

MOTHER INDIA

MAY, 1971

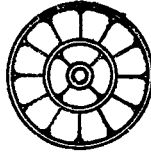
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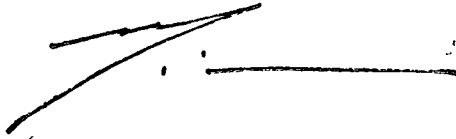
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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“SRI AUROBINDO’S ACTION” AND THE WAY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

A LETTER TO THE MOTHER AND HER REPLY

The Letter¹

IN a talk where you insist exceedingly on the importance of reason, you say among other matters : “The first thing that every human being should be taught, as soon as he is able to think, is that he must obey reason, which is a super-instinct of the species.” And then you point out that you are not speaking of Yogis but of ordinary humanity.

It is this humanity that Udar addresses. And the fundamental advice of “Sri Aurobindo’s Action” for one’s attitude in life is: “When you have a problem, go inward, open yourself; the solution has to come from inside, and not be the result of reasoning.”

Now, is that not to expose humanity to all sorts of vital influences, all kinds of fantasies, by putting aside good sense because it is reasonable?

The talk mentioned above finishes thus: “The reign of reason must end only with the advent of the psychic law which manifests the Divine Will.”

But are there many who can open themselves to the psychic influence?

Do you approve the determinedly inward attitude recommended by “Sri Aurobindo’s Action”? If so, can one consider that the advent of the Hour of God permits today an attitude that was inadvisable yesterday?

ALAIN

The Reply

L’Inde est le pays où la loi psychique *peut et doit* régner et le temps est venu pour cela *ici*. C’est d’ailleurs le seul salut possible pour le pays dont la conscience a malheureusement été faussée par l’influence et la domination d’un pays étranger, mais qui, malgré tout, est en possession d’un héritage spirituel unique.

Bénédiction.

MÈRE

2-8-1970

India is the country in which the psychic law *can and must* reign and the time has come for that *here*. Besides, this is the only salvation possible for the country whose consciousness has unfortunately been falsified by the influence and domination of a foreign country, but which, in spite of everything, is in possession of a unique spiritual heritage.

Blessings.

THE MOTHER

2-8-1970

¹ This was originally in French.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

TRY to be satisfied with what you receive—for it is a matter of *receptivity*, because—you can believe me—I *give always much more* than what the 'people are capable of receiving—and in two or three minutes they could have quite enough to go for a whole month. But the mind interferes with its ignorant demands and the whole thing is spoiled.

29.I.1964

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of March, 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.)

MARCH 21, 1956

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "There is one fundamental perception indispensable towards any integral knowledge... It is to realise the Divine in its essential self and truth..."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 130.)

How can one understand the Divine?

By becoming Him, my child. And that is the only way: by identity. As Sri Aurobindo says: "We know the Divine and become the Divine, because we are That already in our secret nature." It is because He is the very essence of our being that we can become Him and, consequently, understand Him; otherwise it would be quite impossible.

How can we find the Divine within ourselves?

Well, it is exactly what I just said.

What do you mean precisely?...By what method?

First of all, one must begin to search for Him, and then that must be the most important thing in one's life. The will must be constant, the aspiration constant, the preoccupation constant, and that must be the only thing one truly wants. Then one will find Him.

But naturally, if in one's life one thinks of Him for five minutes and is busy with other things for three-quarters of an hour, there is not much chance of success. In any case, that will take many life-times.

This must not be a pastime. It must be the exclusive preoccupation of one's being, the very reason of one's existence.

Is that all?

Tell us something, Sweet Mother, for we don't have any questions.

Why say anything?

I can say this, that the most precious gifts are given in silence.

(Meditation)

MARCH 28, 1956

"If a departure from the world and its activities, a supreme release and quietude were the sole aim of the seeker, the three great fundamental realisations¹ would be sufficient for the fulfilment of his spiritual life: concentrated in them alone he could suffer all other divine or mundane knowledge to fall away from him and himself disencumbered depart into the eternal silence. But he has to take account of the world and its activities, learn what divine truth there may be behind them and reconcile that apparent opposition between the Divine Truth and the manifest creation which is the starting-point of most spiritual experience."

I don't understand the meaning. Why is this opposition the starting-point of spiritual experience?

What one ordinarily calls a spiritual experience is the intense need of something other than the life one lives, and most often this awakens after difficulties or disappointments or pain or sorrow, all these things which bring unhappiness and at the same time arouse the aspiration for a better condition. It is that which is generally at the root of spiritual experiences: this is a negative thing.

The positive need to know the Divine and unite with Him comes generally much later. I say generally; there are exceptions, but generally it is at first a flight from the miseries of life which pushes you towards the spiritual life. Very few people, if they were in a state of perfect inner and outer harmony, and nothing unpleasant or painful happened to them, very few people would think of the Divine; they would not care about it, they would adjust themselves to the half-measures of ordinary things and would not search for an absolute. That is what Sri Aurobindo means.

But, when one has found this spiritual life, one realises that it is everywhere behind all appearances, as well as directly without appearances. Behind appearances it also exists; this is what he says: we must find and reconcile these oppositions. There is a place or a state of consciousness in which they are reconciled.

But, first, one must go like this (*gesture of ascent*) and then come back like this (*gesture of descent*). There!

¹ Realisation of the Immanent Divine, the Cosmic Divine and the Transcendent Divine or Nirvana.

Sri Aurobindo writes here: "And yet there is not only in him [the seeker] or before him this eternal self-aware Existence, this spiritual Consciousness, this infinity of self-illuminated Force, this timeless and endless Beatitude. There is too, constant also to this experience, this universe in measurable Space and Time, some kind perhaps of boundless finite, and in it all is transient, limited, fragmentary..."

(Ibid., p. 136)

"Boundless finite"—what does that mean?

That is a way of formulating something which cannot be formulated.

In fact, one could almost say that the details are finite and the whole is infinite, but he does not say "infinite": he says "boundless"—boundless in space and boundless in time, but still limited in itself. Each detail has its particular limit and the whole has none.

Sweet Mother, still one thing more which I haven't understood: "At times these two states of his spirit [the consciousness of eternity and the consciousness of the world in time] seem to exist for him alternately according to his state of consciousness; at others they are there as two parts of his being, disparate and to be reconciled, two halves, an upper and a lower or an inner and an outer half of his existence. He finds soon that this separation in his consciousness has an immense liberative power, for by it he is no longer bound to the ignorance, the inconscience."

(Ibid., p. 136)

I don't understand this.

It is because this divine is within you and you can taste of an eternal life that the outer life seems unreal to you; and consequently, because of this opposition you begin to do what is necessary for passing from the external life to the divine life. If there were no opposition in the being, if you were a middle term between the two, this could last indefinitely; you would not objectify your difficulty and your need, you would continue to live as you do, without reflecting, by force of habit.

It is also because of this opposition that one part of the being acquires the habit of watching the other. Otherwise one would live without even realising what one does, automatically.

(Addressing a disciple) Something to say?

Why is it that "All the Timeless presses towards the play in Time; all in Time turns upon and around the timeless Spirit"?

Because it is thus, my child. All that is unmanifested wants to manifest, and all that is manifested tries to return to its Origin.

It is as though you asked me: "Why is the earth round and why are there the sun and the planets?" It is like that, the law of the universe is like that.

Most of these things are simply statements of facts; but there are no explanations, for one can't give mental explanations. One can give them, but each thing one wants to explain is explained by another, which has to be explained by another yet, which again has to be explained by another—indefinitely. And you can go round the universe,—and with one thing explaining another, that explains nothing at all.

The only thing one can do is to say: It is like that.

That is why it is said that the mind can know nothing: it can know nothing because it needs explanations. An explanation is valuable only to the extent it gives you a power to act upon the thing explained, otherwise what's the good of it? If explaining something does not give you the power to change it, it is absolutely useless, for, as I said, the explanation you give entails another explanation, and so on. But if, through an explanation you obtain a power over a thing, to make it different from what it is, then that's worth the trouble. But this is not the case. Here, you turn round and round in this way, just on the surface, instead of springing up into the air towards a new height.

Is that all?

(Turning to a disciple) Yes, yes, you have already asked your question, but still, you may ask it aloud if you like.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of a first realisation where one sees on the one hand the eternal Existence, Brahman, and on the other the existence of the world, Maya, as two contradictions; then there is another realisation, the supramental, and he says: "The once conflicting but now biune duality of Brahman-Maya stands revealed to him as the first great dynamic aspect of the Self of all selves..."

(Ibid., p. 138)

When this is realised, does it mean that our lower nature has consented to change? At that moment, is the duality seen as biune?

Evidently. I don't understand your question.

So far, there is this duality of which he speaks.

That is an appearance, that's not a fact.

When one realises that this duality does not exist...

That means one has gone behind the appearances, one has witnessed a fact which was always there.

Is that a promise?

But after all, when one has made a progress, one has made a progress! I don't understand your question. If you make a progress, you make a progress; if you perceive a truth behind an illusion, generally this is considered a progress.

But here, he explains again that even the lower nature...

Yes, but as you have realised that this is one and the same thing....That is what I was saying a while ago: when you have an explanation, does it suffice to change your outer nature? Has it changed, are you different from what you were in your outer nature?

No.

No. So something more is necessary. That is what I meant; an explanation does not suffice, something else is needed. Evidently, it marks a progress to know something one did not know before, but unless this knowledge becomes dynamic and changes into a power for transformation, it is not of much use.

Do you understand? Good.

(Addressing a child) You want to ask a question? Ask. Have a little courage.

Sweet Mother, how can one increase one's understanding?

One's understanding? Ah, well, it is by increasing one's consciousness, by going beyond the mind, by widening the consciousness, deepening the consciousness, by touching regions which lie on the other side of the mind.

(At the time of the first publication of this talk, in 1962, the Mother added the following commentary to the last question.)

I would add one thing now: experience. Changing knowledge into experience. And experience will automatically lead you to another experience.

But by "experience" I mean something quite different from what it is usually taken to mean. It is not to have an experience of what one knows—that is of course obvious—but instead of knowing and understanding (even a knowledge much higher than mental knowledge, even a most integral knowledge), it is to become the Power which makes *that be*. Fundamentally, it is to become the *tapas* of things—the *tapas* of the universe.

It is always said that at the beginning of the Manifestation there is *Sachchidananda*, and it is put in this order: first, *Sat*, that is to say, pure Existence; then *Chit*, the self-awareness of this Existence; and *Ananda*, the delight of Existence which makes it continue. But between this *Chit* and *Ananda*, there is *Tapas*, that is to say, the self-realising *Chit*. And when one becomes that *tapas*, the *tapas* of things, one has the knowledge which gives the power of changing things. The *tapas* of things is what governs their existence in the Manifestation.

When one gets there, one has the feeling of so formidable a power!—It is the universal power. One has the feeling of a total mastery of the universe.

(To be continued)

INTERFUSIONS

(The poet, in submitting these two pieces to the Editor, prefixed a note which may be helpful to the reader: "There are two ways of Divine Action, one symbolized by Leda and the Swan and the other by Zeus and Danaë. I wanted to communicate these modes of Divine Influx.")

I

O LOVING One,
 Thou comest from afar
 Time and again!
 Sudden like a Swan,
 A shudder, a shock, a jar,
 A tremor, a rapture, a pain,
 In a flash begun and done!

But O the gestation's days
 And endless nights forlorn,
 Till the star of a floating phrase
 Augurs the birth of a Dawn.

2

O Loving One,
 Thou comest from afar
 Time and again!
 Not like the dazzling Sun
 But a shower of golden rain
 Star upon star—
 Not with a flap and a flash
 Nor with a crack-down crash
 But with a tingle of nerve and flesh,
 Soft like a silken mesh.
 Invincible glory is born
 With aegis and Gorgon's head,
 Herald of a glimmering dawn
 And Love and Beauty's reign.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

WHAT SRI AUROBINDO WROTE ABOUT WORLD WAR II

AN EXTENSIVE PARTLY UNPUBLISHED TEXT

(On May 8, 1945, World War II against Hitlerite Germany came to an end. It may be appropriate to publish in the present month the long letter Sri Aurobindo wrote on September 3, 1943, to Dilip Kumar Roy, who had forwarded to him a friend's note along with his own questions concerning World War II which at that time was at an advanced stage but whose true implications were not seen by many, particularly in India. The form in which this letter has already been published (Messages of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, 1952, pp. 10-15) follows a text that is incomplete, as indicated in the book itself by a series of dots at six places. Even the complete text as it existed at the time is now found to have been not the full one. Among the papers of Sri Aurobindo, there has come to light a typescript bearing Sri Aurobindo's revisions in ink. Besides changes in several expressions, some important matter has been added, sometimes of fair length. We are reproducing this new version, with the questioner's own letter prefixed. Here and there, in view of the additions, some paragraphing has been done by us in the interests of convenience.)

