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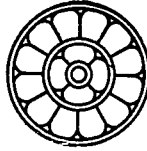
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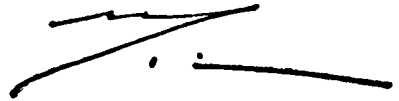


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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

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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”.

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## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

La vérité est au-dessus du mental, c'est dans le silence que l'on peut entrer en rapport avec elle.

Implorer le Divin et se soumettre entièrement à Lui et en toute sincérité sont les conditions préliminaires essentielles.

24-10-1971

Truth is above mind, it is in silence that one can enter into communication with it.

To pray to the Divine and to surrender oneself entirely and in all sincerity to Him are the essential preliminary conditions.

24-10-1971

## WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*Q. We hear that you also had to undergo a lot of suffering and despair, even to the extent of wanting to commit suicide.*

What nonsense! Suicide! Who the devil told you that? Even if I knew that all was going to collapse tomorrow, I would not think of suicide, but go on to do what I still could for the future.

21.6.1935

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of March, 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, 1954 (Continued)

*(Another disciple:) I have prepared a question. (He takes the "Synthesis" and reads:) ". .the central consciousness in its turn will take up more and more the outer mental activities of knowledge and turn them into a parcel of itself or an annexed province; it will infuse into them its more authentic movement and make a more and more spiritualised and illumined mind its instrument in these surface fields, its new conquests... There will be less and less individual choice, opinion, preference, less and less of intellectualisation, mental weaving, cerebral galley-slave labour; a Light within will see all that has to be seen, know all that has to be known, develop, create, organise....But this cannot be the whole scope of the transformation . .For, if it were so, knowledge would still remain a working of the mind, liberated, universalised, spiritualised..."*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, P. 167)*

And so, what do you want to know?

*That means that the spiritualised mind is of no value at all !*

Sri Aurobindo says: "If it were so, knowledge would still remain a working of the mind." *(The Mother reads):* "...the mind liberated, universalised, spiritualised, but still, as all mind must be, comparatively restricted, relative, imperfect in the very essence of its dynamism."

*I don't understand.*

Yes, it seems to me you don't understand! He says it is not like that. That is not what happens, for if it were like that, it would be absurd.

He says later *(The Mother reads):* "The spiritualised mind will exceed itself and

transmute into a supramental power of knowledge.”

If the spiritualised mind continues to function like the ordinary mind, it would make no difference. But in fact it is just the opposite of what happens.

*But when it is spiritualised, how can it function as before ?*

You must not read just one sentence and not see what goes ahead and what follows, because in this way one can prove anything whatsoever.

*But here, with you, one does not need to go through all these experiences, isn't that so, Mother ?*

Need to go through....But he has said at great length that everyone follows his own path, in his own way, and that no two paths are the same, and each one has his own road. Consequently, what “need”, need for whom? For you? I don't know. Go through what? Putting one's ideas in some order? That is quite necessary for everybody perhaps.

I don't know what you want to know!

*To reach the Supermind, Sri Aurobindo says there are stages: first, the mind, then the purified mind, the illumined mind and all that....Is it necessary for everyone to go through all these stages ?*

(*After a silence*) It is likely that a sequence of this kind always occurs. But the duration of the stages and their importance vary considerably according to individuals....For some the passage may be sufficiently rapid, so quick as to be hardly perceptible, whilst for others it may take a very long time; and according to the nature of the resistance in each one, the stress on one of these stages or another varies enormously.

For some, it may be so rapid that it seems almost instantaneous, as though it were not there. For others it may take years.

There is one phenomenon which, evidently, seems indispensable if one wants the realisation stabilised....Experiences come, touch the consciousness, bring sometimes great illuminations, then get blurred, retire into the background and, outwardly, in your ordinary consciousness, you don't feel that there is a great change, a great difference. And this phenomenon may occur very often, may be repeated for years. You get suddenly a sort of revelation, like an illumination, you are in the true consciousness and have the feeling of having got hold of the real thing. And then, slowly or suddenly it seems to recede behind you, and you seek but you do not find that there is any great change in you....These things seem to come as harbingers or as promises: “See, this will happen,” or to tell you: “Well, have faith, it *will be like* that.”

And this may recur very often. There is progress, evidently, but it is very slow and not easily apparent.

But then, suddenly—perhaps because one is sufficiently prepared, perhaps simply because the moment has come, and it was so decreed—suddenly, when such an experience comes, its result in the part of the being where it occurs is a complete reversal of consciousness. It is a very clear, very concrete phenomenon. The best way of describing it is this: a complete reversal. And then the relation of the consciousness with the other parts of the being and with the outer world is as if completely changed. Absolutely like an overturning. And that reversal no longer goes back to the old place, the consciousness no longer returns to its former position (Sri Aurobindo would say “*status*”). Once this has happened in any part of the being, this part of the being is stabilised.

And until that happens, it comes and goes, comes and goes, one advances and then has the impression of marking time, and again one advances and then marks time, and sometimes one feels as though one were going back, and it is interminable—indeed it is interminable. It may last for years and years and years. But when this reversal of consciousness takes place, whether in the mind or a part of the mind, in the vital or a part of the vital, or even in the physical consciousness itself and in the body-consciousness, once this is established, all is over; you no longer go back, you do not return any more to what you were before; and it is this that gives a true indication that you have crossed a step. And before this, they are only preparations.

Those who have experienced this reversal know what I am speaking about; but if one has not had it, one can't understand. One may have a kind of idea by analogy, people who have tried to describe yoga compare it with the reversal of a prism: when you put it at a certain angle, the light is white; when you turn it over, it is broken up. Well, that is exactly what happens, that is to say, you restore the white. In the ordinary consciousness there is decomposition and you restore the white. Only this is an image. It is not really *that*, this is an analogy. But the phenomenon is extremely concrete. It is almost as though you were to put what is within outside, and what is outside within. And it is not that either! But if you could turn a ball inside-out, or a balloon (you can't, can you?), if you could put the inside out and the outside in, that would resemble what I mean.

And one can't say that one “experiences” this reversal—there is no “feeling”, it is almost a mechanical fact—it is extraordinarily mechanical (*The Mother takes an object from the table beside her and turns it upside down*)....There would be very interesting things to say about the difference between the moment of realisation, of *siddhi* (like this reversal of consciousness, for example) and all the work of development, the *tapasyā*; to say how it happens....For Sadhana, Tapasya is one thing and Siddhi another, quite a different thing. You may do Tapasya for centuries, and you will always go as at a tangent, closer and closer to the realisation, nearer and nearer, but it is only when the Siddhi is given to you...then, everything is changed, everything is reversed. And this is inexpressible, for no sooner is it put in words than it escapes you. But there is a



difference—truly a difference, essential, total—between aspiration, the mental tension, even the tension of the highest, most luminous mind, and realisation. something which has been decided above from always, and is absolutely independent of all personal effort, of all gradation. Don't you see, it is not bit by bit that one reaches it, it is not by a small, constant, regular effort, it is not that: it is something that comes suddenly; it is established without one's knowing how, or why, but all is changed.

And it will be like that for everybody, for the whole universe: it goes along, it comes, it moves forward gently, and then one moment, all of a sudden, *it will be done*, finished—not finished: it's the beginning!

(*Silence*)

It is generally the first contact with the psychic being which brings this experience, but it is only partial, only that *part* of the consciousness (or the activity in any part of the being), that part of the consciousness which is united with the psychic has the experience. And so, at the moment of that experience, the position of that part of the consciousness, relatively to the other parts and to the world, is completely reversed, it is different. And that is never undone. And if you want or care, or are able, to put into contact with this part all the problems of your life and all the activities of your being, all the elements of your consciousness, then they begin to be organised in such a way that your being becomes one unity—a single multiplicity, a multiple unity—complex, but organised and centralised around a fixed point, so well that the central will or central consciousness or central truth has the power to govern *all* the parts, for they are all in order, organised around this central Presence.

It seems to me impossible to elude this necessity if one wants to be and has to be a conscious instrument of the Divine Force. You may be moved by the Divine Force, pushed into action and used as *unconscious* instruments, if you have a minimum of good will and sincerity. But to become a conscious instrument, capable of identification and conscious willed movements, you must have this inner organisation; otherwise you will always be meeting a chaos somewhere, a confusion somewhere or an obscurity, an inconscience somewhere. And naturally your action, even though guided exclusively by the Divine, will not have the perfection in expression it has when one has acquired a conscious organisation around this divine Centre.

It is an assiduous task, which may be done at any time whatsoever and under any circumstances whatsoever, for you carry within yourself all the elements of the problem. You don't need anything from outside, no outer aid to do that work. But it requires a great perseverance, a sort of tenacity, for very often it so happens that there are bad creases in the being, habits—which come from all sorts of causes, which may come from atavistic malformation or also from education, or from the environment you have lived in, or from many other causes. And these bad creases you try to smooth out, but they wrinkle up again. And then you must begin the work over again, often, many, many, many a time, without getting discouraged, before the final result is obtained. But

nothing and nobody can prevent you from doing it, nor any circumstance. For you carry in yourself the problem and the solution.

(*Silence*)

And to tell the truth, the most common malady humanity suffers from is boredom. Most stupidities men commit come from an attempt to escape boredom. Well, I am certain that no outer means are any good, and that boredom pursues you and will pursue you no matter what you try out to escape it; but that this means, that is to say, beginning this work of organising your being and all its movements and all its elements around the central Consciousness and Presence, this is the surest and most complete cure, and the most consoling one, of all possible boredom. It gives life a tremendous interest. And an unheard-of diversity. You no longer have the time to get bored.

Only, one must persevere.

And what adds to the interest of the thing is that this kind of work, this harmonisation and organisation of the being around the divine Centre can only be done in a physical body and upon earth. That is the true and essential and original reason of the physical life. For, as soon as you are no longer in a physical body, you can no longer do it, *not at all*.

And what is yet more remarkable is that only human beings can do it, for it is only human beings who have at their centre the divine Presence in the psychic being. For example, this work of self-development and organisation and becoming aware of all the elements is not within the reach of the beings of the vital and mental planes, nor even of the beings usually called "gods"; and when they want to do it, when they really want to organise themselves and become completely conscious, they are obliged to take a body.

And so, human beings come into a physical body without knowing why, most of them go through life without knowing why, they leave their body without knowing why, and they have to begin the same thing all over again, indefinitely, until, one day, someone comes along to tell them: "Look! you know, this has a purpose. You are here for this work, don't miss your opportunity!"

And how many years are wasted.

---

## THE SILENT SELF AND THE TRUE ACTION

### LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*Q: I pass hours and hours in pure-existence and pure-consciousness. But I remain only there. There is no farther advance.*

*Is there any risk of my indulging this state too much and of my remaining only there?*

SRI AUROBINDO: No. It is taking time so as to establish these things well.

13-10-1934

*Q: Does the universal aspect of the Self take a long time to follow the individual aspect?*

15-10-1934

SRI AUROBINDO: It varies with different people. With some the universality comes first.

15-10-1934

The pure-existence is not something abstract but substantial and concrete. Moreover it is descending into the body, so it is quite natural to feel it materially.

16-10-1934

*Q: My consciousness does not feel time or space when I am located above.*

SRI AUROBINDO: In the self or pure-existence there is no time or space—except spiritual space or wideness.

17-10-1934

*Q: The Self extends its influence more and more. Even my body feels it and remains intoxicated most of the time. This perhaps shows that the subconscious and mechanical mind and all other parts are under its charm?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

22-10-1934

*Q: At present my consciousness feels that, instead of letting it go higher or deeper the Mother is making me fix what has been already achieved. Thus something will remain stabilised for good.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what is being done.

22-10-1934

*Q: In fact I don't know what is meant by living in the Mother's Consciousness. I wrote simply thinking that to dwell in the Self-consciousness is only the first step towards living in the Mother's Consciousness.*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it is the first step. Afterwards the silent self gets filled up with the Mother's active consciousness, the true consciousness, without the fundamental silence being disturbed—than all the action can become more and more the true action.

23-10-1934

*Q: I wrote to you that the Mother has brought down what I had experienced above. But now I find that She has opened other greater and higher levels above. Thus there will remain above always something superior to what comes down.*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, up to the Supermind there are ranges above ranges.

