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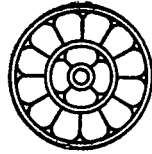
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXIV

No. 4

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".*

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## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

It is only in the calm that one can know and do. All that is done in agitation and violence is an aberration and a folly. The first sign of the divine presence in the being is peace.

We are here to do better than elsewhere and to prepare ourselves for a supramental future. This should never be forgotten. I appeal to the sincere good-will of all so that our ideal may be realised.

*(For the new session of the Centre of Education)*

15-12-1971

We want here only those children who want to prepare themselves for a new life and who put progress before success in life. We do not want those who want to prepare themselves to earn a living and to achieve worldly success. They can go elsewhere.

The children—to understand what we expect of them they should be over 10 years of age—who are ready for a new adventure, who want a new life, who are ready for a higher realisation, who want that the world should change and no longer be what it has been for so long, *THESE* are welcome.

We shall help them.

29-1-1972

## SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF THE MOTHER

*Q: Have I the capacity to tread the path of this Yoga and are there spiritual potentialities in me?*

This is not the question. The question is whether you have the necessary *aspiration, determination and perseverance*, and whether you can by the intensity and persistence of your aspiration make all the parts of your being answer to the call and become one in the consecration.

*Q: How should I continue my sādhanā after returning home?*

Quiet yourself and in the quiet see and feel the Mother.

*Q: What is meant by opening?*

An inner purity and receptivity that freely lets in the Mother's influence.

*Q: Where should I open?*

Begin with the heart.

*Q: How does the psychic being open?*

By the force of aspiration and the Grace of the Mother.

*Q: How is one to understand what the psychic and vital beings are in the ādhār?*

Psychic—your true being that is in the heart.

Vital—the part from which arise desires and hungers and dynamic activities, having its physical base round about the navel.

*Q: What attitude should I keep while following my daily routine of work?*

Detachment.

*Q: What should I read at present?*

Read Sri Aurobindo's books.

December, 1928.

From MULJIBHAI TALATI

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 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 13, 1956

*"Already in the process of spiritualisation it [the spiritualised mind] will have begun to pass out of the brilliant poverty of the human intellect; it will mount successively into the pure broad reaches of a higher mind and next into the gleaming belts of a still greater free intelligence illumined with a Light from above. At this point it will begin to feel more freely, admit with a less mixed response the radiant beginnings of an Intuition, not illumined, but luminous in itself, true in itself, no longer entirely mental and therefore subjected to the abundant intrusion of error. Here too is not an end, for it must rise beyond into the very domain of that untruncated Intuition, the first direct light from the self-awareness of essential Being and, beyond it, attain that from which this light comes. For there is an Overmind behind Mind, a Power more original and dynamic which supports Mind, sees it as a diminished radiation from itself, uses it as a transmitting belt of passage downward or an instrument for the creations of the Ignorance. The last step of the ascension would be the surpassing of Overmind itself or its return into its own still greater origin, its conversion into the supramental light of the Divine Gnosis."*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 168)*

THERE are two stages, you see. One may rise beyond the mind into a certain domain, then beyond that domain enter another yet which is the origin of all things. That implies two successive steps.

*Sweet Mother, now that the Supermind has descended, why can't one pass from the rational mind directly to the Supramental?*

Who said that one can't?

Sri Aurobindo is describing here what was to be done to enter into contact with the Supermind and prepare the ground for its manifestation; but now that it has

entered the earth-atmosphere, I don't see why a precise and particular procedure should be inflicted upon it in its manifestation. If it wants to illuminate directly an instrument which it finds suitable or ready or adaptable, I don't see why it should not do so.

And I am repeating this: who has said that this cannot be otherwise? Nobody. What Sri Aurobindo has described here is another thing and, indeed, this is what did happen. It was the preparation necessary for the manifestation to take place. But now I don't see why or on what basis a particular process should be imposed upon the supramental action and why it should not have the freedom to choose its own means.

I think that all possibilities are provided for and that all sincere aspiration and complete consecration will have a response; and that the processes, means, transitions, transformations will be innumerable in their nature—not at all that things will happen only in a certain way and not otherwise.

Fundamentally, everyone, whoever he may be, who is ready to receive even a little particle or a particular aspect of the supramental consciousness and light must automatically receive it. And the effects of this consciousness and light will be innumerable, for certainly they will be adapted to the possibilities, the capacity of everyone according to the sincerity of his aspiration.

The more total the consecration and the intenser the aspiration, the more integral and intense can be the result. But the effect of the supramental action will be countless in its manifestations — multiple, innumerable, infinitely varied; not necessarily following a precise line which is the same for all. That is impossible. For that is contrary to the very nature of the supramental consciousness.

The very quality of the atmosphere has changed.

The consequences are bound to be infinitely varied, but perceptible. That is to say, it will be possible to distinguish the consequences of ordinary movements from the consequences of the supramental action, for these latter will have a particular nature, a special character.

But that does not mean that anybody at all, at any moment and in any way whatsoever, is going to become suddenly a supramental genius. That is not to be expected.

I was going to say, if only one notices that one is a little less stupid than before, that would be already something!

*Will this influence manifest in the field of education also?*

Why do you want to prohibit one field or another to it?

*Because the system of education we follow still remains, as Sri Aurobindo says, "a brilliant poverty of the human intellect".*

Are you speaking of the education which you give to your students? Is that it? But it is high time that should have changed!



People have a lamentable habit of copying what has been done before and what is done by others. Long ago I told you this. That argument: "This must be done, because it is this that is done everywhere"; I reply: "That is perhaps why it should not be done! For if all others do it, what is the good of doing it here also?"

*But without your intervention, how can one do anything?*

But why do you ask me that? You ought to change your system of education first in accordance with the principles of the Supramental. At least you should try. You must not ask, you must do it. If you always move in the same rut, you could continue indefinitely in that rut. You must try to get out of it.

Indeed, I am constantly discussing this subject. I think it was just today or perhaps yesterday, I was pleading for the right of everyone to remain in ignorance if it so pleases him (I am not speaking of ignorance from the spiritual point of view, the world of Ignorance in which we live, I am not speaking of that. I am speaking of ignorance according to the classical ideas of education). Well, I say that if there are people who don't want to learn and don't like to learn, they have the right not to learn.

The only thing it is our duty to tell them is this: "Now, you are of the age when your brain is in the course of preparation. It is being built up. Each new thing you study makes one more little convolution in your brain. The more you study, the more you think, the more you reflect, the more you work, the more complex and complete does your brain become in its convolutions. And as you are young, it is the time this happens best. That is why it is human practice to choose young age for learning, for then it is infinitely more easy." And it is obvious that till the child becomes at least a little conscious of itself, it must be subjected to a certain rule, for it has not yet the capacity of choosing for itself.

That age is very variable: it depends on people, depends on each individual. But still, it is understood that in the seven-year period between the age of seven and fourteen, one begins to touch the age of reason. If one is helped, one can become a reasoning being between seven and fourteen.

Before seven there are geniuses (there are always geniuses, everywhere), but the general rule is that the child is not conscious of itself and doesn't know why or how to do things. That is the time to cultivate its attention, teach it to concentrate on what it does, give it a small basis sufficient for it not to be quiet like a little animal, but belong to the human race through a primary intellectual development.

After that, there is a period of seven years during which it must be taught to choose—choose what it wants to be. If it chooses to have a rich, complex, well-developed brain, powerful in its functioning, well, it must be taught to work; for it is by work, by reflection, study, analysis and all that follows from it that the brain is formed. At fourteen you are ready—or ought to be ready—to know what you want to be.

And so I say: If nearabouts that age some children declare categorically: "Intellectual growth does not interest me at all, I don't want to learn, I want to remain

ignorant in the ordinary way of ignorance", I don't see by what right one could impose studies on them nor why it should be necessary to level them all.

There are those who are below, and others at another stage. There are people who may have very remarkable capacities and yet have no taste for intellectual growth. One may warn them that if they don't work, don't study, when they are grown up, they will perhaps feel embarrassed before others. But if that does not matter to them and they want to live a non-intellectual life, I believe one has no right to compel them. That is my constant quarrel with all the teachers of the school! They come and tell me: If they don't work, when they are old they will be stupid and ignorant. I say: But if it pleases them to be stupid and ignorant, what right have you to interfere?

One can't make knowledge and intelligence compulsory. That's all.

Now, if you believe that by abstaining from all effort and all study, you will become geniuses, and supramental geniuses at that, don't have any illusions, that won't happen to you. For, even if you touch a higher light, through an inner aspiration or by the divine grace, you will have nothing there in your head to be able to express it. So that will remain in quite a nebulous form and won't in any way change your outer life. But if it pleases you to be thus, nobody has the right to compel you to be otherwise. You must wait till you are sufficiently conscious to be able to choose.

Evidently, there are people who at fourteen are yet just like children of five. But these,—there's little hope for these. Specially those who have lived here.

Here's something then which already changes your point of view about education totally.

Essentially, *the only thing* you should do assiduously is to teach them to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow. To teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves *and* decide for themselves. That is infinitely more important than teaching them what happened on earth in former times, or even how the earth is built, or even ... indeed, all sorts of things which are quite a necessary grounding if you want to live the ordinary life in the world, for if you don't know them, immediately anyone will put you down intellectually: "Oh, he is an idiot, he knows nothing."

But still, at any age whatever, if you are studious and have the will to do it, you may take up books and work; you don't need to go to school for that. There are books enough in the world to teach you things. There are indeed even more books than necessary. You may exhaust all subjects simply by going down then to Medhananda's, to the Library. You will have enough of them to fill you up to here! (*gesture*)

But what is very important is to know what it is that you want. And for this at least a minimum of freedom is necessary. You must not be under a compulsion or an obligation. You must be able to do things whole-heartedly. If you are lazy, well, you will know what it means to be lazy.... You know, in life the idlers are obliged to work ten times more than others, for what they do they do badly, hence they are obliged to do it again. But these are things one must learn by experience. They can't be inculcated into you.

The mind, if not held in, is something floating, imprecise. If one does not have the habit of concentrating it upon something, it goes on wandering all the time. It goes on and stops nowhere, and wanders into a world of vagueness. And then, when one wants to fix one's attention, it hurts! There is a little effort there, like this: "Oh! how tiring it is, it hurts!" So one does not do it. And one lives in a kind of cloud. And your head is like a cloud; it's like that, most heads are like clouds: there is no precision, no exactitude, no clarity, it is smoky—vague and smoky. You have more impressions rather than the knowledge of things. You live in an approximation, and you may keep within your head all sorts of contradictory ideas made mostly from impressions, sensations, feelings, emotions—all sorts of things like that, which have very little to do with thought and ... which are just wanderings, "moonings".

But if you want to come to a precise, concrete, clear, definite thought on a certain subject, you must make an effort, gather yourself together, steady yourself, concentrate. And the first time you do it, literally it hurts, it is tiring! But if you don't make a habit of it, all your life you will be living in a fluctuation. And when it will come to practical things, when you will be faced with—for, despite all, one is always faced with a number of problems to solve, of quite a practical kind—well, instead of being able to take up the elements of the problem, to put them all side by side, look at the question from all points of view, and rising above and seeing the solution, instead of that you will be tossed about in the whirls of something grey and uncertain, and it will be like so many spiders running around in your head—but you won't succeed in catching the thing.

I am speaking of the simplest of problems, you know; I am not speaking of deciding the fate of the world or humanity, or even that of a country—nothing at all of the kind. I am speaking of problems of your daily life, of every day. They become something quite woolly.

Well, it is to avoid this that you are told, when your brain is in course of being formed: instead of letting it be shaped by such habits and qualities, try to give it a little exactitude, precision, capacity of concentration, of choosing, deciding, putting things in order, try to use your reason.

For though it is well known that reason is not the supreme capacity of man and must be surpassed, it is as evident that if you don't have it you will live an altogether incoherent life, you won't even know how to behave rationally. The least thing will upset you completely and you won't even know why, and yet less how to remedy it. Whilst he who has established within himself a state of active, clear reasoning, can face attacks of all kinds, emotional attacks or any tests whatever; for life is filled entirely with these things—disagreements, pin-pricks, vexations—which are small but in the measure of the one who feels them, and hence always felt as very big because they are in his measure. Well, reason can stand back a little, look at all that, smile and say: "Oh! no, one must not make a fuss for such a small thing."

If you do not have reason, you will be like a cork on a stormy sea. I don't know if the cork suffers in this condition, but it does not seem to me a very happy one.

There, then.

Now, after having said all that—and it's not once I have told you this but several times I think, and I am ready to tell you this again as many times as you like—after having said that, I believe in leaving you entirely free to choose whether you want to be the cork on the stormy sea or whether you want to have a clear, precise perception and a sufficient knowledge of things to be able to walk to—well, simply where you want to go.

For there is a clarity that's indispensable in order to be able even to follow the path one has chosen.

I am not at all keen on your becoming scholars, far from it! For then one falls into the other extreme: one fills one's head with so many things that there is no longer any room for the higher light; but there is a minimum indispensable for not ... well, for not being the cork.

*Mother, it is said that our general inadequacy in studies comes from the fact that too much stress is laid on games, physical education. Is this true?*

Who has said that? People who don't like physical education? Old stiff professors who can't do exercises any longer? These? (I am not asking for names!)

Well, I don't think so.

