starting serious agriculture, Auroville had sent samples of different soils found in it to the soil chemist. He was surprised to see all sorts of soils found on earth concentrated in this place.

There is a plan to start an Ayurvedic section in Auroville. A herbarium is a 'must' for Ayurvedic treatment because it depends so much on herbs, fruits and trees. A piece of land is already allotted to it. This side of the land is rich in medicinal plants and herbs.

At last we reached the Auroville beach. You wouldn't believe that it is the same beach that we see in Pondy. This place is called 'Repos', meaning a place to relax. Truly, it has so much to offer for relaxation! The beach has tall coconut trees at regular distances and the wind creates music with their leaves. It is Nature's lullaby to her children. The sky is a soothing blue with lazy puffs of white clouds wandering aimlessly. The sea below is just a deeper blue and very quiet. White birds fly over it. I thought it was an ideal place for relaxation. Navajata told us that a French lady had built a cottage here. I admired her good taste.

We saw the light-house and tennis-ground pillar in Pondy looking like children's toys from that distance, and home gave us a call. We left the wonderful dream-world of Auroville for our Ashram.

I hope this long letter will make Auroville more tangible to you.

Yours affectionately,
ANUBEN

MONEY IN DIVINE SERVICE

THE question that agitates the minds of several people is: "If you believe the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram to be divine, how is it that she needs money from us for her work instead of getting it by her divine power?"

There are many answers possible to this question—answers from various standpoints. One that is directly relevant to the standpoint of relation between the Mother and her followers is: "Her acceptance of our offerings is a privilege for us, an opportunity given us to serve the Divine's cause.

The ordinary man's consciousness does not easily open to the Divine. It is surrender that brings the opening. Those who can surrender themselves do not need to make an effort to surrender anything else. Everything follows from this, because they belong to the Divine.

Those who cannot give themselves must make a practice of outward surrender if they cherish a desire to lead a higher life. And what can one surrender except what belongs to one?

The first offering of X was Rs 10 and parting with even this petty sum appeared painful. But despite inner turmoil each time he doubled the amount of his offering.

Once a suggestion was made to him by one of his friends to buy a house, to which he agreed provided payment was made by instalments. And this house proved a blessing to the Ashram children.

And it was for this person that for the first time the Ashram built a new house at its own expense when he came to settle here with his children.

Again, this was the person whom the Mother herself asked to close his business and live in the Ashram, though it meant a loss of thousands to the Ashram for whatever he earned he had given to the Mother since the time he surrendered himself. The story needs a bit of elaboration.

Once an idea occurred to him to raise a fund for the Ashram but soon he found that he could not collect even a trifling sum of Rs 200 though breaking his head for months.

This made him ponder: why should he not give what the Divine had given him instead of running about to others?

When he approached the Mother through someone, saying that he intended to offer his all and join the Ashram, the Mother sent him word:

"Tell him he is my child. I want him to work there."

Feeling greatly blessed he said:

"Henceforth what is mine is thine. Even the whole of my business concern I place at thy disposal."

So long as he remained in business he tried to serve the Mother as best he could. He was very prompt in the execution of the work assigned to him. Because it was war-

time, many things were considered impossible and others had failed in them; but he invoked the Grace and got them done.

Since the time he surrendered himself he had never prayed to stay in the Ashram. Whenever he came for Darshan and expressed his desire to go, the Mother would say, "Yes."

In August 1947 when he was about to go, the Mother inquired, "Do you want to go?"

This came to him as a pleasant surprise and he could not make out what the Mother wanted him to do.

It was a red-letter day in his life when the Mother sent word to him, "Close the business and come here"

He came in February 1948 and hired a flat which consisted of only two small rooms. At that time the Mother used to make our birthdays memorable by her Presence. As the house where X lived was dirty and too small he hesitated to put forth his prayer but his joy knew no bounds when the Mother informed him that she was coming. She inquired, "How many rooms are there?"

"Two."

"How many persons are there?"

"Seven."

"Two impossible rooms and seven persons?"

A few days after, he was told that the Mother would build a new house for him. And the building was erected according to his instructions.

Now for another aspect of the question "why money is needed by the Mother whom we regard as divine". One who has got all the powers at her feet, why should she not use them?

