

MOTHER INDIA

21st FEBRUARY 1971 : THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

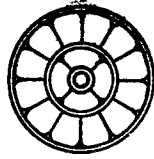
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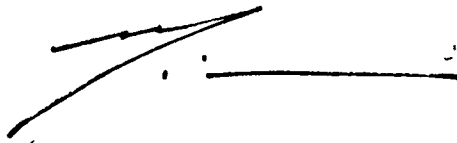
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 21, 1971

A life consecrated to union with the Divine
is the only life worth living.

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXIII

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

THE MOTHER'S BLESSING-PACKET

THERE are some petals, flower petals, inside, but they are charged with force, and if you keep then upon you, the contact with me is kept. So if you refer inside, you can establish the contact and have even an answer.

17.4.1970.

*

Q. To me any activity is more important than its cost to me, even if the cost is unreasonable. Money should never be the criterion for such decisions. If we say we can't have because of the cost, we limit our receptivity to the Grace and hamper its workings. Money is only a medium of exchange, it is all relative and the Divine resources are inexhaustible. Is this attitude a correct one?

You are quite right and I approve of your attitude.

*

The push towards the future is to be ready to give up all gains, moral and material, in order to acquire what the future can give us.

Very few are like that. There are many who would like to have what the future is bringing, but they are not ready to give up what they have in order to acquire the new wealth.

THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE

FOR THE INAUGURATION OF THE SCHOOL AT AUROVILLE ON DECEMBER 15, 1970

A SINCERE will to know and to progress.

In addition to the Message the Mother specified in her own hand the languages to be studied at Auroville in the following order:

- (1) Tamil
- (2) French
- (3) Simplified Sanskrit to replace Hindi as the language of India.
- (4) English as the international language.

A NEW POWER AND PERSONALITY OF THE MOTHER

A TALK BY THE MOTHER IN 1955

(The Mother's Message on 2nd January this year to the Auroville office—"1971: A Sweet Year"—sends us back by its implication of a divine Joy at work to the talk the Mother gave sometime in the January of 1955 at the Playground to the inmates of the Ashram in answer to questions, mostly by children. This talk was first published in the Mother India of February 21 that very year in a translation made by the Editor and approved by the Mother.)

Q: Sri Aurobindo, in his book *The Mother*, after describing the four leading Powers and Personalities of the Divine Mother—Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati—writes that she has other great Personalities but that they were difficult to bring down and put in front in the evolution of the earth-spirit. Among these Presences whom he considers indispensable for the supramental realisation, he mentions in particular one who is her Personality of the supreme Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter.

Will you tell us something about this wonderful unmanifest Personality and when she will manifest herself?

A: She has come, bringing with her a splendour of Power and of Love, an intensity of divine Joy that have been unknown to earth up to now. The physical atmosphere has completely changed with her advent and become impregnated with new and marvellous possibilities. But if she is to stay here and carry on her action, she must meet with a certain minimum of receptivity, she must find at least one human being who has the required qualities in the vital and the physical, a kind of super-Parsifal gifted with a spontaneous and integral purity but at the same time possessing a body solid and balanced enough to sustain unbendingly the intensity of the Ananda which she brings. Up to the present she has not obtained what was needed. Men have obstinately remained men. They neither want nor have the ability to become supermen. They can receive and express only a love cut to their own measure—a human love! And the wonderful joy of the divine Ananda escapes their perception. Then sometimes she thinks of withdrawing herself, finding the world unprepared to receive her, and that would be a cruel loss. It is true that at the moment her Presence is more nominal than active since she has not the occasion to manifest herself. But even so she is a mighty help to the Work. For, of all the aspects of the Mother, it is she who has the most power of bodily transformation. Indeed the cells which can vibrate to the touch of the divine Joy and receive it and keep it are the regenerated cells on the way to becoming immortal. But the vibrations of the divine Joy and those of human

pleasure cannot live together in the same vital and physical system. One must wholly give up the pursuit of all pleasure if one would be in a condition to receive the Ananda. But how few are those who can renounce pleasure without ceasing also to take part in active life and without plunging into rigorous asceticism! And, among those who know that only in the midst of active life transformation must take place, some try to make out pleasure to be a form of Ananda more or less gone astray and thus legitimise the quest for personal satisfaction, thereby creating in themselves an almost insurmountable obstacle to their own transformation.

Q: Mother, if we have not succeeded before, we can still try, can't we? And then this great Personality will not leave us.

A: Oh yes, you can always try. The whole world is created anew each minute. You can re-create your own world in that same minute, if you know how to do it: that is to say, if you have the capacity to change your nature! I have not said that the Ananda-Personality has gone away. I only said that now and again she thinks of departing.

Q: But she must have descended because she saw some possibilities here.

A: She has descended because there was a possibility, because things had reached a certain point and the moment had come when she could descend. In fact she descended because I thought that the descent was possible and that she could succeed!... With her arrival, in two or three weeks the atmosphere not merely of the Ashram but of the entire earth was surcharged with such power—to be precise, with a divine Joy creating a power so marvellous—that all that had hitherto been difficult to accomplish could then be done almost in an instant!

There were repercussions of the event throughout the whole world. I don't believe there was even one amongst you who had the slightest glimmering of her. You will perhaps not be able even to tell me when she came. But I can tell you that she came before Sri Aurobindo left his body and that he foresaw her coming and recognised the actual arrival. It was in the midst of a formidable conflict with the Inconscient. The earth's receptivity was not what it should have been and I had put the responsibility for this lack upon the Inconscient; so it was there that I sought to give battle. I don't say that there has been no result. But, between the result obtained and the result hoped for, there is a lot of difference. You were all so close to the descent, you could bathe in its very atmosphere. And yet you have continued your petty living.

Q: Was it not in 1946 that the descent of this new Power and Personality took place—1946 about which you have often spoken a great deal?

A: Correct.

Q: And now that she is here what should we do?

A: Don't you know what you have to do? Endeavour to change your consciousness ...Are there many amongst you who feel an intense need to discover the soul within, to know what you truly are or what you have to do or why you are here? People go on living—they even start complaining when things are not too easy! And if sometimes an aspiration arises and they encounter a difficulty in themselves, they simply tell themselves: "Oh never mind, Mother is there after all, she will manage everything for me." Then they start thinking of something else....If I may speak about myself, I would like to repeat to you what I said just this morning to a young one who had reached her eighteenth year. I said: "Between my own eighteenth and twentieth years I achieved a conscious and constant union with the Divine Presence, and this I did all by myself, without knowing anybody who could help me, even without any books." When, a little later, I held in my hands Vivekananda's book on Raja Yoga, it appeared to me such a marvel that somebody could explain something to me. And I was enabled to gain in a few months what would otherwise have taken me years. I also met a man, an Indian, who spoke to me about the Gita. There was a translation of it in French, it was a pretty poor one, but those in English were equally bad: Sri Aurobindo had not made his rendering yet. The Indian advised me to read the Gita and gave me his own clue to that scripture: he said, "Read the Gita and take Krishna to be the symbol of the immanent Divine, the God within you." This is all he said. But in one month the whole work was finished. As for you who are here, some from your very childhood, so much has been explained to you, all the toughnesses have already been chewed for you, help has been given you not only with words but with direct psychic support in all kinds of ways possible, and you have been going on the path of inner discovery—yet you let yourselves live as you do. You just think—if even that much thought you really spare—"Whatever will happen will happen"....I am surprised that you do not feel on fire with the question: "How is one to get knowledge?" You are aware, you have often been told, that you have a divine consciousness hidden within you. Still you go on sleeping night after night and spending day after day without burning with enthusiasm and with acute longing to enter into contact with your own self, yes, your own self within you. Oh this passes my understanding!

The first time I knew—not by anybody telling me but by an experience — that there was a discovery to be made within my own depths, it was something of the utmost importance. And when, as I have said, I came across a book, a man, that could give me just a small hint and tell me, "There, you have to act thus and thus and the way will open up before you", I did nothing, short of hurling myself into the search—like a cyclone. Nothing could have stopped me.

But for how many years you have gone on and on in this place, half asleep! From time to time you begin thinking, especially when I talk to you or when you read Sri Aurobindo's books. But where is the ardour, the will that is victorious over all obstacles, the concentration that conquers everything?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Continued from the issue of January 1971

(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 29, 1956

THIS evening, during the meditation which followed this conversation, there took place what the Mother has called “the first Manifestation of the Supramental Light-Force in the earth-atmosphere.”

“The law of sacrifice is the common divine action that was thrown out into the world in its beginning as a symbol of the solidarity of the universe. It is by the attraction of this law that a divinising, a saving power descends to limit and correct and gradually to eliminate the errors of an egoistic and self-divided creation. This descent, this sacrifice of the Purusha, the Divine Soul submitting itself to Force and Matter so that it may inform and illuminate them, is the seed of redemption of this world of Inconscience and Ignorance. For ‘with sacrifice as their companion,’ says the Gita, ‘the All-Father created these people.’ The acceptance of the law of sacrifice is a practical recognition by the ego that it is neither alone in the world nor chief in the world. It is its admission that, even in this much fragmented existence, there is beyond itself and behind that which is not its own egoistic person, something greater and completer, a diviner All which demands from it subordination and service.”

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 120)

Sweet Mother, what does the “sacrifice of the Divine” mean?

It is self-giving. It is the word the Gita uses for self-giving.

Only, the sacrifice is mutual, this is what Sri Aurobindo says at the beginning: the Divine has sacrificed Himself in Matter to awaken consciousness in Matter,

which had become inconscient. And it is this sacrifice, this giving of the Divine in Matter, that is to say His dispersion in Matter, which justifies the sacrifice of Matter to the Divine and makes it obligatory; for it is one and the same movement of reciprocity. It is because the Divine has given Himself in Matter and scattered Himself everywhere in Matter to awaken it to the divine consciousness, that Matter is automatically under obligation to give itself to the Divine. It is a mutual and reciprocal sacrifice.

And it is this which is the great secret of the Gita: it is the affirmation of the divine Presence in the very heart of Matter. And, because of this, Matter must sacrifice itself to the Divine, automatically, even unconsciously—whether one wants it or not, this is what happens.

Only, when it is done unconsciously, one does not get the joy of sacrifice; whilst if it is done consciously, one has the joy of sacrifice which is the supreme joy.

The word “sacrifice” in French has a little too narrow a sense, which it doesn’t have in the original Sanskrit; for in French sacrifice implies a sort of suffering, almost a regret. Whilst in Sanskrit this is not there at all; it corresponds to “self-giving”.

*Sweet Mother, here it is written: “All are linked together by a secret Oneness.”
What is this secret Oneness?*

It is precisely the divine Presence.

Because the Divine is essentially one, and yet He divided Himself apparently in all beings, and recreated thus the primordial Oneness. And it is because of this divine Oneness (which, however, has a piecemeal appearance in all beings), that the Unity is re-established in its essence. And when one becomes conscious of that one has the joy of consciousness of this Oneness. But those who are not conscious, what they lack is the joy of Consciousness. But the thing is the same.

Sri Aurobindo says: The Oneness exists; whether you are aware of it or not, it exists, it makes no difference to the facts; but it makes a difference to you: if you are aware, you have the joy; if you are not aware, you miss this joy.

But how can a sacrifice be made when one is unconscious?

It is made automatically.

Whether you know it or not, whether you want it or not, you are all united by the divine Presence which, though seemingly cut up, is yet One. The Divine is One, He only appears to be cut up in things and beings. And because this Unity is a fact, whether you are aware of it or not changes nothing in the fact. And whether you want it or not, you are in spite of everything subjected to this Unity.

This is what I have explained to you I don’t know how many times: you think you are separate from one another, but it is the same single Substance which is in

you all, despite differences of appearance; and a vibration in one centre awakens automatically a vibration in another.

So, no effort is to be made to improve the sacrifice, there is no need to make an effort?

I don't understand the conclusion at all.

If you are happy to be unhappy, it is all right, it is your affair; if you are content to be unhappy and to suffer and remain in the ignorance and inconscience where you are, remain there. But if this does not satisfy you, if you want to be conscious and you want suffering to cease, then you must make constant efforts to become conscious of sacrifice and to make your sacrifice consciously instead of unconsciously.

Everything turns around the consciousness, the fact of being or not being conscious. And it is only in the supreme Consciousness that you can attain the perfect expression of yourself.

But that the Oneness exists, even if you feel just the opposite, is a fact about which you can do nothing, for it is a divine fact—it is a divine action and a divine fact. If you are conscious of the Divine, you become conscious of this fact. If you are not conscious of the Divine, the fact exists but you simply are not conscious of it—that's all.

So, everything turns around a phenomenon of consciousness. And the world is in a state of obscurity, suffering, misery,....everything, everything there is, simply because it is not conscious of the Divine; because it has cut off the connection in its consciousness, because its consciousness is separated from the Divine. That is to say, it has become unconscious.

For the true consciousness is the divine Consciousness. If you cut yourself off from the divine Consciousness, you become quite unconscious; that is exactly what has happened. And so, everything there is, the world as it is, your consciousness such as it is, things in the state they are in, are the result of this separation and this direct obscuration of consciousness.

The minute the individual consciousness is separated from the divine Consciousness, it enters what we call the inconscience, and it is this inconscience which is the cause of all its miseries.

But all that is, is essentially divine, and the divine Oneness is a fact, you cannot help it; all your inconscience and all your denials will change nothing there—it is a fact, it's like that.

And the conclusion is that the true transformation is the transformation of consciousness—all the rest will follow automatically.

There we are, that's all.

Sweet Mother, what part in us sets itself against a total renunciation?

It is as though you asked me: "What is unconscious in us?" But in fact, everything is unconscious, except the Divine. And it is only when one can unite with the Divine that one re-establishes the true consciousness in one's being. The rest is something like a mixture of semi-consciousness and semi-unconsciousness.

Anything else? No?

(Turning to a disciple) Oh! he is longing to speak!

Mother, there is a magnificent sentence!

Ah! only one?

"Each existence is continually giving out perforce from its stock..." and Sri Aurobindo adds: "And always again it receives something from its environment in return for its voluntary or involuntary tribute."

(Ibid., p. 121,

Yes, that is what I was just saying. And then?

Does one receive from one's environment or only from the Divine?

Oh! from both.

