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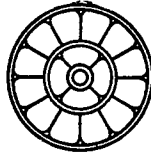
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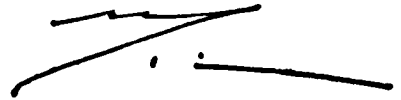


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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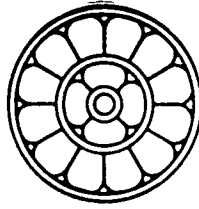
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

N'oublie pas que pour réussir dans notre yoga il faut avoir un corps fort et en bonne santé.

Pour cela le corps doit faire de l'exercice, avoir une vie active et régulière, bien manger, travailler physiquement et bien dormir.

C'est dans la bonne santé que se trouve le chemin vers la transformation.

18-4-1971

Do not forget that to succeed in our yoga we must have a strong and healthy body. For that, the body must do exercise, have an active and regular life, eat well, do physical work and sleep well.

It is in good health that the way towards transformation is found.

18-4-1971

A PRAYER GIVEN TO A CHILD

Je T'appartiens. Et je veux Te connaître pour que tout ce que je fais ne soit que ce que Tu veux que je fasse.

24-6-1972

I belong to Thee. And I wish to know Thee so that all I do may be only what Thou wantest for me.

24-6-1972

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 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 the 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 at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968.)

JULY 4, 1956

Sweet Mother, it is said that if one sees a shooting star and at that moment aspires for something, that aspiration is fulfilled within the year. Is this true?

Do you know what that means? — The aspiration must be formulated *just whilst* the star is visible; and that is not for very long, is it? Well, if an aspiration can be formulated whilst the star is visible, that means that it is all the time *there*, present, foremost in the consciousness (this does not apply to ordinary things, it has nothing to do with that, it concerns a spiritual aspiration). But the point is that if you are able to articulate your spiritual aspiration just at that moment, it means that it is right in front of your consciousness, that it dominates your consciousness. And, necessarily, what dominates your consciousness can be realised very swiftly.

I had the opportunity to make this experiment. Exactly this. The very moment the star passed, there sprang up from the consciousness: “To realise the divine union, for my body.” That very moment.

And before the end of the year, it was done.

But it was not because of the star! It was because that dominated my whole consciousness and I was thinking of nothing but that, I wanted only that, thought only of that, acted only for that. So, that which generally takes a whole lifetime (it is said the minimum time is thirty-five years!),—before twelve months had passed, it was done.

But that was because I thought only of that.

And it was because I was thinking only of that, that just when the star flashed by I could formulate it—not merely a vague impression—formulate it in precise words like these: “To realise union with the Divine”, the inner Divine, the thing always in mind, just the thing one has in mind always.

Consequently, what is important is not the star but the aspiration. The star is only like an outer demonstration, nothing else. But it is not necessary to have a shoot-

ing star in order to realise swiftly! What is necessary is that the whole will of the being be concentrated on one point.

(*Silence*)

(*The Mother shows a series of written questions.*)

What I have there isn't very interesting. There is one very practical question which I have already explained to you several times, but perhaps it will be good to explain it yet once again. It is this:

"When there is a clearly localised illness in the body, what is the best way of opening the physical consciousness to receive the healing Force?"

For this (as for everything else in this domain which may be called the "outposts" of occultism or the threshold of occultism), each one must find his own movement; for what is most effective for each one is that method for which he has been more or less prepared and which is most familiar to him. So it is very difficult to make a general rule.

But there is a preparation probably of a general kind. That is, to accustom the body methodically to understand that it is only the outer expression of a truer and deeper reality and that it is this truer and deeper reality which governs its destiny—though it is usually not aware of it.

The body may be prepared through a series of observations, studies, understandings,¹ by showing it examples, making it understand things as one makes a child understand them, whether by observing its own movements (but generally, in this, one is a little more blind!), or by observing those of others. And more generally still, this preparation will be based on recognised studies, on clear facts. As, for instance, this: that a certain number of individuals, placed in exactly similar circumstances, experience, each one of them, very different effects. One may even go further: in an ensemble of definite given circumstances, there is a certain (given) number of definite individuals, in apparently quite identical conditions, and for some the effects are catastrophic, whilst others escape out without any damage.