The answer is:

If she used superhuman power and wrought all in the twinkling of an eye, where was the need to take human birth? She could do so from her own domain. The whole world dances at the tip of her finger.

Let us hear what Sri Aurobindo says about the Avatar:

"The Avatar is not supposed to act in a non-human way—he takes up human action and uses human methods with the human consciousness in front and the Divine behind. If he did not, his taking a human body would have no meaning. ...He could just as well have stayed above and done things from there."

Whichever the aspect we consider of the money question, it is clear that, contrary to the traditional attitude towards money, the Mother does not attribute any wrong to it or to its earning. But she says:

"Money is a force and a means, but it must never be allowed to become a ruler, a tyrant.

"Money is not meant to make money. Money is meant to make the earth ready for the advent of the New Creation.

"In this material world, for men, money is more sacred than the Divine's will."

That's why instead of mastering it we become slaves of it. Money becomes a curse, instead of being a boon. The Mother continues:

"When you are rich, when you have a lot of money to spend, you spend generally for things that you find pleasant and you get the habit of such things, you become attached to them, and if one day the money leaves you, you miss it, you are unhappy, you are miserable and you feel all is lost because you no longer have what you were in the habit of having.

"It is a bondage, an attachment of weakness. For one who is wholly detached, when he lives in the midst of such things, it is all right, when these things go away from him, it is all right; it leaves him totally indifferent. For his inner consciousness it makes no difference. That is the true attitude."

Because men of spiritual powers have discarded money, it has gone into the sole possession of the Asuric forces. To wrest it from their grip is almost an impossible task.

That's why perhaps those who are open to the Mother's force and have the guts to give a fight can count on her in time of need. The more one is able to open oneself to the influence of the higher sources, the more one would see miracles in one's life. Cases are not rare when one finds things done for him by some unknown power giving unexpected results or feels instinctively guided at the crucial moment. These things can be best realised by experience, they cannot be conveyed by the art of the pen. An inner call brings a more immediate flow of Grace.

There was no end of troubles with N. He had nothing but defeat after defeat. Even then he never turned his back upon the battlefield of life. When the tide turned in his favour he rose to a new height. The more he earned the more he gave his life to the service of the Divine. Thus money is not a hindrance in building a new life.

Ours is not a life of renunciation or of penniless wanderers. There can be no development of life without money. The Mother has to meet a hundred and one demands to keep the Ashram going. To keep money for emergency or for the future is not in the nature of the Mother nor is it the way of her work. Money coming into her hands will pass out tomorrow for an urgent scheme awaiting execution. Clinging to money is alien to her nature.

Some project or other is always under way; things finished are not finished for good, for everything here is open to indefinite progress. The number of houses is always on the increase. Old ones are kept in good repair, those taken on a long lease are remodelled and renovated and they put on the Ashram colour (blue-grey) and breathe its spirit and atmosphere.

There is an Upkeep Service for the proper maintenance of the houses. A separate department functions to regulate paid workers, employed for the routine domestic work. It is a way of giving the local people the benefits of the Ashram. That the local people, especially of the "lower status", may feel the blessings of the existence of the Ashram is perhaps the reason why so many hands are allowed to take part in the working of the Ashram.

There is a directive of the Mother: "No workman must be given any work exceeding his strength; it is unfair and inhuman to do so."

Since the time the bonus was introduced, not even once has it been denied to the workers. There are also hundreds who receive pension for their past services.

Bearing such heavy burdens on her lone shoulders, with no fixed resources, the Mother keeps care-free and lets not a shadow of worry fall on her children. No storm or thunder can play on her nerves. She is a fountain of bliss in a world of pain. Blessed are all who are touched by her hands.

NARAYAN PRASAD

TO A "MODERN" POET

CONSIDER, friend, your strange new art:
 The giddy babel, the words' dark pall;
 Consider the towering tragic wall
 You build between a heart and heart.

Clever, cunning, you close the doors,
 And shut a mad beast in the den;
 The tongues of flame, sun-speech of men,
 You change to grovelling moans and roars.

Uncogent babbling, whim absurd,
 With mockery your pages fill;
 The watching soul has but one will,
 To hear the one Eternal Word:

When through each image, symbol, sound,
 Silence and speech weave endlessly
 A faultless work of filigree,
 The patterns of a Truth profound.