You remember the first article Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Bulletin*? He answers these people quite categorically.

I don't think it could be that. I am quite sure it is not that. I believe rather (and I put all the blame on myself) that you have been given a fantastic freedom, my children, oh! I don't think there is any other place in the world where children are so free. And, my word, it is very difficult to know how to make use of a freedom like that.

However, it was worth while trying out the experience. You don't appreciate it because you don't know how it could be when it is not like that; this seems to you quite natural. But it is very difficult to know how to organise one's own freedom oneself. Still, if you were to succeed in doing that, in giving yourself your own discipline — and for higher reasons, not in order to pass exams, make a career, please one's teachers, have many prizes or all the ordinary reasons children have: in order not to be scolded, not to be punished, for all that; we put aside all those reasons —, if you manage to impose a discipline upon yourself (each one his own, there is no need to follow someone else's), a discipline simply because you want to progress and draw the best out of yourself, then .... Oh! you will be much higher than those who follow the ordinary disciplines of schools. That is what I wanted to try out. Note, I don't say I have failed; I have still great hope that you will know how to profit by this unique opportunity. But there is all the same something you must find out; that is the *necessity* of an inner discipline. Without discipline you won't be able to get anything, without discipline you can't even live the normal life of a normal man. But instead of having the conventional discipline of ordinary societies or ordinary institutions, I

would have liked, and I still want, you to have the discipline you impose on yourselves, for the love of perfection, your own perfection, the perfection of your being.

But without that.... Note that if one were not to discipline the body, one would not be able even to stand straight on two legs, one would go like a child on all fours. You could do nothing. You are obliged to discipline yourself; you could not live in society, you could not live at all, except all alone in the forest; and even so, I don't quite know. It is altogether indispensable, I have told you this I don't know how often. And because I have a very marked aversion for conventional disciplines, social and others, it does not mean that you must abstain from all discipline. I would like everyone to find his own, in the sincerity of one's inner aspiration and the will to realise oneself.

And so, the aim of all those who know, whether they be professors, physical instructors or any others, the very purpose of those who know, is to inform you, to help you. When you are in a situation which seems difficult to you, you put your problem and, with their personal experience they can tell you: "No, it is like this or it is like that, and you must do this, you must try that." So, instead of making you perforce swallow theories, principles and so-called laws, and a more or less abstract knowledge, they would be there to give you information about things, from the most material to the most spiritual, each one within his own province and according to his capacity.

It is quite evident that if you are thrown out into the world without the least technical knowledge, you may do the most dangerous things. Take a child who knows nothing, the first thing he will do if he has matches in his hands, for instance, is to burn himself. Hence, in that field, from the purely material point of view, it is good that there are people who know and can tell you; for otherwise, if everyone must learn by his own experience, he would spend several lives learning the most indispensable things. That is the utility, the *true* use of professors and instructors. They have learnt more or less by practice or through a special study, and they can teach you those things it is indispensable to know. That makes you gain time, a lot of time. But that is their only utility: to be able to answer questions. And, essentially, you would have to have a sufficiently alive brain to ask questions. I don't know, but you never have anything to ask me or it is so rare. But that shows a terrible mental laziness!

At certain times I tell you: "Don't question, try to find out by yourselves these inner things", that is understood; but when I am here and tell you: "Haven't you any questions to ask?"—Silence...so, that proves that you have no mental curiosity. And I don't ask you necessarily to put questions on what I have just read; I am always ready to answer any question whatsoever, put by anyone at all. Well, I must say we are not very rich in questions! It is not often that I have an opportunity to tell you something.

I hasten to tell you that if you ask me technical questions on the sciences, physics or what not, I could very well answer: "I know nothing about it, study your books or ask your professor", but if you ask me questions in my field, I shall always answer you.

So, one last attempt: Has anyone here a question to ask me? (*Silence*)

That's wonderful! (*Mother laughs*) Well, that's all, then. —

## **AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO TO DR. KAILAS NATH KATJU**

OWING to heavy pressure during the last month I am only now able to answer your letter of August 20th forwarding a full report of your address on the occasion of the Mahotsav. I had already heard your talk on the radio in connection with the "Jayanti" and I found that it was very much appreciated by those who were trying to do my work in Bengal and they had drawn much encouragement from it and felt heartened by it in their endeavours. I write this to convey to you my blessings for all you have done on the occasion of the "Jayanti" and the great push it has given to the work and to the workers in Bengal.

I have long been acquainted with your name and what you have done for our country as one of its leaders in the struggle for freedom, and, after Independence was gained, in the heavy and difficult work that had to be done under trying and arduous circumstances to organise its independence and contend with the growing difficulties of the task.

The difficulties you speak of which beset all who are working for the world's peace and welfare are indeed very great; the strength to meet them and to support those who are doing the work is less widespread than it ought to be and there is too much fear and demoralisation everywhere in the world and the will to co-operate for the best is deficient and often absent. I am afraid the hour in which one can be confident that these difficulties would be soon overcome is not yet near and men of good will will have to persevere with great courage before they can say, "It is done." But I believe that as the labour is arduous so will the outcome be sure and satisfying. It has been a great good fortune for Bengal that you have been sent there as Governor and you may be confident that my blessings will attend you in your work.

# DETACHMENT FROM THE MIND

## LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*Q: When my mind begins to slacken due to some form of inertia (unwillingness to concentrate), should I insist on it to concentrate or allow it to remain only quiet?*

SRI AUROBINDO: No general rule can be given. The best at this stage is perhaps to let it be quiet for a while and then concentrate. 19-1-1934

*Q: Will such slackness, inertia, unwillingness disappear by themselves?*

SRI AUROBINDO: No. As the higher consciousness comes in, it will push them out.

*Q: I am much troubled by the frequency of mechanical thoughts.*

SRI AUROBINDO: Reject always without getting disturbed by the recurrences. 19-1-1934

*Q: You wrote, "Yes, but one has to develop the power and habit of communication." How to do it?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Keep your mind open with the will that the power should develop. 10-2-1934

*Q: When the tamas prevails over the consciousness, is it advisable to keep the mind occupied with some book in which it generally takes interest?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if the mind refuses the activity of sadhana, you can do that. 29-1-1934

*Q: How shall I be able to master this mechanical condition (in which the mind goes on with its recurring rounds endlessly) in such a way that it is transformed and never appears again?*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is rather difficult. It is only when the subconscious has become enlightened and conscious that one can safely say, "The mechanical condition will never appear again." 6-3-1934

I do not see any evidence that your thinking is not just as before. If it is a fact, it may be due to the physical mind coming up—for that is always stupid—or it may be the mind is tired of the old kind of thinking and wants something better. 12-3-1934

*Q: How to remember the Mother and receive her light during my intellectual pursuits?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It can be done when you become the witness detached from the

mental action and not involved in them, not absorbed in them as the mental doer or thinker.

20-3-1934

*Q: Once while speaking about the subconscious impressions you wrote, "They usually come up when there is quietude but not silence." Yesterday, you wrote, "It usually happens at first when the consciousness is silent that these things come up."*

SRI AUROBINDO: I should have said "the mental consciousness"—when there is not the usual stress of conscious mental thinking, the subconscious impressions come up. When that ceases then there is real silence.

21-3-1934

*Q: How to become the witness?*

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no device for these things. All is done by aspiration, tapasya (concentration, will etc.) or by opening oneself to the Divine Force.

21-3-1934

*Q: I write letters to you and to the Mother not to get some mental knowledge by asking questions. My object is rather to surrender all my movements, thoughts (good and bad) etc. Now I would like to know if my putting questions to you abuse that higher aim?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Questions are meant for getting light on the things that are going on in one. It is the statement of what is going on that helps to surrender.

3-4-1934

*Q: I was absorbed in listening to the Mother's music. I felt as if something descended into me. Up to the neck the descent was concretely experienced.*

SRI AUROBINDO: Up to the neck means in the whole thinking mind, but not lower.

17-4-1934

*Q: Is it good to perceive the movements of others?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Not unless there is a quiet and dispassionate perception correct in its seeings.

28-4-1934

No. That is no use, it merely encourages the passing of mental judgments usually of a personal kind.

2-5-1934

What you describe happens very usually during a cold in the head, as ordinarily one depends upon the brain cells for the transmission of the mental thought. When the mind is not so dependent on the brain cells, then the obstruction by the cold does not interfere with clear seeing and thinking and one is not thrown back on the mechanical mind.

19-5-1934

Detachment means standing back with part of the consciousness and observing what is being done without being involved in it.

1-6-1934



There can be no clearing out of doubts. The mind doubts for the sake of doubting.

7-6-1934

If you mean that there were more thoughts than happenings, that is quite natural in a state in which the mind has already begun to work but is not yet turned on outward things.

28-6-1934

It is the mind's business to be on guard, not the vital's. If you mean that the vital is interested in other things and the mind follows, that may be so. But the business of the mind is to recall the vital, not to follow it.

28-6-1934

The mind and the heart would do better to remain quiet and wait on a higher Force than theirs to do what is necessary.

It is the stupidity of the mind to want a mental solution for everything. 13-7-1934

There is something in you that does want to stick to the habit of mentalising. So long as you were not having real experiences, it did not matter. But once real experiences begin you have to learn to approach them in the right way.

16-7-1934

*Q: At present, it is specially the mechanical and subconscient minds that are trying now and then to interfere with the inner tranquillity. But they themselves now seem to be tired out by their fruitless knockings.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what must happen. They must become weak and ineffective so that they have no result of disturbance, then they will give up. 30-7-1934

*Q: While talking with some friends, my consciousness lost its usual inner contact. The conversations themselves would not have mattered much. But my mechanical mind has become extremely sensitive. Whenever I project outwards for action—even a necessary one—the mechanical mind takes it up for its food and goes on chewing it for quite a time.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the nature of the mechanical mind—it is not due to any sensitiveness in it. Only as the outer parts of the mind are more silent and under control, this activity looks more prominent and takes more space. It usually wears itself out, if one goes on rejecting it.

8-8-1934

*Q: I feel nowadays that it is through the silence that I write all my letters to you. That is, I do not need to use my mind for it except when I ask some mental questions to you. I would, however, like to ascertain the truth of this fact from you.*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is probably correct—when there is the silence, then it is natural that the writing, etc. should come out of the silence—or through it. That may very well have begun.

2-10-1934

For those who still live in their minds, questions may be necessary — if an answer

is necessary, I give it. On the other hand people very often ask foolish questions which it would be a waste of time to answer. 19-10-1934

All this is very good. As for the submind etc. these things have a habit of sticking so long as the higher dynamic activities are not established. The main thing is that they should not be allowed to invade the inner consciousness. 17-12-1934

*Q: What about reading newspapers? Is it not a vice?*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is only the attachment and diffusion of mind that are objectionable. It is not a vice. One can read if there is no attachment and no diffusion.

28-10-1938

*From* NAGIN DOSHI

## NEAR THEE

WHEN near Thee with impassioned heart  
Thy arms outstretched in grace to me,  
My gratitude filled every part  
And all my failures fell by Thee.

My worthless hands replied in kind  
And reached their awkwardness to Thee,  
Then touched and held the moment blind,  
My forehead bowed upon Thy knee.

From the silence came a voice to say  
"Thank you, my Mother", a simple phrase—  
Mid a golden smile through a golden ray  
I rose fulfilled in Thy diamond gaze.

Aditi sweet, perfection's power  
Unveiled in God's tremendous hour!

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1972)

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

JUNE 11, 1940

THE radio news: Italy has joined the war.

SRI AUROBINDO (*looking at P*): So Mussolini has butted in? When he sees that Germany is winning he comes to share the spoils.

P: Yes. It's a jackal policy. But he says it is according to his understanding with Hitler.

N: Understanding? No, he says pledge.

S: Pledge or no pledge, why say all that? Why not say plainly that he wants to join?

SRI AUROBINDO: Then what becomes of diplomacy?

P: He has only declared war, not started any attack.

N: Why don't the Allies take the initiative?

S: Their hands are full with the defence.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so.

P: He may perhaps invade Corsica with aeroplanes or land parachutes.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't think so. That requires dash and daring.

P: Hitler may have kept off Russia by guaranteeing that Italy wouldn't go to the Balkans.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite possible. But for how long? It will come later on. If the Allies could attack Germany through Greece, then some pressure would be relieved. That is the only way.

N: But it is not possible at present.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, this neutrality stands in the way.

P: Turkey will be for the Allies now since Russia is not involved.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but what when war spreads into the Mediterranean?

N: Roosevelt's important speech is not so important after all. He speaks of all

possible material help to the Allies.

SRI AUROBINDO: He has already said that before. But he asks the people to be ready. That may be a hint.

S: If he could he would have declared in favour of the Allies.

P: He seems to have said to Italy that Italy's coming into the war would bring in a series of interventions.

SRI AUROBINDO: I see.

N: America may come when it is too late.

SRI AUROBINDO: They are all too late in everything.

N: It is a pity that France is paying heavily for England's misdeeds.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): France is also to blame because of Daladier's betrayal of Czechoslovakia

N: That was partly due to Chamberlain's pressure. France alone couldn't fight Germany.

P: There was Russia. Both France and Russia could combine and England would have to come in later.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

N: Natesan was saying that Daladier has been driven out because he was pleading for surrender—that is the rumour.

SRI AUROBINDO: Rumour? May be.... You have seen that Britain has left Norway?