During the war there was a very large number of such examples for study. In epidemics it is the same thing; in cataclysms of Nature, like tidal waves or earthquakes or cyclones, it is the same thing.

The body understands these things if they are shown and explained to it as one explains things to a child: "You see, there was something *else* that acted there, not only the brute, material fact by itself." And, unless some bad will is there, it understands.

¹ For the body, to understand is to have the capacity of execution, obtained through the contagion of example. For, "to understand" for the body means to be able to do. (The Mother's note)

This is but a preparation.

Gradually, if you use this understanding, you must, with a methodical work of infusing consciousness into the cells of the body, infuse at the same time the truth of the divine Presence. That is a work which takes time, but which, if done methodically and constantly, produces an effect.

Then you have prepared the ground.

Suppose that as a result of an illness, there is some sort of pain at a precise point. At that moment all will depend, as I said at the beginning, on the approach most familiar to you. But we can give an example. You are ill, very ill; you are in great pain, suffering a lot.

First point: do not stress the pain by telling yourself: "Oh! how ill I am! Oh! this pain is unbearable! Oh! this is becoming worse and worse, I shall never be able to bear it", etc., all this sort of thing. The more you go on thinking like this and feeling like this and the more your attention is concentrated upon it, the more marvelously does the pain increase.

So, the first point: to control yourself sufficiently not to do that.

Second point: as I said, it depends on your habits. If you know how to concentrate, to be calm, and can bring into yourself a certain peace, of a certain kind (it may be a mental peace, it may be a vital peace, it may be a psychic peace; these have different values and qualities, this is an individual question), you try and realise within yourself a state of peace or attempt to enter into a conscious contact with a force of peace.... Suppose you succeed more or less partially. Then, if you can draw the peace into yourself and make it go down into the solar plexus (for we are not talking of inner states but of your physical body) and from there direct it very calmly, very slowly I could say, but very obstinately, on the place where the pain is, more or less sharp, and fix it there, that is very good.

Yet this is not always sufficient.

But if by widening this movement you can add a sort of vivid mental formation (not just cold, but a little alive) that the only reality is the divine Reality, and all the cells of this body a more or less deformed expression of this one Reality—that there is only one Reality, the Divine, and our body is a more or less deformed expression of this single Reality—if by my aspiration, my concentration, I can bring into the cells of the body the consciousness of this *single* Reality, all disorder must necessarily cease.

If you can add to that a movement of complete surrender trusting in the Grace, then I don't give you even five minutes before your suffering disappears. If you know how to do it.

You may try and yet not succeed. But you must know how to try again and again and again, until you succeed. But if you do those three things at the same time, well, there is no pain which can resist that.

That's all, then.

(*Silence*)

Now, another question. It is about what I said last week in connection with the psychic seeing from its psychic domain, looking at the earth and seeking there a point where it can reincarnate in favourable conditions. Then I said that from the psychic domain it looks at the earth to see a “corresponding light” there.

Someone asks me what I mean by “corresponding light”.

I mean quite simply a psychic light. For there are people who have more or less an awakened psychic, and this psychic, more or less awakened, is visible from the psychic domain to psychic beings. So, when they see a light somewhere, they find that a favourable place to manifest themselves (*It begins to rain.*)

Now, I think we are going to have a damp meditation, my children!

(*To a disciple*) Take away the mike, these poor things which don't like the rain.

(*Meditation*)

SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS ON DREAMS

III. SOME DREAMS OF THE HIGHER PLANES

Q: A dream: There was a small dog that wanted to take revenge on me, I don't know why. I had to run away from it in order to save myself. But it always persued me, no matter where I fled and how. At last I escaped to a place which seemed like a highest room, and heaved a sigh of relief that the dog would never attempt to follow me here. But alas! after a while it did appear before me. But what a wonder! I perceived that all its anger had vanished! It simply bowed down before me.

This dream might be perhaps interesting.

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be symbolic.