Dilip Kumar Roy's Letter

I HAVE just received (2-9-43) a letter from Krishnaprem in which he has qualified his objection to violence as his letter enclosed will explain. I have no doubt hereanent specially after your approval of violence against Hitler who has become such a menace to civilisation. Only one point sometimes gives rise to misgivings in me. This I told Nolini when he read out to us his masterly analysis of the values at stake in this war and the real issue: it is his comparing this war to Kurukshetra implying (when he identified Hitler's cause with the Asura's) that the Allies were here the Pandavas, which is exactly what troubles Krishnaprem. You know I had never, from the very beginning, doubted the wisdom of having all our efforts (the entire humanity's) directed and all our available forces organised against Hitler; but is it not somewhat unwise to compare him with Duryodhana (though I myself have done it), for then do not the Allied Powers become the Pandavas, by a kind of inference as it were? I have received of late from correspondents and friends objections to this our dubbing the Allies "modern Pandavas." Those were protagonists of virtue (dharma) and unselfishness, which can hardly be said of the Allies, and (with the exception perhaps of China) are they not all exploiters of the weaker races and essentially imperialistic—

more or less? Won't you, please, throw some light on this question? It is, I think, somewhat important, that is why I ask.

Sri Aurobindo's Reply

What I have said is not that the Allies have never done wrong things, but that they stand on the side of evolutionary forces. I have not said that at random, but on what to me are clear grounds of fact. What you speak of is the dark side. All nations and governments have shown that side in their dealings with each other,—at least all who had the strength and got the chance. I hope you are not expecting me to believe that there are or have been virtuous governments and unselfish and sinless peoples? It is only individuals and not too many of them who can be described in that style. But there is the other side also. Your correspondents are condemning the Allies on grounds that people in the past would have stared at, on the basis of modern ideals of international conduct; but looked at like that, all big nations and many small ones have black records. But who created these ideals or did most to create them (liberty, democracy, equality, international justice and the rest)? Well, America, France, England—the present allied nations. They have all been imperialistic and still bear the burden of their past, but they have also deliberately spread these ideals and introduced self-governing bodies and parliamentary institutions where they did not exist; and whatever the relative worth of these things, they have been a stage, even if a still imperfect stage in a forward evolution. (What about the others? What about the Axis' new order? Hitler, for example, says it is a crime to educate the coloured peoples, they must be kept as serfs and labourers.) England has helped certain nations to be free without seeking any personal gain; she has conceded independence to Egypt and Eire after a struggle, to Irak without a struggle. On the whole she has been for some time moving away steadily from imperialism towards a principle of free association and cooperation; the British Commonwealth of England and the Dominions is something unique and unprecedented, a beginning of new things in that direction. She is turning in spirit in the direction of a world-union of some kind after the war; her new generation no longer believes in an imperial mission;¹ she has offered India Dominion independence (even, if she prefers it she can choose or pass on to isolated independence,) after the war, on the base of an agreed free constitution to be chosen by Indians themselves; though this, it has been feared, leaves a loophole for reactionary delay, it is in itself extremely reasonable and it is the Indians themselves with their inveterate habit of disunion who will be responsible if they are imbecile enough to reject the opportunity.

All that is what I call evolution in the right direction—however slow and imperfect and hesitating. As for America she has forsworn her past imperialistic

¹ In the already published version this clause of the original letter has been modified to run: "her new generation has no longer the old firm belief in mission and empire."

policies in regard to Central and South America, in Cuba, the Philippines,—everywhere apart from some islands in the Pacific which would go plop into other hands if she withdrew from them. It is perhaps possible, some suggest, that she may be tempted towards a sort of financial imperialism, the rule of the Almighty American dollar, by her new sense of international power, or led into other mistakes, but if so we may fairly assume from her other strong tendencies that she will soon withdraw from it. The greater danger is that she may retire again into a selfish isolationism after the war and so destroy or delay the chance of a possible beginning that may lead eventually to some beginning of a free world-union.² But still there again is the evolutionary force.

Is there a similar trend on the part of the Axis? The answer is plain enough both from their own declarations and their behaviour. Avowedly and openly, Nazi Germany today stands for the reversal of this evolutionary tendency, for the destruction of the new international outlook, the new Dharma, for a reversion not only to the past, but to a far-back primitive and barbaric ideal. She fully intended to reimpose it on the whole earth, but would have done so if she had had, as for a time she seemed to have, the strength to conquer. There can be no doubt or hesitation here; if we are for the evolutionary future of mankind, we must recognise that it is only the victory of the Allies that can save it. At the very least, they are at the moment the instruments of the evolutionary Forces to save mankind's future, and these declarations of their own show that they are conscious of it. Other elements and notions there are, but the main issue is here. One has to look at things on all sides to see them steadily and whole. Once more, it is the forces behind that I have to look at, I don't want to go blind among surface details. The future has first to be safeguarded; only then can present troubles and contradictions have a chance to be solved and eliminated.

For us the question put by you does not arise. The Mother made it plain in a letter which has been made public that we did not consider the war as a fight between nations and governments (still less between good people and bad people) but between two forces, the Divine and the Asuric. What we have to see is on which side men and nations put themselves; if they put themselves on the right side, they at once make themselves instruments of the Divine purpose in spite of all defects, errors, wrong movements and actions (past or present or possible backslidings in the future) which are common to human nature and to all human collectivities. The victory of one side (the Allies) would keep the path open for the evolutionary forces; the victory of the other side would drag back humanity, degrade it horribly and might lead even, at the worst, to its failure as a race, as others in the past evolution failed and perished. That is the whole question and all other considerations are either irrelevant or of a minor importance. The Allies at least stand for human values, though they may often have

² Editor's Note: There may be some oversight here, with the word "beginning" twice used. The whole phrase is an addition written in the margin of the typescript and left in perhaps without the finishing touch.

acted against their own best ideals (human beings always do that); Hitler stands for diabolical values or for human values exaggerated in the wrong way until they become diabolical (e.g. the "virtues" of the *Herrenvolk*, the master race). That does not make the English or Americans nations of spotless angels nor the Germans a wicked and sinful race, but as an indicator it has a decisive importance.

Nolini, I suppose, gave the Kurukshetra example not as an exact parallel but as a traditional instance of a war between two world-forces in which the side favoured by the Divine triumphed, because its leaders made themselves his instruments. I don't suppose he envisaged it as a battle between virtue and wickedness or between good and evil men or intended to equate the British with the Pandavas, nations with individuals or even individuals with individuals—shall we say, Stafford Cripps with Yudhisthir, Churchill with Bhima and General Montgomery with Arjuna! After all, were even the Pandavas virtuous without defect, calm and holy and quite unselfish and without passions? There are many incidents in the Mahabharata which seem to show the contrary, that they had their defects and failings. And in the Pandava army and its leaders there must have been many who were not paragons of virtue, while there were plenty of good men and true on Duryodhana's side. Unselfishness? but were not the Pandavas fighting to establish their own claims and interests—just and right, no doubt, but still personal claims and interests? Theirs was a righteous battle, *Dharmayuddha*, but it was for right and justice in their own case. The Allies have as good or even a better case and reason to call theirs a righteous quarrel, for they are fighting not only for themselves, for their freedom and very existence, but for the existence, freedom, maintenance of natural rights of other nations, Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, Belgians, Dutch, French, Greece, Yugoslavia and a vast number of others not yet directly threatened, they too claim to be fighting for a Dharma, for civilised values, for the preservation of great ideals and, in view of what Hitler represents and openly professes and what he wishes to destroy, their claim has strong foundations. And if imperialism is under all circumstances a wickedness, then the Pandavas are tinted with that brush, for they used their victory to establish their empire continued after them by Parikshit and Janamejaya. Could not modern humanism and pacifism make it a reproach against the Pandavas that these virtuous men (including Krishna) brought about a huge slaughter (alas for Ahimsa!) that they might establish their sole imperial rule over all the numerous free and independent peoples of India? Such a criticism would be grotesquely out of place, but it would be a natural result of weighing ancient happenings in the scales of modern ideals. As a matter of fact such an empire was a step in the right direction then, just as a world-union of free peoples would be a step in the right direction now,—and in both cases the right consequences of terrific slaughter.

Who are the people who have such a tenderness for Hitler and object to his being compared to Duryodhana? I hope they are not among those (spiritual people among them, I am told) who believe—or perhaps once believed?—Hitler to be the new Avatar and his religion (God help us!) to be the true religion which we must help to establish

throughout the wide world or among these who regard Hitler as a great and good man, a saint, an ascetic and all that is noble and god-like. I don't see why Hitler should not be compared to Duryodhana, except that Duryodhana, if alive, might complain indignantly that the comparison was a monstrous and scandalous injustice to him and that he never did anything like what Hitler has done. By the way, what about Krishna's "*jahi shatrun, bhunjasva rājyam samriddham*"?¹ An unholy and unethical bribe? Or what on earth did he mean by it? But battle and conquest and imperial rule were then a Dharma and consecrated by a special form of sacrifice. We should remember that conquest and rule over subject peoples were not regarded as wrong either in ancient or medieval times and even quite recently but as something great and glorious; men did not see any special wickedness in conquerors or conquering nations. Just government of subject peoples was envisaged but nothing more—exploitation was not excluded. No doubt, many nations in the past were jealous of their own independence and some like the Greeks and later the English had the ideal of freedom, more especially of individual liberty. But the passion for individual liberty went along in ancient times with the institution of slavery which no Greek democrat ever thought to be wrong; no Greek state or people thought it an injustice to take away the freedom of other Greek states, still less of foreign peoples, or deemed it immoral to rule over subject races. The same inconsistency has held sway over human ideas until recent times and still holds sway over international practice even now. The modern ideas on the subject, the right of all to liberty, both individuals and nations, the immorality of conquest and empire, or, short of such absolutist [attitudes]² such compromises as the British idea of training subject races for democratic freedom, are new values, an evolutionary movement, a new Dharma which has only begun slowly and initially to influence practice,—an infant Dharma that would be throttled for good if Hitler succeeded in his "Avatic" mission and established his new "religion" over all the earth. Subject nations naturally accept the new Dharma and severely criticise the old imperialism; it is to be hoped that they will practise what they now preach when they themselves become strong and rich and powerful. But the best will be if a new world-order evolves which will make the old things impossible,—a difficult task, but not, with God's grace, absolutely impracticable.

The Divine takes men as they are and uses them as His instruments even if they are not flawless in character, without stain or fault, exemplary in virtue, or angelic, holy and pure. If they are of good will, if, to use the Biblical phrase, they are on the Lord's side, that is enough for the work to be done. Even if I knew that the Allies (I am speaking of the big nations, America, Britain and China) would misuse their victory or bungle the peace or partially at least spoil the opportunities open to the human world by that victory, I would still put my force behind them. At any rate

¹ "Conquer thy enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom".

² Editor's Note: In this expression added in ink between the lines, either a word like the one we have suggested has dropped out or "absolutist" is a slip for "absolutes."

things could not be one-hundredth part as bad as they would be under Hitler. The ways of the Lord would still be open—to keep them open is what matters. Let us stick to the real issue and leave for a later time all side-issues and minor issues or hypothetical problems that would cloud the one all-important tragic issue before us.

SRI AUROBINDO

P.S. This is in answer to what is implied in your letter and, I suppose, in those of your correspondents, not to anything in Krishnaprem's letter. His observations are all right, but circumstances alter cases. Ours is a sadhana which involves not only devotion or union with the Divine or a perception of Him in all things and beings but also action as workers and instruments and a work to be done in the world, a spiritual force to be brought on the world, under difficult conditions; then one has to see one's way and do what is commanded and support what has to be supported, even if it means war and strife carried on whether through chariots and bows and arrows or tanks and cars and American bombs and planes, in either case *ghoram karma*:¹ the means and times and persons differ, but it does not seem to me that Nolini is wrong in seeing in it the same problem as in Kurukshetra. As for war, violence, the use of force to maintain freedom for the world, for the highest values of human civilisation, for the salvation of humanity from a terrible fate, etc. the old command rings out once again after many ages for those who must fight or support this battle for the right: "*Mayaivete nihata pūrvameva nimitramātram bhava Savyasāchin.*"²

¹ Terrible action

² "By Me and none other already even are they slain, do thou become the occasion only, O Savyasachin."

UNPUBLISHED FRAGMENT OF A DRAMA BY SRI AUROBINDO

Achab—Esarhaddon

ACHAB. Stamp out, stamp out the sun from the high blue
And all-overarching firmament of heaven;
Forget the mighty ocean when it spumes
Under the thunder-deafened cliffs and soars
To crown their tops with spray, but never hope
That Baal will excuse, Baal forgive.
That's an ambition more impossible,
A thought more rebel from the truth.

ESAR. Baal!
It seems to me that thou believst in Baal!