PENSEROSA

THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

THE VISION AND REALISATION IN SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

(Continued from the issue of May)

XIV. THE PHYSICAL CONQUEST OF DEATH (Contd)

THE "yet unaccomplished journey" leading to the attainment of earthly immortality has already been undertaken and is being gradually worked out by the Divine Supermind, here in the very conditions of Matter itself. For in order to hasten the day of this glorious consummation of the destiny of embodied life, he about whom the Mother declared in far-off 1914 after her very first meeting with him—

"It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth : his presence is enough to prove that *a day will come* when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be established upon earth"¹—

he of whom, when in 1950 he accepted the process of death and left his material envelope in a gesture of supreme self-sacrifice for the fulfilment of the collective destiny of the race, the Mother announced :|

"Sri Aurobindo incarnated in a human body the supramental consciousness and has not only revealed to us the nature of the path to follow and the method of following it so as to arrive at the goal, but has also by his own personal realisation given us the example; he has provided us with the proof that *the thing can be done* and the time is now to do it";²—

he who, in the pregnant words of the Mother, has always presided, since the beginning of earth history, over the great earthly transformations, under one form or another, one name or another,³ has plunged in the depths of the Night of Death in order to score a radical victory over this formidable Adversary of life; for, has it not been pointed out that one has to seek and master the root and cause of Death in Death itself?

In his own inimitable prophetic notes we listen to his mission and self-ordained task as a world-redeemer:

"He too must grapple with the riddling Sphinx
And plunge into her long obscurity....

¹ The Mother, *Prayers and Meditations* (Pondicherry, 1954), p 91. (Italics ours)

² *The Mother on Sri Aurobindo*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7

He must call light into its dark abysms,
 Else never can Truth Conquer Matter's sleep
 And all earth look into the eyes of God....
 He must pass to the other shore of falsehood's sea,
 He must enter the world's dark to bring there light.
 The heart of evil must be bared to his eyes,
 He must learn its cosmic dark Necessity,
 Its right and its dire roots in Nature's soil....
 He must enter the eternity of Night
 And know God's darkness as he knows his Sun.
 For this he must go down into the pit,
 For this he must invade the dolorous Vasts.
 Imperishable and wise and infinite,
 He still must travel Hell the world to save."¹

But this descent into the realm of Death does not represent the final act of the drama. It is but the prelude to his conquest of Death—not, indeed, as a personal achievement, but as a realised possibility for the earth-consciousness. Thus a day shall surely come when

"Into the eternal Light he shall emerge
 On borders of the meeting of all worlds"²

and as a sequel to that golden Emergence

"This mortal life shall house Eternity's bliss,
 The body's self taste immortality.
 Then shall the world-redeemer's task be done."³

Now the advent of this golden Dawn bringing into reality a divinely transfigured physical existence transcending the law of Ignorance and Death, is being earnestly prepared here in our midst by one about whom Sri Aurobindo said as far back as 1933:

"Her embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible".⁴

And about the nature of her divine mission upon earth, Sri Aurobindo announced in absolutely the last piece of poetry he dictated in 1950 before leaving his earthly frame:

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book VI, Canto II.

² *Ibid*

³ Sri Aurobindo *on Himself and on the Mother*, p. 434.

"A day may come when she must stand unhelped
 On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers.
 Carrying the world's future on her lonely breast,
 Carrying the human hope in a heart left sole
 To conquer or fall on a last desperate verge;
 Alone with death and close to extinction's edge,
 Her single greatness in that last dire scene,
 She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time
 And reach an apex of world-destiny
 Where all is won or all is lost for man.
 In that tremendous silence lone and lost
 Of a deciding hour in the world's fate,
 In her soul's climbing beyond mortal time
 When she stands sole with Death or sole with God
 Apart upon a silent desperate brink
 Alone with her self and death and destiny
 As on some verge between Time and Timelessness
 When being must end or life rebuild its base,
 Alone she must conquer or alone must fall."¹