The dog is here something of the physical, adverse or injurious until one rises up to the highest part of the being when it gets transformed and becomes friendly and helpful.

18-9-1934

Q: Romen, Shanti, Jyoti and myself climbed to a high hill. There was a beautiful bungalow and garden on the summit. We were enjoying the place. Within a short time, Jyoti became impatient and insisted on going down immediately. In spite of our unwillingness we had to lead her down. Any meaning in this?

SRI AUROBINDO: Probably that she cannot remain long on a high experience but comes down into the ordinary consciousness.

11-10-1934

Q: In a dream of mine, the Mother told Shanti, Romen and myself to go to her abode. It was at some distance. We had to cross through ponds and rivers where there were no bridges. The Mother had shown us a particular passage which alone could be used. But it was full of dangers. There was a long and slippery slope. At the centre lay a narrow and crooked path of not more than nine inches breadth! A slight wrong step from the centre and there was water below to swallow us up! However, by the Mother's grace we three crossed all that and arrived at a certain safe place. And yet we had not reached the destination (somehow in the dream itself we had thought: "How can we hope to attain the goal so easily!"). Afterwards the Mother appeared and told us, "Why did you not journey forward? My abode was just a few steps farther. You ought not to be so discouraged once on the way." What meaning does this dream have?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is indicated in the dream itself.

15-11-1934

Q: A dream during my noon nap: I saw an earthen pot of just an ordinary kind. But it was beautifully decorated. The pot was so manufactured that its upper half could be taken up without disturbing the lower half. The upper lid consisted of eight parts, and each one could be separated. This whole vision appeared as clearly as a cinema film.

Later some writing surged up, which was deciphered as: "Those eight parts are the openings of eight Goddesses. Each part of the lid will open and an woman will emerge from it." Does the dream mean anything?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may—the pot may be the symbol of the being, with its upper and lower parts and the eight divisions (physical, vital, psychic, mental, Supermind and Sachchidananda parts—or else more probably higher mental, intuitive, overmind and supramental). Each has its own Shakti to manifest. 21-9-1934

Q: A dream of last night: I was going towards the sea with some people. When we reached the shore we saw several boats just started on a voyage. Almost all the boats were new and very beautiful. They seemed to be constructed in quite a different design than what we find in this world. I felt as if not only the travellers were very gay and cheerful but also that even the boats themselves were manifesting joy and felicity! I could not quite make out the exact meaning of the happy and cheerful boats and the voyagers.

SRI AUROBINDO: A happy movement of the sadhana without depressions and obstacles. 14-12-1934

Q: Some time after seeing the above dream, a voice was not only heard but felt as an experience, "A Light is dawning on the lower vital (for transformation) and we can sleep no longer." The voice awoke me at once and I felt profoundly that most of my lower vital difficulties had been ended by the Mother during the night—and then I felt myself free and full of delight and as if a thing like the lower vital existed no longer in my being!

It was at about 2.30 a. m. that I was roused from sleep. And yet I was so full of joy that more sleep was not necessary. The pure Atman consciousness which I had experienced before during fragmentary periods and only if I had first entered into a pure blankness, became now as spontaneous as peace!

Doubtless, all that shows a sudden and marvellous change in my being and also that the Mother has done it very consciously and precisely during the sleep.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a very good experience, especially as coming in a dream such experiences have power on the subconscious.

Q: From where did that voice come?

SRI AUROBINDO: Such voices come usually either from within oneself or from some higher plane. 14-12-1934

Meaning (of "sleep no longer"): "be tamasic and negligent about sadhana no longer." 15-12-1934

From NAGIN DOSHI

LIGHTS ON THE PATH

PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES

(Continued from the issue of June, 1972)

(In 1931 a number of disciples used to meet the Mother in the Prosperity Store-room in the evening. One of the activities there for a short period was a reading of passages from Sri Aurobindo's works. Each day one or other of the disciples would concentrate a little and open a book anywhere with his finger or a paper-cutter and strike upon a passage for reading. The Mother did the same. This procedure went on from March 18 to May 2. We are publishing these passages in a series, both for their intrinsic value as lights on the path of Yoga and for whatever subtle side-lights they may throw on the inner movements of those who found them.)