ACHAB. And what dost thou believe in? The gross crowd
Believe the sun is God or else a stone.
This though I credit not, yet Baal lives.

ESAR. And if he lives, then you and I are Baal,
Deserve as much the prayer and sacrifice
As he does. Nay, then, sit and tell him, "Lord,
If thou art Baal, let the fire be lit
Upon thy altar without agency,
Let men believe." Can God do this, and if
He cannot, if he needs a flint and fuel
And human hands to light his sacred fire,
Is he not less than man? The flint and fuel
Are for our work sufficient. What is he
If not a helpless name that cannot live
Unless men's lips repeat him?

ACHAB. And the flint,
The fuel? Who made these or formed the hands
That lit the fire? the lips that prove him nothing?
Or who gave thee thy clear and sceptic brain,

Not crying at each turn for human blood
 Which means the loss of so much labour, gold,
 Soldiers and strength. This Mithra's worship is.
 Come, priest, you are incredulous yourself,
 But guard your trade; so do I mine, so all.
 Will it be loss to you, if it be said
 Baäl and Mithra, these are one, but Baal
 Changes and grows more mild and merciful,
 A friend to men? or if instead of blood's
 Unprofitable revenue we give
 Offerings of price, and heaps of captive gold
 In place of conquered victims?

ACHAB. So you urge,
 The people's minds are not so mobile yet.

ESAR. If you and I agree, who will refuse?
 I care not, man, how it is done. Invent
 Scriptures, forge ancient writings, let the wild
 Cry out the will of Baal while they slashed.
 You are subtle, if you choose. The head of all
 Assyria's state ecclesiastical,
 Assured a twentieth of my revenues,
 And right of all the offerings votaries heap
 On Mithra, that's promotion more than any
 Onan can give, the sullen silent slave,
 Or Ikbäl Sufas with his politic brain.

ACHAB. Why that?

ESAR. You think I do not know! I see
 Each motion of your close conspiring brain,
 Achab.

ACHAB. And if you do, why hold your hand?

ESAR. That's boldly questioned, almost honestly.
 Because a State is ill preserved by blood,
 The policy that sees a fissure here,
 A wall in ill repair, and builds it up,
 Is better than to raze the mansion down

THE ORDINARY AND THE TRUE VITAL BEING

SOME ANSWERS BY SRI AUROBINDO

During my English class, I feel that my vital is attracted by my teacher's vital...It opens itself to him freely, even though there is a call from within to be restrained and self-contained. Well?

SRI AUROBINDO: It simply means that X has a stronger vital than your own and his dominates yours. 5-4-1934

You wrote, "It is the mind that does not want it (illness). The vital when left to itself often wants illness etc." Does your answer mean that during the process of my sadhana a time has come when the mind's control is taken away and the vital has become free and prominent?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. It can happen at all times, not in a particular stage of the sadhana. In the human being the vital is usually strong enough to do many things in spite of the mind. 7-4-1934.

You have to go on increasing the inner peace until it imposes itself on the vital also—refusing always to accept the vital suggestions. 16-4-1934

The vital does not act on good reasons—it does not care for reasons and uses them or invents them only to justify itself to the mind. The vital acts on a basis of desires, fancies, impulses etc. 23-4-1934

Is it true that the vital has non-cooperated with the present sadhana?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is for you to observe. There are usually parts of the vital and physical which do not take great interest in the sadhana—until the whole being is converted. 23-4-1934

Be less indulgent to your vital. You pampered it for a long time, that is why you are finding difficulties now. 24-4-1934

You must get the vital to change itself and make it understand that nothing else will be tolerated. 24-4-1934

The ascending movement is often felt. What does the vital do in joining with the higher consciousness?

SRI AUROBINDO: It comes under its influence first—afterwards it develops into the true vital, which is an extension of the higher consciousness. 1-5-1934

There are many parts at which an opening has to be made. The heart is the seat not only of the psychic, but of the emotional vital which covers it. 3-5-1934

The tendency to be miserable is a matter of habit in the vital. It can come at any moment so long as the habitual movement has not been entirely dissolved.

You said "a great difficulty" because you are affected and do not sufficiently detach yourself from the movement. You have not thrown off the rule of the vital.

12-5-1934

Has one to conquer and change only a limited number of vital beings to be free from the vital troubles?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. It is the vital consciousness that has to change. When it is transformed the vital beings can do nothing to mind or vital. As for the physical, that depends on its being open and plastic to the Force, receiving the Force freely within it and assenting to its working.

18-5-1934

If it were only the physical inertia, then to what is all this tamas and fall from the sadhana due? Does my vital not make an attempt to come out of it?

SRI AUROBINDO: The vital is acquiescing in the condition as it is affected by the physical tamas.

23-5-1934

Reject it (the vital) more and more firmly—do not allow it to touch or affect you. Separate its feelings from you as not yourself.

31-5-1934

It is of course the vital that is making you ill by its revolts and dissatisfactions. It is dissatisfied and in revolt, (1) because it is not attended to when it complains about the Mother not paying proper attention to it etc, (2) because I have discouraged your flood of questions by short answers, and suggested to you a different and more natural method, (3) because of the want of speed in the progress which is itself the result of its own unquietness.

If you get rid of the vital dissatisfaction it will be easier to deal with pains.

11-6-1934

You have to react against this foolish movement and not accept it or indulge it. If you can't do it yourself, you must at least have the full will for it and call the Mother's force down to it. This is a known thing, you have only to apply it.

12-6-1934

In the evening, when we were all looking at the Mother my vital felt a little egoism or pride. On other occasions it feels depression or dissatisfaction. When will it then feel delight?

SRI AUROBINDO: The ordinary vital is always like that. It has either to be quietened entirely or replaced by the true vital before it can change.

19-6-1934

Why did I feel a psychic love towards A and T? The Force works intensely and it seems to have descended into the body. Consequently, it creates in the vital and heart something like emotions which are eager to express themselves to other people. But there seems to be something wrong in this movement. Will you kindly point it out?

SRI AUROBINDO: The Divine Force does not create such emotions. It is the vital that is trying to raise up its own activities under the pretext of their being "psychic" or movements of Force.

9-7-1934

Upto now I had to deal only with the mind, vital and physical. But today I found for the first time my heart took certain things very deeply. I don't know how to keep it under the psychic control?

SRI AUROBINDO: The heart is part of the vital—it has to be controlled in the same way as the rest, by rejection of the wrong movements, by acceptance of the true psychic surrender which prevents all demand and clamour, by calling in the higher light and knowledge. It is not usually however the heart that bothers about mental questions and the answer to them.

14-7-1934.

From NAGIN DOSHI

TWO POEMS

INVITATION

I think
 the trees are in love
 with the air,
 and if you, my love,
 will enter there,
 my breath-intuned flute
 will endeavour
 to answer your ardour,
 and we shall echo
 the earth's entreaty
 and the sky's answer.

AS YOU ARE

As I love
 your enchanting existence
 and I care
 about the eternity in it all,
 I shall stay
 a step or two
 of the psyche away,
 and see
 you as you are.

CHITRA

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 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.

We are interrupting the sequence of the Talks with a few that were somehow left out. Once these have been published, we shall resume the usual series.)

NOVEMBER 26, 1939

M: *(after Sri Aurobindo sat up in bed before walking)*: TOMORROW I am going, Sir. One request before I go. May I massage your leg?

SRI AUROBINDO *(curtly though with a slight smile)*: No.

N *(to M who looked nonplussed)*: Why do you want to massage? From the medical point of view or for personal satisfaction?

M: From the medical point of view.

SRI AUROBINDO: One day's massage won't do any good.

M: No, but afterwards N and others may continue.

MUL: You want to begin first?

SRI AUROBINDO: They can as well begin.

M *(again outdone and feeling perhaps a little humbled)*: All doctors agree that massage is the right thing.

SRI AUROBINDO: I know!

M: If it is not objectionable, may I know, Sir, why you object?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a secret.

The subject could not be pursued any further and the Mother came in soon after. Now Sri Aurobindo's walking was over. Then M came slowly in front and took up another line.

M: Bose is wild against the Congress Resolution. He says the Government have already closed the door while Congress keeps the door open and it is going to lick their shoes.

SRI AUROBINDO: How can Congress lick their shoes if the door is banged? The Government have not closed the door yet. —

M: What is your opinion about the resignation of ministers?

SRI AUROBINDO: I have no opinion.

M: But are they right? Is it a correct step?

SRI AUROBINDO: Everything is correct if it is successful!

M: Not always true, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: I mean, in politics.

M: People say the ministers are wrong.

SRI AUROBINDO: Who are people?

M: Bose and the Leftists, I also think they are wrong.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why?

M: Well, they were once doing so much good work, village uplift etc. Now everything will stop and perhaps be undone.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not the point. They accepted Ministership for a greater purpose and if they find that that is not going to be fulfilled, what can they do?

M: But they could have accepted and remained and tried for further progress.

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case the Moderates also could have said the same thing and you would have been where you were.

S: They wanted a clarification of the war aims and, when the government is not willing to give even that, how can they remain?

M: But do you think this will lead to anything?

SRI AUROBINDO: How can I say? It depends on what they do next and how they work things out. Nowadays there are no more resolutions, only speeches. Gandhi and Nehru's resolutions are speeches. I got tired reading and gave up in the middle.

S: They want to put everything clearly.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but that can be done with brevity also.

S: C.R. could have done it perhaps.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he could have.

M: Will the Government go against Congress Ministry reforms? For example, prohibition?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not likely unless India as a whole wants it to go.

M: But the Parsees may agitate.

SRI AUROBINDO: They are only a small number. A government can't undo it for a tiny minority.

After this there was a lull. M seemed to be thinking of some other points.

N: What next, Dr.?

S: He seems to be thinking.

SRI AUROBINDO: He wants to find the sort of questions to which I may give a

less agnostic reply. He wants Supramental answers while I am giving only Overmental ones. (*Laughter*)

M: Huque seems to be an incapable fellow; he goes on talking rabidly. Sikandar seems more able.

SRI AUROBINDO: Sikandar is a very able politician.

M: Huque seems to have surrendered to Jinnah. He has no position of his own.

SRI AUROBINDO: He never had.

M: And yet Bose couldn't drive him out.

SRI AUROBINDO: Bose is no better statesman than Huque.

M: Is he still under his brother's influence and guided by him?

N: Not quite but their programmes and opinions seem to be the same. They say the country is ready for launching civil disobedience.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they can talk anything. They don't know what it means after launching such a thing.

After this P asked M, in an aside, about the present Gaekwar's family. One of us noted that the Gaekwar had seven children and his wife was only 25.

SRI AUROBINDO: At 25 seven children?

M: She was married at thirteen.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then they started at once. (*Laughter*) What industrious people they are!

M: Four boys and two girls.

SRI AUROBINDO: And one in between? (*Laughter*) Otherwise how seven?

M: No, she started labour-pains while I was coming here. The next issue of the Baroda paper will bring the tidings.

SRI AUROBINDO: Tidings of the next issue? (*Laughter*)

P: When I read of the Gaekwar touring all about, I thought: how could the Rani accompany him?

M: The Gaekwar does not take her with him.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why?

M: Well, Sir, she comes in his way.

Soon after M's question about massage, N said about a Chinese Professor that he had been much impressed by his interview with the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he says he is going to conquer China for me. He also says the Chinese are a selfless people. He seems to think all people can be selfless!

EVENING

M: I had a vision of snakes coming towards me but being thrown off.

SRI AUROBINDO: Snakes usually mean hostile forces. But in getting a vision you have the reward of your patience!

M: The 26th of November is said to be "Immortality Day". What is meant by it? The Mother used to give Immortality flowers on this day every year.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know. What do you understand by it?

M: Physical immortality; but why the 26th? Did you attain it on this day?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be to remind you that you have to realise it as I can't remind you every day.

M: But we have to be reminded every day just as Medalasa reminded her child.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Divine parents have much to do while Medalasa had nothing else.

M: Why was that Bokul flower (meaning Patience) violet, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Maybe Sri Krishna's compassion for your patience or perhaps he has the compassion to wait patiently for you. (*Laughter*)

M (*addressing N after a short pause*): Try Arnica oil for your hair.

N: No need. I am waiting for the Supramental.

SRI AUROBINDO: To remove the rest of your hair or save it?

M: We are all eagerly waiting for the Supermind.

SRI AUROBINDO: For your liver, Nirod's hair and Amal's leg?

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 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.)

1. MIND (*manas bhoomi*): the mental, the vital, and the physical mind.

1. THE MENTAL:

(1) The thinking and dynamic mind is the Buddhi. The centre of thought is the space between the eye-brows. The centre of the will-part is behind it. Higher, there are centres of higher functions.

Speech comes from life, it is life expressing itself; all the same it is a function of the Buddhi; its centre is in the throat. Mental vision creates forms. Dreams and memory are everywhere, in this part of the mind, in the vital mind. The life-force supports—*i.e.* is the basis of—all ideas...