P: Yes.

N: From Narvik too?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

S: From Norway altogether.

N: And they lost three destroyers.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, I don't know how. But it is nothing to them. They have many destroyers.

#### EVENING

Italy has declared war on the Allies and said that it will carry out war according to the international and humanitarian law.

SRI AUROBINDO (*sarcastically*): So Italy will fight according to the international law?

P (*laughing*): Yes. It says so.

SRI AUROBINDO: That means 'don't strike me.' Mussolini knows that if he hits he will be hit back. Italy has never been humanitarian anywhere.

P: Italy may attack Marseilles by sea or it can invade the frontier overland.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but France is quite prepared for the defence. Italy's main strength is in its fleet, strength not on paper but in organisation and fighting power. But it hasn't been proved yet.

P: Its aeroplanes also seem to be very strong.

SRI AUROBINDO: That also has to be proved.

JUNE 12, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO: What has happened to the Italian flotilla? (*addressing P*) The news was that the Italian flotilla has started for Africa. It requires so many days to reach Africa?

There was very little talk today and also at night. About the war, Germany was approaching nearer and nearer Paris.

JUNE 13, 1940

The German army was less than 20 miles from Paris

P: André Maurois the writer has flown to England to ask for more men to be sent to France—trained or recruits doesn't matter. They are badly in need of men.

SRI AUROBINDO: Men who know how to shoot? (*laughter*) You said the number of Germans is 10 to 1 against the French?

P: Yes, in certain sectors.

SRI AUROBINDO: How can France fight against such odds? It seems it is by sheer mass that Germany is carrying on. The mechanised units are not so effective now.

N: Hitler also must have had a tremendous loss.

SRI AUROBINDO: For that he is prepared. He has said already that he is prepared to sacrifice one million men against the Maginot Line. (*After a while*) Paris has been the centre of human civilisation for three centuries. Now he will destroy it. That is the sign of the Asura. History is repeating itself. The Graeco-Roman civilisation was destroyed by Germany.

N: But if France does not defend Paris?

SRI AUROBINDO: Then he will not destroy it immediately. The unfortunate thing is that all are tied up to the modern civilisation—even China and Japan.

N: If America had come in!

P: They ought to have come in four months ago.

SRI AUROBINDO: Everybody has realised what German rule will be like. You have seen what an Irish minister has said? He says, "If Ireland dies we do not want to live." They know what life will be like under Hitler. Ireland has no feeling for England. Left alone it would not mind if England went down.

N: England is responsible for this bitterness.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the past, yes. Ireland has undergone more repression than India. Everybody realises this but India doesn't. You have heard what picture Roosevelt has drawn of the future under Hitler?

P (*after some time*): The Khaksars have been rounded up, 300 people have been

arrested. Sikander Hayat Khan has said that the government has found out the link between Khaksars and the enemy countries.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, has he? Where has he said that?

P: I do not know, but he has said so and therefore he has no sympathy for them.

SRI AUROBINDO: At last he has woken up. The Khaksars were a terrible danger to the Hindus too.

P: It seems the Thakore of Rajkot died as the result of tiger hunting.

S: Not heart failure?

P: Heart failure as a consequence probably. Virawalla is also dead. Our people will surely link up these two deaths with Gandhi's fast. They will say, "It is a punishment for their behaviour with the Saint."

S: Oh yes!

SRI AUROBINDO: That proves what I have written in the *Essays on the Gita* about soul-force.

S: There may be some subtle way in which the moral force will work. But Gandhi did not change his heart.

SRI AUROBINDO: He may have changed the Thakore and his Dewan but not the heart, maybe the head. (*Laughter*)

#### EVENING

P: Some officer's wife has written that the Germans dropped about 160 bombs in the village she lives in but not a single one exploded. The village is in the lower region of Paris.

SRI AUROBINDO: Mother's brother's family is also in the lower region. They thought it would be quite safe.

P: The French claim to have pushed the Germans back 5 miles. Something!

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*): That is only in one sector. There are 30 others. This time the British could not be masterly in their retreat? Some 6000 troops have been caught.

P: No, they seem to have been cut off.

S: England can easily send half a million troops. What France needs now is men.

N: Perhaps they fear an invasion by Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is not likely now. After France is occupied, Hitler may turn his attention there. But the English army is still in training.

P: Neither are they good soldiers. They can of course be sent to the south.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they may be good for the Italians. (*Laughter*)

S: How is that? At one time they were considered good soldiers. In India they fought us well.

SRI AUROBINDO: That was only groups of people. Now the whole nation has to be prepared to fight. Besides, they have all become comfortable and ease-loving. Even the French are not as good as in the last war. The French peasants and farmers

have become rich and used to comforts and they don't like to be disturbed.

S: The Germans, of course, have always the will to power but when will they settle in peace?

SRI AUROBINDO: Militarism is in their blood. They were at one time hired as mercenaries.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

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## CRADLE FLOWER

Be gentle now and still, breathlessly calm,  
In the depths are moving the beyond-life waters,  
That true living light be guide and saving  
Its touch turn right and cleanse well.

So subtly rocking forms in the heart beyond pain,  
In full seclusion and freedom from the surface  
Bounds of desire and murky turbulence,  
The bloom that bears, the world-rose.

Foolish and feeble shall grope the man no longer,  
Born rich in his heart that sun-bright flower;  
The fragrance mutes him long for the gates to open,  
And purity spring splendid.

For the true and the central self an infant  
Let the depth-bells chime and be stilled the waters,  
That he come and his petals fold the world-ways:  
In hymns the breaths be silent.

JESSE ROARKE

# SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 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.)*

It is not the mental ideal or theory of a social order that matters. The mental theory itself is the outcome of some truth behind, some need that has to be met. Take a theory like Socialism: behind it is the need for co-operation in place of individualistic competition. That need takes the form of this theory.

*Q: Here's the photo of Nirmala Devi who can make her body large or small, and can cure diseases, and who practises Pranayama.*

She does not seem to live in the physical consciousness at all, she lives in the vital consciousness. She seems to be the medium of some vital power, a power of the vital plane, not the supramental-vital. If one has sufficient mental power, she can go through all this and come out. Otherwise she may have the realisation as many Yogins have on the vital plane or mental plane (the mental seeing of the one in all). She says that she will do something big in a few years. If one gets something of the vital power, one feels like this. She thinks that all that is possible on the vital plane is also possible on the physical, but unfortunately it is not so.

"Manyu" in the Veda is an urge in the mind, it is not exactly desire. Sayana translates it as thought. But it cannot be thought or even anger.

The cause of disease is an effect of a vital movement on the vital being, the physical cause is simply an intermediary. Small beings take advantage of the movement of force and amuse themselves. That the physical cause is not the primary cause is proved by the fact of faith cure. The bacilli may be there, but they cannot attack all, and even when they attack, faith can conquer them; faith, mental or of the vital being, brings a contrary force. All depends on the vital atmosphere. If the atmosphere is a condition of receiving the disease, one gets the attack. Generally all disease is due to



depression of vitality; nervous disorders—neurasthania especially—can be cured by vital power. The atmosphere of a war is favourable to disease. An epidemic always follows a great war. War disturbs the natural conditions and disease takes advantage of the disturbance.

In the artificial atmosphere of civilisation, the habits that depress vitality are a fruitful source of disease.

Belief is mental. Intuition is mental, a form of activity of mind, pure mind or vital mind. Faith may be mental, vital or physical, an anticipation of knowledge, or of effectuation of force (vital) or of realisation in fact (physical) .... Faith of the psychic being is faith pure and simple.

Before life or mind evolves in matter, there are already manifest Universal Life, Universal Mind.... Universal Consciousness involves itself in individual formations. The consciousness involved in life or living things manifests itself as mind in animal or men; this mind or the organisation of consciousness in men is an instrument for tapping the Universal Mind.

When the vital is opened the Sadhak gets easily irritated. It is a good sign, but he must find his balance at once.

The body is conscious in its own way, it has its physical habits. Certain movements of the body to which we get habituated—like stroking the moustache—persist in spite of our will to control them.

There is vital energy in inorganic elements. Gold and iron, medicines help to increase the vital energy; they are transformed and their vital energy is assimilated. There is pranic energy in the Sun's rays; they produce a feeling of exhilaration.

In the vital world there is no evolution, it is all manifestation that you see there. As you go higher in the vital world, you see something that is already there, that is always there .... Common meditation creates an atmosphere of openness .... If there is a vital disturbance in the atmosphere, as in Religious festivals, the vital being takes a holiday and something may happen.

I fasted for 20 days, did not sleep, observed no rules in breaking the fast. I did not feel weakened. Only the body got emaciated. The physical substance in the body (cells) gets disintegrated and it must often be newly built up by food, otherwise the body sinks.

Politics is an art, often a foul art; calling names and using violent language are no good.

In my paper 'Bandemataram', there was sedition in every line, but the Government could do nothing....

Patriotism satisfies the vital needs of the being. Patriotism is true when it takes count of the spiritual possibilities of the country and develops them.

The Japanese discipline is a product of their culture, tradition, loyalty to the Mikado, self-control (they don't laugh or shout or cry), self-sacrifice for the country, worship of the ancestors. It is a rigid discipline, mental, moral and vital—following external rules. The mind of the Japanese is not plastic. Their discipline is in the very atmosphere, in the spirit of their country. Such rigid discipline does not help spiritual development, and Japan has never been spiritual. The ethical and vital teaching of Buddhism they suited to themselves. Truth of the spirit they intellectualise. The soul of Japan may be content with the mind. In India the discipline was internal. Even in the Kshatriya ideal the demand was on something subtle and psychic and it was never rigid. There was more individualism in India than in Japan. The Indian mind is quicker than the Japanese.

As we go higher we find that knowledge is always a remembering.

OM is the physical articulate sound spoken by man which the Rishis discovered as corresponding to the psychic sound. Psychic forces or vibrations can be attached to certain physical sounds (Mantra). If man could emit lights, as he does sounds, he could compose Mantras in Light! Colours and sounds have a psychic meaning. It is said, if you keep roses in your room, you may get a bad temper. Flowers give me peace in the vital, mental and psychic planes. The psychic colours which one sees as he advances in Sadhana are moon-light (spiritual consciousness) blue light, pale blue, whitish blue, white, etc. The white lights are more powerful than the physical light and they have an effect on the physical eye, not on the physical light. The physical eye at first finds it difficult to adjust itself but the psychic eye later sees things through the physical eyes (psychic spectacles!) The sense of physical smell also becomes more refined apart from the psychic smell which one recognises in bodies . . . Violet is the colour associated with Kama (lust); rose (psychic colour) with love or a similar movement of the psychic being. Sound is a vibration of force. There is no reason why a subtle force (a vibration) should not be attached to sound; only, you must know how to attach it.

OM is said to contain the whole universe and is therefore the sound-symbol of Brahman. Meditation upon it may help, it is a powerful sound. As one advances in Yoga one hears certain sounds. A Mantra may carry a psychic force or a vital force. The Guru is supposed to give the power along with the Mantra. If the meaning of the Mantra is meditated upon and if there is openness and faith, it helps. If the disciple is unprepared, he may shake. That is why the ancients initiated only the élite. They

were very rigid in their choice, whereas the founders of religions, Buddha, Christ, spread abroad their teachings. Humanity is a frail vessel for the spirit.

Bhakti is more difficult than is generally supposed. It requires absolute purity. Otherwise what one gets is a vital excitement as evidenced by the erotic signs one shows in Samkirtan.

We find the elements of Tantra in the Atharva Veda. Tantra developed about the time of Buddhism in Bengal, Tibet, and Nepal.

The symmetry in nature is, apart from the aesthetic point of view, a balancing of masses. The way of nature is not to be excessive on one side, and deficient on the other. Every plane of consciousness has its two sides, one seen by us and the other not seen by us, like the other side of the moon.

Individualism was a later growth in India. The Mahabharata shows the prevalence of Jati-Dharma. Aristocracy, real aristocracy, not the modern one, set the standard. With the rise of Buddhism, Christianity and other religions, individualism came into prominence—the idea of the individual having his own Dharma as laid upon him by God.

The ancients tried to create a true artistic taste in the people. Whatever Tolstoy may say, the artistic taste of the unregenerated human mind is vulgar and imbecile. Art is now confined to a select circle in the West and the East.

Thought is not generated independently in anyone. It is a movement of nature. Forces of nature come from outside to us subconsciously and set up a movement in us. When the movements become habitual, the mind thinks that the habitual formations are its own thoughts. Mind itself is one such formation of nature. Even when habitual thoughts arise it is the movement of nature which raises them. In Sadhana there comes a state when you see the thoughts outside you, coming towards you laterally or across, outside your very body, in your atmosphere (atmospheric or environmental being or consciousness) as things, as forces such as desire, etc. You will see these trying to act on your Buddhi, but the centre of your being must not be affected. The unaffected state is there when calm is established in all the being, when you leave aside your body consciousness and reach a higher consciousness.

The Yogin does not give a necessary reaction to these forces. He can alter the balance of forces in his atmosphere. (Forces have no consciousness as they are not organised and therefore are not beings.) People generally carry with them a vital atmosphere. Cheerfulness and gloominess are of the vital atmosphere. When we meet a person, we like or dislike him because of something in his vital atmosphere. It is so with love between two persons at first sight. Some people carry a mental or spiritual atmosphere with them. This atmosphere is the aura. The range of the atmosphere

differs with different people. A Yogin has a wide atmosphere, others a narrow one. A hermitage breathes peace and joy. You don't organise your environmental being, but you establish there peace etc.