THE ideal attitude of the sadhaka towards Time is to have patience as if he had all eternity for his fulfilment and yet to develop the energy that shall realise now and with an ever-increasing mastery and rapidity.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. I, p. 377.

(Found by the Mother, April 20, 1931)

... Your actions will disappear without leaving in you mark or trace, as a wave disappears from the surface of the sea, as water falls from the lotus leaf.

The Yoga and Its Objects, p. 24.

(Found by Pavitra, April 20, 1931)

... Not the renunciation of work in the world, not any outward asceticism or any ostentation of a visible giving up of enjoyment, but a renunciation, a leaving, *tyaga*, of vital desire and ego, a total laying aside, *sannyasa*, of the separate personal life of the desire soul and ego-governed mind and rajasic vital nature. That is the true condition for entering into the heights of Yoga.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, pp. 347-8.

(Found by Lalita, April 20, 1931)

The call, once decisive, stands; the thing that has been born, cannot be stifled.

*

**

The secret of success in Yoga is to regard it not as one of the aims to be pursued in life but as the one aim, not as an important part of life, but as the whole of life.

*
**

... Every energy or activity that we can convert from its allegiance to the lower and dedicate to the service of the higher is so much gained on our road, so much taken from the powers that opposed our progress.

*
**

The Divine must be called in to do its own work in the individual and this is only possible in its entirety when there is no interference from below to falsify the truth of the superior action.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. I, pp. 432-42.
(Found by Amrita, April 21, 1931)

The ordinary human soul takes a pleasure in the customary disturbances of its nature-life; it is because it has this pleasure and because, having it, it gives a sanction to the troubled play of the lower nature that the play continues perpetually.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, p. 277.
(Found by the Mother, April 21, 1931)

The mere idea, however well grasped, of something higher beyond is ineffective unless it is ... seized on by the heart and will as the one thing desirable and the one thing to be done. For so great a change as is contemplated by the Yoga is not to be effected by a divided will or a small portion of the energy or a hesitating mind. He who seeks the Divine must consecrate himself to that and to that only ... there should be an entire self-giving.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. I, pp. 431-33.
(Finder unrecorded, April 22, 1931)

The liberated man has no personal hopes; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions; he receives what the divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none; what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment; what goes from him he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control; they are free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things.

Essays on the Gita, First Series, p. 262.

The first requisite is to shake the wings of the soul free from desire and passion

and troubling emotion and all this perturbed and distorting atmosphere of human mind into an ether of dispassionate equality, a heaven of impersonal calm, an egoless feeling and vision of things. For only in that lucid upper air, reaches free from all storm and cloud, can self-knowledge come and the law of the world and the truth of Nature be seen steadily and with an embracing eye and in an undisturbed and all-comprehending and all-penetrating light.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, p. 287.

(Found by Nolini, April 23, 1931)

The method we have to pursue, then, is to put our whole conscious being into relation and contact with the Divine and to call Him in to transform our entire being into His ...

*
**

This path is at once the most difficult imaginable and yet in comparison with the magnitude of its effort and object, the most easy and sure of all ...

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. I, pp. 308-9.

(Found by Amrita, April 23, 1931)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of July, 1972)

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November, 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Mamlal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champakalal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo, 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.)

JULY 17, 1940

REYNAUD has resigned, Pétain has become the premier and other members of the cabinet have been picked from the military.

N: Was there any difference in policy among the members of the cabinet?

SRI AUROBINDO: Probably. Raynaud is unpopular. Now it is practically military dictatorship.

P: Even after the war it may remain. Most of them seem to be Catholics and of the right wing.

S: Pétain has no time, and besides the supply and equipment are too poor. What can he do? At present what is more necessary is men; equipment doesn't matter so much.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, it does matter. They say that because their ammunition was exhausted they couldn't use the 75 mm. gun. On the first day they were able to destroy 400 tanks. Afterwards we didn't hear any more. This was due to lack of ammunition.

