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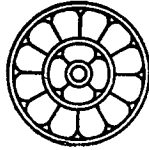
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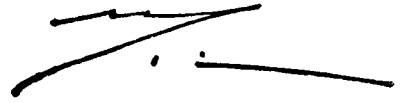


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 2

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".

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ADMISSION TO THE ASHRAM AT PRESENT

THE MOTHER'S REPLY TO AN APPLICANT

BEFORE answering your enquiry we must inform you that it is now very rare indeed that applicants are admitted to the Ashram except in absolutely exceptional cases.

They must have an outstanding aptitude for this yoga and offer their work unconditionally.

They also have to offer all that they possess and are required to observe the following rules of the Ashram: no sex, no drugs, no alcohol, no tobacco, no politics.

You may, if you like, come as an independent visitor but we would advise you to study the teachings of Sri Aurobindo before coming.

We enclose a list of our Ashram Guest Houses.

While you are at the Ashram you will be required to observe the rules of the Ashram.

March, 1972

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

WE speak of union and say we are working for it. But the spirit of quarrelling is in our midst. Shall we not conquer this insincerity?

I am here to ask you to do it. And the best way is to join in the service of the Divine.

12.3.1972

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 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.)

JUNE 6, 1956

Once or twice, just for fun, you took one of your books or Sri Aurobindo's and opened a page at random, and read a sentence. Can these sentences give a sign or an indication to any individual? What should we do to get a real answer?

EVERYBODY can do it. It is done in this way: you concentrate. Now, that depends on what you want. If you have an inner problem and want its solution, you concentrate on this problem; if you want to know the condition you are in, and which you don't know, and want to get some light on the state in which you are, you just come forward with simplicity and ask for the light. Or else, quite simply, if you are curious to know what the invisible knowledge has to tell you, you remain silent and still for a moment and then open the book. I always used to recommend taking a paper-knife, because that is finer; whilst you are concentrated you insert it in the book and with the point indicate something. Then, if you know how to concentrate, that is to say, if you really do it with an aspiration to have an answer, it always comes.

For, in books of this kind (*The Mother shows "The Synthesis of Yoga"*), books of revelation, there is always an accumulation of forces—at the least of higher mental forces, and most often of spiritual forces of the highest knowledge. Every book, on account of the words contained therein, is like a little accumulator of these forces. People don't know this, for they don't know how to make use of it, but it is so. In the same way, in every picture (photograph), there is an accumulation, a small accumulation representative of the force of the one whose picture it is, of his nature and, if he has power, of his powers. Now, you, when you are sincere and have an aspiration, you put out a certain vibration, the vibration of your aspiration which goes and meets the corresponding force in the book, and it is a higher consciousness which gives you the answer.

Everything is contained potentially. Each element of a whole contains potentially what is in the whole. It is a little difficult to explain, but you will understand with an

example: when people want to practise magic, if they have a bit of a nail or hair, that is sufficient for them, because there is within this, potentially, all that is in the being itself. And in a book there is potentially (not expressed, not manifest) the knowledge which is in the one who wrote the book. Thus, Sri Aurobindo represented a totality of comprehension and knowledge and power; and every one of his books is at once a symbol and a representation. Every one of his books contains symbolically, potentially, what is in him. Consequently, if you concentrate on the book, you can, through the book, go back to the source. And even, going through the book, you will be able to receive much more than what is just in the book.

There is always a way of reading and understanding what one reads, which gives an answer to what you want. It is not just a chance or an amusement, nor is it a kind of distraction. You may do it just "like that", and then nothing at all happens to you, you have no reply and it is not interesting. But if you do it seriously, yes, seriously, your aspiration tries to concentrate on this instrument (it is like a battery, isn't it, which contains energies), tries to contact the energy which is there and insists on having the answer to what it wants to know; well, naturally, the energy which is there—the union of the two forces, the force given out by you and that accumulated in the book—will guide your hand and your paper-knife or whatever you have; it will guide exactly to the thing that expresses what you ought to know.... Evidently, if one does it without sincerity or conviction, nothing at all comes. If it is done sincerely one has an answer.

Certain books are of this kind, more powerfully charged than others; there are others where the result is less clear. But generally, books containing aphorisms and short sentences (not very long philosophical explanations, but rather things in a condensed and precise form), it is with these one succeeds best.

Naturally, the value of the answer depends on the spiritual force contained in the book. If you take a novel, it will tell you nothing at all but stupidities. But if you take a book containing a condensation of forces—of knowledge or spiritual force or teaching power—you will get your answer.

So now, what do you want to know? I have explained the mechanism to you; you want me to do it? Is that what you want, child, or did you want only to know how it is done?

No, Mother, before the class, as we had no questions I opened many books and tried to find something, but I could find nothing.

You found nothing because probably at that time there was no curiosity in your mind!

There are many explanations in this book (*The Synthesis of Yoga*), so if you tumble into the midst of an explanation.... It should be rather a book like *Thoughts and Glimpses*, or *Prayers and Meditations*, or *Quelques Paroles*; also *Conversations*.

We tried the Letters of Sri Aurobindo, Mother, the third series.

The Letters?... Give me the book. Aren't these about literature?

Yes, Mother.

Then that's the worst of all! (*laughter*)

No, it is the second series.

Then I am going to draw first for the collectivity. That is, what is going to answer and express the collective state of all gathered here. We are going to see what it will do. (*The Mother concentrates and inserts a small card in the book.*)

My child, this is in English! I must translate it off-hand.

My card was on this, which seems to me indeed a sufficiently general problem for everybody here: the true attitude in work. (*laughter*) Sri Aurobindo says this, that the true attitude in work comes "when the work is always associated with the Mother's thought, done as an offering to her, with the call to do it through you." That is the sentence I have found, I think that's not bad for a beginning!

Now, does anyone want me to draw for him or her?

You! And what do you want? Do you want to know the state you are in, or what?

That I ought to be in.

(*The Mother concentrates for a moment, opens the book and reads silently.*) Is this the problem you are interested in: the purpose of the Avatar?

"I have said that the Avatar is one who comes to open the Way for humanity to a higher consciousness..."

(*Letters, 2nd Series, p. 500*)

It is there I had placed my paper-knife. He adds here:

"If nobody can follow the Way, then either our conception of the thing, which is also that of Christ and Krishna and Buddha also, is all wrong or the whole life and action of the Avatar is quite futile."

I don't know if this is a problem you were busy with, but indeed this is what has come as the answer.... It was evidently for someone who had asked him: "The Avatar comes and opens the way, but if there is nobody to follow him, what happens?" Sri Aurobindo says: Either his conception is wrong or his life is quite futile. That is to say, if a divine Power comes to earth to open the way to a higher realisation and it so happens that there is nobody on earth to follow the path, it is quite obvious that it was useless for him to come. But in fact, I don't think that has ever happened.

Let me see the end of the sentence.... Yes, it is in reply to someone who said:

“There is no way and no possibility of following it” and that “all the struggles and sufferings of the Avatar are unreal and all humbug” (that popular English word!). This person asserted that there was “no possibility of struggle or effort for one who represents the Divine”, that is to say, the denial of the life of all those in question here. And Sri Aurobindo adds that “such a conception makes nonsense of the whole idea of Avatarhood” and “there is then no reason in it, no necessity in it, no meaning in it...” He adds (*laughing*): “The Divine being all powerful can lift people up without bothering to come down on earth...” He can do it like this (*gesture*), he is all-powerful, he has only to pull them up and then they will be lifted up. Why should he come and take all this trouble here?

And Sri Aurobindo finally says:

“It is only if it is a part of the world-arrangement that he should take upon himself the burden of humanity and open the Way that the Avatar has any meaning.”

There he touches a problem you were busy with, doesn't he? You have never put this question to yourself: what was the purpose of a divine incarnation in a human body, whether it was necessary or not, and how it happened and why it happened? That has never interested you, that question? Never?

Not in this way.

Not in this way. Then it answered something you were not conscious of. I know to what it was an answer, but you were not conscious.

Ah! does anyone else want something? Nobody?... Oh! how shy you all are!

Ah! what are we going to find for you (*The Mother opens the “Letters”*)... These are answers to people who want scholarly knowledge. You want to know in Indian terminology what the transcendental Mother is?... People always ask scholarly questions, so there is no life in them, it goes on only in the head.

Wait, I am going to try with this (*The Mother takes “The Synthesis of Yoga”*), we are going to see if perchance we find something (*The Mother concentrates and opens the book*).... Ah! this answers very well:

“The most disconcerting discovery is to find that every part of us—intellect, will, sense-mind, nervous or desire self, the heart, the body—has each, as it were, its own complex individuality and natural formation independent of the rest...”

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 85)

That is exactly your case! (*Laughter*)

This continues, he explains:

...“it neither agrees with itself nor with the others nor with the representative ego which is the shadow cast by some central and centralising self on our superficial ignorance.”

Why! this is really very fine. (*The Mother re-reads*): “The representative ego which is the shadow cast by some central and centralising self on our superficial ignorance.” And then:

“We find that we are composed not of one but many personalities and each has its own demands and differing nature. Our being is a roughly constituted chaos into which we have to introduce the principle of a divine order.”

This is indeed fine.

(To be continued)

THE MOTHER'S LOVE AND HER RELATION WITH PEOPLE

A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

To launch into too many mental subtleties in this connection is not very helpful; it is a subject which is beyond mental analysis and the constructions of the mind about it are apt to be either very partially true or else erroneous.

There is a universal Divine Love which is equal for all. There is also a psychic connection which is individual; it is essentially the same for all, but it admits of a special relation with each which is not the same for all but different in each case. This special relation stands apart in each case and has its own nature, it is, as is said, *sui generis*, of its own kind and cannot be compared, balanced or measured with other relations, for each of these again is *sui generis*. The question of less or more is therefore perfectly irrelevant here.

It is quite wrong to say that the Mother loves most those who are nearest to her in the physical. I have often said this but people do not wish to believe it, because they imagine that the Mother is a slave of the vital feelings like ordinary people and governed by vital likes and dislikes. "Those she likes she keeps near her, those she likes less she keeps less near, those she dislikes or does not care for she keeps at a distance," that is their childish reasoning. Many of those who feel the Mother's presence and love always with them hardly see her except once in six months or once in a year;—apart from the Pranam and meditation. On the other hand one near her physically or seeing her often may not feel such a thing at all; he may complain of the absence of the Mother's help and love altogether or as compared to what she gives to others. If the childishly simple rule of three given above were true, such outbursts would not be possible.

Whether one feels the Mother's love or not depends on whether one is open to it or not. It does not depend on physical nearness. Openness means the removal of all that makes one unconscious of the inner relation—nothing can make one more unconscious than the idea that it must be measured only by some outward manifestation instead of being felt within the being; it makes one blind or insensitive to the outer manifestations that are there. Whether one is physically far or near makes no difference. One can feel it, being physically far or seeing her little. One can fail to feel it when it is there even if one is physically near or often in her physical presence.

II-6-1935

RECEPTIVITY AND ASSIMILATION

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Q: My nature is such that if I aspire for a particular thing, say, peace, I soon fall away from the concentrated condition. My nature prefers to be just receptive—to keep receiving whatever the Mother sends down. Is this a good habit?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not altogether. If the receptivity were very great, it would not matter; but with a limited receptivity aspiration is indispensable. 16-5-1934.

Q: The present state is one of difficulty—during external actions—in surrender and aspiration. But I should not mind this but tend the consciousness to offering, as that is an essential attitude. Do you agree?

SRI AUROBINDO: Unless it is a period of quiet peace in which there is no disturbance. Such periods are very useful for assimilation. 5-7-1934

Most people need to have periods of assimilation—which is always automatic.

9-7-1934

One can assimilate in sleep also. Remaining awake like that is not good—as in the end it strains the nerves and the system receives wrongly in an excited way or gets too tired to receive. 23-7-1934

Yes—there are sometimes periods of assimilation, sometimes of preparation of some part of the being or nature. 21-6-1934

Q: I don't yet have a clear understanding of assimilation. For the last few days I haven't received anything consciously. Thus, when nothing is received, where is the question of assimilation?

SRI AUROBINDO: When one is assimilating, one is not receiving. 23-8-1934

Q: What I fail to see is why my consciousness should fall out of the silence and inwardness during the assimilation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Because it is parts of the ordinary consciousness that are assimilating. 23-8-1934

Even in your good days you have usually periods less good—it is then that the assimilation takes place. 23-8-1934

Q: Assimilation seems to have gone on for three days! Is it not too long a period? Once you wrote: "Not that the time of assimilation cannot be shortened."

SRI AUROBINDO: It can, but only when the system is ready. 23-8-1934

There is always a gain or progress at some point after these periods of assimilation if one takes them rightly however dull or troublesome they may be. 23-8-1934

Q: During the Mother's Darshan yesterday I felt my vital being was opening to her more and more. It had not been participating properly in the sadhana before the last periods of assimilation. Do you agree with my idea that this is a result of assimilation?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, certainly.

24-8-1934

Receptivity can always increase, there is no limit to its possibilities. 25-8-1934

Q: During the period of assimilation I took up H's poems. Reading them I felt a sort of psychic spell reviving my being and opening the door to love for the Mother and to stillness and freedom. When I stopped reading and opened myself fully to the Mother, I received more than usually and thrills passed through me as if coming from above!

SRI AUROBINDO: It simply means that owing to the stimulus of the poems there was a renewed activity of receptivity in place of the assimilative condition. 27-8-1934

Q: Every experience turns into a higher and higher fullness. The consciousness is like a vast sea. Whatever the Mother pours enters and is worked out automatically. There is a constant feeling of lightness and ease.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is quite a right condition—a state of natural receptivity without straining or effort.

7-9-1934

Q: On coming back from the Mother, I often feel an inner drowsiness followed by peace. Sometimes there is a feeling of fullness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Some necessity of assimilation; what comes is more than the consciousness can assimilate.

21-9-1934

When there is inertia, it is usually the physical that is the cause. As for assimilation, it may be, but after so long a spell of peace and silence, the period of assimilation should not be marked by a merely inert emptiness.¹

3-10-1934

Q: Whenever the inertia emerges to the surface, does it not mean that assimilation has begun?

SRI AUROBINDO: No—the assimilation is going on all the time. It is only some part of the physical that is not able to absorb immediately all that comes down.

20-10-1934

Yes—the system has to take rest so as to assimilate and secure its receptive power.

21-10-1934

From NAGIN DOSHI

¹ Tentative reading. (Editor)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 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. Mamilal, 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 5, 1940

EVENING

THE radio said that Germany had resumed her attack along the Somme.

P: It means her drive towards Paris.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

P: I hope Weygand has been able to reconstruct the line. He has a heavy work to do.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes, a tremendous work.

P: If he can drive back the Germans—

SRI AUROBINDO: Then he will go down in history as the greatest military leader. If only he can resist them for some months till the French are ready for an offensive, that would be something.