*Q: For the last two days, I have felt a direct connection with something just a little above the Brahmic passage of the head. Something of it remains in touch with the Brahmuc which feels it as a thing floating up above it.*

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be the thousand-petalled lotus which is the centre of the higher consciousness. 24-10-1934

*Q: It is something new to me when my consciousness feels a depth in the heart and a height on the head simultaneously.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what should be. 24-10-1934

*Q: You wrote, "All that dissatisfaction is of course an ignorant objection of the lower vital which does not know how the higher consciousness works or even what is real fullness." Will you kindly enlighten me how the higher consciousness works and what is a real fullness, since I too am as ignorant about it as is the vital ?*

SRI AUROBINDO: By knowing I do not mean mental ideas about it—I mean it has not the consciousness and feeling of what these things are. 1-11-1934

*Q: What my physical mind considers as emptiness or nothingness—is it not a pure working of the higher consciousness ?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

*Q: However, one thing needs to be made clear. You have said, "There is no such thing as emptiness, it is a pure-existence, silence etc." Why then does it create a feeling of voidness and as if all the sadhana is suspended ?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is because there is no activity and the outer consciousness is accustomed to be always thinking, feeling or doing something. 2-11-1934

*Q: I do not quite understand the present dumbness. It seems like a state beyond blankness, where no thinking, feeling or acting ever intrudes. There is a mere consciousness and Shanti—no contact with the entire universe !*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the pure static Atman consciousness or separate Purusha consciousness, Purusha separated from Prakriti is like that, Atman separated from Maya (I dont mean Illusion) or Shakti is like that. This is the static side of being, the other dynamic must manifest in that. 4-12-1934

It is the usual condition when one has forced the concentration with the centre above the head and is realising the self, Then there is no location of the consciousness

—it is everywhere. Only in your case you do not seem to feel this wideness or everywhere-ness—as yet the feeling seems to be only negative, not of everywhere-ness but of nowhere-ness. Is it like that, actually? 8-12-1934

*Q* A definite and conscious change was felt after the Mother's coming down for the evening meditation. For a time, I felt myself above the head and the body was simply hanging down below me.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a very important development. 8-12-1934

If there is any part of the being that does not share in the realisation, it may throw this sense of loneliness. 9-12-1934

*Q*: When one is in the immutable Atman, does not one usually prefer to keep oneself all aloof even from the higher knowledge?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not necessarily. The immutable Brahman is only a base for the transcendent action which comes down into its peace and silence and fills it with power also and Ananda and the light of knowledge. 24-12-1934

*Q*: Yesterday's experience of Self-realisation seems to have withdrawn today. Perhaps, by thus retiring, it is preparing more and more close and intimate identification with the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is usually so with new or yet unestablished experiences. 24-12-1934

The nature takes a long time to be able to keep the higher condition without a break. 27-12-1934

Strengthen the peace—higher power in the will (Tapas); extension and continuity of peace and self-realisation; if possible descent of a Force removing the Tamas and vital difficulty. 28-12-1934

From NAGIN DOSHI

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## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of March, 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. Mamlal, 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 8, 1940  
EVENING

THE newspaper and radio said that the British army in the West had retreated in face of the German attack.

SRI AUROBINDO: So the British troops are getting mastery in retreat? They have withdrawn to Bresle leaving their former position. They say that their division consists of the Highlanders. The Highlanders are better fighters. It is the territorial force, I think, without any sufficient training, that has been pushed to the front. Even if it had been the expeditionary force it would have been something.

N: They could not hold on even for a day! It is said that the German pressure was heavy in that sector.

SRI AUROBINDO: So was it in the French sector. They should be withdrawn to the rear and given some training in fighting first, or removed to the Maginot line.

N: They could be set to deal with the tanks in the rear.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, they will be no good for that!

P: Hitler must be getting wild with America.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? Has he said so anywhere?

P: No, they are sending naval planes, dive bombers and all possible help short of sending an army.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the isolationists are quiet now.

N: Gayda is trying a little outburst.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if America intervenes in Europe, why shouldn't we intervene in America? Roosevelt knows that the Nazis will do it in any case; so there is nothing much to lose.

*(After a while)* We are getting more anti-imperialistic letters denouncing our help

to the Imperialistic Allies. Jatin Sen Gupta, also, it seems, has written to the Mother.

P: That contractor?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

P: It is, as Satyendra says, due to the big figure of 10,000 francs. They don't know that it is equivalent to a few hundred rupees. (*laughter*)

S: About 7-8 hundred.

P: They also don't know about the political movement here against us.

SRI AUROBINDO: This should stop it. They should know that I have been living here under the protection of the French Government. Were it not for that, I would be now in an English prison. And apart from that, after India, France has most of our disciples and some have gone to the front in Belgium. The Mother's nephew is there — he was in Belgium — don't know if he is still alive. And France has the best sale of our books. Though it was spreading to Czechoslovakia and then through Switzerland to Italy, even to Chile where somebody wanted to translate *Thoughts and Glimpses*. Now all that is stopped due to this war.

If Hitler gets the domination of the world there won't be any national independence left anywhere and spiritual work will be doomed. England and France are bad enough but still some liberty of thought and spirituality are left under them. Besides, as I don't hold the principles of the objectors, why should I act according to them?

P (*after a pause*): *The Modern Review* has brought out an article on the Khaksar movement. I haven't read it as yet.

SRI AUROBINDO: *The Sunday Express* says that the Khaksar movement was being fed from Germany.

P: It is quite true. That came out in the secret police investigation. That is why the Indian Government came down on them and Sikandar Hyat could not protect them any more.

N: Hitler has duped them with Muslim Raj?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, maybe independence of India. This Mushriki has been to England?

P: Yes, he is an I.C.S.... Independence by Hitler? He says that Indians are a primitive race.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, even the other day when he was trying to be friendly with England and to divide France, he said that the white races should keep under subjection the black races.

JUNE 9, 1940

N: I find Dilip in my company regarding Krishnaprem's review of *The Life Divine*. He is not much impressed by it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why?

N: He says that there is nothing characteristic about it, and it doesn't go far enough. And Krishnaprem does not seem to have understood the Supermind.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, that he hasn't.

N: When Dilip saw that Krishnaprem makes Nirvana and Samsara equal according to Buddha, he revolted. That was too much because Buddha has always been against Samsara.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course, Buddha never said that. Krishnaprem speaks according to the Mahayana. Mahayana went much further. Buddha didn't say what Nirvana is and he did not say that Nirvana and Samsara are equal.

P: As an authority on Buddhism, Mrs. Rhys Davies seems to be the best person.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, she is not very reliable. The Mahayana conception of Nirvana seems to be something like Laotse's Tao. Tao, according to him, is a condition of nothingness that is beyond all present construction, and that is the nothingness which contains everything. (*Addressing P*) Do you know anything about the *Nous*, the Divine Mind, of Plotinus? Krishnaprem appears to make the Supermind and the *Nous* the same. *Nous* seem to be Intelligence.

P: I do not know if Divine Mind would be the same as Supermind.

SRI AUROBINDO: When they consider Sankara the greatest of realists and my philosophy the same as his—

P: What to speak of others? (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: Is it the supramental urge for unification? (*Laughter*)

P: Italy has ordered her ships to neutral ports.

SRI AUROBINDO: It means war then.

P: And it seems the German generals are to go to Italian Africa.

N: What a huge mass Hitler has thrown in the North!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if Weygand can hold on, it's all right; otherwise a dark look-out, Germany has the advantage of concentrating all the strength at one point, while the Allies have to keep their forces scattered.

N: Germany seems to be making for the ports—first, Dieppe.

SRI AUROBINDO: Dieppe is a minor port. Le Havre, Cherbourg, Boulogne and Calais are the major ones.

N: Why are the British not sending their army? They have a big force.

SRI AUROBINDO: Their army is still in training. They have adopted conscription too late. Somebody from Switzerland informed France that if Germany attacks her through Basle, Switzerland will be able to hold on for 48 hours and has warned France to make arrangements beforehand. Basle is flat forestland. From the end of France to Basle there is what is called a '*trou*'—a hole, that is, no Maginot line there. Of course Switzerland can fight by retreating into the mountains. Hitler may not think of attacking there now because of his concentration in the North.

P: Perhaps he is waiting for Italy to join and then make a combined attack there.

SRI AUROBINDO: Probably.

N: It is very strange that France did not build any Maginot line on the Belgian frontier.

SRI AUROBINDO: There were only scattered fortifications.



P: Even in these 8 months they did not do anything.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not enough. France counted on the Belgian fortifications which were supposed to be very strong. Liege held up the enemy for a long time. They also thought that the forest of Ardennes would form a natural barrier and the Germans would find it difficult to cross it. Of course, it is all Daladier's work—the most indefensible war-minister. He seems to have done nothing. It is like the story of the general of Napoleon III. When Napoleon asked him, "Is everything prepared?" he replied, "Yes, upto the last button", and when the attack began everything broke down at once! As for Gamelin, he seems to know only the names of officers and nothing more and is quite helpless in difficulty. That shows that it is easy to build up a reputation during peace.

P: In the secret session they will try to throw out Chamberlain and other previous ministers who were responsible for this bad preparation.

SRI AUROBINDO: I see.

P: And it is the Conservatives who will lead the attack, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course they made a tremendous blunder.

N: Tom Paine says in the *New Statesman and Nation* that Chamberlain wanted to make an alliance with Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not so far as that but it was Baldwin and Chamberlain's policy to make a 4-Power alliance: Italy, Germany, England and France to settle all European affairs. Of course England is responsible for all this, for it is England that raised Germany so that France might not be too powerful. It is the old policy of balance of power. She did not think that her own weapon might strike against herself.

JUNE 10, 1940

S: Will there be any hierarchy among the Supramental beings?

SRI AUROBINDO: Supramental beings? In the overhead, there is a hierarchy, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and so on.

P: That includes the Overmind.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, among the supramental beings too there is a hierarchy, in the sense of gradation of consciousness towards the Sacchidananda.

N: Sisir was saying you have written in the last volume of *The Life Divine* that the supramental beings will retire into islets.

SRI AUROBINDO: (*laughing*) I meant by islets, living in collective groups.

N: I also said the same thing to him.

S: Like individual isolation, it will be a collective isolation. That is still my difficulty—why should there be any collective group? One can exercise one's influence individually as well.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but collective influence will be of a different kind—so that it may exercise its influence on the whole world. Individual isolation is for those who want Mukti. But this will be an ideal collective group along with the change of

the outer mould to serve as an ideal life to others.

N: Will there be missions to other countries?

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord, missions for preaching? No! Groups will develop and will have different expressions according to different conditions. Whatever is necessary, and in whichever way needed, will grow up of itself.

S: I do not know how Pondicherry could have been selected.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): When I came it was very quiet, there was no life. Of course there was a lot of beating and fighting, if you mean that by life.

(Then the talk changed to the topic of war.)

N: Germany has thrown in a huge army.

SRI AUROBINDO: A tremendous number. They have lost about half a million, and as much in Belgium; and still they are putting in fresh numbers. Can France stand against it all?

N: Why does not England send her Expeditionary Force?

SRI AUROBINDO: Good Lord! You must give them at least some rest.

N: But she is supposed to have a big army.

S: It is under training now and it will take some time. The English have no conscription and so are as raw as ourselves.

N: What about America? There is a big army there.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not so big—only 50,000, and they want to make it a million. They are also not properly trained. Of course they can call up their volunteers. Even they will have to be trained till August. The question is whether France will be able to stand so long?

N: If Paris falls will the French be able to continue the fight?

SRI AUROBINDO: They can but it will mean a decentralisation of their whole life. And, besides, a great moral shock. It is not like India shifting the capital to several places.

P: In the last war they shifted the government to Bordeaux.

SRI AUROBINDO: Besides, North France is the most important part because of the industries and commerce there. If Paris goes, Normandy also will go, that is, France virtually will go. In the south, Bordeaux and Rhone are the few important places. That has always been the difficulty of France—that Paris is too near the frontier. If Paris is taken, Hitler will have some breathing time before he attacks other countries.

S: England will continue to fight, Churchill says, even after England is gone.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that is something new. The English people are very tough, they will go on till they are directly touched. (*After a while*) These huge migrations are quite unprecedented in history. Two million Belgians have come to Paris.