(2) The mental-vital is the emotional part of the mind and the sense-border of the mind. Here is not the thinking mind, with its deliberate creation, but the life-force rising up into the mind and taking the form of thought. The centre now is the heart. It is also in this part of the mind, where we have the mind's sense-border, that we feel presentiments. Senses belong to the prana, but the mind receives images through the senses. The substance of mind here is a mixed one.

(3) The physical part of the mind is different from the physical mind. It is mechanical in its movements. It moves in an undulating way, it is the customary and habitual mind.

(4) The supramental part of the mind is Intuition.

2. THE VITAL:

(1) The vital has on the surface of it, as its central principle, desire. The true vital is not desire, but a force trying to realise itself in life, a force which seizes, gets hold of matter, tries to work upon it and get enjoyment through it. The vital is the

source of ambition, of the force of money, of the demand for women, of demand of any kind.

(2) The vital mind does not think or reason like the thinking mind but it is conscious of itself in its own way and thinks in its own way, imagines and fancies without reference to facts. It is the vital mind which says, "I will do this, I will do that." It is that which, in Mussolini, says, "Italy shall be master", that which says in India, "Swaraj within one year." Associated with this there may arise an emotion of patriotism and the vital mind may urge reason to support it by argument and rationalisation. A form of the vital-mind is desire-mind or force-mind. The vital mind is not to be confused with the mind of the animal. It is nothing of the kind. The animal is simply vital. Whatever of mind there is in it—association, planning—is there to serve life.

(3) The physical part of the vital makes little limping movements; it is here that irritation and anger arise. Grief is of the vital mind.

(4) The supramental part is vital intuition which sees the thing to be done at once and does it. Here is also the aesthetic movement. Style for the sake of style, form for the sake of form, the choice of words, disposition of colour, expression in a beautiful manner—all this comes from this part of the vital. The source of inspiration in some people may be from above but the expression has always to come through the vital.

3. THE PHYSICAL:

(1) The physical mind is part of the physical consciousness. It is this which sees and deals with physical objects. It supports and helps the Buddhi.

(2) The vital-physical is the seat of health, of the vital functions in the body. Control of the vital-physical substance is necessary, for a musician may have rich harmonies in his mind, but if the vital-physical is not all right (the nerve-ends, so to say, of the fingers) he can't put them on the instrument. Like the physical mind and brain, these nerve-ends support the higher action. Again, a poet's mind may be full of ideas, but if his vital-physical is not controlled he can't put them down on paper. The vital-physical receives shocks from outside and responds.

(3) The physical consciousness works in the flesh and cells; it works according to a certain truth or habit impressed on it.

(4) The supramental part: the body has its intuitions. All civilised bodies have lost it; but a natural body knows what it needs. It does not desire like the vital, it knows what to eat and what not to eat. It is the vital which says, "I like this, I like that", it desires; it is not the body that says so. It is the mental which says, "This thing is good for the body, this bad." If there is no interference from the vital and the mental, the body intuitively knows what it needs.

If the body is left to itself, it knows whether it is a vegetarian body or a non-vegetarian body. Similarly it rejects poisons at the very sight of them; this faculty is prominent in the animals. Poisons attack the life-principle in the body, cause death. Other causes of death are through stopping of the vital centres, through suggestion, fear

(nerves, e.g. the sight of snakes)... Chitta is the basic stuff of consciousness. There is Chittakasa and there is Chidakasa. All impressions are stored in chitta. Here is the fundamental memory. Our memory (in the Buddhi) is only that which is kept by attending to a thing and deliberately fixing it in the mind. It fades away soon, but not so the subliminal memory; that is why there is an attempt to give lessons to students by wireless while they are sleeping.

The question arises whether Reason would have developed, if it had not been occupied with itself but simply followed the vital impulses. But a better and truer development of life would have been there and Reason too would have been the better for it if it had turned upon life, purified the desires, transforming them instead of rejecting them; but in its exclusiveness it rejected all the vital intuitions, all the body-intuitions. As a result we have lost much. Reason developed at the expense of these things....

In the foregoing, classification, emotions and the sense-mind are classified under the mental-vital. In some classifications they are included in the vital. But though the senses are of the prana, mind receives the images and becomes conscious of them. It is therefore proper to call them mental-vital.

Q. Is there any necessary relation between the psychic being and the aesthetic being ?

There is no necessary relation. The aesthetic being moves on the vital plane and on the physical. The aesthetic sense of beauty is the sense of beauty of form, beauty of life. The psychic sense of beauty is the sense of beauty of something more inward, something that is not much thrown out into form, something subtle behind that is not expressed, that moves the soul. E.g. in some persons the smile is not physical nor vital, but psychic, the charm of the soul manifests through it. Apart from the aesthetic beauty of form, an artist who is not merely a master of form may give us the beauty of an idea. E.g. we say, "How fine this idea is!" Or we may feel the life of an idea or the harmony and the significance of a thing; but this beauty which is not of form is not psychic, you may call it psycho-mental, psycho-vital or psycho-physical if you please. The subtle aesthetic emotion is nearer the psychic. Spiritual beauty is something more delicate, we find it in Indian Art. In modern Bengali painting we get here and there a touch of the psychic. E.g., in Nandalal's "Cow lost in the forest". Nandalal usually draws his inspiration from the psychic plane. But the beauty of intelligence in a face is not psychic.

Aesthetics helps to purify the vital being, to refine it and this purification is a first step in spiritual development. Moreover, aesthetic beauty is a part of spiritual beauty and therefore must not be rejected.

Psychic beauty in flowers is not in the form, the delicacy, the colour or smell; these things may be or may not be a channel for the manifestation of the psychic. The smell of the jasmine is such a channel. In the jasmine there is a great deal of psychic beauty; in many flowers, whatever of psychic there is in them, is hidden, not so transparent as in the jasmine. The psychic beauty in a flower is something subtle that es-

capacities our senses. The lotus also is psychic. It is a mystic flower. The rose is strongly vital but it is one of the most perfect flowers.

Q. Is there a psychic being in the flower?

Why not? There it is, it is the manifestation of the soul of the flower.

Q. Is the psychic being in the flower more developed than that in man?

Maybe. For example, dogs have a more developed psychic being. Take my cat "Big Boy". When he loves one particular she-cat, it is physical love that he manifests; when he loves another one, it is vital love; with still another it is emotional love; with Goldie it is psychic love.

Q. Is man, then, inferior to these animals?

Sometimes he is worse than the devil. Because he stands high in the scale of evolution it does not follow that he is much different from animals. The animal is vital, man is mental. The psychic is not a scale in evolution like life and mind. The psychic is there behind and without psychic development you cannot reach the supramental. Because man has reached the level of mind and can consciously use the forces that are around him, we simply generalise that he is on a higher level than the beasts. But he can be worse than a beast. With his refined vital being and his refined intellect he can be devilish. The divine possibility is there everywhere—in flower, in animal and in man. Only it has to be formulated, organised and this man alone can consciously do.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

MATRIMANDIR : VISION ON WAY TO REALITY

A LETTER AND A POSTSCRIPT

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, January, 1971.

Dear Hero,

As I was coming out of Richard's Nursery the other day, I saw a tiny red flower and, believe it or not, it is called 'Curiosity'. I thought that that was a flower which suited me. Well, I hope I've succeeded in arousing your curiosity about Auroville through these letters.

I can almost see you struggling to say, 'Yes, yes, I do remember about Matrimandir.' As I promised you last time, I'll write about it now.

I must warn you that as yet Matrimandir has taken its shape only in the brain of the architect Mr. Roger Anger. He has made a tiny model of the building and only thus far it has taken a concrete shape. When I saw the model and heard the detailed description of the building, I could not help thinking that this plan must have come to the architect in a vision. It seems to have come from out of this world. The trouble is that though I can almost see it in my imagination I don't find adequate words to give you the thrill it gave me. Anyway you know I am one of those fools who 'rush in where angels fear to tread', so let me try to describe it.

Matrimandir will have four roads coming to it from four directions. Each road will end with a fountain and in between two roads there will be two canals. Thus the roads will have eight canals between them. All the canals will meet under the main building of Matrimandir and form a lake there. This lake will have four pillars at equal distances. The shape of these pillars won't be the conventional round or square. If you look at these pillars from the road they will resemble a children's slide but the lakeside view will show sheer straight pillars. These pillars will support a huge football-like structure. Its diameter will be about thirty-three metres. This 'football' will contain one single hall which will have four walls in white concrete. There will be empty space, about three feet, between the walls of the hall and the outer layer of the globe. Over the layer will come a plastic covering. This covering will be studded over with small and very thin brass discs which will be so loosely fixed that the slightest wind can play upon them and create harmonious music out of them. Won't it be almost a constant hymn of the earth and a music of the spheres!

The architect wants to give the impression of an unsupported golden globe floating in space. So the four pillars on which the globe will be supported will be hidden and the whole area will be surrounded by artificial hillocks. These in their turn will be covered with the twelve gardens Richard will create.

As you must realise I have not talked of an entrance into the globe. That too will be quite unique. The four supporting pillars will have a hidden entrance and inside

the globe the passage will spiral through the hollow space between the hall and the outer wall of the globe. There will be also a staircase in all the four pillars. The globe will have an opening at the top and at the bottom through which sunlight can filter in. The hall will have nothing but a crystal placed in the centre and you can imagine the beauty of sunlight on the crystal. I can almost see prisms of colours shooting in all direction in the hall. And to add to it this whole mystic beauty will be reflected in the sparkling waters of the lake below Matrimandir. I was at once reminded of Konarak, the well-known Sun-Temple where, legend says, a huge image of the Sun-God was kept floating in space by the help of magnets. When enemies attacked the temple they broke the magnets and the image fell down and broke into bits. The hall in Matrimandir will have four entrances.

After seeing the model I could vividly feel that Matrimandir is a golden opportunity that the Divine has thrown to the earth in answer to her call. While giving a message for Matrimandir the Mother said "Let the Matrimandir be the living Symbol of Auroville's aspiration for the Divine."

People say that I live in a world of imagination but even for me Matrimandir was something that I could have never imagined. When this building will be completed, it will open a new chapter in the history of architecture.

We saw many other plans on paper. Actually each building was unique of its kind. The beach in Auroville will have a motel. Its round floor is going to stand on many pillars and the space below will be utilised for parking cars. Each flat will be constructed in the form of a step-ladder. This construction will give each flat a little open space for inmates to create their own gardens. The first floor will have a swimming pool and it will be surrounded by a garden.

I saw another shape. The whole building will look like a huge mushroom. The passage will be through its lone pillar. The whole circumference will have circular glass windows.

When I came out of Mr. Anger's office I felt as if I had come out from the dreamland where Vishwakarma and Mayadanava of our mythology may have worked. These were the sellers of dreams. It's thrilling to know that these dreams will take shape in our lifetime and in our land.

Sincerely yours, ANU

February 22, 1971.

P.S. I thought that this wonderful construction would take ages to get started; at least ten years if not more. Perhaps Auroville means the unexpected. Imagine my surprise when Kishorilal came two days before the Darshan (21.2.71) and informed me that on the 21st of Feb. the foundation stone of Matrimandir would be laid. The time too was fixed. The ceremony would start at 5.30 in the morning. Kishorilal said that he would come at 4.30 to pick me up.

We started exactly on time. I had heard that some of our students had started

for Auroville on foot the previous night! At about 3.30 in the morning, I had heard many cycle bells and excited voices calling "Hurry up! We can't wait. They have already gone!" I saw that the road to Auroville was crowded with buses, cars and cycles even though it was pretty dark. We met many cyclists who had started at 3.30. As we left the main road and turned to the dirt-road we could see a single light burning on the top of Ganesh's temple. Ganesh sits at the very entrance of Auroville. The rest of the place was in darkness. Above us the stars were shining bright as diamonds. In this hour of Nature's repose it was difficult to know whether it was midnight or the hour before dawn.

All of a sudden tiny golden bits of light pierced the darkness. By this time we had reached 'Centre' or 'Peace' and the pleasant break in the darkness was due to torches that the people held near the entrance. A number of boys were guiding us with their torches. I thought that just as we were guided by the light in this darkness, the world too will find torch-bearers who will lead it out of its chaos.

The tree near 'Centre' had two or three gas-lamps. As soon as we reached it a woman came to us and gave us a lighted incense stick. We saw a number of people distributing incense sticks to the visitors. A torch-bearing student guided us to the place of meditation. My curiosity got the better of me and I asked the guide to let me see his torch. It was a piece of green bamboo which had been dipped in kerosine oil.