The centre of man's being is up there. A part of man's mind may feel that mind and life are external things. When you get into the body of the supermind you see the three times (Trikal). The potentialities you see as several forces trying to work out... "Sanchita" is the past accumulated store of material for use now and in the future. "Prarabdha" is the force that has already begun to work. Lele quoted his own example as freedom from Prarabdha.

*Q: Is everything pre-arranged for man? If so where is his freedom?*

In his imagination. From the intellectual point of view, everything is pre-arranged. Still, it looks to us as if nothing is arranged and we have to arrange. Similarly in the Samkhya, from the standpoint of the nature-consciousness the Purusha is bound, from the standpoint of the Purusha-consciousness the Purusha is free and the natural being is bound.

Philosophy is only mental gymnastics; it helps one to think clearly about abstractions. In India it always had a dynamic use, it was a sort of springing board for the mind to rise beyond itself into a spiritual condition. We have to know our true physical being, our true vital being, our psychic being (soul). Our vital being must have stuff in it, our mind must be large. The vital being seeks after power, not what we ordinarily call power but something bigger.

The real call comes from the psychic. There may be a mental call to know, an emotional call for greater enjoyment, but these do not succeed till there is a call from the formulated psychic being. The central thing in mind corresponds to Purusha consciousness (contact of the intellect with Truth); when it sees a light from above it begins to know God, knows mentally. The vital has its light too.

The true psychic being (soul) envelops the mental, vital, physical being; the psychic being, like the true mental being, is not a part of nature. The psychic plane, if it can be called a plane, envelops the three: mental, vital and physical. It has a line of direct communication with Truth. Its projection in the heart is the emotional mind. It brings out the divine potentialities of the mental and vital. It is not well developed in man. It has to be developed, formulated and organised. When the mind is awakened it sees that all the intuitions come from outside, it is free from nature, 'Mukta', stands apart from nature. It is the pure existence, unconcerned with things. It is the Purusha.... Knowledge comes from above or within if you like. Our surface thoughts are the movements on the surface of something deeper. The inmost reality of our thoughts is the soul-thought; the supramental would be the highest reality — so with emotions, etc.

*(To be continued)*

V. CHIDANANDAM

## SRI AUROBINDO: ARCHITECT OF INDIA'S FREEDOM

*(This series of articles by a scholar who has devoted years of study to the early political work of Sri Aurobindo as revealed in the Bandemataram and Karma-yogin papers will, it is hoped, be of some assistance to the high-powered committee recently appointed by the Government of India to prepare an authoritative account of India's freedom movement. The title is suggestive of Sri Aurobindo's role in this great movement and will be amply justified by the evidence marshalled here.)*

### Credentials

ON the day of India's independence, Sri Aurobindo, in a public Message broadcast over the All-India Radio, announced to the world: for the first and the last time, the significance his life had for the freedom of India:

"August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India . . . August 15th is my own birthday.... I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition ..."<sup>1</sup>

Far back, in August 1905, he had given a hint of this, in extreme privacy, in a letter written (in Bengali) to his wife. There he had said.

"I know I have in me the strength to uplift this fallen nation—not the strength of body for I am not going to war with rifle and sword, but the power of knowledge ... There is such a thing as the power of the spirit, a power which is based on knowledge....

"This idea of mine is not a new-fangled notion, nor is it a thing of yesterday. I was born with this idea, it is in my blood, God has sent me on earth to carry out this great purpose.... I do not say that I shall live to see the attainment of the goal. But that it will be attained is certain. .."<sup>2</sup>

We can easily see why he does not take the attainment of independence on his birthday as a fortuitous accident. Elsewhere, in a letter written to a disciple in July 1947, he calls this a "birthday present"<sup>3</sup>.

### A Mazzini ?

It has been suggested with some truth that Sri Aurobindo's work for India's freedom resembled that of Mazzini. Indeed there are certain features in the work of the Italian patriot of the last century that are surprisingly similar to that of Sri

Aurobindo. In a memorable essay on Mazzini which he wrote in 1909—we quote it *in extenso*—one might almost substitute the one name for the other and read “India” wherever there is mention of “Italy”.

But, at the same time, one must be careful not to carry the analogy too far. Mazzini did great things for Italy. He gave to a dying race a mighty hope, ideals to live and die for, the courage and the habit of self-sacrifice that the youth of Italy needed for the greatness of its future. But there his action ended, and other forces political and military had to be brought into the field, and methods adopted that were diametrically the opposite of those advocated by the great idealist.

But Sri Aurobindo was never a mere idealist, neither in politics nor in any other field of human endeavour. His was a stark realism—call it “spiritual realism” if you like—that looked straight at the reality of things and forces, pierced through the shuning veil of illusions with which men are wont to cover their hopes and desires, and he was clear enough in his description of the reality he saw. Besides, being a realist, he had a precise conception of what needed to be done, immediately and in the more distant future, to attain the goal. He was no doubt dubbed a mad extremist by many of his wise contemporaries. But there was a method in his madness which was potent enough to his hardheaded adversaries who instinctively realised that here was the one man whom they need really fear, for he knew what he was about while the rest talked platitudes. But the most important difference between Mazzini and Sri Aurobindo lies in the fact that he gave a complete blueprint on which to work in order to gain India’s freedom. And the important thing is that it is actually by following the lines of this blueprint, however sporadically and with insufficient attention to detail, that the work was actually accomplished.

This is what Sri Aurobindo says about Mazzini:

“Mazzini was busy with the great and eternal ideas which move masses of men in all countries and various ages...

“Mazzini summed up the soul of all humanity, the idea of its past and the inspiration of its future in Italian forms and gave life to the dead. At his breath the dead bones clothed themselves with flesh and the wilderness of poisonous brambles blossomed with the rose.

“Mazzini found Italy corrupt, demoralised, treacherous, immoral, selfish, wholly divided and incapable of union. He gave her the impulse of a mighty hope, a lofty spirituality, an intellectual impulse which despising sophistry and misleading detail went straight to the core of things and fastened on the one or two necessities, an ideal to live and die for and the strength to live and die for it...

“Mazzini knew well what he was about. His eyes were fixed on the heart of the nation and as the physician of the Italian malady his business was not with the ultimate and perfect result but with the creation of conditions favourable to complete cure and resurgence. He knew final success was impossible without the creation of a force that could not be commanded for some time to come, but

he also knew that even that force could not succeed without a great spiritual and moral strength behind its action and informing its aspirations. It was this strength he sought to create.

"This spiritual force he created by the promulgation of the mighty and uplifting ideas which pervade his writings ..

"But moral force cannot be confirmed merely by ideas, it can only be forged and tempered in the workshop of action. And it was the habit of action, the habit of strength, daring and initiative which Mazzini sought to recreate in the torpid heart and sluggish limbs of Italy. And with it he sought to establish the sublime Roman spirit of utter self-sacrifice and self-abnegation, contempt of difficulty and apparent impossibility and iron insensibility to defeat. For his purpose the very hopelessness of the enterprises he set on foot was more favourable than more possible essays...

"Because he had that superhuman strength, he was permitted to uplift Italy...."<sup>4</sup>

### **The Indian Context**

Here it becomes necessary to give, in however brief an outline, the state of India at the time when Sri Aurobindo came on the political scene. We must know the background against which he had to work, in order to appreciate the particular methods he followed and the lines of action he advocated.

We shall as far as possible make use of his own words, as they provide the best assessment hitherto available.

"Nowhere have so many weaknesses combined to stand in the way of a nation in the whole range of history. Nowhere have the rulers reduced their subjects to so complete, pervading and abject a material helplessness. .. While we could we deceived ourselves; but we can deceive ourselves no longer. Pain is a terrible disillusioner and the pangs which had come upon us were those of approaching dissolution ..."<sup>5</sup>

The conquest of India by a handful of traders from overseas will always remain one of the miracles of history; it was unprecedented, this rule of the merchants supported by Indian sepoys and British bureaucrats.

"When the Mogul ruled, he ruled as a soldier and conquerer, in the pride of his strength, in the confidence of his invincible greatness, the lord of the peoples by natural right of his imperial character and warlike strength and skill. He stooped to no meanness, hedged himself in with no army of spies, entered into no relations with foreign powers, but grandiose and triumphant, sat on the throne of a continent like Indra on his heavenly seat...

"He trusted his subjects, gave them positions of power and responsibility, used their brain and arm to preserve his conquests and by the royalty of that

trust and noble pride in his own ability to stand by his innate strength, was able to hold India for over a century until Aurangzeb forgot the *kuladharm* of his house and by distrust, tyranny and meanness lost for his descendants the splendid heritage of his forefathers.

"The present domination is a rule of shop-keepers who are at the same time bureaucrats, a combination of the worst possible qualities for imperial Government. The shop-keeper rules by deceit, the bureaucrat by the use of red tape. The shop-keeper by melancholy meanness alienates the subject population, the bureaucrat by soulless rigidity deprives the administration of life and human sympathy. The shop-keeper uses his position of authority to push his wares and fleece his subjects, the bureaucrat forgets his duty and loses his royal character to his mercantile greed. .

"This is what has happened to India under the present regime...."<sup>6</sup>

"When the sepoys had conquered India for the English, the choice lay before the British, either to hold the country by force and repression, or to keep it as long as possible by purchasing the co-operation of a small class of the people who would be educated so entirely on Western lines as to lose their separate individuality and their sympathy with the mass of the nation. An essential part of this policy .which became dominant owing to the strong personalities of Macaulay, Bentinck and others, was to yield certain minor rights to the small educated class, and concede the larger rights as slowly as possible and only answer to growing pressure...."<sup>7</sup>

It was part of this policy to break successively the main centres of national power that still existed after the fall of the Mughal empire.

"It is doubtful whether there is any example in history of an alien domination which has been so monstrously ubiquitous, inquisitorial and intolerant of any centre of strength in the country other than itself as the British bureaucracy.

"There were three actual centres of organised strength in pre-British India, —the supreme ruler, Peshwa or Raja or Nawab reposing his strength on the Zemindars or Jaigirdars, the Zemindar in his own domain reposing his strength on his retinue and tenants, and the village community independent and self-existent. The first result of the British occupation was to reduce to a nullity the supreme ruler, and this was often done, as in Bengal, by the help of the Zemindars. The next result was the disorganisation of the village community. The third was the steady breaking up of the power of the Zemindars with the help of a new class which the foreigners created for their own purposes,—the bourgeois or middle class. Unfortunately for the British bureaucracy it had, in order to get the support and assistance of the middle class, to pamper the latter and allow it to grow into a strength and develop organs of its own, such as the Press, the Bar, the University, the Municipalities, District Boards, etc.... It was now sought to cripple the organs through which this strength was beginning slowly to feel and develop its organic life. The Press was intimidated, the Municipalities officialised,



the University officialised and its expansion limited.... The organs of middle class political life can only be dangerous so long as they are independent. By taking away their independence, they became fresh sources of strength for the Government,—of weakness for the class which strove to find in them its growth and self-expression....”<sup>8</sup>

Undoubtedly, as the apologists of British rule are never tired of repeating, England gave India peace, and certain other “blessings” for which we must be thankful. But this peace, these “blessings”—what were they worth?

“The Pax Britannica is now seen to be the cause of our loss of manliness and power of self-defence, a peace of death and torpor, security to starve in, the ease of the grave. British law has been found to be a fruitful source of demoralisation, an engine to destroy ancient houses, beggar wealthy families and drain the poor of their little competence. British education has denationalised the educated community, laid waste the fertile soil of the Indian intellect, suppressed originality and invention, created a gulf between the classes and the masses, and done its best to kill that spirituality which is the soul of India. The petty privileges which British statecraft has thrown to us as morsels from the rich repast of liberty have pauperised us politically, preserved all that was low, weak and dependent in our political temperament and discouraged the old robust manhood of our forefathers. Every Municipal or District Board has been a nursery of dependence and pampered slavery, and right of public meeting and freedom of the Press only served to complete this demoralisation, while at the same time cheating us into the belief that we were free.”<sup>9</sup>

How to rid his “educated” countrymen of this pernicious belief was to be Sri Aurobindo’s first and most immediate task. And this was to lead him to a prolonged and incessant struggle with his own countrymen, particularly with the acknowledged political leaders of the day, as with the foreign adversary.

### A Matter of Guess

Before we come to deal with the various aspects of this struggle, there is one point on which we should dwell a little.

Sri Aurobindo, we have seen from his letter to his wife, had been aware from the start of his mission to free India. Yet we do not find him embarking on active politics till 1903, that is, as long as ten years after he had come back to India. True, he did take a keen interest in what was happening in India while he was a student in England—of this we shall take note presently. His anti-British effusions on the platform of the Cambridge University Majlis must have been strong enough to decide the British Indian authorities in London to exclude him from the Indian Civil Service for which he had qualified at the open competitive examination.<sup>10</sup> And immediately on his return to India, he penned a series of outspoken articles for the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay which the editor of the paper dared not continue to publish for fear of

being hauled up for sedition; these articles, captioned "New Lamps for Old", were written by Sri Aurobindo under the pen-name of "Zero", perhaps because he was never particularly keen about personal publicity, even in his political work. Whatever silent activity there may have been between the *Indu Prakash* episode of 1893-4 and 1903, he was not publicly known as a political figure till the end of the period.