N: They can be put in the army.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what is being done.

N: If the British government had started training in India, India would have

played a great part at present. The commander-in-chief speaks of 100,000 soldiers.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is nothing.

S: Now everybody is speaking of India's defence. The *Statesman* of Calcutta is pleading for a compromise and settlement and starting the defence preparation. The European Association in Calcutta is also urging for it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Because they have seen things with their own eyes and know, and are practical people. The *Statesman* has always been for some self-government for India. Englishmen have got a correct vital instinct. They know the time of necessity while the ruling class is shut up in its traditions and runs in grooves. The Labour Party can now exert its pressure on the Government.

S: When they are out of the Government they can press, but when in the Government practical difficulties come in the way.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but necessity now demands self-government. Of course if the Congress had been conciliatory, it would have been easy for the British Government. They can't accept whatever the constituent assembly decides.

S: Englishmen here have their own vital interest at stake.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but that interest is also connected with England and if England goes, they also go.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

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## SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

(Continued from the issue of March, 1972)

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

8-5-1926

IN yoga one must have solid nerves. Solid nerves means patience, vigilance, endurance, capacity to break stones... !

14-5-1926

*Q: What is melancholy due to?*

Melancholy may be due to the sentimental part of the mind. The mind raises up melancholy to enjoy it. There is also the melancholy of the poets: it may be due to imagination. Melancholy may sometimes arise from low vitality or physical depression.

If the melancholy is corrosive, it must be rejected. If it is soothing—as when it is induced by certain melodies—it is psychic sadness and this can be utilised in the Sadhana.

I have reached a stage where there is something in the atmosphere around me and the Sadhakas may feel the effects of its pressure on all the levels of being.

It requires a great capacity to contact another's consciousness. Even those who enter into a sort of universal consciousness don't know how to contact the individual consciousness of others.

16-5-1926

Silence is a very powerful weapon and comes only after long Sadhana to those whose mental development does not become an obstacle to Silence. It depends on one's Samskara, temperament.

17-5-1926

You must lay down the mind as freely as you do a tool. This also comes after a

long Sadhana.

18-5-1926

Watch the mind as it runs along. Look from above at the thoughts. Detach yourself completely. Do not involve yourself in the thoughts or in the active forcible rejection of thoughts. Even in the act of watching your mind you are passively rejecting the thoughts, but you are not involving yourself. The method of actively watching the mind as it runs seems preferable to the method of summarily rejecting the thoughts. There is no harm in the second, but you should not involve yourself in the act of rejecting thoughts. If you do not involve yourself it is the same thing as the first method.

Prayer is making precise the aspiration. Aspiration in the heart (psychic mind) and will in the higher mind will bring down the peace. The peace you will feel as a Presence (Purusha) about you, within you. The concentration of the physical mind on the Higher Power, the Mother, etc., will not do. What is required is an inner central concentration, an inner peace. There may be a stillness due to an absorption in an idea, but silent inner concentration alone can give the inner stillness.

Vigilance and detachment are necessary even in prayer; otherwise you will unconsciously identify yourself with the mind. Absorption in one idea without wakefulness, power of detachment behind and full self-control, is dangerous. The concentration must be conscious.... Absorption in one movement may be helpful sometimes.

You have to change the stuff of your mind, it must become flexible and plastic. You have to get the largeness which holds the peace. If you can't get the peace, concentrate on force. The two mean the same thing in the end. The peace brings the force with it and the force when it comes removes the obstacles and establishes the peace.

14-7-1926

After the stillness is established, concentrate silently and consciously on the peace. Do not think always of getting the peace, but aspire quietly.

16-8-1926

To quiet the mind by prayer (mental and vital) is not the right movement, it brings only a precarious calm and soon the mind is up again. The only way is to look at the mind's activity and refuse assent to it. One must be able to seize the mind inwardly and hold it. The mind must obey your command every moment. If even for once you allow yourself to think, not calmly, but getting restless, desiring to possess knowledge, it will take long to quiet the mind again. You will allow the subconscious habit of mechanical restless thinking to rise and continue.

Psychic aspiration first expresses itself through the mental and vital being. The

mental and the vital aspiration are not to be cried down, you must first have some aspiration.

23-8-1926

The aspiration of the vital being is an essential thing, it must be there, not just the aspiration of the surface vital being which is overpassed soon.

*Q: To what part of the being in us does Nature appeal?*

It generally appeals to the mind and vital being. The aesthetic being, which usually responds, is partly mental and partly vital. To the psychic being Nature reveals the Infinite. The psychic being feels Bhakti, Devotion, it enters the universal Beauty through Nature.

*Q: How far does Nature's appeal help the sadhaka?*

It first refines the vital being, frees it from desire and egoism, it does not help directly. It creates a certain psychic sensibility, a door through which the Sadhaka can enter the Infinite.

*Q: To what part of the being does music appeal? I feel that music also appeals to the same part of the being as Nature does. Am I right?*

Yes. Music's true appeal is to the psychic being. But with some people it appeals to the mind only.

*Q: How far does music help?*

It is mostly a mental movement. These mental movements may help to prepare the being through a touch on the aesthetic being, but they can also obstruct. It is often all a play of sentiment.

*Q: What about poetry and art?*

The same is true there.

The yogin has to exceed all these things. That does not mean that he must suppress them. He must overpass them and transform them.

In Sarojini Naidu's poetry there is colour, emotion and exquisite talent. She has real capacity.

If your mind is sincere but your will is not, then the mind will fall back. If your will is not strong, you must open your self to the higher power and allow it to overcome the obstacles. Will does not exhaust one. It is the resistance of the mind that exhausts. That heart is at present man's centre, the soul-centre. If you concentrate in the mind, the mind begins to meditate. But meditation in the heart easily takes you to the reality. When you try to withdraw into yourself you take your mind also with you there; that must not be; there must be real detachment and aspiration for something from above, wideness, etc.

Intuition does not discriminate between right and wrong as the theosophists say. It is discrimination that knows the difference between right and wrong. Imagination is the power which overcomes doubt but can also mislead. It goes beyond ordinary facts. Its form in the Truth is inspiration. Mental imagination arrives at a sort of Truth. It is thus a creative power in the mental. Vital imagination embroiders the thing, while the imagination of the physical mind concerns itself with ordinary physical things.

When I was doing pranayam there was an atmosphere of electricity round me and mosquitoes could not come near me. In jail there were many ants and there I first saw how pain could be turned into Ananda with just a little turn-over.

The general decline of the Indian people dates from the death of Aurangzeb and the rise of the East India Company. The period of decline is thus from 1700 A.D.—nearly two centuries.

Nations begin with passion and end with algebra.

The Gods are reflected on all the planes and therefore they vary according to the plane on which they are reflected.

*Q: Has the form of the Gods any resemblance to that of man?*

Not necessarily. But those who approach the plane of the Gods through the impersonal attitude without stopping at the Sat-Chit-Ananda Consciousness arrive at a plane where they see the Gods in forms which resemble man's. It may be due to their carrying the mental impression beyond. That is why perhaps in the Veda the Gods are called Purusha...

A work of art is cold in spite of perfect technique—that is, beauty of form and line—because the writer has nothing to put into it, nothing that comes out of him. In Greek art it was their aim to put as much inner beauty as they could in limited line and form. The Indian standard is different. It expresses the infinite...

In table-tapping, it is not will-power. Of course the power at work represents itself as will to the mind; as a controlling agent the will is there, but really it is a certain vital magnetic energy that is at work. It is the vital physical that lays hold on the material object, and deals with it...

The powers of Sarva-Bhaktshaka Swami seem to be Pisacha Siddhi: Demonic Achievement, not Daiva Siddhi: Divine Achievement the phenomena of a vital force acting from its own plane, not the vital force working in the body. Still the process by which he got the Siddhi is interesting to know. There are persons who do a certain Kriya, Rite, and acquire the power of memory. There seems to be at

present a movement in the world to show that such things are possible. First came the age of denial which influenced the world largely. Now the vital world is pressing on the physical and abnormal phenomena occur to show that such things are possible. In cases like Joan of Arc the scientists may say that it was all imagination or a contribution from the subliminal mind. There may have been such a contribution but it does not explain these things. That there are other powers beyond the human there is no question.

Natural selection is now held to be inadequate to explain evolution. A chief factor that is the source of adaptation is the general consciousness of the species itself....

The Vahanas of the Gods and Goddesses symbolise vital forces; for example, the lion, tiger, elephant. Probably the rat of Vinayaka (Ganesha) symbolises the vital force of patience.

The vital stomach desires more than the physical stomach needs. The palate is not vital so much as mental. When the palate feels equal Rasa in all things then a man is freed from desire. Though my palate felt equal Rasa in all, my vital stomach preferred meat.

What is called blind faith is psychic faith covered up by mental faith and vital faith. When psychic faith comes in front and purifies mental faith it is no longer blind. If one has a tremendous faith in doing a certain thing and taps some vital force, he can achieve a seemingly impossible object: for instance, one can bring out Ganges water from the earth. People succeed in life mostly because of their vital faith. The physical being insists on fact and is supported by physical faith; until the thing is there before it, it is not satisfied.

Movements like anger are of the lower vital plane. Jealousy is one of the most ugly lower vital forces. What we have to do is not to repress or control or merely replace anger by gentleness—that does not carry us beyond humanity. It is a mental and moral limitation; the true work is to bring down the Divine Strength and replace the lower movements by the divine counterparts of which they are distortions—anger by Divine Strength, jealousy by a following of one's superiors.... Self-control is not true freedom. We must not put down the vital world, but bring the Divine into it. .

Restraint does not change the nature, the lower impulses are put down, the life becomes dry, the man harsh, and the vital being becomes tame (the nerves get dried up).

The subtle senses belong to the mind, *manas*; they are not physical senses. In ordinary sense-experience mind sense through the sense-organs and there is an element of *Buddhi* also working.... There is an inner physical being which one comes to see when the light comes down....



Vyapti is the power of knowing others' thoughts, coming into contact with them. There are two movements of Vyapti. Either the thoughts may come as waves into my range of consciousness or I may project myself towards them. It is supposed that one can touch the stars even. It is the contact of consciousness. Ishita is when things come to us, things that we want. Prakamyā is when we wish to know things past or present and we know them.

*(To be continued)*

V. CHIDANANDAM

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## THE SHADOW

HAVE you seen this long shadow  
 Wrapped in a mystic understanding  
 Falling against the dead wall of Time?  
 When the evening blooms in violet hues,  
 When the azure east breathes serene,  
 Have you seen the serpentine shadow,  
 Laughing at you  
 Behind your existence?

Have you seen your shadow  
 Crawling over the meadow,  
 Creeping through the trenches,  
 Kissing the water lilies  
 When you are musing with your lover  
 Or when you are musing with the evening air,  
 In the cool arbours  
 After a care-worn day?

He is there,  
 Ever changing shapes—  
 Sometimes guiding you,  
 Sometimes creeping behind you,  
 Sometimes a slave under your feet,  
 But waiting with the patience of a cat  
 To coil round you  
 When the evening chars  
 To boundless dark.