At the moment, as M.P. Pandit of Sri Aurobindo Ashram has so well pointed out, "the Mother is pre-occupied with the organisation of the New Consciousness-Force, the Dynamis of Knowledge-Will, the Supramental Shakti that has been brought down on earth by the concentrated tapasya of Herself and Sri Aurobindo. She is ceaselessly engaged in extending its roots, furthering its blossoming in the earth consciousness. She has exposed Her own physical body representing the Earth-principle in evolution to the workings of this transforming Force . She examines the reactions of the very cells in Her body to the influx of the Supramental Power and describes the manner in which the fusion is steadily taking place."²

In the words of the Mother herself: "By slow degrees the Supramental is exerting its influence, now one part of the being and now another feels the embrace or the touch of its divinity; but when it comes in all its self-existent power, a supreme radical change will seize the whole nature. We are *moving nearer and nearer the hour of its complete triumph* "³

Be it noted that this supramental change will involve not only human nature but the body-structure and its organ-systems as well. For, as the Mother has very recently pointed out, the state of *spontaneous immortality* for the body cannot come unless

¹ *Savitri* Book VI, Canto II.

² Readers wishing to know more about the results of the supramental transformation, as they are being progressively worked out, are invited to follow the latest writings of the Mother, that are being serialized in the issues of *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*.

³ *Towards February* 29, 1960, p. 2.

and until its structure changes into something other than what it is now (*Vide: Bulletin*, February 1967, p. 75). Sri Aurobindo is very much explicit on this when he speaks of the emergence of the New Body, the Divine Body, as a fit vehicle for the untrammelled manifestation of Sachchidananda upon earth itself. *Inter alia* he says:

"The evolutionary urge would proceed to change the organs themselves in their material working and use and diminish greatly the need of their instrumentation and even of their existence.... This might go so far that these organs might cease to be indispensable and even be felt as too obstructive: the central force might use them less and less and finally throw aside their use altogether: If that happened they might waste by atrophy, be reduced to an insignificant minimum or even disappear. The central force might substitute for them subtle organs of a very different character or, if anything material was needed, instruments that would be forms of dynamism or plastic transmitters rather than what we know as organs."¹

It is not that the body-structure and the organ-systems alone will undergo the necessary supramental transfiguration: the very substantial stuff of the body, although still remaining material, will be of an altogether different sort. For corresponding to the supramental consciousness of the gnostic being there exists what Sri Aurobindo has called "supramental substance". This supramental substance alone can confer on the body the status of a worthy mansion of the self-manifesting Spirit, "in the sense not of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body,—*the conquest of death, an earthly immortality*".² (*Italics ours*)

Now, what are the attributes of this supramental substance that will render it immune to the ravages of decay and death? In the prophetic words of the Mother:

"One of the greatest victories... will be the transformation of Matter which is apparently the most undivine. Supramental plasticity is an attribute of finally transformed Matter. The supramental body which has to be brought into being here has four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it were always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or tamas or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be equal to the demands made upon it because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually make Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequence and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly, it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, pp. 69-70

² *The Life Divine*.

permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even the most sceptical.”¹ (*Italics ours*).

Yes, a transformation that will be ultimately convincing even to “the most sceptical”. For, even now, before the very presence of all those who are awake, before the very eyes of all those who can see, the superman, the divine Child, is growing up on earth, and will surely annihilate in the Hour of God the twin demons of Ignorance and Death. For,

“...in the march of all-fulfilling Time
The hour must come of the Transcendent’s will...
All turns and winds towards his predestined ends
In Nature’s fixed inevitable course,
Decreed since the beginning of the worlds
In the deep essence of created things:
Even there shall come as a high crown of all
The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.”²

(*Concluded*)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *Towards February* 29, 1960, p. 2; also *Words of the Mother* (Third Series), Pp. 84-85.

² *Sri Aurobindo*, Savitri, Book XI, Canto I.

A LETTER OF CORRECTION

Sri Aurobindo International Center,
875 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10021, U.S.A.

To the Editor of *Mother India*:

On page 163 of the April 24, 1970 issue of *Mother India*, there is the statement that the Sri Aurobindo Center in Sedona, Arizona is the first Sri Aurobindo Center in the United States. This is an error, a mis-statement of fact.

The facts are that the above Center was founded by the Mother in 1953, the Arizona Center was founded only after the visit of Mr. Purani there in 1964.

The above Center was the first Sri Aurobindo Center to be founded in this country.

I would appreciate it if you would publish a correction in your earliest possible issue.