N: Germany has started war against Switzerland also.

SRI AUROBINDO: Just the preparation for it.

P: I suppose Hitler wants to bring in Italy then and it will be very advantageous to him.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

P: Italy seems to be vacillating because of the strong American pressure.

SRI AUROBINDO: You saw how Bullitt escaped? It is lucky for Hitler. I was wondering what America would do if Bullitt were bulletted. He had a double escape, it seems. The bomb did not burst in the restaurant but it burst in the courtyard and did not hit him.

N: He said that God was with him. *(Laughter)*

SRI AUROBINDO: I had said he would feel the presence of God. The

French have awarded Prioux the Légion d'Honneur. In that case he must have been in Dunkirk. The papers said that it was due to his organisation that the British army was able to evacuate. Then the German statement that he was taken prisoner long ago must be a myth. The British Government was wise in asking the French Government to escape by aeroplane, while Prioux could not. Such men are worth more than soldiers.

P: Duff Cooper was also in Paris during the raid.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he was also in a restaurant.

N: Munching bread and butter! (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: As the waiters were forbidden to serve the meal during the air raid. Are the waiters not allowed to go and take shelter during the raid?

JUNE 6, 1940

The radio said that the Germans had penetrated through the French lines in some places.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Germans' technique is to accumulate all their strength at one point and then make a drive. The French don't seem to be able to prevent the thrust.

P: No, though their Air Force is attacking the rear.

SRI AUROBINDO: That cannot prevent the advance, it can only hamper it.

P: The French also could gather their mass against the Germans.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what they should do. I don't know why they don't. I suspect they have dispersed their forces too much. In the East, of course, if Italy comes in to the war, this will be helpful. In the last war they had found some counter measures against German attacks. This time they don't seem to have found anything yet.

EVENING

SRI AUROBINDO: Have you seen that India is going to be a great military country? The Viceroy is forming civil guards for defence. (*Laughter*)

P: If they were trained to handle machine guns and tanks, that would be something.

N (*smiling*): They will be given only batons!

SRI AUROBINDO: Batons?

N: Yes.

P: Gandhi will object even to that. It is against non-violence, Ahimsa!

S: Why? He doesn't object against the nation using violence, if it wants to. His ideal is only for himself.

P: Yes, the nation can have its army for defence.

SRI AUROBINDO: But he changed his principle with regard to monkeys.

P: Monkeys?

SRI AUROBINDO: Monkeys in his Ashram!

P: Oh, yes. You mean he may change with regard to Hitler-monkeys also?
(*Laughter*)—He is capable of that.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hitler was born to prove the inapplicability of Ahimsa.

N: The small neutrals seemed to have followed Gandhi's method in submitting to Hitler so easily.

S: In Holland and Belgium he met some resistance.

N: In Holland? There was no fight there, I think.

SRI AUROBINDO: There was a fight there but they allowed themselves to be killed more than killing. Perhaps Gandhi's non-violence? They did not go the whole hog with Gandhi.

S: The Poles also surrendered so quickly in spite of their being good soldiers.

SRI AUROBINDO: That was because of their generals and leaders. If they had had somebody like Mannerheim, then Germany would have been foiled.

JUNE 7, 1940

P: Churchill's speech has come as a revelation to Italy.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, Italy thought the Allied army had been annihilated.

P: Ironside is now forming mobile units to guard against a German invasion. Doing it too late.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why too late?

P: When the attack is imminent.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't think any attack is likely now except by small armies which will be crushed by overwhelming numbers. There is no more chance of surprise attacks. Besides, the Allies have destroyed all the ports and without ports the Germans can't launch an attack. It will take time to put them in order, and by that time England will be still more ready. Even now she has a strong army ready. No, Hitler won't attack; he has, not intuition, but intimation. That is why he is driving against Paris. He knows that if he sets out to repair the ports and attack England, by that time the Allies will be quite prepared and afterwards attacks on Paris won't be possible.

EVENING

SRI AUROBINDO: The French have destroyed 400 tanks, they say. It is a very good number—one-fifth of the whole.

P: Yes, the Germans have brought in 2000 tanks.

SRI AUROBINDO: It seems Hitler brought two and a half million men to Belgium and only 50,000 were lost. Still he has two million while the Allies did not use even a

million there; no wonder they were defeated. Have you read that the Belgian consul has become furious with the *Amrita Bazar* and calls it a gossip-monger? He praises Churchill and *The Hindu*. But now Churchill says that one can form one's own opinion about the conduct of Leopold. (*Laughter*)

JUNE 8, 1940

P: Daladier has been ousted altogether from the Cabinet.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the man whom Reynaud has taken in his place is said to be a specialist, and non-political.

P: There are already plenty of political people. It seems it was Daladier who relieved Weygand and put Gamelin in his place. And when there was apprehension of trouble he sent him to the Middle East. Weygand is a Catholic.

SRI AUROBINDO: I see. Pétin also is a Catholic.

P: Yes.

N: Daladier is anti-Catholic?

SRI AUROBINDO: He is a radical.

N (*after a while*): Italy is between two fires.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, Russia has warned her against any move in the Balkans and America against extending the field of war while Hitler is pressing Mussolini.

P: Even in today's paper there is something about American pressure on Italy. America has already sent some dive bombers, it seems, lending them to the Allies.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not lending but sending to some Company which will forward them. (*Laughter*)

N: Hitler is quietly swallowing all that. He does not utter a single word of threat against America.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he is very cautious. He does not want her to join the Allies.

SRI AUROBINDO (*after a while—laughing*): J has written to the Mother denouncing her action in supporting the French who are killing the communists. (*Laughter*)

P: Still he has his sympathy for the communists? But he didn't write about his approaching marriage?

SRI AUROBINDO: Marriage?

P: Yes, as soon as his B.A. result is out he will get married.

N: How can he write about it? It will bring denunciation on himself.

P: He is going to marry in his caste.

SRI AUROBINDO: Communists have castes?

P: He has seen in Bombay, perhaps, that educated girls are more forward and won't tolerate any subjection.

N: Has his health improved?

P: Yes. He says he is much better now. He wrote to the Mother about his health.

SRI AUROBINDO: Marriage might do him good—make him sober. Because much of his trouble was due to sexual unbalance.

N: Yes, but who will be the unfortunate bride, I wonder!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, she may be unfortunate.

P: He is going about giving lectures on Yoga, the Ashram and you. His communist comrades don't understand how he, being a communist, praises you. They think, "Is he a black sheep in the fold or what?"

SRI AUROBINDO: A bistriped animal. (*Laughter*)

P: The socialists in Bombay are not in the forefront now.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why?

P: After the seceding of Masani, they have lost ground.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why has Masani seceded?

P: He does not seem to have found anybody sincere among them. He now lives a retired life.

SRI AUROBINDO: The socialists generally have not stood the test. In the beginning there were sincere people, but later on they became respectable. The communists are more idealistic than the socialists. They have to live and work in obloquy and that requires sincerity. It is like religion. When a religion is new and fresh, plenty of people come in, but as it gets older it is all up and people become respectable and it becomes a church. (*After a pause*) Why does J say that the French are killing the communists? They are only imprisoning them.

P: Because of the death penalty hanging over them.

SRI AUROBINDO: That, if they do any subversive activity like interfering with the soldiers. They were trying to make a pact with Hitler.

P: The French seemed to have destroyed 700 tanks.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yesterday it was 400—a very good number.

P: Yesterday's paper says 700.

SRI AUROBINDO: Which paper? *The Hindu*?

P: No, *The Indian Express*. (*Laughter*)

P: Hitler is not using dive bombers in the attack this time.

SRI AUROBINDO: He did at first, but it was not effective due to the measure adopted on the direction of Weygand—that the troops should disperse as soon as a bomber arrives, and close in after it has left. Bombers are very costly.

S: If they can hold on for a month, it will create a very good effect; it will give confidence to the soldiers.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, if they can hold on for a month, then they will be able to hold on as long as they like. (*Addressing N*) Have you read Krishnaprem's review of *The Life Divine*?

N: Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you find it? (*N gave a laugh*)

S: He says that the two denials are the same as in Buddhism—their avoidance points to the middle path.

P: And Mahayana's equation of Nirvana and Samsara also has the same teaching as in *The Life Divine*—about the acceptance of life.

SRI AUROBINDO: Did Buddha say that? I thought he preached renunciation.

P: It is the Mahayana school which came into existence after Buddha, that holds this view of the acceptance of life. The Hinayana does not.

S: Everybody finds things in *The Life Divine* according to their own predilection. Somebody found Tantra and Krishnaprem finds Buddhism.

SRI AUROBINDO: Especially as he is in a Buddhistic phase now.

N: Sisir says that the reviewers should give quotations from the writers. That is the modern trend now.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't find that in the *New Statesman and Nation*. On the other hand, sometimes, their quotations are irritating, especially in poetry. But they should give quotations in poetry.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

THE SERVICE TREE AT THE SAMADHI

SEASON after season you staunchly stand,
Waiting on the Master's ever-living spirit.
Your vast branches in a loving canopy
The heavenly essence of his strength inherit.

Giving cool shade from the sun's burning rays,
A sanctuary to absorb soul-soothing peace—
Yet are you a fierce sentinel-protector
Upon wild wind-swept whirling days.

At twilight your purple shades, mute song to his Grace—
In the deep night you giant soft-murmured brooding tree
Eternally guarding this enchanted spot
Suffice for a prayer to the Master's all-powered tranquillity.

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER, 1926

(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.)

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1972)

THE idea of Tantra that the lower movements can be made stepping-stones to the spiritual ascent is an old idea of the Veda. The Veda speaks of the hostile forces (Panis) seizing the divine cows (the rays of the sun), and penning them up in the subconscious. But in the Veda it is the seized divine rays that are afterwards released, whereas in Tantra it is the lower movements themselves that are used. The difference is important. In a sense the lower movements also are the Divine at work. Thus anger, which is a hostile force, is the Divine in the lower movement and we have to transform it into its true image. God also destroys in His anger. He can be cruel at times, for His purpose, not our moral purpose. But unless we transform the force of anger as we find it in ourselves we cannot use it as a stepping-stone. Tantra says that the Vira, the Hero, can use the lower movements like that but the Vira is rare, and ordinary Tantrics who, like the Adwaitins, say that all is one, simply indulge the lower movements and fall into a pit. For instance, the sexual force is one of the greatest forces of the world. The pure, natural sexual act without appetite or lust brings a vital force. But as it is ordinarily done, it is a movement towards death, as evidenced by the exhaustion following the act. Moreover, there is a great vital-physical excitement which is contrary to the psychic calm, and where such excitement comes in, the psychic being recedes and the Sadhaka makes no progress. The natural act is neither good nor bad, it is there for procreation; as it is ordinarily done it is bad from the Yogic standpoint, it is a hostile force. Where attachment or excitement comes in, the hostile forces take advantage of the Sadhaka's weakness and try to overthrow him. The Vira in order to use the sexual act itself as a stepping-stone must cast away the attachment or excitement. He must have a particular kind of large spiritual power (not any kind of spiritual power) supported by a large vital power. And the idea that Nature is doing the act and not he must not be the idea in the mind,

but something in the vital being. And he must have passed the human limit, he must look at things from above. He must be superhuman. Only such Viras can do it without any danger.

In Tantra, Mahashakti is one with Para Brahman. Shiva and Vishnu are manifestations and therefore inferior to Mahashakti.

Tantra says that its path is more effectual and brings the Sadhaka quicker to the goal but I have not seen even one man who has used the lower movements as stepping-stones to the ascent.

If the seeker is not ready and simply calls on God to come, repeating "God, come! come!", the higher power may descend and shatter him. There must be no rushing. There must be first the preparatory movement of calm, wideness, strength. Even if there is nothing in the Sadhaka to invite the hostile forces they may come. He has to be alert, face the hostile forces, reject them, grow in knowledge, power, call down the Divine Power to conquer them. In certain cases the Power may come down at a time of crisis.

Talking of flight to the moon on a rocket, I may say that perhaps one may go to the moon in his vital body if one has the power and see things there; he may dematerialise things there, take them up into his atmosphere, bring them down to earth and again materialise them on earth. I don't know whether this sort of venture can seriously be done!

Spareness of physical substance facilitates the descent of the higher power. In illness or fever there is some disturbance in the being and in all disturbance there is a sort of openness (healthy or unhealthy) to all kinds of forces. Some people write poetry during a fever. After illness or fever some Sadhakas get a certain clarity and advance rapidly.

The centres are in the subtle-physical. The physical centres correspond to them. You can awaken the Kundalini in any centre if you know where it is. In most people it is involved in the physical consciousness. The force is there on each plane itself, but it is shut up; when the higher power descends, the full force manifests itself. The full powers are in the subconscious. The petals of the lotus signify the main elements of the divine powers opening up. The lotuses and the letters in them are a mental symbolism.

If the mind is widely open it receives widely; if it is open only in one part it receives narrowly. The psychic opening (in the heart) is a good beginning, but with no other opening it is difficult to change the physical consciousness. The higher power comes through the mind even into the body. The body can register every experience.

Q: What becomes of the mind when it is transformed?

You no longer reason. We reason because we don't know. The Yogin knows or does not know; if he does not know he does not reason but waits for Truth. Truth first sends light and influence, it does not come itself at first.

Q: Then what is the use of the mind?

Why is the nose there? It is only an instrument, it does not itself smell. Similarly with the mind. But you no longer reason or construct because you see the Truth. If I see you before me I need not reason and say that you are there.

Wit is mental, ordinary humour is vital, or vital and mental. With some, joking is intuitive.

Vamana Avatar was the physical man, Parasurama the vital man (fighting man), Rama the mental man, Krishna the supramental.¹

Coffee and tea stimulate the nerves and brain and make these instruments of the physical mind capable of more activity. They act on the vital-physical, because there is the vital-physical in themselves, as in other drugs. Some people, when they drink, get more thoughts than when they are in the normal state. There are certain drugs which some Yogins use (ganja). When they take them the consciousness goes out of the body, is thrown out as it were and they get some experiences. And there is also a reaction. Certain other drugs (the traditional soma plant) fortify or strengthen the system instead of stimulating. But salvation through a drug is no salvation. It does not build up anything.

In our Yoga, we need not go to other planes, we may go and come back sometimes. There is a turnover of the consciousness, so to say, when we bring down the high thing. We must bring down the consciousness and power to our own plane. If there is a sufficient force brought down to protect your body, it is a protection against accidents. It is a protection only and does not abolish the theoretical possibility of accidents. If the vital consciousness and the body consciousness are fully awake, then there will be something in the body itself which will protect you against accidents. If you have the yogic body, accidents cannot touch you.

Q: What is it that causes accidents?

Vital forces or vital beings who amuse themselves. Some vital beings may help to save you from accidents. Many people have felt that something caught hold of them and protected them.

If there is pain in the body, detachment is the first condition of controlling it.

