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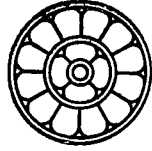
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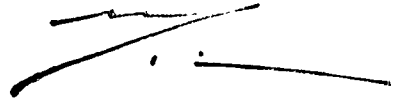


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXIV

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".

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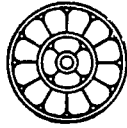
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

14-8-71

WHEN men will be disgusted with the falsehood in which they live, then the world will be ready for the reign of the Truth.

25-12-71

The time has come for the rule of falsehood to end.
In the Truth alone is salvation.

*

Q: For those at Auroville who would like to be true servitors, is Sunday a holiday?

In the beginning the organisation of the week was conceived thus: Six days of work for the collectivity to which the individual belonged. The seventh day of the week was reserved for the inner quest of the Divine and the offering of one's being to the Divine Will. This is the only significance and the only true reason for the so-called rest of Sunday.

Needless to add that sincerity is the essential condition for realisation; all pretension, all insincerity is a degradation.¹

25-10-1971

¹ This whole answer was originally given in French.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of January 1972)

(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.)

MAY 30, 1956

“The Yogin’s aim in the sciences that make for knowledge should be to discover and understand the workings of the Divine Consciousness-Puissance in man and creatures and things and forces, her creative significances, her execution of the mysteries, the symbols in which she arranges the manifestation.”

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 161)

I have already told you, explained that outer forms, if looked at not in themselves, for themselves, in their outer appearance only, but as the expression of a deeper and more lasting reality, all these forms (as indeed all circumstances and events), all become symbolic of the Force which is behind and uses them to express itself. There is not a single circumstance, not a form, not an action, not a movement which is not symbolic of something deeper, something which stands behind and which, normally, ought to prompt all action.

For a certain state of consciousness there is not a single word, not a gesture, not an action which does not express a deeper or higher reality, a more lasting, more essential, truer reality; and once one has seen that or felt that, everything takes on a meaning, and one sees more clearly how things ought to be organised, arranged, so that a deeper truth may be expressed yet better than before.

“The Yogin’s aim in the Arts should not be a mere aesthetic, mental or vital gratification, but, seeing the Divine everywhere, worshipping it with a revelation of the meaning of its works, to express that One Divine in gods and men and creatures and objects.”

(Ibid., p. 162)

How can we “express that One Divine”?

That depends on the subject one wants to express: gods, men or things.

When one paints a picture or composes music or writes poetry, everyone has his own way of expression. Every painter, every musician, every poet, every sculptor has or ought to have a unique, personal contact with the Divine, and through the work which is his speciality, the art he has mastered, he must express this contact in his own way, with his own words, his own colours. For him, instead of copying the outer form of Nature, he takes these forms as the garment of something else, precisely of its relation with the realities which are behind, deeper, and he tries to make them express that. Instead of simply imitating what he sees, he tries to make them say what is there behind them, and it is this which makes all the difference between a living art and just a flat copy of Nature.

Mother contemplates a flower she holds in her hand. It is the flower of the golden champak
(*Michelia champaka*)

Have you noticed this flower?

It has twelve petals in three rows of four.

We called it "Supramental psychological perfection".

I had never noticed that it had three rows: a small row like this, another a little bigger and a third bigger still. They are in gradations of four: four petals, four petals, four petals.

Well, if one wants to see exactly in the forms of Nature a symbolic expression, one can see a centre which is the supreme Truth, and a triple manifestation (because four indicates manifestation) in three superimposed worlds: the outermost (these are the largest petals, the best formed), that is the physical world, then a vital world and a mental world, and then at the centre, the supramental Truth.

And you can discover all sorts of other analogies.

Is that all?

Mother, in reference to the division of works, Sri Aurobindo writes here: "A Yoga turned towards an all-embracing realisation of the Supreme will not despise the works or even the dreams, if dreams they are, of the Cosmic Spirit or shrink from the splendid toil and many-sided victory which he has assigned to himself in the human creature. But its first condition for this liberality is that our works in the world too must be part of the sacrifice offered to the Highest and to none else, to the Divine Shakti and to no other Power, in the right spirit and with the right knowledge, by the free soul and not by the hypnotised bondsman of material Nature. If a division of works has to be made, it is between those that are nearest to the heart of the sacred flame and those that are least touched or illumined by it because they are more at a distance, or between the fuel that burns strongly or brightly and the logs that if too thickly heaped on the altar may impede the ardour of the fire by their damp, heavy and diffused abundance."

(*Ibid.*, p. 160)

Psychologically, to what does this division correspond in our life?

I suppose it is different for everyone. So each one must find out those activities which increase his aspiration, his consciousness, his deep knowledge of things, and those which, on the contrary, mechanise him and draw him back more thoroughly into a purely material relation with things.

It is difficult to make a general rule.

That means that everything ought to be done exactly, as an offering?

Truly speaking, that depends on the way of doing a thing rather than on the thing itself.

You take some work which is quite material, like cleaning the floor or dusting a room; well, it seems to me that this work can lead to a very deep consciousness if it is done with a certain feeling for perfection and progress; whilst other works considered of a higher type, as, for example, studies or literary and artistic work, if done with the idea of seeking fame or for the satisfaction of one's vanity or for some material gain, will not help you to progress. So this already makes a kind of classification which depends more on the inner attitude than on the outer fact. But that classification can be applied to everything.

Naturally, there is one kind of work which is done only for purely lucrative and personal reasons, like that (whatever it may be) for earning one's living. That attitude is exactly the one Sri Aurobindo compares with the damp logs of wood, which are heaped so thick the flame cannot leap up. It has something humid and heavily dull about it.

And that brings us to something which I have already told you several times, but which poses a problem not yet solved by circumstances. I think I have already spoken to you about it, but still I shall speak about it again this evening in connection with this sentence of Sri Aurobindo's.

At the beginning of my present earthly existence I was put into touch with many people who said they had a great inner aspiration, an urge towards something deeper and truer, but were tied down, subjected, slaves of that brutal necessity of earning their living, and that this weighed down upon them so much, took away so much of their time and energy that they could not engage in any other activity, inner or outer. I heard that very often, I saw many poor men—I don't mean poor from the monetary point of view, but poor because they felt imprisoned in a narrow, heavy necessity.

I was very young at that time, and always I used to tell myself that if ever I could do it, I would try to create a little world—oh! quite a small one, but still—a small world where people would be able to live without having to be preoccupied by problems of food and lodging and clothing and the imperious necessities of life, to see if all the energies freed by this certainty of an assured material living, would spontaneously be turned towards the divine life and inner realisation,

Well, towards the middle of my life—at least, what is generally considered the middle of human life—this means was given to me and I could realise that, that is, create these conditions of living. And I have come to this conclusion that it is *not* this necessity which hinders men from devoting themselves to an inner realisation, but that it is a dullness, a “tamas”, a lack of aspiration, a miserable laxity, a I-don’t-care-a-hang attitude, and that those who face even the hardest conditions of living are sometimes the ones who react most and have the intensest aspiration.

That’s all. I am waiting for the contrary to be proved to me.

I would like to see the contrary very much, but I haven’t yet seen it. As there are many energies which are not used, since this terrible compulsion of having something to eat or a roof to sleep beneath or clothes on one’s back does not exist, as one is sure of all that,—there is a whole mass of energies which are not used for that; well, they are spent in idle stupidities. And one of these follies which seems to me the most disastrous is to set the tongue wagging: chattering, chattering, chattering. I haven’t known a place where they chatter more than here, and say everything they should not say, busy themselves with things they should not be concerned with. And I know it is simply an overflowing of unused energy.

That is all.

So the division in works is not perhaps quite what one believes it to be...

EMPTINESS AND FULLNESS

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Q: The voidness of my vital is deepening vastly. I do not know what it means. Has the vital also its inner and higher planes of consciousness?

SRI AUROBINDO. It is an influence from the wider Self above occupying the vital.
4-9-1934

Q: Specially after seeing the Mother I experience a greater and deeper voidness! Do you mean to say that what I feel as void is not true? For a week whatever I have felt has been nothing but emptiness!

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not true? The void is the condition of the Self—free, wide and silent. It seems void to the mind, but in reality is simply a state of pure existence and consciousness, Sat and Chit, with Shanti.
3-9-1934.

Q: What is this "Shanti" or this Peace?

SRI AUROBINDO: The three things are Sat, Chit and Ananda—but at this stage there is more usually the Shanti than the Ananda.
4-9-1934.

Q: An opening in the middle of the top of my head is felt. What is that centre?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the Brahmaraandhra through which there is the communication between the higher consciousness and the lower in the body. It is a passage, not a centre. The centre is the thousand-petalled lotus just above the head, at that part.
5-9-1934.

Q: I went to the Aroumé House (the Ashram Dining Hall). There I visited M. While approaching him I felt as if I was stepping towards a psychic being! During my conversation also I experienced all the while that I was speaking not to a human person but to a psychic being!

SRI AUROBINDO: His psychic is very prominent.

Q: I placed my head on the lap of the Mother during the Pranam ceremony. She put her transforming palm on my head. And with her thumb she pressed the centre of my head. The result was, I began receiving something from above. Suddenly my consciousness had the experience as if it had been shifted into some supra-terrestrial world! Some higher light penetrated into the cells of the body which was flooded by it; and the physical consciousness itself seemed to be taken up. This needs to be explained, please!

SRI AUROBINDO: There is nothing to be explained. It was as what you describe. At once the raising of the consciousness to a higher plane and the descent of that into the physical.
5-9-1934

Q: Do the experiences during the dream-state carry the same value and importance as those of the waking state?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if they are true experiences, not merely formations of the mind or vital. 7-9-1934.

Q: When the new experiences come how am I to understand or appreciate them before the higher knowledge descends?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to watch and see how they develop. For the most part they carry their own meaning and if you go on observing them with a silent and vigilant mind you will understand more than if you were in a constant turmoil of thought about them. 7-9-1934.

What you are at present doing is the upward opening to the Self and for that the inner mind centre is the proper station. 11-9-1934

Q: During the blank state my consciousness shifts its lodging from the inner mind centre to the top of the head—it feels itself around and on the head, like a cap.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a first entry into the higher consciousness.

12-9-1934

Q: I see positively that very soon my consciousness will leave the body and station itself somewhere above the head.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is very good that the consciousness is realising this movement. 12-9-1934

Q: Sometimes the bodily being is as if non-existent.

SRI AUROBINDO: That kind of non-existence of the body or of some part of it is a frequent experience in Sadhana. 15-9-1934

Q: While speaking about the emptiness, you said, "Into that all things can come, yet it remains always the same." Here did you mean that no kind of higher experiences will change it? Will it be my permanent state of consciousness?

SRI AUROBINDO: The only difference is that what you feel now as a negative emptiness, you will feel positively as the Self or the pure existence, consciousness, peace and bliss. 24-9-1934

There is no reason to be unhappy. One must accept the stages of the experience and the transformation and not get unhappy, if one does not get the perfect state immediately. 25-9-1934

You have to have more confidence in your consciousness and experiences. If there is anything not clear about them, it will clear as the experience develops.