P. M. SHANKARAN KUTTY

# THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

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

(Continued from the issue of March, 1972)

3

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH, CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY AND TEILHARD'S "NEW RELIGION"

(a)

It is not unnatural for Zaehner, a Roman Catholic, to favour Teilhard and see with him the Church of Rome as the one great gathering-force of the super-humanity to which Teilhard looked forward. And we have respect for him because he is no blind partisan. He refers to the Church's "pettifogging legalism and a sacramental system that had so often degenerated into an almost mechanical device by which salvation might be obtained".<sup>1</sup> About brother killing brother and brotherhood slaughtering and persecuting brotherhood, he remarks: "In this particular form of beastliness Christianity has won for itself a unique distinction."<sup>2</sup> Weighing the chances of what Evolution will achieve by way of drawing us together, he opines that there may result a "civilization" of the ant-hill, or "by a miracle (and a real miracle is needed) the Catholic Church, re-invigorated and transformed once again by the power of the Holy Spirit, will, purged at last of the miserable legalism that has cramped and stunted her so long, grow inwardly into a superconsciousness manifesting itself in spontaneous love and joy...."<sup>3</sup> The same thought recurs: "But—and it is an enormous 'but'—if—and it is an enormous 'if'—if the Church is indeed the 'mystical' body of Christ, living by the breath of the Holy Spirit, how are we to account for its disgraceful, blood-stained history? We have already suggested that the root-sin of the Church has, ever since the conversion of Constantine, been its betrayal of its spiritual mission in the interest of worldly power, and its total loss of Christ's gift of love which was made manifest in its mad and criminal career of persecution and intolerance."<sup>4</sup> Zaehner levels the identical charge elsewhere too. After approving of Gandhi's condemnation of the Indian caste system with its institution of "untouchableness", he writes: "Substitute the word 'persecution' for 'untouchableness', and the same must hold good for the Catholic

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution in Religion: A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Church. It has been the 'ineffaceable blot' and the 'curse' that Western Christianity has carried with it ever since Augustine of Hippo gave the full weight of his authority to the persecution of heretics—persecution, that is, in the name of Catholicity and unity, no matter at what cost to the real organic unity that St. Paul had called the body of Christ."<sup>1</sup> And, of course, Zaehner is fully aware of the crass suppression of Teilhard himself by the Church during his whole lifetime: "At every stage of his life his ideas and writings were suppressed not only by his own superiors but also by the curial authorities in Rome."<sup>2</sup>

Yes, Zaehner has no illusions about his own Church; but there are some counterbalancing factors in its favour: the sense of its origin in Jesus, the host of mystics and saints it has produced, its long and wide-spread persistence as the guardian of a great tradition, the living touch it brings of a collective religious experience. Zaehner<sup>3</sup> even claims that Sri Aurobindo grants Catholicism "a tendency towards some conservation of the original plastic character of religion [and a] many-sidedness and appeal to the whole nature of the human being". True, Sri Aurobindo does speak of "two tendencies, catholic and protestant," but he uses the adjectives to denote a pair of recurrent categories applying to the religious phenomenon in general, and we may note that the noun he makes from the former is "catholicity",<sup>4</sup> not "Catholicism", and the outstanding example he adduces of "catholic" religion, "with its pristine wholeness of movement", is "religion in India".<sup>5</sup> Zaehner<sup>6</sup> is hardly justified in declaring of Sri Aurobindo: "when he thought of it at all, he realized that the Catholic principle in Christianity was the nearest approximation in the history of religions to his own vision of a humanity redeemed and divinized." Nevertheless, we may attribute something to Catholicism as contrasted with Protestantism to have suggested those two specific adjectives to Sri Aurobindo. Evidently, this strain and the other factors lead Zaehner<sup>7</sup>, as they did Teilhard, to regard the Roman Church as "the only possible focus of unity".

Expressed by so honest and broad-minded an adherent, this view should not be attacked with any acrimony. And a superficial survey of world-institutions is likely to support the impression of uniqueness voiced by the word "only". Besides, the recent championship of Teilhard by a number of highly qualified Churchmen is a healthy sign, very encouraging to liberal thinkers like Zaehner. Perhaps this championship and the ecumenical movement have been the two most pleasing aspects of the Church's orientation today. Surely, Zaehner has his eye on both when he<sup>8</sup> attests: "the tug-of-war between the conservatives and progressives has ever since the truly miraculous

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p 24

<sup>4</sup> *The Life Divine* (The Sri Aurobindo Library, New York, 1949), pp 775, 776.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 775.

<sup>6</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 25

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p 9.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

pontificate of good Pope John testified to the renewed vitality of the Roman Catholic Church." A student of Comparative Religion, Zaehner cannot but be affected by the new ecumenism with its tolerance and understanding. He is also bound to see a great light in the pro-Teilhard enthusiasm frequently evinced by both Jesuits and Dominicans and, above everything, in the tribute Pope Paul VI has himself paid. For Pro-Teilhardism shows the perception, as Zaehner puts it, of "a point of union in time to be—the cosmic Christ of Teilhard's vision 'through whom and for whom God wanted all things to be reconciled'"—a point of union about which Zaehner<sup>1</sup> says: "most Christians before Teilhard had long forgotten they ever had it." However, the tilt towards Teilhard on the Church's part is a phenomenon worth a little attention and analysis.

For, we may pertinently ask whether the Church is really turning Teilhardian rather than watering him down to its own dogmas. The aim of his champions is to prove him orthodox under a novel nomenclature. Zaehner<sup>2</sup> himself has suggested, as we have already observed, that "Teilhard with Omega-point, noosphere, superhumanity, super-Christ and so on" was in the same case as Sri Aurobindo with his "typical concepts...which...only duplicate the more traditional terminology, thereby creating unnecessary confusion." We shall contest the thesis about Sri Aurobindo. And we may at once assert that Teilhard, in his most natural and transparent moments, is—to say the least—very far from including himself in the fold of orthodoxy, however generously spread out.

We shall begin with a text of June 1926 quoted by Zaehner.<sup>3</sup> There, Teilhard,<sup>4</sup> for all his seeing in Christianity the sole "axis" providing "any guarantee or way out for the world", categorically said: "around this axis, I can glimpse an immense quantity of truths and attitudes for which orthodoxy has not made room"—and he added with decisive frankness: "If I dared use a word which could be given unacceptable meanings, I feel myself irreducibly 'hyper-Catholic'."

What is the drift here? Granted that in Teilhard's vocabulary words like "hyper", "ultra", "super" do not as a rule indicate transcendence of a thing but only its expanded, heightened, intensified form—granted that, as the phrase "unacceptable meanings" shows, Teilhard had no desire to renounce the Roman Church, so deeply attached he was to its collective presence as being the one sure path to the future—still the irreducibility he mentions of his hyper-Catholicism entails that he would never dilute those convictions of his which rendered him suspect in the eyes of the Vatican. His position was: To be really faithful to Christ the Church must change, not Teilhard—the Church must realise the Teilhardian way to fulfil its august mission. Clearly, to his mind, Christian orthodoxy, as history knows it, was incapable of containing him: it was not what Christianity should be: Christianity

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters to Léontine Zanta* (Collins, London, 1969), p. 36.

must become quite new, incorporate "attitudes" and even "truths" for which it has had no room so far, it must let itself be expanded, heightened, intensified beyond its established formulas in order to fulfil its original genius, its primal Catholic seed: it must grow Teilhardian and not seek to absorb Teilhard into those fixities. Not historical Catholicism but something it has never dreamt of, yet ought to be, can alone do justice to Teilhard.

As early as May 1916, when he had composed his first characteristic essay, *Cosmic Life*, he wrote in a retrospective *Nota*: "If one tries to bring out the presuppositions and principles it is based on, one finds that it introduces a completely new orientation into Christian ascetical teaching."<sup>1</sup> As late as July 1950, in concluding *A Clarification: Some Reflections on Two Converse Forms of Spirit*, he reflects on the new religion towards which, as a representative of the modern world, he has moved by fusing mysticism with evolutionism: "it is still impossible at the present moment to find a single printed work which affirms the existence and describes the specific properties of an interior attitude (the *centric* cosmic sense) which, through force of circumstances, is coming to be the hidden mainspring of the life of each one of us."<sup>2</sup> July 1952 finds Teilhard practically reiterating in *The Stuff of the Universe* the text of June 1926: "a whole series of adjustments must be made, I am well aware (if we wish frankly to Christify evolution), in a number of representations or attitudes which seem to us to be definitively fixed in Christian dogma."<sup>3</sup> And at the very close of his life, in 1955, while recognising in *Le Christique* "the pulsation of countless people who are all—ranging from the borderline of unbelief to the depths of the cloister—thinking and feeling, or at least beginning to feel, just as I do",<sup>4</sup> he sets against such unofficial religious modernism in sympathy with his own vision the fact, already stressed in July 1950, of his utter isolation in the midst of contemporary Catholic authorities: ". . . I cannot, when asked, quote a single writer, a single work, that gives a clearly expressed description of the wonderful 'diaphany' that has transfigured everything for me . . . . It would be impossible for me, as I admitted earlier, to quote a single 'authority' (religious or lay) of whom I could claim that in it I can fully recognize myself, whether in relation to my 'cosmic' or my 'Christique' vision."<sup>5</sup>

No, Teilhard cannot be "orthodoxised" in any manner without being essentially violated. To be Teilhardian, Roman Catholicism has to be as he conceived it instead of what it is. "Christianity now appears to me much less a closed and established whole than an axis of progression and assimilation."<sup>6</sup> What "progression and assimilation" connotes is not simply that orthodox Christianity can remain basically the

<sup>1</sup> *Writings in Time of War* (Collins, London, 1968), pp. 70-71.

<sup>2</sup> *Activation of Energy* (Collins, London, 1970), p. 227

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 382-83.

<sup>4</sup> *Let Me Explain*. Texts selected and arranged by Jean-Pierre Demoulin, translated by Renée Hague and others (Collins, London, 1970), pp. 157-58.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 157.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters to Léontine Zanta*, p. 36.

same but assume new modes of expression in tune with modern evolutionary concepts. Henri de Lubac<sup>1</sup> reports, though without giving any reference, that Teilhard wrote to a friend: "I am convinced that a more traditional expression of my views is possible ...." De Lubac<sup>2</sup> also states about the "experience" at the back of Teilhardism: "He was confident ... that 'substantially, the experience is orthodox....'"<sup>3</sup> Yet nowhere has Teilhard himself succeeded in bringing his views or his experience into perfect *rappor*t with tradition and orthodoxy. Something always remains over, in regard to which he appears to blow hot and cold or stand with his legs in two camps.<sup>3</sup> The general situation is best put in de Lubac's own admission:<sup>4</sup> "Père Teilhard's personal interior experience was too authentic and too deep, it was (to use his word) too *innate*, for it ever to be possible to be left out of account in his formed thought and his teachings. It had been 'developed', 'extended', 'transformed', into knowledge and love of God. Even so, in spite of his persistent efforts, he was not always able to find ways of expressing it which, without doing violence to it — 'without distorting and weakening it'<sup>5</sup>, would both clarify it for him and harmonize it with the most sensitive demands of faith." It is this recurring inability on Teilhard's part to effect a complete harmony between faith and his "innate" experience that renders

<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (Collins, London, 1967), p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364, note 55. The reference is Letter of 3 October 1918 in *The Making of a Mind, Letters from a Soldier-Priest* (London & New York, Collins & Harper, 1965), p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> For, an example we may study some remarks of de Lubac (*Ibid.*, pp. 208, 209, 211).

"It is commonly thought today that anthropogenesis has come to a complete halt. This Père Teilhard regarded as an illusion, and a pernicious illusion. After hominization, which was still an 'elementary phenomenon', we are advancing towards a 'second critical point of reflection', in this case 'collective and higher'. 'the critical point of socialization' or 'co-reflection', which will ultimately bring with it full 'humanization'

"We should not attach too much importance to what we are told about this 'super-organism', that it will be made up of all human individuals just as the biological individual is made up of cells. The individuals that enter into the composition of such a super-organism are not conceived as ceasing to be so many reflective, personal centres ... Here, however, we meet with a question that cannot be evaded: is it possible to conceive a 'critical point' of collective reflection, which possesses so extraordinary a property and nevertheless allows the whole effect of the first 'critical point' to remain operative? We may wonder whether, to express the envisaged 'planetization of man', such expressions as 'second critical point' or 'second hominization', if taken in the literal sense that Père Teilhard sometimes seems to give them, are not too strong, or whether they are not even self-contradictory

"What could be meant by an 'ultra-reflection' that was specifically a 'consciousness raised to the power of two'? .. Is it really consistent, in the same sentence, to define an 'evolutionary neo-humanism' as 'dominated by the conviction that there is an ultra-human', and as being simply 'a humanism of fully evolved man'? From the fact that man is 'destined to synthesis' can one conclude that 'something greater, more complex, more centred than man is taking shape before our eyes'? Some expressions of this type might have reflected their author's deliberate intention. But does not Père Teilhard betray the indecision of his thought or its lack of accuracy when, in language that contrasts with his normal assurance, he speaks of a 'harmonized collectivity of consciousnesses *equivalent to a sort of super-consciousness*', 'a sort of common personality', or again when he says that he is coming to see that 'under the influence of co-reflection' the 'multiple reflective centres' represented by human individuals will be totalized in a 'still nameless something', in which every difference will vanish at the boundary between universe and person?"