¹ At that time the radical distinction between Supermind and what was later called Overmind had not yet been made. (Editor)

You have to separate yourself from the pain, you have to localise it in the body. Ordinarily you feel that not only the body suffers but that a part of the mind also suffers, that you yourself suffer. You must say, "It is the body that suffers, not I." The pain does not go but you feel that it is something external, in the body. Man for the most part lives in his physical consciousness with as much of the vital and mental as can get through. If he can silence his physical mind, there is no limit to his power. His subliminal self is more powerful and does things more surely. This is the truth behind Coué's system.

The Jiva manifests the various personalities. Besides the Jiva there is that which supports the continuity of the personalities; without it reincarnation cannot be explained. We bring our past with us. There are certain elements in my vital being which I brought with me from my past lives. My taste for painting I got while meditating in Jail. It must have come from something brought from the past but lying hidden.

The monist seeks the Impersonal. We can't call it God; God is personality, and all personality to him is a limitation. But the supreme Purusha is a Person, though not limited; and the Impersonal is only one of His aspects. God is not an abstraction (Ncti, Neti, "Not this, not this"); mind sees only one aspect and opposes the rest to it. It is not natural for the mind to deny God. But if it does, there is a sattwic denial—it cannot know, and so it denies; but the vital denial is a asuric, not from incapacity but from unwillingness.

Collective Sadhana creates a solidarity in the physical atmosphere, makes it even and homogeneous (if the Sadhakas are in the same state) and the descent of the power also will be even.

Q: If the Sadhakas agree to meditate apart at the same time, what would be the difference?

Space counts in these matters; nearness creates solidarity in the physical atmosphere. At a distance mental communication is easy but mental communication is not everything. The Sadhakas in my vital atmosphere receive more easily than those who are far away. To send the force far away a great concentration is needed—a movement in the mental acting in the vital.

The adverse forces are not so much in the mental as in the vital and physical. The physical is idiotic; the vital is interesting. Certain colours or lights can be brought down to protect the circle—that is, to envelope the Sadhakas.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

A SUGGESTION ABOUT A WORD IN *SAVITRI*

AN AMERICAN DISCIPLE'S LETTER TO *Mother India*

380 Tidd Dr., Galion, Ohio 44833, U.S.A. Feb. 13, 1972.

Dear Mr. Sethna,

A follower of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, I have been a reader of *Mother India* since 1953 and have gained much from it. I have been an admirer of your writings in particular. An engineer in the fields of computer design and communications, I have degrees in philosophy and physics.

With the introduction out of the way, I would like to call your attention to a seeming error in *Savitri*. It occurs in the original two volume edition, and in the 1954 University edition. Perhaps it has been corrected since. The line in which the fault lies occurs on the same page of the latter edition, page 290, as these famous lines:

Or we may find when all the rest has failed
Hid in ourselves the key of perfect change.

But the lines with which I am here concerned read:

Man then might rest content and live in peace,
Master of Nature who once her bondslave worked.

The above contains my correction of the passage. The book has "wants" for "once," which garbles the meaning. Although "wants" and "once" have only one letter in common, they are very close in pronunciation, suggesting that the error was made by a scribe taking dictation of the lines from Sri Aurobindo. Nirodbaran would seem to have committed a pun. Would you agree that my correction is fairly obvious wants seen, pardon me, once seen?

Sincerely yours,
ROBERT SHARLAND

*

23 Rue Suffren, Pondicherry 1, South India, 5-3-1972.

Dear Mr. Sharland,

I was glad to get your letter, introducing yourself and suggesting "once" for "wants" in a line of *Savitri*. As the line occurs in that part of the poem which Sri Aurobindo had written and not dictated we were hoping to get to the bottom of the mystery by referring to his papers. On the face of it, it looked impossible that if the

line were a written one anybody could have misread the word. So we suspected that Sri Aurobindo had expanded the passage in the days of dictation. And we were right. Nirodbaran found five new lines added and one of them was the bone of contention.

I agree with you that "once" makes very natural reading and that it should substitute the current word in all future editions. Thanks for being pundit enough to spot Nirodbaran's unconscious pun!

It's rather exhilarating to find that an engineer in the fields of computer design and communications or even that someone who has degrees in philosophy and physics is also such a sensitive reader of Sri Aurobindo's poetry on top of being a follower of him and the Mother. You have followed him very well indeed in this *Savitri*-passage!

Yours sincerely,

K.D. SETHNA

P.S. It may interest you to know that I have loved to study the thought-structure of modern physics and have written at some length on Einstein's theories and on other fundamental concepts of present-day science. In fact, the last piece of prose by me read out to Sri Aurobindo shortly before he passed away was: *Probability in Micro-physics*. When he had heard it out, he asked Nirodbaran: "Did you understand a single word of it?"

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

A SEARCH APROPOS OF R. C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

DR R.C. Zaehner, well-known specialist in Zoroastrianism, keen scholar of comparative religion and, lately, stimulating commentator on the Bhagawad Gita, paid a flying visit in December 1969 to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. He came after delivering the Westcott Lectures—three in number—under the Teape Foundation in Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. They were on Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin within the general framework of a thesis on religion evolving towards a world-wide unity of progressive spiritual outlook in accord with modern Science's discovery of universal Evolution.

He was kind enough to drop in at my place. We had a short pleasant conversation swapping thoughts on the fundamentals of the French mystic-scientist's vision of life. A convert to Roman Catholicism but versed in various scriptures, Zaehner could speak knowledgeably in several respects from both inside and outside the Church to which Teilhard had been born. Originally a Zoroastrian educated at a Roman Catholic school and college and later a follower of Sri Aurobindo, I could talk of Teilhard with some understanding as well as detachment. As for Sri Aurobindo, Zaehner seemed to have read a fair amount of him with fine sympathy. But we hardly entered into any particulars of the Aurobindonian vision, for I was more eager to explore my distinguished visitor's comprehension of Teilhardism than he to take advantage of whatever acquaintance I might have with the spiritual light that lay behind Sri Aurobindo's "Integral Yoga".

Now his three lectures, "Religions and Religion", "A World in Travail" and "The Communion of Saints", along with a fourth, "Unity in Diversity—Vedantin and Christian" and an Appendix, "Commemoration Day Address delivered at St. Stephen's College, Delhi", have been published in attractive book-form¹ and sent me for review. Reading the little volume, I find Zaehner well-grounded in Sri Aurobindo on many points but seriously slipping up in some. The mistakes, except for factual ones, do not quite surprise me: they are just what one might expect face to face with something that is so revolutionary in its revelation of the heart of our evolutionary universe. Partly they stem from a common Western shortcoming—a difficulty in getting to the real sense of the Eastern mystical attitude. A missing here and there of the revolutionary implications of Teilhardism has also been a frequent phenomenon in the West—and even this, I believe, has something to do with

¹ *Evolution in Religion A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford University Press, 1971), Rs. 33.

that difficulty; for, in my opinion, Teilhard was Eastern much more than his co-religionists have thought, much more than he himself liked to think. Zaehner too stops short of certain Teilhardian truths, misled by their discoverer's own blurring of them because of their foreignness in a Roman-Catholic context. But, by and large, he sees with a calm clarity and competently appraises Teilhard's insights within the religious field of the modern West as well as Teilhard's blind spots towards other religions than his own, especially the spirituality of India that is Sri Aurobindo's background.

I

ZAEHNER'S MAIN COMPARISONS

Zaehner's objective and preoccupation in his book may be summed up in his own words. We may also string together, for convenience's sake, his most important comparative pronouncements as well as a few general reflections. This stringing together may at times make for too close repetitions as well as for a certain jumpiness. As a rule, Zaehner has a good sequence and, though he is prone to repeat himself here and there, he mostly does so to keep some *leit-motifs* ringing and usually manages a sufficient spacing-out of the reiterations. But our method of massing the major comparisons that are relevant to areas of special interest to us has the advantage of projecting some sort of total picture which, provided we know of its having been considerably simplified, does the best justice to Zaehner's over-all view.

After saying that Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard "are between them the excuse and the main theme of these lectures", he¹ writes:

"The reason why I have chosen them is that, in their separate traditions, they represent something totally new in mystical religion. And the reason is not far to seek. Both, not only accepted the theory of evolution, but enthusiastically acclaimed it, indeed were almost obsessed by it. Both were, it seems, profoundly influenced by Bergson, both were deeply dissatisfied with organized religion, and both were vitally concerned not only with individual salvation or 'liberation' but also with the *collective* salvation of mankind. Hence their sympathetic interest in Marxian socialism, for it was the hope of each of them that the unity in diversity which the mystic finds in himself would be reflected in a socialized and free society in which, as Marx had prophesied, 'we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'.

"The reality, as we know, has turned out to be very different from the prophecy both in the Soviet Union and in China...(3, 4) However, there is always room for hope, and hope is a Christian virtue. It was also recognized as a virtue by Aurobindo though it seems to have faded from his vision towards the end of his life. For, Aurobindo, though he had started as a left-wing politician, had also been the subject of a mystical revelation, and this even so Anglicized a Bengali as Aurobindo could not

¹ The page numbers have been put in brackets after the excerpts.

lightly brush aside. 'Cosmic consciousness', as he called it following R.M. Bucke, in which the ego is annihilated and all is seen as One and One as all in a perfect and marvellous harmony, is the 'Truth' which the mystic experiences in his own being; it must therefore be true of the cosmos as a whole. Hence evil must either be illusory or a necessary stepping-stone on the way to the good. This is the common experience of all so-called 'nature mystics', and it has also the scriptural authority of the Upanishads...(4,5)

"Aurobindo...too had experienced the omnipresence of God 'in every man moving before me, even in every tree, wall, bird, and beast....God is in every metal, and in the earth and mud.'¹ But [unlike Bucke] he did not suppose that this one experience was in itself typical or complete, although he is not always consistent about this...

"Teilhard de Chardin too was a pantheist by nature, and throughout the first World War, during which he acted as a stretcher-bearer, he seems to have lived in an almost permanent state of 'cosmic consciousness'. It was not he who had sought it out any more than had Bucke. 'It was not I,' he writes, 'who laboriously discovered the All; it was the All which showed itself to me, imposed itself on me through a kind of 'cosmic consciousness'. It is the attraction of the All that has set everything in motion in me, brought it to life and given it organic form...[Hence] I can never aspire to a reward which is less than the All itself.'² And this cosmic consciousness, if it is to be truly cosmic, must be realized not only in individual men but also in the whole of mankind. Only so can humanity be spiritually unified and collectively redeemed.

"Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin had these two things in common, the repeated experience of cosmic consciousness, and a profound belief in evolution, the goal of which they saw to be the divinization of man. Both produced their most significant work during and directly after the first World War. Teilhard was prevented by his superiors from publishing anything during his lifetime; hence it would have been impossible for Aurobindo to have become acquainted with his thought. It is, however, strange that Teilhard never came to hear of Aurobindo—or perhaps not so strange, for though he had formed his own ideas about Eastern mysticism, he had quite clearly not read the basic texts in any kind of depth. Had he done so, he would scarcely have dismissed Eastern mysticism out of hand as being *périmé*, 'dated',³ how much less Aurobindo whose thought so closely resembled his own. For what was the ideal of both men? 'The hope of the kingdom of heaven within us and the city of God upon earth.'⁴ as Aurobindo said, or, in the words of Teilhard, 'to promote in equal measure the mastery of the world and the kingdom of God'⁵...(6,7)

¹ A.B. Purani, *Life of Sri Aurobindo*, Pondicherry, 1964, p. 125.

² Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Oeuvres* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil), 9, p. 72. cf English Translation: *Science and Christ*, Collins, London, 1968, pp. 43-44.

³ *Oeuvres* 7, p. 236.

⁴ *The Human Cycle*, etc., Pondicherry, 1962, ch 13, p. 165.

⁵ *Écrits du temps de la guerre* Paris, Grasset, 1965, p. 84: E.T. *Writings in Time of War*, Collins, London, 1968, p. 91.

“Teilhard de Chardin was profoundly dissatisfied with what he considered to be the excessive legalism of the Roman Catholic Church of his time.... Yet despite occasional bitterness it never seriously occurred to him to leave the Society of Jesus, let alone the Roman Church, for despite all its defects it was for him the only possible centre of unity in the frame of which the collective salvation of mankind could one day be realized...

“For Aurobindo the problem was quite different. Though born in Calcutta, he was sent to England when he was seven. Educated at St. Paul’s School in London and King’s College, Cambridge, proving himself to be a classical scholar of note, he was thoroughly steeped in the classical humanism of his time: by upbringing he was an English gentleman.... It was only on his return to India...that he discovered the Hindu religion and the Vedānta. But he could not accept the Vedānta in its classic non-dualist formulation, for in England he had come to accept Darwinism and Bergson’s idea of *creative* evolution. If the One were totally static and unfractionable, then there could be no room for evolution, creativity, or development of any kind. This could not be. Rather, the One, though absolutely self-sufficient unto itself, must also be the source of multiplicity and not only of change, but of progressive, evolutionary change, an ascent the culmination of which was to be re-united with the One in a new richness and a new glory. Aurobindo knew that his ‘integral Yoga’ which not only aimed at the discovery of the immortal and timeless within oneself but also sought to harmonize the total human being in and around this immortal core and then to concentrate all immortal cores or centres around the core and centre of all things—this integral Yoga was an innovation and constituted a clear break with the traditional Sankhya-Yoga which had made the sharpest distinction between Spirit and matter, the Imperishable and the perishable, Eternity and time. For Hinduism as a social structure he had no use at all, and the Vedānta of Śankara and Theravāda Buddhism he regarded as *hīnayāna*, a ‘defective way’ at the best; but, having once discovered Hinduism, the national religion of India, he had no intention of leaving it. Indeed, he had no incentive to do so, for Hinduism has no central authority to lay down what you should believe nor is it committed to any particular form of religious expression. Moreover, just as Teilhard found the justification for his radical re-interpretation of Christianity in certain of the writings of St. Paul and St. John, so did Aurobindo find the justification for his dynamic interpretation of the Vedānta in the Hindu scriptures themselves, particularly in the Bhagavad-Gītā and (less justifiably) in the Vedic Samhitās. He thus reversed the current monistic trend in Hindu mysticism by appealing to the sacred texts themselves. Though he re-interpreted the Vedas along his own lines, he did in fact bring out their essential concern with *this* world which was a necessary corrective to the dominant inwardness of the later Upanishads. The Katha Upanishad (4.1) had diverted man’s eyes from the contemplation of the outside world to his own hidden depths. .. But the full teaching of the Upanishads is that ‘without’ and ‘within’ are one, the infinite and the infinitesimal blend in the human heart, and both are pervaded and ruled by a ‘Lord’...(9-11)

“The essence of Aurobindo’s thought is perhaps to be found in his *Thoughts and Aphorisms* compiled, apparently, in his old age. These derive almost entirely from Hindu tradition, particularly the Bhagavad Gītā and the *Bhāgavata Purāna*. Gone are the European influences, as are Aurobindo’s own typical concepts of Supermind, Overmind and so on which appear to be central to his *magnum opus*, *The Life Divine*, but which in fact only duplicate the more traditional terminology, thereby creating unnecessary confusion. The same might be said about Teilhard with his Omega-point, noosphere, super-humanity, super-Christ and so on—none of which is calculated to endear him to modern secular and scientific man (for whom the terminology was presumably designed) let alone to more traditional Christians.