We thank you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. A. Moore Montgomery

(President of the Sri Aurobindo International Center Foundation, Inc.)

THE SECRET SELF AND THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of June)

PART II

THE SECOND LIBERATION¹

THE SIX Principles of the Second Liberation are those given by the Mother as the principles of psychological perfection. The Mother has given the Champak flower the significant name, Psychological Perfection. The Champak tree itself, a living symbol of timelessness, seems to have lived through great ages of tapasya, embodying in its gnarled trunk and striving branches the wisdom of the world aspiring to heaven with the manifestation of beauty and perfection in its blossoms and perfume. The Mother has seen the flower from different viewpoints according to different situations and needs. For our purposes we may take the vision in which the flower as a whole signifies Perseverance, and the five petals represent Faith, Aspiration, Devotion, Sincerity, Surrender.

We have said in the Introduction that this Second Liberation establishes one of the inner Roads to the Truth-Consciousness—one of the Four Great Paths of Yoga-Sadhana which in this Purna or Integral Yoga are traversed simultaneously. It should be clearly stated, however, that the individual cannot *do* this Yoga, for it is the Yoga of the Divine

Though one individual may have different tendencies than another individual, and thereby follow one particular Path of discipline especially in the initial stages of the sadhana, he will have to recognise such discipline in relation to his whole nature. He will have to become conscious of the totality of self in relation to the greater Self of the universal.

This integral self-awareness or synthesis of consciousness is not possible without the inner guidance of the Guru and the blessings of the Divine Grace he may bring to bear upon the individual effort.

Sri Aurobindo gives us the Four Aids to Yoga: *Śastra*, The Word; *Utsāha*, Zeal; *Guru*, The Teacher, and *Kāla*, Time. These Four Aids are indispensable to the practice of Yoga. The last, Time, demands the first of our next six principles for the second liberation: Perseverance.

¹ It should be clearly understood that we do not use the word "liberation" in the sense of the terms of reference of the old yogic practices—that of liberation out of this world—but in the sense of a liberation from old habits and set formations, likes and dislikes, preferences, desires and the forces that make for death.

PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance is implicit in the very conditions of the Synthesis of Yoga—Life and Yoga: objective and subjective—the manifestation of God in Life. All Life is Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo says, “It is no integral Yoga that kills the nervous energies .their purification—transformation, control and utilization is our aim—not destruction.”

The pure intellect has to liberate itself from the illusions of the body and the senses. Then becomes possible the true human existence—when the intellect emerges out of the material. “A free not a compulsory acceptance is the high human ideal.”

Perseverance is more than the dictionary meaning, “to continue striving” or to go on steadfastly, it is to look ever towards New Horizons of consciousness, New Dawns of becoming because we are transitional beings evolving from animal to divine, from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness into light. This is the Goal which makes perseverance always possible: the belief that man is upon earth for a purpose greater than he apprehends with the senses, greater than mere mind can comprehend, greater than the religions have understood and taught—that he is upon earth to manifest, through his evolving consciousness, the ever-expanding Play of the Divine—that God may be manifest in Life and life become divinized through the self-perfecting consciousness of man.

Perhaps behind the seriousness of the perseverance experienced by the sadhak is the subliminal awareness that those who choose the Divine are chosen by the Divine, something of the nature of the Calvinistic doctrine—“the perseverance of saints”—that those who are effectually called by God cannot fall away so as to be finally lost.

Perseverance in Yoga naturally implies the experience of *utsāha*: the zeal to overcome preference, transcend sorrow, sublimate desire, conquer death, to liberate oneself from the maya of appearances, to fulfil the law of our being in a world made ready for the Delight of an expanding Perfection of the manifesting Divine.

Perseverance has also inherent within its meaning the divine oestrus goading man on to heights as yet undreamed of.

Unaware though he may be, man has within him the Seed of the Divine and it must manifest in the soil of earth. Or to use a classical metaphor from Francis Thompson: the Divine pursues us relentlessly to the end of our days and takes no consequence of time. It is no paradox to say we also have free choice. We have free choice up to the moment of acceptance. Before that we are always free to fall back into the amorphous mass from which we evolved. But once we have accepted the Divine, answered the Call of His Flute, we have entered the Play, however long it may last, and we are His for all eternity.