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> *Mon Univers* (14 April 1918).

his hyper-Catholicism irreducible. Nor was it his perpetual preoccupation to reconcile himself with faith's most sensitive demands. To quote de Lubac<sup>1</sup> once more: "Père Teilhard attacked this problem with patience and loyalty, but he always kept his eyes fixed firmly on his vision." And that vision struck him as considerably novel and worth propagating: ... "in truth (without, I think, the least touch of conceit) I do believe that I can see something, and I would like that something to be seen"<sup>2</sup>. No wonder he was mostly all out to "modernise" Christianity in order to make it "get off to a completely new start"<sup>3</sup>.

From the very beginning of his reflective life the task faced him of bringing his point of view into accord with orthodoxy. In his *Nota to Cosmic Life* in 1916 he<sup>4</sup> observes: "In the 'classical' interpretation, suffering is *first and foremost* a punishment, an expiation; ... it is born of a *sin* and makes reparation for the sin .... In contrast with this view, suffering, according to the general line followed by *Cosmic Life* and the ideas it puts forward, is primarily the consequence of a *work of development* and the price that has to be paid for it . . . Physical and moral evil *are produced by the process of Becoming*: everything that evolves has its own sufferings and commits its own faults. The Cross is the symbol of *the arduous labour of Evolution*—rather than the symbol of *expiation*." Then Teilhard admits that the two points of view can be reconciled if the Fall of Man, which Christianity postulated as the ground of sin and suffering, is taken to have brought about Mankind's entry in Nature's evolutionary setting for progress and work "by the sweat of its brow". But Teilhard continues that there is no mark left in nature by the postulated Fall, "since its visible penalty is contained in Evolution, with Expiation coinciding with Work." This obviously renders the postulate arbitrary and otiose. Even after its acceptance, "there is a great difference of emphasis between *expiatory asceticism* and the asceticism underlying 'Cosmic Life'." And Teilhard's last words here are: "I would have been dishonest not to point this out."

Nor are his contrasts a heresy of his younger days outgrown in the period of maturity. In April, 1948, he sent a colleague in Namur a typed note, "My intellectual position", which was later published in *Les Études Philosophiques* (Vol. 10, Oct.-Nov., 1955) under the title, "The thought of Père Teilhard de Chardin in his own words."<sup>5</sup> There he summarises his "Physics", shows how upon it his "Apologetics" and "Mysticism" get built, and then refers to the outline of a "Metaphysics" being suggested and formed by the three branches of his system taken together. In this Metaphysics, he says, "even the Problem of Evil is given an acceptable intellectual solution (the statistical necessity of disorders within a multitude in process of organization)."<sup>6</sup> Again, in 1953, as one of the readjustments in definitively fixed Christian

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Letter of 13 December 1918 in *The Making of a Mind*, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> *Introduction à la vie chrétienne* (1944), p. 11—quoted by de Lubac, *Op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> *Writings in Time of War*, p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> *Let Me Explain*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 146.

dogma, we see: "The twofold notion of *statistical evil* and *evolutionary redemption* correcting or completing the idea of catastrophic sin and reparatory expiation." Thus Teilhard in his old age repeats the "completely new orientation" of his youth *vis-à-vis* suffering and sin.

And in between his youth and his old age we have a declaration which is total and goes to the root of the matter. On January 26, 1936 he<sup>1</sup> writes in a letter from China: "What increasingly dominates my interest and my inner preoccupations, as you already know, is the effort to establish within myself, and to diffuse around me, a new religion (let's call it an improved Christianity if you like) whose personal God is no longer the great 'neolithic' landowner of times gone by but the Soul of the world—as demanded by the cultural and religious stage we have now reached.... My road ahead seems clearly marked out; it is a matter not of superimposing Christ on the world, but of 'panchristising' the universe. The delicate point (and I touched on part of this in *Christology and Evolution*) is that, if you follow this path, you are led not only to widening your views, but to turning your perspectives upside down; evil (no longer punishment for a fault but 'sign and effect' of Progress) and matter (no longer a guilty and lower element, but 'the stuff of the Spirit') assume a meaning diametrically opposed to the meaning *customarily* viewed as Christian. Christ emerges from the transformation incredibly enlarged (at least that is my opinion—and all the uneasy contemporaries with whom I have spoken about it think like me). But is this Christ really the Christ of the Gospels? And if not, on what henceforward do we base what we are trying to build? I don't know whether among the many of my colleagues who are in front of me or behind me on the road I am travelling, there are any (or even a single one! ... that seems incredible) who realise the importance of the step that all are taking. But I am beginning to see it very clearly. One thing reassures me: it is that, in me, the increase of light goes hand in hand with love, and with renouncement of myself in the greater than me. This could not deceive. Thus in an obscure way I fall back on the feelings that Being is infinitely richer and more able to bring renewal than our logic. As all forms of movement, the paradox of the religious change now in progress will resolve itself by its very movement. '*Solvitur eundo.*'

This declaration should settle all controversy. Teilhard is after a new religion, which can stand in its own right. It need not be un-Christian but it can be Christian only if Christianity undergoes an improvement. The improvement does not lie just in extending, heightening, intensifying what we have been accustomed to as Christian: it lies basically in a complete revolution, an entire inversion—the head has to be put where the feet were and *vice versa*: no mere patch-up or expansion along the same line will do. But Christ still remains the core of the new religion, even though the Church's outlook on evil and on matter has to be turned topsy-turvy or taken to a sheer antipodes. And Christ is now the Soul of the world, the Cosmic Person who is the animating principle of all matter: he is as wide as the universe: he is the universe

<sup>1</sup> *Activation of Energy*, p. 382.



itself in its true inner reality, the One Spirit whose outer stuff, as it were, is the world of matter, the sphere of a difficult, often erring yet ever advancing evolution. There can be no going back on this view, whether or not it agrees with the picture of Christ given by the Gospels. But if we gauge the true temper of the Gospels' Christ—the revealer of love for God's children and of the mystical resort of our whole self to the Divine Infinite, we may be sure he is not negated by this Panchristism which the trend and mood of our modern age with its discovery of universal evolution demands.

The last portion of the declaration — about the power of Being and that of logic — is not very clear, but a general light is shed on it by some other letters to the same correspondent. "The weaker and less confident you feel in yourself, the more you need to strengthen in yourself the vision of the omnipresent Being to whom you have vowed your efforts."<sup>1</sup> "May God preserve within me the deep taste, and the sort of lucid ecstasy, that intoxicate me with the joy of Being—a joy drunk in as though from an everlasting spring .... What science or philosophy is comparable to the knowledge of that incomparable Reality—and above all to the perception of it, even at the most modest and inchoate level!"<sup>2</sup> The world and its Soul—Matter inwardly one with Spirit and serving as its developing expression: such seems to be "the omnipresent Being". And a broad clarification as well as confirmation of what the whole passage denotes is found in an earlier letter from China: "in my heart I haven't changed, except along the same lines. One consequence of this movement is that I am gradually finding myself more and more on the fringe of a lot of things. It's only thanks to the exotic life I'm leading that this drift does not develop into a break. What rather reassures me and saves me is that, if a whole wall of ecclesiastical concepts and conventions has definitively collapsed, I have never, on the other hand, felt nearer to what seem to me the deeper axes of Christianity: the future value of the world, the primacy of the Spirit and Personality, divine Personality. I can see no way out, nor any strength for me, outside the (theoretical *and* practical) synthesis of passionate faith in the world and passionate faith in God. Being fully human and Christian, one through the other. This leads to situations that appear paradoxical. But I am more and more determined to put my trust in Life, without letting anything surprise me. And then I feel that I haven't the least apprehension about anything that could happen to me, provided that it is 'in the service of the world.'<sup>3</sup>

A point of particular interest here is a fact that has never been thrown into relief or even brought into the open. We know that Teilhard passed through many an inner crisis of "anti-ecclesiasticism, not to say anti-Christianity,"<sup>4</sup> yet came out an obedient child of his order and his Church—letting his books be suppressed and not losing his trust in the institutions of Roman Catholicism. We know that he perceived the delicate and dangerous situation he was in and once devoutly wished that "loyalty" to

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Léontine Zanta*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

himself might not sever him from his Church nor "attachment" to his Church falsify his own truth: he wrote that all that was asked of him and of his correspondent was "to try, ceaselessly, to climb upwards towards more breadth and more light, without letting go of these two threads", and he ended: "Pray that I may never break either of them."<sup>1</sup> He feared the possibility of a recantation or else a revolt—and managed to live on without allowing either alternative to actualise. But now for the first time we are told that the drift of his vision away from "ecclesiastical concepts and conventions" was so great, so decisive that if he had not been leading an "exotic life", living in a place of personal isolation and intellectual distance like China, there would have been a rupture: the conflict would have been of such acuteness and the pressure of such magnitude that Teilhard, to remain himself, would have had to cut himself apart from his Order and his Church: a "break" with them would have surely developed round about the period of the letter—June 1934. Further, he is absolutely sure of being most truly Christian in the "faith" he has found for himself for good and all, and he has no shrinking from any future "break" if he has lived up to his "faith".

The position thrown into relief here is prepared, as it were, by a confession made in *c.* 1925. Robert Speaight<sup>2</sup> pointedly notes that even while affirming his fidelity to the Church Teilhard made no attempt to conceal his estrangement from its representatives. Speaight quotes from a letter: "In a kind of a way I *no longer have confidence* in the exterior manifestations of the Church. I believe that through it the divine influence will continue to reach me, but I no longer have much belief in the immediate and tangible value of official directions and decisions. Some people feel happy in the visible Church, but for my own part I think I shall be happy to die in order to be free of it—and to find our Lord outside of it."

The last phrase is radical. It shows Teilhard feeling the actual Church to be unbearable and yearning somehow to get rid of it and go out of it in order to reach and live in its ideal spirit.

Again, some years later (August 23, 1929), in the midst of a deep and cordial attachment to his Order, we chance, in the correspondence with Léontine Zanta, upon the envisagement of a situation in which Teilhard would be compelled to abjure his membership of the Church: "the case ... of my being driven into a corner where I should be faced with intellectual dishonesty." He personally thinks such a case "very unlikely", but his words prove that his adherence to institutional Roman Catholicism was not unconditional at all and, as the rest of the letter says, he narrowly had the luck "to have passed the turning-point of last year, which was certainly a critical juncture in my intellectual and emotional life, without a break".

As time passed, Teilhard, for all his sticking on, found himself no better reconciled to the actual Church. We discern in a letter to Bruno de Solages on January 17, 1954, just a year before his own death, the same feeling which prompted nearly 29

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

years earlier the death-wish for the sake of liberation from the visible institution of his religion: "The sin of Rome (for all its casual benedictions on technique and science) is not to believe in a future, and an achievement (for heaven) of man upon earth. I know it because I have stifled for fifty years in this sub-human atmosphere."<sup>1</sup>

We can now easily see the naturalness of the perception Teilhard once had in China that, had he been anywhere near the active field of orthodoxy, a break would have been inevitable.

The cause of the break, it goes without saying, would have been the too intolerable contrast between established Christianity and his science-activated and humanism-steeped religion of a spiritually evolving physical universe. He had not the slightest inclination to yield on fundamentals to his religious masters.

In a communication of September 1948, in connection with his efforts to secure a *nihil obstat* for *The Phenomenon of Man*, he told Paul Lamare: 'Absolutely nothing will make me change my mind or hold my tongue on the essential points. They must take me as I am or not at all. I am going to Rome, but not to Canossa.'<sup>2</sup> And we have also a pretty clear picture of why Teilhard was so anxious to be able to remain within the fold in spite of his "new religion". We learn from Speaight:<sup>3</sup> "To those who begged him to take a freedom always open to him, he would borrow the words of St.-Exupéry: 'In order to have an effect upon the house, you have got to live in it.' To all such impulsive well-wishers Teilhard emphasized that ... a revolutionary attitude ... would mean 'the killing of everything that I want to liberate, and not destroy.'<sup>4</sup>

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> *Teilhard de Chardin A Biography* (Collins, London, 2nd Impression, 1968), p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 320

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 282

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

## AH, CHILD...

AH, child, did you glide  
Past the big tree, rustling?  
Did each leaf dance with joy there  
For Her, for Her?