29-9-1934

As I told you, it is a thing for you to feel, not for me to tell. The centre of silence, peace etc. as you feel them now is above—so it must be there. But you must be conscious and able to feel it there.

29-9-1934

Q: You wrote, "If you feel it why should it be a hyperbole?" Well, my mind tells me: "To have such a union with the Mother is not possible for your present state. Perhaps you are mistaking something else for the oneness with her. Such an identification with her comes only after a long practice in sadhana."

SRI AUROBINDO: Such movements by the mind are of no value. If you had spoken of a final perfect integral and absolute union, there would have been overhaste in expectation but you spoke of a beginning of identification and that is quite possible now.

1-10-1934

Q: I want to leave off writing to you my experiences, since my mental descriptions are so partial, and also because I do not know whether you find it necessary to depend on them.

SRI AUROBINDO: I prefer that you should continue to describe your experiences.

9-10-1934

Q: During the evening meditation, my consciousness felt the pure silence and Shanti up above the head. Absolutely no thought, merely an existence of stillness. I think, this is what you meant by the Self-realisation of the pure existence and consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

11-10-1934

Q: When my consciousness returned into the head from above, it felt the working of the Mother's Force and the non-existence of several parts of the body, particularly the face.

This experience shows that in the pure existence there is not even the sense of existence or non-existence!

SRI AUROBINDO: Only the self exists—but one need not even call it the self.

11-10-1934

Q: What was all that extremely strong working of the Force for two whole days before there came the sudden stillness today?

SRI AUROBINDO: It was probably preparing the stillness.

11-10-1934

Q: As the soul, the psychic being, is in direct connection with the Divine and is a part of Him, so is our Self, the Atman. Why then, does one not feel intimacy with the Divine while realising the Self as one experiences during the soul-realisation?

SRI AUROBINDO: The Self has two aspects—passive and active. In the first it is pure silence, wideness, calm, the inactive Brahman—in the second it is the Cosmic Spirit universal not individual. One can feel in it union or oneness with the Mother. Intimacy is a feeling of the individual, therefore of the psychic being.

12-10-1934

Q: Yesterday's experience of self-realisation was again felt this morning for hours together. What was added was a spontaneity, the absence of any sense of abnormality about it.

You said, "One need not even call it the self." How then is one to formulate it?

SRI AUROBINDO: One need not think of it by any word or name. One simply is that. 12-10-1934

Q: You spoke of the two aspects of the Self; do they manifest one after the other?

SRI AUROBINDO: Usually they are there one after the other and remain separate till the Supermind is being prepared. 13-10-1934

Q: Does the first aspect remain always as mere silence, wideness and calm? Is there no further step?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not until the final change, when calm and action are fused into each other. Except that strength may come in before that and a strong wide calm be experienced. That happens when the true vital emerges. 13-10-1934

Q: Could one have a great fullness of spiritual being and at the same time a deepening of emptiness?

SRI AUROBINDO: Without the emptiness there can be no fullness. 24-10-1934

Q: How is it possible to have emptiness and fullness at the same time?

SRI AUROBINDO: I meant that in the higher consciousness that simultaneous experience was quite natural. It is the same with complete rest and full activity,—experience of infinite impersonality and of the true person. All these (and many other things also) are to the mind incompatible, but in the higher consciousness they go together. 24-10-1934

Q: I wonder why my consciousness does not open to the essential attributes of the Self, like wideness and Ananda, as it did with silence and calm.

SRI AUROBINDO: Ananda comes afterwards—even if it comes at the beginning it is not usually constant. Wideness does not come because the consciousness is not yet free from the body. Probably when what is felt above the head comes down, it will be liberated into the wideness. 13-10-1934

From NAGIN DOSHI

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of January, 1972)

(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.)

JUNE 2, 1940

EVENING

P: The Allies did not seem to have correct information about the strength of the German Air Force. Their espionage system wasn't very efficient. Neither did they know the strength of the German mechanised units.

SRI AUROBINDO: No.

P: What a tremendous number of planes they have brought forth! They must have about 20,000, I suppose.

N: But not very efficient.

SRI AUROBINDO: Even as regards their tanks they are inferior to the French ones, it seems.

P: Yes, one French tank is almost equal to two or three German ones.

SRI AUROBINDO: You saw the story of two French men attacking, like the Abyssinians, a German tank with revolvers. As soon as the German tank driver saw the revolvers, he cried out "Kamerad" and surrendered. (*Laughter*) The Germans act by sheer mass drive and daring. But individually the soldiers were better in the Kaiser's time. They had more initiative.

S: If Italy joins in, the French will be in a difficult position. They will attack France from the south.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but the observers say that France has kept a big army there.

S: Yes.

N: It seems Italy is going to attack Egypt, Tunis, Corsica first. The Russians call it all bluff.

P: Their breaking off trade negotiations with England is significant.

SRI AUROBINDO: Still England hopes for an agreement!

N: The *Amrita Bazar* says that due to the influence of a certain general Leopold surrendered.

SRI AUROBINDO: The *Amrita Bazar*?

N: It is a special cable news. And Leopold's sister and mother also, who were in Rome, exercised their influence on him. This General had been to Rome and returned just three days before the surrender. It seems Hitler exerted his influence through Mussolini and has promised Leopold the kingship of Holland. (*The paper was shown to Sri Aurobindo and after reading it he asked us to give it to Pavitra for the Mother to see.*)

SRI AUROBINDO: Then what the Mother said comes true. She said that it might be due to some pro-Nazi general and the influence of his mother that he surrendered. (*Looking at N*) Have you seen what Rukmini Devi says?

N: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: She says that it is not fair to blame the king and to demonstrate before the statue of King Albert, in that way. She was in sympathy with Belgium.

JUNE 3, 1940

P. Franco's representative seems to have met Mussolini and then gone to meet Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO: Who is he?

P: I forget his name—some general. Military circles say that after seeing the Dunkirk operation they are convinced that the Navy is still superior to the Air Force. The German Air Force could not cause much damage to the soldiers or to the Navy.

N: That is because of the R.A.F. resistance and because the German Air Force is not so efficient.

SRI AUROBINDO: An Air Force is effective on land only. On sea it is not so effective.

P: They say that tons and tons of bombs have been lost without causing any proportionate damage.

SRI AUROBINDO: That of course. Still it is not so bad as the old bombardment. You know the story of the bombing of Smyrna?

S: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: After a whole day's bombardment they killed only a goat and a donkey! (*Laughter*)

S: These had perhaps come there on hearing the noise!

P: General Prioux is said to have reached Dunkirk—the morning radio news says.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it is not correct. It seems only a part of Prioux's troops have reached there. Looks as if they were lost. Almost the whole of the B.E.F. has escaped. The French were farther away from the coast.

P: King Leopold's mother is said to be a German.

SRI AUROBINDO: German? I see. Who said so?

P: Jwalanti¹ Nishtha² also says that she is an enigma. During the last war's peace negotiations, her face used to be like a mask. Nobody knew whether she sided with Germany or with the Allies. Nishtha has met her.

SRI AUROBINDO: But it was said that she strongly supported the king against the Germans. Because she is a German does not mean that she should side with Germany. The English king also was German, so was the Rumanian king.

S: Maeterlinck says that the German blood is alive.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes.

N: I thought Maeterlinck was long dead.

S: So did I.

SRI AUROBINDO: Very much alive!

N: It is said that the Germans will now make a drive towards Paris instead of England.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is one of the possibilities. Otherwise if the French consolidate their position in the north, it will be difficult for the Germans to penetrate. So they may think of striking.

S: And if Italy comes in, it will be difficult for France.

N: Italy's coming means the extension of war to the Balkans too.

SRI AUROBINDO: That depends on Mussolini. He may do it later on after winning the war, provided Hitler does not come in the way.

S: If Spain also comes in, it will make it still worse for France.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, attack on three sides.

N: But Spain has not yet recovered.

P: Still it can attack Gibraltar. The French, of course, can attack through the Pyrenees.

SRI AUROBINDO: France would have enough to face before attacking. No, Italy can take possession of Majorca and Minorca and separate France from her colonies, by the Navy.

P: Also she can establish an air base. Spain's change of attitude may have been helped by Petain's departure too.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. France has had such dangers before, as Reynaud says. She has been invaded a hundred times. But England is in a dangerous position only just now. Even during Napoleon's time she had her allies in Europe. Now she has only France to rely upon.

N: We do not hear of Gamelin now.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): No.

N: Has he committed suicide then?

¹ The mother of G. Monod-Herzen.

² Margaret Woodrow Wilson.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, he has been relieved of his duty.

N: The *Amrita Bazar* says that the failure to blow up a bridge on the Meuse was responsible for the German penetration.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is one reason, but Gamelin's disposition and his placing of troops under...¹ was weak.

N: India is increasing her defence measures now, by three or four times.

S: From 70 to 80 aeroplanes, perhaps. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: The Indian Navy is said to be having a portentous force. (*Laughter*)

N: The chance of Gandhi's starting his civil disobedience is getting more and more remote.

S: He does not want to embarrass the British now.

SRI AUROBINDO: Also he says that the Congress and the country are not non-violent enough. If he waits for everybody to be non-violent, he will never be able to start it.

N: I think he just says it in order to prepare the people. In fact he does not want to start it now.

SRI AUROBINDO: He would have come to a compromise but for Bose with his Forward Bloc and Nehru.

P: He wants England to be in a better position before he starts the civil disobedience.

SRI AUROBINDO: It will be much worse. By the way, have you seen that Nehru is prepared to shed his blood for the country, against Hitler?

S: He wants to be recruited.

EVENING

SRI AUROBINDO: (*addressing P*): Have you seen that history repeats itself? Germany threw two bombs on England and killed a chicken! (*Laughter*)

P: Yes, yes. It must be a joke.

C: In the morning it was a donkey and a goat and now a chicken!

P: Bombing from air does not seem to be as effective as they think it to be. There is a lot of waste, for many bombs miss the target.

SRI AUROBINDO: To hit properly the plane has to come down very low but then it exposes itself to the anti-aircraft guns; whereas from a height it can't aim correctly.

S: What is the news about the B.E.F. evacuation?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is very confused. They say that four-fifths have been removed. Since Lord Gort is in England, it may be true. But there is no news of the unfortunate Prioux.

P: Italy seems to be preparing. France will have to face another menace.

¹ Name irrecoverable (Nirodbaran)

S: We thought that if Italy joined it would be advantageous for the Allies. It will enable them to make an offensive.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but just after this great struggle in Flanders the Allies have become weak. If at this moment Italy gives a blow, it may be serious.

P: If Spain also joins then there will be a double menace.

SRI AUROBINDO: Spain has sent a military mission—not any general. That does not mean anything; of course it may but it need not. If Spain joins, it will be at the mercy of Germany and Italy if they win. And besides there are many discontented elements in Spain who are waiting for an opportunity to revolt. If Spain joins they will at once seize this opportunity.

P: Spain can take possession of Majorca and Minorca at once.