“Despite all this Teilhard, quite as much as Aurobindo, can point to scriptural authority in support of his views. Taking his stand on the assumption that the law of increasing entropy which must finally mean the death of the universe *must* be counterbalanced by a complementary law of continually increasing complexity-consciousness (the highest example of which is up till now the human brain), he goes on to say (as does Aurobindo) that the next stage of the evolution of this planet will be the convergence of humanity upon itself, the development, then, of a *collective mind* the nature of which can be dimly inferred from the experience of cosmic consciousness. All this is to be found in St. Paul, ‘not,’ he admits, ‘in the Sermon on the Mount or even in the gesture of the Cross¹,—that is to say, in an aspect of Christianity with which Hindus on the whole are unfamiliar and which Aurobindo himself, despite his English education, either did not know or preferred to ignore. This is St. Paul’s vision of the mystical body of Christ in the Church and of the cosmic Christ he reveals in his Philippians, Colossians and Ephesians. Through Christ and his Church the human race is destined to grow together until ‘everything is subjected to him, [and] then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.’² This consummation of the whole human race through the God-man was God’s purpose from the beginning...(11, 12)

“...this aspect of Christianity had been neglected and only through this approach, Teilhard thought, could Christianity be made meaningful to modern man. He saw Christ and Christianity in and through evolution—from individuality through collectivity to a unity in diversity centred on the cosmic Christ. This was precisely the vision of Sri Aurobindo in his *The Life Divine*. Substitute the Hindu Trinity *sac-cid-ānanda* (Being-Logos-Joy) for Christ, and the parallelism is exact. The difference is that, whereas Teilhard saw the instrument of human unity ready to hand in the Church, Aurobindo could find no such principle of unity within Hinduism since, socially, Hinduism has hitherto been based on caste ... Even if we are able to see merit in the caste system, its function is to divide, not to unite, and what divides is, in the eyes of both Teilhard and Aurobindo, evil. Acting on his own principle that even a single

¹ *Oeuvres* 6, p. 193.

² I Corinthians, 15, 28.

soul fully integrated in the divine life must, sooner or later, make its attraction felt throughout the entire world, Aurobindo collected a few disciples around himself in his Pondicherry Ashram in the hope that, with the assistance of a French lady whom he was bold enough to hail as the Divine Mother and the eternal Śakti, he, the utterly perfected Siddha, would draw all things to himself. Since evolution works in units of millions rather than hundreds of years, it is obviously very much too early to say whether he was right...(13)

“Aurobindo...was right to condemn the rigidities of organized religion but wrong to imagine that his vision of the cosmos transformed and re-integrated into the Divine could be realized except in the framework of a religious organization capable of transforming itself into a living organism in which the individual parts would depend for their life on the whole, each contributing its own special excellence to the well-being of the total body which one day would embrace all mankind...(24, 25)

“To the very last Teilhard, against all the evidence of two world wars and an armistice only maintained by a balance of terror, believed that the spirit of man was on the verge of a break-through to a new form of socialized and ‘totalized’ existence. Aurobindo could not entirely share this optimism to the end, for his Ashram in Pondicherry had not yet given birth to new centres in which what he called Supermind could manifest itself. This was perhaps a disappointment to him since, unlike Teilhard, he saw himself as the divine centre from which the transformation of man into ‘super-mankind’ was to radiate. During the thirty years in which he had been engaged in ‘bringing down the Supramental’ nothing much had happened outwardly: the Ashram was indeed and still is a going and expanding concern, but its impact on the world has so far been slight and is not yet comparable to that of the widely diffused Ramakrishna Mission. But then Aurobindo, like Teilhard, could always fall back on the theory of evolution itself and the prodigious periods of time that it presupposes. (27)

“The earth had, indeed, not proved responsive to the divine transformation that was to have become manifest through him. Hence he had no alternative but to give up his body quite voluntarily—or so his disciples believe—in an act of supreme unselfishness...to hasten the hour of collective realization’.¹ In 1915 he had said: ‘Heaven we have possessed, but not the earth; but the fullness of the Yoga is to make... Heaven and earth equal and one.’ But it needs more than one lifetime to do this...(28)

“And was it not a sign of an inner despair that Aurobindo retreated into himself during the last twenty years of his life? Despite the theoretical dynamism of his philosophy which was to have transformed Hinduism, when he died he had still not succeeded in ‘making Heaven and earth equal and one’. Perhaps he has left behind in his Ashram not only the ‘kingdom of God within us’ but also, however small it may be, a ‘city of God upon earth’.

“And yet he realized that without an inner transformation of the individual there could be no outer transformation of the collectivity.... ‘It is a spiritual, an inner freedom

¹ *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga*, Pondicherry, 1955, p 389.

that can alone create a perfect human order....A deeper brotherhood, a yet unfound law of love is the only true foundation possible for a perfect social evolution...a love which is founded upon a deeper truth of our being, the brotherhood or, let us say,... the spiritual comradeship which is the expression of an inner realization of oneness. For only so can egoism disappear and the true individualism of the unique godhead in each man found itself on the true communism of the equal godhead in the race; for the Spirit, the inmost Self, the universal Godhead in every being is that whose very nature of divine oneness it is to realize the perfection of its individual life and nature in the existence of all.¹

"This was the hope of Aurobindo, but he was usually clear-sighted enough to see that there was always a chance that it might fail, and in any case things had to be seen in terms of evolutionary time, and not in terms of human generations...(33-35)

"Usually, however, Aurobindo is little given to pessimism; for he regards the evolutionary process as inevitably leading back to the supreme *Sac-cid-ānanda*, the triune God who is not only the static God of the philosophers but also a *living* God who operates in time. More concretely he sees evolution both in political terms and in terms of ever greater awareness—a progression from apparently inanimate matter to life, from life to consciousness and mind, from mind to what he calls Overmind, and from Overmind to Supermind which, if I understand him aright, is pure *cit*, pure consciousness, operating in the world as *śakti* or power. This ascent from matter to Spirit he sometimes sees as a return to the insights already 'given' in the Upanishads and Veda. 'We have then to return to the pursuit of an ancient secret which man, as a race, has seen only obscurely and followed after lamely, has indeed understood only with his surface mind and not in its heart of meaning—and yet in following it lies his social no less than his individual salvation—the ideal of the Kingdom of God, the secret of the reign of the Spirit over mind and life and body.'²...(35-36)

"It must be remembered that there is Aurobindo the socialist and Aurobindo the mystic. The first is typified in *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*, while the second unfolds himself at enormous length in *The Life Divine*. Though he continually speaks of his 'integral Yoga' which is supposed to contain both, the two aspects of him, the exoteric concerned with the building of the city of God on earth and the esoteric struggling to realize the kingdom of God within you, tend to fall apart, the latter tending to assume greater importance in his later work. Unlike Teilhard his background was literary, not scientific, and his attitude towards science remains ambivalent. Very occasionally he sees science as the great unifier of the human race....His tribute to it, such as it is, seems to be only lip-service paid to a fashionable idol. In this he differs widely from Teilhard for whom scientific research was akin to adoration³ and who could say: 'Neither in its impetus nor in its achievement can

¹ *The Human Cycle*, etc., ch. 20, pp. 295-6.

² *The Human Cycle*, ch. 22, p. 322.

³ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, E T p, 250.

science go to its limits without becoming tinged with mysticism and charged with faith.¹

“Yet despite the differences between the two men they share a common view of the universe. First, Spirit takes precedence over matter. Secondly, since this is so, it follows that Spirit must always have been in matter in a rudimentary form. Third, evolution is a progressive unification, an ever-increasing spiritualization of matter. Fourth, the goal of evolution must be the integration of matter in a final harmony and its convergence on to a centre of attraction which is supramental and divine. Fifthly, the only conceivable agent of such a convergence is a ‘yet unfound law of love’. Both men again were profoundly dissatisfied with their own religions as currently practised and interpreted and sought to re-construct them in an evolutionary mould. Both again regarded suffering and strife as being of the very stuff of evolutionary progress... (37-38)

“Both might be regarded as Gnostics, for both, in their different ways, interpreted the ‘Fall’ in a cosmic sense: Spirit ‘falls’ into matter and its true nature is thereby ‘veiled’ from itself. On the nature of this ‘Fall’ Sri Aurobindo is confused; but in *The Life Divine* his thought seems to be nearest to Neo-Platonism among the philosophies of the West. The supreme Absolute which in itself must be beyond change is the classic *Sac-cid-ānanda*—Being, Consciousness, and Joy...—absolutely One in itself but nonetheless containing the seed of multiplicity. From this Trinity, or more specifically from Consciousness in-dwelt by Joy proceeds Supermind which he also calls Consciousness-Force; in Christian terminology we might say the Logos in its creative action. From this proceeds Overmind which is the boundary between the ‘pleroma’ of pure Being and the world of becoming, the universe, that is, in which we live. Thus ‘Overmind stands at the top of the lower hemisphere’²; below is what Sri Aurobindo calls the world of the Ignorance which consists of mind, life, and finally matter. This descent of the spirit into matter he calls devolution, the necessary obverse of evolution. In ‘inconscious’ matter as he calls it Spirit has become totally submerged; it is not aware of itself, or, if you prefer it, it is playing hide-and-seek with itself, the divine ‘game’ so beloved of the Hindu... (38, 39)

“God is One: on this the higher religions are in some degree united: but in Christianity he is also three, and this is a mystery which the Christians themselves have never been able to explain. And yet this Christian Trinity is reflected in Hindu theology too, not in the highly artificial trinity of Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Śiva, the destroyer, which is not comparable to the Christian Trinity at all, but in the standard Vedāntin formula *sac-cid-ānanda*, which all Vedāntins and not least Aurobindo accept, Being-Consciousness-Joy, or without stretching the formula too much, Being-Logos-Love... (55)

“On the one hand...you have heaven, the realm of spirit where all is but one, on

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

² *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga*, p. 385.

the other you have the earth organizing itself at first through the mysterious power of evolution and then being consciously organized in these 'last days' by scientific man.... What...is the link between them? In China it is man, in the Book of Genesis it is God.

" 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water.'

"We hear no more about the heavens, as is proper, for, as Teilhard says, 'in heaven all is but one'. But the earth is very different; it is *tohu* and *bohu*, a 'trackless waste and emptiness', dark and fluid, having no shape or form, coherence or consistency. Call it 'nothing' or 'no thing', say with 2 Maccabees (7.28) that 'God made them out of things that did not exist...'; it doesn't matter very much since even theologians are not very clear as to what creation *ex nihilo* means. Teilhard did his best to describe the 'nothing' from which God created the earth, and his account which tries to square evolution with Genesis rather than the dogmatic creation *ex nihilo* is intriguing if not very convincing to the rational mind.... This is how Teilhard put it in one of his earlier works:

" 'In the beginning there were, at the two poles of existence, God and pure multiplicity (*la multitude*). Even so God was all alone, because the pure multiplicity which was in a state of absolute dissociation did not exist. For all eternity God saw the shadow of his unity in a diffused state of disarray (*éparpillé*) beneath his feet; and this shadow, fraught as it was with every possibility of producing something, was not another God because, in itself, it did not exist, nor had it ever existed, nor could it ever have existed because its essence was to be infinitely divided in itself, that is to say, to tend towards nothingness. Infinite in extension, infinitely rarefied, this pure multiplicity, annihilated as to its essence, slept at the antipodes of Being which is One and concentrated.

" 'It was then that Unity, overflowing with life, joined battle through [the process of] creation with the multiple which, though non-existent [in itself] opposed it as a contrast and a challenge. To create, as it appears to me, means to condense, concentrate, organize, unite.'¹

" 'God was all alone,' Teilhard says. But how could he be alone if, as the Christians (and the Vedāntins) will have it, he is a Trinity? And what was his 'Spirit' which hovered over the water? It can scarcely be other than the Holy Spirit commonly accounted as being the third 'Person' of the Christian Trinity. It 'hovered over the water' and, presumably, entered into the water, the symbol of the ever-moving, the unstable, perpetually changing thing which is chaos—matter in its most embryonic and, if you like, its most non-existent form. The Spirit, the principle of unity in the Godhead since it eternally binds the Father to the Son, descends into matter, descends into the dead, dark waters. Or as the Rīg-Veda (10.129.2) puts it:

¹ *Écrits du temp de la guerre*, p. 114. R.T. in *Writings in Time of War*, p. 95.

“ ‘In the beginning, was darkness swathed in darkness;
 All was but unmanifested water.
 Whatever was, that One, coming into being,
 Hidden by the Void,
 Was generated by the power of heat.’

“ ‘Hidden by the Void’: this is essential in the thought of Sri Aurobindo. Spirit or, as he more often calls it, Consciousness-Force descends into matter and there becomes veiled and alienated from itself. Though remaining in eternity unfettered and free in the triune Godhead it, so to speak, loses itself in the dark, dead waters of matter, but in so doing it stirs them into life...(54-57)

“This means that there is no such thing as really ‘dead’ matter; all matter is instinct with life and consciousness. What Teilhard calls the ‘Soul of the world’ and Sri Aurobindo calls ‘Supermind’ is already there in embryo, just as the soul of an individual is already there, though unconscious, in the human foetus. It is there but it has not yet developed; yet it develops slowly but inexorably until we arrive at the simple consciousness of the animal, and then in the first human beings or rather groups of human beings at a kind of collective consciousness which seems to precede full self-consciousness. For, as Teilhard says, ‘in the opinion of the best observers a kind of collective co-consciousness can still be distinguished among tribes classified by ethnologists at primitive which in the most natural way in the world enables the group to stick together and to function harmoniously as a group.’¹ This is a primitive form of cosmic consciousness...(60, 61)

“Cosmic consciousness, says R.N. Bucke who invented the term, appearing in individuals, is the guarantee of a future cosmic consciousness that must one day be born and which will mean the transformation of the human race and its unification in and around a central focus of attraction, the *sac-cid-ānanda* of Aurobindo, the Christ-Omega of Teilhard de Chardin...(48)

“Christ, because he is both God and man, is the Centre to which all human ‘centres’, all human ‘selves’ as ‘parts of God’, as the Gītā (15.7) puts it, must look. He is the mid-point in human evolution, midway between the ‘beginning’ when ‘God’s Spirit hovered over the water’ and the final Porousia when ‘God will be all in all.’”(81)²

We may stop quoting here. Our passages, culled from separate places, cannot give a totally adequate idea of the richness of Zaehner’s book, the trouble he has taken over the exposition of several aspects of the Aurobindonian or the Teilhardian outlook. Some statements about Sri Aurobindo in our *ensemble* sound very odd: they should not suggest any hostility on Zaehner’s part, he is sufficiently eulogistic of Sri Aurobindo. However, while one or two like those on Sri Aurobindo being “confused”

¹ *Oeuvres* 8, p. 135: cf. E.T. *Man’s Place in Nature*, p. 93.