What is the explanation? Here we have to hazard a guess.

Sri Aurobindo must have been impressed and enthused by the sudden birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885. He was then only thirteen and many older than he had been swept off their feet by "the fervour of these morning hopes, the April splendour of that wonderful enthusiasm",<sup>11</sup> as he was to write later, in a slightly ironic vein. By 1893, however, when he returned to India, the Congress, led by leaders blind to the future, had turned itself into a talking machine: "there is not the slightest evidence to show that we have at all learned to act together; the one lesson we have learned is to talk together, and that is a rather different thing ...."<sup>12</sup>

Bankim Chandra Chatterji who had visions of Mother India as an immortal Deity and wrote the "Bande Mataram" song had already caricatured the Congress sessions in his popular writings; but he was dead in 1894. Vivekananda had the highest contempt for the kind of "canine agitation" in which the Congress had been indulging, and he had left for America (in 1893) to raise India in the eyes of the Western world. His abilities and his deep love for the Motherland were not unknown to Sri Aurobindo. If there was one man alive at the time who could raise India from the dust, that was obviously Vivekananda, whom Sri Aurobindo describes as a very lion among men, "marked out by the Master to take the world between his two hands and change it."<sup>13</sup> Perhaps Sri Aurobindo waited to see what Vivekananda would do on his return from the West. Therefore he retired into his study, thoroughly Indianised himself by delving deep into India's past—and waited. Vivekananda, enamoured of the Infinite, did not fulfil his promise. He left his body in 1902, leaving India practically where it had been. Now was the time for Sri Aurobindo to step out of his retirement and initiate an active movement.

In fact, it was not one movement but a series of movements that Sri Aurobindo initiated, a many-pronged attack on the bastion of iniquity.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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## A SHINING HORSE

A shining Horse of the Eternal's vast sacrifice  
 Has entered my earth smashing its dun formidable base  
 With the thunder tramp of his galloping diamond hooves.  
 The jewelled fire of his stride whips up life's narrow grooves

To a marvellous music struck by some long forgotten seeing,  
 That haunts ever the high and hushed vaults of the being.  
 Insistent and irresistible the boundless call  
 Of the unthinkable One, the unimaginable All.

Beyond the safeties of stagnant self and its miserable dole,  
 In the unfettered freedom unaccompanied and alone  
 Armed with the strength of the gods, drunk with sun-wine  
 To the sacrificial flames of the celestials, O Soul!

Offer your self and not-self and selflessness, the entire whole  
 And at each step on the way is God the Golden Goal.

A. VENKATARANGA

## MRINALINI DEVI: A REMINISCENCE

*(Mrinalini Devi (Minoodi to her juniors) was married to Sri Aurobindo in 1901. She died in 1918. Here are some impressions of her during 1908-09. By that period Sri Aurobindo had already plunged into the political life and passed through several spiritual experiences. At the time of the impressions he was an undertrial prisoner at Alipur.)*

I saw her in my childhood, with the candid love of a tender soul. The sweetness of Minoodi's character was incomparable—she had charmed the children's minds with her selfless affection and by playing with them. Every evening boys and girls of our age gathered on the lawn of her family home and Minoodi would join in all our simple games including hide-and-seek. She would choose such unimaginable places for us to hide in that it would be very difficult for the "thief" to find us. Mixing thus with all, she had made for herself a special place in the world of our childhood-life.

This reminds me of a day when seeing that Minoodi had not yet come I went towards their sitting-room to look for her. At the sound of some conversation I peeped through the window to find the wife of the Magistrate sitting there with a cup of tea. She was requesting Minoodi to do something and then, a little shyly, Minoodi sat in front of the organ, played and sang a song by Tagore. I had never heard her sing like that before, so I simply stood there till the song was over. When I joined my friends that day the play was not so interesting, but I wasn't very eager about it either. My mind was filled with the words and tune of the song I had heard.

There was a deep intimacy among all the Bengali families that then lived in the city of Shillong, playfield of Nature's beauty. Nowadays such close feelings seem to be very rare indeed. It was in our neighbourhood, a few houses beyond ours, that S. J. Bhupal Chandra Bose, Minoodi's father, lived. We had unlimited access to all these houses, and because Minoodi's younger sister was of our age we came to know many things. That is how we first heard of Sri Aurobindo's imprisonment. Feeling that Minoodi must have a deep grief in her, there grew in us a silent respect for her and we started observing her still more carefully. After Sri Aurobindo went to jail it was, for one and all, the only topic of discussion. Though we children did not quite understand the gravity of the situation, we were quite aware of it and imagined all sorts of things. We often wondered what this Personality must be—He who welcomed prison for the sake of his country. Every morning when father read the papers and explained all to my mother, I, under some pretext or other, stood there to listen to him. Among the ladies also, the talk went on—'what a calm and steady girl this Minoo, never an expression of anxiety on her face.'

From the time of Sri Aurobindo's imprisonment we never saw Minoodi in any

showy dress: a broad black-bordered saree on her beautiful fair body, her dark curly tresses surrounding a pleasant smiling face. She also used to partake only of a vegetarian diet with her grandma. She would eagerly prepare many types of dishes, but never, even at the request of the elders, did she ever touch them. We had witnessed this so often—because whenever she saw us returning from school she would come and take us in and feed us with sweetmeats.

Their garden was a real wonder. Bhupal Bose, an officer in the Agricultural Department, had carefully made his garden a glory of beautiful flowers, fruits and vegetables. The bungalow-type house was surrounded below the windows by grape-creepers covering the walls. Here and there you would even spot a few bunches of grapes swaying in the breeze. On the veranda there was an apiary: a long wooden case with a small opening where the bees fluttered about—we spent hours curiously watching them. In the front garden there were innumerable flowers of varied shapes and colours.

When on Sundays, before sunrise, we used to go by their garden on our way to Prayer-meeting to listen to the chanting of hymns, we often saw Minoodi in her usual saree, her hair let loose and wearing wooden sandals, plucking flowers in the garden. She would then take them to the meditation-room. This was a beautifully decorated place of worship. Near the wall in the centre was a long bench, covered with white, where beside a statue of Kali were carefully placed the portraits of Sri Ramakrishnadev and Sri Saradamani. The perfume of incense and the beauty of flowers seemed to carry you to another world. To me this room bore a strange mysterious sign. I used to go there almost everyday. It was not very well ventilated as it stood between two rooms; there was just one window that opened to the garden, and this dimness increased its mysterious feeling. On the wall were arranged a few pictures of great saints. On one side hung a small picture of Vivekananda and on another, resting on a wooden shelf was a picture of Sri Aurobindo. Every day Minoodi stayed closed in this room, in silent worship for a long time. If I went in soon after her "Puja" I noticed fresh flowers beautifully arranged at Sri Aurobindo's feet with incense still burning at the side. Knowing that it was the special offering of the one who had just left, I also would bow down to that unseen and unknown Greatness.

From far and near many people came to see Minoodi, to pay homage at her feet as to a mother. If she knew beforehand she never came out to meet them. But sometimes, when she was walking in the garden, unknown people just stepped in and without caring for any introduction simply bowed down at her feet—it must have been in remembrance of Sri Aurobindo.... But could there have been no other reason? The extraordinariness, the simplicity of character that radiated from her beautiful face, was surely not common at all.

Thus it was we loved her in our children's candour, without knowing about the joys and sorrows of the grown-up mind. We understood that there was a pain in her and from our hearts we gave her the sympathy that words cannot convey.

The news of Sri Aurobindo's acquittal came when we were at school. How happy

we were! Immediately all classes stopped and we ran to Minoodi's house. The reason of this joy was surely the feeling—at last Minoodi's sorrow was at an end....

Later when Sri Aurobindo left for Pondicherry, we often used to wonder why Minoodi did not join Him there. Much later we came to know that Sri Aurobindo had promised to send for her as soon as it was possible. Perhaps it was this waiting that had to be the sadhana of her life. Because, after years, when full of hope she at last left for Pondicherry, a sudden attack of influenza took her life within two or three days at Calcutta.

The soul that went through the hopes and fears of this short-lived existence, ever waiting for its Lord—would it not have come immediately to rest at His feet?

While studying the life of Sri Aurobindo many may have wondered about her, who had one day been His wife and companion. That place in which Sri Aurobindo had accepted her is by itself enough to introduce her specialness.... But, sketched by the tender touches of my childhood, her memory remains in a halo of beauty, affection and simplicity, like the pure delicate fragrance of a cluster of white jasmine.

ILA SEN

*(Original in Bengali)*

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## PRAYER

THE earth made sweet with your footprints  
Where you have walked these many years—  
The sunshine blessed by your shadow—  
The roses, within your sight, sparkle like unshed tears  
Of some deep-hidden joy!  
The light about you is a blissful caress!  
O make me a part of your roses' fragrance,  
A part of this soil filled with your tenderness!

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

## PASSION PLAY

BORN with clipped wings, ordained  
Not to fly high, save for a dream  
Here and now mercifully scattered,  
To hold out hope for the longing in the dust.  
Life being what it may, for the limited round,  
We lived as best we could  
Amidst Philistines and the like.  
Waiting, always waiting ...  
Of pain, there was much to be had,  
A symphony of pain. What scale to play?  
Never loved, never one other who knew  
The fire, beauty, passion, as  
I alone to secret altar brought  
My triune offering.  
Compromise? Never. Life is absolute.  
It had to be all. Always, it had to be all,  
And no one knew why in the dark  
The fire burnt bright,  
There had to be light, splendour,  
Limitless flight.

All was promised before, now paid for,  
It is justly earned.  
Let me enter at last a vast round of flight,  
It has to be now.  
There is nothing else, nothing more to be had  
At all. At all.  
Yesterday's lived and all the tomorrows  
Can yield no honey I want.  
Dancing images, sham, so pale against  
That known right, nothing is alive.  
They died, all the pictures died,  
My actors went to sleep  
And I must keep awake until reality comes.

GEORGETTE

# 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 April 24, 1972)*

3 *(Continued)*

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

(b)

WHATEVER Teilhard's resolution to be himself all through, he could not escape traditional influences colouring his mind on the whole, but his central aim in general to Teilhardianise the Church (from within it) instead of letting himself be Churchianised is too patent to be denied. And the letters from China provide some sharp straightforward insights into what we have called his science-activated and humanism-steeped religion which stood over against established Christianity.

"One single operation is in process of becoming in the world, and it alone can justify our action: The emergence of some spiritual Reality, through and across the efforts of life."<sup>1</sup> "I've reached the point of being unable to imagine the world, even physically, other than in the form of a huge movement of spirit."<sup>2</sup> "I see all the attributes that science has accumulated round matter in the last 150 years, whether as regards energy or history, transposing themselves and passing over onto Spirit."<sup>3</sup> "It looks as though mankind will never regain its passion for God until God is presented to it as the term of a movement that extends our worship of the concrete Real (rather than tearing us away from it). Oh, how tremendously powerful the Real would be for lifting us out of our egoism if only we knew how to see it in its prodigious greatness!"<sup>4</sup> We may note that for Teilhard two realities are bound together for worship: "the concrete Real"—that is, the tangible cosmos in its totality—and the "huge movement of spirit", the emerging Cosmic Person, whose physical aspect or expressive body it is. Both jointly constitute "the great All", which was the object of his most intense meditation in that "most alive region", the "front" of World War I,

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Léontine Zanta* (Collins, London, 1969), p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.



and in "the vast solitudes of Mongolia."<sup>1</sup>

No doubt, the emerging Cosmic Person was connected by Teilhard with the historical Christ. According to him, through Jesus of Nazareth divinity had been concentratedly and organically inserted into the world of matter and as a result of the incarnation of God 2000 years ago the slow Godward process of the evolving world got its decisive impetus to "divinization" and the certainty of its fulfilment in the final union with the Supreme beyond time and space, which Christianity calls the Pleroma, the Plenitude, of Christ—the union whose natural support would be effected by the evolution of a totalised and unified humanity functioning as a collective Person. In that Person, identical with the Omega Point of evolution, the World-Soul will have emerged. Certainly a Christianity is here, with Christ in several roles—transcendent, universal, immanent, matter-suffusing, evolutionary, incarnate, super-animative, pleromatic—but an utterly recast Christianity, both in its basic vision and its various derivative implication. That is how Teilhard saw his religion when he spoke out of the deepest and clearest part of him.

Against this interpretation some words of Henri de Lubac's<sup>2</sup> may be pitted: "Père Teilhard sometimes seems unnecessarily to exaggerate the originality of his teaching in the field of religion.... In his enthusiasm for the new prospects opened up by generalized evolution, he over-emphasizes, in a way that can even be annoying, the contrast between 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'. He is all the more inclined to do this in that his knowledge of Christian thought throughout the centuries was never (as is true of many, even better theologians than he) more than elementary... On such occasions, one would like to be able to say to him, 'Why do you make it seem as though you wanted to be an innovator, whereas all you are really trying to do is to be a rejuvenator? Why are you ready to accept, without any distinction, an image of the Christian past that is derived from a present that often suffers from sclerosis?'" De Lubac<sup>3</sup> imagines Teilhard as answering: "I obtained this image from recognized theologians. They seem quite satisfied with it. Is it my fault that I accepted it?"