N: The Germans have now reached the south end of the Maginot Line.

SRI AUROBINDO: That means all industrial areas have fallen into their hands. The British have opened disused coal mines in Wales to supply coal to France.

S: The situation is very grave now.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, one of the tactics Germany applied was to capture the Generals by means of tanks so that the troops might be disorganised.

N: And at this late hour England is calling up the 29-year age-group. People 29 years old are quite strong and able-bodied, they could have been called long ago.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. I suppose they wanted to keep men for commerce, agriculture, industry etc., so that export would go on leisurely as in 1914.

P: And they could rely on the blockade.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but except for war materials the blockade can't be so effective if Hitler becomes master of Europe.

EVENING

News arrived in the afternoon at about 6.20 that Pétain had decided to stop fighting and negotiate with Hitler for honourable peace terms. The Mother gave the news to Sri Aurobindo and went away.

SRI AUROBINDO (*after reading the news*): France has stopped the fight. This is Pétain's doing. He is too old!

Naturally it came as a great surprise and we were all thrown into a gloom.

N (*later in the evening*): No terms have been given yet?

SRI AUROBINDO: No.

N: It seems to me France has acted more dishonourably than the Belgian king.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, yes. Besides, Hitler now becomes the master of Europe.

N: But why has France done this? She still has a huge army and navy intact. She could have withdrawn, as Reynaud said, somewhere else instead of surrendering like that.

P: France has become decadent now.

N: Hope England won't give up.

S: I don't think she will.

SRI AUROBINDO: The English don't give up. But it has to be seen if England also has become decadent or not. After all Poland fought much better than France. It was only the Polish Generals who were incompetent, the people went on fighting. Finland also fought very well.

S: In Belgium it was the king, not the government; but here the government has surrendered. The navy could perhaps disobey and revolt?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not possible. Pétain has put in admiral Darlan in the Ministry. The navy is not likely to disobey him.

P: Now the Mediterranean situation will be critical. If Hitler gets the fleet of France, then with Italy on his side he will be very powerful.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and Turkey's position will be dangerous. Now only Hitler's death can save the situation.

N: Everybody is astounded, for Russia is already preparing for future attacks.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the Russian army has marched into Lithuania and Latvia, hasn't it?

N: Japan is threatening Indochina and may capture it any time now. She won't allow Germany there.

P: Yes, it must have shaken the whole political structure of the world and I think everybody realises the danger if Hitler occupies France.

SRI AUROBINDO: Does India realise it? Everybody seems to be busy with his own interest and none considers anything in the light of the world situation. The Congress Committee is now in session. Will it realise the danger?

N: I think it will.

SRI AUROBINDO: Let us hope so. Nehru seems to shut his eyes and calls all these fears a bogey of foreign invasion. I am wondering what our Ashram's fate will now be. Like the others we are also considering our own self-interest! (*laughter*) Shall we be under Stalin or under Hitler? Stalin will be a more serious risk.

N: How Stalin? He will have to conquer India.

SRI AUROBINDO: That won't take him a long time and he won't allow our existence at all.

N: The British will grab at Pondicherry if France capitulates.

SRI AUROBINDO: If England gives in to Germany Japan may come and throw some bombs on India.

P: Could it be the result of Karma that France is being defeated and overrun?

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course past Karma, but it is not fixed. It can be counter-balanced by the right Karma at present; or it can exhaust itself through suffering. Even if France is conquered now, she can rise again through the exhaustion of her Karma by suffering. New forces can come into play.

N: In that case England also has a heavy Karma to pay for.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes. It has to be seen what she does.

N: If England had given India freedom, wouldn't that have counted morally?

SRI AUROBINDO: Certainly, it would have had a great moral value for her.

P: Apart from that it would have been a great benefit from the practical point of view.

N: That, of course, but I am talking of moral and spiritual values.

P: It seems Surya Kumari or somebody else brought some French coins to the Mother; on seeing them the Mother said, "What coins are these? I don't know them. They seem to be the coins of a ruined country." It was after the Munich pact.