Because here it is written: "it receives from its environment."

Yes! Because Sri Aurobindo says there is a unity in Matter, a unity in the manifestation, a unity in the substance, and that there is necessarily an exchange.

In fact, this is what we have said more than fifty thousand times: that all is the Divine and that consequently all is One; that it is only your consciousness which is separate and in a state of inconscience because it is separate; but that if you remove this inconscience and this sense of separation, you become divine.

But in ordinary life, in one's environment, what one receives is not always what one gives.

Oh! but you must not understand things so superficially.

(Another disciple:) Does the inconscience aspire to become conscious?

No. It is the Divine in the inconscience who aspires to the Divine in the consciousness. That is to say, without the Divine there would be no aspiration; without the consciousness hidden in inconscience, there would be no possibility of changing the inconscience to consciousness. But it is because at the very heart of the inconscience there is the divine Consciousness, that you aspire and that necessarily—this is what he says—automatically, mechanically, the sacrifice is made. And this is why when one says, “It is not *you* who aspire, it is the Divine, it is not *you* who make progress, it is the Divine, it is not *you* who are conscious, it is the Divine”—these are not mere words, this is a fact. And it is simply your ignorance and your inconscience which prevent you from realising it.

(A meditation followed during which the first manifestation of the Supramental Light—Force took place.)

(To be continued)

THE MOTHER'S SMILE

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

I DO not know what you mean exactly by a dubious smile, whether it is a smile expressing doubt or causing doubts as to what it meant or of an uncertain or equivocal character, or what else. But what is certain and not dubious at all is that the dubiety was all in your own mind and not in the Mother or her smile. The outer mind on which you so much rely is always making inferences, conclusions, reactions based on impressions and stands by them firm as a rock refusing to admit that they are wrong or fallible; it has to do that, because in its ignorance it cannot guide itself otherwise; but more often than not its inferences and impressions are wrong or afflicted with error and misunderstanding. Many here seem to be under the impression that Mother spends her time at Pranam looking into people and expressing her approval or disapproval, pleasure or displeasure. That is all wrong; for she is not doing that, and for them to look for these things in her or infer or imagine them is to waste the moment of Pranam. One should make it a simple act of love or worship or adoration or communion or self-giving or, if one wishes to receive anything, then there should be a quiet and simple approach or self-opening which will fit one to receive. The Mother at the Pranam is not on a seat of judgment, she is standing there to bless, to accept and to give; her smile then is the same to all, the smile of grace of the Divine Mother and it is an error to seek there for or to find in them other and unpleasant things. If then this is the main reason for your wishing to cease coming to Pranam, that is obviously a suggestion from a wrong source.

(Incomplete)

TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

I

YOUR own difficulties and those of the sadhaks whom you mention are due to the same cause, the pushing back of the higher mind and the higher vital and the psychic and what they have gained either into the background or behind a curtain and a domination by the difficulties of the ignorant and obstructing physical consciousness with its obscure and mistaken ideas, habitual reactions, irresponsive obstructions, doubts and objections and the small lower vital nature with its ego-centric reactions and revolts and disturbances. This condition is not fundamental either in your case or that of the others and it is not a proof of radical unfitness for the Yoga, but a temporary, even if persistent, condition which would disappear with the removal of its cause.

I may point out that this condition which tries to justify itself by the facts it sees—for the physical mind is always strong on apparent facts and triumphantly appeals to them and its inferences from them as conclusive and irrefutable—almost always sees wrongly or imperfectly and even when the facts may be partially correct it misinterprets them, attributes the wrong causes and motives, draws the wrong inference and makes of them an unreal picture. The ego-centric's small lower vital makes use of that to justify its revolts or its despondences and despairs and its assertions of a failure final and irrevocable. It is not true, for instance, that I have become more and more aloof and indifferent or that I am too much preoccupied with the state of the world to care about the state of the sadhaks or that I am no longer giving any help to you or to others. My "aloofness" consists in two facts, one the very ancient fact of my physical withdrawal and the less ancient still long-standing fact of my having ceased to write letters. Neither of these facts constitute a withdrawal of help or a lofty self-preoccupied indifference.

2

I am not at all concerned about Nicodemus and what seems to me his stupid and ignorant question; he brings a fantastic physical notion across Christ's teaching¹

¹ "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

(*St. John*, 3. 3-4)

and I am afraid I must hold him partially responsible for Freud's sexual meanderings and his craze for going back into his mother's womb. I don't myself remember any blissful sojourn in that locality in my case and I don't believe in it and I am quite sure I never felt any passion for returning there. The great Sigismund must have had it, I suppose, and remembered that blissful period and felt a longing for beatific return and I suppose others must have had it unless its acceptance is only a result of a general acceptance of the papal infallibility of Sigismund in psycho-analytical matters, about which few people have any direct reliable knowledge or can form a truly independent conviction based on truly independent evidence. I believe the practical methods and evidences for the success of psycho-analysis are made up mostly of suggestion and auto-suggestion; for suggestion and auto-suggestion can do almost anything and can make you believe in anything and everything. Many of these suggestions seem to me quite artificial and their forced connection with sex to be quite groundless. For instance, there is the suggestion of the dream of being stabbed with a knife which they say is a rendering by the subliminal of an actual sex-probe and of that you can obviously persuade a patient who is under your influence. I myself had when a boy of eight or nine a vivid dream which I never forgot of myself alone in my bed—I used to be sent to bed much earlier than my brothers and lay there in a sort of constant terror of the darkness and phantoms and burglars till my brothers came up...

(Incomplete)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of January 1971)

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

MAY 26, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO: The British have made another strategic retreat. (*Laughter*)

P: Yes, they got safely away without losing a single man.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Germans allowed them to run away perhaps.

P: Fifteen generals have been relieved of their command in France.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is quite a big number.

P: They were said to be indifferent and negligent.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is why Rénaud said that if the French could stand for a month, there would be a better chance. They will have to look for new men to take the place of the old generals.

N: Was there sabotage in the army?

P: The generals were just indifferent.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not sabotage exactly. Some officer here said that along with the first French refugees some 2000 Germans came in and produced a demoralising effect. And yet the authorities took no action against them. Daladier exhibits himself as a strong man but he is really very weak.

P: A French counterpart of Chamberlain?

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so.

P: The Germans praise Lord Gort and General Ironside, saying they are quiet and don't show what they are going to do.

SRI AUROBINDO: But they haven't done anything so far, except making strategic retreats. They do what the Germans want them to and hence the praise. They haven't shown any very brilliant capacity till now.

N: The British rely much on Weygand.

SRI AUROBINDO: They know they have themselves no capable persons.

N: I wonder if there is any sabotage in the British Army. Or is it the inherent weakness of the army itself? But the situation seems to have improved a little.

SRI AUROBINDO: On the French side. The British are always retreating. If they go on in that way, the Germans will reach the ports and the British will have to retreat into their ships. That will be good in one way. The French will have a more easily defensible line—not too long. At present they have four lines along four rivers—the Somme, the Oise, the Meuse and the Scheldt. They can defend themselves without difficulty against mechanised units, but they haven't yet found anything for dive-bombers.

N: Dilip had a letter from Niren R. Chowdhury. It seems he sent Huxley's book to Charu Dutt and asked him to forward it to Niren. Niren, after reading it, says: "It is all right, but Marx's Dialectical Materialism is the last word."

P: Marx's own followers are now differing among themselves about his Dialectical Materialism. What exactly is it?

S: Huxley hasn't developed any philosophy in that book. He has only described his experience. It is *neti, neti* ("Not this, not this").

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it is not all *neti, neti*. So far as I have gathered from the extracts I have read, it is not that alone.

S: But he has not given any philosophy.

P: He is a moralist.

SRI AUROBINDO: He has said, as I have done, that there is no solution of the problem of the world except by spirituality and the Spiritual Way.

S: Can spiritual experience solve the problem?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the basis. What people try to make out of Huxley and Gerald Heard is that theirs is a confession of defeat and that they on their part want to escape from the world. It is not really this, as Isherwood has pointed out in the *New Statesman*. He says that what he understands from Huxley and Heard is that they want to discover a way for the change of the present human consciousness by which alone the social and political problem will be solved. Somebody also said that Heard stands for Buddhist fatalism. To which Heard replied that he didn't stand for fatalism at all. Nor is there any fatalism in Buddhism. All human history has been a question of change of consciousness, and Huxley says that the change can come only by spirituality. Hitherto people have worked on the principle of opposition and indifference. That can only make a patchwork solution. Behind the multiplicity and division one has to see the identity and oneness. Of course, if you say spirituality is not a solution, then you have to fall into Mayavada, World-Illusionism.

S (*after some time*): Do you envisage the Gnostic Being as living and acting in the world in a group formation?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. If the individual has to remain in society, the Gnostic Being has to do this: and the individual must merge in the group.

S: In place of individual isolation, it will then be group isolation?

SRI AUROBINDO: From the group the Gnostic Being will act on the world. Since the Supermind wants to change the world, the group will have to take up the outer life of the society and the individual has to throw himself into the outer life. I am not speaking of the inner life. Either the individual has to live secluded and isolated from the life of the society or take up its own outer life in order to change it. Without the group action the individual will have to give way to the life of the society and be like one of the group.

S: There has been plenty of spiritual life lived in the world.

SRI AUROBINDO: Is that why it had no effect on the world?

P (*after S's exit*): What I understand S to say is: Why should one be compelled to lead a group life?

N: There is no compulsion and, if at all, it is an inner one.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should there be any compulsion? One can go, if he likes, to the mountains and live there, but if one is impelled from within he can follow the impulsion. If the Supramental Truth commends itself to one, he can live according to it.

P: I told S that the very fact that he talks of compulsion and of keeping the individuality shows that he is talking from his mental imagination. For, if one attains to the Sachchidananda consciousness, one is no longer bound by such ideas, one is led to accord oneself to that higher consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: And if he wants to keep his individuality, for that he has to accept the Supramental Truth; for in the Supermind alone there is diversity and difference but without division — diversity there is based on unity and difference is a play of the One.

EVENING

P: That book of Astrology is hard on Sir Oswald Mosley, and what the writer has said has come true. Mosley has been imprisoned.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but Mosley may comfort himself by thinking that Hitler too was once imprisoned.

P: As regards particulars, the book is not correct at all.

SRI AUROBINDO: Only about general influences he makes some right guesses.

MAY 27, 1940

N: Nolini Sen writes that Meghnad Saha wants to come here.

SRI AUROBINDO: To embrace Anilbaran? (*Laughter*)

N: Sen has a deep respect for Saha. He says he is very sincere, honest, open-minded, generous.

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps not open-minded.

P (*giving a letter to Sri Aurobindo*): Sundaram has written to you, asking what his duty is in connection with the war. He is much puzzled.

SRI AUROBINDO: You may tell him that God's Front is the Spiritual front, which is still lagging much behind. Hitler's Germany is not God's Front. It is the Asuric Front, through which the Asura aims at world-domination. It is the descent of the Asuric world upon the human to establish its own power on the earth.

N: It seems Hitler says that by the end of June he will proclaim from a city in France a New Order.

SRI AUROBINDO: A New Order for what? And from which city? Vervains?

N: Or Amiens?

SRI AUROBINDO: Amiens will be made unsuitable for him by the R.A.F., if they know he is there.

N: He will dictate the terms of peace also.

SRI AUROBINDO: Dictate by the end of June?

N: Yes.

P: And everything will be over by August 15.

SRI AUROBINDO: He expects everything to go according to schedule.

EVENING

P: Ramakrishna's new temple at Belur is supposed to be the biggest on the eastern side.

SRI AUROBINDO: What does the eastern side mean?

P: On this side of the temple of Jagannath.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hindu temples are usually not big. Whom do they worship at Ramakrishna's temple?

P: I think there is a life-size photograph of Ramakrishna and the sign of OM somewhere.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is Vivekananda's creed.

P: Yes, but I am not sure of the details.

SRI AUROBINDO: In Ramakrishna's temple there ought to be at least an image of Kali.

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

(Continued from the issue of January 1971)

(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.)

WE are bound down to a form. But there may be a plane where there is no form—form as we know and understand it. In the mind, for instance, ideas have no form, the mental beings are not bound to form; the vital beings too change their forms easily.

There are many kinds of samadhi and the Supramental Yoga does not concern itself much with them but seeks to bring down the higher power. Ordinarily when the mind gets a glimpse of Brahman and has to deal with it, it goes into samadhi—or when it refers to its experience it takes images from space and time. When it gets a glimpse of Beauty beyond space and time, it similarly uses spatio-temporal images. Beauty like Brahman is ineffable.

European philosophy is a game of words. The Upanishads are not philosophy in that sense, though some people are now making a philosophy out of them. They are statements of experience, they state all sides of the Truth. Later, the commentators on them wrote what they thought about the experience. Sankara is like the European philosophers, but not as abstract. Socrates is not a philosopher in the same sense, he fought with the Sophists, he reasons about things which he sees inwardly. His experiences are not of the highest order, they are of the psychic region. Plato also is more than a philosopher.

The physical mind concerns itself with the physical universe. It sees physical objects as they appear, does not care for anything behind them and is concerned just with their uses. The vital mind of man is not much different from that of the animal. The vital mind is a lower part of the mind and is shot through with feelings and emo-

tions. In the animal, association and perception go with feelings, while in man thought follows them. Thought does not precede emotion but follows it. Only by habit thought calls up desire or emotion. It is a case of action and reaction and association. The association calls up the desire: thus, one can bring an illness into the body by means of thought and cast away an illness by the same means. This of course does not imply that natural illnesses are caused by thought.

Also, thought does not generally modify emotions, it simply weaves some ideas around them. Our emotions — love, the herd-instinct, patriotism — are of the same substance as in animals. Poets spin fictions out of love, patriots out of patriotism. Such ideas can lift man for a time above his ordinary self, but the substance of the emotions remains the same. Ideals are mental constructions set above the emotions.