We reached the place of meditation and I saw two big flood-lights and mats spread in front of them. We were asked to sit there. The lights were so bright that for a few minutes I could see nothing beyond them, but soon my eyes grew accustomed to them and I saw something unusual. There were twelve square red pillars which formed a circle between them. The pillar in front of us was less than half a foot. But then gradually from both sides the pillars rose in height till the last two were about ten feet high. In the circle lay dry wood and hay. After a while Navajata and Nolini joined us. Navajata had brought the foundation-stone with him. You surely remember Bob. Well, he put his torch to the dry wood and at once the flames shot up. Hundreds of sparks flew up in the darkness. As I looked at the fire I thought that creation too must have started in the same way — thousands of sparks coming out of the original fire. Along with the flames rose music composed by Sunil Bhattacharjee. I could hear new footsteps in this music, thousands of feet marching joyously towards a new adventure. We heard the Mother's voice: "Let the Matrimandir be the living Symbol of Auroville's aspiration for the Divine."

I saw the flames becoming less intense and, believe it or not, as I looked at the flames I felt as if Rishis from the invisible world had stood around this new sacrificial fire and chanted mantras.

Over us the moon had become pale and in the east were waves of light. As the flames died down the music too ended. The chief architect Mr. Anger came to Nolini and escorted him to the site. As I turned I saw that a similar fire was burning near the banyan tree and the lotus-shaped jar where the foundation of Auroville was

laid. Mr. Anger brought us to the site which was a deeply-dug-up square. Nolini, Navajata, Mr. Anger and Auroville's first citizen Aurofilio, a child of about 5, went down the square. We saw another deeper square inside this square. This was the place for laying the foundation-stone. Jean Maslow announced over the mike that Nolini would say a few words. Then we heard Nolini's voice over the mike. He said that he had chosen one sentence from *The Mother* written by Sri Aurobindo: "The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death Truth and Light and Life Divine and the immortal's Ananda." Nolini explained that *The Mother* is not a book but a 'mantra' consecrated to the Mother.

Nolini sat down and then Richard and a few Aurovillians went down the square with offerings of flowers from the Nursery. According to the Mother's instructions at six-thirty Nolini and Aurofilio laid the foundation-stone in its place. The stone was black and Sri Aurobindo's symbol was engraved on it. Nolini left but I am like a curious connie of the Far-Away Tree. So I had to look round. Under the banyan tree there was a huge plan of Auroville city in black wood and Matrimandir's brass globe shone bright as the sun. There were a number of paper-plans which explained Matrimandir's plan in detail. We were told to take the Mother's 'prasad' before leaving. There was a photograph of the Mother at the exit and a basket in front of it contained toffees. We took our prasad and started for the Ashram. The sun was out. the city was awake and full of noise.

The three fires which I had seen round the three corners of the foundation-site puzzled me. So I went to Nolini to find out why three fires had been lit. He said that the three fires had been important since Vedic times. We can explain them in two different ways. The Vedic way says the three fires represent Heaven, Self and Earth. The other explanation is more modern: here the three fires represent the mind, the vital being and the body.

ANU

A TALK TO THE STUDENTS

AT THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

Below is the report, edited in places, of the second of the talks recently given by Amal Kiran (K.D. Sethna). The date was February 27, 1971.

LAST time I gave a somewhat unpleasant if not gruesome description of myself as a being full of holes—not only the seven physiological holes but also seventy-seven or more psychological ones! Keenly conscious though I have always been of the multiple character of His Holeyness Amal Kiran, I did not realise that I had some holes in my brain through which many things slipped out. I don't mean only things which I should not have spoken yet unfortunately blabbed, but also several which I should have said yet somehow let go.

I have to remedy the defects. This business may come in the way of my saying on the present occasion a number of things I have in mind about the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Perhaps I should start with them, but then I may get launched on a course which might again make many matters slip out of that hole in my brain. It seems that whatever I do I shall have to deliver a third talk, which may not be such a calamity after all—except for the talker, because he feels terribly nervous until he forgets myself and says things which may need forgiving! (*Laughter*)

I'll begin with remedying some of my oversights before endeavouring to pass on any more insights. But even prior to doing that I have to do something in response to my friend Nirod. He has made an earnest plea that I should rid your minds of the delusion that the doctor I spoke of last time was he. (*Laughter*) It seems many of you carried away that impression, though I wonder how.

Nirod can hardly be described as a person of one dimension attached to a thin beard. (*Laughter*) But, of course, in this place there are all kinds of miracles occurring and you all may have thought he might have been like that. Well, one example of the unexpected to be expected here is the look of my own self 43 years ago. Can you imagine me, when I first came here, to have started growing long hair and sprouting a far from wispy beard? And yet I did so. No doubt, I always had the ambition in my younger days to look like Bernard Shaw whom I admired a great deal. But when I was in Bombay I could not grow a beard—beards at that time were not in fashion for people who were rather young and perhaps inclined to be romantic. (*Laughter*) Even when I returned to Bombay after a six and a half years' stay here and met my future wife Sehra, whom I had known earlier, she was indignant on seeing me bearded, though not long-haired any more. She made a disgusted face and said: "What is

this?" Then I very calmly explained to her: "You see, I am a Yogi. (*Laughter*) God thrust on me the spiritual favour of a lame leg so that I might not run after anybody glamorous (*laughter*) and I have spiritually favoured myself with a beard so that nobody glamorous may run after me!" (*Laughter*) Well, I am rather running away from my friend Nirod and after my own unglamorous self. So let me finish what I started saying.

Nobody should have imagined Nirod to be the person I had described—nor do I think that Nirod ever had sufficient confidence in his own meditation to substitute it for medicine. (*Laughter*) The person in question was somebody quite different and I don't think any of you will recognise him now because he has been dissociated from medicine completely for almost the last four decades—just as I myself have been dissociated from drawing and painting for nearly as long a period.

Those days in the Ashram there was a scarcity of specially qualified people. Now we have a dozen doctors, each diagnosing a different disease for the same patient. (*Laughter*) Those days we had only one doctor and he always diagnosed a spiritual illness, though, I suppose, he did not have a cure for it. Now, in that period, I was a sort of Raphael and Rembrandt and Whistler rolled into one, because there were no real artists about, and the Mother somehow picked me up for drawing jobs. I am not quite sure how she came to the conclusion that I could draw or paint. But I have two tentative clues.

Once I drew a series of somewhat irreverent sketches of people meditating. In those early times we used to have meditation at 7.30 a.m. in the long room where the Mother, after the passing away of Sri Aurobindo, gave darshan on the four big days of the year. Of course, on those big days she used to sit in a chair, but in the old period she sat on a big seat meant for herself and Sri Aurobindo. During the morning meditation she would be alone there—and Sri Aurobindo was in the background, supporting the meditation going on in the front room. The Mother, wearing a sari, would sit cross-legged, looking radiantly beautiful. She was a picture of supreme repose, but a repose in which there was a great deal of held-in power, as if she had come and sat there after having gone on a journey through the centuries and finished her job of finding what she had wanted to find. All journeys seemed to come to an end in her, and when we went and knelt down at her feet all journeys of ours also seemed to end there. All our difficulties vanished—except the difficulty of going away and leaving the Mothers' feet!

During these early meditations, each of the old sadhaks had his turn to sit throughout with his head on one of the Mother's feet—profoundly surrendered to the foot and profusely perspiring on it! (*Laughter*) I may make a small digression here. The old sadhaks had an affectionate way of referring to one another. They called one another "Old Bandicoot." (*Laughter*) Why exactly long-standing sadhana resembled the movements of a rather obnoxious-looking big rat of Pondicherry, I cannot precisely say. But my ingenious mind conjectures that it may have been in accordance with the goal of Yoga as expressed in Sanskrit and as mispronounced by a non-Sanskritist

like me. The goal of Yoga in India, as stated in Sanskrit, is self-mastery, "Swarat" (*laughter*) and world-mastery, "Samrat". (*Laughter*)

Well, to come back to our situation. While one of the old bandicoots sat at the Mother's feet, the rest of us sat at some distance from her. As I was new, I did not know properly how to meditate. I thought the best procedure was to keep my eyes open and watch the others getting into meditation. (*Laughter*) That would be one of the first lessons of my Yoga. And I kept on watching and saw a lot of things which I put into a series of cartoons. (*Laughter*) I don't remember all of them, but I hope that when I describe some, those who are concerned will excuse me—well, it will be a test of their Yogic equanimity. (*Laughter*)

To begin with, there was the first American here, old Vaun McPheeters—quite a hulk of a man, over 6 foot tall. He used to meditate as if by closing his eyes and going inward he were trying to hypnotise the Absolute into submission. (*Laughter*) He knitted his brows, set his jaws and looked most aggressively concentrated. I should say somebody looking as resolute though in a different way was Purani—as you might expect. He had the habit of making a movement with his mouth all the time, as if trying to swallow the nectar of the Divine Bliss. (*Laughter*) And his determined look seemed to say: "No fooling with me! I shall drink all heaven up, no matter how large the quantity!" And, strange to say, his neck used to become stiff and straight and expand enormously: the weight of the descending nectar must have been immense. Nolini sat with the fingers of his right hand holding his impressive forehead, as if his brain needed support when the Light plunged in and filled it to overflowing. Then there was our Ashram engineer, Chandulal—the only engineer then just as there was the only doctor and the only artist. He sat stretched out, almost sprawling, with his features somewhat intent—he appeared to be inwardly calculating—and with his two arms planted behind, palms flat upon the floor, to support his stretched-out posture like a pair of pillars. It was as though he was trying to throw a bridge between earth and heaven with his own body. (*Laughter*) A Mohammedan sadhak, brother of the great Dara, sat with a very prayerful expression but with his head hanging loose to one side in a state of what I called dislocated devotion (*laughter*)—that is, the consciousness forcibly pulled away from ordinary objects of desire and helplessly bent towards the Divine. Dara himself was like a baby elephant, his curved aristocratic nose—or shall I say, his thoroughbred trunk?—working vigorously its nostrils and breathing hard to get a whiff of the invisible but evidently not unsmellable Beloved of the Sufis. Near the two brothers was Amal Kiran. He bore a rather sad look on his long-nosed face, moving his open eyes over people while straining his thin neck upward to touch as best he could the "sky-lucent bliss" towards which his all-too-errant life wished to soar as you know from the poem I recited on the last occasion. Not the least spectacular and cartoonable was a sadhak with the grandiose name of Purushottam, meaning "Supreme Being". He sat with quite a soulful countenance but with a constant jerk in one leg. He sort of kicked out at unYogic things every two or three minutes. My caption for his speciality of meditation was: "Purushottam

striving to achieve the psychic.”¹ (*Laughter*) Then there was Champaklal. As soon as he shut his eyes he would start swaying a little—obviously in response to some inner rhythm. It was a fine sight—that gentle semi-circular swaying with a deeply absorbed face. The moment his eyes were closed, his consciousness seemed to get outside the fixed poise of the common physical mind. Perhaps the most dynamic meditation was of a person who did not sway in a semi-circle but who, losing outer consciousness, would nod forward—not only with his head but with his whole body. And the nodding kept increasing in tempo until his head either went bang into the back of whoever was in front of him or, if there was nobody near enough to cushion the blow, fall with a terrific thud upon the floor. (*Laughter*) The Mother would open her eyes wondering what had been the cause of the sudden explosion (*laughter*) and the exploder would himself wake up and look all around in extreme astonishment. (*Laughter*) But I really admire the simplicity, the sincerity, the lack of self-consciousness which this sadhak had and also the sense of humour which enabled him to laugh at himself afterwards when his friends poked fun at him. His case was outstanding enough for Nirod to ask Sri Aurobindo once what exactly was happening. Sri Aurobindo explained that Rajangam’s consciousness completely left his body during meditation.

The peculiarities of some others have been left out. I think there were only three or four people whom I could not particularly characterise in my sketches because they meditated more or less in a normal fashion. For instance, Pavitra, sitting perfectly straight and looking very calm and pure. I may mention Lalita too, quiet and refined and childlike. Amrita looked the picture of meekness, the Divine’s obedient and ever-ready servitor with just a faint forward and backward movement of the head at times. Dyuman too sat unobtrusively though not unimpressively, with a dedicated visage that appeared incapable of ever saying “No” to anything the Mother might order.