(To be continued)

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

EIGHTEENTH SEMINAR

23RD NOVEMBER 1969

(Continued from the issue of June, 1970)

THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD LIES IN UNION AND HARMONY.
HOW DO YOU CONCEIVE THIS UNION AND THIS HARMONY?

WILL Durant, the well-known philosopher and historian, has said about Civilization that it "begins where chaos and insecurity ends".¹ Civilization then has not yet begun or else it has ended with us. And yet if we cast a sweeping look across the corridor of history we inevitably perceive that chaos and insecurity are no new features of our century alone. On the other hand we observe that an age of anarchy has been more often than not an age of transition. The age of the French Revolution, for instance, was such a transitional period. It is not therefore an inane adage to say that night is darkest before dawn. But our night, even to a superficial watcher, is the darkest with a fatal possibility of mass annihilation. The air is reeking with gunpowder. A number of nations are still engaged in a ruthless "battle of destiny in a sea of blood under a blazing sky", to quote the rhetoric of Mr. Nasser.

In the past the evils of destruction were insular, threatening one or a few nations sporadically while humanity at large was left alone. The culture and ideas of one nation did not usually affect another in a distant part of the world. But today nations have come intimately close to one another, owing to the rapidity of technological progress. It is no more possible to remain isolated by shutting doors on all foreign currents of life. Even the impenetrable jungle life of savages has been explored and contacts established, although such contacts on both sides have not been always very happy. "The white man when roasted tastes like ripe banana," Pierre Loti was told by an old Polynesian chief of Tahiti.² I am afraid a white man will not find this quite toothsome.

As a result of this coming-together our problems have assumed universal dimensions such as have never been encountered in the past. Now by force of circumstances man has been led to conceive an ideal of unity and harmony. And, indeed, never

¹ *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 1.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

before was the ideal of world union so vocal as today. One main feature of the foreign policy of this age is peaceful co-existence. The much faltering League of Nations and then the United Nations Organisation have been conceived by the same urge towards peace and unity.

Dissatisfied with this life of chaos and disharmony a number of modern thinkers have conjured up several images of an ideal life. These efforts, however faltering they may be, at least hint at a recognition of existing problems and an attempt to resolve them. By scrutinising these fumbling efforts we may grasp their *lacunae* and caution ourselves against further repetitions of similar slips.

In 1883 Kay Robinson offered us a somewhat difficult-to-stomach glimpse of future man. "The human being of the future," he would have us believe, "will be a toothless, bald, toeless creature with flaccid muscles and limbs almost incapable of locomotion."¹ It is true that such a toothless creature "incapable of locomotion", even if gruesome to look at, would certainly be less garrulous and no jingoist. Peace and harmony will reign on earth!

In more recent times thinkers like Aldous Huxley and others have given us a science-oriented image of the future. Albert Rosenfeld, for instance, says, "We are now entering an era when, as a result of new scientific discoveries, some mind-boggling things are likely to happen..." . He then adds, "man's power will have become truly godlike. Just as he has been able, through chemistry, to create a variety of synthetic materials that never existed in nature, so may he, through genetic surgery, bring into being new species of creatures never before seen or imagined in the universe—beings better adapted, if he wishes to survive on the surface of Jupiter, or on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean."² All these will be the results of offspring "*in vitro* i.e. laboratory glass-ware." The writer observes that such *in vitro* offspring will raise great many social problems. Necessarily in a relationless and loveless world, each man is likely to feel a lonely entity—a windowless monad! —having no common bond to establish unity. This will rather increase than solve the problem of harmony.

Next, an intimate knowledge of savages has led great many thinkers to extol jungle life: "nature must once more become his home," advocated Edward Carpenter.³ According to him our civilization has become diseased. "Whatever we have—to get more; wherever we are—to go somewhere else": this attitude is the very symptom of ill-health. If we want to establish harmony and entirety we must recuperate from this ill-health. Primitive peoples, it has been seen, are almost immune from physical diseases. It is only when our sophisticated "Civilization touches them, they die like flies from the small-pox, drink, and worse evils it brings along with it, and often its mere contact is sufficient to destroy whole races".⁴ Also in the moral sphere they are equally sound. Among most of the primitive peoples land and food are shared by all.