The first step towards truth is to keep a dissolvent critical attitude, to see things as they are, actually; to dismiss all egoistic nonsense. Things like love and patriotism are vital instincts and it is false to camouflage them as divine emotions. Shaw is an acute thinker who sees things in their actuality. So is Anatole France. But this actuality is not the whole truth. To attain Truth we must look from above, and see what is good and useful in the lower movements and cast off the falsehood and egoism. In mind, knowledge and power are not one. In man it is his mind that knows, and it is the vital that wills and acts. It is the will of the vital being that is dynamic in action. When the mind begins to reflect and to rule the vital being, the latter consents so long as it suits its convenience and, when it no longer does suit it, it rushes up. That is why man has not done anything so far but spins in a futile circle, since his knowledge is that of the mind and his will is of the vital being and they are separate. To effectuate anything, knowledge and will must be one. For a similar reason Idealism fails to effectuate itself in life, for it throws a false glamour over the lower movements, as the politicians do, and adds its own constructions, does not see things in their reality. In the end, the lower movements, not being changed, rise up and upset the edifice.

As an example of knowledge and will being divided in man, take Tilak. Something in his mind wanted to study mathematics, but there was a call on his vital being to take part in politics, his vital being took joy in such activities. His love of scholarship was also a mental urge, but he was cut out for politics. About myself I can say that I was more fitted for intellectual pursuits like poetry than for politics. I did not take part in politics like the politicians of today.

Vital movements come into the mind as feelings. The mind isolates or idealises. Here also the psychic may enter (in the form of love). Mental control is not the right way. I had thought for several years that I had full mental control of my vital movements but it was not so.

The moralist crushes life into a narrow groove and there indulges his movements. True freedom comes from true mastery, and you cannot have true mastery unless you have complete knowledge of the mental, vital, physical. Nothing

should remain concealed. The vital and physical movements are bound to a narrow groove. The mind is more plastic and therefore in our Yoga we begin with the mind. The mind must open itself to truth, receive knowledge, power — knowledge may come first and power later, for you must remember it is through the mind that we are receiving the Truth: as one advances, knowledge brings power with it and likewise power brings knowledge, and they become one movement. We must first change the mind completely and then open up the vital being. The true vital being is something vast, calm, strong and deep. It is there to be used. Generally life effectuates itself through desire, possessiveness. We must insist on changing the movement of desire, the movement of egoism. If the insistence is sincere, the vital being begins to yield. As in the mind we awaken aspiration to bring down the Supermind, so we have to awaken aspiration in the vital being itself to raise it into the image of the Divine. Gradually aspiration awakens in the vital being and a principle in it surrenders gladly to the change and then the transformation is easy. For the control by mind is not effective, because it is external, but now a principle within the vital being itself accepts the change and therefore the rest follows. We have to get rid of the desire of possession and such other falsehoods in the vital being and get to the true vital. The vital must not be rejected just because it is vital. We must see what is useful there.

Similarly, with regard to the sex energy we have to bring down the Supermind into the physical; then the mental and the vital stand back and the Supermind works in the physical. The physical consciousness has a sort of paradoxical inconscient conscience; it obeys automatically whatever movement has been impressed on it by habit or life. At first it does not yield, it resists, but as you go on insisting it changes.

The physical is a powerful instrument. There is a latent Supramental in the physical consciousness as also in the vital consciousness. Life by itself has no knowledge and it is the latent Supramental that directs its movements. In mind also there is the latent Supramental, the mind partially translates—that is, mistranslates — truths of the latent Supramental and calls them its own ideals.

We have to psychicise and spiritualise the vital movements—sex, money-force, ambition. All instincts belong to the vital plane. Not only have we to open up the vital being but we have to enter into the universal vital movements, just as we enter into the universal mind and the universal physical, and deal with them. Unless we do this, there will be a lot of trouble. When you get something of spiritual experience, the vital being rushes up to enjoy it. Therefore concentration on vital change is necessary.

Every nation has its own principle of life. The source of India's life is spirituality. A spiritual movement is always behind a great national awakening in India. The Indian finds his full force when the central being in him is awakened. It is always a Sannyasi or Yogi who inspires the leaders of a creative movement. There is the instance of Ramdas at the back of the Mahratta power, Guru Nanak and Guru

Gobind behind the Sikh upsurgence. In modern India too there is the example of Bengal. In 1905 all the great leaders were moved by spiritual forces. Now the Swadeshi movement is in a state of putrefaction, for it sticks to some old formula, does not see the new conditions; there is no spiritual force behind it.

I am striving to bring down the Supramental on the earth-plane. This has not been done before. If I succeed, some people will come into touch with it. It is not only the fit who come into touch; the unfit also may receive it. Then something will have been done. There are signs that some extension of the spiritual force and atmosphere is taking place, for people outside not in contact with us here are being affected by our movement. In America some turns of my Sadhana are reproduced in the case of a few persons.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

A TALK BY SURENDRA MOHAN GHOSH

TO THE STUDENTS OF THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

Nirodbaran's Introduction

WE are glad to renew our acquaintance with Surendra who, if you remember, addressed in this Hall perhaps this very audience some years ago. But you may have forgotten him because you are young — young people do not live in the past, they are children of the noons of the future. Neither are they much at peace with things that are old. So we cannot blame you if your memory is short and we have also to keep in view what our Prime Minister recently emphasised and what is so much in evidence today: the indomitable restlessness of the young all over the world.

But our Surendra, though old, has an eternal interest for us; he has a magic key! For you know he had a very close association with Sri Aurobindo — the Eternal — and enjoyed the great privilege of discussing, and having his advice on, many problems of the day. So on behalf of the young who had very little chance, or practically none at all, to see Sri Aurobindo — leave aside hearing him—Sri Aurobindo the Avatar, the Enigmatic, the Elusive and the Seclusive, we request our friend and our elder Surendra to open his heart with that magic key and tell us something about the secrets he has come to know in confidence—today it will not be told in confidence though—and earn the loving gratitude of the young.

Surendra Mohan's Talk

FRIENDS, children of the Mother and standard-bearers of tomorrow, I have been requested to share with you something of your past—it is not only my past, it is yours as well.

I have known Sri Aurobindo—not from the very beginning, although I came not quite in very close touch but near him as a young boy. Gradually some unfolding began also to go on within me. Then I came to know that it was his hidden hand which really guided my steps, without myself knowing anything about it. That is another aspect of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, which I discovered, and today I can say that I see that hidden hand again.

One thing I remember now is that at the age of 9 or 10 I was reading in school and that during the summer vacation I went to my maternal grandfather's home where I had been born and brought up. The next day I went to look for boys of my

age-group to play with; and I saw a village school and went there. There I saw a friend of mine being mercilessly beaten by the teacher — with a cane. He was rolling on the ground, and the teacher was beating him without mercy. As soon as the teacher had left, I collected the boys and girls together and told them, "From tomorrow don't come to this school. Come to my house, I shall open a school there!" As my own tutor was with me, I asked him to start teaching all those boys and girls. So that was my first act of revolt! (*laughter*)

Another thing which has been brought to our notice by Girijashankar Rai Choudhury in his book on Sri Aurobindo is that in 1893 Sri Aurobindo came to India, Vivekananda left India and Gandhiji went to South Africa. These three events happened in the same year — and sometimes I feel proud that I was born in 1893! (*laughter*).

Some years later the partition of Bengal suddenly came and the agitation started. Being young we were drawn into it. With turbans on our heads and sticks in our hands we too became volunteers for the meetings. 'Samitis' were formed, and our 'Samiti' was called 'Sadhana Samaj' led by Hemendra Kishore Acharya Choudhury in Mymensingh. It was an open activity—everybody going there for physical exercises—playing lathi, sword, dagger, etc ... But along with this there was a secret revolutionary party founded by Sri Aurobindo himself. We didn't know anything about it at that time; and our leader Hemendra Kishore was already a member of this secret party. I first saw Sri Aurobindo in Mymensingh — I forget the year — when Bipin Chandra Pal and, as far as I remember, Subodh Mullik were also with him. Sri Aurobindo never addressed any public meeting, never spoke, but he used to be taken there and made to sit; it was Bipin Pal who used to address meetings in those days. Sometimes people would shout, "We want to hear Aurobindo." I was quite young, but I still remember — and Bipin Pal would say, "Don't ask him to speak now, try to assimilate what I am telling you; when he will speak, it will be only fire!" (*laughter*).

Then I had an opportunity to know that there were some secret activities going on, and I also became a member of that secret revolutionary party. I have never said all this previously, but now I am saying it, otherwise people will forget Sri Aurobindo the founder of the Indian revolutionary party, Sri Aurobindo the first among the Indian leaders, who proclaimed openly, publicly that complete independence was our goal. Other leaders were saying something else: annulment of Bengal's partition or, in guarded language, without explaining it swaraj. He was the first leader who said openly, "Complete independence, and nothing short of it will satisfy us!" So our present generation as well as future ones should know what is their past; how they are able to enjoy these fruits of freedom today; from where this freedom has come; who gave the call, who started it. And I am one of those still alive, who joined his party. We had to take an oath and write a pledge with our blood — that we would obey our leader's command, whatever it might be, and execute it. We had to hold the Gita in one hand and a revolver in the other and take the oath. In my turn, after

I had taken the oath, I was suddenly asked, "Now that you've pledged your life for this, tell us why you want freedom or independence for India." I was taken aback. It was so obvious — the young mind's reaction was : why should those foreign people coming from such a distance rule over us? In what way are they superior to us? They are exploiting us. So there was a feeling of hatred. I was told, "Yes all this is all right, but you have to remember one thing more — after Independence, India will have to work for the whole world, the entire humanity. The misery of humanity will not be removed unless India becomes free, independent, and then works for it. That burden of responsibility is also on your shoulders; you are to remember it. You are not only responsible for your suffering, you are responsible for the suffering of humanity as a whole; you have to remember it."

The impression these words had on my mind at that time is still vivid. I knew something of the Vedantic mukti; it meant this world is nothing but maya; and there were India's sadhus, sanyasis who knew the way out of it and become 'mukta-purusha,' free beings. So I thought, "It must be this secret which India knows and which we shall have ultimately to deliver to the world." It had nothing to do with politics, or economics, or other affairs in our material life. That was the impression — something beyond.

Now instead of going into detail into this direction, I come to another aspect.

We joined the movement in 1908 and then this Alipore Bomb Case took place — in which Nolini was arrested. And Sudhir, from the same revolutionary group, went to Jamalpur where there was some communal upsurge — Goddess Basanti's idol had been broken by the Muslims and some atrocities also committed; so Sudhir went there — I don't know if it's known to all of you, but he actually opened fire with a revolver on a crowd and then escaped and the police couldn't trace him. And he came to Mymensingh and stayed in the house of my immediate leader Hemendra Kishore Choudhury. Afterwards other people were arrested but he could not be found. Then the Bomb Case began. Before it was concluded I myself had been arrested and jailed for a year — because they had found in my possession an unlicensed revolver. When I came out of jail Sri Aurobindo had already left for Pondicherry.

As regards the secret party, it was so very secret that only a few people knew each other and acted as connecting links. Both my father and I were members of this party, and yet we did not know about each other! (*laughter*)

Suddenly some of the key people disappeared from the field and the entire organisation was dislocated, we couldn't find the links. Outside Calcutta we knew one of our men — in Rangpur — Nolini's native place — he was the father of Suresh Chakravarty who used to be a member of this Ashram: Ishan Chakravarty. Another of his sons was Prafulla Chakravarty who went with Nolini to experiment with a bomb — the first one they prepared and unfortunately the bomb exploded and he was killed. So we started by establishing contact with him, and then in 1912 I was sent to Calcutta to find out other links and reorganise the party. From that time onwards I took a leading role in the party, along with some other friends, in order to carry on the work

not only in Bengal but in other parts of India also. Immediately after that the First World War broke out. Most of you must have read or heard that we made an attempt at a general rising and it failed; we were again arrested and kept as state prisoners. One curious thing was about Sri Aurobindo's writings — I found something inspiring in them. In those days *The Ideal of the Karmayogin* and *The Indian Renaissance* were the two books we used to read. I liked them very much; from every sentence, every word of them one could draw inspiration. And on the last page of *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, Sister Nivedita's 'A Daily Aspiration for the Nationalist' is given. We felt wonderful reading it in those days. She wrote: "I believe that India is one, indissoluble, indivisible. National unity is built on the common home, the common interest and the common love..." I still remember a little of it here and there—"I believe that the strength which spoke in the Vedas and Upanishads, in the making of religions and empires, in the learning of scholars, and in the meditations of saints is born once more amongst us, and its name today is Nationalism..."

After the First World War, inside the jail, we were thinking of what we should do after our release. There I was helped very much by Abinash Chakravarty who was also imprisoned with me — from 1916 onwards.

Abinash was Sri Aurobindo's most devoted, and loyal worker in the revolutionary movement. I didn't know much, but from whatever I could get from his talks, I gathered that he was also touched by Sri Aurobindo's spirituality and yoga. But he was mainly helping Sri Aurobindo in the revolutionary field. After Noren Goswami's confession to the Government, Abhinash was not exactly dismissed but his service was dispensed with by the Government, and later he was arrested. That's how we came to be together. It was a great advantage for me — again I point out to you how the Secret Hand was working — the hidden hand of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Abhinash was much older than myself, I couldn't have approached people like him in those days.

In those days our literature was confined to Garibaldi's life, the history of the French Revolution, Bankim's novels, Romesh Dutta's novels, and a few other things; the rest were all Ramayana and Mahabharata stories to draw inspiration from.

Under his guidance I read many books—all the 'darshanas', etc. — and finally he told me about Sri Aurobindo. So before we were released Abinash drew my attention first to Sri Aurobindo's last letter to his countrymen — pointing out that a new movement was coming and that it would be such as shown in the letter — and he told me, "Now Gandhi is coming up and now we shall have to go and work among the masses through this Congress organisation. You had better take a decision on these lines." We came out.... It'll be very difficult to reach Pondicherry soon ! I came here only in 1938 (*laughter*)—I'm still in 1920. Very well, I make a jump, as Nirod wants me to do. I come back now to Pondicherry! (*laughter*) As Nirod has told you, I had the unique privilege to see Sri Aurobindo whenever I was here, and to discuss politics which was my only interest and for which I had to pledge everything. That was also his command, so he had also some responsibility for me. I could go

and tell Gandhiji that if he wanted he could come and see him and discuss politics also with him. Once Gandhi had wanted to see him, but Sri Aurobindo had avoided the meeting—but in 1939 he said, “He can come now; whatever political difference there was is no more. He can see me. You may convey this to him.” I conveyed it. But that’s another unfortunate thing. When I came here in 1939 I had already given, as President of Bengal Congress in those days, notice to the District Magistrate that on such and such a date I would offer Satyagraha in such and such a place; after giving one month’s notice, I came here. And here the command was that I should convey Sri Aurobindo’s words to Gandhi. So I went from here to Sevagram and told Gandhi and he jumped at the idea. He also wanted to convince me that there was no difference. For three days I stayed with him. He used to have meals with me. But I told him that it must be kept a secret: “Whether you avail yourself of this opportunity or not, the matter must be kept a secret.” He said, “Yes. I want to go, you make some arrangement.” I said, “I cannot do that because from here I shall have to go straight to my place of Satyagraha, I can’t go to Pondicherry now. But I shall write.” I sent a message here but the interview didn’t take place. I don’t know the reason; I was in jail.