A less Teilhardian answer can hardly be conceived. His charge against Christianity's past and present is not confined to a condemnation of what he termed "juridicism" or of an other-worldliness. De Lubac<sup>4</sup> may be right in saying that "juridicism" does not describe "the main stream of theological tradition" and that Teilhard's picture of Christianity wanting "to withdraw from the world into the 'beyond'" is "over-simplified". But the heart of novelty in Teilhardism lies in a certain sense which could never have been in fundamental Christianity because it is inextricably bound up in the West with the world-view of modern science, which was impossible when the Christian ground-plan was laid out and permanently demarcated. Orthodoxy resides in sticking to that ground-plan, and if it gets unstuck it is no longer itself.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (Collins, London, 1967), pp.186-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

What the new sense is—splitting Teilhardism from orthodoxy,—may be briefly set forth in some phrases of Teilhard's own:

"In the space of a century the combined influence of history, physics, philosophy and sociology, has shown us that the whole universe is carried along in an over-all movement (or evolution) within which the special evolution of consciousness has its determined place. Time now appears to us not as the permanent setting of divergent or circular diversifications but as the axis of a sort of cosmogenesis. Things do not repeat themselves, the world presses on....<sup>1</sup>

"From the scientific and philosophical point of view, this way of looking at the universe has consequences of obvious importance: its influence is necessarily felt, and felt effectively (though this has not yet been sufficiently emphasised) even in the religious depths of the soul. By taking on a sort of natural unity in the course of duration, the world does more than acquire an additional dimension in the eyes of intellectual inquiry. It stands out, in an encounter with the human individual, as an object endowed with higher value and dignity, to which it is clear, he must subordinate and dedicate himself. It arouses in us, with the undeniable appeal of a tangible immensity close to us, the resonance of the chords, ever ready to vibrate, of worship....<sup>2</sup>

"As a result of the scientific discovery of the natural unity of the world and its vastness modern man can now recognise God only in the continuation (could one, perhaps, say 'under the species'?) of some universal progress of maturing....<sup>3</sup>

"It has become a commonplace to designate western civilisation as materialist.... Nothing could be more unjust. The West has overthrown many idols. But, by its discovery of the *dimensions and forward momentum of the universe*, it has set in motion a powerful mysticism. For we can properly speak of it as a mysticism, in that we have been aroused by physics and history to the consciousness of a tangible immensity, and so can conceive no values, can take delight in nothing, except our arduous identification with the fulfilment of that immensity. The whole problem now is to determine the truth and the name of the presence that we believe we can feel behind the blaze of the universe."<sup>4</sup>

The same spiritual modernism, impossible to connect *in toto* with accepted Christianity, appears when Teilhard emphasised his "need to reconcile in a solidly coherent system scientific views on evolution (accepted as, in their essence, definitively established) with the innate urge that has impelled me to look for the Divine not in a cleavage with the physical world but through matter, and, in some sort of way, in union with matter."<sup>5</sup> There is also his description of himself as an "average man of the twentieth century" who "has been unable to find the proper balance for his interior life except in a unitary concept, based upon physics, of the world and Christ."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Science and Christ* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Christ's entry into this concept depends on our formulating "a Christology proportionate to the dimensions now attributed to the universe—that means...recognising that... Christ possesses 'universal' or 'cosmic' attributes in addition to his strictly human and divine attributes (with which theologians have hitherto been primarily concerned): and it is precisely these attributes that make him the personal Centre which the physics and metaphysics of evolution feel must exist and for which they are looking."<sup>1</sup>

Then Teilhard points to the support he finds in scripture and tradition: "these views show a startling coincidence with the most fundamental Johannine and Pauline texts and with the theology of the Greek Fathers."<sup>2</sup> In those texts Christ is said to be "*he who fills all*", "*he who consummates*", "*he who gives its consistence to the entire edifice of matter and Spirit*".<sup>3</sup> These functions of Christ, says Teilhard, are to be taken "physically and literally."<sup>4</sup> And, as a result, the man who has religiously adhered to "God in All" "cannot see which is the more precious grace: that he has found Christ to animate matter, or matter to make Christ tangible."<sup>5</sup> However, we must note that by referring to St. Paul, St. John and the Greek Fathers, Teilhard, while validly Christianising in a general sense his cosmicism, does not merely revive a component of Christianity which was relegated to the background: what he formulates is still a new Christianity and he was cognisant of many differences from St. Paul in the very act of claiming that the Apostle's line was being followed.

Thus a note<sup>6</sup> during his Retreat of 1940 says: "Into the famous text of Romans 8.38, 'Quis separabit nos a caritate Christi' — 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ'—I introduce a shade of meaning that differs from St. Paul's (even though it follows his line). For St. Paul charity is the force greater than all forces; for me, it is the dynamic milieu that embraces and super-animates them all." De Lubac<sup>7</sup> himself admits that, putting forward the Cosmic Christ, the Evolutive Christ, Teilhard "has the insight to perceive that this new way of looking at Christ involves more than a new shade of interpretation of the Apostle's thought... since at that time the world, the 'whole' (with all the organic definition that these words imply for us), were still non-existent for human consciousness...."

Thus Teilhard was justified in speaking of "a new religion", "an improved Christianity"—something that can fit into no Christian orthodoxy of any time. And it is the same sense of a radical innovation, in the midst of whatever adherences in him to his Church and its tradition, that is behind the religious envisagement which de Lubac<sup>8</sup> speaks of in referring to Teilhard's response, in *Le Cœur de la Matière* (1950), to God calling him from both scientific evolutionism and Christian spirituality, "from the depths of the cosmic future, as from the heights of heaven". De Lubac tells us:

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> Henri de Lubac, *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Message*, translated by Renée Hague (A Mentor Book, New York, 1967), p. 28, fn.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, p. 104.

"He now seems to envisage 'a new Faith, in which are combined the upward striving Faith in a transcendent and the propulsive Faith in an immanent'...."

This conclusion for a Christianity "set off on a completely new start" cannot be controverted simply by showing, as does de Lubac, how Teilhard, in spite of all the novelties of his thought which during his lifetime the Church regarded as dangerous if not heretical, observed the various traditional credos and practices and pieties of his priestly vocation. We must remember that Christ's universal or cosmic attributes did not negate for Teilhard his usual human and divine ones: on the contrary all the three types were intimately linked together in his mind and significantly coloured one another. Nothing diminished the essential newness of his religion. Nor are de Lubac and others of his school right to make some play of certain resemblances between Teilhard's formulations and those of older exegetes and thinkers, as if the latter in part anticipated the former. A few verbal similarities, a few affinities of definition are the utmost that can be demonstrated. Even if they spoke of Christ being cosmic, their purport would be different: it would not go beyond a stress on "omnipresence" and "immanence", which were orthodox theological ideas, or on a universal, a ubiquitous role of Christ in human destiny. Teilhard remains inevitably unorthodox.

Broadly speaking, de Lubac admits as much in his carefully balanced sentence:<sup>1</sup> "If [Teilhard] seemed to go beyond some positions generally adopted by the Church, he would never have been willing to lag behind any one of them." Here his conformities are juxtaposed with his novelties, with his outstrippings of orthodoxy. While the former do not fall short of the Church's interpretations, the latter cross the limit up to which these interpretations, whether in the past or the present, have gone.

From some other statements of de Lubac's we can even infer that following St. Paul's line in general does not disprove Teilhard's novelty and non-orthodoxy. De Lubac<sup>2</sup> writes: "it fell to him to explore truths which, without being new, stretched out like continents untrodden by man. 'St. Paul and the Greek Fathers speak of a cosmic function of Christ: the exact content of that phrase has never perhaps been brought out'". That is precisely what he liked to find in the theology of his time—more light on 'the organic and cosmic splendour contained in the Pauline doctrine of Christ gathering up all things'....<sup>4</sup> Finally, we should remember that, throughout his whole life, Père Teilhard had to struggle to define a spiritual attitude for which there was no adequate model in past centuries. This was because it had for the first time, without distorting the perennial Christian ideal, to make that ideal accept the responsibility towards a developing world or, as he put it, towards Cosmogogenesis, that man had newly come to feel."

Even the one reservation made by de Lubac, in the midst of statements that

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> O. Rabut, *Dialogue with Teilhard de Chardin* (Stagbooks, Sheed & Ward, London and New York, 1961), p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> 'La Crise présente' in *Études* (20 Oct. 1937).

can imply Teilhard's novelty and non-orthodoxy despite his following the line of St. Paul, can be rendered ineffective. He speaks of the Teilhardian truths as having been like "continents" already there though stretching out "untrodden by man". We may provide an answer from Teilhard<sup>1</sup> himself: "one might say that a hitherto unknown form of religion — one that no one could as yet have imagined or described, for lack of a universe large enough and organic enough to contain it—is burgeoning in the heart of modern man, from a seed sown by the idea of evolution." Surely this means: "the organic and cosmic splendours contained in the Pauline doctrine of Christ gathering up all things" were organic and cosmic in a very different sense.

The "hitherto unknown form of religion" is set off yet more clearly elsewhere by Teilhard with even an understood reference to the Pauline doctrine. He<sup>2</sup> says of "the various creeds still commonly accepted": "they were born and grew up in a time when problems of cosmic totalization and maturing did not *exist*. However universal their promises and visions of the beyond might be, they did not explicitly (and with good reason) allow any room to a global and controlled transformation of the whole of life and thought in their entirety. And yet...is it not precisely an event of this order (an event that involves the expectation and the advent of some ultra-human) that we are asking them to include, to hallow, and to animate, now and for ever after?" The conclusion for us is unmistakable: the "promises and visions" in the Pauline doctrine, no matter how "universal", had another foundation than Teilhardism. The hope of a reappearance of Christ—the Parousia—for a plenary gathering up—the Pleroma—had necessarily a religious core radically dissimilar to the one that shapes under the vision of an evolution-conducting cosmic Christ. Without mincing his words Teilhard<sup>3</sup> insists on the radical dissimilarity: "It is impossible to think of Christ as 'evolver' without at the same time having to re-think the whole of Christology."

And he goes on to indicate in a summary the immediate lines of re-thinking, one of which we have spotlighted a little earlier. They are: "a functional completion of the one and the multiple takes the place of the creative paternalism we habitually envisaged. The twofold notion of *statistical evil* and *evolutionary redemption* correcting or completing the idea of catastrophic sin and reparatory expiation. The final parousia more akin to a maturing than to a destruction."

The first line has found some elaboration in Teilhard<sup>4</sup> elsewhere:

"I have no intention of contesting... an ontological distinction between the divine Centre and the elementary centres that form the world. .. Nevertheless, from the point of view of action, I shall note that the Christian solution, if it is not taken further than it actually goes, is certainly unable to fulfil the conditions of activation<sup>5</sup> imposed on the universe by the progress of modern thought. An entirely gratuitous creation, a

<sup>1</sup> *Activation of Energy* (Collins, London, 1970), p. 383.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Science and Christ*, pp. 180-82

<sup>5</sup> In *Science and Christ*, p. 171, fn. 5, we read "By activance (activating potential) I mean the power an intellectual or mystical outlook possesses of developing spiritual energies in us and super-stimulating them."

gesture of pure benevolence, with no other object, for the absolute Being, than to *share* his plenitude with a *corona* of participants of whom he has strictly no need—that could satisfy minds that had not yet awoken to the immensity of space-time, the colossal stores of energy and the unfathomable organic articulation of the phenomenal world; but we who have become conscious (and vividly so) of the majesty, the implacability, and the truly ‘divine’ power of cosmic evolution—we would suffer deeply, in the honour we pay to being, and the respect we have for God would be insulted, if all this great array, with its huge burden of toil and trouble, were no more than a sort of game whose sole aim was to make us supremely happy. We can accept that by ourselves and in ourselves we are initially nothing to the ultimate depths of ourselves.... But if we could not somehow consciously feel that we cannot ‘be of service to God’ without God adding something to Himself, that would most certainly destroy, at the heart of our freedom, the intimate driving forces of action. To be happy? But what use have we for the *selfish* happiness of *sharing* the joy of the supreme Being, when we can dream of the infinitely greater happiness of completing that joy?... Philosophically we are still living in an antiquated body of thought,...now...being undermined by physics that is succeeding in abolishing any real distinction, for our reason, between extension and motion, between particles and waves, between matter and light, between space and time.... Under the pressure and contagious influence of these revolutionary re-appraisals (whose result is in every case to bring out a necessary link between pairs of realities that hitherto seemed to be as independent as they possibly could be), we are inevitably making our way to a completely new concept of *being*: in this the hitherto contradictory attributes of the ‘*ens ab alio*’ [‘being by another’] and the ‘*ens a se*’ [‘being by itself’], of the world and God, would be combined in a general synthetic function (cf. algebraic functions including an imaginary term): God completely other in nature than the world and yet unable to dispense with it.”