Ah, was the light too intense, child?  
Did the very earth glow  
Of that silent timeless crater?  
Saw you not your sisters  
Laying garlands in the dusk?  
Saw you not your brothers  
In their night-vigil of love?

Ah, child, trance-lost in the moonlight,  
Pleading with the flowers  
For the cause of all this magic,  
Asking of the plants the reason why.  
Ah, child, did the spirits whisper  
In the fragrance of the roses?  
Hummed the breeze amid the branches  
The secret of its motion?  
Heard you then the fairies  
And a million subtle players  
In the orchestra of nature  
Making music in their gladness?  
Knew you then the answer,  
Wept you then with rapture  
At discovery sublime?

Ah, child, did they tell you  
Of the birthday of the Mother?

Ah, child, were you with Her children  
In the twilight of the morning?  
Placed you not a stone then  
As the sun played in the heavens  
Its symphony of gold?  
Saw you not the fire

In its mystical pulsations?  
 Saw you not the concrete  
 Of the first divine foundations?  
 Shared you not the moment  
 As the light spoke from the Heavens,  
 As the light embraced the Earth,  
 On the birthday of the Mother  
 For us, for us?

VIKAS  
 ("*Peace*", *Auroville*)

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## THE MOTHER'S FACE

A LOVE that is utter sweetness,  
 A glorious rose of honeyed beauty,  
 Tides and tides of Grace,  
 A glimpse of all-sweeping pity.

A smile reaching your inmost self  
 With a calm of silent mountain-tops.  
 A heart-filling joy unutterable  
 Like a parched land soaked with pure rain-drops.

Eyes shining into yours—  
 A promise of colossal peace,  
 A vast healing of troubled souls,  
 A solving of earth's blind miseries.

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

## TOWARDS AUROVILLE

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

*(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1971)*

INTERNATIONALISM is essentially an outcome of the European mind. It 'proceeds characteristically from life-experience to the idea and ... returns from the idea upon life in an attempt to change its outward forms and institutions, its order and system.'<sup>42</sup> It is an attempt of the human mind to outgrow the nation-idea and even in a way destroy it in the larger interests of humanity. It becomes effective only when it has a relevance to some developing power in the life of the times. Born of the thought of the eighteenth century and christened by the French Revolution, this noble idea took a clear body and a recognisable vital shape from the forces of socialism and anarchism. Being entirely futurist in its view it turns away from the prejudices and narrowness of the past to the breadth of vision and purity of the future. This pure and noble idea is also a great power. But as man at present lives more in the outward than in the inward, he is afflicted by a great weakness. For men who are governed by the physical and vital existence it seems to be abstract, and it is in this abstraction and remoteness that the pure idea, however powerful it may be, suffers and becomes helpless. Unless, therefore, an idea becomes part of the soul-life of a nation or a people it does not become effective. No doubt there are many conditions at present which seem to favour the progress of internationalism. Science especially has been a great force in its development, for science is international in its very nature and the indivisible inheritance of all humanity. Moreover there is greater communication today than before in the fields of art, religion and culture and the idea of a world culture is gradually growing in the minds of men. Unfortunately, contrary to the expectations of the votaries of internationalism, the progressive forces of socialism do not seem to be necessarily bound up with the progress of internationalism. The real cause of the failure of the idea of internationalism is that barring a few individuals it is still merely an idea. It will become powerful when it also becomes a part of the vital and psychological existence of mankind. A profound change of the world conditions can come about only when men are open and ready to change.

The family, the clan and the tribe ideas all had their origin in the vital necessities in human nature for aggregation and developed into strong psychological motives. Whereas the nation idea is the outcome of a geographical and historical necessity; it arose not from any primary vital need but from the force of circumstances and is therefore a product of environmental evolution. And it grew into a strong psychological motive of patriotism and a national ego with a nation soul to support and guarantee its durability. But, at present, international unity is only an idea with no vital necessity;

even the geographical necessity for such a unification of the race does not exist. Science, no doubt, has struck down the physical distances between nations but the social, linguistic, cultural and religious barriers are still strong. It may therefore be by a historical necessity, by the need for international political, economic and technical co-operation that a loose framework will be created without any vivifying psychological reality behind it. But behind all the external circumstances and necessities there is always an internal necessity, a secret goal, a subconscious inevitable will in Nature which persistently creates forms suitable for its progressive manifestation and realisation. This is not only a biological fact but also a psychological truth. "Such a will in Nature creates for itself favourable external circumstances and happenings or finds them created for it in the stress of events. And even if they are insufficient, she will still often use them beyond their apparent power of effectivity, not minding the possibility of failure, for she knows that in the end she will succeed and every experience of failure will help to better the eventual success."<sup>43</sup> Following this compelling method of Nature's operation let us then create a body with the modicum of conscious and vivifying psychological content that we can at present give it and devotedly wait or work for the soul to grow in it. For "as a national ego formed which identified itself with the geographical body of the nation and developed in it the psychological instinct of unity and the need of its satisfaction, so a collective human ego will develop in the international body and will evolve in it the psychological instinct of human unity and the need of its satisfaction. That will be its guarantee of duration."<sup>44</sup> To make this world-union durable and long-lasting there would be needed "a religion of humanity or an equivalent sentiment much more powerful, explicit, self-conscious, universal in its appeal than the nationalist's religion of country; the clear recognition by man in all his thought and life of a single soul in humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul-form; an ascension of man beyond the principle of ego which lives by separativeness,—and yet there must be no destruction of individuality, for without that man would stagnate; a principle and arrangement of the common life which would give free play to the individual variation, interchange in diversity and the need of adventure and conquest by which the soul of man lives and grows great, and sufficient means of expressing all the resultant complex life and growth in a flexible and progressive form of human society."<sup>45</sup>

*(To be continued)*

*Compiled by MADHUSUDAN REDDY*

<sup>42</sup> *The Ideal of Human Unity*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry pp. 337-38.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 341.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 353.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 354.

## ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

*(Continued from the issue of March, 1972)*

### CHARACTER-ANALYSIS IN SAVITRI (*Contd*)

WE have touched on the manifested human aspect of Savitri. But there are yet larger and profounder aspects which we shall now discuss. So far we have shown bright premonitions of the true reality of Savitri. Much of her diviner elements are suggested and the reader can work up the suggested points. This is one part of the art in Sri Aurobindo. He never totally reveals, but leaves much unsaid and suggested which works in a greater effectivity of tone and grandeur. A character like Savitri has a myriad reaches, depths, heights and a single uni-tonal representation cannot convey the reality of her total aspects. We are shown too some significant points, signposts, revealing stages, indicational moods or traits—the rest is almost inscrutable and indefinable by the rational and dialectical intellect. There is a mystery all about the personality of Savitri which we cannot probe with clear-cut rationality, which needs subtler treatment. Sri Aurobindo offers the subtlest treatment possible. This subtlety becomes most true and significant, when he suggests instead of actually revealing in many words.

In the first phase we see Savitri as a divinely human entity. But after the death of Satyavan, she sheds the individual portion of the character and becomes a cosmic figure—she no longer is Savitri—she is the Woman. Opposing the Woman stands the cosmic godhead of death Pursuing the soul in the clutch of negating and illusory power, she grows greater than any human. All the suggestions so long made now seem to be bearing fruit. The exigency of doom has compelled her to renounce her former limited existence. It has given the clarion-call to ascend to her truer nature, for death will not heed a mortal's claim or the claim of Love. Some power greater than man must be evoked and awakened in order to cope with the necessity. Death gives forth long tirades and reveals to her mighty aspects of gloom, negation, fear, desolation; he argues as a mind, as an empiricist, then as a nihilist, then as an idealist. The main purport of all his speeches is that Life is evanescent, the only reality is death. All ideas, ideals, hopes, constructions, revelations, religions and moralities are futile. He seems to yield to an ever inexhaustible wealth of images — his words seem invincible with the logic of materialism. To all this Savitri affirms her right, her position, her great immutable truths. Mere words cannot shake her. Mere revelations of the grotesque aspects of Death cannot persuade her to leave her mission. For she is conscious of her inherent force, her indwelling will, her unsurmountable perseverance. Death does not admit openly her superiority. And in spite of his sneer and his cold and biting sarcasm, in spite of all his questions, he yields



place to her by giving her boons. By and by he has to admit her greatness. The sneer gradually is turned to respect. For all that admission he cannot let go the claim on Satyavan's soul. Savitri on her side is not satisfied with all the boons that come to her unasked. Her soul demands the soul of Satyavan. We have met with this singular fixity of purpose before too. This resolve is a human trait; but wedded to the divine will, it becomes insurmountable. We have yet to face this will as it faces the Absolute and, by opposing the mask it puts forth, compel it to reveal its consenting eyes of Grace.

When Death sees the overwhelming power of Savitri, it withers away. Savitri has revealed to us her aspect of earthhood, then her aspect of will. This will is imperative for any new creation, as its inaugurator and as its triumphing symbol. In the human aspect she has love—love that bridges humanity to the spirit. These two build up the main trends of her character. Love without will is ineffective; will without love has no meaning where the earth is concerned. For will can march ahead, forge a new path, destroy the obstacles. But it is love that creates, or rebuilds in that cleared field of creation. In a way Savitri is both a creator and a destroyer. She creates a new world, allowing no alien domination to intervene in her path. She destroys all inherent or ensuing powers, influences or even challenges the embodiment of Ignorance itself. But from outside, she seems so docile, so fragile, so lovable. We are amazed when we meet such superhuman power and tenacity in her. The way of loud proclamation, the clarion-blare of glory does not necessarily mean a great puissance. A great power lives in silence, in unassuming hush. For we must not forget that Savitri is here incognito. In that garb alone can her mission be best fulfilled. If she had come as the revealed godhead, perhaps she could not have touched the seat of human misery. Her splendour would have called a veil to be cast on human weakness, and on Ignorance which she has come to change. To reveal her glory has never been the trait of her character. This unassumingness is one of the stamps of the Divine.

Thus we come face to face with a new aspect—humility. Humility is not self-abasement; it is not the cancelling of what we are nor declaring what we are not. Savitri knows her divinity to be a greater fact than anything in creation. But she refrains from manifesting herself for the fulfilment of her mission. What she does, is not a self-abasement but the veiling of her secret self. Although her assumed humanity does not conceal this, she is not eager to reveal it unless it is essential. Her sense of humility prevents her from making a show. For, all self-pronouncements are psychologically bravados, conceited statements, or declarations that cover up a great gap in the structure of the personality. This we can see in Death, whose loud voice only conceals the essential fact of its deprivation of power, of Truth and of knowledge. To match a falsehood with another falsehood is not Savitri's aim. To vaunt her stature as against his would be false. She does not speak, but reveals what she truly is. Whereas he does not reveal but only brags, which falsifies all his high-keyed declarations. Such a position on the part of Savitri can only come, when one is '*ātma-sthā*' or poised in the light of the self. A true self-knowledge brings in true humility. True

greatness needs no words, or gestures or even attitudes to reveal itself. The very fact of the reality of its nature, self and consciousness makes its possessor humble—when we have attained our self-knowledge, this itself is the end—it needs no further outer declaration. Expression cannot enhance the self-knowledge. Also one who is truly great can be truly humble.