I hope none of the objects of my cartoons will get angry with me now. At the time the sketches were made very few saw them. I showed them to Purani who enjoyed them immensely. One or two others were a bit peeved. Some got the wind of them but never saw them. I think Amrita heard about them and maybe he spoke of them to the Mother. He used to give her a lot of news. But the Mother never spoke to me about this adventure of mine. What she did was to ask me unexpectedly one day: “Will you draw and paint the flowers I give all of you at Pranam?” I said: “How do you know that I can do such a thing?” She answered: “It is very easy. Hold up your right hand.” I held it up. “There! you have the hand of an artist.” Well, that was that. There was no question of disputing anything with her or of going against her wish. But I surmise that apart from her reading the potentiality of my hand or having heard a rumour of those cartoons, there might have been some memory of a past life. Just as I pestered Sri Aurobindo about his own past lives, I once put an exploratory question

¹ It is now many years since Purushottam kicked off the dust of the Ashram and sought for a spiritual achievement on his own with no Guru supervising his progress,

to him on myself. I wrote: "Certain poets very strongly appeal to me and their minds and characters seem to have strong affinities with mine in different ways. Have you any intuition in the matter of my past lives? The Mother once saw Horace (as well as Hector) behind Dilip; but she has told me nothing about myself except that she is positive I was an Athenian." Sri Aurobindo replied: "A strong influence from one or more poets or all of them together is not sufficient to warrant a conclusion that one had been those poets or any of them in former lives. I have myself no intuitions on the subject of your past lives, though from general impressions I would be inclined to wager that you were not only in Athens (that is evident) but in England during the Restoration time or thereabouts, in Renaissance Italy etc: these, however, are only impressions." So it may be that I was a footling of a painter tutored by the great Leonardo who, we are convinced, was an emanation of Sri Aurobindo's. I may have handed him brushes when he was doing the portrait of Mona Lisa whom we take to be an emanation of the Mother in that period. At least once I confronted the Mother with the question of Mona Lisa. Just as she had asked me to hold up my hand I held up her hand on one occasion after a private meditation with her, and said: "See! your fingers, curved like this, look exactly like Mona Lisa's as Leonardo has painted them." She didn't confirm or deny but looked pleased. Is it impossible that she faintly recollected a poor assistant of Da Vinci when she saw my hand?

Anyway, I began my career in the Ashram not only as a furniture-keeper, as I have told you several times, but also as a flower-painter—and as a budding poet. Here I think I must remedy a gap I had left in regard to furniture-keeping. It is in connection with somebody who was in charge of the carpentry department at that time. Nirod was in charge of the timber godown; so don't mix him up with this person. I had often to go to the carpentry department to pick up things to supply sadhaks' rooms with. Once a shelf and table had been demanded; so I had told my friend the carpentry-manager to have them made. After a few days I passed along the road and saw that they were lying ready. I went in to inquire. Well, I must tell you, before I come to the incident proper, that this friend of mine had a remarkable faith in the Mother—especially in the Mother within his own being. You know that there are two Mothers who are ultimately one—the Mother inside us and the Mother outside. Of course, the aim in general of the Mother outside—the Mother who is in a body as our Guru—is to make us aware of herself within our being. But she is there also as a check on our imagination of what she is within us. The Divine Presence within, if properly found, is the most wonderful discovery; but, if improperly found, it is the most marvellous invention! Oh, it is ever so kind, so accomodating, so convenient—indeed it might as well be no other than ourselves in disguise. The ego in us is very clever and finds all sorts of ways to justify what it wants to do, and again and again the Mother outside us has to contradict the Mother inside before we are guided to the true Light within. And these contradictions are pretty unpleasant at times. The Guru in front of us can often be a damned nuisance or, if we must be reverent, a blessed annoyance. (*Laughter*) This Guru won't let our pet desires and

favourite proclivities skip and hop and have a holiday. The one who is a fountain of delight can frequently be such a kill-joy to the ego. Yes, the Mother is there before us to test, times without number, whether we have truly found the Mother inside us. I have learnt this truth, not always pleasurably but, I hope, always gratefully.

Now I come to my confrontation with my friend. I said: "The table and shelf are ready. May I pick them up and have them carried away?" He said: "No." I looked a little puzzled and must have struck him as rather foolish since he had said "No" with such assurance. I asked: "Why?" He replied: "I have received an order from the Mother that every piece of furniture should be coated with chocolate paint." I countered: "Really? I have never heard of such a thing and I have often taken furniture from you without any chocolate paint." He explained: "Yes, that was formerly. But now the order has come and I have to obey it." I questioned. "Has the Mother written it to you?" "Written?" he rather contemptuously repeated my word, and added: "I don't need written orders. The order has come from here"—and he thumped the middle of his chest. (*Laughter*) I was a little stunned. He saw that my ears were not tuned enough to hear the voice coming from his hairy bosom. So he continued: "You will learn about these things as you get on in Yoga. The Mother will teach you."

I saw there was nothing for me to do except report the enlightening dialogue to the Mother herself. I asked her whether she had really instructed so-and-so to chocolate-paint every piece of furniture. She wrote back in an emphatic hand: "I have given no order of the kind, and it would be too expensive to chocolate-paint everything." I took the note to the preacher of the new gospel. He was very displeased, but being a good sadhak at heart he admitted the voice from within to have been mistaken or rather to have been mistakenly heard. It must have spoken "No chocolate paint" but he, in his unprepared state, missed the first word. (*Laughter*)

The universal chocolate-painting was halted and my friend learnt a lesson. But now look at the sequel. It made me sorry I had found fault with his inner voice. Soon after the incident, he was promoted from the carpentry to the smithy. He worked so hard there that he felt terribly hungry at the end of the working hours and ate the food meant for three or four people and became huge and muscular. He was so full of irrepressible energy that he would not merely walk: he ran all the time and very fast indeed as if he were racing with somebody. I told all my friends that the vision in Nolini's first book, written years ago, on the future evolution of man was getting materialised—the book which he had entitled "The Coming Race." (*Laughter*)

One day the giant smith was summoned late in the evening to the door of a house. As usual he came galloping. He was interested to find that an old lady was yelling like mad inside, "Open the door, open the door!" It seems she had mistakenly been locked in and badly needed to be let out. In those days we used to have the Soup ceremony. I shall come to that subject if I have time and talk to you of it because it is long forgotten and many things connected with it are important. All the inmates of that house had gone to the Soup. But some passerby—an Asharmite—who was late in going heard

the yelling from inside. I too happened to be hanging about by chance. A few people had gathered at the door and they asked the smith to force the lock open. He firmly replied: "I can't do anything without a chit from the Mother, our Guru." (*Laughter*) Now the Mother was in the Soup Hall and could not be approached. We tried to explain to the smith that it would be quite all right to proceed without consulting the Mother. But he was adamant. "My God!" I said to myself. "What have I done—by discrediting the inner guide?" The old lady increased her yelling. Suddenly something got into the smith's head or, more appropriately speaking, his heart—and the Guru inside gave the decision: "If you can't get a chit from the Mother, get it from someone who is next to her." We eagerly asked: "Who will do for you?" According to him, the deputy avatar would be the Ashram engineer under whom he had once worked. So people had to run about and find the engineer. Luckily he had not yet gone to the Soup. He hurriedly scribbled a note: "Please let the lady out." (*Laughter*) Then the lock was forced and the imprisoned lady emerged into freedom and, without giving thanks to the smith, rushed away to the Soup.

The incident taught me a lesson. There must be a sort of compromise between the Guru inside and the Guru outside. The former should sometimes be able to decide whether the latter is to be consulted or not. We should not proceed too mechanically. A hint on the correct compromise is given by the Mother herself when she says that the first thing people surrender to her when they come here is their common sense!

Now I shall close the chapter of my role as furniture-keeper and turn to myself as flower-painter. As the only artist or the sole apology for one, I got many favours from the Mother. She heaped me with drawing materials. She brought out the sketching-pads she had collected in Japan from a stationer with that most musical of names: "Bumpodo." (*Laughter*) I got paint-brushes and, I think, crayons too. Every morning, after the Pranam, I had to hurry home and paint my flower while it was fresh. Every week the Mother inspected my drawing-book. Then I discovered an important thing. I suppose all of you know that what we have to do here is Yoga first and Yoga again and Yoga always. This makes a formula like the one on good writing which I quoted from a French critic last time and which I will not repeat in French now lest I should once more create comic complications. What I want to say now is that the Mother evaluates everything from the standpoint of Yoga. Of course she appreciates competent and skilful work of all kinds, but if she had to choose between great skill with no Yoga in it and smaller skill with a splash of the Yogic consciousness going with it, she would always tilt in favour of the latter. When she turned the pages of my drawing-book I found that she simply passed over paintings I had done with a great deal of cleverness but with a tinge of self-congratulation. But she paused and smiled and appreciated very much whatever I knew I had done with real remembrance of her and with an inner gesture of offering to her. I may add that, on many occasions, things done like that acquire even a finer artistic form than things done efficiently with an outside approach in order to impress the Mother with our own talents. A psychic

delicacy or an inner sensitive strength enters the line and colour and composition. The same applies to the art of writing. Writing can be surfacy or it can be depth-revealing. Here I may pick up the thread where I dropped it last time in dealing with the problem of clarity in poetic expression.

The French critic's statement—on what good writing, prose or poetry, should be—ran: "Clear, again clear and always clear." But I argued that, while poetry should make an attempt at being clear, well-formulated, something you could catch, something you could visualise inwardly, it should combine with the clarity an element of mystery. So I would rather follow Havelock Ellis's dictum: "Be clear, be clear, be not too clear." What I infer from this is that we cannot do without clarity but that our clarity should lead on to a profundity beyond the mere mind—the profundity of the Divine's Being which to the Divine's Consciousness is a most blissful transparency, a colossal clarity of beatitude, but which to the mere mind is an ever-elusive secret. Mark the epithet I have employed: "ever-elusive." It does not mean that you are just stumped and dumbfounded: it means that you move onward, press forward, seeking as it were a shape and a substance but both of them refuse to be caught and pinned down, they overflow the words while yet filling them. Conceptual hints, imaginative suggestions, symbolic shadowings—forth are there, demanding an inner awareness for their comprehension—these are what poetry must have along with graspable and utterable matter. I might say that poetry should aim not so much at the clarity of the mind as at the clarity of what we may term with Sri Aurobindo the overmind. The one is concerned with seeing faithfully the contour, the colour, the texture, so to speak, of the subject of a poem. The other does not stop with a limited observation. It passes from it to more and more subtle patterns and meanings. The beauty of contour, colour and texture—the loveliness of the finite—opens brightly into unknown dimensions: it is, like the body of Savitri in the passage from Sri Aurobindo I recited to you last time—

A golden temple door to things beyond.

The overmind's clarity pierces from space to wider space, follows light upon deeper light, discerns truth after greater truth. It is an endless self-discovery of the Infinite. The true poet directly or indirectly goes after such revelation—directly when he not only deals with spiritual themes but catches the pulsation of an inner language without any admixture—indirectly when he handles themes that are secular or even profane, yet infuses into his language an inner turn and tone.

Let me give you an example which may be considered at the same time spiritual and secular. Most of you must have come across Wordsworth's line:

The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep.

The line occurs in Wordsworth's famous *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, which a British schoolboy made a memorable howler of by calling it Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimate Immorality!* (*Laughter*) In this poem Wordsworth describes the landscape of a May morning in Cumberland, while bringing out the subtle feelings and impressions he had during childhood of a divine radiance everywhere, God's presence

in all Nature—in flowers and streams and even rocks. These feelings and impressions he found dimming as he grew older and at times he lamented he had quite lost them. In the midst of one confrontation of landscape with a certain mood he has that fascinating line. What does it mean?

An Englishman would be disposed to equate it with:

The Winds come to me from the sleeping fields.

He would mean that as the earth had just emerged from darkness and was still covered with shadows the adjacent fields lay in a mist and seemed to be in a drowse lingering on from the night and so the breeze blowing from them came with a drowsing influence to the poet. As a result, the poet's heart was cooled and lulled and soothed. This interpretation sees the line as absolutely clear in its significance: it gives us a fair picture of finite things. But, if Wordsworth meant just this, why did he not say "sleeping fields" instead of "fields of sleep" and make the line akin, with a different atmospheric touch, to the start, breathing a reverent Nature-enjoyment, of the 1804-version of *The Prelude*:

Oh there is blessing in the gentle breeze

That blows from the green fields...?

One may answer: "In the passage concerned there is the word 'steep' at the end of a nearby line and Wordsworth has to rhyme with it: so he puts 'fields of sleep' here rather than 'sleeping fields'. That is all the reason." But surely Wordsworth was enough of a master of language to rhyme "steep" with some other line-ending and get the proper rhyme for "fields" by another verse. Even if he could not, what prevented him from writing not what he actually wrote but simply:

The Winds come to me from the fields asleep?