I shall not be able to narrate to you everything in sequence. But I can tell you something—Sri Aurobindo’s advice, directions, instructions; as they come to my mind, I shall disclose them to you.

The order in which I used to see him was: on the first day Nolini used to take me at 11 o’clock, without anybody knowing it, quietly, to Sri Aurobindo’s room. At times I found my friend Nirod moving here and there in the room, and Champaklal was also there. The room was the same—the big chair in a corner where he used to sit, and I would sit at his feet. I would tell him about the international situation in the light of *The Ideal of Human Unity*, what was going on in the world and what we expected of it. And he would ask me questions now and then. If I knew the answer I told it to him, otherwise I said I didn’t know. Daily two hours, from 11 to 1, I was with him. And at the end, every day, on every occasion, his reply was: “I shall give you an answer tomorrow, after consulting the Mother.” Then I would come away. The next day he would give me the reply to the questions I had raised, and then our all-India or internal politics were discussed. Sometimes he used to ask about one or other of the leaders he had known—what was he doing? What was his activity? etc. Then again he would give me the same reply to my questions—“I shall reply to you after consulting the Mother.”

On the third day after getting the reply I would talk of Bengal affairs—I was President of Bengal Congress—Bengal which was undivided then and afterwards partitioned. And on the fourth day Yoga, sadhana and philosophy were the themes, and I put questions. On the fifth day after receiving his blessing I used to leave Pondicherry. That was the order of my meetings—our programme. And he told me, “Don’t come during Darshan time, avoid it.” Apart from this routine, once I had to suddenly come to the question of Partition. I could not adjust myself when this Partition was

decided upon—I was Bengal Congress President—agitations were carried on by others, specially Atulya Ghose, Prafulla Sen and others. People asked: ‘Why is the President silent? why isn’t he saying anything about the Partition? why isn’t he calling a meeting of B.P.C.C.?’

I went to North and East Bengal and you’ll be surprised to hear that the advocates and others surrounded me and started shouting, “Why aren’t you accepting this Partition?” They were all against me because I was silent. Even then I could not make up my mind. I came here and asked Sri Aurobindo, “What am I to do?” He said, “You cannot resist it. It has come, but don’t adopt any resolution supporting this Partition of India on a communal basis. If India is partitioned, then in Bengal the people who would like to remain in India have a right to remain here: on that basis you may go and adopt a resolution.” And we adopted a resolution on those lines.

After that I received a telegram—Nolini told me it was the first and the last telegram in Sri Aurobindo’s name—saying, “Come at once—Sri Aurobindo.” I came here immediately and met him. I don’t know if I am divulging a secret—I suddenly realise that this is not a closed secret meeting where one may divulge all these things. Very big personalities not only of India but of other countries also are involved. I can only tell you this much that all of us had to suffer for not having listened to Sri Aurobindo’s direction or advice. He sent me back, saying, “Go and tell Gandhi, Nehru, Maulana, Sardar and Rajendraprasad, that it is for the good of India, and ultimately for the good of the world, that they should act on these lines; and here is an opportunity I am giving them, let them accept and work on it.” I went to Delhi—there was a meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress, everybody said, “A very good thing, very good”—but it was never implemented, and no step was taken to see that it would be. How it got stuck is a mystery. One thing I should mention here that in the first open session of the Congress at Jaipur the foreign-policy resolution which was adopted was practically the same draft as sent by Sri Aurobindo. I can’t say that it was the very draft but it was a nearly word-for-word version that Nehru adopted. It was Sri Aurobindo’s draft, but it was to be kept a secret in those days. So Nehru adopted, word for word, the whole thing, adding a little more to it to suit India’s foreign policy.

The draft which Sri Aurobindo had made about the integration of the French possessions with India was on this basis that all the French possessions should immediately merge with India, with a right for Pondicherry to maintain its cultural contact with France. Because we did not implement Sri Aurobindo’s resolution a serious problem arose afterwards. To solve it I was asked to go to Pondicherry again by our leaders after 1950 when Sri Aurobindo had passed away.

I told them nothing could be done, still they said, “No, no, you go and see what can be done.” I came here and stayed here for two or three days. Then when I was returning, Rajagopalacharya who was Chief Minister of Madras sent word to my host, “As soon as he returns, ask him to see me.” I went to him. He asked, “What could you do?” I said, “Nothing could be done.” He too had received a message from

Delhi to see what I had done. But when I told nothing could be done, he said, "Then go and tell the Mother." I said, "The Mother doesn't take interest in politics." "No, no, you go—take my car and go." This time I had to tell the Mother and she replied, "You know I don't take interest in politics." I said, "That is true; but now it is not my politics or the Government of India's politics: it is Sri Aurobindo's! (*laughter*) He wanted this to be done and in our stupidity we didn't understand then. Now these people want to do something on those lines, for which I can expect your blessings." The Mother kept quiet for some time and told me, "All right, go back. If you receive a telegram from me, come again." I went back, told Rajagopalacharya what she had told me. "Yes, yes, yes...", he said. (*laughter*) After about a month I received a telegram. I came, saw her here. Then she asked me, "Between certain dates—when will you be able to come to Pondicherry? Somebody will come from France; he wants to have a talk with you." Then I told Rajagopalacharya that I wanted for some delicate matter a responsible man for consultation and I asked him to tell me when he'd be available and fix up a date and note it down in his diary too; so that I could come on that day. I informed the Mother of this and went back and soon afterwards came again. And the whole integration of the French possessions with India was finalised here.

One important thing, lest I forget. Sri Aurobindo could see my limitations and my ignorance; to deal with me was also difficult for him—I am not so learned a scholar that by his throwing a few hints I would understand things. One day he spoke to me in connection with the international situation; after consulting the Mother he was giving me the reply; he told me, "Look here; before the Second World War the stability, the sense of security all over the world depended on the British Empire. It was the force around which world security moved. As a result of this Second World War, the Empire is in process of liquidation and it is fast getting liquidated. The whole world will be free—a vacuum in the international leadership will be created. That makes all the difference in studying the international situation with old ideas—because the latter are no longer there. We are not yet aware that the Empire is gone and nothing else has come up to replace it; everybody is free." He reminded me of this position in 1950, October—my last darshan. This really helped me a great deal to understand the situation then and even today. I feel that it puts to a great extent the international situation in the proper perspective. In *The Ideal of Human Unity* he said, during the First World War, that the total outcome of events was a movement towards a World Government. "It is not only a probability but a certainty," he said. Today there is no choice before the nations except to come together and set up something stable; otherwise the entire human civilisation, even this planet earth, is threatened in its existence. Therefore the more the nations realise this situation the more their attention is drawn towards the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and towards Pondicherry and Auroville and towards you all.

Thank you very much!

THE DREAM AND ASPIRATION OF AUROVILLE

IMPRESSIONS OF THE AUROVILLIANS' ANNUAL PLAY

I

FEBRUARY 21 is the Mother's ninety-third birthday. February 28 is the third birthday of a Dream of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's—Auroville, the "City of Dawn" that has been named by the Mother after "Aurobindo" in combination with the French "Aurore" and that has been slowly taking shape since its inauguration three years ago when teenage boys and girls from every country in the world brought handfuls of earth to mix with the soil of Auroville's site within the lotus urn specially constructed by the youth of the Ashram. This lotus symbolised the blossoming of a future to the touch of a new light of consciousness which would be above all nationalities, politics and religion—"a future of knowledge, peace and unity," as the Mother has said.

Every year the growing group of young men and women, who have stirred with the heroism of an impossible-seeming vision and plunged into the adventure of Auroville, stage a play. I was told that this year the dream and aspiration of Auroville was sought to be expressed in a play called

THE ARTIST BEFORE DAWN AND THE DREAM OF VICTORY

A poem by Rod was to serve as the basis. The choreography would be by Deborah. The cast was to be a wide assortment of Aurovillians. The music would come from the heart and the imagination of the whole world gathering itself up and invoking through this little group a beauty and a truth unborn as yet.

Most of my time is spent in the Ashram, turning my hand to various jobs in the workshop of the mind, topped by the monthly love's labour of editing *Mother India* and by the more laborious and less loving chore from day to day of editing my own straggly self. Auroville I have welcomed from the start—and now and again I have written about it, but except for little openings through which I had looked out at it and into it I had never caught its living spirit in an actual bodily movement, so to speak.

Last year I went to watch the show the Aurovillians had put up, something half serious half light-hearted, very original either way, with a quietly impressive *finale* in the reading of a poem of Wallace Stevens's by Deborah. When I came home I had a happy sense of the life that was sprouting in Auroville in various directions. But

I cannot say my experience was utterly memorable, as proved the case this year. Now, before I went, I had become more acquainted with life in the baby city, if city it can be termed at present. Some of the Aurovillians had wished to chat with me and we had an extremely pleasant meeting one morning. I found a greater awareness of the psychological background against which Auroville was materialising. The Mother has said that all the Aurovillians may not practise Yoga but they must know what Yoga means, for otherwise the very purpose of Auroville would be missed. I discovered that the practice of Yoga was going on—more intensely than I had thought and under external conditions that were pretty hard, requiring the soul to be a pioneer both without and within.

My visit, however, had not prepared me for the splendid surprise of the dramatic show to come. When I returned from seeing the tableaux and dance-sequences based on Rod's poem, I knew I had gone through impressions and emotions that gave me a kind of revelation not only artistic but spiritual. I saw colour and sound and gesture and movement mingling the creative energy of the West with the rapt insight of India to make a new form for man's evolutionary unfolding. Here were young beings who had come across half the world to take India as their home, not merely the ageless Mother India but also the ever-growing all-exceeding India of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

Two hours—with the mind enchanted and the heart joy-filled. No doubt, the players had been keyed to a special pitch, and the same high mood might not be maintained at all times. There is also the fact that the wide freedom in which modern youth naturally lives calls for its true fulfilment a subtle centre of self-discipline, a compact core as it were from which life could radiate forth infinitely without dispersal and into which the whole free wideness could gather the gains of its multiplicity and diversity. Yes, that evening's mood was special—but it showed clearly the very centre, the very core which I have mentioned, and the showing left in me the conviction that the seed from which the City of Dawn would arise was already there, consciously held, in the depths and only needed to be called up and made constantly creative.

K. D. SETHNA

2

The roads in Auroville are not paved and a fine, red dust settled on the car. It was dark and the driver drove slowly across the fields and through the village. As we neared "Forecomers" there was a bright, battery-run light placed by the side of the road to direct us. There is no electricity at "Forecomers" but we passed a large, towering structure, which is a future power soon to reach them.

A concrete stage had been constructed with a keel and bamboo roof that soared upward, and we, the audience, sat on the red earth which was covered with straw mats. Rod, in a gold robe, with appliqué golden flowers of Auroville catching the

light, stood to read his poem. The notes of a flute announced the beginning and Deborah danced to the call of the Future.

“and why does the flute caught wind
call softly to the moon
when clarity wears the gown of night?”

Two lovely muses then sang and played a lyre and the breeze caught their white dresses as they echoed the poem.

“and infinite bliss and eternal peace
enshrine his muse and his desire—
finally his spirit is free.”

The beautiful young men and the shining girls danced out of the shadows and one could feel their longing for a world of love and harmony.

“The beautiful young men who sweat in the sun
and laugh in the shade with the shining girls
until the world turns gold
and the glowing mountain is born ..”

The children played and laughed and danced—for they are living the future. The children of Auroville have no past.

“the gift is given and the gift is received,
the worlds of beauty are born—
the sunborn children run softly in the twilight
toward the wondrous day
and soon the sunburst morning
will fly them to their nest...”

Then prophets, with their bent bodies and crutches of doom, proclaimed the impossibility of anything new and fought amongst themselves with their sticks as the future confronted them with wild gestures and impossible dance-steps. The old was vanquished by a stronger magic, that of hope and joy.

“We are walking in waves of heat
across the plain toward a peak
like ancients who gather bones
in the canyon of infinity
for magicians who turn them to golden towers

that the spaces we build
might never become crowded or unfree..."

The audience was taken into the movement and we found ourselves on the other side of the stage. Fabienne danced a dance of victory and ascended to the throne as a light was cast on a blazing portrait of the Mother. The dragon-slayer appeared on a flower-bedecked horse and put aside his weapons and paid homage to the Mother.

"The dragon-slayer sheathed his sword
and brushed the curls from his brow
then bowed down from dawn to dusk
to see the beginning and end of time
touch and crystallize in his praying hands."

The audience then passed through the interior of the stage where the Aurovillians sang their hymn of praise. All was transformed into their moment of victory and they ascended to the heights of the soaring roof. The beautiful young men and the shining girls danced and the children threw flowers and played. The ancients saw the flowers of the future blossom and grow the children of the Divine Mother.

"and they would listen to her mighty words of love
and receive her glorious gift of light
that poured from her beautiful eyes
and revealed all to sight."

The harmony of many languages sang together and the contrast of skin colours danced together in aspiration and hope for a future of 'endless progress'.

"O the city rises round the rim
as night's armor clatters to the ground
and in the utter silence
men of light noisily launch their ships
to the sun—
sights and sounds noticed and unnoticed
from the highest peaks
where the day rolls merrily by I pray
where the day rolls merrily by Him
O the kingdom rises round the rim."

We could still hear the music as we found our car in the dark. We drove home slowly because the roads in Auroville are not paved.