But humility does not stunt a soul. It does not shrink from action, even great actions if this is demanded of it. So too, in Savitri, her human mask, her humility do not bar it, when the moment comes to assume the stature she is at her heights. This assumption of greatness is not bravado, it is a necessity. Also when one has to ascend great summits of consciousness, one must transcend one's limitations. So here. The veil that the Supreme casts between Satyavan and herself after Death was had been never finished, necessitated Savitri's ascending the highest rungs of consciousness. If she had withdrawn from this point, declaring that the return of Satyavan was not sanctioned by the Supreme, her work would have remained unaccomplished. Also the Supreme wanted to reveal its heights, its vasts, its spheres of plenitude and light and bliss and show that Death was a mask of its own power. From Savitri's side she found no trace in Satyavan's soul of a desire to withdraw from the field of earth. It is this crucial decision that determined her action. Both the will of Death and the will of the Supreme could not stand in the way of a soul's return to the fields of terrestrial existence to complete its cycle of manifestation. Its decision comes from the fiat secret in its very core. Savitri saw this; hence her decision to oppose all that came in the soul's way. She knew the secret fiat and this made her so invincible in her will. She, as the incarnation of the Divine Word, the instrument of the Supreme, the human and the Divine in one single embodiment, could not oppose so fundamental a negation, if it was true. For if that negation was a fact and valid, her existence had no meaning. Facing all these realities, she knew both Death and the veil of the Supreme were tests, and deliberate provocations and hence a play. That is to say, Savitri had the vision to see beyond the actualities of manifestation into the core of Reality and knew the true Essence of things. Such a perception cannot be acquired but is inborn. A lesser poet would have missed this cardinal aspect of Savitri's nature; in fact, this is the only possible and feasible explanation of the legend of Savitri. If legend has to become a reality and subscribe to the laws of cosmic and transcendental truth, it must explain the secret that underlies its garb of mysteries. Even a fairy-tale has its side of esoteric validity. If the Mahabharata, from where the legend of Savitri has been derived, speaks of Savitri as a character of great determination, it only half states the issue. The conquest of Death is not a diurnal occurrence, and hence its cause, the instrument of this victory, must have a deeper source of power than a mere strong human character. Merely stating that Savitri was a great soul, and her power lay in her *satitva* is not enough. Here Sri Aurobindo shows where lay the source of her power. Mere faithfulness to wedlock may be a great moral virtue, but it has no spiritual significance. Love has a great power; but greater than this love between man and woman, or even between soul and soul, is the power of the incarnating

Divine. Love is not the end of the play of man and the Divine; greater than that are manifestation and the furthering of evolution and the bringing close of the cause for which the world was created—the removal of Ignorance and the limitations and veils that shut away the supreme Reality.

*(To be continued)*

ROMEN

## LOVE—LIFE'S ONLY VICTORIOUS ENSIGN

SELF-giving at the altar of love is the key,  
 Complete self-effacement and suffering is love's price;  
 Love must be a flame of living purity  
 Where impiety holds no pretence or guise.

God's Grace, soul's longing, heart's wisdom, life's sun is love,  
 Not bodies' clasp, not clasped emotions' fire.  
 For love world's working, births' cycles, earth's wheelings, life's move;  
 Love for love's sake, not for pleasure, not for desire.

Seeking of love is God-search, ego's doom,  
 Not lust, not demands, not claims, not hankerings;  
 And pleasures?—stupid stumbling o'er bees' comb,  
 Tickling and teasing an army of sleeping stings.

Only by love, for love is life worth living;  
 Love blossoms only by giving, giving, giving.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

# THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

## A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

*(Continued from the issue of March, 1972)*

*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.*

### Chapter II

#### *Matter*

IN they go and behold! a land so different from Aries, of greens and browns and lovely rolling hills, with fruit trees galore full of sweetly singing birds and flowers swarming with bees. Pom-pom realises that he has Hunter's handkerchief still in his hand and that in the excitement he forgot to give it back. Well, who knows, a handkerchief might come in handy on such an arduous journey, and so he puts it in his pocket.

At the sight of the fruit trees all around them the children remember they are quite hungry. They see one special tree which has the most beautiful fruit and seems just ripe to eat. It stands all alone in the middle of a very lush grazing pasture fenced off from the rest of the land. Val and Pom-pom are no exception to the rule and they are determined to climb the fence and to eat precisely the fruit of this special tree.

Up and over they go and soon are gorging themselves on luscious green apples. They eat so much that before long they become very drowsy. With their stomachs so full and the excitement of Zodiailand, the air heavy-laden with the strong scent of flowers and trees in bloom, they fall into a peaceful and profound sleep.

After a long time that cannot be counted by Earth clocks, for time in Zodiailand has a meaning other than what we know, Val is awakened by great gusts of hot air being blown into her face and sounds of 'snort-snort-spoof.' She opens her eyes and there, face to face, is an enormous bull. Her fright is so great that she jumps to her feet and runs behind the tree, calling to Pom-pom. Meanwhile the bull doesn't understand what the shouting and panic is about because all he wants is his favourite spot to sleep on.

"If you'll just move over," he assures them, "I won't disturb your rest. There's room for the three of us."

Slowly, however, it begins to dawn on Bull that something peculiar is going on; after all what are these creatures doing in his private grazing land? Without wanting

to bother them with his curiosity he politely begins to question the motive of their presence.

The children blurt out all their previous adventures and Bull blinks his eyes in astonishment. He can hardly follow their tale and thinks it so delightful that he is determined to take them home to his mistress who loves a good story now and then, if she can ever stay awake long enough to listen and refrain from eating! In fact, it is time for the special banquet that takes place about now in honour of the Sun's entry into Taurus.

"What luck for you both, and for me, because my mistress will surely reward me for bringing such a charming addition to our festivities."

Bull asks the children to mount and off they go across the rolling hills and fertile pastures until they arrive at Malamulapaga's illustrious residence. And what a busy place! All sorts of strange little creatures are rushing here and there in great haste. Everyone is so excited because Malamulapaga is just awaking.

"Elves," cries Pom-pom, "those are real elves!"

"Of course they are," says Val, "don't show how little you know. Haven't you been reading about elves all your life? Don't they teach you anything in school?"

The residence is a sort of cavern inside a very lush hill, covered with the most beautiful flowers. The party is almost ready and gongs are sounding. Rush, rush ... it's such an effort to rush in Taurusland, the air is so heavy — all one wants to do is idle.

Bull carries the children into Malamulapaga's chambers and behold! the fair lady reclining on a sumptuous, enormous couch on the other side of a huge banquet table. The couch is enormous as is the table because Malamulapaga is as big as a mountain! The children gasp in wonder at the size of her. Rolls and rolls of flesh all topped off by a great head of green locks almost falling to the ground, the same colour as her amazing eyes whose heavy lids are slowly beginning to open ...

As she awakens elves begin to dance and play, chimes ring and the whole land seems to rejoice at this happy event: Malamulapaga is awake, so now the banquet can begin!

With great effort she raises a pudgy, roly-poly index finger, at which gesture a little elf jumps to her side. After a yawn that almost sucks in the whole table before her, he is summoned closer and Malamulapaga whispers in his ear. The elf jumps for joy. He carries out her desire, strikes a bell and in comes Haro the Harp-player, with an instrument nine times bigger than he.

There is lively expectancy, for Mala has expressed her desire to start the year's celebration with a song from her lovely lips, but to do this she must stand and this is no simple matter! All available elves are summoned to the task and together they shove, pull and tug this great mound of flesh. Fair Mala gives some assistance but their efforts at first are not very successful and not a few elves get squashed under a huge arm or leg. Out from under they squirm and hastily shake their flexible bones back into shape. Slowly the feat is accomplished and there she stands in all her

glory! Applause from all the company and at one little wink from Mala Haro the Harper strikes the first note.

It is difficult to describe the beauty of Malamulapaga's voice and the sweetness of her lyrical expression. Her song fills all of Taurusland with joy and even the birds are irresistibly drawn to sing. When she finishes it is easy to imagine the reaction of her adoring audience, for applause is not enough to express their appreciation. With great effort she signals them all to silence and with another little wink a gong is sounded and the great banquet begins as Mala tumbles back on her couch.

It seems all the sleepiness and slowness have temporarily vanished for all are so quick to devour the exotic delicacies that are offered. There is so much ado about the food that Malamulapaga hasn't even noticed the children. The time spent eating is really quite long and in Earth time it would be almost impossible to count. The fact is that the children—as well as everyone else—have completely forgotten it is almost time to leave Taurusland. They are all so happy with the special entertainment prepared each year for Malamulapaga that all cares and worries vanish.

Taking advantage of a lull at one point, Bull steps forth, gives a few greeting snorts to his mistress and announces his special treat for her. He presents the children and she is overjoyed.

"Never has such a delicate favour been made to me. Bull will be given a grand prize!" she exclaims.

The children are then coaxed to relate their adventures and at the most unlikely moments Malamulapaga bursts into uncontrollable frenzies of laughter, which send the rolls of her pink flesh into ripples and shakes and volcanic upheavals. In the process many a plate and glass come crashing to the ground.

Delighted with the story she announces that since they have been so kind she will also do something special for them. Malamulapaga summons an elf with a hundred keys chained around his neck and whispers in his ear. He dashes off and returns pulling a wagon with several very elaborate chests.

"In honour of this magnificent occasion and with sincere gratitude, I will show you something few eyes have ever seen: MY POSSESSIONS! Ah my little ones, never, never have there been such marvels. Quickly, open the chests and show our illustrious guests the quality of my treasures."

There before their eyes are the grandest and most sublime pieces of Taurusland, and the children stare in amazement.

"Enough," cries Mala, "that's enough!" and quickly the lids are slammed shut, almost catching Pom-pom's head in the process.

"Next I would like our little ones to express a desire, anything their hearts would like, except of course my possessions, which can never belong to anyone else!"

She turns to Val and asks what it is she would like. Val thinks a moment and says: "A storybook, ... yes, that's what I'd like. A storybook."

"A storybook, a storybook ... you mean with *words*? What a foolish wish! Why do you want words when you can have music and dance and pictures? What can you

do with words? Oh no, that wish will never do!"

"All right," sighs Val, "then a picturebook."

"Well now, that's another matter. Of course you can have a picturebook, the finest to be found in all of Taurusland."

And saying this she raises a fat finger and a little elf hurries to fulfil Val's wish. Back he comes with the most beautifully bound leather book and presents it to Val. Everyone bursts into applause at the extreme goodness of their mistress, for surely there is no other person so generous as Malamulapaga of Taurusland!

Pom-pom then jumps up, clapping his hands for joy:

"I know what I want! I know what I want! A red balloon!"

Mala swoons, there are shrieks and screams and a terrific uproar from all those present, as elves rush to their mistress's side to console and reassure her, shouting:

"Shut him up!"

"Keep him quiet!"

"Away with him, away, away!"

Val and Pom-pom hug each other in desperation. They cannot understand why a simple thing like a red balloon could cause such a commotion. After all, every child wants a red balloon!

"Ah my little dumplings," says Mala finally regaining herself as she gestures for silence, "haven't you noticed? There is no red in Taurusland. The only thing that could make our Bull violent is the colour red, and when this peaceful creature ... look at him lying there in such an attitude of serenity ... when he sees red he becomes fury itself. Horrors! Let us hope this calamity never befalls our land.

"... And now I have the great pleasure to announce my wish for the year."

Again applause and noisy approvals from the party, gongs sound and bells ring. Mala speaks, with great solemnity and sincere emotion:

"I want these children always with me, in my special golden cage. They will be my live possessions, my very precious treasures. All for me!"

The children gasp at these words. They entreat Mala to let them go, setting off an avalanche of abuses from her indignant followers. Who dares contradict the yearly wish of the fair Malamulapaga! And so they burst into tears.

The cage is wheeled in, the children are placed inside and Pom-pom continues crying and crying until finally, remembering Great Hunter's handkerchief, he pulls it out of his pocket to blow his nose.

Pandemonium breaks loose. A red handkerchief!!! Elves run all over the place trying to hide, squeaking and screeching, each trying to save himself. No one remembers Malamulapaga who cannot move by herself and in absolute desperation falls into a dead faint, while the party—which a few minutes earlier was such a festive affair—is turned into a collective folly.

Bull stands and gets ready to charge. He paws the ground with his front hoof, snooting and snorting. His anger is slow to work up but once it is aroused, off he goes, crashing around the banquet room, throwing everything sky high with his horns.

Everybody has fled, except Malamulapaga of course, who remains reclining in a faint on her couch, and the two children who can't flee because they are locked in the cage.

Toward them and the red handkerchief he charges with a fury so great that he crashes into them sending cage and all flying through the entrance, high into the sky. The children fear they are doomed. They seem to be going higher and faster, always higher ... but why don't they come down? To their amazement they find they are perched on the back of an odd looking bird who carries them along on his flight far above the turmoil they left below.

*Taurus is an Earth sign, an element which corresponds to Matter, as Fire does to Spirit; it is feminine, of Fixed energy—a mid-seasonal, steady flow, and it is ruled by Venus.*

*The Sun, symbol of the Divine, moves along the ecliptic, illuminating each Zodiacal sign it touches on its journey. As seen in this fantasy, all the lands exist simultaneously but the individual's experience is that of a progressive unfoldment. And so Matter exists, but when the spark of Spirit touches it there is a quickening, an awakening of inherent Life. This is the symbol of Malamulapaga. The individual affords a further possibility within the Play: it is the children who make the movement of progression within the eternal possible.*

(To be continued)

PATRIZIA

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## CARVED IMAGE

THE carved image said, love me,  
 I long for my maker's touch.  
 I did and she throbbed  
 Under my caressing hands  
 and lingering eyes  
 adoring her charms.  
 Her cool, opalescent love glowed  
 When I touched it  
 with the warmth  
 of mine.