The second line of re-thinking has already received enough gloss in brief. The third is connected with Teilhard’s idea that Christ’s Parousia, with its consequent Pleroma, will be a supernatural event coinciding with a progression of the human into the ultra-human by a natural evolution towards Omega-point and must indeed depend upon such a consummate maturing of humanity as a single unified being. Not that the ultra-human natural will compel the divine super-natural; but by a functional relationship through the Cosmic Christ the two logically stand together. In Christian dogma the Parousia has no intrinsically organic relationship with human progress: it can even come “*in rupture* with it”.<sup>1</sup> “Whether the terrestrial world achieves its success or ends in failure”, the Divine Kingdom will arrive—“even more certainly, maybe, if failure is the answer”.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the Divine Kingdom tarnishes the flower of progress, or kills it completely.<sup>3</sup> Referring to the Christian Revelation, Teilhard<sup>4</sup> writes: “The Parousia, we know, is promised as a dawn that will rise over a

<sup>1</sup> *Writings in Time of War* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

supreme onslaught of error....” His editors append the footnote: “In later years, Père Teilhard sometimes took a more optimistic view. He still, nonetheless, maintained the dramatic possibility of evil being the final choice.” He maintained that possibility because of the loyalty of the Christian in him to the dogma of Revelation; but the whole evolutionist in him rejects the notion of the Parousia’s destructiveness, dealing as it would with a paramount evil instead of a luminous and harmonious maturity. Against the supernatural dogma, as well as against the ultimate contempt by religious orthodoxy of a world whose trend is felt to be towards evil, his re-thought Christology held: “Of the two or three natural dogmas that mankind, after long centuries of debate and after ceaseless critical examination, is now definitely establishing, the most categorical and the dearest to us is certainly that of the infinite value of the universe and its inexhaustible store of richness. ‘Our world contains within itself a mysterious promise of the future, implicit in its natural evolution.’ When the newborn mind surveys the grandeurs of the cosmos, those are the first words its falters; and that is the final assertion of the scientist as he closes his eyes, heavy and weary, from having seen so much that he could not express...”<sup>1</sup>

*(To be continued)*

K. D. SETHNA

## **“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”**

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1972)*

### **GOD AND LIFE THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION**

IN the previous issue I spoke of Bramacharya and its effects on the life of a middle-aged man. Now I will tell of a girl leading a celibate life with grace and dignity while working among college students.

J was in the Ashram from her early childhood. One day she went to her father and told him: “I feel unable to conform to the principles of the Ashram, therefore I should not live on Ashram food”; so she went to live with her sister in Bangalore. An example of transparent sincerity!

After obtaining the degree of M.A. in English (First Class) she got an appointment in Delhi at Rs. 900 a month but found the atmosphere suffocating, so came back to Bangalore and accepted a job at Rs. 500 a month. Here she felt happy, for the Ashram was near and she could be there on her days off.

At college J told her students in a friendly way:

“I am here to teach you and to help you if you have difficulty. You should work hard to get good results and I shall work hard to see you climb high in life and have a bright future.” This created a good impression on the students and whenever J rose to speak there reigned a pin-drop silence.

In her way of life she is said to be far different from the girls of our modern age. By the force of her character and eloquence J brought a definite change in the general attitude of the college students.

Her father is never tired of repeating that because of her early days in the Ashram atmosphere she is respected by all. Even while in college she was looked upon with respect by both professors and students. What she imbibed during her childhood in the Ashram has sustained her. When one goes from here one realises what has been gained.

Because of her connection with the Ashram she was requested to address a meeting organised to celebrate the function of Sri Aurobindo's birthday of 15th August 1971, presided over by the Ex-Chief Justice of Mysore. She is also taking interest in the activities of Sri Aurobindo Society, whether she conducts a general meeting or gives a talk at the Youth wing. Wherever she goes, she creates an atmosphere of her own.

In each success there lurks the seed of failure. It is not easy to overcome the lures of life. All cannot rise to the peak. One slip and one does not know what fate awaits him. J's eldest sister was the first to join the Ashram but could not stand the rigours of



the Ashram life. When she stood before the Mother at the time of parting, the Mother put her hands on her shoulders and very sweetly said, "My arms will always remain open for you." Though she is far away from the Ashram now—in Australia—the Mother's name is ever on her lips.

To another girl, at the time of her departure to Canada with her husband, the Mother said, "Write to me and I will give reply."

When the father of a youth felt greatly grieved because his son was planning to live an ordinary life, the Mother told him, in an assuring tone, "He has not left me and I have not left him. He needed some experience, why should you worry?"

Look at the Mother's way of dealing with these youngsters. She didn't take them to task or show any displeasure but promised her help to them wherever they might be. There is hardly anyone among us who has not at some time or another tasted the Mother's human sweetness.

Once when a girl was having difficulties and her father wanted to take her away, the Mother is reported to have said, "Why do you wish to take her when she does not want to go?" Infinite is Her tolerance for those who have taken refuge at her feet! Time and again they are given the chance to rise, awake and push themselves towards the Light.

Such instances remind me of the words spoken by a Canadian teacher:

"Great opportunities in life should not be lost."

The Mother named him Angira. Though he came from the West, he appeared almost eastern in spirit and attitude. Though much inclined towards the contemplative life he didn't fail the call of work—the role of a teacher in our Centre of Education.

Asked what his assessment of the Ashram children was and how they differed from those outside, he said in a thoughtful tone:

"Children here are of a different category. The difference lies in their purity, consciousness and the building of character in some, if not all. It will bear them well when they enter adult life. The ego is prominent in some here also, but the general level is higher. All over the world there is confusion, inner turmoil and revolt against the past among the students.

Q: What do you think about their development?

A: To my mind all children are developing in some way or other. Here the central factor in their education is the awakening of consciousness slowly but steadily under the constant influence of their own psychic being.

After a few moments of silence he continued:

"Children in the West, below age twelve, are not allowed to grow freely. Teachers have no idea that the 'thinking mind' is different from the 'vital and physical mind' and that there is a psychic being, which, if awakened, will infuse into the child a new life, and a new light."

His parting comment was:

"The problem is not how to change but do you really want to change?"

Now we come to education proper.

In the field of education the Ashram's contribution is not negligible, though still in the experimental stage. Even those who do not subscribe to the gospel of spirituality can learn how life can be organised, how it can be made fruitful and blissful. Much has been written by eminent scholars on the Free Progress System of our education. I shall be as brief as possible within the framework of this series. Things in the world have come to such a pass that we are led to think there can be no changes in life nor is there hope of change. In this respect we reproduce a passage from *'Life'* quoted by Pavitra in his book on Education:

"Many thoughtful Americans are disturbed because as a nation we seem bereft of a sense of purpose.... We have tried to fill ourselves with science and education, with better living and pleasure, with many other things we thought we wanted but we are still empty and bored. . We are confused by the prejudice, hatred, greed and lust that are within us. We seem to be caught helpless in quicksand: we want to be out of our human dilemma but are powerless. The American genius has enabled us to change virtually everything but ourselves. It is absolutely impossible to change society... unless we ourselves are changed."

In this spirit and to this end we proceed to study our educational system.

At the outset let us note the Mother's proverbial words:

"To seek to change conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera."

But what is one to do to bring about this change?

"Above the mind there is a consciousness much wiser than the mental wisdom." Life must be governed and organised by this consciousness. Then in time the change will come, as day follows night.

"Consciousness has been given to man so that he may progress, discover what he does not know, grow in what he is not."

So the aim of education should be the evolution and the unfolding of consciousness petal by petal. And thus the purpose of education is closely linked with the purpose of life.

Here I recall a striking line from the pen of Nolini Kanta Gupta:

"True education is the growth of consciousness. And the growing child is nothing but a growing consciousness."

"The chief aim of education," says Sri Aurobindo, "should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use. A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development."

Modern man is carried away helplessly by the current of life like a piece of driftwood. He has no say, no will-power to turn the tide of life.

The Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education maintains that one of the most important tasks of education is to lead the student to discover for himself the aim of his life and what the Divine demands of his nature.

The Mother counsels: "Everyone should have an aim. On the quality of your

aim will depend the quality of your life. Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested; this will make your life precious to yourself and to all." Science does not help man discover the true aim of life. Its search is mostly confined to the chemistry of life.

Let us take life as it comes and transform it by the power of Spiritual Science. That is the only way to face the bitter world.

What is Spiritual Science?

That which helps one breathe a new air;

That which pours new life into the dormant soul;

That which brings illumination to life.

How to ascertain our progress in Spiritual Science?

By the degree of surrender,

By the awakening of consciousness,

By the measure of mastery over oneself.

The world Sri Aurobindo wants to create will embody a new consciousness, a new light, a new guiding principle of knowledge and action ushering in a new era, a new epoch, a new civilisation.

For years Sri Aurobindo considered the formation of an Educational Centre as one of the best means of realising this end. His ideas took a concrete form when a school was founded on December 2, 1943. On January 6, 1952, in its place the Mother instituted the Sri Aurobindo University Centre as the finest memorial to him. Later she renamed it the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

*(To be continued)*

NARAYAN PRASAD

# THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

## A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

*(Continued from the issue of April 24, 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 III

#### *Mind*

POM-POM dries his tears and Val bends down on all fours to examine the bird that is transporting them. He is a gay creature with blue feathers and a tuft of yellow plumes on top of his head, carrying them along in a most distracted manner.

Finally it seems they have arrived at their destination, for the bird deposits his load in a very strange land indeed! A land in the air with clouds forming landscapes and a hubbub of people rushing to and fro, all carrying books under their arms and walking in two's. They have scholarly faces and are very busy chatting and chatting away to each other.

For a long while Val and Pom-pom study their surroundings. They realise the cage is locked and after much indecision and talk about whether they should enter this land, they finally put their diverse opinions in accord and decide to try the third key. Bending down close to the lock of the cage they see the following symbol **II** and the number 3. Val inserts the key and to their greatest joy the door opens: they are free!

The children rush out and are about to dash off when Val remembers her picturebook. Just before the cage vanishes she returns to fetch it and puts it under her arm as they hop off down the cloud road.

The people around do not seem very interested in the children; they walk hurriedly and most of them have their noses in books. There is quite a lot of noise because all are reading out loud and making such a racket. Val wonders how they can concentrate on their studies, for surely they are studying very seriously. The children are curious to know where everyone is going because the whole place seems to be moving toward something. The only problem is that the direction always changes and they find that many times these people are moving in circles. In spite of themselves Val and Pom-pom are obliged to enter the movement and they both agree it would be a good idea to find out where everyone is off to. Pom-pom runs down the road to sort of scout around, when he hears voices above the general reading hubbub saying:

"Where's your other half?"

"How dare you walk around alone!"

"What sort of primitive creature are you?"

He rushes back to Val and they cling to each other not daring to move for fear of doing something wrong and arousing the ill will of these creatures. Finally the indignant voices quiet down.

"Psst!"

Val and Pom-pom remain in their state, undecided as to what to do.

"Psst!" they hear again, and then another more insistent,

"Psssssst!"

They turn around to see two young gentlemen, standing arm in arm with books in their free arms, dressed very fancily with high collars and shiny boots with spats, fine fitted coats and lovely silk cravats. Both have wonderful heads of yellow wavy hair topping high foreheads above sharp, alive, blue eyes.

"Come here," they say in unison.

Val and Pom-pom hesitantly approach the couple and coming closer they soon lose all fear because the manner of the two is so pleasant that they are encouraged to communicate with them. Pom-pom boldly asks why everyone is in two's and why they always speak together.

"Two! What do you mean two? I am one. I mean, one and one make two and it takes two ones to make a two, so I am one and one in two and therefore one! How about you?"

"Well, he's just my brother," explains Val, rather embarrassed.

"Oh, me too, a twin," they reply in unison. "Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Geof-Frie." They say the name in perfect timing so as to make it sound one. "However, please tell me why you haven't yet learned to speak together. How can you stand such a crazy split?"

Val begins to wonder who's really crazy, the twins or they! She doesn't know what to say nor how to say it since she could never manage to talk with Pom-pom, who always says silly things anyway. Nevertheless, she starts relating all their adventures through Aries and Taurusland which delight the minds of Geof and Frie.

After listening to the tale the Twins reassure them:

"Have no fear. You have come a long way in ignorance but finally here in Geminiland your education will begin. You will learn to complement each other and the outward results will be to speak in unison. After all, two minds are better than one, even if they are separate. And words, dear friends, ah, you will learn the excitement of words!"

"Is that what everybody is studying?" asks Val.

"They're preparing for the yearly examination. It's May 21st, a very important time here. Come along and you will see."

Off they go, with Val and Pom-pom trailing after the Twins down the road. Their steps are quick and it takes quite an effort to keep up with them.

They approach a very imposing building that seems to be just where all the popu-

lation is going. Hundreds of people are entering in a great rush and busily scanning the books held in their free arms. Certainly there was never a school in such confusion! Geof and Frie lead the children into a very large lecture hall almost completely filled and each takes a seat. The Twins—as all the other couples—are seated with one arm entwined in the other's.

In come the Professors, rather thin, with huge spectacles and a thousand and one twitches. They are very nervous sorts.

Roll call is taken: Hum/Phry, Ron/Ald, Hora/Tio, Lio/Nel, Frank/Lin, and so on. After this the work begins and each couple is tested. With most remarkable skill the two professors speak in perfect unison about entirely different subjects, and with the same facility the students answer, one to the questions of the first professor, the other to the questions of the second, simultaneously and in exact coordination. Meanwhile the classroom is in uproar because the rest of the students are preparing other lessons; some are studying mathematics, others history, some are memorising verbs in the strangest languages. Yet nothing seems to distract the concentration of these creatures and they all appear so capable of doing a hundred things at once.