With the opening of the play "The Artist before Dawn", staged at "Forecomers", Auroville, on January 6th, 7th and 9th, the audience was compelled to forget reality. Magically it felt itself drawn into a dream-world of perfect humanity. They, for whom the earth was being prepared, here they were, singing and dancing, "the sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn."

The performance soon achieved a communication between the actors and the audience that was far from anything ordinarily experienced in the theatre. There was the feeling of participation in a mystery play where the spectator ceases to be a witness and becomes an initiate.

When the audience was asked to move through the big central bamboo-structure in the background of the stage, the passage became a door into another world, a world of harmony in freedom, of beauty, love and bliss within an enveloping Consciousness that is new on earth.

At this moment dream and reality mingled. Auroville was staging itself. And everybody was 'in'.

The play had no end. When the actors ceased to perform they drew the audience into a common dance that went on into the night until the concentration achieved ebbed out, and there was once more reality and the dream dreamt and worked for by some beautiful young people on a wide South-Indian plain.

JOBST

THE ARTIST BEFORE DAWN AND THE DREAM OF VICTORY

I

WHY does the wild wind wander on this planet
while the hunter runs among the stars?
and why does the flute caught wind
call softly to the moon
when clarity wears the gown of night?
A child's innocence or a man's pride
could inspire such questions
and the symbol care the eager soul
must seek to answer
would seal the mystery with a tear.
But what after all is the point
of agony of thought of art of joy of daylight
and the arrowflight of life?
When the bow is bent and the true aim is felt
then the shaft is released
that meets itself in mid air
like fair game on full wing struck deep
and the wind turns round the world again
while the hunter weeps among the stars
and shadows chase the flute song moon to dawn.
The archer's prize is fire
and infinite bliss and eternal peace
enshrine his muse and his desire—
finally his spirit is free.

It is an arduous path
swirling to give birth to its creator
biting its tail
spreading its wings wide
and narrow to the extreme.

We know we do not know we know
the ray behind the cloud
the bridge the stream we cross.

It becomes clearer
 inner and outer
 future and past
 if it doesn't blind by its brightness
 and the right adjustment is made.

To grow and change, create and destroy
 ever renew always from the executive supreme
 point of view:
 Ishwara Shakti
 flowering wave on wave
 magnificent at every moment.

To awaken from the dream
 and see the way.

2

The beautiful young men who sweat in the sun
 and laugh in the shade with the shining girls
 until the world turns gold
 and the glowing mountain is born
 listen to the music at night
 that sings their life to smoke
 in the sweetly turning light.

A silence will purify the mind
 and make clear the formula of sight
 for the builders who love
 in the rising falling light
 and listen to the music of the sun.

Form is the forerunner of the future,
 growth is the way to the goal
 across the vast unknown;
 the gift is given and the gift is received,
 the worlds of beauty are born—
 the sunborn children run softly in the twilight
 toward the wondrous day
 and soon the sunburst morning
 will fly them to their nest...
 so the seed is sown and the tree gracefully sways

in the garden where time spins a silent web
to find where soon the flower will be known.

All will come to pass this way
and more than I can tell
says the mystery beyond the veil.

Under his cloak the prophet croaks a doom
form is the forerunner of change
his error will be revealed
by sacrifice be fulfilled.

To be like the sun—
it is the music of dawn that we hear
and we are one with many voices
who sings the word divine
as we cross the bridge
that we build together,
as we listen to the sun.

We are walking in waves of heat
across the plain toward a peak
like ancients who gather bones
in the canyons of infinity
for magicians who turn them to golden towers
that the spaces we build
might never become crowded or unfree ;
children run softly in the twilight
across the plain and hide in the shadows
that conceal the happy blaze
until all is changed in Her smile.

We gather flowers as we walk toward the peak
and the beautiful young men
who listen to their hearts
build the city of the sun
to guard the golden flowers we pick—
in the vital physical currents of the mind
we flow toward the stream of dawn.

Perhaps it will be remembered this way
and perhaps it will be justified

if it is all suspended in a dome
 and spun around
 so that every point is seen
 rising to express its oneness.

In a similar way one meets another,
 the flower opens to its lover,
 and the will to transcend
 shines on the brows of the beautiful young men.
 The children float at dawn
 toward the warm touch of reality
 inside a magic dome
 and the light grows within.

They will be one
 and the word they speak
 will be love,
 in their self giving
 to the flame of sacrifice
 their consciousness will increase
 to perfection
 and they will see all
 in the light of truth
 in the joy of Her smile.

3

Brightly haloed she stood alone
 and her face of beauty and light
 concealed the laughter or the tears,
 the joy or the sorrow that she felt
 as hopes and fears flamed before her
 and the tides of life and death raged around her
 warring through the night
 until the beasts and angels
 that danced in the forest where she stood
 grew quiet:
 the light that filled her breast
 flowed out to quell the madness of the world
 and touch every heart with grace.

The pomp and lust that fought
 to win their cup of flesh and blood

filled with silver and gold
were made to yield and shattered in an instant
under the weight of a mightier force:
her body trembled with ecstasy
as the new world was born and ascended
to the throne.

The dragon slayer sheathed his sword
and brushed the curls from his brow
then bowed down from dawn to dusk
to see the beginning and end of time
touch and crystallize in his praying hands.

The young men who flushed with pride
as they lay beside their maids in the hay
stood suddenly erect with wonder
at the world's mystery they beheld.

The altar vessels of the blue ascetics
smoked in the moonglow of the soul's illumination
and sent the holy fragrance drifting through the air
out the cave's mouth to shake the mountain and valley
with divine breath.

The earth's choirs
intoned praise of the powers supreme
that made this world a sun
and voiced the truth of every birth.

The One enlightened All.
The inward and outward movements
found their balance forever.
What was always known to be behind the veil
was shown.
The future leaped into view
like blossoms opening in a garden
and the ancients who cared for them
from the first, watched their children grow.
And they gathered ever after
around the table of the Master
to share with him the drink of life
and wandered in the woods
where strolled in magnificent beauty

The Mother, His mate
and they would listen to her mighty words of love
and receive her glorious gift of light
that poured from her beautiful eyes
and revealed all to sight.

The chariots charged ahead
to deliver the conquerors
unto the conquered land
to offer in Truth its riches
to the Lord.

4

O the city rises round the rim
as night's armor clatters to the ground
and in the utter silence
men of light noisily launch their ships
to the sun—
sights and sounds noticed and unnoticed
from the highest peaks
where the day rolls merrily by I pray
where the day rolls merrily by Him

O the kingdom rises round the rim.

Rod

TOWARDS AUROVILLE

AN APPROACH THROUGH SRI AUROBINDO'S BOOK, "THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY"

THE experience of mankind, in the past, has been that huge aggregates with greater social and political unity did not promote a rich and puissant human life. Collective life has always prospered in small spaces and simpler organisms. Modern Europe owes most of its civilisation to the religious life of Israel, the small Greek city states and the artistic life of medieval Italy. The smaller kingdoms of the Pallavas and Chalukyas, Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras were more productive qualitatively than the Mogul, Gupta or the Mauryan empire; for, like the city states of ancient Greece, they had the most intense life, and rapidly progressed through creative activity. But these city states and smaller kingdoms suffered from an 'insufficient capacity for wide-spread material well-being' and from defencelessness. The advantages of large aggregates or nations are admirable organisation, peace, security and material well-being; the disadvantages are that life loses its richness, variety, creative impulse, and the individual dwindles and eventually, by his dwindling, the huge organism stagnates and dies. As such the social, political and administrative unification of mankind under a single monolithic rule will be a catastrophe. Yet the unity of mankind, as Sri Aurobindo thinks, is "part of Nature's eventual scheme and must come about. Only it must be under other conditions and with safeguards which will keep the race intact in the roots of its vitality, richly diverse in its oneness."¹

Nature constantly moves between two poles of life, the individual and the aggregate, seeking an integration and harmony between them. "Human life forms no exception to the rule. Therefore the perfection of human life must involve the elaboration of an as yet unaccomplished harmony between these two poles of our existence, the individual and the social aggregate. The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual; the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs and eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of united humanity."² Between the individual and the totality of mankind Nature seems to introduce a series of lesser aggregates which act 'partly as aids and partly as barriers to the final unity'. "For the obstacles of space, the difficulties of organisation and the limitations of the human heart and brain have necessitated the formation first of small, then of larger and yet larger aggregates so that he may be gradually trained by a progressive approach till he is ready for the final universality. The family, the commune, the clan or tribe, the class, the city state or congeries of tribes, the nation, the empire are so many stages in this progress and constant enlargement."³ This graduation results in a great complexity, for Nature does not destroy the smaller aggregates once the larger are successfully formed but keeps them

in order to serve her passion for variety, richness and multiformity. She only seems to efface the dividing lines between them and so modifies the nature of the smaller entities that they freely allow, promote, and even contribute to her creation of the larger unity. And this has confronted humanity with the most difficult problem of seeking accord between the interests of the individual and the immediate aggregate on one hand and the needs and interests of the latter and the growth of the larger whole on the other. "The perfection of the individual in a perfected society or eventually in a perfected humanity—understanding perfection always in a relative and progressive sense—is the inevitable aim of Nature."⁴ "...For the final aim of Nature in human life cannot be the exploitation of the many by the few or even of the few by the many, can never be the perfection of some at the cost of the abject submergence and ignorant subjection of the bulk of humanity; these can only be transient devices. Therefore we see that such dominations bear always in them the seed of their own destruction. They must pass either by the ejection or destruction of the exploiting element or else by a fusion and equalisation."⁵ "...Absolute equality is surely neither intended nor possible, just as absolute uniformity is both impossible and utterly undesirable; but a fundamental equality which will render the play of true superiority and difference inoffensive, is essential to any conceivable perfectibility of the human race."⁶

Individualism and collectivism are the two human tendencies which are equally strong and deep-rooted. "On one side is the engrossing authority, perfection and development of the State, on the other the distinctive freedom, perfection and development of the individual man."⁷ There is therefore always this mighty conflict between 'the self-liberating Person and the engrossing collectivity'.

History and sociology testify to the fact that the human race began with 'the all-engrossing group to which the individual was entirely subservient'. Originally, man was wholly gregarious, for this was necessary for his survival. He was therefore an instrument for the strength and safety of the group. Uniformity of the individuals and predominance of the interests of the group are the chief traits of the process of man's prehistoric evolution when he was close to material Nature. Free variation and increasing individuality are the fruits of the growth of Life and the increasing conscious Mind. But an ancient tradition (in India) speaks of a free and 'unsocial' state prior to this all-engrossing group life, when man living by 'natural instinct or free knowledge' was freely social without society and 'needed neither to prey on his fellows nor to be restrained by the iron yoke of the collectivity'. "It is even possible that our original state was an instinctive animal spontaneity of free and fluid association and that our final ideal state will be an enlightened, intuitive spontaneity of free and fluid association. Our destiny may be the conversion of an original animal association into a community of the gods. Our progress may be a devious round leading from the easy and spontaneous uniformity and harmony which reflects Nature to the self-possessed unity which reflects the Divine."⁸ Despite great hurdles on the way mankind seems to move slowly but steadily towards this high dream of philosophic Anarchism, combining 'free solitude' with 'free association'.

The modern State—the organised community—is the result of an increasing immolation of the individual, a growing subordination of the individual to the collective egoism which claims to satisfy certain collective aims and ambitions shaped and imposed on the masses by a group of people in charge of the government. This ruling class by no means represents the best mind of the nation or its noblest aims and ideals. Nor does it contain the sum of the creative energies of the community. Often the working force and productive thinking of the creative minorities are suppressed or left out of the nation's activity. When a State, losing all propriety, develops a false, pretentious and ugly code of conduct, it is bound to impose on the vision and conscience of its people a primitive and degenerating ideal. More often than has been noted, organised nations have acted as huge beasts of prey in relation to smaller ones and, in the name of self-protection, devoured others. But, unfortunately, there is no enlightened world opinion built up so as to effectively influence the barbaric behaviour of such States, nor is there any international body which can incorporate the rights and freedoms of the individual into an international law to restrain such activity.

The goal of Nature is to help man learn to fulfil himself in the fulfilment of Mankind, by expanding his ego out of its attending limitations and eventually losing it in something superior and greater which it now tries to represent. The State is a means for common human development and therefore not an end in itself. Man, primarily, lives by the community, for he needs it to develop himself individually as well as collectively. The State can only provide all necessary conveniences for his progress and remove all obstacles in his way. Any attempt on the part of the State to control the cooperative activity of the community and to clamp needless checks and restrictions on the individual would only result in a monstrous machinery crushing out the freedom, initiative and creative growth of the individual. All collectivist societies tend to immolate the individual to a communal egoism and envisage and seek unduly to subordinate him and create a static communal order that is dead set against all creative growth. Therefore, in the present conditions the State is incapable of bringing about a healthy unity of mankind. This will be possible only when mankind develops a self-conscious collective soul capable of subordinating mechanical means to the inner and creative growth of the human being. The development of a spiritualised humanity, and not an organised and mechanised human existence, is the goal of evolution. Hence any attempt at the political, economic and administrative unification of humanity must be preceded by the strong idea and conviction of a moral and spiritual oneness. If it is a living principle of national oneness that binds together the people of a nation, then a more dynamic and conscious principle of spiritual oneness is required to hold the peoples of the world in a common human fellowship.

(To be continued)

V. MADHUSUDAN REDDY

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CYBERNETICS AND TELEVISION IN INDIA

FOURTH REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, AUROVILLE

WHEN man discovered the wheel he met the Divine, and was led to a far more full and free manner of living. He was given the first giant hint of how evolved he really was.

When man discovered the steam engine he met the Divine again and was given another giant hint of how far he had come and of how much more freedom and excitement he could expect of the future. He could travel faster, communicate more easily, build industries and improve his manner of living far beyond the dreams of the age of the wheel.

Now man has discovered electricity, electronics, and cybernetic machines which have their own memories and can actually answer questions about many things far better than any single man alone. He is meeting the Divine again and being reminded again of how far more evolved he is than any other being on earth. He can fly around the globe in less than a day ..explore outer space...he can communicate instantly with any other man anywhere...in the near future he will be able to free himself almost entirely from work, as work is understood in the age of industry. When the cybernetic age becomes fully actuated he will find that he has been given an overwhelming freedom, and overwhelming amounts of time for leisure.