GEORGETTE



## “LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

*(Continued from the issue of March, 1972)*

### THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

#### II

M SEEMS to be one who has been shaped by the Mother. His first visit to the Ashram was in 1942 and he has been here since 1945. As a child he was very shy. There is something interesting about how he was attracted to the Mother. At the site where Golconde now stands there was a well. M was playing nearby and while walking backwards fell into it. When he was brought out his father wanted him to go to the Mother but he was very hesitant. His father pushed him, as it were, to the Light—the Mother. She poured so much love and affection on him that he lost all fear of her and for ever afterwards.

Those were the blessed days when those who came first, second and third in the recreational games received their initialled Prize Cards from the Mother's hands. A special medal was awarded to the person who showed the best results during the year both in studies and on the playing fields. This came to be known as the “Prix d'Honneur”. M was the first fortunate one to receive it from the Mother in 1951. He is now a professor at the International Centre of Education.

Lost in admiration Prof. P spoke about M when he was his student, “He was square in everything, far above the common run.”

The following will illustrate M's inner make-up.

Who doesn't like to take rest after school hours and lunch? But M would be found wielding a broom and sweeping the Ashram courtyard at 1 p.m. His father, a humble man, also a Professor and the Manager of the Ashram Press, would set about cleaning the Press on Sundays, rejecting the holiday mood. The Mother says about humility:

“Humility and sincerity are the best safeguards. Without them each step is a danger, with them the victory is certain. Humility is the surest way to the indispensable dissolution of ego.”

C who came at the top of the next generation had his education under M as well as under B (now 38), another student of high calibre. Thus the first batch of teachers who were made by the Mother's hands are repaying, in part, for the care given to them when they were children.

The Mother stopped going to the Playground regularly after December 1958, but up to 1962 she went on Darshan Days to take salute of the March Past and for some special occasions. After 1962 she stopped going out completely.

C was the last to receive the much coveted medal from the Mother in 1961 in

the Playground. He is now a Professor and is helping to mould the future generation.

Up to 1965 the "Prix d'Honneur" was given to the student who showed the best results in studies and physical education. From 1966 the School prize for studies and the prize for physical education were separated. The School prize is now called "Prix d'Honneur" and the physical education prize is called "Sports Star". The Sports Star prize is given to a boy and girl who have done the best throughout the year in all the branches of physical education.

Promesse was the first boy to receive the Sports Star in 1966; among the girls it was Kavita. Devdas was the first boy to receive the Sports Star prize for three consecutive years from 1969 to 1971. Minoti was the second girl to get the Sports Star. In 1971 Devdas and Minoti received the Sports Star from the Mother's own hand in Her room.

Any institution would be proud of such jewels; not for their academic brilliance but for their excellence of character and inner growth. The object of their craving is not worldly riches—money is not and will never be lord of their lives wherever they are placed.

To illustrate the point let me cite one or two instances:

The son of an advocate of Pondicherry has been in the Ashram for the past 17 years and has passed the Higher Course.

"Don't you feel like going out?" I asked him in an inquisitive mood.

"Never thought of it," was his answer.

The first visit of G to the Ashram was at the age of four. He attended the Ashram's Centre of Education. After finishing the Higher Course he felt inclined to go abroad for advanced studies so that he could equip himself to serve the Mother better. His father, well-known in the scientific and literary circles of America, secured three thousand dollars for him. All the necessary papers came and the boy got them ready for despatch. He had taken the vow that he would dedicate his life to the service of the Mother. "This is the time of education; so why not acquire more knowledge that I may serve the Mother better?"—this was the motive that acted within him. Before posting the papers he wrote to the Mother for her Blessings. In reply the Mother is reported to have written, "If you want worldly success you may go to America, but if you want to be a new man you should be in the Ashram."

The moment he read these lines he tore up the papers.

With few exceptions, all the above entered into the Ashram life at an early age and have now reached maturity breathing in the Ashram atmosphere. Brahmacharya (sexual purity) distinguishes this group and the beauty of it is that the state of Brahmacharya has been acquired naturally and not by coercion, or the suppression of desires or undergoing a bone-breaking Tapasya. Like the stream of a river their lives flow slowly and steadily to their destination without disturbing or devastating waves.

There are hundreds among the followers of Sri Aurobindo who carry on Sadhana where they are. Here I speak of a brahmachari who has reached the age of 68 unmindful of the distractions of the modern world. He looks upon every woman as his

mother. It was his former Guru who imprinted on his young mind the value of Brahmacharya. Once he felt attracted to a young girl. His eyes were drawn to her beauty forcibly time and again. When he spoke about his weakness to the Guru, who was himself a brahmachari of a high order and a great Vedic scholar, the latter said, "Look at her by all means as much as you can but as a child looks to his mother." This advice he never forgot even when confronted with tremendous temptations, as he was a social worker and had to come in contact with men and women of various social orders. When a proposal of marriage was put to him, his answer was: "All right. Get me married, but I shall treat the girl as mother and call her mother."

N passed his matriculation at the age of 13 and his engineering examination with Honours at 20. He started smoking at the age of 16, and smoked almost 30 cigarettes a day.

Once when a relative called him to the meditation room he declined saying:

"Mine is not an age of doing yoga or meditation. That is meant for old age." There is a curious belief in many that yoga is for those who have grown old.

He mixed with girl friends freely but often there was an uneasy pull in his consciousness and a sharp reaction. This mute battle went on unceasingly. Even when he earned a fine salary he did not lose himself in the grosser pleasures of life. One day he acceded to the request of the relative to meditate before the Mother's photo. He felt something deeply appealing. Next day he went to the meditation room without being asked!

In the course of time he questioned that relative of his: "I have some troubles. Is it possible to get rid of them?"

"Why not drop a letter to the Mother?"

There was no reply. He wrote again; "Blessings" was the only reply, and along with it a blessings packet. He always keeps the blessings packet with him, even at night under his pillow.

As days rolled by, he saw a path before him which he felt called to follow. He felt that God awaited him and he took the plunge. He made the Sri Aurobindo Centre, which was run by the same relative, his permanent home, despite the clamours of his family members. Thus began his new life in 1961. Since the time he joined the Centre he has made a joyous gift of all he has earned to it. He stopped smoking in six days—a habit of six years. There is the play of a childlike simplicity in his face, his talk and movements. In 1971, after 10 years of silent preparation, he was allowed to make Auroville his new home.

We shall end with the instance of the 25 boys of 20 or so who have started Sri Aurobindo Vani Chakra. From November 1971 they have published a monthly in Bengali "Auro Katha". The editorial of the first issue opens with the line:

"Nothing serious. Nothing astounding. Nothing worth attracting notice in what we do. Yet, people look at us with wonder and say 'Look, they have gone mad! Look at these youngsters! In the bloom of their youth they are crying God! God! Have they gone mad?'"

“Ah! When will that blessed day dawn in our life when we shall be mad after God?”

*(To be continued)*

NARAYAN PRASAD

## XANTHIPPE THUNDERED

XANTHIPPE thundered, then most aptly rained  
 Thereafter, on her patient Socrates:  
 Who talked no less for that, nor found it pained  
 Unduly, or disturbed his peace and ease—  
 No more than dirt and fleas Diogenes—  
 And so dishwater of the shrewish world,  
 Alike its pomp and glory of a day,  
 Are by the nobly independent furled,  
 Like Alexander's banners when the seas  
 Beyond closed in so soon, and cast away.

And still the pageantry and fretting here,  
 The mighty labors and the little chores,  
 Are strands that weave—as finest tapestry—  
 Fit clothes for those who find out farther shores.

JESSE ROARKE

# *Students' Section*

## **GOLD**

### **A CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE**

*A teacher at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education asked her class to meditate on the words gold and golden. After the meditation the children were asked to say whatsoever they felt. "Words poured like an avalanche," said the teacher, "though generally the children could hardly formulate a correct sentence." The next day the meditation was repeated with the words peace and quiet.*

*The following sentences were chosen to be printed in Mother India because of their spontaneity and child-bright simplicity. The average age of the children was nine years.*

Everybody has a little silver light and a little golden light.

God's hair is Golden.

Sri Aurobindo's eyes are as bright as a sun ball.

Mother is throwing golden leaves on the earth.

Mother's light is golden and it is very nice and warm.

Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's Light is so powerful and beautiful that we can see it just now.

If we are quiet the Mother can pour all nice things in us.

Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's heart is the same.

Every moment Mother sees us.

If Mother gives us power we will burn in it.

The moon is very quiet.

The world is inside Mother's mouth.

# EYE EDUCATION

## TREATMENT IN THE CLINIC

*(Continued from the issue of March, 1972)*

IN the treatment of eye diseases the methods which are at hand with the orthodox ophthalmic practitioners for the visual defects are of little value. They neither prevent nor cure the trouble. When a patient complains of defective eyesight, usually glasses are given. Some of the cases develop fast deterioration in eyesight and are given up as hopeless. When there are symptoms of cataract or glaucoma, patients are advised an operation. Cataract patients, of course, need an operation when the cataract is at a mature stage, but some cataract patients have to wait for many years while glaucoma cases are seldom benefited by operation. Diseases of the retina are rarely benefited by the usual treatment. Much time and money are wasted in trying to find the cause of the diseases by various laboratory tests and yet often without any result. Most of the patients are declared incurable sooner or later. Patients who have no organic trouble but suffer from loss of sight are treated in various ineffective ways. In short, the present system of treating diseases of the eye is fairly uncomfortable and rarely satisfactory.

A student had the habit of reading under a high-powered electric light up to the middle of the night. Gradually his sight began to fail and he felt great difficulty in seeing when he came from light to dimness. He started seeing floating specks before the eyes. He was taken to several eye specialists and was thoroughly examined by various tests but there was nothing wrong in the system. Finally the doctors of Orissa declared that his retina was under degeneration and there were chances of his becoming blind in the future. Each time atropine drops were used to examine his eyes, the condition became worse. All this was a great shock to the boy as well as to the parents. For several months the boy was under treatment at the Cuttack Medical College and many injections and tablets were tried but without any good result. When the parents got disgusted with this kind of experimental treatment and prayed, someone informed them about the School for Perfect Eyesight at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. And one day I found the father and the son sitting in the reception room.

For the examination of eyes we rarely use atropine or any other medicine for dilatation of the pupil. Nowadays the electrical instruments for the examination of the eyes are so good that the eyes can very well be examined without any dilatation of the pupil. Dilatation of the pupil causes strain and sometimes very severe strain. A patient developed blindness after the use of atropine. So this student was examined without any atropine drops. His eyesight was recorded, his field of vision was taken, his colour-sense was observed and his eyes were thoroughly examined in the dark room. It

is true that his retina was showing some unhealthy signs.

The father felt very happy when I said that the boy would be all right in a few months and there was nothing to worry about. When asked about the cause of the trouble, I said that there was a great strain on his eyes due to reading under high-power electric light: the glare reflected from the paper was the source of this strain. Other factors such as constipation, poor action of the liver and general poor health had helped the trouble to increase.

The boy had developed the habit of staring, he did not blink at all while reading or seeing things at a distance. So the first thing in the treatment was to teach him to blink gently and frequently and we adopted various methods in this direction. Often he played with a ball and moved the ball from hand to hand while shifting the sight with the ball and blinking. While walking he blinked at each step. When he began to blink properly, it was amazing how the floating specks disappeared and the strain was relieved to a great extent. Frequently he practised palming for ten or fifteen minutes at a time, and this had the good effect of relaxing his eyes, mind and the nerves of the whole body. Reading fine print in good light and candle light alternately helped him greatly to read ordinary book-print without any strain. At the end of eye exercises such as swinging and central fixation, his eyes were bandaged for about half an hour with some medicine-pads. Once a week he was advised to clear the bowels by an enema. His diet was regulated with more fruits and greens. The result was that his health considerably improved and the eyes became all right.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

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