² Corinthians, 15.28

or "inconsistent" are rather hasty and childish by being unconscious of differing contexts and need no further attention, a good number require correction because of their importance and, in many instances, in correcting them we shall alight on significant dissimilarities between Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard in spite of several convergences. Our corrections will also serve a wider purpose, to which some comments by us on several sides of Teilhard and on a few of Zaehner's assertions about Hinduism and about Sri Aurobindo's links with it will contribute as well. This purpose is to right the tilting of the balance on the whole by Zaehner in the direction of Teilhard as if Sri Aurobindo were an admirable and valuable mystic only inasmuch as he points towards the completeness, in a general sense, of the vision that is Teilhardian.

2

A FEW INITIAL MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SRI AUROBINDO

Before we launch on a doctrinal study in some depth we may dispose at once of what we may dub Zaehner's most glaring *gaffes* about Sri Aurobindo. Two of them relate to doctrine itself or rather to a question of doctrinal posture.

One touches twice on intellectual influences in the early part of Sri Aurobindo's life. Zaehner holds Bergson to have been a seminal factor in the development of Sri Aurobindo's world-outlook just as in Teilhard's. He traces it to Sri Aurobindo's period in England and refers in particular to the thesis of Bergson's *Creative Evolution*. Sri Aurobindo left England in 1893. Before this year Bergson had written only his first major work, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, in 1888, whose English translation as *Time and Free-Will* came out in 1910. Eight years later — in 1896 — appeared his next work, *Matière et mémoire (Matter and Memory)*. And neither of these compositions concern themselves appreciably with the theory of evolution which, according to Zaehner, is the foundation-stone of the Aurobindonian system. *L'Évolution créatrice (Creative Evolution)* saw the light in French in 1907 and was Englished only in 1911. The possibility of Bergson's impact as an evolutionary philosopher on Sri Aurobindo during his early days is utterly ruled out. Of course Sri Aurobindo had accepted from those days the general idea of evolution. But by 1911 he had already passed through the gigantic experience of Nirvana in 1908 at Baroda and the no less sweeping one in Alipore Jail, 1909, of Sri Krishna as the cosmic Personal Divine. Even the inner sense, in a broad manner, of what he has designated Supermind had developed. So evolution as a process of the Spirit had already figured in his mind. Actually, some Notes on Bergson survive from the time the English version of the Frenchman's masterpiece was published, but they bear on his philosophy of Becoming rather than on his scientific thought. And much later, in answer to a disciple's queries, Sri Aurobindo wrote briefly on Bergson's "Intuition" as well as his "Élan vital", but in doing so he said: "I havenot read him sufficiently

to pronounce.”¹ Bergson as a seminal factor is quite out of the question, and to imagine him profoundly influential on Sri Aurobindo in England is an amazing anachronism.

A much worse mistake on Zaehner’s part concerns the last years of Sri Aurobindo. He takes his book, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, and finds in this group of pithy and spirited sayings no trace of “European influences” and of “Aurobindo’s typical concepts of Supermind, Overmind and so on”. But he does not infer that if the typically Aurobindonian, filling volume after volume, is absent this comparatively short work cannot belong to his maturest period. Instead, he leaps to the conclusion that here, where he thinks he sees “the Hindu tradition, particularly the Bhagavad-Gītā and the *Bhāgavata Purāna*”, we have “the essence of Sri Aurobindo’s thought” and that the book was “compiled, apparently, in his old age”. Doubtless, the compilation was first published in 1955, half a decade after Sri Aurobindo had passed away. But the Publishers’ Note gives a clear clue to the chronology of its composition. The Note explains that this is the full collection of which the book published as *Thoughts and Glimpses* was only a portion. *Thoughts and Glimpses* first came out in bookform in 1920 but it dates to a period still earlier; for its *début* was in a series of instalments in Sri Aurobindo’s philosophical monthly, *Arya*, which ran from August 15, 1914, to January, 1921, and the instalments appeared in 1915 and 1917.

Possibly such a gross misunderstanding of the place of *Thoughts and Aphorisms* in the history of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophico-spiritual outlook has contributed to Zaehner’s belief that “Supermind, Overmind and so on” are a matter of unusual terminology alone and do not indicate any really new departure in Yogic experience. Old realisations applied to a modern master-idea — Evolution — sum up Sri Aurobindo’s inspiring novelty for Zaehner. We shall analyse this opinion at a later stage. Here it will suffice to quote some words of 1935 from Sri Aurobindo explaining why, in spite of several old elements being present, he calls his Yoga new as compared to the old ones:

“(1) Because it aims not at a departure out of world and life into Heaven or Nirvana, but at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate or incidental but as a distinct and central object...

“(2) Because the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not only a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of Consciousness (the Supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active.

“(3) Because a method has been preconised for achieving this purpose, which is as total and integral as the aim set before it, viz., the total and integral change of the

¹ *On Yoga*, II, Tome One, (Sri Aurobindo International University Centre Collection, Pondicherry, 1958), p 231.

consciousness and nature, taking up old methods but only as a part action and present aid to others that are distinctive. I have not found this method (as a whole) or anything like it professed or realised in the old Yogas. If I had, I should not have wasted my time in hewing out paths and in thirty years of search and inner creation when I could have hastened home safely to my goal in an easy canter over paths already blazed out, laid down, perfectly mapped, macadamised, made secure and public. Our Yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure.”

We may draw attention to the reference to the Supramental Consciousness and the bringing in of it as a new power. On the change, the transformation, it is meant to effect, Sri Aurobindo¹ says:

“By transformation I do not mean some change of the nature — I do not mean, for instance, sainthood or ethical perfection or yogic siddhi (like the Tantrics) or a transcendental (chinmaya) body. I use transformation in a special sense, a change of consciousness radical and complete and of a certain specific kind which is so conceived as to bring about a strong and assured step forward in the spiritual evolution of the being of a greater and higher kind and of a larger sweep and completeness than what took place when a mentalised being first appeared in a vital and material animal world. If anything short of that takes place or at least if a real beginning is not made on that basis, a fundamental progress towards this fulfilment, then my object is not accomplished. A partial realisation, something mixed and inconclusive, does not meet the demand I make on life and yoga.”

Right up to the end — 1950 — Sri Aurobindo kept up his new and radical demand. Nor was there, as Zaehner suggests, a giving up of “hope” and “optimism” at the end because the Supermind had not been collectively realised in the 24 years from 1926 when the organised Ashram came into existence. All Yoga — particularly one that is “a spiritual adventure” — is fraught with ups and downs, outbursts of light and vigils in the dark. Sri Aurobindo minced no words on this theme: “This Yoga is a spiritual battle, its very attempt raises all sorts of adverse forces and one must be ready to face difficulties, sufferings, reverses of all sorts in a calm unflinching spirit.” About his own personal burden of spiritual work too he made no secret but the spirit in which he bore it is also unmistakable in a letter of April, 1934: “It is only divine Love which can bear the burden I have to bear, that all have to bear who have sacrificed everything else to the one aim of uplifting earth out of its darkness towards the Divine. The Gallio-like ‘Je m’en fiche’-ism (I do not care) would not carry me one step; it would certainly not be divine. It is quite another thing that enables me to walk unweeping and unlamenting towards the goal.” Some months earlier — December, 1933 — find him writing: “As for faith, you write as if I never had a doubt or any difficulty. I have had worse than any human mind can think of. It is not because I have ignored difficulties, but because I have seen them more clearly, experienced them on a larger scale than anyone living now or before me that, having

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

faced and measured them, I am sure of the results of my work. But even if I still saw the chance that it might come to nothing (which is impossible), I would go on unperurbed, because I would still have done to the best of my power the work that I had to do, and what is so done always counts in the economy of the universe. But why should I feel that all this may come to nothing when I see each step and where it is leading and every week and day — once it was every month and year and hereafter it will be every day and hour — brings me so much nearer to my goal? In the way that one treads with the greater Light above, even every difficulty gives its help and has its value and Night itself carries in it the burden of the Light that has to be.”

Here we have a positive statement of a life-long attitude and resolve and a flaming certitude. In the same year, on August 10, we see him writing in a similar vein. And now there is a reference to the question of giving up the ghost in a mood of disappointment. Apropos of intellectuals like Tagore, Russell and Rolland clamouring for the end of an age where misery is rampant everywhere, he was asked by a disciple: “How is it that things should be marching headlong into a quagmire such as this? I sometimes fear that eventually you and the Mother will retire into an extra-cosmic Samadhi leaving the wicked world to sink or swim as best it can. Perhaps that would be the wisest course — who knows?” Sri Aurobindo replied:

“I have no intention of doing so — even if all smashed, I would look beyond the smash to the new creation. As for what is happening in the world, it does not upset me because I knew all along that things would happen in that fashion, and as for the hopes of the intellectual idealists I have not shared them, so I am not disappointed.”¹

We realise that the appearance of things going contrary would have no effect on Sri Aurobindo and would never induce him “to give up his body voluntarily”. Zaehner is rather mixed-up here. He quotes some words from the Ashram — they are the Mother’s, in fact, but in a somewhat garbled form — declaring that the earth’s unresponsiveness had led Sri Aurobindo to give up his body. The Mother was far from suggesting any sense of frustration in Sri Aurobindo. What she definitely indicated was, as Zaehner himself discloses, that Sri Aurobindo’s departure was “an act of supreme unselfishness...to hasten the hour of collective realisation”. What the unselfishness consisted in is not mentioned by Zaehner. The Mother said that it lay in his “renouncing the realisation in his body”. This implies an occult strategy whereby the leader’s death spells a violent breakthrough accomplished for the followers. Only such a death can be envisaged for a Yogi with a spirit in him like Sri Aurobindo’s.

Perhaps one may object: “The spirit you speak of is expressed in letters of 1933 and 1934. Surely they are a far cry from the year 1950 when Sri Aurobindo left this ‘wicked world’. Are there any letters close to 1950 to show the same spirit?”

First of all, Zaehner cannot logically want late letters rather than early ones. For, he has the sentence: “And was it not a sign of inner despair that Aurobindo retreated

¹ *Ibid*, p 231.

into himself during the last twenty years of his life?" The allusion is to the so-called retirement of Sri Aurobindo from November 24, 1926, giving the Ashram and its work into the Mother's hands. So anything after November 24, 1926, disproving "inner despair" would be appropriate and cogent against Zaehner.

Actually, however, we have letters of a late period also breathing the same indomitable spirit and conviction of success. On June 2, 1946, Sri Aurobindo¹ observes: "I know that this is a time of trouble for you and everybody. It is so for the whole world. Confusion, trouble, disorder and upset everywhere is the general state of things. The better things that are to come are preparing or growing under a veil and the worse are prominent everywhere. The one thing is to hold on and hold out till the hour of light has come." October 19, 1946, shows Sri Aurobindo² asserting: "I have not been discouraged by what is happening, because I know and have experienced hundreds of times that beyond the blackest darkness there lies for one who is a divine instrument the light of God's victory. I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world — I am not speaking of personal things — which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or even disaster." On April 9, 1947, he³ once more says: "I am not discouraged. I know what is preparing behind the veil and can feel and see the first signs of its coming." When a disciple discussed with Sri Aurobindo the implications of modern physics and Sri Aurobindo thought the disciple was urging on him some writings of his which could place again "a dogmatism from materialistic science on its throne of half a century ago from which it could victoriously ban all thought surpassing its narrow bounds as mere wordy metaphysics and mysticism and moonshine" so that "there can be no possibility of a divine life on earth", Sri Aurobindo,⁴ in a powerful letter, affirmed with superb irony and sweeping determination about those "writings": "I dare say these... may be entirely convincing and I would find after reading them that my own position was wrong and that only an obstinate mystic could still believe in such a conquest of Matter by the Spirit as I had dared to think possible. But I am just such an obstinate mystic ..." This was penned in May 1949. And as late as April 4, 1950, in connection with "the present darkness in the world round us," he⁵ pronounced:

"For myself, the dark conditions do not discourage me or convince me of the vanity of my will to 'help the world,' for I knew they had to come; they were there in the world-nature and had to rise up so that they might be exhausted or expelled so that a better world freed from them might be there. After all, something has been done in the outer field and that may help or prepare for getting something done in the inner field also. For instance, India is free, and her freedom was necessary if the divine work was to be done. The difficulties that surround her now and may increase for a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

² *Ibid.*, p. 242

³ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁴ *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Fourth Series (Sri Aurobindo Circle, Bombay, 1951), p. 70.

⁵ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, pp 247-8.

time, especially with regard to the Pakistan imbroglio, were also things that had to come and to be cleared out.... Here too there is sure to be a full clearance, though unfortunately a considerable amount of suffering in the process is inevitable. Afterwards the work for the Divine will become more possible and it may well be that the dream, if it is a dream, of leading the world towards the spiritual light, may even become a reality. So I am not disposed even now, in these dark conditions, to consider my will to help the world as condemned to failure."

It is surprising how Zaehner, studying Sri Aurobindo, could miss articulations which would give the lie in an absolute manner to all suspicions of despair in Sri Aurobindo at any time. And indeed to link "an inner despair" with the sequel to November 24, 1926, is the height of absurdity. For that day is regarded in the Ashram as the Day of Siddhi, Victory. Sri Aurobindo's own words¹ on it are: "24th November 1926 was the descent of Krishna into the physical. Krishna is not the Supramental Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead, preparing, though not itself actually, the descent of Supermind and Ananda..."

A most momentous event with an extremely positive spiritual consequence for Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is here. And if it led to his retirement, the latter must be construed as an extremely positive move, a secret victorious march forward and not at all a despairing retreat by him into himself because of disappointment in world-work. Even on the retirement we have some direct words from him. When asked when he would come out he answered on August 25, 1933: "That is a thing of which nothing can be said at present. My retirement had a purpose and that purpose must first be fulfilled." Nor was the withdrawal from common contacts total. Sri Aurobindo wrote practically thousands of letters during his period of "seclusion" on all kinds of topics—Yoga, philosophy, science, literature, life-problems—and sometimes at enormous length. During World War II he made public his complete support of the anti-Hitler cause and repeatedly averred in private that he was using his spiritual force for it. A radio was installed in his room for hour-to-hour information of the war's progress. When during Sri Aurobindo's last two years the present writer was editing *Mother India*, then a fortnightly, from Bombay, no editorial of his on national or international politics as viewed from a higher non-political standpoint was published unless it had first been read out to Sri Aurobindo and fully approved by him. Also, from 1938, after an accident to his right leg, to 1950 he had daily talks on a variety of subjects with a small circle which was in attendance on him. Surely, even the term "retirement" is a bit of a misnomer in Sri Aurobindo's case. And whatever withdrawal was there has been said by him explicitly to have advanced the work on which he had been bent. He wrote² on August 14, 1945: "my retirement...was indispensable; otherwise I could not be now where I am, that is, personally, near the goal."