This age we have already entered will become so drastically new and different, and the changes will happen with such enormous speed that it has become urgent now for spiritual progress, our growth in consciousness, to keep pace with the material progress going on in the outside world.

All old-fashioned ideas about a spirituality which is modest, hypermysterious and exclusive should be replaced by an aspiration which is dynamic and optimistic... a spirituality which is not afraid to find God everywhere, outside as well as within. Sri Aurobindo envisions the total transformation of man and a whole new stage of evolution. The Mother has told us clearly that the consciousness which goes with this new stage of evolution has already descended on the earth. Their vision is large enough to handle life in the cybernetic age, when the mind itself would seem to be surpassed by technology. Sri Aurobindo's spirituality is fearless. It would have us find the Divine Consciousness absolutely everywhere. In past ages this did not imply as much as it does now. Suddenly, total transformation demands communication. It demands an end to fear...and end to exclusiveness. Let the Divine handle our mystical experiences and the over-all mystical plan which has never been clear anyway except to a miniscule few. Since the new consciousness is already in the earth's atmosphere it would seem that we must expect new kinds of spiritual experience. The Mother has said recently, "It is only a question of receptivity."

With instant, live, global television almost upon us when the Indian satellite goes up in 1973 or 1974, there is no longer any possibility of exclusiveness.

What does this mean for India now? It means that India must get rid of all its fears, which might have been legitimate in the industrial age but which are now no longer legitimate. She must loosen her hold on the keys to the spiritual life. She must make a courageous plunge into the cybernetic age. Cybernetics, from the Greek, means steersman. She must let this steersman have his head and trust in the larger Steersman who is running the entire universe. She must joyfully face the new, powerful medium of television and use it in almost totally new ways to set up new structures necessary for this country now...new structures necessary, therefore, for the rest of the world. India must now become the star for the rest of the world to steer by on its desperately confused contemporary course. The Indian inferiority complex must be dropped like the poisonous viper it is. Feelings of inferiority must be replaced by a confidence so strong that she can rapidly accept the drastic innovations of the cybernetic age and build structures newer and more powerful than the world has ever seen. She must not be surprised if the first practical plans to accomplish all this sounds to some like the ravings of a madman. But she must see the objections as coming from ignorance and egoism. In the spirit of the Gita she must be ready to break every back, even if it be the back of an ignorant though beloved brother, if it tries to stand in the way of this vibrant new push into the future. India must express her deepest soul now. The need is urgent. The pace is quick. The times demand immediate action.

At the risk of being accused of madness, India should concentrate on television as the core of a new educational system. She should now even try to make the masses of her people literate. Western approaches to education should be dropped as soon as possible since they will never answer the psychological needs of this country. Concentration should be placed on direct knowledge, intuition, means of communicating which do not threaten the unified vision of the Indian people. The literate West has categorized, split knowledge into neat pockets for hundreds of years and the global confusion which has resulted is clear to anyone who cares to see. This splitting of consciousness should not be allowed to go on any longer here. With the direct-to-home satellite, all of India can be covered instantly, with one receiver set in each village to start. A large force of instructors should be set up to follow through in the village themselves on what has been learned on television. This large group of young men and women could be easily financed and peopled by phasing out the impotent Westernized school system as it exists today.

Whole new approaches to birth control, proportioned to India's soul must be presented. It is clear that the old approaches do not work with 57,000 Indian babies being born every day. There seems to be no communication about sex between the older generations and the young. This can be changed by television but it must be handled with the utmost care. In an atmosphere like the Indian one where there is such a deep respect for all life, the stoppage of human life must be presented in the

context that life for all will become more full, richer, deeper, and more holy. The motivations given must be basically spiritual as they were during the movement for independence. It was Mother India who was shackled then by the chains of foreign domination. It is her own children who are shackling her now with overpopulation. The Indian family system must be understood and it will become clear that it is not the young ones producing babies who should be approached first but rather the grandmothers in charge of the large family units. They must be made to see that it is not necessary to have ten children to assure a full life and security in the old age of the new generations.

The rush of poor villagers to the big cities must be stopped immediately. The one hundred year cycle of the country-to-city-to-country movement, as it is happening in the West, does not have to happen here. With the help of television rural life must be presented as much more promising and fulfilling than life in the city. New housing and town planning should be suggested in a simple, graphic, and practical way. We could show how to build huts which are absolutely functional while they make a break from luxury and too much comfort. They should be well-built while they are economical. They should take advantage of new discoveries like solar heating and solar cooking which make sense for India.

They should be contemporary and beautiful while they take deeply into consideration the ancient soul of the place where they are to be built and the personal, if potential, good taste of the people who are to live in them. The total environment in the village should retain the Indian atmosphere of peace. It should be a place where one could truly *be present*, and in India I think we can openly admit that this means not only to be present to one's own self but also to the Universal Self in which we are all participating. This could be financed by an economy which takes advantage, as Japan has done, of the fast and lucrative innovations in electronics which go with the cybernetic age. For obvious reasons, the West cannot switch over from big industrial centers and the old ways of doing things so fast, even though it might wish to. India can and must. The new economy can be planned in such a way that the villagers can be kept in the villages. This could be done by setting up smaller units of production spread out across the entire country. This nation is still underdeveloped. Why can it not be developed in this way? It could be done without disturbing the Indian pace of living which preserves an incredible leisure where the average villager works only three or four months out of a year. Only in India is leisure properly understood and practised on a large scale. It is used to enjoy family and friends, to keep the body clean and fit, to expand in consciousness, and to relate to the Divine. This, of course, is hampered now by extreme poverty and by a small, but growing group of foreigners and Westernized Indians who do not love India enough. India is our Mother. She must be loved with a dedicated passion if we are to solve any of the current problems here and even begin to present a structure which can be copied by the rest of mankind.

This can all be done through a courageous plunge into the cybernetic age and through television.

After we have substantially begun, the Divine Mother can actuate her dream of Auroville and the fullness of the vision of Sri Aurobindo. She can let us see the new light trying to shine forth, and let us experience the new consciousness already in the atmosphere of earth.

WILLIAM T. NETTER

IN AUROVILLE

A SOFT sliver of moon
 Riding bowed in the mist
 A bird's wan pronouncement
 Above the edge of the cricket's drone
 A far flute sound
 From a distant air
 Fall in cadence to my thoughts of you
 O Spirit Mother of Peace in Auroville.

GENE

TO A PURE SERENE

FROM dream-essence I'll distil
 A rarer spirit's will.
 Over mothflight I'll array
 In crystalline display
 The mysterious hues
 Of love and dream.
 Upon a canvas I will ply
 The trade of beauty
 Sailing and trailing
 In aquamarine.
 In a palace I will lie
 And contemplate the sky
 In its soft-burning tones
 Of acetylene.
 From a burdened nest
 My bird will fly
 To a pure serene.

STANLEY W. COWIE

YOUTH UNREST

(This is one of several papers read at the meeting, on January 22, 1971, of "The Thinkers' Club" of Pondicherry which meets periodically in Government House to discuss each time a selected topic of current interest.)

I KNOW that I am speaking to an audience of rebels. We can all remember our 18th or 20th year—and remember our dreams and how determined we were and how sure we were to fulfil them. Somehow it just didn't work out. But we are still in a way rebels. We are rebels because we are here trying to understand our world and act on that understanding.

Youth has always been and always will be the vehicle for change. How effective, how far-reaching that change will be, depends a great deal on time, place and past preparation or evolution.

A new light has come to the earth, a new energy which is changing the face of our planet. The young respond to this energy in a way we would have responded at 19 or 20. The new revolution is basically spiritual. The entire consciousness of man is being affected and youth is, again, more open and able to respond. They do not have the preconceived ideas and the experience of age to tell them what is or is not possible.

This is a world-wide massive movement toward a higher step in the planetary evolution—and this step must be a conscious one. Today's youth is not only rebelling against mamma and papa or a local political situation—they are striking at the very foundation of *all our man-made values*. How can a completely new consciousness express itself? At present it is being encumbered by a social-political structure so corrupt and top-heavy that it threatens to crush itself. The new consciousness demands a new freedom, a freedom necessary for a creative spiritual life.

Let us look at some of the positive possibilities that are now in evidence.

(1) Youth rejects religion. This is too broad a statement. Youth rejects dogma. Dogma is the man-made laws or morals that have up to now guided man along his stumbling path. How can anything new come from these rigid formations? Religion tells us what to eat and why and even when. It tells us when to marry and, often, to whom. It then goes on to regulate our sexual behaviour—all in some special pattern depending upon where we happen to have been born. Youth does not reject God, but it wants the freedom to experience the Divine. This is not so acute a problem in India because she has been very broad and open and embraced all religions. But none the less dogma exists. Let me share with you a definition that has struck me—a definition of morality and spirituality. Morality is laws made by man to change the other fellow. Spirituality is a light with which one changes oneself. Youth is experimenting—reaching inward to change himself.

(2) Youth rejects marriage. Marriage no longer serves its intended function—that of preservation of the race—in this respect it has been over-successful! And we are actually trying to curb its success. In other more personal human terms it too is a failure. The young are striving to develop relationships based on human fulfilment and not on need. They do not and *cannot* bear the idea of human bondage. Both parties must be free and whole beings. They do not want to be with anyone from whom they feel the need of legal protection. The material values and considerations must not be foremost. This freedom does not imply promiscuity but love, trust and understanding.

I feel that this is the seed of the future brotherhood of man, because we must learn to relate with one another first within our personal circle—and then outwardly with the world.

(3) Youth rejects politics. This statement is not broad enough. Look at our political failure. It is not an isolated failure but a total failure. Youth must reject this structure: it has not worked. Something new must replace it. All political and social ideals, regardless of how wonderful or high they are, degenerate into a struggle for power—and greed. Greed has been and is the basis of our corruption. The direction youth is taking is toward small communes or communities. Most of them are relatively free from rules. The members attempt to solve their problems as they arrive, taking the personal situation of each person into consideration. I feel that this is the seed of a new group-consciousness and can evolve into a world-wide group-consciousness. •

Let's try to imagine the implications of a world-wide group-consciousness replacing our political structures. All the separative tendencies will disappear.

We say: "If these ideals are true why the violence, why the drugs, why the crime?" I think it's crucial for us to realise that it is the social-political structure which elicits violence—not a violent youth.

As for drugs, I feel they were introduced into the world-consciousness as a powerful tool, a tool to help shatter the rigid crust of our preconceived ideas and a materialism which had come to stay instead of being a helpful passing phase. Drugs have, on a larger scale, served this purpose and I see youth now rejecting their use more and more. They have been a kind of shock therapy.

Now what can we do? The first thing is to understand that change—complete change of consciousness—is absolutely necessary if we hope to survive. How can we help? By being open—by trying to see behind the face or façade and look toward future possibility. Man must change his consciousness from the narrow "sure-of-his-own-ideas" to the exploratory openness of the unknown future—instead of criticising and finding fault with the outward appearance he must open his mind to understanding the tremendous forces at work in our new age.

I feel that Auroville is the only place in the world today with a wide-enough vision, free-enough environment, high-enough aspiration for this change to become a reality.

CLAIR WORDEN

FINDING THE NATION'S SOUL

“THE number one problem for India now is to find back her soul.”¹

These words of the Mother obviously suggest that we have been well on the point of losing it. How did this happen and what does this imply? Sri Aurobindo once summarised the position thus. “The debasement of our mind, character and tastes by a grossly commerical, materialistic and insufficient European education is a fact.... The practical destruction of our artistic perceptions and the plastic skill and fineness of eye and hand which once gave our productions pre-eminence, distinction and mastery of European markets is also a thing accomplished. Most vital of all is the spiritual and intellectual divorce from the past which the present schools and universities have effected; it has beggared the nation of the originality, high aspiration and forceful energy which can alone make a nation free and great...”² The position today is not so very different from sixty years ago when these words were written. And, worse still, we are even now undecided as to what to do about it all.

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Sri Aurobindo's prescription for this “mighty evil in our souls” is simple and clear. “Reverse the process and recover what we have lost,” he says. “And as the loss of originality, aspiration and energy was the most vital of all these losses, so their recovery should be our first and most important objective...”³ We must therefore continue the work begun by the prophets of Nationalism. Their primary aim was “to rid the nation of the idea that the future was limited by the circumstances of the present. They pointed the mind of the people to a great and splendid destiny, not in some distant millennium but in the comparatively near future, and fired the hearts of the young men with a burning desire to realise the apocalyptic vision. They pointed persistently to the great achievements and grandiose civilisation of our forefathers and called on the rising generation to recover their lost spiritual and intellectual heritage.”⁴ For, as he says elsewhere, “we have yet to know ourselves, what we were, are and may be, what we did in the past and what we are capable of doing in the future, our history and our mission. This is the first and most important work...”⁵

“To raise the mind, character and tastes of the people, to recover the ancient nobility of temper, the strong Aryan character and the high Aryan outlook, the per-

¹ *Mother India*, December 1970, p. 691.

² *Karmayogin*, 25. 9. 09.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.6.09.

ceptions which made earthly life beautiful and wonderful, and the magnificent spiritual experiences, realisations and aspirations which made us the deepest-hearted, deepest-thoughted and most delicately profound in life of all the peoples of the earth, is the task next in importance and urgency. ...Finally, the artistic awakening commenced by that young, living and energetic school which has gathered round the Master and originator, S. Abanindranath Tagore, the impulse which this school is giving, its inspired artistic recovery of the past, its intuitive anticipations of the future, have to be popularised and made a national possession.”¹

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These things, one might say, are primarily things of the mind. How shall we deal with the pressing problems of social economic and political life? How shall we deal with the outside world and its constant invasion? Here is Sri Aurobindo's answer.

“We have to treasure jealously everything in our social structure, manners, institutions, which is of permanent value, essential to our spirit or helpful to the future; but we must not cabin the expanding and aggressive spirit of India in temporary forms which are the creation of the last few hundred years. That would be a vain and disastrous endeavour. The mould is broken; we must remould in larger outlines and with a richer content.