The rhyme remains, yet does it say what Wordsworth wanted? Of course the shade of sense in "the fields asleep" is not quite the same as in "the sleeping fields". The emphasis has shifted from the "fields". The qualifying word "asleep", placed after the noun and then also at the end of a line where a greater or smaller pause is always made, takes up our attention rather than the word "fields." The activity—or, if you like, the passivity—of sleeping is now in the forefront. A greater interiority is indicated, but we do not go very far except by way of something in the rhythm and in the indefinable suggestion of a particular word-order. However, we fall between two stools. We miss the surface clearness, the clearness that is a nearness, and we yet do not get any clearness of the depth, of the distance. There is neither the mind's admirable clarity nor the amazing clarity of the overmind. The final fulfilled poetic effect has not been reached and we are more tantalised imaginatively than satisfied intuitively. The intuitive satisfaction arrives only with the line Wordsworth actually penned. There "sleep" assumes the centre. We are face to face with a state of in-drawn consciousness, what seems a blank to the surface mind but is really a new dimension of being. Now it is the presence, the power of "sleep" that has fields of its own: "sleep" is now a plane, a hidden world, a mysterious existence. Modern psychology would call it the Subliminal or else the Collective Unconscious. But such labels do not carry

us sufficiently into the poetic mystery here. It is only the ancient Mandukya Upanishad that supplies the right clue. There we have three stages of consciousness described: the waking stage, *jāgrat*, which looks outward on the physical cosmos, the dream stage, *svapna*, which looks inward on subtle universes, and the sleep stage, *susupti*, in which everything is gathered into a divine concentration, a spiritual seed-form. Wordsworth's "fields of sleep" conveys the life-sense of the superconscious unknown that is the Mandukya Upanishad's *susupti*: these fields are the hidden height of our inmost being, from whose recesses of eternal bliss and rapt truth-sight the most profoundly re-creative inspiration wafts into us.

Note how well the spiritual mystery pressing upon the poet from across in-drawn distances is prepared by the three preceding lines in the passage:

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong:

I hear the Echoes thro' the mountains throng,

The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep.

The physical reality imaginatively caught up into the semi-symbolic meets us in the opening line: the trumpet-metaphor affines the cataracts to invisible high-poised archangels. A subjective turn enters the next line, putting the poet's grief into relation with something living and vocal in the season, something against whose secret burden of self-existent bliss all expression of grief would be an ungrateful rebellion. Then the physical sounds from the steep, descending and spreading in space, are mentioned in a rarefied form as "Echoes" gathering in lofty places, hovering for the poet like a remote remembrance of some looming range and recess of reality, both without and within. Then we get the last movement with its leap beyond all Nature-hints of the spiritual into sheer mysticism and Mantra. Not that Nature is annulled—the fields of Cumberland on "a sweet May morning" are still there, but the breath, simultaneously vague and powerful, of Supernature has broken across them and wakened in the poet the thrill of some ultimate soulscape. There we have the divine clarity I have spoken of, shining through the human clarity and giving us the mystery that makes meaning a gesture of ecstasy and, whether colourful or delicate, sweeps us from the finite concrete object into illimitable vistas. In the words of Meredith,

its touch is infinite and lends

A yonder to all ends.

A long time ago—in 1934—I submitted Wordsworth's line to Sri Aurobindo, asking what plane exactly it had hailed from. He replied that it was very high in the "overhead" inspiration but lacked the precise overmind note and had only the note of the intuition-plane in an intense form. Afterwards, in 1946, Sri Aurobindo sprang a surprise on me with the declaration that the line was one of the seizures from the overmind itself. Naturally I questioned him: "What you write now means a crucial change of opinion—but how and why?" He replied: "Yes, certainly my ideas and reactions to some of the lines and passages about which you had asked me long ago, have developed and changed and could not but change"—and he added:

"I have since then moved in those fields of sleep and felt the breath which is carried from them by the winds that came to the poet, so I can better appreciate the depth of vision in Wordsworth's line."

Well, we have come back to Sri Aurobindo, but our time is up and a lot of things I had wished to tell you have got left out. We shall have to meet again, since there seems to be a yonder to all my ends.

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

AGLAIA

No splendor sweetly overmatches yours,
 Young Goddess, delicately grave,
 Who of the flame that freshens and endures
 Drink deep to save
 And lambently consume all strangling lures.

So may I drink with you, and clasp your hand,
 And drown and burn in your clear eyes:
 That brightened song shall seal its high command,
 Descending with its skies
 To raise in glory all its writhing, stifled land.

Completion ever waits the kiss of fire
 You graciously bestow:
 Still awkward is, and bound below,
 All labor, till your soft light caps the spire,
 One, sure, entire.

JESSE ROARKE

ASWAMEDHA—A DREAM

THE horse was white without a stain,
Without a tinge of a darker kind.
Each hair shone silver in the sun,
His tail caught tints of rippling gold,
His mane of flashing diamond blue.
His hoofs struck sparks as they clove the air
Made electric with the speed of his flight.
His royal neck arched; his eyes burned brave,
And fierce and proud, defiant and bold.

Upon his forehead lay a tablet
Fastened with a bridle of heaven-set gems
Proclaiming to all that here flew the herald
Of the invincible army of a divine Ashwamedha.
And, in truth, never before had a more splendid creation
That the lightning-bright horse left the labouring hand
Or the perfection-bent mind of the worlds' Creator.
He was a masterstroke of the Creator's art—
A burst of pure aspiration from his heart.

And is it not always done this way
That the greatest pains and the greatest love
Are poured out unstinting upon the flag,
Upon the emblem or the sign
That once so meticulously fabricated
Will sail before its men as their pride
To follow to their fate ahead?
Such was the horse that flamed through the sky
Like a new meteor of trailing white.

Towards the earth he shot unwavering,
On his forehead emblazoned the Divine's own tablet—
"Come forth and contest, whoever so cares,
The lands this messenger claims for me."

The horse flew on to a tiny globe
On the outskirts of a galaxy
That wheeled and swirled among all the others.

As he approached, this globe grew larger
 Till it sprouted continents and seas,
 Then mountains and lakes, and forests and cities
 And, at last, houses that people inhabited—
 All of which came clear to the approaching horse,
 While a lance of terror hit his breast
 And passed shuddering through him right to his tail.
 But the tablet pressed hard upon his forehead
 And he lunged once again to his destiny.

He found a town asleep at noon,
 Its wide streets bare, its houses still,
 And braking his headlong flight through space
 He landed as gently upon the dusty street
 As an autumn leaf on a forest floor.
 No dust flew up upon impact.
 No noise he made to announce the time
 Of his arrival on the dozing earth.
 Yet the shock he made on the atmosphere
 Was so immense that from every side
 The people rushed out on to the street
 From the houses where they had all been sleeping.
 But what was this? These were not men,
 But goblins hideous and distorted
 With leering eyes and wart-covered faces—
 Not pouring out of the rooms of the houses—
 But seemingly from underground:
 From cellars, basements, and catacombs;
 From subterranean depths of earth
 Where all this time they had awaited
 The arrival of the divine white horse.
 With them they brought dripping bags and ladles
 Of offal, of blood, of the tender insides
 Of things murdered and stripped in their butcheries,
 Their workshops of horror beneath the ground.
 With a demon's delight, they raised their armloads
 And threw them at the horse with all their might.
 Down the white flanks the dark blood trickled,
 Till the great horse reared in stark despair—
 As though the blood were his own dead flesh
 Putrified against his body.

The gnomes and the goblins for their part
Did not rest from their foul barrage,
Till the horse walked in blood up to his hocks—
Till his tail hung heavy and clotted behind him,
Till over his coat of brilliant silver,
He wore their lurid coating of death.
Then a great howl of derision went up
Among the assembled goblin horde.
“Look at the white horse now,” they cried,
And laughed so hard they rolled on the ground
And punched each other and slapped their knees,
So delighted were they with what they had done.

In horror and shame the poor white horse
Picked his way between the mounds of offal
That lay up and down the goblin street.
Each piece of filth upon his skin
Wrapped round his heart like a tourniquet.
Tears welled up in his liquid eyes;
He raised his head and sent a silent shriek
To those that followed in his wake.
Return he could not, for the great white horse
Of the Divine Ashwamedha internally knew
Retreat there was none from a Divine Decision—
From a Divine Commitment once it was made.

But the pain of his suffering ate through his coat
As the creeping death of a goblin curse.
And he walked abroad across the earth
Stained, defiled and humiliated.

But still there was no turning back.
As he walked he dreamt of the life he had known;
Of the exuberant sky where he had grown to strength;
Of the suns which had glossed his coat each day;
Of the grandeur of his maker who had tended him;
And last of all the things he remembered,
The gold-white army at his back,
Streaming through the galaxies
To their God-marked destination.
How far were they behind him now?
Once more he raised his glorious head.

Once more he sent a silent whinny
Piercing through the still, deep skies.

At first there was no answering call,
And then a great familiar hand
Reached invisible from the air
And stroked the soiled white flanks with love.
“Wait, my beauty,” a quiet voice said
From some secret recess of his heart.
“Remember that a great rich cloak
Falls about you to the ground
Made of all the jewels of my love.
Wear it proudly as the king you are
Until our armies vindicate
The claim you bear upon your brow.”

Joy sprang from the inner sadness
Of the horse like flowers from winter's snow;
Like a king he held his head aloft
And trod the high mountain meadows of earth,
His cloak flowing behind him in jewelled splendour,
The goblin stains fading from his skin,
As his ears flicked and quivered to every sound
That rumoured of a million war-bent hoofbeats
Thundering across the sky.

BINA BRAGG

THE POETRY OF JONES VERY

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1971)

VERY's poetical output was not large, and most of the best of it is the work of one year, 1838, the year of his crisis. Later in his long quiescent period, his verse became for the most part conventionally poetistic: but a respectable number of his earlier poems are expressions of genuine spiritual experience.

He was not a conscious literary artist, or at least was very little of one, and in his poetry he uses only the simplest and most familiar forms, most commonly the Shakespearean sonnet. He is of course not entirely artless, for he does use form, and use it well; but his best work has the air of being unpremeditated, and of flowing out naturally. So much we may expect from any poet: but we get it from Very more limpidly, and simply, than from most: and if the word "artless" may ever be used of a genuine poet, it may be used of him. And again, as we may expect of any poet, his voice is distinctive. He may sometimes remind one of Herbert or Traherne, Bryant or Clare; and he was probably well acquainted with these poets (except Traherne, who was not published until the twentieth century); certainly he was well acquainted with Bryant, and also with Wordsworth; but he does not remind one very much of anyone else, and one does not feel that his best poems could have been written by anyone but himself. A roundabout way of saying again that he is a genuine poet; which has perhaps been emphasized sufficiently. Just where the inspiration came from, and how purely it got through, it would take a perception like Sri Aurobindo's to tell us; but inspiration there surely was. Of his spontaneous if not copious flow, like a mountain spring, he gives us poems that are like sweet draughts of cool, fresh water—a commodity, it may be said, that is not easy to come by in present day America. He is sometimes careless or clumsy in diction, but almost never in rhythm, and it is a rare and delicate music that he gives us. His work is a contribution to the poetry of the English language which perhaps the Time Spirit will not let die.

In the furthest and most harmonious reaches of his experience, he was at one with nature in a way that few poets of the Western world have been. A Chinese or Japanese Buddhist might find nothing unusual in what is said in the following lines, but they are certainly something rare in the English language.

The bird thou hearest on the budding tree,
Thou hast made sing with thy forgotten voice;
But when it swells again to melody,
The song is thine in which thou wilt rejoice.

His was a particularly *Christian* experience, however, as this sonnet makes plain enough:

The bubbling brook doth leap when I come by,
 Because my feet find measure with its call;
 The birds know when the friend they love is nigh,
 For I am known to them both great and small;
 The flowers that on the lovely hill-side grow
 Expect me there when Spring their bloom has given;
 And many a tree and bush my wanderings know,
 And e'en the clouds and silent stars of heaven:
 For he who with his Maker walks aright
 Shall be their lord, as Adam was before;
 His ear shall catch each sound with new delight,
 Each object wear the dress which then it wore;
 And he, as when erect in soul he stood,
 Hear from his Father's lips, that all is good.

But if it be a Christian experience, it is one of a remarkable intensity, and elevation:

The night that has no star lit up by God,
 The day that round men shines who still are blind,
 The earth their grave-turned feet for ages trod,
 And sea swept over by His mighty wind,—
 All these have passed away;—the melting dream
 That flitted o'er the sleeper's half-shut eye,
 When touched by morning's golden-darting beam;—
 And he beholds around the earth and sky
 That ever real stands, the rolling shores
 And heaving billows of the boundless main,
 That show, though time is past, no trace of years.
 And earth restored he sees as his again,
 The earth that fades not and the heavens that stand,
 Their strong foundations laid by God's right hand.

He had found, if briefly, his heaven-on-earth—

Father! thy wonders do not singly stand,
 Nor far removed where feet have seldom strayed;
 Around us ever lives the enchanted land,
 In marvels rich to thine own sons displayed.
 In finding Thee are all things round us found;
 In losing Thee are all things lost beside.

And he wished to live, and briefly felt that he was living, the great burgeoning and loving divinity of all existence:

It is not life upon thy gifts to live,
 But to grow fixed with deeper roots in Thee.

He aspired he would be docile and open, and give no impediment to the divine illumination.

The light will never open sightless eyes,
 It comes to those who willingly would see;
 And every object—hill, and stream, and skies—
 Rejoice within th' encircling line to be.