Geof and Frie are questioned, one in Greek and the other in Latin, then in Physics and Chemistry, and so on. The children find them so clever, much more than the other students. They are very proud to have them for friends.

"Val/Pom-pom! Val/Pom-pom!" two voices shout out. "What a ghastly name. Who bears such a ridiculous name?"

Bang-bang! Bang-bang! The professors rap their desk in indignation. Geof and Frie push the children to their feet and for the first time the whole room falls into an attentive silence.

The Professors exclaim: "Well, let's be quick now. You're the last one on the list and examinations are coming to an end. Can you write?"

"Yes/No," respond the children, not in perfect time nor in accord, for Pom-pom of course can't write,—not very well at least.

"Repeat that please. Can you write?" straining an ear to make sure they hear properly.

"No/Yes," again not agreeing.

The whole class breaks out into ripples of laughter. The Professors rap their desks and order returns.

"There has obviously been some mistake. You can rectify this by properly answering the following question: how many lives does a cat have?"

"One/Nine. We mean Nine/One!" they respond.

"Wrong, wrong, wrong! This will never do. *We*, you said, you said *WE*! Failure, failure," and at these cruel and disheartening words the Professors are ready to dismiss them when Geof and Frie come forth to plead for another chance. It is almost the end of term, June 21st, with just a short time left to examine, but the Professors consent. They ask for the book Val carries and agree to question them only on what they have been studying. The Twins pass the book down the rows of students until it reaches

the teachers' hands. Opening the book the Professors gasp in horror:

"Pictures," they exclaim, "a picture book! This is the cause of their maladjustment and ignorance. An over-stimulation of the emotions and not of the intellect! Disastrous."

"Valie, what are they talking about?" whispers Pom-pom.

"I think they mean we cry too much. Sssh."

"Silence up there! Class," continue the Professors, "these are feeling not thinking beings. Can you see what such a stimulus can cause: complete mental chaos, inability to coordinate and adapt, and a general disorder of the cerebral-nervous system," proclaim the Professors as they twitch and fidget.... "And what's more, even their physical development has been affected, for one is bigger than the other. AND," they continue solemnly, "I have the vague suspicion—though I prefer to leave the matter in doubt—that one is a *girl* and the other a *boy*!"

Sounds of amazement come from the class and tension rises, sometimes dying down, then it begins again. In fact, there is always this continuous feeling of up and down, up and down.

"There is only one thing to do for these unfortunate beings. They must stay in this class until the next yearly examination period, working on the proper methods to become one well-conditioned, well-adjusted mental being, and let us presume that by that time their performance will be satisfactory."

Pom-pom cries out:

"We can't stay here! We have to leave now, right now."

The Professors are silent a moment. They have a very grave air about them. Finally they speak:

"No hope, there's no hope. Bring the certificate."

One pair of students comes forward with a roll of parchment upon which the Professors write:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
VAL/POM-POM  
HAS FAILED TO PASS THE YEARLY EXAMINATION  
OF  
GEMINILAND  
AND HAS DISPLAYED *SUPER-EMOTION* INSTEAD OF  
*SUPER-INTELECT*  
THEREBY MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT THE  
PROPER EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONING OR CONDITIONED  
EDUCATION, AND MAKING IT NECESSARY TO ORDAIN  
*TRANSPORT INTO THE REALM OF NIGHT*

This Twenty-first day of June  
in Geminiland

Signed.....  
Professor of Coordinated  
Conditioning

The document is rolled up and handed to the children. The crowd makes sounds of approval; however, it is clear they are becoming bored with the matter and seem anxious to get on with their other affairs.

The children are accompanied to the entrance of the institution by Geof and Frie and a winged messenger is summoned to carry them off. When he appears the children realise it is the same bird who carried them before.

He cleverly snatches them up, one in each of his claws and they depart, with Val carrying the certificate. She and Pom-pom turn to wave a last farewell at Geof and Frie, only to find the Twins nonchalantly waving their handkerchiefs while talking to a group of students about preparations for the evening's annual ball, already forgetting the two little folk who are by now far off in the distance.

The bird whistles a tune as he flies and seems in a gay mood. He is obviously always in the clouds for in his distraction he loses his way many times and constantly changes direction. At last he seems to hit the right course and with a decisive plunge begins descending, while the two children dangle in the grasp of his claws. Down and down they go and the farther they descend the darker it becomes. Down into the unknown, down into the night.

*Gemini is an Air sign, an element having particular affinity with the mental plane. It is masculine and of Mutable Energy—the wavering, unsteady flow of end season, sensitive and changeful but without force or direction. It is ruled by Mercury, the asexual planet, whose function is to mirror the light of other planets: the instrument or messenger of the Gods.*

*The previous sign, Taurus, represents a sort of Garden of Eden, and after passage through Gemini and the subsequent duality or division occurring, of which mind itself is unaware, there is then the "fall". With this sign the first trinity of Cardinal, Fixed and Mutable Qualities is completed, movements that can be viewed as Creation, Preservation and Destruction. This is to repeat itself four times within the wheel, each time corresponding to a further development, an ever greater possibility on the spiral of creation.*

(To be continued)

PATRIZIA



## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**A Big Change** (A collection of 23 talks on the Spiritual Revolution and the Future Man) by *K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, New Delhi. Pp. 187. Rs. 8/—

CHANGES we have many; and the attempts at more changes are not wanting—changes in the structures of Governments, changes in the economic, social and political life, changes in the systems of education and changes in almost every other walk of life. In this wild sea of changes there is not a single concrete change the world can confidently live by in peace and harmony. The great prophets of peace and universal good will have come and gone; but the world is going on in its own way of division and destruction. The advent of science has added a new ominous element with (to use a phrase from the book under review) its “smashing of the nucleus and cracking of the genetic code”<sup>1</sup> The click of a button by someone, somewhere in some idiotic moment, can wipe out the countries and continents. Colossal power in its naked dance divorced from Grace—to what hoped-for Utopia can it ever lead?

All Grace is power. In fact Grace is the only power. But the slow sense-hampered human consciousness can only see the gross physical and brute power. This power flows from Nature, Prakriti. “It is abundant, it is ceaseless. It is irresistible,”<sup>2</sup> asserts Professor Iyengar. It is the force of the Supreme put forth—this Prakriti. And it is not blind. It has a vigilant eye of its own, and exercises a wonderful control over its outflow of energy, thereby maintaining a marvellous balance and harmony. Man in his blind pursuit of power has shattered this balance. Science has placed in his hands monstrous weapons of destruction undreamt-of even by the most devilish dictators and tyrants of the past. Our very civilisation is in peril. Surely power without Grace is corrupt and such graceless, absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is indeed an irresistible lure of the siren-self. The present life of the nations all over the world is too common a story to be repeated here. The situation has been luminously summed up in the following lines charged with a cleansing fire:

Ignorant architects of low-built lives  
And engineers of interest and desire,  
Out of crude earthiness and muddy thrills  
And coarse reaction of material nerve  
They build our huddled structures of self-will  
And the ill-lighted mansions of our thought,  
Or with the ego's factories and marts

<sup>1</sup> p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> p. 11.

Surround the beautiful temple of the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Now, how to emerge from the chaotic market place of material preoccupations? How to escape from the suffocating smoke of the ego's factories and marts? The problem has been engaging the urgent attention of many an enlightened mind. Neither the democracies, socialistic or otherwise, nor the totalitarian states, can offer any permanent solution. Even a return to religion must prove itself the same old wine in a new bottle. The change of institutions, parties and governments, through revolutions or elections, cannot bring the desired change. It is a change complete and whole in the human consciousness which acts behind these, that alone can bring us nearer to the goal. Perhaps the modern crisis was inevitable in the very nature of the evolutionary process, to point out to us the utter need of a higher and nobler than this our human consciousness and the imperative need of a total revolt against all kinds of falsehood or half-truth at each level phase of life.

"The revolutions of the past have tried to change everything except the old Adam who has had the last laugh always."<sup>2</sup> Hence the urgent need of an integral change, "A Big Change" as the title of the book suggests. A grand reconciliation of power with Grace and of matter with spirit is the imperative call of the hour. The division between mundane life and spiritual life is quite arbitrary, untenable and false. "Matter is not something utterly dead. There is phenomenal energy packed into the atom. The electrons and the stars follow laws of their own with immaculate regularity, the colouring of the cast-off sea-shell bespeaks a divine artistry—for all is the habitation of the Lord, all is His functioning, all is His ecstatic dance."<sup>3</sup> The mind and heart of humanity must now turn towards this central truth of all-inclusive and all-transforming spiritual consciousness, which denies nothing and embraces everything. "The wheels of our terrestrial life must now be geared to a spiritual centre," pleads Professor Iyengar, "so that although the numberless spokes of research and development may revolve unceasingly, all may nevertheless be held together by the spiritual hub and move towards the goal on the integral felly."<sup>4</sup>

In one of his fine talks, "Education and Yoga", the deep scholarship of the author sees education as a movement from inconscience to perfect consciousness. A sparrow's education is complete and perfect when it learns to fly. But with the march of civilisation and the "Knowledge explosion" the education of man has become a problem escaping all solutions. The specialised skills tend to arrest the evolution of the future man in its computerised paradise. A Master's or Doctorate degree from a University is not the whole education, as it has lost sight of the *whole man*.

If modern education is thus facing bankruptcy, the traditional yogas of the past too have fared no better. It is in the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo that nothing is left behind, no part of our being, no instrument or faculty untouched and untrans-

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*. (The University Centre Collection), p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> p. 169

<sup>4</sup> p.165

formed. Even the physical body must find its own divine fulfilment. Yes—"If we are agreed that education is part of the larger discipline of yoga," to quote the author, "that to be of any value education must be an integral (rather than a partial) discipline and that education is a dynamic becoming (not a standardised and stereotyped technique.)"<sup>1</sup> This does not mean we must forego "much of what passes for education—facts, statistical information, cookery recipes, standardised opinions, stock reactions, miscellaneous know-hows".<sup>2</sup> But all this education will be of little avail without the education of the soul, the ground and the reference point of the rest. When the soul is lit up, the soul will light up everything else—and how is education of the soul to be accomplished? Lectures with lantern slides cannot do it. Written examinations cannot do it. Catechisms cannot do it. But a glance of the teacher—if he is himself a man of realisation—might effect the great change. This is vibrational impact and inner transformation, something akin to what Sri Ramakrishna did to the boy, Naren, the future Vivekananda. Like the mantra leaping over the middle terms of mind and sense and reaching the soul direct, quintessential teaching is also reaching the soul direct, by means of the vibrations that emanate when the pupil exposes himself with true receptivity to the sovereign glance of the realised teacher—words don't have to be spoken—elaborate directions don't have to be spelt out. There is the confrontation, the psychic contact. The vibrations pass from the teacher to the pupil in consecrated silence and the soul is touched and the decisive turn in real education is taken at last. The rest of the "education" should now be a comparatively expeditious affair. "—With this freedom of the soul he can go out and conquer all the kingdoms of the Little and Greater Mind."<sup>3</sup>

Prof. Iyengar is an eminent educationist and is well known to us through his beautiful biography of Sri Aurobindo. He is an internationally known figure for his biographical works and literary critical studies which display a keen insight suffused by a high sense of abiding human and spiritual values. His talks presented in the book flow like a smooth stream. They, to borrow the words from a talk to the youth camp by K.D. Sethna, "indeed point to the necessity of going beyond all talk and being the self-expressive light of the soul."

A. VENKATARANGA

<sup>1</sup> p. 169

<sup>2</sup> p. 171

<sup>3</sup> p. 172

# *Students' Section*

## **EYE EDUCATION**

### **SYNTHESIS**

OUR hope of the future is to create a new type of doctor to relieve the suffering of humanity and to manifest health and happiness and perfect eyesight. He will be guided by his intuition, and his knowledge will be based on the synthesis of all the systems of medicine.

Along with the evolution of man's intelligence, medicine has also evolved. At first the means of evolution were sense-faculties and intuition, and that discovery of medicine was called Ayurveda or Indian Medicine. Then the intellect discovered various diagnostic instruments such as microscope, X-rays, ophthalmoscope, etc., since the knowledge through sense-perception was found insufficient by the rational mind; this discovery of medicine was called Allopathy or Modern Medicine. Hahnemann observed that the life-force was affected in sickness and he evolved Homeopathy. Bates noted that the mind was under a great strain in most of the eye-troubles and physical ailments, and he developed relaxation methods. Thus each system covers a part of the complexity of medicine and attempts to bring out its highest possibilities. A synthesis of all of them largely conceived and applied will result in the integral system of medicine. But they are so diverse in their tendencies that we do not easily find a way to arrive at their right union. An indiscriminating combination will create confusion. The synthesis we propose must seize some central principles common to all which will include and utilise, in the right place and proportion, their particular principles.

The spiritualised doctor of the future will prove to be a physician *par excellence*, integrating all the systems of medicine harmoniously. In the diagnosis and treatment of patients he will be mainly guided by his intuition though he may also make use of modern scientific instruments to express the phenomena in scientific terms. His methods of treatment will be simple and harmless and will bring quick recovery, even in many so-called hopeless cases. His very presence will radiate peace and a healing force and his patient will be conscious of him as a saviour.

*(To be continued)*

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