SRI AUROBINDO. Perhaps it will wait for Italy to take them. The Spanish are a virtuous people and think that virtue will win at the end.

(*After some time*) You have seen that in India everybody is prepared to shed his blood. (*Laughter*) Asaf Ali is not satisfied with the defence measures.

N: The commander-in-chief says that we have everything except technicians.

P: All the tanks and mechanised units of the Germans have people who are skilled technicians as well, so that they may put under repair at once anything that goes wrong.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not only that but there are highly trained soldiers in mechanised units. It is because the British were raw in Norway that they could not cope with the Germans. In Flanders, though the B.E.F. were territorials, they have been trained for a long number of years. When Napoleon was thinking of attacking England and was preparing the navy, a general said to him, "It is very well to talk like that. To train a sailor it requires many years, while a soldier can be trained in just 6 months." Napoleon said, "Don't talk like that. A soldier requires at least 2 years' training."

P: Gandhi said the same thing as you do. He said it would require at least 25 years for India to prepare herself for defence.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is obvious to everybody.

P (*after a while*): Somebody in Gujerat has prophesied that Hitler's decline will begin in June—that is, now.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): That fulfils my prophecy which I myself never made! Some Anglo-French woman said that the Sage of the Ashram had prophesied that Hitler's decline would come in May. The decline will really depend on the strength of the French line. They have now built it up.

P: In the last war, they threw in a large number of men against the Germans coming to Paris. It was an immense sacrifice against all military codes. "Not to Paris at any cost," was their resolve. And the German attack slowed down.

SRI AUROBINDO: The credit for it went to...¹

Krishnalal's picture of a terrified monkey clasping her young one in protection

¹ Name missed. (Nirodbaran)

was shown to Sri Aurobindo.

SRI AUROBINDO: Have you seen the photo of two refugees cowering from the explosion of bombs? (*Laughter*) These monkeys look very much like those refugees.

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

THIS EVENING

THIS evening I am waiting again
For a gift from beyond earth's bounds,
Coming on the wings of waves
That are cosmic sounds.

A few words in a rhythmic flow,
Answers to the riddles of life,
Or the humming of a sweet song
To lessen our mortal strife.

This evening again I am sitting
On the beach of a silent sea,
Watching for waves to wash away
My gloom and make me free.

As a beggar upon a pavement
Stretches to the World his bowl
I wait and watch for waves of grace
With a hushed and hopeful soul.

M. P. JAIN

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

(Continued from the issue of January, 1972)

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

THE use of mantra depends on the power which the Guru puts into it by his Sadhana and on what the Sadhaka puts into it: that is, he must have the right condition of mind and receptivity. The mantra, if properly repeated, creates certain vibrations in the mind, and a certain openness. A real Sadhaka cannot fail to get something out of the mantra. If you mechanically repeat it, it is no use.

Q: What is the ideal relation between the disciple and the Guru?

It is the method of the mind to make an ideal and then create a rule from it and cut things according to the rule. How can there be such a rule or standard in these cases? Each disciple has to find his own relation to the Guru. There is an impersonal part of the Guru, something greater than the Guru himself. The Guru gives from the impersonal; the personal (mental or vital preference) does not determine what he gives except if he be a human not a divine Guru. The personal side is given only in so far as it is a reflection of the higher. Grace or 'Kripa' is part of the divine wisdom. The common idea of Patita Pavana is sentimental but the truth of it is that, whatever defects a man has, if he has some openness to the Divine and if he fulfils some conditions, there is some chance of Grace. The Grace is not capricious.

Q: Ultimately is it all the Divine Working?

Your logic, which carries a certain aspect of the thing to its extreme and does not see other aspects, comes to such a conclusion. Obviously man has a part in the matter. When we say that all is the Divine, we have to remember that the Divine Will is so high and beyond our reach that we do not see it. What we see is the lower movement of the forces and we have to deal with it practically. The only value of such a statement is that behind all apparent defect and improbability there is the Divine which helps under conditions. From the point of view of Nature all is a working of forces, she puts a Mussolini in front for her purpose and when her work is done she

may shove him aside. The external being may take account of the possibilities and if the external being is well developed it may gain success, outer success. But from the point of view of the soul, the inner being and its development, there is the assent of the soul. Even if all is Nature's working through the Gunas, as the Gita says, it is only one aspect of the matter; it is the soul behind that gives or refuses assent. If we follow logic it takes us to a dead stop, for it argues that the assent, or for the matter of that, everything is Divine. But we have to see things in the whole.

Q: In Baroda did you have all this capacity of yours?

If the seed is not put in the right soil, it does not produce the tree. But the soil is only one factor. All energy I got from Yoga.

There are two movements of the money force which represents a vital force: (i) one is the lower movement, Mammon or the Devil, (ii) the other is the Lakshmi movement. People generally follow the lower movement, amass wealth, do not spend, have an attachment to it. Such money, hoarded wealth, does not remain, it goes away in two or three generations. In the Lakshmi movement there is a gathering of money and a throwing of it out in the right order and harmony. This gathering and throwing out was the ancient Hindu ideal of the Vaishya, who had no attachment to money and earned it only to spend it for the community. There is no waste, not even a pie is wasted, but there is no attachment. Such also in its own way is the American movement. If you have attachment you cannot take risks and you cannot either accumulate or spend. Compare the American movement with the little French movement. Again look at the great captains of industry, how they earn money and spend. Not only that, they follow the right rhythm and do not waste a pie. For example, I believe Ford does not waste a pie. He is so orderly in his movements.

There are certain persons, who have something in their vital being, one kind of vital force, and they very often succeed in a large way. Napoleon's wife brought her husband an empire. Had he not married her, he would not have got the empire! It has nothing to do with the sex of the person—it is a force in the vital being. Many men also who have that vital force get success. That woman is a great force of a particular kind is another matter; but at times she even prevents man from action.

The Siddhi of Ishita¹ acquires money by following another movement. The Yogin has no attachment to money, is not troubled when he has no money, sees everything as the will of God, but money comes to him when it is wanted. And many such Yogins spend it away as soon as it comes and starve till it comes again. But our Yoga takes account of the movements of all forces of nature, even the force of money. The Yogin may have to keep or store some money against the future, in the present conditions of society. At present money is in the hands of the lower forces. They oppose its right use. The Yogin has therefore to adopt a special line of movement.

¹ Perfect control over the powers of Nature and over things inert or intelligent.

He must have no attachment. If he has attachment, that attachment raises up the contrary force, the Devils of money, and they try to overthrow him. He must have no personal needs, all must be used for building up the Divine in life. He must be orderly in his rhythm; he must not waste a pie, must not accumulate too much money nor restrict it to his use. If you follow these spiritual laws there will be plenty of opposition from the hostile forces at first but if you take the Yogic attitude towards getting money, you will succeed.

Das had the capacity to earn, but he wasted money, he gave it to wrong people for wrong purposes. If anybody wastes like that, money does not remain with him. That is why he was always in debt. But Das had a fine psychic nature.

Das asked to come here, but I refused because he would have brought a different world here and because he was not ready. His psychic being would have easily opened. But there was much vital movement in his nature and therefore he took to politics and his psychic being receded and kept behind. If such a man begins his Yoga, there would be a very unhealthy balance of forces which may result in great disturbance. His intellect was lucid.

Oliver Lodge follows the scientific method in regard to the phenomena of the other world. What Conan Doyle says cannot be accepted unless well testified. The English have little logical intelligence in dealing with these facts. The northern races have a strain of mysticism. The English (in the stories of ghosts, spirits and other worlds) draw from the vital world, and their physical mind presents the facts in a realistic fashion, their presentation has therefore the force of reality of life. But there is nothing psychic or aesthetic about it as in the delicate Celtic expression. The French are not open that way and have little imagination. Of these races the Swedish are the most open.

The French have logical intelligence, intellectual common sense, they present ideas in their right relation and sequence, they argue from the premises to the right conclusion. The English are the most illogical but they have imagination. That is why English poetry is better than French poetry and English prose cannot compare at all with French prose. The English have practical common sense, they do not bother themselves with logic and therefore succeed in politics. The Latin mind is the most logical but it has also shown success in practical life. The Roman practical energy was quite different from the English, there was a grandeur about it. Mussolini is a poor imitation of the old Roman character. Roman Law is everywhere on the continent, but in English Law there is a good deal of Germanic element. The Germans are more imaginative than the French. They pour out ideas, but cannot group them in the right relation.

The French mind is shut up in its logical intelligence. The Anglo-Saxon mind gives a material presentation to whatever it sees; it has not the direct perception of the other world. There is some resemblance between the Anglo-Saxon mind and the Semitic; that is why the English know and understand the Mahomedans better than we do. There is an idea that nations also reincarnate. The English seem the reincarn-

ation of the ancient Carthaginians. The Carthaginians had the same sea spirit and the idea of Colonial empire. In the American mind there are many elements; it started with the Anglo-Saxon as its basis. But the possibilities are yet to be realised and there is a great future for America. Now, the success of the Americans is due not to the mind, but to their lively, quick, youthful though yet crude vital force. The Japanese mind is intuitive along certain lines. The Far Eastern races have the sense of nature, a feeling for decoration. The Chinese mind is logical but here is a different logic from that of the French. The Bengali is intuitive, but his mind has not sufficient staying power. Staying power means that there should be in the vital being mass and force (Mahatwa). Madhusudan Dutt tried to bring in Mahatwa into his works, as did Milton. The modern languages have Mahatwa. Shakespeare very often rises to it.

The Tamil mind is logical : for example, Shankaracharya, but it is rigid.

The Gujarati mind is still in a state of formation.

The Mahratta is practical but his mind does not make for success in business or politics; It is logical but rigid, has little imagination. He smiles rarely.

Industrialisation in the West is a phase. It began in the middle of the 19th century, as the realisation of the demand for production. As there is no larger inner life in the West, the Westerner is easily mechanised. But there is no necessary connection between machinery and mechanisation of life....As long as there is the slum in human nature it manifests itself externally in slums. But now there is a movement in the West to take the machine to the home, to make the city a garden. Even cottage industry—for instance, the spinning wheel—mechanises if there is no inner life. But there was the inner life in India and cottage industry catered only to artistic needs. It was only in the middle of the last century, when the machine dominated, that cottage industry could not compete with it and there was a decline of prosperity in India; the handmade products could never compete with the machine and never will. We have to bring in the machine, we must not refuse to give up the power and mastery of nature which science has given. Cottage industry may be there, for artistic purposes. Whether India has to repeat the mistakes of the West, one does not know, but India must get wealth first before she adopts any organisation of life, industrialism or anything. One must earn well and live well. The standard of life ought to be high. We must reject the Gandhi ideal and get back to the ancient one. The capitalist can be there but he ought not to be the owner, he must be part of the system....Jamshedpur was planned by Patrick Geddes according to the ancient model, only in the place of the temple in the centre there is the factory. In the ancient Indian villages or towns the temple was always in the centre; all the communal institutions were around it and next, behind, were the people's quarters so that all the people had easy access to the temple and its institutions. In Srinagar, in Taxila, in Benares the temple is in the centre. There was a perfect system of drainage; merely the relics of it remain now.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

THE INTEGRAL YOGA, WORK AND LIFE-ACTIVITY

SOME NOTES FOR AN AMERICAN SEEKER

Q: Please define Sadhana and Integral Yoga. What is their relationship to each other? What is the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's attitude toward work and what part do work and life-activity play in the life of one who undertakes Integral Yoga?