We may close on this triumphant note—a note natural to a supreme Yogi, a master mystic. Contrary to Zaehner's contention, it is not Sri Aurobindo but Teilhard

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 208. ² *Ibid.*, p. 270.

who in his last year (1955) bewailed¹ his complete isolation and his spiritual ineffectivity: "How does it happen that, still intoxicated by my vision, I look around me and find myself practically alone?... And...how can it be that, 'having come down from the mountain,' and notwithstanding the splendour of my vision, I find myself so little better, so little pacified, so incapable of communicating to my own actions, and therefore to others, the marvellous unity in which I feel myself plunged? The universal Christ? The divine Milieu? May I not after all be simply the victim of some mental delusion? That is what I often ask myself." And it is Teilhard who, in the mid-career (1934) of his reasoned scientific optimism and ardent religious devotion, could yet sadly confess:² "After what I have just said of my conviction that a term exists for cosmic evolution which is divine and personal, one could imagine that I look forward in future years to a life that is luminous and serene.... Nothing could be further from the truth. Though I am certain, more and more certain, that I must continue to live as if Christ were waiting for me at the goal of the universe, I experience no special assurance at all that he is there. To believe is not to see. As much as anyone, I think, I walk in the darkness of faith."

Not that a lofty visionary like Teilhard could ever quite lose his inner glow of joy, but we cannot expect of him the Aurobindonian heroism and certitude and imper-turbable poise born of a manifold realisation of the Eternal Spirit working out for Man a supramental destiny in time. And this very difference should provide us with an initial clue to the direction in which lies the spirituality of the future.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

² Quoted from *Le Christique* by Christopher Mooney in, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ* (Collins, London, 1966), pp. 196, 197.

CRY IN THE WIND

So your wisdom bans me
From the sweetness of your court.
You bid your veil drop
To hide the comfort of your face.
You aim no council to aid
And teach me to find you again
Whilst without rages a storm.

Unleashed, called forth to serve you
You bring on
The thunder of my doubts
And of not knowing.
You teach me
In blowing wind
To walk straight, and to make
My way ahead,
In a blinding curtain of rain

I am to find you more.
There is nothing to show a sign,
A direction of the path
And the tumult of the elements
Has rendered me deaf-eared.

Such is your love which demands
A test then,
I will stand for your leashing boon,
I love you all the same
All the more.
Let then all your forces come
To try me
And to mould me good
For your smile.
If love asks me to be shaken
Even as a mountain once thought high,
And be battered like a strong stone
Made dust unto the winds,
Then dust will I be
And a nothing of a thing
For your love to be won,
To be raised once more!
All this I'll take:
I wish to be renewed.

GEORGETTE

THE UNITY OF INDIA

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

(Concluded from the issue of February 21, 1972)

AFTER Harshavardhana, the foreign menace was for a time in abeyance and India had a last chance to unite freely of its own accord. But this chance was lost. It is difficult to find the reasons. Perhaps the habit of coercion had become ingrained among the ruling class; perhaps the ideal of the Vijigishu, the king who aspires for world dominion, had been too often eulogised by the writers of the preceding ages; perhaps India had to learn the lesson of disunity to the bitter end before she could mend her ways. One may console oneself by saying that after all the nation-idea had not yet been even thought of in contemporary Europe. But the fact remains that India lost a golden opportunity. The next six centuries were spent by the military leaders of north and south and west and east in trying to secure for themselves and their dynasties—the Palas and Rashtrakutas, the Cholas and the Pratiharas—the hegemony of India. No one succeeded in uniting the country, even for a short spell. There was a serious waste of energy and man-power in bloody battles. At length there came even a wilful shutting of eyes to the foreign menace that began to loom large by the beginning of the eleventh century and assumed formidable proportions at the beginning of the thirteenth. It is even said, perhaps with truth, that it was due to the treachery of one of our own kings, Jaichand of Kanauj who had a personal score to settle with Prithviraj of Ajmer, that the Sultan of Ghor could overrun the whole of north India and remove for a long time any hope of a Hindu empire.

Nevertheless, all was not lost when India came under the Muslim yoke.

Early in the first millennium after Christ, once the first shock of the foreign invasions had passed, there came a great revival of the ancient Vedic spirit when the old Puranas were recast in “modern” form and became the starting-point of a cultural renaissance. These revised versions of the Puranic literature show clearly the spirit of the age. They not only sought to give a new life to the old Vedic religion dimmed for a while by the Buddhist interlude. They also had a deep political significance. They openly denounced the foreigners as barbarian Mlechchhas who had been soiling our purity. They described in vivid language the battles of the gods against the demons—was that not a symbol of India fighting her enemies? They insisted on the sacredness of the land and enumerated the glories of the innumerable *tirthas* or holy places which one must visit in one’s life-time; these *tirthas* with their vast assemblage of men and women from all over the land were a vital link in the chain of Indian unity. The idea of the old Vedic sacrifice, the *asvamedha*, was revived, and a number of kings aspiring to “world” dominion are actually found to have performed this sacrifice as a crown-

ing event of their career. Once the Puranas had done their work and won the allegiance of the masses, there appeared on the scene some of the towering spiritual personalities of the age, Kumarila Bhatta, Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, who by their writings and debates and wide travels—most of them had travelled all over India—brought about a unity of sentiment which no king could hope to engender. Thus, when the Muslims came, India was once more a land of the ancient Rishis, and the rupture caused in the old fabric by the advent of the Buddhist heresy had been practically healed.

During the five hundred years of Muslim rule, the millennial attempt at securing political unity continued unabated. At first the Turko-Afghan Sultans, later the Mughals under Akbar and his descendants, sought to bring the whole of the sub-continent under their sceptre. On more than one occasion, as under Alauddin Khilji and later under Aurangzeb, they came within an ace of success. But the very vice of the method operated against them and the Muslims too failed like their predecessors. A new element had been added to the problem of Indian unity owing to the divergence of faith in addition to the difference of race and cultural background which the Muslim rulers brought with them.

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This however proved to be a boon in disguise. The animosity born of religious persecution was one of the mainsprings of the new nationalism that began to grow among the Rajputs, the Marathas, the Sikhs. The Rajputs failed to present a united front to the Muslim aggressor and therefore failed to unite India in spite of their chivalry. The Sikhs could never grow out of their provincial feeling and were therefore not the leaders of a united India. The Marathas under Shivaji and the early Peshwas had the genius and the leadership. But they lost their chance when in fighting the Muslim they forgot that a nation cannot be built on the basis of Hinduism alone, a united India cannot afford to neglect the other creeds. When the problem of political unity seemed almost insoluble, there came on the scene the foreigner from beyond the seas and passed a steam-roller across all our old differences and paved the way for a final unity.

The five hundred years of Muslim rule had been a period of crisis for the ancient culture. For the first time in her history, India had been assailed by a culture which, though not superior, was vital enough to refuse all compromise with Hinduism. There were large-scale conversions to the new religion and the Hindus had to adopt a defensive attitude. Whatever the evil results—the growth of rigid social conventions, the refusal to admit any new light, the insistence of the priest and pundit on the letter of the written Shashtra—there was a certain gain from the purely nationalist point of view. Perhaps for the first time in history, the Hindus came to be conscious of their separate existence which they must defend at any cost. If not a united India, a Hindu India was born. The bond of unity was provided once again, not by the common

subjection to a ruling emperor but by the iron chain of a common Shastra and the worship of the same gods. Here too there came outstanding personalities—Kabir, Nanak, Sri Chaitanya, the Maratha saints—whose work, apart from its spiritual value, was of capital importance in keeping alive the sense of cultural unity.

The British conquest and occupation of India had a most salutary effect. The British had no sympathy for our ancient heritage—we might except as almost negligible the work and influence of the early Indologists who dabbled in Indian culture. They could therefore destroy without the least compunction all that we considered sacred—our caste feelings of superiority, our love of the Sanskrit language and its rich heritage, our fondness for the regional languages, our village organisation, even our system of the joint family. The destruction was no doubt painful, but it served a very useful purpose; for it cleared the air of all that stood in the way of a new national birth. Above all, it created, or rather had just begun to create in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a growing sense of patriotism for India as a whole, as opposed to the earlier forms of regional or local patriotisms.

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But the immediate prospects, when the British established their rule, were dark enough and gave no inkling of the promise it concealed for the future. India was lost to a handful of English merchants because our own leaders had invited them in the hope of a better government and because our own men had fought as Sipahis in the army of England. Even the earlier generation of educated Indians welcomed the new regime as a god-send: even a man of the calibre of Rammohan Roy thought it would be a blessing to India if English “gentlemen” were to make India their home and settle down here as planters and traders. They had perhaps felt that India could not within a foreseeable future aspire to be free: So why not make the best of a bad bargain? Some at least among them were genuinely impressed by the new civilisation with which they were suddenly put in touch.

Sparks of nationalist feeling however lingered among the Marathas and the men of the north-western provinces, and the sparks burst into flame in the Mutiny of 1857. But the Mutiny was suppressed, and for the next fifty years, there was no more talk of freedom. The political leaders of the post-Mutiny period pinned their faith on the natural honesty of their British rulers, and hoped by means of petitions and prayers to redress some of their grievances. There was no question of asking for freedom. They in fact took pride in their “loyalty”. Their utmost ambition was to be as one of the Englishmen, or if that was asking for too much, at least to be considered more civilised than the average Indian because they dressed in English style and had discarded the use of their mother tongue. Fifty years more of this servility and India was doomed.

It was at this critical juncture that Sri Aurobindo appeared on the political scene.

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“I entered into political action and continued it from 1905 to 1910,” he once wrote, “with one aim and one alone: to get into the mind of the people a settled will for freedom and the necessity of a struggle to achieve it, in place of the futile ambling Congress methods till then in vogue.” But this in itself was a herculean task. For the nation was not yet ready to fight; it was not even prepared to understand the necessity of freedom. The worst enemy was within and the bitterest fight had to be waged against the apathy and complacency of our own leaders. What was the result? Well, by the time Sri Aurobindo retired to Pondicherry, a very influential section of Indian educated opinion had accepted his gospel; a larger number of young men had even decided to die if necessary to attain the goal he had set for them. In his own words, “in the Swadeshi movement for the first time, patriotism became a national religion, the name of the motherland was invested with divine sacredness and her service espoused with religious fervour and enthusiasm” (*Bande Mataram*, 18.3.07).

It was now only a question of time for the masses to espouse the cause. In Gandhi they found their leader. Under his guidance the Congress officially endorsed Sri Aurobindo’s programme, without however acknowledging the debt. India’s political freedom was achieved by the decision of England to quit India. It was only marred by a last-minute hitch about the Muslim interests and Pakistan had to be conceded. But that may prove to have been a temporary expedient.

Sri Aurobindo’s dream of an India united and free and paving the way for a world united and free may not eventually prove to have been in vain.

(*Concluded*)

SANAT K. BANERJI

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1971)

CHARACTER-ANALYSIS IN SAVITRI *(Contd.)*

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

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

Sri Aurobindo has painted Savitri and shown various facet in her, except that of ignorance. This alone does not exist in her. All else are there, the emotions, the moods, the will, the love, the sweetness and the sincerity. She possesses too a superhuman courage, a dogged tenacity and an unflinching straightforwardness. These are human qualities, but in Savitri they assume magnificent proportions.

It is said that without any trait of ignorance, any shadow or setback, the character cannot become a living one. Such a statement is true for a deficient humanity, but not for a divine personality. The very assumption of human qualities is in itself a fall, it is a cross the divinity must bear; but to expect the Divine to wear man's robe of foolishness, error, fickleness is demanding too much. Thus we find no trace of Ignorance in Savitri. For divinity would not condescend to come down in any imperfect instru-

ment; only the most perfect form humanity can attain is a good enough vehicle. The purity it demands, the sincerity it exacts, the nobility it seeks are too much for a common girl. Thus she comes in extraordinary conditions, amid a society which is the highest developed; her parents are the loftiest of mortals. Although in the play of possibilities, all are probable, Savitri does not choose niggardly conditions. The outer conditions reflect her choice and her future role. Even in the forest she is amid uncommon personalities in whom the reversal of fortunes does not alter their royal natures. Further, it is not to fight and alter outer conditions, or change the outlook of men that she was born. But to tackle something fundamental, something that was at the root of things which needed changing—it is for executing this miracle she came.

Ignorance she has none—but the cross of human anguish she yet has to endure. She does not shrink from it. She is not repelled by it. Although divine, and born from bliss, she does know the character of pain and its value. Her devotion to Satyavan and her momentary human attachment to him makes her go through the crucial pangs of a separation that is going to come. For a moment we see her waver; her instrumental humanity is changed with the 'unwept tears' and 'unexpressed anguish'. This is the only moment we see her bow before the weight of doom. This not only gives realism, but reveals the depth, the intensity of feeling and the wideness of her passion. We see the Divine assume so completely the human garb, that she forgets her native source and feels within her a weeping with the mortal. It is the god-head weeping for fate-moved man. Her tears are not the tears of failing, but of endless compassion, of extreme surrender and union with the human instrument. The only other comparison we have is in the Ramayana—the lament of Rama for the loss of Sita. But the anguish of Savitri is greater because she cannot express her grief, while Rama has a whole world to share his bereavement.

But under the duress of extreme suffering, Savitri finds her soul—so long she had been an instrument of her immanent divinity; her will was its will in truth. But now she knows herself to be the Divine incarnate—the last vestige of a veil is removed. The passage to the discovery of the soul is not an easy one. Across the triple statuses of soul forces and their threefold echoes, all of which claimed to be her soul, she met her inscrutable soul. It was the portion of the unique transcendental godhead who had come as a delegate to the world, standing apart from the struggling and battling life and slow discriminating mind as a mother permitting all this game. Here there is infinite sweetness, and the veil of separation between the adorer and the adored is rent. Life reveals a different meaning. Her struggle and her pain appear in another light. Her psychological structure undergoes a vast transformation. Her personality and all she is, is now the descending Mother of the worlds. And in a gamut we see the path of Yoga and transformation trodden by the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The passage of self-discovery, the change, the descent, and the re-attainment to that primal consciousness she originally was, are symbols, examples for the upward soul. Savitri exhausts all the possibilities of Yoga by attaining Nirvana and returning from it. She discovers that it cannot satisfy her deepest need. She finds that not in extinc-

tion, but in realisation is the ultimate fulfilment. She would be the one Reality everywhere; in the cessation of world-existence there is no true finality. The latter would also jeopardise her mission. At this point we come face to face with Sri Aurobindo's central philosophy—which is based on the divine will of manifestation and evolution. Cessation from it, or the denial of this scheme can only result in retardation of and opposition to the principle of divine perfection.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

THE BIRTH

I SAT in a waiting stillness,
The call of a rapture's mood,
And saw the world's becomings
From being's high solitude.