It was a splendid beginning that he made: but it was only a beginning, and the light soon faded from an intensity too great for him to bear. He felt himself to be the voice of divinity, and the voice of nature which is divine expression; and the feeling was too much:

Oh, humble me! I cannot bide the joy
 That in my Saviour's presence ever flows;
 May I be lowly, lest it may destroy
 The peace His childlike spirit ever knows.

He could not abide the largeness and the splendor of it all:

When I would sing of crooked streams and fields,
 On, on from me they stretch too far and wide,
 And at their look my song all powerless yields,
 And down the river bears me with its tide.

The Holy Ghost never gave his song a very ample power in this regard; he remained thin and narrow, and not adequate to the immense expanses of divinity.

His later life was not one of serenity undisturbed; and even in the very pitch of his crisis, he had not been immune from the peculiarities of outrageous fortune. He could feel the stings, and it was hard for him to bear not being accepted at his own estimate, which of course he did not believe to be his own. The thrusts of the unspiritual were grievous to him: he was not like the man of Tao, in whom the knife found no place to enter. He was totally without humor, a man unfortunately "obsessed with the spiritual", as it was prettily put by some observers who did not stand in danger of a like affliction; and perhaps the wonder is that he was able to bear up at all. But he did so; badgered by the usual inane questions and assumptions of the ignorant, and finding no one competent to understand him, or to guide him toward a more complete experience and a greater realization, he retrenched, and lived on; though the peace that he finally settled in may have been somewhat less than that which passeth all understanding. He expostulated once:

Break forth in joy my soul, the sea retires,
 Its waters cease to roll across my head,
 I feel within new kindling of the fires
 That seemed but now forever lost and dead.

And he hoped, at another time:

Soon may my spirit find that better birth,
 Where the retiring wave is never known.

But the finding seems to have been withheld. He was not without attachments; he grieved when his mother predeceased him, and he sometimes craved for human sympathy. He hoped to continue communion with friends in heaven. Really, decisively

to overcome ego and finitude seemed not even to be his conscious aim; and the following sonnet reveals what was perhaps his common state.

There is no change of time and place with Thee;
 Where'er I go, with me 't is still the same;
 Within thy presence I rejoice to be,
 And 'always hallow thy most holy name.
 The world doth ever change; there is no peace
 Among the shallows of its storm-vexed breast;
 With every breath the frothy waves increase,
 They toss up mire and dirt, they cannot rest.
 I thank Thee that within thy strong-built ark
 My soul across the uncertain sea can sail,
 And though the night of death be long and dark,
 My hopes in Christ shall reach within the veil
 And to the promised haven steady steer,
 Whose rest to those who love is ever near.

His experience was conditioned by his circumstances, his upbringing and surroundings, and there seems little doubt that his roots were somewhat more in Massachusetts than in Heaven. He never decisively transcended what was acceptable to the dogma that he was used to and that he had to live with or somehow come to terms with (as St. Teresa of Avila may have been close to doing, at the end of her life); instead of going on to do so, he collapsed and retired. One may be permitted to wonder how it might have been, if he had proceeded to a fuller experience: would the shock have been too much for him, or would the change in him have been such that his enemies would have been able to succeed against him, or would he have been able somehow to continue to live acceptably in such an environment? He was not so fortunate as Lao Tse, living where there were spiritual people, and where the majority, though they might laugh at spiritual men, did not thirst for blood on being confronted with them—and though they might consider them mad, had little objection to their being so. It may be wondered whether a large spiritual experience would have been at all possible, in the dark isolation of nineteenth century America. Certainly if it obtained it, it was kept a secret; and the greatest spiritual awakening we know of, in that ambience, is that of Jones Very.

(To be continued)

JESSE ROARKE

THE LOST CHILDREN OF THE WEST

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HIPPIES

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1971)

Drugs

THE Hippie movement originally revolved around drugs. Drugs acquired in it a significance far exceeding that of a mere protest-symbol. In some European countries 30% of the 15-25 year olds have taken drugs. Especially favoured have been Hashish and Marijuana, products of *cannabis indica* or Indian hemp. Besides these, Opium, Morphine, the psycholepticum LSD, Praeludin, Methedrine and the Amphetamines have been most commonly used.

The young are not unaware of the dangers of these drugs, although they frequently choose to ignore them. Strong narcotics are habit-forming. In the case of Hashish the danger hardly lies in the drug itself which seems to have no perceptible ill-effect, but in the fact that it can serve as an introduction to stronger drugs with longer-lasting effects which prove harmful.

"Why is it," the general public wonders, "that young people all over the world have increasingly taken drugs?" Their first try is mostly impelled by curiosity. Often it is part of a protest against the limitation of the freedom of the individual by modern society. But the decisive answer to this question can only be given by the effects of the drugs themselves. When asked, young people explain that the use of euphorics has enabled them to think in a clearer, wider and more imaginative way, to write more spontaneously and with greater inspiration, to paint, to compose and to make music. These are, however, only those answers which can most easily be formulated. The state they achieve with the help of the drugs is a pararational state of consciousness. They can and wish to talk about it only with people who have experienced it themselves.

The pararational or subliminal consciousness was first described in 1905 by the English psychologist F. W. H. Myers in his book *Human Personality* and later on by the American psychologist William James in his classical Gifford-Lectures, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The most detailed psychology of the subliminal can be found in the extensive writings of Sri Aurobindo. Independent of and contrary to Myers, Sri Aurobindo insists on the existence of a *separate* latent subliminal self in man, a hidden inner consciousness of which man normally knows nothing but which in its potentials is much more plastic, powerful and capable of a manifold knowledge and play of forces than the mind, life and body on the surface.

Drugs seem to help remove temporarily the organic barrier which ordinarily

cuts the outer consciousness off from the inner. They remove it either completely or partially. The removal in the young person is followed by an increasing transposition of his existential point of gravity from outside inward. A deepened life-sense settles in the being. The outer world including one's own personality belonging to it becomes questionable, the utilitarian claim and its end unacceptable—there comes about a withdrawal from the life of society in its externalised and calcified forms. New psychological aims become visible—the finest being self-knowledge, self-transcendence, universal love, union with the Divine, a world of harmony and unity.

No doubt, drugs have been seen also to let loose sexuality and violence and to split the personality. But the other facts, which are little-known yet important, should be pointed out if the solution of the "drug-problem" is not to be left solely in the hands of doctors, social workers and policemen. Every attempt of society to re-integrate the drug-taking young people will be opposed. Only in the rarest of cases do they want to be led back into that from which it has cost them so much effort and suffering to free themselves. The wish to help must not tag itself on merely to the theme of "misuse of drugs." In order to be permanently effective it has to aim beyond it and make the true inner life possible without them.

To make it possible, there must be provided the spiritual guidance and control necessary in a domain so diverse as the subliminal, full of psychological dangers no less than psychological enrichments. What Sri Aurobindo has written on the subliminal being leads us to conclude that the state at which the young drug-user arrives as well as its contents is determined by:

1. The stage of inner development of the person (this includes the constitution, stability and purity of the inner being, the degree of consciousness realised, the stage of development of the psychic senses).
2. The physico-vital-mental condition of the personality as well as the nature of the outer being at the time of drug-consumption.
3. The kind of desire, will or aspiration that predominates at the time.

Sri Aurobindo tells us: "All that we become and do and bear in the physical life is prepared behind the veil within us. It is therefore of immense importance...to grow conscious of what goes on within these domains, to be master there and be able to feel, know and deal with the secret forces that determine our destiny and our internal and external growth or decline."¹

Sri Aurobindo continues: "It is possible by strenuous meditation or by certain methods of tense endeavour to open doors on to the inner being or even to break down some of the walls between the inner and outer self...but it is not always wise to do it as that may lead to conditions which may be very turbid, chaotic, beset with unnecessary dangers."² "In entering within one may find oneself amidst a chaos of unfamiliar or supernormal experiences to which one has not the key or a press of subliminal or cosmic forces, subconscious, mental, vital, subtle-physical, which may un-

¹ *On Yoga II*, Tome One, Pondicherry, 1958, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

duly sway or chaotically drive the being, encircle it in a cave of darkness, or keep it wandering in a wilderness of glamour, allurements, deception, or push it into an obscure battlefield of secret and treacherous and misleading or open and violent oppositions; beings and voices and influences may appear to the inner sense and vision and hearing claiming to be the Divine Being or His messengers or Powers and God-heads of the Light or guides of the path to realisation, while in truth they are of a very different character.”¹ “These perils were well-known to a past spiritual experience and have been met by imposing the necessity of initiation, of discipline, of methods of purification and testing by ordeal, of an entire submission to the directions of the path-finder or path-leader, one who has realised the Truth and himself possesses and is able to communicate the light, the experience, a guide who is strong to take by the hand and carry over difficult passages as well as to instruct and point out the way. But even so the dangers will be there and can only be surmounted if there is or there grows up a complete sincerity, a will for purity, a readiness for obedience to the Truth, for surrender to the Highest, a readiness to lose or to subject to a divine yoke the limiting and self-affirming ego.”²

“There should also be a discriminating mind which puts each thing in its place and can pause to understand its field and nature. There are some who become so eager after these subsidiary experiences that they begin to lose all sense of the true distinction and demarcation between different fields of reality.”³ They “get absorbed in inner experiences which they get lost in or get passionately attached to and this inner life becomes for them the sole reality without the outer to poise it and keep it under check and test.”⁴ “It is always necessary to keep the inner perception and will clear, conscient and in perfect balance and never to allow any form of impulsions, however it may present itself, to sweep without their discerning consent the vital or the body into action.”⁵

The common opponent of the drug fails to realise the importance Sri Aurobindo gives to the subliminal: “This concealed self and consciousness is our real or whole being, of which the outer is a part and a phenomenon, a selective formation for a surface use. We perceive only a small number of the contacts of things which impinge upon us; the inner being perceives all that enters or touches us and our environment. We perceive only a part of the workings of our life and being; the inner being perceives so much that we might almost suppose that nothing escapes its view. We remember only a small selection from our perceptions, and of these even we keep a great part in a store-room where we cannot always lay our hand upon what we need; the inner being retains everything that it has ever received and has it always ready to hand. We can form into co-ordinated understanding and knowledge only so much of our perceptions and memories as our trained intelligence and mental capacity can grasp in their sense and appreciate in their relations: the intelligence of the inner

¹ *The Life Divine*, New York, 1951, p. 805.

² *On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 146.

³ *Ibid.*,

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 178,

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

being needs no training, but preserves the accurate form and relations of all its perceptions and memories and,—though this is a proposition which may be considered doubtful or difficult to concede in its fullness,—can grasp immediately, when it does not possess already, their significance. And its perceptions are not confined, as are ordinarily those of the waking mind, to the scanty gleanings of the physical senses, but extend far beyond and use, as telepathic phenomena of many kinds bear witness, a subtle sense the limits of which are too wide to be easily fixed. The relations between the surface will or impulsion and the subliminal urge, mistakenly described as unconscious or subconscious, have not been properly studied except in regard to unusual and unorganised manifestations and to certain morbid abnormal phenomena of the diseased human mind; but if we pursue our observation far enough, we shall find that the cognition and will or impulsive force of the inner being really stand behind the whole conscious becoming; the latter only represents that part of its secret endeavour and achievement which rises successfully to the surface of our life.”¹

The subliminal self admits us into wide fields of experience to which normal life has no access. Through the drug the young people attempted a forced way out from that life which expects them to carry on blindly their fathers' works. Their profound discontent with these works' superficialities and superfluities “is good”, as the Mother has remarked; but, according to her, they must find a new truth to fulfil it. They have to be offered the assured possibility of evolving the spiritual side of the subliminal consciousness. For they cannot find genuine satisfaction short of making the spiritual largeness and light their own, which, half touched half missed, has really called them through this profound discontent of theirs. They have to be offered the drug-transcending path.

(To be continued)

JOBST MÜHLING

¹ *The Life Drive*, p. 662 f.

DEDICATION

LET the youthful desires for plenty go,
Banished with the wish to hold
And let them become desires for nothing,
Empty of store.
Nor keep wishing for anything
At all—
No demands shall enter this house again—
No more, no more.
Let me become a vessel of no content,
Of no will of its own,
Other than what
You wish it to hold.

May I become like, the hollow
Of a tree,
Empty of sap, vacant
Of life's shadowy blooms.
Let the roots of this tree be wrenched
From its warm and sweet
Hold of life.
Let my arms, once soft, mould into steel
To draw the roots up, and show them
Toward heaven's way.
Then shall I sprout forth,
A tree born anew,
Glowing with light,
A dark-banishing force.

This is my prayer and call.
May I stay steadfast in my will,
And let the lovers of the poor,
Those who help the needy
Aid me.
This be my pledge,
Thus I stand alone.

GEORGETTE COTY