¹ Quoted by E. Carpenter in *Civilization Its Cause and Cure*, p. 19

² *Life*, July 7, 1969, p. 40.

³ *Op cit*, p. 59

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 17

The words "mine" and "thine" are unknown among some savages. Once when a bushman was told about a poor man in London, the savage exclaimed, "How is it? No food? No friend? No house to live in? Where did he grow? Are there no houses belonging to his friend?"¹ Clive Bell informs us, "Theft would seem to have been unknown among North American Indians till the coming of the whites."² To an Andaman Islander lying is "a great sin".³

There then we seem to have an ideal society of harmony and brotherhood which our civilization will do well to emulate. But let us pause and deliberate a while before such a picture of primitive life gets the better of us. When we give it a closer look we unmistakably perceive that it is a life preoccupied with physical needs. The chief characteristics of primitive barbarians are, to quote Sri Aurobindo, "To take the body and the physical life as the one thing important, to judge manhood by the physical strength, development and prowess, to be at the mercy of the instincts which rise out of the physical inconscient, to despise knowledge as weakness and inferiority or look on it as a peculiarity and no necessary part of the conception of manhood, this is the mentality of the barbarian".⁴ Besides, reverting humanity to a life in nature is no more possible. According to Sri Aurobindo, that cycle of evolution has permanently passed away.⁵

Then there are utopian thinkers who have dreamt of a consummate society, right from the time of Plato and culminating in H.G. Wells. Utopia has always been conceived in terms of a city. The Greeks, particularly, knew that what Aristotle called "a common life for a better end" could be lived better in "the city" than anywhere else. "The men who dwell in the city are my teachers," said Socrates. Cities are burgeoning like mushrooms in our time and even Hitler desired to make a colossus of Berlin and christen it Germania. But in spite of Socrates and Plato and Aristotle life in a modern city is a nerve-jangling experience. "It is a mismanaged ant-heap, rather than a community fit for human habitation."⁶ Thus ideas of Utopia always floated as charming bubbles in the air while life ran its normal course.

What then should we conclude? Is man eternally chained to Ixion's wheel and is there no salvation? Or is it that we have missed the right key to unity and harmony?

Sri Aurobindo points out that the seed of life's redemption lies hidden in life itself. For when we face life with keen eyes to search for truth we perceive something higher and nobler secret within it and seeking to assert itself, tearing the covers of our dark crudities. To quote Sri Aurobindo, "...we are vaguely aware of something that is there in us or seeking to be, something other than what has been thus made, a spirit self-existent, self-determining, pushing the nature towards the creation of an

¹ *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 17.

² *Civilization*, p. 20

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22

⁴ *The Human Cycle*, p. 88

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

⁶ *Time*, "What Makes a City Great," Nov. 14, 1969

image of its own occult perfection or Idea of perfection. There is something that grows in us in answer to this demand, that strives to become the image of a divine Somewhat, and is impelled also to labour at the world outside that has been given to it and to remake that too in a greater image, in the image of its own spiritual and mental and vital growth, to make our world too something created according to our own mind and self-perceiving spirit, something new, harmonious, perfect.”¹

If then we wish to achieve true unity we must seek it within our consciousness. Religion, which deals with our inner life, would seem to be the right instrument for its realisation. But here too we observe that all “orthodox religions” tend to end up in rigid and exclusive formulae and get fossilised while the spirit departs. For, religion instead of recognising the all-inclusiveness of the supreme truth dwells in partial truth which leaves an inconclusive dichotomy between the spirit and this material life. No past religions could therefore address themselves to transform this life of division and strife. On the contrary they sought to escape from life or “looked with eyes of pious sorrow and gloom on the earthly life of man and were very ready to bid him bear peacefully and contentedly, even to welcome its crudities, cruelties, oppressions, tribulations as a means for learning to appreciate and for earning the better life which will be given us hereafter.”²