Aloft in the soaring aloofness,
Visioning the depths below,
I viewed in the Eternal's darkness
The unseen's fire aglow.

I saw nude the giant world powers
Viciously massed in strife,
Crushing to dust the stones of matter,
Rendering useless pale flimsy life.

Sweet Krishna they'll soon awaken
From his numb and senseless trance,
Break out the worlds of Ananda
That bide asleep in his glance.

Mighty is the Mother's gestation
Giving birth to new creation!

DICK

THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

This is the story of a being in Manifestation. The children represent two complementary poles within the individual. It is also a treatment of astrology, each image evoked being a key to the deeper meaning of the signs.

Prologue

ALL the lands rejoice on this twenty-first day of March, the beginning of a new cosmic year.

The day is especially important for two Earth children who are the main characters in this story. They are being sent to Saturn in the family's rocket for a vacation with their grandparents who live on that planet. All alone they'll travel because the rocket will be guided from Earth and Saturn.

There is so much excitement. Many preparations have been made and the children are scrubbed clean, their bags neatly packed. The rocket is filled with the necessary provisions and in no time Val, short for Valentina, and Pom-pom—whose real name has long been forgotten—find themselves soaring into space.

In the beginning all goes well, but on the ninth day a most peculiar thing happens. The four adults who were directing the flight lose control. Mama left Pa in charge while she went out to do the shopping. In the meantime Pa saw a mouse run into the cupboard and rushed to catch it. At the other end on Saturn Grandpa went out to milk the cows and Grandma, the only adult left on the job really knows nothing about rockets.

What a dilemma for Val and Pom-pom! But for the rocket—whose official name is Fritz 18 of the series XQT, the last in a line of very distinguished rockets—the occasion is momentous, for it is a fact that every rocket's most fervent wish is to gain control of a flight and then direct itself to the Sun, like a moth drawn to light.

Quickly taking advantage of the unique opportunity, fearless Fritz swerves around, drastically changing his course. The children are thrown to the floor with a crash and when able to stand again they rush to the portholes to see where they are headed.

"We're going into the Sun! This can't be! No one can fly to the Sun!" cries Pom-pom.

"But that's just what the cosmic compass says," responds Val.

And so it is...the needle points to the Sun.

Fritz is joyous. What an occasion! His whole dynasty of rockets will become famous! Never has such a thing happened.. and never were there two children in

such despair and dismay as the Earth beings Val and Pom-pom.

Being the older of the two Val remembers that in any emergency they must put on their flying motors and oxygen helmets. She helps Pom-pom into his, quickly slips on hers and then there is nothing to do but wait.

Not too long a time passes, a few days perhaps, when all the lights in the rocket flare up and it starts making strange noises—all exclamations of joy, Val and Pom-pom soon realise. Then with a grand shimmer and shake, Fritz takes a final leap into the resplendent blaze, as Val and Pom-pom cling to each other in a last embrace and await the crash.

Ba-boom, clunk!!! Splash!!! ?

SSSSSSSSSSssssssssss..... .. .

Silence, a long, long silence.

The children then open their eyes and touch each other to see if this is all true and they are not dreaming. They go to the porthole and cautiously look out to find the rocket surrounded by swirls and layers of purple and violet smoke. As for Fritz, it is as if he were suspended from a string. He gracefully sways one way and then another, hanging in the midst of...what? Nothing but the mysterious smoke.

A buzzer sounds and a red light flashes.

“Good grief! That’s the signal to abandon ship. We have to get out before it blows up!” cries Val.

They dash to the door, unlatch it and are out in a flash. While they slowly fly away from Fritz they are filled with sadness, for after all, he was a brave rocket who only did what any rocket would do if man were to lose control. Who knows what will happen to him? And what will happen to them? Where to go and what to do, suspended in the endless smoke like two homeless little angels?

Pom-pom notices something in the distance.

“Valie, there’s a light shining over there!”

“Maybe it’s a space ship looking for us,” she answers.

And immediately they find themselves in the middle of the glow that a second earlier seemed so far away, because the strange thing in this place is that all they have to do is will to be somewhere and they are there. And what’s more, they no longer need their flying motors and helmets, or anything for that matter. In this light everything is so nice, so warm, full of the good feelings that children know so well. And now they are no longer afraid.

In a manner they have never known before, the glow speaks, as though in some strange and mysterious way coming from inside their very bodies.

“Welcome! I am deeply honoured to welcome you and to have been chosen for this special occasion.”

The children’s eyes, normally huge, grow even bigger.

“Welcome where?” they ask.

“To Zodiacland.”

“What’s that?”

“You are about to begin a journey much grander than any Earth being has ever known, and on this journey you will discover for yourselves what this land is. Many believe it to be imaginary, but it is very real, as real as children know the imaginary to be. But there is only one thing you must remember: follow the Sun as it leaves each land and stay not a day longer, for it is the Sun who gives you your light and it is he you must follow.”

With these solemn instructions the voice ceases to speak and the children find themselves immersed in the vibrations of a musical note of whose beginning and end they are unaware. It vibrates so strongly around and within them that they hold each other tightly and close their eyes so as not to see what happens.

The vibrations are shattering. They almost seem to explode the whole universe until finally there is silence again. Val and Pom-pom open their eyes—not daring to imagine what they might see next—but there is only a long passage through the smoke at the end of which is a door. And lying at their feet is a ring of twelve keys, three large ones and nine smaller, each with a symbol and number on it.

With the keys in hand they walk toward the little door and once close they see the following symbol Υ and the number I. Val uses the first key and with no effort at all the portal is unlocked and they enter Ariesland.

Chapter I

Spirit

Certainly the landscape before them is the strangest they have ever seen. Wild and savage, like the thickest jungle, full of trees, hanging vines and unusual flowers—vegetation so full it is almost impossible to advance. An early dawn light filters through, colouring everything in reds and oranges and russet browns, with touches of yellow and white amid these fiery shades.

It is difficult for Val and Pom-pom to advance because something always blocks their way, and though they long to meet someone in this unbelievable place, no one seems to be around.

Suddenly from the distance a horn sounds and they hear the thunder of great galloping hoofs, interrupted every now and then by the loudest of bangs; the horns bellow out, then the hoofs, next the bangs,—all sparked by the cracking sounds of a whip.

The children rush to hide, or at least to get out of the way of whatever is coming, for they don't even know what it is nor where its path lies. But all too soon through the crimson wilderness a great majestic ram with golden horns and fiery eyes comes dashing forth. He pulls a chariot within which is a huge man in primitive hunter's dress, of furs, leather and knee-high skin boots. He cracks a whip in the air setting off sparks

the same colour as his flaming red hair that falls in masses to his shoulders. But most incredible of all are his eyes, luminous tongues of fire! He spurs the animal on and the ram knocks down everything in the path of the chariot with the bash of his horns. The enormous man inside seems very fierce and determined to get somewhere in a great rush; but there doesn't seem to be anywhere to go! Nevertheless he continues on.

At the sight of the children the great explorer pulls Ram to a halt and directs his fiery gaze on the young ones. He doesn't seem to be such a patient sort and the children huddle in fright.

"What!" he bellows out in a voice that makes the very trees tremble. "Someone is here! Someone has arrived before us. They are first! They're here first! We've lost...What a disgrace!" he shouts to his ram, and with this descends from the chariot, utterly dejected, to sit on the trunk of the last tree Ram has knocked down and then bursts into sobs. He pulls a huge red handkerchief out of his pocket and mops up his tears.

With all the gentleness of his lamb nature Ram consoles his friend as best he can. The latter takes no heed and goes on crying until finally the fire in his eyes is completely extinguished by the tears. He can see no more.

The animal impulsively blasts at the children:

"Look what you've done! His fire is out. We can't go on any more! Who's going to open a path through this wilderness? Woe is us, we're ruined, finished. There's no hope left..."

Ram then puts a hoofed arm around his master in an attitude of comfort. Now the children are really distressed for they are very sensitive creatures and would never have willfully done this. If only they had known!

After a long, embarrassing pause they decide to approach the two and see if something can be done to help them out of this dilemma. Val timidly explains:

"Please don't be angry, please. We just used the key to open that door"...she turns to point to it and is shocked to see that it is no longer there! "It's gone! Oh me, now we're all lost! How are we ever going to get out of here?"

Then both she and Pom-pom, in a fit of anguish, sit on the same trunk and burst into tears. What a sorry sight. Great Hunter and Ram consoling each other and Val and Pom-pom sobbing away like two little faucets.

Finally Ram is the only one brave enough to stop this farce and he stomps his hoof demanding everyone's attention:

"We've got to move on. We can't just sit here and wait for something to happen!"

He gets ready to be off again in a fruitless burst of enthusiasm. Great Hunter makes an effort to gather his courage together and face the sad situation. Pom-pom is thus moved by Hunter's helplessness and tries to encourage him:

"What a wonderful land you've discovered. Such an exciting life."

"You certainly must be a very courageous man," Val joins in, "to be able to make path through all this. So why should you be sad?"

The more they talk the more he cries, but finally they get him to calm down and in between sighs and sobs that he can't control, he tells them what his grave problem is:

"You don't understand. I must find the gate to Taurusland, otherwise the Sun cannot continue its journey when April 21st comes around, because it must leave Ariesland. It is my job to pave the way for the others, but now that I can't guide Ram, what will happen to the Sun?"

The children agree it's really not a very happy affair. But suddenly Pom-pom has an idea, a wonderful idea:

"We'll guide Ram through the wilderness, since there's still some time left, and maybe we can find the gate to Taurusland!"

Great Hunter, as impulsive as he always is, immediately says 'yes' and, since he can't see, the children assist him and they all pile into the chariot. How excited they are at the thought of driving such a magnificent ram and being real explorers. Hunter warns them that once Ram takes off great restraint is needed to stop him so they must be very strong. He bursts into sobs again for he feels that the children will never be able to do the job well. The whip snaps in the air to announce Ram's departure and they dash off into the wilderness.

They meet many adventures in their travels, overcoming one obstacle after another, sometimes knocking them down, other times leaping over them; Ram seems to thrive on it all. But one day he meets a flock of friends and relatives gathered in a wild pasture. Overjoyed at the reunion he forgets his goal completely and seems just as happy in a life of ease. Seeing the weakening rays of the Sun, Val and Pom-pom realise there isn't much time left and frantically try to urge him on without much success. But when they tell him how dull his lovely golden horns are becoming from leading such a lazy life and not bumping into anything, he shoots up with a start and it is all they can do to get aboard in time.

On the last day, with almost all hope lost, Ram finds a particularly pleasing barrier to break, an exceptionally hard one. He crashes into it with such a bang that Pom-pom is thrown out of the chariot and lands on the top of a tree, hanging from a branch by the seat of his pants—and not very happy about it all.

Val leads Hunter to the tree. Arms outstretched he reaches toward Pom-pom and is just about to pull him down when Pom-pom suddenly notices an opening in the wilderness with a curious little door half-hidden in the bushes. He cries to everyone below:

"There it is! I think we've found it. It's the door!"

Just in time! What rejoicing! Hunter is so excited he forgets to stand still; Pom-pom, anxious to get down, drops onto his shoulders and slides down his long back. Hanging out of Hunter's back pocket is the red handkerchief he used to dry his tears. Just before hitting the ground Pom-pom grabs it and pulls it along with him.

"Wait for me!" he shouts to the others who are already setting off.

"Hurry, time's running out; it's almost April 21st," cries Ram. And Pom-pom just manages to climb aboard on time as they dash off with Ram ready to bang his

horns into the door. Then Val remembers the keys Glow had left for them and pulls him to a stop with great difficulty, for once he's off and made up his mind it takes a powerhouse to change his direction. Approaching the door they see the symbol **♈** and the number 2. Val fishes for the proper key and finds that it just fits the lock. The children are so excited they quickly scurry through the opening when they remember Hunter and Ram. They turn to look for them and—how strange—they seem to have disappeared!

“What happened? Why aren't they coming through?” Pom-pom asks.

“Now that we've finally found the door, they're not entering!” exclaims Val. “But how can we possibly continue without Hunter and Ram?”

They search and search but can find no one and all the while time is running out; the door slowly begins to close. They remember they must cross and continue the journey as Glow had explained.

Aries is a sign of the Fire element, masculine and of Cardinal Quality or energy—first creative impact of the season, with direction and impulse. It is ruled by the planet of energy or vital force, Mars. Aries represents the Cosmic Dawn.

(To be continued)

PATRIZIA

THY BLESSINGS

AN unshakable faith has been my life's pole-star,
 In heart a fixed unwavering law resplendent:
 From Thy near Light never must I slip far,
 But climb upwards only on Thee dependent.

Thy secret Guidance has never let me down,
 I've seen behind face-meanings the meanings hidden,
 A receiver of Thy progress-signals grown,
 I sought working out Thy Will howsoever bidden.

Although strength-famished stumble my stricken days,
 Thou keep'st my health-powered soul's fire ever burning,
 Thy Name as medicine, as helper Thy Grace
 I stride towards Thee with a zealous yearning.

I've racked my depths, I find I want *Thee, Thee*,
 Thy blessings are my only remedy.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1972)

GOD AND LIFE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

II

“We have,” says the Mother, “everyone of us, a role to fulfil, a work to do, a place which we alone can occupy.”

In the search for that role one should remember another of her sayings:

“There is a great difference between feeling vaguely, having a groping impression of something...and having a clear vision, an exact perception, a total understanding of the sense of one’s life. It is only at that moment that one can follow the thread of one’s destiny and perceive clearly the goal and the way to reach it.”

One more quotation must be included among these preliminaries:

“It is for the sake of fulfilling a special mission that you are born upon earth....”

Is it without any significance that Pranab decided to become an athlete? Was he blessed with a vision of the future role he had to play? Or was he born with a mission?

Pranab comes from a sporting family. His great grandfather took interest in Gymnasium and Tennis and his grandfather was a physical culturist; his father and uncle loved to play football and other games. Thus he imbibed something of Physical Culture in the formative years of his life and there arose in him an ambition to gather a group of youngsters, make them bodily strong and give himself to the political or social uplift of the country. But destiny turned him to the path of Yoga.

The first member of the family to visit the Ashram was his uncle who came in 1936. *Darshan jayanti* was first celebrated at his home in Calcutta. The first visit of Pranab to the Ashram was in 1942 when he was 19. Before his visit to the Ashram from time to time he wondered if there was no way to maintain health and youthful vigour all along? How miserable it is to grow old! Is there no escape from the curse of old age? Are death and decay inevitable?¹ These musings of his young mind were answered in Sri Aurobindo’s books which he began to read prompted by the function of *Darshan Day* held at his house in August 1939.