SADHANA is the practice, system, method by which one tries to attain spiritual perfection. It may be called also the process of Yoga—Yoga meaning the union of the human consciousness with the Divine.

The Integral Yoga sets before the sadhaka, the doer of sadhana, a full and complete aim. The fullness and completeness may be viewed from several standpoints.

Not only one part of us—the mental intelligence, the emotional being, the vital force, the physical organism—is taken up according to the specific turn of our nature, as in the old Yogas, but our whole self in all its parts is set towards the Divine. Of course, our starting-point can be anywhere, but with its help we have gradually to open all of ourselves.

Every part of us has an inner and an outer aspect. Both have to be taken into account. There should be a movement inward to concentrate on the Divine in a quiet isolation or absorption. But the movement outward must not be neglected. The world without no less than the world within is the field of our sadhana.

The ultimate goal is not only to rise above the ordinary world to some supreme Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, some infinite and eternal Oneness in which everything gets merged, or else some sovereign Being beyond with whose light and love we unite. The ultimate goal is also to bring all that is above into the world below and to manifest it in our own humanity and put it in relation to the ordinary life around us.

The manifestation in ourselves and the channelling out to the world have to be of a Divine Presence and Power that can utterly transform into perfection all the terms of our being and nature, all the terms of the world's life, leaving nothing untouched. There is a supreme original, an eternal truth, a perfect model, as it were, of all that is here partial, broken, groping and discordant. That luminous "archetype" has to be evolved here and now.

The evolution of this "archetype" needs the operation of what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother call the Supermind, the creative Truth-Consciousness, which has never been brought into play in its direct form. The Supermind can divinise the mental and vital and physical being of man and bring about a collective spiritual life on the basis of an inner unity and take up all the fields of activity and give them a divine value, direction and fulfilment.

Thus the Integral Yoga sweeps everything into its scope. Its sadhana is not a fixed one-dimensional discipline as in the older Yogas. It is a plastic movement, varying in its turns, suiting each individual and depending ultimately on the working of the Supramental Godhead, the Will and the Grace of the transcendent Mother who is also universal and individual.

The central process of this Yoga, therefore, is a constant aspiration to that Godhead and that Mother, a surrender of the whole self and nature into their hands and a consecration of all activity to them so that they may take it up and make us their perfect instruments. In more concrete terms we may say that our entire self and nature have to flow towards the Avatar of that Godhead—Sri Aurobindo—and the incarnation of that Mother—the radiant personality who has been Sri Aurobindo's co-worker.

“Co-worker”—the word is apposite in a special sense, for it points to the importance of work in the Integral Yoga. It is by work that our outer being, with its manifold dynamic turns, can be dedicated to the Divine.

Every kind of work, all life-activity, is embraced by the Integral Yoga. But it has to be offered to the Supreme, launched upon for Sri Aurobindo, carried out for the Mother. Thus it cannot be accepted in any crude shape. Not that one has to be finicky and over-choosy. The Integral Yogi should be ready to take up whatever work falls to his lot and feel himself fit to do it. But nothing should be done crudely, all should be made as perfect as possible—and the whole effort has to be charged with a new attitude. The new attitude is the indispensable thing. For our aim is not just to be refined and efficient: our aim is to do everything for the Divine and there must be at all moments the sense of self-offering, the calling of the Divine to take up our work and do the Supreme Will through it. We must cultivate a non-attachment to the results: success we must try to achieve but if we do not get it there must be no inner upset. The failure itself has to be offered up to the Divine to make use of for His own purposes. Shakespeare has hit the mark with his phrase:

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we may.

It could even happen that a depth-churning failure is of greater use ultimately to the Divine than a superficial success. So, upset is out of place in any case.

By continued self-offering and inner detachment from the results and by aspiration to be the Supreme's instruments we shall grow gradually into the feeling that a Power beyond our own takes up all our works and directly acts through us. When this experience begins, we are on the way to the state Dante attributes to the blessed at every level of Paradise—the state in which there is no ambition, no discontent, no lack of self-completion but a constant acceptance and reception of God's Will that is all-sufficient and leaves nothing more to be desired:

His Will alone is our tranquillity.

Indeed it is natural that this should be so, for the Divine's dynamism comes out of an infinite peace: it is, as Sri Aurobindo says,

Force one with unimaginable rest.

And because it is such, it is not only inexhaustible, not only possessed of a vast and happy patience but also free from rigidity and one-sidedness and capable of meeting every demand, every change of circumstance and leading assuredly to the pre-
visioned goal. That is why Sri Aurobindo has said:

All can be done if the God-touch is there

K. D. SETHNA

THIS TOO IS HER LOVE

(The background of this poem is the following letter, dated May 11, 1955, to the Mother: "I was waiting for you outside your bathroom. When you came out, you did not look at me at all. I couldn't understand why and it was simply awful—but, as always, I tried to feel that every act of yours is really a grace to me and is meant to remould me into the Divine Truth. The incident moved me to write a poem. Here it is—a symbolic transcription of my faith—but, of course, I hope I shan't have to write such poems very often.")

THIS too is her love—that with unseeing gaze
 She goes as if I were but empty space.
 Not my poor soul's ill-carven presence now
 But all the dreamed perfection, the pure brow
 And falterless feet of the God unborn in me,
 The white Absence of my mortality
 Her eyes are fixed on, calling into time
 The Eternal Truth whose gold my days begrime
 And teaching me the time-transfigurant art
 To make her alchemy's crucible my heart.
 When self-submerged in her vision's depth, I cease
 To my own thought and grow a nameless peace,
 Then all that's crude will fade to an apoclypt flare
 And ever her eyes will rest on the light laid bare
 By my dense clay she treats now like thin air.

K. D. SETHNA

TWO POEMS

OUTSIDE THE MOTHER'S ROOM

A WAITING on that hushed terrace
Where shade and sunshine meet and part,
A waiting in silent expectancy
For a glorious Joy to invade the heart.
Each inner moment pulsating
In the being like a bell
Marking time for the Splendour whose depth
A glimpse into that room alone can tell.
Ever gaining strength, burns a secret flame
Lighting each one's inner gloom,
Waiting to turn to heavenly brilliance
On entering the sacred room.

MEETING THE MOTHER

Just to stand before You,
My hands cupped for Your grace—
Your smile a star shining in my heart—
A promise of glorious life Your face!
I drink in that grace hungrily,
I offer now my open hands—
My life-core is offered in this gesture,
And Your sweet assurance before me stands,
A balm to my troubled mind—
An ever-glowing light.
My bowed head is filled with Your love.
With this precious gift my eyes shut tight.
I leave—but I sit on Your door-step,
My heart cleft open like a shell.
My joyful weeping cannot stop
As though from a depthless secret well.

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

RENAISSANCE

IN Beauty's simple temple,
Amid a million miracles,
We revealed to each other the joy of our renaissance,
Named it, needlessly,
For a wordless communion sang its truth in our eyes.

The power of the joy was so immense
That it could barely be contained
And shaped itself in the wetness of a little tear of bliss,
Like the dewdrop which speaks of the ecstasy
That the dawn-fresh flower feels
As it greets the blinding light of day's birth.

Thus with Her grace,
The Earth-Mother gently opened the doors
To divine transformation.
We were dumb witnesses merely
To an incomprehensible immensity of force
In us, in all, in Her.
And thus could we begin to know, to share
The silent hymn of the universe,
In unison in its eternal Creation;
Our flower-petal eyelids unfold
To embrace the brilliance of the endless dawn.

VIKAS
(Peace, Auroville)

THE SWAN ETERNAL

DOING no "research", but a little reading desultory though not entirely undirected, I have come upon yet another opportunity to extend my horizons in the matter of literary knowledge and understanding: this being the book *Enrique González Martínez*, by John S. Brushwood (New York: Twayne, 1969). The fact has not, I think, been largely studied or even widely spread in the apprehension of the cultured world, that there has latterly been a flourishing literature in Spanish America; but the activity there has been intense and not infrequently anguished, a search for distinctive voices, as well as for something real to say—and this Mexican poet may actually stand as a kind of instructive figure and emblem for the whole movement in poetry in these modern times.

He was born not long after the ill-fated days of the would-be emperor Maximilian, and lived until 1952; that is, chronologically he is right in the centre of things. Being there, he did not escape the nearly ubiquitous if not exactly monumental confusion. The influences were largely French, of course; and in fact cultural Mexico actually tried to *be* French, in so far as it could. Thus "Parnassianism," "Symbolism", and all the other "isms" of a primarily prosy consciousness were formidable; and operative too was the activity and influence of all those whose main concern was being "up-to-date," and who followed the fashions with more skill on the surface than inspiration and imaginative grasp.

Living in this environment, González Martínez turned against the cultivation of an exquisiteness that passed over into the effete; and he even reneged against poetry itself, in its large and life-giving nature. Thus he published a volume of verses entitled *The Death of the Swan (La muerte del cisne)*—in 1915, be it noted, when Hulme was doing his deadly work in England—and even before this, in 1911, he had published what is perhaps his most famous poem, "Wring the Swan's Neck", which contains these lines:

Tuércelo el cuello al cisne de engañoso plumaje
que da su nota blanca al azul de la fuente;
él pasea su gracia no más, pero no siente
el alma de las cosas ni la voz del paisaje.

As per Mr. Brushwood's translation: "Wring the neck of the deceitfully plumed swan who sings his white note to the blue of the fountain; he only shows off his grace, so does not sense the soul of things nor the voice of the landscape." Perhaps it is not necessary to add that González Martínez wanted what he considered to be that soul and that voice; and his tortured search has commended him to the Modern consciousness.

To understand his attitude here is not difficult; but to sympathize with it thoroughly is impossible for anyone who has really drunken of the great springs of poetry, whether a poet or a lover of the art and the divine gift. It is one thing to deprecate the denaturing, as it were, of the swan, the prettifying and conventionalizing until all real significance is lost, and depth and truth of nature; but it is quite another matter to want to wring the swan's neck on that account. The thing is to find the true springs that feed the real swan: and there is the soul and the voice of nature, and this divine existence. The great themes and images are perpetually being overworked by feeble poets—or underworked, dragged in extraneously and pretentiously; but to throw out the great themes and images is not to achieve; it is to default, to give up the real struggle. And to speak of “wringing the swan's neck”, even “ironically”, is to put oneself in the natural position, among cultured people, of being required to show cause why one should not be considered a barbarian.