It is to solve this ancient quarrel between life and spirit that Sri Aurobindo has blazed a new path—the path of integral yoga—leading to the transfiguration of life into the formula of divine existence. In the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo we endeavour to live an integrated life: a spiritual life within and a physical life without, supported by the living inner spirit. It becomes an integral life because we seek to integrate physical existence and spiritual inwardness. But here again Sri Aurobindo warns us that, to find a spiritual life on earth, it can never be enough that “only a few climb into the free air and light” while many remain doomed to the lower existence.³ The mass consciousness is still preoccupied with physical and vital cravings and if a spiritual community is our goal we can ill afford to abandon the mass. The latter has to be taught to live by the true mind and the psychic being.⁴ Here again as elsewhere, Sri Aurobindo cautions us against a possible danger. Mind while receiving the higher truth always distorts it into so many irreconcilably opposite formulas. Thus the ideal of liberty remains ever incompatible with the ideal of oneness and brotherhood. Mind must recognise its limitation and realise that the true knower is not mind but the Spirit. “Then only,” says Sri Aurobindo, “will the real, the decisive endeavour begin and life and the world be studied, known, dealt with in all directions as the self-finding and self-expression of the Spirit. Then only will a spiritual age of mankind be possible.”⁵

¹ *The Life Divine*, American Edition, p. 905.

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, p. 364.

³ *The Human Cycle*, Chapter XXIII.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

And yet Sri Aurobindo recognises the great and noble achievements of the mind. Mind's "faith in humanity and its earthly future" has been a great redeeming feature of human progress. The result was a great deal of social well-being. It raised the condition of the "depressed and fallen, gave large hopes to humanity, stimulated philanthropy and charity and the service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom, put a curb on oppression and greatly minimised its more brutal expressions."¹ But mind in spirit of its lofty achievements could not cure life of its evils. Peace still remains an uneasy "interlude" before a potential war. It is so because mind fails to overcome human egoism. It is only when ego will submit itself to the dictates of the Spirit that real freedom and perfection will become possible. But here we meet a possibility of liquidating one's individuality into a transcendental consciousness in the process of overcoming one's individual ego. Although such a possibility does exist, it cannot be the ultimate goal of the integral yoga. Nirvana is not our end. Liberated from the ego the seeker of the integral truth lives by the law of his own divine nature and at the same time partakes of the plurality of the divine existence. We have then a spiritual society where each individual liberated from ego recognises a human brotherhood existing "in the soul and by the soul".²

It is to make such a spiritual life of harmony and unity possible that the city of Auroville has been founded. In August 1954, in a short writing entitled "A Dream", the Mother said, "There should be somewhere upon earth a place that no nation can claim as its sole property, a place where all human beings of good will, sincere in their aspiration, could live freely as citizens of the world, obeying one single authority, that of the supreme Truth, a place of peace, concord, harmony..." And then towards the end she adds, "Yet, this dream is on the way of becoming a reality. That is exactly what we are seeking to do at the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo on a small scale, in proportion to our modest means."³ This dream is being¹ given a concrete shape in Auroville. "Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity," says the Mother in the Auroville Charter.

DEBRANJAN

¹ *The Ideal of Human Unity*, p. 364.

² *Ibid.*, p. 368.

³ *Bulletin of Physical Education*, August 1954.

EYE EDUCATION

RELIEF OF PAIN

WHEN black is remembered perfectly, relief of pain results in many cases.

A student was suffering from severe pain in the head and the eyes for many days. When he could palm and remember black, he was completely relieved.

In many cases of glaucoma not only the pain, but the tension which is often associated with the pain, has been completely relieved by palming and remembering black.

Why the memory of black should have this effect cannot be fully explained, but it is evident that the body must be less susceptible to disturbances of any kind when the mind is under control, and only when the mind is under control can black be remembered perfectly. That pain can be produced in any part of the body by the action of the mind is not a new observation; and if the mind can produce pain, it is not surprising that it should also be able to relieve pain and the conditions which produce it.

With a little training, anyone with good eyesight can be taught to remember black properly with the eyes closed and covered, and with a little more training anyone can learn to do it with the eyes open. When one is suffering extreme pain, however, the control of the memory may be difficult, and the assistance of someone who understands the method may be necessary.

DR. R.S. AGARWAL
THE SCHOOL FOR PERFECT EYESIGHT

ERRATA

In *E. M. Forster : A Personal Tribute (Mother India*, July 1970), please read :

P. 340, line 3 from below, closing quotation marks after "questions" and none after "Indian" in the last line.

P. 342, line 5 from below, "as" instead of "is" and a comma after "person", followed up by "do..."