“We have to learn and use the democratic principle and methods of Europe in order that hereafter we may build up something more suited to our past and to the future of humanity. We have to throw away the individualism and materialism and keep the democracy. We have to solve for the human race the problem of harmonising and spiritualising its impulses towards liberty, equality and fraternity....We cannot tone down our political movement until the lesson of democratic self-government is learned and the first condition of national self-fulfilment realised ..

“We cannot arrest our development of industry and commerce while waiting for a new commercial system to develop or for beauty and art to reconquer the world. As in politics so in commerce, we must learn and master the European methods in order that we may eventually rise above them. ..Industry can only become again beautiful if poverty and the struggle for life are eliminated from society and the co-operative state and commune organised as the fruit of a great moral and spiritual uplifting of humanity. We hold such an uplifting and reorganisation as part of India's mission, but to do her work we must live...”²

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¹ *Ibid.*, 25. 9. 09.

² *Ibid.*, 19.6.09.

In a word, we must re-nationalise ourselves first before India can find back her soul. But what is sketched above shows only the broad lines laid down for our endeavour. Much remains to be said as to the details of the work. Sri Aurobindo has dwelt on these details at great length. Let us try to summarise.

Political freedom is the first condition for national regeneration. This freedom has been achieved, almost in spite of ourselves: it was a divine gift. This point has to be emphasised, for we are apt to belittle its significance. It was God's purpose, says Sri Aurobindo, that India should be free; therefore the world conditions have been so arranged that the foreigners were compelled to leave. That it was a divine event, this achieving of Indian freedom, is no mystical jargon; the proofs of it are writ large over the history of the movement from its inception, the historian has only to examine the facts and wonder at the "miracle."

But "Liberty is a Goddess who is exacting in her demands on her votaries, but if they are faithful she never disappointed them of their reward."¹ Primary among these demands, in the case of India, is that she must become aware of God's purpose in uplifting her once more; India must know her destiny. This she can do only if she delves into her past, knows in it the "perennial from the transient" as our Prime Minister put it the other day in her message to the UNO, and by that vivifying knowledge gets back the energy, the faith in herself that alone can prepare her for the future. She must at the same time have a precise idea of what she is going to be in the future; for whatever the glories of her past they can never compare with the glories that are to be. In this matter of the future, there is an imminent danger that in her hurry to achieve, she may not give time enough for deep thought, rush into things that attract, perhaps even try to imitate. Imitation would be disastrous, whether it be of America, Russia or Japan; for to forsake one's *Svadharmā* for another's, however seemingly glorious that might be, is to lose one's soul and invite death, *svadharme maraṇam śreyah, paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ*.

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India must remain true to her ideals, "the great Vedantic ideals of freedom, unity and the godhead in man."² But she can no longer remain content to hold these ideals as applicable to the exceptional individual alone, leaving the commonalty to grovel in the dust. The call is on her to spiritualise the race. "A widest and highest spiritualising of life on earth...is the mission for which she was born and the meaning of her existence."³

But "to spiritualise in this sense a society of slaves, slaves of power, slaves of authority, slaves of custom, slaves of dogma, slaves of all sorts of imposed laws which they live under rather than live by them, slaves internally of their own weakness, ignorance and passions...can never be a successful endeavour. They must shake off

¹ *Ibid.*, 5.2.10.

² *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, I.3.

³ *Ibid.*, III.2.

their fetters first in order to be fit for a higher freedom..."¹ Therefore, if India is to fulfil her mission, she has to subject herself to a thorough cleansing process first. She has to remodel her education, not by a mere tinkering with details but in its fundamentals, so as to prepare a nation of freemen and not slaves. She must free her society and economics and politics of all that stands in the way of the spiritual ideal, create freedom, unity and the Godward urge where bondage and division and strife and the strenuous pursuit of the ego are the prevailing motifs. She must establish her relations with neighbours near and far, not only on a basis of equality and strength and amity, but also and more as a living example of the spiritual ideal. And in order to do all this with anything even remotely approaching the truth of her spirit, she must develop a leadership of élites who will have thoroughly studied and assimilated in its innermost sense the entire cultural heritage of India, her religion, spirituality and yoga, her science, philosophy, literature and art, her social economic and political systems, the secret of her educational methods,—who in other words will have become entirely "Indian". This implies a complete reorientation and reappraisal of our ancient and medieval culture, a task formidable in its proportions but absolutely indispensable if India is to find her soul.

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And we must be ready to recognise the Avatar when he comes—or has he come and gone and we have been asleep? For it is only the Avatar who can guide and help this nation in its crucial hour, "When the Avatar comes, we like to believe that he will be not only the religious guide, but the political leader, the great educationist, the regenerator of society, the captain of cooperative industry, with the soul of the poet, scholar and artist. He will be in short the summary and grand type of the future Indian nation which is rising to reshape and lead the world..."²

SANAT K. BANERJI

¹ *The Human Cycle*, Chapter 21.

² *Karmayogin*, 25.9.09.

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1970)

12. A Character-Analysis of Savitri

It is not possible to treat *Savitri* in the same fashion as we have done *Paradise Lost*—the quest after a hero. For the question of heroism is an accomplished fact here as the title reveals and the epic unfolds. But an examination of the chief characters both human and occult would not be out of place and would show the clarity of treatment here as opposed to the ambiguity of approach and depiction of character there.

The epic revolves around one central character and there is no side-theme or lengthy narration to distract the reader from the central point of focus. The treatment has no jaunty breaks from earth to heaven, then from Paradise to Inferno. The first book reveals the awakening of the mind, the seed of possibility of Savitri. It gives us an opening for the divine Spirit to descend, as typified by the tapasya of Aswapathy—his discipline and his call. The second book shows the path of the traveller, the human seeker, across the expanses of the worlds till he discovers the lonely summit of the World-Mother who grants him the boon of her own descent on the earth. This is the third book.

Savitri takes birth in book four and till book twelve we meet her childhood, her growth, her quest, her love and her struggle with Death and finally the supreme victory. In the passage we meet many worlds, characters, personalities; we meet the darkest and the brightest aspects of things; we meet the types, the beings dwelling in the various parts of the consciousness. Although she is the supreme Divine, Savitri has to pass, like the human being, through the phases of growth, the experience of pain and strife; she too has to rediscover her soul. This gives the stamp of naturalness to the depiction. Sri Aurobindo explains the mystery of the Divine's assumption of birth and —contrary to common conception—does not give it any special privilege. Milton is baffled by the son of God, Christ, and his human and divine aspects remain ever an enigma. A poetical representation would have given Savitri a super-mundane personality, depicting her mainly as a divine being without any taint. Such a representation might be ideal, but surely not authentic. For when one takes birth in certain conditions one must not violate the existing conditions; if that were not so, this birth would be meaningless because the aim of it is to bear the human burden and uplift man as a being conscious of the grim reality of mortal existence. India has a conception of this truth, but not the West where the distinction between heaven and earth is very sharp, and the concept of Avatarhood is not very clear.

Savitri has mainly three aspects—the Divine as the mother, the Woman as a cosmic entity and the Madran Princess as her material manifestation. In the first she is the supreme Person, the Arch-Creatrix in the second she is the soul and in the third she is the human personality with a name, a status, existing under conditions and subject to earthly laws. There is no division or opposition between these and their presence is neither an anomaly nor an impossibility. We shall examine them separately.

Although it is the entity behind that is of supreme importance, we recognise her as the human personality that is manifested here, and it is this that is the source of all events and drama. The other two personalities behind are eternal in their essence and no mutation in them is possible. When there is no change or growth there is no drama as we humanly conceive it. The element of drama starts with mutation, that is, with manifestation on earth. In the eternal sphere there is no play of opposites, which makes drama impossible, for the clash of powers, personalities, aims, the will and effort to overcome oppositions give us the elements of drama. Drama in the ethereal realm can be possible when our human perception and cognition have become sufficiently changed to grasp their import. With this transformation lacking we have to be content with earth as the home of all dramatic possibilities. That is why Sri Aurobindo places his theme on earth, in spite of its being a drama of a subtler and occult character. That is why Savitri's manifested aspect has been given so much emphasis.

Savitri, when we first meet her, has been described not as a human child; her rare character and her ethereal nature are there from the very outset. This, in fact, is the very core round which the personality of Savitri is built. The human personality is the super-structure. A Wordsworth, or even a Milton would have painted her as sober, quiet, grave, not given to any play of fancy, prim and moral. But Sri Aurobindo does not paint the child Savitri in that fashion—he rather reveals her as a Flame nursed by earth, a seed of godhead without any moralised identity. The sweetness, the light that is there, is inborn in her and these give us a glimpse of her origin. The whole passage regarding her childhood and adolescence is short, for these play a minor part in the life of Savitri. Sri Aurobindo is not writing a detailed biography, but is concerned with her mission—and he is not carried away like Milton to give greater emphasis on wrong places. He discloses no details of her life but rather the psychological implications and subjective turns; he shows the rainbow-world she lived in, apart and alone, although her name was in every mouth and her grace and beauty were the pride of Madra. She is here as an apprentice learning the earth's ways, the patterns, the secrets of mortality, because she is essentially divine and has to acquire earthly ways to shield her inner divinity. This divine aspect Sri Aurobindo points to again and again. Her mortality is assumed by her.

Her feelings and sentiments were not akin to a normal human's. She possessed what a man acquires by countless ages of labour and the mixed fruit of toil and divine grace. There was no division between her soul and other souls. All souls were reflections of her soul and the dividing wall are the mind and body. She had the sweep of the gods which ordinary men could not cope with. She attempted to delve into

man's knowledge, laws, formulas; but these she found to be inadequate for gaugings the cosmic knowledge, the divine wisdom. Man's epistemology was faulty. It could not capture her innate immensity of self.

She found in painting, sculpture and music the celestial voice, line and body of the unseen. In the dance she found the rhythm of the cosmos—a moment's sway of the Eternal.

To raise all to the height of light attained was her desire. She did not possess any human hopes, or a virgin's dream of an ideal mate, a safe and cosy home. Her divine nature was too vast to house such paltry aims. The native greatness that she possessed was too great to be conned by ordinary minds. Men saw in her a light which they grasped as a guiding beacon. But beyond that they could not climb to meet her greatness, her spirit's altitude. It is not disdain or pride but a living light, will and rapture that made her alien to man's drab existence. She touched his highest points, his deepest mysteries, but could not come down to the human ground of Ignorance. Hence, in a way, she was inscrutable to common humanity.

Sri Aurobindo describes her not as an impossible person but as a concrete incarnation. His account of her is not far-fetched or improbable. He does not add anything that is ornate, ideal, something that is created out of fancy, away from reality. He has before him a real divine person whom he is describing faithfully. And in spite of the subjective treatment, we feel the reality. As against this we have the descriptions of God and Christ by Milton; they do not convince the deeper mind; we have an impression that all was a mental, ethical and fanciful portrayal. What he has imbibed from theological texts is here. But what Sri Aurobindo recounts does not occur in any text; his model is life. Indeed, not life in its common and facile sense, dark, drab, low, lacking in splendour, felicity, which the modern writer of today exults in, but life that is illumined by the soul, the spirit, the inner fire, the mystic resplendence. Such an existence is beyond the scope of any materialist or intellectual; for they have studied only the surface side of the common and ignorant life and not seen its upper reaches, its beautiful fields, its vastnesses that are spaces of God. Sri Aurobindo has lived this existence, has plumbed its inner depths and scanned its divine horizons—hence the drabness, the ugliness and the ignorance that are there in common life are not here. What he speaks of is not a cloudy impossibility but belongs to soul-actuality, the actuality that is not in life's unmasked ugliness but in its beauty. For life's essential expression is for the Beautiful. Its purpose is to manifest the hidden; its aim is to reach out towards immortality.

Savitri's human aspect is revealed by her growth. Essentially, the gods have no decay or birth. But, born in the field of change, her outer nature must obey its outer law, although in her inner nature she is free. Also the frailty that visits man, becomes in Savitri the opportunity of a greater manifestation. The innate dream of the virgin for a happy wedlock becomes in Savitri a conscious drive to find her soul-mate. It is an act which is predestined, and which will open out for her the fulfilment of her divine destiny.

Her love in this context bears an altered significance. Love in the human sense is attachment, and in no case furthers the cause of the soul's liberation. But love has a different meaning to Savitri. She does not seek love either as a romantic pastime or as a vague emotional necessity, but as the essence of her existence. This seeking after love is a conscious one, for all she does or seeks has already been planned out for her. Her instrumental nature, here in birth and in the flux of change, merely obeys the inner dictates. Her passage through the woods, cities, villages and distant places reveals to her what exactly is her need. All she surveys and passes by for, these faces, these lives do not answer the soul-form already engraved in her inner stillness. She wants the one and the unique, for whose redemption she was born, the leader of the evolution.

In Satyavan she finds what her soul has previsioned. Her surrender to him shows the deep need in her to give herself and relive by this dedication. By this act she does not obliterate her individuality but fulfils herself, because she has discovered her ground of action. There is no outer exuberance or romantic vitality in her love. For love is not a sudden flash of lightning but the steady light of the dawn that never becomes less or more intense due to emotional changes. Once found, it gives a constant light and for it she is ready to face and conquer death. Such constancy is not possible for a woman of the senses or of passions, where surges come and leave a desolate emptiness.

But sweet or ethereal, Savitri is not devoid of will or firmness. When occasions arise she can rise to great height and declare her sovereign will. It is not the naked will of the ego, parading as something absolute, but it is the will that has made itself one with the highest will and carries out the divine purpose. This will is neither moral in its content nor religious in its import. Altruism, meek benevolence are not its aim. It seeks the highest, the noblest that the human instrument here can embody. It has no eye on desire or the satisfaction of claims. A divine purity, an unfallen sincerity, a great selflessness are the marks of its character. But from outside we cannot gauge that Savitri possesses such a living and dynamic will. Even Aswapathy and Narada are baffled by its presence and its force. The presence of this will, along with many divine qualities, does not make Savitri proud. And yet she seems to know the real worth of her character although there is no outer vaunting or show. She possesses them as parts of her nature, indifferent to their superhuman aspects, because after all these are reflections of the spiritual modes and statuses. She possesses them in her diviner portions that stand above and behind this outer projected personality which is a mask.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

THE SECRET SELF AND THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

Part II—The Second Liberation

6. SURRENDER

SURRENDER, the last of our principles for the second liberation, is perhaps the most difficult to realise. Not at all difficult if all that has gone before has been truly realised, each in itself, building up to a perfection of consciousness that wants the Divine and only the Divine.