González Martínez was no doubt very “sincere”: he really preferred darkness to light. Thus he considered himself inspired by the owl, and he wanted to replace the swan with that bird. (These Moderns do tend to insist on the exclusive claims of one of two things that do not conflict in nature, that is, in the natural order). He wanted to know the secrets of the silence and the midnight darkness, that are closed to that cygnic dandy of his aversion. He preferred the shrouded attention to small prey, not the sunlit buoyancy on the clear water. What he found was ways of talking about looking for the great secret, for what that is worth to anyone.

And this is the achievement of all our moderns, the signal Modern achievement: finding ways of talking about what one would do if one could, and of trying to make the talking do service for the endeavor. It is a more or less cultivated if not a cultured incapacity for anything poetic but some of the surfacemost possibilities of the artistry, which for lack of the depths whatever their skill are radically insignificant and meaningless. It is the feeling of fundamental futility perhaps that makes these versifiers (not to speak of the “progressive” would-be versifiers) so savagely, so crudely and degenerately violent: it is a part, a manifestation of the degeneracy that is so salient a characteristic of these “modern” times. They cannot ignore the swan, or let him alone, or leave him to his native and proper sphere: they must kill him. For if he lives, he threatens them. He is achievement, not tormented writhing or fashionable despair. With him the soul comes free, and the deathless beauty flies. He is an unbearable reproach to those who would make violence do for strength and sure enlightened power; who would try to be “vivid”, and “vigorous”, and even “profound” by a false and exaggerated emphasis, a graceless insistence, or startling by a rude reversal, with no substance; who at their most forceful shout, instead of singing (if they do not screech or hoot withal); those wilful prisoners of the unregenerate vital nature who do not want answers, but only the strenuosities and the thrills and pangs of a fundamentally insincere “search”. But the swan is deathless and remains inviolate, waiting for the awakening of the deeper springs, and the aspiration, the rising to the heights of the pure aether and the creative sun. The writhing and the straining, the huddling

and the narrow and all-too-personal course that rejects the light, of course remains in darkness; the owl catches a few mice perhaps. But the white note creates a new and a better world.

JESSE ROARKE

FOG

EVERY way the thickness grey and cold
Envelops and the sun is burning clear:
There is no failure and no loss to fear,
While of divine will comes beatitude,
And slowly all the stainless powers unfold.
The groping and the tossing in the storm
Is rounding of the bud to its pure form,
Increasing freedom with sweet light imbued,
Till all is light, the bright blood blooming gold.
Now sovereign advent speaks the earth renewed,
And darkness fights the more the more it quails;
Long working still against the stubborn veils
Must be: and faithful still the strong ship sails,
To its transformation and buoyant grace untold.

JESSE ROARKE

THE UPANISHAD OF UPANISHADS*

(Compiled from Sri Aurobindo's translations of the Kena, Katha, Mundaka and Isha Upanishads)

I

BY whom missioned falls the mind shot to its mark? By whom yoked does the first life-breath move forward on its path? By whom impelled is this word that men speak? What god set eye and ear to their workings?

That which is hearing behind the hearing, mind of the mind, the word behind the speech, that too is life of the life-breath, sight behind the sight. The wise find their release beyond and passing forward from this world they become immortal.

There sight attains not, nor speech attains, nor the mind. We know not nor can we discern how one should teach of That; for it is other than the known, and it is above beyond the unknown; so have we heard from the men of old who have declared That to our understanding.

That which remains unexpressed by the word, that by which the word is expressed, know That indeed to be the Brahman, not this which men follow after here.

That which thinks not by the mind, that by which the mind is thought, know That indeed to be the Brahman, not this which men follow after here.

That which sees not with the eye, that by which one sees the eye's seeing, know That indeed to be the Brahman, not this which men follow after here.

That which breathes not with the breath, that by which the life-breath is led forward in its paths, know That to be the Brahman, not this which men follow after here

He by whom It is not thought out, has the thought of It; he by whom It is thought out, knows it not. It is unknown to the discernment of those who discern of it, by those who seek not to discern of it It is discerned.

When It is known by perception that reflects it, then one has the thought of It, for one finds Immortality; by the self one finds the force to attain and by the knowledge one finds Immortality.

2

One calm and controlling Spirit within all creatures that maketh one form into many fashions, the calm and strong who see Him in the self as in a mirror, theirs is eternal felicity and 'tis not for others.

* On special request we are republishing this feature from an old issue of *Mother India*—with the addition of four new passages in the last section of it.

The one Eternal in many transient, the one Conscious in many conscious beings, who being one ordereth the desires of many, the calm and strong who behold Him in the self as in a mirror, theirs is eternal felicity and 'tis not for others.

The childish wit, bewildered and drunken with the illusion of riches, cannot open its eyes to see the path to heaven; for he that thinks that this world is and there is no other falleth again and again into death's thralldom.

God is not easy even to be heard of by many, and of those that hear of God not many can really know Him. A miracle is he that can speak of God wisely or attain Him, and when one is found, a miracle is the listener who can know God even if taught Him by the wisest master.

The Self-born hath set the doors of the body to face outward, therefore the soul of man gazeth outward and not at the Self within; hardly a wise man here and there desiring Immortality turneth his eyes inward and seeth the Self within.

The Wise One within is not born, neither doth He die; He came not from anywhere, neither is He anyone; He is unborn and everlasting, He is ancient and eternal. He is not slain with the slaying of the body.

If the slayer think that he slayeth and the slain think that he is slain, both of them know not; God within a man neither slayeth nor is slain.

Smaller than the atom, huger than hugeness, the Spirit abideth hidden in the secret heart of this creature; when a man is stripped of wishes and weaned from sorrow, then he beholdeth the Spirit; purified from temperament, he seeth God in His glory.

This that waketh in the sleepers, creating desire upon desire, this Purusha, Him they call the Bright One, Him Brahman, Him Immortality, and in Him are all the worlds established; none goeth beyond Him. This is the thing thou seekest.

The Purusha who is seated in the midst of our self is no larger than the finger of a man. He is the lord of what was and what shall be; Him having seen one shrinketh not from aught nor abhorreth any. This is the thing thou seekest.

The Purusha that is within is no larger than the finger of a man; He is like a blazing fire that is without smoke. He is lord of His past and His future, He alone is today and He alone shall be tomorrow. This is the thing thou seekest.

3

There are two birds that cling to one common tree, beautiful of plumage, yoke-fellows are they, eternal companions; and one eats the delicious fruit of the tree and the other eats not, but watches his fellow.

The Soul of man is the bird that dwells on one common tree with God and is lost and forgetful in its sweetness, and because he is fallen from lordship, therefore he has grief, therefore he is bewildered. But when he sees that other who is the Lord and the Beloved, then he knows that all this is his greatness and his grief passes away from him.

When the seer sees the Golden-hued, the Lord, the Spirit who is the doer of all actions and the womb of Brahman, then he shakes sin and virtue from his wings and rises a soul incapable of stain to the supreme equality.

When a man sees That which is both the higher and the lower being, then the knot of the heart-strings is rent asunder, then all his doubts are shattered and his works fall away from him and perish.

The wise man knows Him for the Life whose light becomes apparent in all existing beings, and takes not pleasure any more in creeds and much disputing. He who doeth all actions playing in the Self and in the Self is all his delight and pleasure, is the best among the knowers of the Eternal

The Eternal is hidden in a glorious golden sheath, the indivisible and stainless Spirit, and He is a brightness and the light of all lights and the One that the Self-knowers know.

There the sun shines not and the moon has no splendour and the stars are blind; there these lightnings flash not, nor any earthly fire. For all that is bright is but the shadow of His brightness and by His shining all this shineth.

All is this eternal and immutable Brahman. The Eternal is before us and the Eternal is behind us and to the south and to the north of us and above and below and extended everywhere. All this magnificent universe is nothing but the Eternal.

4

The Omniscient and All-Comprehending of whom is all this might and majesty that is upon the earth, is this Self in beings who is enthroned in his ethereal heaven in the city of the Spirit.

This Self is not to be won by exposition and brain-power and much sacred learning, but he alone whom the Spirit chooseth, getteth the Spirit and to him this Self discovers Its own body.

Eye cannot seize and speech cannot grasp Him, nor all these other godheads, nor by works can He be held nor seized by austerities; only when the inner being is purified by a clear gladness of Knowledge one beholds Him after long meditation, Spirit indivisible

Where the nerves meet as the spokes in the nave of a chariot wheel, there God dwelleth within us and is born in many disguises. Meditate on the Self as OM and let it carry you safe to the other side beyond the darkness.

A spirit of mind that is pilot of the life and the body has set a heart in matter and there he is established and the wise by knowledge behold him everywhere, even that which shines out as Delight and Immortality.

This Brilliant, this Subtler than subtlety, this Vastness in which all the worlds are set and their peoples, this it is that is Brahman immutable, and Life is That and Speech is That and Mind is That only, and this is that Truth and Immortality. O fair son, know it for That into which thou must penetrate.

Take up the bow of the Upanishad, that mighty weapon, set to it an arrow sharpened by adoration, draw the bow with a mind steeped in the feeling of oneness and penetrate into the Eternal as thou wouldst shoot into a target.

OM is the bow and the soul is the arrow and the Eternal is the target. Pierce into Him with an unfaltering aim and lose thyself in Him as an arrow is lost in that which it striketh.

It is the Truth that conquers at last and not falsehood. Truth built the long highway of the gods, the path which the sages tread and satisfying their desire come where is that highest home of Truth.

It is divine, It is immense, Its form is unimaginable; and It shines out more subtle than the subtle. It is farther than farness and It is here and very near to us: It is even here, hidden in the secret heart for those that have eyes to see it.

When every desire that harboureth in the heart of a man hath been loosened from its moorings, then this mortal putteth on immortality; even here he enjoyeth Brahman in this human body.

5

All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession.

Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee and not otherwise than this; action cleaves not to a man.

One unmoving that is swifter than Mind, That the Gods reach not, for it progresses ever in front. That, standing, passes beyond others as they run. In That the Master of Life establishes the Waters.

That moves and That moves not; That is far and the same is near; That is within all this and That also is outside all this.

But he who sees everywhere the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self, shrinks not thereafter from aught.

He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings, for he has the perfect Knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?

It is He that has gone abroad—That which is bright, bodiless, without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil. The Seer, the Thinker, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature from years sempiternal.

He who knows That as both in one, the Birth and the dissolution of Birth, by the dissolution crosses beyond death and by the Birth enjoys Immortality.

The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid; that do Thou remove, O Fosterer, for the law of the Truth, for sight.

O Fosterer, O sole Seer, O Ordainer, O illumining Sun, O power of the Father

of creatures, marshal thy rays, draw together thy light; the Lustre which is thy most blessed form of all, that in Thee I behold. The Purusha there and there, He am I.

The name of That is "That Delight"; as That Delight one should follow after It. He who so knows That, towards him verily all existences yearn.

Thou hast said, "Speak to me Upanishad"; spoken to thee is Upanishad. Of the Eternal verily is the Upanishad that we have spoken.

CITY MUTE ...