SRI AUROBINDO: I didn't know about it. But when France betrayed Czechoslovakia the Mother said that France was condemned.

N: Do you foresee all possibilities?

SRI AUROBINDO: The possibilities can be foreseen but we don't accept them as fixed or inevitable. They can be changed.

P: Reynaud should not have resigned.

SRI AUROBINDO. What could he do? He is unpopular in France. And he is not a military man. He could have made a *coup d'état* and arrested all these people, but he must have felt that the nation would not be behind him.

Now two things can save the world: one is Hitler's death and another is if Hitler exhausts himself so much that he has to wait before farther adventures. In that case

time will be gained.

N: If America and Russia joined with England, they three would make a formidable combination.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is common sense. But nobody listens to common sense. Even if Hitler dies, there is Stalin. And if Stalin invades India, Subhash Bose and Nehru will oppose him perhaps.

N: Bose? I think he will be the first to ally himself with him.

P: I was surprised when he sided with the Moslem League on the question of the *Star of India's* attack on Krishna.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, he is capable of such things. By the way, Hoque has admitted that he made a pact with Bose.

N: I think Bose has opened himself to something Asuric now.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite possible to be caught by the influence.

N: I wonder what Hitler's next move will be.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it will be interesting to see what he does next.

N: Not likely that he will go to the Balkans, as it will involve him with Russia. He will now avoid friction with Russia and America.

P: America, of course, and America won't come in unless a variety of odd incidents happen: for instance, the sinking of an American ship.

SRI AUROBINDO: Hitler will never do that. The Asura who guides him knows very well what will happen then.

JULY 18, 1940

P: The people in Pondicherry have become very panicky. They are thinking, "What will our fate be now?"

SRI AUROBINDO: I see.

S: The Working Committee of the Congress is sitting now. With the coming of the war it has set up a Radio and Trunk line. It must have got the bad news. But I don't know how much it will influence its decisions. People are talking about a National Government now.

SRI AUROBINDO: But for Nehru's influence, Gandhi would have come to a compromise.

P: Rajagopalachari also seems to be in favour of some settlement.

SRI AUROBINDO: He is a practical man.

P: I don't know how Churchill's offer to France of one nationality will work. Two nations temperamentally so different!

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes, the French will say one thing, and the English will nod their heads to quite the opposite.

P: And France won't accept the king!

SRI AUROBINDO: No!

S: But it is a brilliant offer for an economic combination.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not only economic but much more than that. Practically one nation. It is a tremendous step for the English; beyond all tradition, prejudice and characteristics of the nation.

P: Yes, and after the war it might form the nucleus of a European federation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if they combine, the small nations may enter and the British Dominions come in and, along with them, India may be asked to join. In that case it may turn into a world federation. The English do not seem to have lost their elasticity which is shown by two steps. The first is the socialisation of their Government in two hours and the second is their offer to the French. The English lead a practical life, they don't live in ideas. That is why they are so successful in life. In times of crisis or necessity they are driven to take practical steps as the situation demands.

N: Only, they are not applying their practicality to India.

P: They still may not have felt the necessity.

SRI AUROBINDO: Pétain and Weygand are inelastic and too old. Hitler is neither practical nor a man of ideas. Still he is very successful because of his remarkable inspirations.

N: Hitler has not yet sent any reply to France's peace offer.

P: He will be more cunning now in face of the British proposal.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, as in the case of Czechoslovakia. He struck later at the most opportune moment. He knows that he can't conquer England without the support of France. Hitler's first idea was to get hold of the north of France so as to control the Channel ports.

N: 20th of June is not very far away; today is the 18th.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yesterday was Paul Richard's birthday. You know what he used to say?

P: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: That his ideas would be fulfilled on his birthdays.

N: France can still retrieve her honour if she accepts England's offer.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. But, as I said, Pétain and Weygand are too old and inelastic.

S: It is perhaps too late.

SRI AUROBINDO: If it had been earlier they would not have accepted it.

S: That is true.