Indeed, I believe surrender is only possible if one has sufficient faith to aspire with constancy. A constancy that leads to a natural devotion coupled with true sincerity. A sincerity born of a practice of the first six principles where gratitude and remembrance are a constant state, and truthfulness and right-attitude a natural way of life.

All life then is a prayer towards Perfection; all prayer a communication, a union with the Divine. Surrender means simply giving, giving of oneself. This is the supreme secret that man comes to know. But first he has *to be* before he can give. He cannot give what is not there. He has to be an individual. To individualise himself he has to organise himself around his central being. To bring together all the wayward and dispersed parts of his being and integrate them around the ego, preferably for a purpose or for an ideal which the true self or the psychic supports.

To be able to give oneself, consecrate oneself, surrender oneself, one obviously has first *to be* oneself and have the power to give that which is worthy of being given to the Divine.

The average human being is usually a collection of fads, fears and fancies, fluctuating between pride, passion, joy and remorse; never knowing how he is going to act from one moment to another. Rarely knowing how he will react to any given circumstance, borne up on the 'promise' of better things to come but seldom making an effort to contribute to that promise or its fulfilment, he is, by and large, a creature that wants always to possess like a child who clutches at bright and moving objects, hungry for anything that attracts the five senses, hungry to satisfy inborn desires, avid for colour, sound, touch and delight—ignorant that all this hunger is an illusion and the 'delight' merely an appearance hiding a truer and greater Delight beyond. He fears to give up any of these delights he knows for the delights he knows not of. He fears to give up what literally constitutes his 'world.' How then should he surrender?

Only when the appearance falls away, only when the illusion sheds its coverings and the Truth stands naked before the eye of humility is there a possibility of the

human creature entering into the higher Delight. Then the heart is overwhelmed with love; devotion is a dance of joy, gratitude an infinite song of Bliss. Surrender: the only answer to the Voice of God.

(Concluded)

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

TWO POEMS

I

THE strident blows and terrors
 Of your unannounced coming,
 The mortal rigours and fatigues
 Of your unexplained going—
 These, when I understand—
 Thanks to a thoughtful friend—
 I mind no more.
 My psyche is ashore.

2

SHALL I sing all my songs to you?
 Shall I tell you my secret stories?
 Ah, what shall I receive from you
 In return? I am a hard bargainer.
 In return for opening before you
 My treasure, I ask the kindest from you;
 Like the bow seeking over the strings
 Of a violin
 I seek the contacts which make our existence
 A symphony.

CHITRA

ASPECTS OF THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of January 1971)

TAGORE said to someone, showing a part of his finger:

“What you know is only this much, what you don’t know is limitless.”

That’s why I love to read the life-experiences of different people.

Here I narrate the life-story of two unripe, inexperienced youths, one from the East and the other from the West. One begins his inner journey at the age of 14 and the other becomes a bit conscious of his future at the age of 12. The first goes to the West in the course of time as an ambassador of Indian Culture, the other comes to the East in quest of Light. Destiny brings them together in the Delhi branch of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and both come to Pondicherry.

At the age of 12, X, from the West, found in himself some attraction for Hathayoga. At 18 he came across the Gita which captured his heart. There rose in him a longing to meet someone like Vivekananda or Raman Maharshi. He saw to it that no undesirable habit like smoking should take hold of him. He abstained from meat, so when he came to India there was for him no food problem. Thus began his preparation for a pious and nobler life from the age of 18 or rather 12.

He came to India by land. In Lebanon he inquired of a person if he was an Indian.

X told me with a joyous heart, “It was he who put me on my destined path. His words are still ringing in my ears:

‘If you want to study Indian Spirituality, you must go to Pondicherry and see the Mother.’

“Thus you see,” continued X, “I wanted to go to Rishikesh and settle in an Ashram there but destiny brought me to Pondicherry.”

“Do you feel at home in the Ashram?”

“Very much,” straight came the answer.

“What prompts you to say so?”

“I was beset with hundreds of problems which I believed would be solved in India. In fact it was this thought that sustained me throughout my long journey. In my heart there was a deep quest for light and I am happy to say that I have found it here.

“When I sit before Sri Aurobindo’s Samadhi,” he went on, “I find myself flooded with spiritual power. It is not a momentary experience. I have been here since April and am leaving for my native place by the end of October [1970] but

whenever I am able to open myself I feel the vibration, at times the pouring in of something at the Samadhi.

“The Spirit is refreshed, as a flower among rocks is refreshed by the morning dew. It is this that gives me the feeling that I have come to the right place.”

He looked calm and contemplative. The combination of simplicity and spirituality gave the impression of a man above the common run.

The experience at the Samadhi he complemented by another:

“The next thing that attracted me the most was the Mother.”

“In what way?”

“O it cannot be described,” he said in an altered tone. “The look that she gave me when I stood before her for the first time is unforgettable. I felt a radiant light and power penetrating into my being. Certainly there is much truth in what is said about her in the little book *The Mother*.”

Two days before his departure he was granted another occasion to see the Mother:

“She didn’t utter a word but her sweet smile was more eloquent than a hundred spoken words.” He spoke out spontaneously without my asking.

Now about the youth of 14 whom we shall call Y, and about his “never-dying fire”. As a novice he roamed about recklessly wherever his feet carried him. Wandering aimlessly he reached the Himalayan borders and then passed on to Tibetan territory without a passport at a time when the border was completely sealed due to India’s war with China.

Greatness does not come as a gift. One has to pay dearly for it.

While moving among the snowy peaks of Tibet bare-headed and bare-footed, braving the biting winds, several times he was made the target of Chinese bullets and about a dozen times taken into captivity as a suspected spy but each time the Grace came to his rescue. All this brought him tremendous power of endurance.

After a time he settled in Nepal and gave himself to intense studies, twelve to sixteen hours a day. The great love of his hermit life in Nepal was Sri Aurobindo’s books. The more he read the more he got lost in the writings. Those were the days of his grim preparation for a yogic life. He would not allow any woman to touch his feet.

Once a youthful Nepali maiden with some spiritual standing wished him to stay at her place, giving him full assurance that he could carry on his sadhana as he pleased. Raising a serious objection Y said that he was young and she too was in the prime of her youth; why should he thrust himself into the arms of the devil?

This brought a sharp rebuke from the girl’s wounded heart, “I can hardly bear to think that you are so weak. Is this the sign of mastery? With such poor strength do you hope to conquer the fortress of the devil?”

Struck dumb Y kept staring at her.

“Be at ease,” the girl assured him, “I will not pull you down. Being a woman

I can't go about seeking for a man of realisation. With your help I have hoped to rise to a higher rung of spirituality."

Deeply impressed Y made her drink the nectar of Sri Aurobindo's words.

He has been coming to the Ashram off and on for the last four years. Once I inquired of him if he could follow our way of life. His answer was:

"Sri Aurobindo Ashram is like a vast ocean. A year or two are required to enter into its inner life. In my first visit I avoided meeting with people. In my second visit I took up the work of washing vessels in the dining room, to kill my ego. This helped me to know something of real life here."

He says that whenever he is called upon to speak in public, the only subject that comes to his lips is Sri Aurobindo. He speaks extempore, never from any notes. Rather, one day earlier he keeps himself void of thought and then speaks whatever comes from within without effort. Thoughts and words come pouring in. They have never failed him. He feels confident that he could face any audience and their volley of questions with equanimity. When he looks back he feels overwhelmed to realise how the Grace has moulded his life.

In a corner of his heart there lurked a desire to go to foreign countries but he never thought even in his dreams that it would be fulfilled soon and without the least effort on his part. X whom he met at the Delhi Centre offered to take him to the Continental countries by Air and both flew together.

This is the story of one among those hundreds and thousands for whom it is not necessary to label themselves as disciples of Sri Aurobindo. His literature is there for all. Anyone who feels a call can avail himself of its riches.

The one thing essential is to make a free and full gift of oneself.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

ART: REVELATIONS OF BEAUTY. Quotations on Art from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Price Rs. 5.

AN elegant set of some thirty cards, magic cards that will never let you lose any time you deal them—a gem in the range of gifts for friends, with a taste for the aesthetically beautiful. Its artistic presentation is true to its subject matter, a pleasure to the eyes and the hands—a fitting frame for the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's words on Art.

It would be perfect indeed but for the lack of a few minor finishing touches: a more careful and hand-sown wrapping in a happier colour, matching the cover, and a cloth and cardboard covering more lovingly perfected in detail. The quotation on p. 17 should have been fully implemented:

“Art is not only technique or form of Beauty, not only the discovery or the impression of Beauty—it is a self-expression of consciousness under the conditions of aesthetic vision and a perfect execution.”

Even without these improvements it is a collector's joy, proving the fineness of taste of both the designer and the buyer.

CARMEN NEVILLE

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

NINETEENTH SEMINAR

22ND FEBRUARY 1970

THE Nineteenth Seminar of the New Age Association was held on the 22nd February 1970 from 8.30 to 10.05 a.m. in the Hall of Harmony at the Centre of Education. The subject approved by the Mother was:

What is the big change for which the world is preparing? How can one help it?

The following five members participated as speakers:

Ayati, Basavjit, Lotus, Romen, Subhash.

The Seminar began with a short piece of the Mother's recorded music. Then Kishor Gandhi read out the following answers of the Mother to two questions pertaining to the subject of the Seminar:

Question: What is the big change for which the world is preparing?

The Mother's answer: A change of consciousness. And when our consciousness will change we will know what the change is.

Question: How can one help for this change to come?

The Mother's answer: The change does not need our help to come, but we need to open ourselves to the consciousness so that its coming is not in vain for us.

Then Abhijit read out the following passage from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* which gives a marvellous description of "the big change" that will occur in human consciousness and life when the New Supramental Consciousness manifests upon earth:

When superman is born as Nature's king
His presence shall transfigure Matter's world:
He shall light up Truth's fire in Nature's night,

He shall lay upon the earth Truth's greater law;
Man too shall turn towards the Spirit's call.
Awake to his hidden possibility,
Awake to all that slept within his heart
And all that Nature meant when earth was formed
And the Spirit made this ignorant world his home,
He shall aspire to Truth and God and Bliss.
Interpreter of a diviner law
And instrument of a supreme design
The higher kind shall lean to lift up man.
Man shall desire to climb to his own heights.
The truth above shall wake a nether truth;
Even the dumb earth become a sentient force.
The Spirit's tops and Nature's base shall draw
Near to the secret of their separate truth
And know each other as one deity.
The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.
Then man and superman shall be at one
And all the earth become a single life.
Even the multitude shall hear the Voice
And turn to commune with the Spirit within
And strive to obey the high spiritual law:
This earth shall stir with impulses sublime,
Humanity awake to deepest self,
Nature the hidden godhead recognise.
Even the many shall some answer make
And bear the splendour of the Divine's rush
And his impetuous knock at unseen doors.
A heavenlier passion shall upheave men's lives,
Their mind shall share in the ineffable gleam,
Their heart shall feel the ecstasy and the fire,
Earth's bodies shall be conscious of a soul;
Mortality's bond-slaves shall unloose their bonds,
Mere men into spiritual beings grow
And see awake the dumb divinity.
Intuitive beams shall touch the nature's peaks,
A revelation stir the nature's depths:
The Truth shall be the leader of their lives,
Truth shall dictate their thought and speech and act,
They shall feel themselves lifted nearer to the sky,
As if a little lower than the gods.

For knowledge shall pour down its radiant streams
 And even darkened mind quiver with new life
 And kindle and burn with the Ideal's fire
 And turn to escape from mortal ignorance.
 The frontiers of the Ignorance shall recede,
 More and more souls shall enter into light,
 Minds lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear
 And lives blaze with a sudden inner flame
 And hearts grow enamoured of divine delight
 And human wills tune to the divine will,
 These separate selves the Spirit's oneness feel,
 These senses of heavenly sense grow capable,
 The flesh and nerves of a strange ethereal joy
 And mortal bodies of immortality.
 A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
 And take the charge of breath and speech and act
 And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns
 And every feeling a celestial thrill.
 Often a lustrous inner dawn shall come
 Lighting the chambers of the slumbering mind;
 A sudden bliss shall run through every limb
 And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.
 Thus shall the earth open to divinity
 And common natures feel the wide uplift,
 Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
 And meet the deity in common things.
 Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
 The Spirit shall take up the human play,
 This earthly life become the life divine."

(*Savitri*, 1951 edition, Book XI, Canto I, pp. 331-33.)

After this the 5 members delivered their speeches. Then Kishor Gandhi read out some extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother pertaining to the subject of the Seminar. Some of these speeches and extracts will be published in the coming issues of *Mother India*.

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

EYE EDUCATION

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: My daughter is four years old, she has developed a squint, her right eye turns towards the nose.

A: Young children can usually be cured of a squint by the use of atropine. A one per cent solution is dropped into the better eye or both eyes daily for about one year. An atropine makes it more difficult for the child to see, and makes the sunlight disagreeable. In order to overcome this difficulty the child has to relax the eye muscles, and the relaxation cures the squint. Swaying the child in a circle is also very useful.

Q: I use glasses for reading only and am fifty years old. Without glasses I cannot work. Now these glasses do not give clear vision. What to do?

A: Concentrate on a candle flame while counting 100 respirations. Read small print with glasses in good light as well as in candle light.

Q: I have discarded glasses. I ride considerably on a cycle. I often go on a trip in my car and after every trip I find my eyes stronger. This, I think, is due to the rapid changing of focus in viewing scenery going by so fast.

A: The rapid motion compels rapid shifting and helps in relieving eye strain.

Q: Every year I get an inflammation in my eyes, the glare troubles me and I use dark glasses. Can my eyes be benefited?

A: There will be no more trouble if you can take sun treatment with closed eye for ten minutes daily. At night practise concentration on a candle flame and read fine print.

Q: When I travel in a bus, my eyes are greatly strained.

A: Mark all side objects moving backwards, do not stare at any object. Better look at the movements of the conductor or read something so as to avoid the habit of staring.

DR. R.S.AGARWAL
The School for Perfect Eyesight