CITY mute: though thousandfold stirrings,
 Subterranean architects, chrysolites,
 Dreamers, builders, treading soil of reddened dust
 From which shall spring, unaccountably
 To outward eyes, the myriad whole,
 Teeming with joy and delight,
 To grace the body of our Mother, Earth,
 For whom They came to build
 The structure of a superhuman life,
 Crown of this cradle of divinity,
 Matrimandir of Their Light,
 The Light of Her who treads with tranquil feet
 Untouched, unharmed, this perilous globe,
 And Him whom all the ages called—
 To bear His Name in the splendour of the Dawn.

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

THE UNITY OF INDIA

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

UNITED by geography, drawn together by racial and linguistic affinities, India had every reason to develop as a single homogeneous whole. Has she done so in fact? The answer is, partly yes. India, or at least the elite of the people, has had a common aspiration. Indian religion, in spite of its bewildering variety of detail, is basically one and is governed by certain common principles. Indian philosophy again, in spite of the warring creeds, has been essentially one in its aim and method. Indian life presents a more varied picture, but there too the elements of unity are clear to the eye of vision—its endeavour to regulate the whole life of man from the cradle to the grave with a view to inner growth, its system of social divisions based on capacity and function, its joyous insistence on play and leisure and an observance of the ethical law, the Dharma. It is, our critics say, in the field of politics that India has failed completely to evolve any kind of unity. Let us examine this point in some detail.

Indian history is usually such dull reading because, in contrast to the history of other nations, especially those of Europe, we lack here a sense of meaning and purpose. But is it not really the fault of the historians, or is there something so basically wrong in our political evolution that our history is no history at all but a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing? We shall see that the fault lies more with the manner in which we approach our subject. The main interest of Indian political history, as of the political history of any other great nation, lies in the way the nation has gradually been evolving into a single political unity. If we approach our subject from this point of view, the meaning in our history becomes clear. Indeed, it acquires a significance for the future evolution of the world.

No other nation in historical times, with the possible exception of the imperial Romans, started on its career with a clearer sense of its purpose. The Romans, we know, had a definite ambition to bring the whole of the Mediterranean region under a single government, their own, in order to remove the elements of disunity that marred its life. At least two thousand years earlier, indeed it was actually much before that date, the Vedic Rishis, the founders of Indian civilisation, formulated in clear terms what they wanted about the future evolution of India. They wanted India to become one—not merely political unity, but the unity of heart and soul: this was their goal. The story of India's later development is merely an attempt on the part of political thinkers, kings and military leaders to put into practice, in various ways not always faithful to the original plan, this conception of the ancient Rishis. To the extent that these later attempts departed from the original plan, India showed a failure.

India, like all other nations, began as a congeries of clans and peoples, each occupying a definite territory usually no bigger than the size of a modern district, and each warring with the rest for an extra acre of grazing ground or arable land. The habit of warfare was in the blood of these early people, so much so that we read in the Brahmanas that even the Gods had their fighting clans, the Maruts. To speak of a united nation to these barbarians would have been a waste of breath. The Rishis did not attempt that impossible task. On the other hand, they spoke to them of the necessity of sacrifice, of worship, of an ethical law that should govern their life. "Join together, speak one word, let your minds arrive at one knowledge even as the ancient gods arriving at one knowledge partake each of his own portion....One and common be your aspiration, united your hearts, common to you be your mind, so that close companionship may be yours." This was the concluding verse of the Rigveda, as translated by Sri Aurobindo in *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

The poet of the Atharvaveda repeats the same sentiments in almost identical language when he says, "May you all speak words of weal....May you keep through dawn of day and eve the goodness of your mind, even as the gods guard their nectar of bliss" (*AV. III. 20*). And the Yajurveda says, "Where I am wounded, make me firm and whole. May all creatures gaze on me with the eye of the Friend, may I gaze on all creatures, may we all gaze on all with the eye of the Friend" (*Yajurveda, 36,18*, translated by Sri Aurobindo in *The Future Poetry*, Chapter 26).

But ethical teaching was not all. There was inculcated a deeper sentiment, the love of the soil, of this Mother Earth. Here are some extracts from the celebrated Hymn to Mother Earth in the Atharvaveda (*XII, 1*) which ranks perhaps as the first national anthem in history and is certainly among the noblest in all literature. "The Truth, the Right, the Vast, the prowess of man and his initiation, his austerities, sacrifice and prayer—these are the supports of Earth. May Earth, sovereign over the past and the future, make for us a wide world. ..I am a son of Earth, the soil is my mother....May she lavish on me her manifold treasure, her secret riches....May we speak the beauty of thee, O Earth, that is in the villages and forests and assemblies and war and battles. May we live long, may we awaking day by day bring thee our offerings of love" (translated by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine*, II. 10.).

The idea of political unification of the whole subcontinent was not wholly foreign to these early mystics. But to them the subtle world of gods was more real than the material earth, and their first emperors were all of them gods and not human kings. Prajapati and Indra and Varuna and Soma were the mighty rulers, who ruled over "all the world". It is perhaps from these prototypes that the earliest idea of empire originated in India. In any case we find the idea of empire, of a terrestrial empire as distinct from the heavenly kingdoms of the high gods, already fully developed in the Brahmanas.

A long formative age separates these Brahmana works from the early Mantra collections, the Samhitas of the Veda. In the meantime, the little fighting clans and

tribes seem to have spread over practically the whole of India, from "sea to sea", as the Brahmanas put it. Some of them had developed into mighty kingdoms and even empires. We hear for the first time of Maharajas, some of them claim the title of Ekarat or Samrat, "sole ruler", "universal ruler". Special ceremonies have been devised for their consecration—the Ashvamedha, the Rajasuya, the Vajapeya. Long lists are given of kings who have been consecrated emperors, names that cannot be discarded as mythical. India was already well on the way to political unity. But already it seems the future of her political unity was doomed. We should understand the reason.

In the view of the ancient mystics, the Vedic founders of our culture, man owed everything to the gods, and he owed them a return, the sacrifice or consecration of all his gains to them as a token of gratitude. This idea of sacrifice they sought to extend even to the grossest and most selfish of his acts, the endeavour to rule over his fellowmen that is the very substance of politics. Hence the king or emperor who gained mastery over the rest was required to perform the sacrifices which symbolised the gift of his kingdom to the gods. So long as the sacrifice was performed in its true spirit, not much harm was done. But soon, as would appear from the later history of the Indian empire, the sacrifice became a mere matter of routine. The gods were relegated to the background, and the human emperor asserted his claim. This contained seeds of his own ruin, as we shall see presently.

The historical material embedded in the Mahabharata and the Puranas shows clearly that at least on five different occasions India had been brought under the domination of imperial dynasties before the great battle of Kurukshetra practically decided the issue. The Ikshvakus had taken the lead and the Haihayas and Bharatas had followed (Sri Aurobindo in *Vyasa and Valmiki*). But none of these empires proved to be the solution intended by the ancient seers. Each of them rested on force, each was the result of personal ambition, the subordinated kingdoms asserted their independence at the first opportunity.

The Mahabharata in its political story is a record of Sri Krishna's political genius. He saw clearly that the ancient plan of a united India would never succeed so long as the powerful Kshatriya dynasties did not change their warlike habits or else disappear. To change their habits was obviously found to be impracticable at that epoch. Hence they must be destroyed. After a serious attempt at reconciliation which was bound to fail, Sri Krishna took the only alternative left, namely, a "world war" that would clear the air of accumulated debris. That is what happened at the Kurukshetra war. Almost the entire chivalry was destroyed in that massacre and the path lay open for a new creation and a fresh attempt at Indian unity. (This is explained by Sri Aurobindo in *Gitar Bhumka*.)

What exactly happened between the great Mahabharata war and the founding of the first historic empire of the Mauryas in the fourth century B.C. has yet to be deciphered in detail. But the main outlines seem to be clear. In place of the innumerable little clans fighting for supremacy in the pre-Kurukshetra period, a smaller number of big kingdoms appear on the scene. The Buddhist records of the fifth and sixth

centuries give the traditional number of sixteen—the sixteen Mahajanapadas. The actual number may have been a little more, but not perhaps appreciably larger. In other words, India now came to be divided into a number of regions, each under its king or republican form of government, corresponding approximately to the present-day political map. The problem of unification was considerably simplified.

The statesmen of India were now faced with a choice. One alternative was that India should grow into a single political unity on the lines of the Vedic concept of sacrifice. That is to say, the dominant ruler or rulers would subjugate the country but leave the regional kingdoms and republics their independence on condition that they accepted the hegemony of the dominant power. In the other alternative there should be an outright annexation and a strong central organisation with very little autonomy left to the regional peoples. The statesmen chose the second course and India lost a chance of showing to the world that political unity need not be based entirely on compulsion. But perhaps there was no other solution possible.

The north-western passes had lost much of their defensive value with the annexation of the cis-Indus passes by the Achemenid empire of Darius in the sixth century B.C. These passes now offered an easy path to any invader from the West. When the invasion of Alexander came, India faced a crisis. A decision had to be taken immediately as to whether she should offer a united front or succumb to the foe. Alexander indeed retreated from the Beas, but his exploits might be renewed at a later date, by himself—he was yet only a lad in his early youth—or by one of his generals. Actually, one of his generals, Seleukus Nikator who inherited his West Asian dominions on his sudden death, made a last bid to conquer India. But by that time, Chandragupta Maurya had mastered his enemies and created an empire at least in the north. Faced with the united strength of this empire, the Greek general had to acknowledge defeat and India was saved for the time being.

The first attempt at political unity in historical times was thus the direct result of a threat of foreign invasion. In this matter, India has obeyed a general law of history, of which there are innumerable illustrations all over the world. But the method did not at all suit the Indian spirit and it could never succeed permanently in India. If India was to become a united nation, it could not be by political conquest. The mistake has been discovered repeatedly to their cost by all the empire-builders in Indian history. In fact, the political history of India from the founding of the Maurya empire right till the defeat of the Marathas at the hands of the British early in the 18th century is essentially the record of this failure to realise the futility of that method.

The failure would have been apparent to a discerning eye even at the very inception of the Maurya empire. Chandragupta, if we are to believe the traditional account, was a mere tool in the hands of that sinister spirit, Kautilya or Chanakya, whose work, the *Arthasāstra*, has come down to us and betrays his methods. The ruler aspiring to universal rule must have no scruples; he must consider himself surrounded by ene-

mies and he must spare no pains to destroy them. Guile and force, these must be the mainstay of his policy. Of guile we find ample evidence in the Sanskrit drama, *Mudrārāksasa*, which is supposed to record the doings of Chanakya and Chandragupta; of the use of force Asoka has left a fine monument in his Rock edicts, where he records his subjugation of Kalinga.

Such methods were bound to fail as soon as the threat of foreign conquest which had brought about the artificial unity was removed at least for a time and the regional peoples and their leaders could again think of independence. Hence we see the empire of the Mauryas breaking to pieces soon after Asoka's death—some say even during his life-time itself.

But the foreigners were there all the time across our north-west borders, and they pounced upon our rich soil as soon as they found they could do so with impunity. In this way there were frequent invasions whenever the Indian political scene favoured them. The story was repeated through the long centuries from the downfall of the Mauryas till the coming of Harshavardhana in the seventh century A. D. Each time, the invaders were repelled or absorbed by strengthening the empire—each time the empire sought to maintain itself by force of arms, each time it was broken up by internal revolt.