N: It seems to me that the capitulation of Paris has demoralised the army. Otherwise how could the Germans advance so fast?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. Besides, I don't understand Weygand's strategy of ceding territory to the enemy with the idea of exhausting him. That only lengthens the line which is very difficult to keep together. It is only by a short line that the forces can be concentrated. It is the Champagne line that is broken. The fall of Paris has of course divided the army into three sectors. The other two sectors are still fighting well.

N: Some people in India defend France's peace offer. They say, "What can the French do?" Their army was being annihilated. As they were defeated they had no other course.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the typical Indian mentality. That is why India is under subjection. Just because an army has been defeated, must it surrender? Then, will a subject nation always be a subject nation? Won't it fight for freedom? See what the Poles have done. They have resisted in spite of their severe defeat. The Belgian and the Dutch Governments have not surrendered, they have withdrawn.

P: Besides, the French have a big army still intact. The navy and the air force are theirs. Why should they surrender?

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so. Moreover, as you go on fighting, moral and spiritual forces may rise up and assert themselves. No, France has become inferior now.

N: France does not believe in moral forces.

SRI AUROBINDO: But ancient France did believe.

N: Dilip believes that England also will give up the fight. How will she fight alone?

SRI AUROBINDO: She always has fought alone. That is again the Indian subject mentality. No great things can be done unless one sticks on in the face of defeat and failure. Hitler has himself been imprisoned but he stuck on like a bulldog even after defeat. Now he is the master of Europe.

EVENING

P: It seems Reynaud has resigned on the issue of the appeal of Churchill which he wanted to accept while Pétain and others didn't. And Pétain has started communication with Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they want military nationalism, that is why he speaks of believing in the destiny of France.

N: I hope Hitler's terms will be unacceptable and they will be forced to accept England's offer.

SRI AUROBINDO: I hope they will accept this offer. To do so will be much better than the surrender of France to Hitler.

S: If the navy could get away...

SRI AUROBINDO: Pétain has put two naval officers in his cabinet to stop that. Unless there is a revolt in the Cabinet the outlook is bad. These people ought to be shot for the betrayal of France.

P: In Africa the Italians are not faring very well.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, the Africans don't seem to be willing to give their lives for the Italians.

P: Sammer still holds that if France declared herself communist, the Russians would attack Hitler and come to help France. And people here in Pondy believe that

Hitler doesn't want the British Empire. He only wants a hegemony among his colonies.

SRI AUROBINDO: Are they so idiotic as to believe that he will be satisfied with that? He has said plainly in *Mein Kampf* that his aim is to destroy France and Russia. Now he is speaking of colonies which means that England also must be destroyed. These people know nothing about war. It is better for us to learn German now or both German and Russian—as a precaution! (*laughter*).

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

SUNRISE

THIS morning I watched the glorious sun rise.
 Slowly and surely it rose before my eyes.
 I became the pink and beautiful clouds, bright
 And shining forth with the Soul's inner light.
 From above and in the sky, as though apart,
 Yet wholly within, I watched the birds dart
 And wing their way home again.

Brighter and more vividly the sky begins to glow
 As if as a reminder of all I really know:
 God is here, I am there, with the sky and flying gulls.
 These lovely floating creatures are but the hulls
 Of my Soul's purposeful flight to perfect freedom.
 All this reminds me of the Being I can become.

I AM, I said, clearly speaking out to no one there.
 And yet I know my voice breaks through God everywhere.
 I *know* that *I AM*—and there is no more:
 Total union with the Divine opening every door.
 All the universe vibrates with the bright energy
 Of love that glows in the promise of the rising sun.

DIANNE

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1972)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON AUGUST 15, 1925

Q: Do you think it is possible now to bring down the Supermind into the physical plane?

A: It all depends on things outside myself. It is to be seen whether the physical plane is ready to receive the light, for it is not always that it is ready when the light descends. There have been manifestations of it that were not there before. The power is working more directly in the physical plane. It is not a personal question. There is the general atmosphere. I find that the more the light descends the greater is the resistance. You yourself can see that there is something pressing down, you can also see that there is a tremendous resistance.