Pranab’s interest in physical education took the shape of “Vivekananda Vyayam

¹ At this point I am reminded of a couplet in Urdu

मौतसे बदतर बुढापु आयगा; Mout se badtar burapa ayaga,
जानसे प्यारी जवानी जायगी। Jan se pyari jawani jaygi.

Old age far bitter than death will overtake you and the vigour of youth more dear than life itself will forsake you.

Samiti" which was founded in his home town by 5 or 6 young men in May or June 1940. The club equipment comprised a set of barbells, a skipping rope, a mat and an old mirror. Along with body-building, the club laid stress on character-building, fellow-feeling, nobility and a graceful and dignified living.

To determined students, the club gave special attention so that they could captain the team and when the time came for entry into the arena of worldly pursuit they would know how to organise themselves.

There Pranab initiated various items, athletics, gymnastics, swimming competition, yearly outing, picnic, a library with a collection of books which stimulated the spirit of body-building. Along with all these he brought to the club love of physical labour and love of literature—aspects which he was to introduce later on into the Ashram physical education programme. Thereby Pranab himself gained much experience if not honours.

Soon the club rose in the estimation of the local people and was invited to give demonstrations. The club still remembers Pranab with gratitude. His family members did not want to stand in his way provided his studies were not neglected. And he did not fail them. He set his foot on the path of Yoga only [after he had finished his B.A.

He did not come to the Ashram merely because his parents had leanings in this direction. There was a chance of his obtaining a scholarship and going abroad for higher studies. He was torn between two alternatives—the world of riches and the thorny path of Yoga. Three years passed, he was still undecided, then there came a decision by itself from within which appeared irrevocable and he took the plunge.

“Blessed are those who take a leap towards the future.” (THE MOTHER)

In April 1942, from the balcony the Mother noticed that some young people had come. “I like them,” she said to Nolini Kanta Gupta. They were four in number: Pranab, Sunil, Ranju, Gora. On coming here Pranab approached Nolini for some work which would be quite heavy and required hard labour. He was given the work of washing clothes of the Ashramites in the newly started laundry.

It is surprising the work did not appear dull to him. He was a college student, in the full flower of youth—yet he never thought it below his dignity to take up such work; rather he took pleasure in doing it. Sad to say, this is a spirit not common among Indian young men. Here the Mother's words spring to the mind:

“What you do, do it with pleasure and not for the sake of pleasure.”

More astonishing than this, is that on his final arrival in 1945, he took up the same work with the same zeal. After a month he started some physical exercises in his own house, in front of “Harpagon”, where he lived, with Govindraj, Dayakar, Biren and a few others. Mona, Manoj, Barin, Bachhu and some others had just joined the Ashram.

They requested Pranab to help them learn physical exercises. When Pranab prayed to the Mother to start Playground activities, the Mother was very pleased. Thus started Physical Education in the Ashram with 14 youngsters.

At the time the Mother used to come down at noon to see the vegetables grown in the Ashram. This came to be known as “Vegetable Darshan.” Someone from Bombay had offered a set of barbells for the use of the Ashram school-children. When it was shown to the Mother she asked, “Who will use them?”

Pranab said that he would.

“I don’t want you to die young. It is said those who do heavy exercises suffer from heart trouble.”

The barbell set was sent to “Harpagon” for melting.

But the prohibition was not permanent.

Udar had a set of barbells and it became the first piece of equipment of the Ashram Gymnasium. Later most of the iron apparatus for the Gymnasium was made by Udar in his Harpagon Workshop.

About two years after when the Mother started coming to the Playground regularly she asked Pranab to show weight-lifting with Udar’s set of barbells. She was very pleased to see it and said these were very fine exercises. Then for several months Pranab had to do the exercises in the Playground when all the other activities were over for the day. This took place on alternate days, *i.e.*, three days a week, in front of the Mother and went on until 9 p.m.

On the second anniversary of the school in 1945 Pranab gave a demonstration and everybody liked it and the report came to the Mother. Being pleased, she said she would come to see the next performance. It opened a new phase of Ashram activity. More of this later on.

When marching and Drill started Pranab used to give orders in English. The Mother wanted him to use French, for it was the medium of the then French Government. But he did not know French. The Mother herself started teaching him.

Pranab was very frank with the Mother and would tell her all that came to his mind without the least hesitation. Once in his childlike way he told the Mother, “You and Sri Aurobindo must be very good friends.” The Mother kept quiet for a few moments and said, “Sri Aurobindo calls me Mother.” Then she gave a copy of the book, *The Mother*, to Pranab and he had to read it with the Mother every day until the whole book was finished. The Mother used to tell him about herself and her family.

Her father was a banker but he lost everything in speculation. He was an honest man. He paid up all who were to receive money from him. He led a very simple life afterwards, as all his money had been spent in this act of honesty.

He was very fond of the circus and would give the Mother the great thrill of seeing circus performances, but her mother used to get angry as she did not like circuses at all.

On one occasion the Mother slipped from a hill. The surface below the hill was full of jagged stones but a saving hand lowered her very slowly and softly on the

ground, just as we are now being saved by her saving Hands times without number.

At one time she narrated:

“When the body opens to the higher consciousness it can work wonders: Once, when I was 14 years old, an idea came to me whether I could cross the hall in three steps and I found I could do it; I put one foot across one-third the distance, the next carried me to two-thirds, the third one to the other side.

From time to time the Mother would ask Pranab to frame a sentence and she would translate it into French. Then she started *Prayers and Meditations*. After a time one or two joined in and thus began the French class upstairs in the hall in front of the Darshan room. When she started coming to the Playground, in the course of time the French class shifted there. Here began the translation of Sri Aurobindo’s works into French.

Tara has on record all that the Mother spoke in French when she started her evening talks with the school children in the Playground courtyard. It is this that has been serially published in the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*.

Pranab picked up French in about three months. The Mother herself translated some of the Marching Orders into French. Some were translated by Madame Baron, the wife of the then Governor of Pondicherry. The Governor himself was a great admirer of the Ashram. Off and on he would be seen seated along with us in the open space of the Ashram courtyard when the Mother came for meditation in the evening on the terrace over Dyuman’s room.

Of the 24 hours of the day Pranab spends about 16 with the Mother. The Mother herself gradually drew him near to her. When patrolling was organised in 1947 to guard the Ashram against some undesirable elements he was one of the organisers. Often he had to seek the Mother’s instructions. The Mother granted him the freedom of seeing her whenever he liked. Pranab used to do late duty; by the time he had finished, the Mother would be about to take her evening meal and would ask him to have his with her. Later he was allowed to dine with her twice a day.

To win the respect of children one must have the capacity to think and feel like a child, be one with them. Though nearing the borders of 50 Pranab still lives in the child’s world. Age does not seem to tell on him. He is still a picture of health. This is one of the blessings of a celibate life.

Pranab earned the gratitude of both the students and the teachers by organising special nutrition services for them. His birthday is a day of rejoicing for the children.

Pranab is a man of distinctive personality. He loves things to be orderly and is a great disciplinarian. He keeps a watchful eye over all the acts of the Playground. The discipline maintained by the rising generation of the Ashram is a result of the admirable system of physical education. Children grew to love him, for while he is exacting, efficient and insists on discipline, he is also affectionate and lovable. He is the one man in the Ashram who is both loved and feared the most. He will be always

remembered for the traditions he has established of regulated life and fine discipline.

We may close with some words of the Mother which Pranab is sure to endorse:

“Without discipline no proper work is possible. Without discipline no proper life is possible. And above all without discipline no Sadhana is possible.

“Each department has necessarily a discipline and you must follow the discipline of your Department.

“Personal feelings, grudges and misunderstandings must never interfere with the work which is done as a service to the Divine and not for human interest.

“Your service to the Divine must be scrupulously honest, disinterested and unselfish, otherwise it has no value.” (25-1-1965)

NARAYAN PRASAD

IN THE BLUE DEPTHS

In the blue depths of the being a silence would speak
The all-revealing word, that only can break
The brilliant lid of the baffling illusion,
The false mirror distorting each truth-vision.

Hope not to slake your quenchless thirst, O soul!
From the low self's shallow passion-polluted pool,
But from the dear Spring hidden within your heart—
The creative core of the world-saviour Art—

Drink deep the rapture-wine of self-surrender,
The Word shall possess you and, smitten by a splendour
Of all-changing alchemy, a vast sun-mirth,
Each cell of your body wake to the Eternal's birth.

A single-minded sincere prayer alone,
A self wide open to the Grace—and the work will be done!

A. VENKATARANGA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo Centenary Calendar (Numbers 31-32 of =1 (*Equals One*), the Quarterly Journal of Auroville).

“UNHAPPY is the man or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment; for them is irreparable loss or a great destruction.” Thus sounded Sri Aurobindo the now famous note of warning embedded in one of his shorter writings, bearing the significant title “The Hour of God”.

Humanity is indeed at the moment standing on the threshold of a revolutionary era, a divine era in the progressive unfoldment of the history of man. Individuals, countries and continents— all are face to face with a moment of crucial choice, a ‘divine moment’ of supreme import. In more than one sense, 1972 represents an ‘Hour of God’ or, more appropriately, the ‘Year of God’; for this is the year of the Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo.

And who is Sri Aurobindo? or rather, what is Sri Aurobindo? In the luminous words of the Mother.

“What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world’s history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme.”

This “Action” from the Supreme became incarnate in a human vessel a hundred years ago, on the 15th of August, 1872. And referring to this event of prodigious importance to earth and man, the Mother has spoken of Sri Aurobindo’s birth as ‘eternal’ in the history of the universe and then proceeded to explain the exact sense of the term ‘eternal’ used in this context:

“The sentence can be understood in four different ways on four ascending planes of consciousness:

1. Physically, the consequences of the birth will be of eternal importance in the world.

2. Mentally, it is a birth that will be eternally remembered in the universal history.

3. Psychically, a birth that recurs for ever from age to age upon earth.

4. Spiritually, the birth of the Eternal upon earth.”

The Mother has consecrated the current year to Sri Aurobindo and, in her New Year’s Message, has exhorted all of us to “try to be worthy of Sri Aurobindo’s Centenary”. It is thus in the fitness of things that in this ‘Sri Aurobindo Year’ the editorial board of = 1, the Quarterly Journal of Auroville, the Golden City of Dawn deriving its name from Sri Aurobindo, should bring out a Special Number unique in

its conception as well as in its execution. This issue of the journal has been given the significant name "Sri Aurobindo Centenary Calendar" and it is in fact, in the words of the editors, "a day-to-day summons to the reader, an insistent call throughout the year for him to change in his very foundations, a call for an evolution of his consciousness as man".

This Calendar, published in the format of a beautiful book, has daily entries recording the events of Sri Aurobindo's life date-wise and carrying whatever of his writings on his own career is relevant to the dates. There are also appropriate extracts from his major prose-works, from his poems, plays and letters, his speeches and conversations.

Thus "this presentation", to quote again from the Preliminary Note preceding the actual body of the Calendar, "puts Sri Aurobindo and his yoga in a new perspective, bringing into proximity various phases and aspects of his work. Each entry has thus become a candid snapshot and offers an unexpected insight into Sri Aurobindo's life and evolution."

The publishers are to be congratulated upon bringing out this spiritual Calendar dedicated to the life and work of the Avatar of Supramental Evolution. A steady perusal of the daily entries is in more than one sense a most delightful and at the same time a most fruitful experience to the readers. Every page of the calendar offers something illuminating on the various problems that are apt to confront an aspirant practising the Yoga of Transformation as propounded by Sri Aurobindo. The appearance of this Sri Aurobindo Calendar in what has been aptly called 'Sri Aurobindo Year' comes as a quickening message to all who are interested in the welfare and future destiny of the race.

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

Students' Section

VERSES BY A TWELVE-YEAR OLD

LIFE

WHEN you're in joy life is lovely and gay,
When you get irritated and unhappy every day
Then death is much better than life, you say.
But what is true
Is only known to a few.
Life is nothing but to toil and succeed.
Oh! life is nothing but to grow and to weed.
Life is easy, both sad and gay.
Oh! life is nothing but to go the right way.
So, whether you're short or whether you're tall
It matters just a bit, or in fact not at all,
Because life is just doing good and not bad.
So remember this poem and you'll be glad.

NATURE

HERE's a kind of nature song.
It's quite expressive, but not very long.
Hey! look at the morning dew—
Isn't it sparkling and shiny and new?
Oh! look at the fresh green grass—
Isn't it just first-class?
See the river a little later
When it's full of alligator;
Watch the flowers in their flower-beds
Singing a song and nodding their heads;
Look at that busy buzzing bee
Who is making honey for you and me;
And look at the evening sunset,
It never makes you regret.
So now that you have seen nature's beauty
Don't you think it's got a good duty?
For it keeps us in a happy mood,
All of which is very good.

EYE EDUCATION

TREATMENT IN THE CLINIC

ALMOST every patient faces the sun with eyes closed or with gentle and frequent blinking after the application of Resolvent 200. In some cases the rays of the sun are condensed with a magnifying glass on the closed eyelids or on the white part of the eye with frequent movements from side to side to avoid the heat of the rays. This procedure is greatly helpful in clearing the vision and improving the health of the eye. After the sun treatment eyes are washed with Ophthalmic eye lotion and the patients are advised to practise palming to relax the mind and the eyes. After palming each one follows different exercises according to the prescription. It is frequently noted within a few days how wonderfully the so-called incurable cases begin to improve. When necessary, glasses are also prescribed or an operation advised.

We have evolved a system of treatment in the School for Perfect Eyesight based on the synthesis of all the systems of medicine. We believe that all the methods of treatment such as glasses, medicines, operation, eye education and methods of relaxation have their value, but one has to discriminate what is necessary in a particular case. However, eye education and relaxation treatment are prescribed for everyone, at least to prevent further deterioration. The efficacy of eye education and relaxation is so great that sometimes one can successfully treat cases of serious eye trouble even without a diagnosis. The reason is that whenever a patient complains of pain, headache or loss of vision, it is an indication of eye strain and mental strain; and the treatment which will relieve the strain will be beneficial to the eyes. An elderly patient gave a history of constant pain in the eyes and gradual loss of sight and inability to sleep at night. Every doctor who had examined her had admitted that he did not know what was wrong. Blindness had been expected by some doctors in the course of a few years. We told this patient that we too did not know what was wrong organically in her eyes but we believed that she could be all right by eye education without our entering into the details of diagnosis. She followed the treatment quite devotedly and became all right within a short time.

(To be continued)

DR. R.S. AGARWAL

BOOKS ON EYE-EDUCATION

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|----|----------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1. | SECRETS OF INDIAN MEDICINE | | Rs. 12 |
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