(To be continued)

S. K. BANERJI

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1971)

THE CHARACTER-ANALYSIS IN SAVITRI

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

The epic revolves around one central character and has no real side themes or needless lengthy narrations to distract us from the central point of focus. The treatment has no jaunty breaks from earth to heaven, then from Paradise to Inferno. The first book reveals the awakening of the mind, the seed of possibility of Savitri. It gives us an opening for the divine Spirit to descend—the *tapasyā* of Ashwapathy—his discipline and his call. The second book shows the path of the traveller, the human seeker, across the vistas of the inner worlds. Then he discovers the lonely summit of the World-Mother who grants him the boon of her own descent on the earth—this makes the third book. Savitri takes birth in book four and till book twelve we meet her childhood, her growth, her quest, her love and her struggle with Death and finally the supreme victory. In the passage we meet many worlds, characters, personalities; we meet the darkest and the brightest aspect of things; we meet the types, the beings dwelling in the various parts of the consciousness. Although the supreme Divine, Savitri, like the human being, has to pass through the phases of growth, the experience of pain, and strife; she too has to rediscover her soul. This gives the stamp of naturalness to the depiction. Sri Aurobindo explains the mystery of the Divine's assumption of birth and does not, as commonly conceived, give it any special privilege. Milton is baffled by the Son of Man—Christ and his human and divine aspects remain ever an enigma. A poetical representation would have given Savitri a supra-mundane personality, depicting her mainly as a divine being without any taint. Such a representation might be ideal, but not surely possible. For when one takes birth in certain conditions, one must not violate the existing terms; if they are violated, this birth would be meaningless because the aim of it was to bear the human burden and uplift man as a being conscious of the grim reality of mortal existence. India has a conception of this truth, but not the West, where the distinction between heaven and earth is very sharp and the concept of Avatarhood is not very clear.

Savitri has mainly three aspects—the divinity as the World-Mother, the woman as the cosmic entity, and the Madran princess Savitri as the material manifestation. In the

first she is the transcendent Person, the supreme entity; in the second she is the soul; and in the third she is the human personality with a name, a status existing under conditions and subject to earthly laws. There is no division or opposition between these and their presence is neither an anomaly nor an impossibility. We shall examine these separately.

Although it is the entity behind, that is of supreme importance, we recognise her as the human personality that is manifested here, and it is this that is the source of all events and drama. The other two personalities behind are eternal in their essence and no mutation in them is possible. When there is no change or growth, there is no drama as we humanly conceive it. Elements of drama start with mutation; that is, with manifestation on earth. In the eternal sphere there is no play of opposites and without them there is no play at all, for the clash of powers, personalities, aims, the will and effort to overcome oppositions give us the element of drama. Drama in the ethereal realm is possible, when our human perception and cognition become sufficiently changed to grasp its import. With this lacking, we have to be contented with earth as the home of all dramatic possibilities. That is why Sri Aurobindo places his theme on earth, in spite of its being a drama of a subtler and occult character. That is why Savitri's manifested aspect has been given so much emphasis.

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

Her feelings and sentiments were not akin to the normal human. She possessed what a man acquires by countless ages of labour and the mixed fruit of toil and divine grace. There was no division between her soul and other souls. All souls were reflections of her soul and the dividing wall were the mind and body. She had the sweep of the Gods which ordinary man could not cope with. She attempted to delve into man's knowledge, laws, formulas; but these she found to be inadequate to gauge

the cosmic knowledge, the divine wisdom. Man's epistemology was faulty. It could not capture her innate immensity of self.

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

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

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

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

Her love in this context bears an altered significance. Love in the human sense

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

(To be continued)

ROMEN

WE PRAY...

FOR Thy kind Love we pray,
Lead us upon Thy way.

With Thy God-touch of Grace
Our faults and fears efface
And make us faithfully move apace
Upon Thy way.

Caught in this world's dark fray,
If we should go astray
Entice us back without delay
Upon Thy way.

O Mother compassionate, sweet,
We crave Thy saviour Feet,
Let all earth's peoples awakened meet
Upon Thy way.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of January, 1972)

GOD AND LIFE

THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

THOUGH the lever of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education is spirituality it stands for an integrated life with all its faculties alive. The teaching imparted affects the body for the better, urges and enlightens the mind, dynamises the spiritual propensities. What better inspiration can be given to the children than to initiate them when they are in their formative years into the great Mantra of the Mother, “Be master of yourself.” Along with the books of the world, they must learn to read the book of their own being and nature.

What is meant by becoming master of oneself? The Mother explains:

“One must know why one does this, why one does that; one must know one’s thoughts, know one’s feelings...etc. And to know oneself is not sufficient, this knowing must lead to conscious control.

“...When you are quite young, you can begin to study yourself and to know yourself and little by little to control yourself .That is the science of living.

“.. All on a sudden someone asks you, ‘Why have you done that? What are you thinking about? Why are you tired? Why are you glad?’ Well, the spontaneous answer is ‘I do not know.’

“...if you look at your whole day, you will find, you say something and you do not know why you say so—it is only when the words have gone out of your mouth that you perceive that it was not quite what you wanted to say.

“Try to do this little exercise: at the beginning of the day, say, ‘I will not speak without thinking of what I say.’ You believe, do you not, that you think all that you say! It is not at all the case, you will see that so many times the word you do not want to say is ready to come out, but you are obliged to make a conscious effort to stop it from coming out.

“I know people who were very scrupulous in not telling a lie, but when directly they are in a group instead of saying the truth they tell a lie spontaneously. They did not intend to do so, but it came ‘like that’. Why? Because they were in the company of liars: there was an atmosphere of falsehood and they simply caught the malady!

“It is in this way that little by little, slowly, with perseverance, first of all with great care and attention, one becomes conscious, learns to know oneself and afterwards to become master of oneself.”¹

¹ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, February 1964 45-51 pp.

To check the little children of the Ashram from their playful habit of telling lies the Mother had asked each member of the Green Group to keep count of the lies they told in the course of the day.

I know a person who had taken a resolution that he would not tell a lie, but though the idea was firm in his mind, he failed miserably in action. Past habits were so strong that at times the words he didn't like to utter came from his mouth unchecked. To bring even initial control he had to struggle for years.

A devotee of the Mother gathered some young ones and started a school in a room given by the zamindar. He used to pour into the ears of the boys some noble thoughts: Not to tell a lie— Not to quarrel— Not to steal, etc. One day, one of the boys plucked a pomegranate from the orchard of a zamindar and placed it in front of the Mother's photo before the class started. As soon as the teacher arrived they came straight out with the truth; they had plucked the fruit to offer as *prasād*.

“Did you ask the zamindar?” inquired the teacher.

“No.”

“You should have asked him; otherwise it amounts to stealing.” I must inform the zamindar, said the teacher to himself.

The moment the news was broken to the zamindar he felt greatly annoyed as something had been done without his permission. He threatened to drive the children out.

The teacher took his seat with his pupils on the verandah. A little after, a boy expressed his desire to say something. Not only he, but others also wanted to speak. The teacher wished them all to put everything down on paper. It was found that all of them had written the same thing—“The Mother will give you another place.” And it came true. Of his own volition, someone offered them a place.

To lead a beautiful and blissful life “the education of a human being should begin at his very birth and continue throughout the whole length of his life”. This the Mother wrote as far back as the year 1951. It is on this ideal that great stress is laid in Auroville. No age limit has been fixed there for education. The whole life is education. It is called the educational city.

The Mother continues: “...the child about to be born will depend very much upon the mother who forms it, upon her aspiration and will as much as upon the material surroundings in which she lives. The part of education which the mother has to go through is to see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine... And if in addition she has a conscious and definite will to form the child according to the highest ideal she can conceive, then the best conditions are provided for the child to come into the world with the maximum of possibilities....

“To say good words, give wise advice to a child has very little effect, if one does not show by one's living example the truth of what one teaches. Sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control are all things that are taught infinitely better

by one's example than by beautiful speeches."¹

Finding a young child of seven or eight expressing himself in English and Bengali just after a few months of his stay in the Ashram, Rishabchand passed the remark, "He seems to have come learning everything from his mother's womb."

Joy was seen bubbling from the child's heart when permission was granted him to stay for good. He would go about, expressing his joy to people, "You see, I too am palmanent (permanent)."

What impresses one most about him even now is his childlike simplicity and unassuming nature. He is loved by all—teachers, professors, students—and he himself is now both a professor and a captain of the most hardy group. Being the only son of his father he inherited a good property but no wordly temptations could distract him from the path.

Before the opening of the Ashram school, generally children below 14 were not encouraged to go to the Mother. There were four exceptions. The first was R. He came at the age of ten in 1930. Nolini Kanta Gupta was his first teacher. He taught him English, History, Hygiene and Geography. With his help he rendered a Bengali poem into English at the age of eleven. From the age of twelve he started sending poems in English to Sri Aurobindo and had the joy of getting them corrected by him. He started music at the age of thirteen and, when he was fourteen, painting under the direct guidance of the Mother.

The first exhibition of Ashram paintings was held in an old building where Golconda now stands. There the paintings of Krishnalal, Sanjivan, Nishikanta and Anilkumar were exhibited. The number of R's paintings at the display was thirty. He was seventeen at the time. He looks quite young even today. On his 50th birthday the Mother filled his heart with joy by saying, "Hello, you are not getting old!"

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ *Bulletin*, February 1951, pp. 11-13.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Language of the Gods by Dr. Judith M. Tyberg (*Jyotipriya*), East-West Cultural Centre, Los Angeles, U.S.A, 1970, pp. xvi+283.

Here is a novel approach to the problem of interpreting the philosophical and mystic lore of India to the English-speaking peoples of the West. Sri Aurobindo has observed more than once that Sanskrit terms used over a long period of time in our philosophical and other works are the best adapted to bring out the exact significance of the concepts or experiences they describe and that to substitute them by their equivalents is to rob them of much of their value; it may even lead to a caricature of the original intention. At the same time—especially when we remember that Sanskrit, picturesquely described in the title of the book presumably in translation of the patriotic *deva-bhāṣā*, is really not one language but two, the Vedic and the Classical differing in their syntax and vocables as widely as, say, the “English” of Chaucer and Tennyson, and indeed with a wider gap—it would be unfair to expect a student of Indian culture who is not sufficiently grounded in the ancient language, a foreign student brought up in a wholly different environment, to appreciate all its subtle nuances even when he catches the general sense. It would be to ask for the impossible. A likely result of such an attempt on our part might well be to make him turn away in disgust from all this “gibberish”.

The learned author has performed a very useful task in bringing together within a reasonable compass practically all the important terms that a student of some of our most valuable works is likely to come across, and explaining their meanings in simple English. The list of Upanishadic terms and those of a more technical nature used in the Gita is fairly comprehensive. Buddhism too receives a detailed treatment; and the commonest terms used in the religious literature of the Hindus, in the texts on Yoga, and to a much lesser extent in the different schools of philosophy, have come in for a lucid explanation. We readily appreciate the vast amount of labour this has involved, and we congratulate the author, a life-long student of the Indian lore, on the measure of success she has attained in this pioneer work. Especially, her attempt to relate the technical terms to the verbal roots from which they are derived is worthy of particular commendation. She has obviously taken the cue from a well-known theory of the ancient grammarians of Sanskrit that all the vocables of the language are ultimately derived from verbal roots, although one must admit that they did not quite succeed in substantiating their theory in spite of valiant attempts. Dr. Tyberg is herself the author of a text book on Sanskrit grammar and she has evidently the competence to undertake this difficult and at times rather perilous task.

This book, apart from serving the particular purpose we have indicated, namely, that of removing a common stumbling-block in the way of Sanskrit studies outside India, has done another signal service which must be emphasised. Vedic interpretation has long suffered at the hands of scholars wholly ignorant of the spiritual endeavour the Vedas were meant to enshrine. The author has a valuable chapter on the Vedas and their spiritual meaning. She does not claim any originality in this matter, but the ample quotations she has compiled from Sri Aurobindo's monumental work on the subject, and particularly on the significance of the Vedic gods, will help remove many a misunderstanding, and will certainly evoke in the reader a curiosity to delve deeper into the secret of the Veda. The professional scholar will perhaps be inclined to scoff at this challenge to his pet notions without adequate authority. But if anybody wants chapter and verse for the statements made, he can always be referred back to Sri Aurobindo's luminous commentaries where he will find them in plenty.

One must admire the boldness and originality with which Dr. Tyberg has performed her difficult task; she has justified the name Jyotpriya given her by Sri Aurobindo.

SANAT K. BANERJI

The Bene Israel of Bombay by Dr. Schifra Strizower. Oxford University Press, Madras. Rs. 20.00

For the westerner, India has always been a land of mystery. In her long history India has experienced numerous invasions, migrations and conquests from outside her borders. The Aryans after 1500 B.C., the Greeks under Alexander the Great, the Arabs, the Moghuls in the 16th century and finally, the Portuguese, the French and the British. All have left monuments which it has been the Indian genius to assimilate and turn into something peculiarly our own. But the most fascinating is the history of the minority groups to arrive here long before the more famous conquerors came along—groups who have been absorbed into India's population without losing their cultural identities.

In all minority communities where no written records are available of a group's exodus from their homeland and their chance arrival on a foreign shore, myth and legend tend to obscure historic facts. Dr. Strizower's book *The Bene Israel of Bombay*, though objective and analytical, is far from cold. It is also the first complete study of the Bene Israel since H.S. Kehimkar's *History of the Bene Israel of India* which was completed in 1897 and published four decades later in Tel-Aviv by Dr. Immanuel Olsvanger of Jerusalem.

Bene Israel tradition has it that their ancestors took to oil-pressing soon after their arrival in India. Indeed, they were called "Shanwar Teli"—Saturday oil-presser caste, a group of oil-pressers who did not work on Saturdays.

Sometime during the eighteenth century Bene Israel began to move to Bombay in search of employment and education. In the last forty years the community has produced a chief justice of the high court, a president of the Medical Council of India, a mayor of Bombay, a superintendent of one of the largest hospitals for women in India, a State director of public health, a commandant of the Defence Academy and a number of officers in highly responsible positions. However, the majority of Bene Israel are employed as clerks or in equivalent positions.

The revelations in the opening chapters of Dr. Strizower's book bear a startling resemblance to the mode of arrival and integration of another minority community in India—the Parsis. Bene Israel tradition claims descent from members of the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes of Israel. Of the many groups which were forced to flee, one travelled to India and the ship which carried them was wrecked off the Konkan coast not far from the present site of Bombay. Local potentates granted them asylum and a persecuted, unhappy people set down roots in a tolerant and hospitable land. "During their long isolation from their co-religionists, the Bene Israel forgot Hebrew and a great part of Jewish ritual. This, the Bene Israel argue, was only natural since they had lost the religious records they had brought with them in the shipwreck. However, they observed the Sabbath, some of the Holy Days, the dietary regulations and circumcision; they remembered the Shema, the confession of the Jewish faith, and repeated it on every occasion, such as that of circumcision, marriage, and death."

Kehimkar, who has been quoted extensively by Dr. Strizower, suggests that "prudence rather than past ignorance of Jewish dietary rules prompted the Bene Israel to abstain from eating beef". The same criteria appears to have been applied to the Bene Israel's non-acceptance of marital union with other Indian communities and their frowning upon widow-remarriage.

Dr. Strizower's book is unusual for several reasons. Apart from the fact that it has the obvious distinction of being the first study in depth on the Bene Israel community of Bombay it is apparent from the word 'go' that this is the work of one who is undoubtedly an expert in her chosen field. Another unusual aspect of the book is its foreward by B.J. Israel, a member of the very community which is the subject of Dr. Strizower's anthropological investigation. Mr. Israel's tribute to the peoples of India is a handsome and well-deserved one. He says, "However insignificant a part the Bene Israel played in the general life of India, by their very existence in sizable numbers on the West Coast, they have constituted a Jewish presence in India which in its small way has enriched its multi-faceted culture. More important, they have provided living evidence that, in at least one country in the world, Jews can exist with pride and honour and without any need for self-consciousness or protective withdrawal into a self-created ghetto.... The Bene Israel never had cause to fear and they, therefore, saw no danger in free intercourse with their neighbours and full participation in the life of the general community.... This 'normality' may be similar

to that now seen in the Israeli Sabra which has the appearance of an abandonment of Judaism.”

If it is permissible to sum up an anthropological study in two words—*compelling reading*—this is it: Dr. Schifra Strizower's *The Bene Israel of Bombay*.

PERIN BHARUCHA

A PRACTICAL GUIDE
TO
INTEGRAL YOGA

This useful book, which has been in great demand, was out of print for some time. The fifth enlarged edition has recently been printed and is on sale.

It gives, in a nutshell, a general idea of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. It also includes matter about the passing of Sri Aurobindo and his expected return in a Divine Body at a future time.

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Pondicherry-2

Students' Section

EYE EDUCATION

SEE THE NATURAL WAY

It is a well-known fact that vision is a process of mental interpretation of the retinal images. The eye being a sense organ is closely associated with the mind in its functioning, and like other sense organs makes no effort to see in its normal course. But when the normal eye makes an effort to see at a distance, distant vision becomes defective and myopia is produced. When the normal eye makes an effort to see at a near point, near sight becomes defective and hypermetropia is produced. Glasses neutralize the effect of such conditions but do not relieve the cause of the trouble. So, in many cases the sight goes on deteriorating and glasses become an added torture to increase the pain and suffering.

The old writers on Ophthalmology did not consider that the strain of the eye and mind could play an important part in the formation of errors of refraction. Hence they believed that errors of refraction were incurable, and today in the days of advanced science that belief is continuing as a dogma. Yet in spite of the emphasis with which the medical profession denies the possibility of curing errors of refraction, there are many doctors and lay persons who refuse to believe these errors are incurable and they search for a cure. The following article written by Dr. R. K. Puri, Pedetrician, JIPMER, Pondicherry, is a remarkable statement to prove the curability of errors of refraction by the relaxation methods and eye education.

“My son Rakesh Puri was complaining of watering and tiredness in the eyes for sometime, especially while reading. I took him to our Eye Department of JIPMER; there the doctor examined the boy under atropine and skilfully prescribed glasses of +1.5 for the right eye and +2.5 for the left eye. By the use of these glasses watering did not stop and a sort of depression or irritation appeared in the temperament of the boy. He would not like to talk or mix with others, he would not eat properly. Why such a thing happened suddenly, we could not understand. Moreover, though the boy had improved his vision with glasses he did not have normal vision. We talked to our neighbour Dr. Indra Bhargava and he recommended that we should take the boy to the School for Perfect Eyesight of Sri Aurobindo Ashram to consult Dr. Agarwal. He related the story of his myopic sons who had greatly benefited: they had improved their eyesight. His nephew Sunil who had been using astigmatic lenses had been cured in ten minutes by the art of seeing pictures and view-cards. This was

difficult to believe though a fact but it greatly stimulated our feelings and one morning we brought the boy to the School for Perfect Eyesight.

“Dr. Agarwal examined the boy and found that glasses were causing great strain to the mind and eyes of the boy, hence there was such a depression of the faculties of the mind. He was sure that the boy would show improvement and there would be no necessity of glasses.

“When the treatment started, glasses were discarded; this itself greatly relieved the boy and he felt very happy. For the first two days the prescription was to drop *Sollux* followed by Palming every two hours. This process soothed the nerves and relieved the mental strain. Palming means to close the eyes and cover them with the palms of the hands without any pressure on the eyeballs, and keep the palms on the eyes for about five minutes. While palming no light enters the eyes and the patient experiences all dark before the eyes.

“Next morning the sun was very pleasant. The assistant applied *Resolvent* 200 to the eyes of Rakesh and asked him to face the sun with eyes closed for a few minutes while moving the body from side to side like a pendulum. Five minutes later, his eyes were washed with a pink lotion called *Ophthalmo*. Then the boy sat in the palming room comfortably while tucking a pillow below his tiny elbows for about five minutes. After palming, the doctor told the boy to run around a chair while bouncing a ball, then sit and read the Snellen Eye Chart at 10 to 20 ft. distance and read the Reading Test Type. He was also advised to concentrate on a candle flame while counting fifty respirations and read small print in good light and candle light. At the end of the treatment his eyesight was again tested and it was a great surprise to us: the boy had normal sight both for distance and near. All his watering and strain vanished in three days' treatment. We found his temperament also changed for the better.

“Another very remarkable thing we observed. My wife had suffered from a sort of semi-blindness due to hypermetropia and amblyopia in her right eye since childhood. Amblyopia means loss of eyesight without any apparent cause. Her vision did not show any improvement even with glasses and she often suffered from headache. She also was eager to take the treatment to improve her amblyopic eye. After examining the eyes Dr. Agarwal was confident that she too would improve. Her good eye was covered with an eye shield and the lazy eye was put to practise in various ways such eye education as swinging, central fixation, concentration on candle flame, reading the chart, playing with a ball, palming, stitching in the right way, blinking, etc. In about a week's time the eyesight of her lazy eye considerably improved, the eye began to read quite small print.

“It is evident that most Ophthalmologists consider Hypermetropia and Amblyopia as incurable. Due to such a fixed conception based on the version of old authorities no research is being made. The result is that loss of eyesight is fast increasing

amongst the educated class. According to Dr. Agarwal preservation of good eyesight is almost impossible without eye education. We are convinced of this fact and we are grateful to him for bringing about such wonderful results within a few days."

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

BOOKS ON EYE-EDUCATION

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| 1. | SECRETS OF INDIAN MEDICINE | | Rs. 12 |
| 2. | YOGA OF PERFECT SIGHT | | Rs. 12 |
| 3. | CARE OF EYES | | Rs. 2.50 |

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