I am not doing an isolated Yoga. When I wrote that much-abused sentence in *The Yoga And Its Object* about our doing the Yoga not for ourselves but for humanity, there was a truth behind it, though I was not conscious of it. It is true that my Yoga is for the Divine and not for humanity, but it is not for myself either. Of course my attaining to *siddhi* (perfection) is the preliminary condition to others attaining it. If I was seeking my own liberation and perfection, my Yoga would have been finished long before.

Q: Was the physical plane worked upon by anyone before?

A: I did not say that no attempt had been made in the past. Attempts were made but nothing stable was attained on the physical level. Nothing fundamental was established. If it had been attained, the thing would have been there, however partial the achievement. Of every achievement, imperfect though it be, you can find marks in the mind. You can find them also in the vital. But you find nothing like that on the physical plane.

You ought to help by creating the necessary condition. (*Pointing to himself*) There is the centre. You can take from it. But we must be all on one side if we want to succeed. If you give room to hostile suggestions, you retard your own progress and also the general advancement. Mind works on the basis of *Bheda*, division. Supermind knows division on the basis of unity. It is the stage nearest to us towards the Divine. Mind seeks and represents but cannot attain and express the Truth. The supermind is something automatic though not in the mechanical sense. It is self-active Truth. Once you attain to the supermind, you can escape through "the doors of the Sun", if you want. If you go higher still, you come to a plane where no Sun is needed. But all that becomes possible and easy if you can bring down the supermind

into the physical plane. After that it is all a flowering of the being, a natural easy growth.

The sign that you have attained to the supermind is that you dispense with the need of thought, thinking as we understand it. In the supermind you do not need to think. It does not mean that there is no thought and that it is mere passivity. There is something self-existent that works.

Q: How does the mind work when there is no thought?

A: In the mind you think from one point to another and then to another and so on. Then you gather them all up and connect them in the relation of cause and effect. Now suppose all these hundreds of thoughts are simultaneously shown up with all the details, and all that in less than a second. That is supramental thought. Absolute rest and absolute activity at the same time is another characteristic of supermind.

Reconciliation between opposites is another. Again, supermen need not use any language.

Q: Is it not true that all the mental faculties have their corresponding counterparts in the supermind?

A: Well, that is what I have said in the *Arya*. I wrote the *Arya* when I was in the borderland. I would not say the same thing now. Everybody has to go through that stage. It is true that corresponding to Reason there is what may be called Divine Reason; you can say that what works as the Divine Reason is derived from the activity of supermind. But it is something which is quite different. I am putting it in the terms of mind. I can only give you images. But there it is not quite the same thing. For example, reason finds out cause and effect and connects them together, while the Divine Reason puts them all in the right relation.

Q: If this conquest of the physical plane is once achieved, would it mean the defeat of hostile forces?

A: You come back to the old question of humanity in another form. That is to say, you want to know whether this victory would mean universal victory. Well, let us wait and establish the thing on the physical plane. Then we shall see.

Q: How ready are the universal conditions now for this conquest?

A: (1) The knowledge of the physical world has increased so much that it is on the verge of breaking bounds. (2) There is an attempt all over the world towards breaking the veil between the outer and the inner mental, the outer and the inner vital, and even the outer and inner physical. (3) The vital is trying to lay hold on the physical as it never did before. It is always the sign that whenever the higher thing is coming down, it throws up the hostile vital world on the surface and you see all sorts of abnormal vital manifestations, such as increase in the number of persons who go mad, earthquakes, etc. (4) The rise of persons who wield tremendous vital influence over

large numbers of men. (5) Also, the world is becoming more united on account of the railways, aeroplanes, wireless. Such a union is a condition of the descent. These are signs to show that the universal conditions may be more ready now. We know nothing of the conditions of the past attempts but the present conditions warrant the attempt.

Q: Do you consider a knowledge of the world forces a necessary part of the Yoga?

A: Yes, we have to deal with them, because they make themselves felt, especially the hostile ones and you have to know the forces that make for help. Even when one is doing an individual sadhana, these forces make themselves felt. Of course as you develop, their aspect changes completely. The movement of these world forces does not begin on the lower plane. It begins on the higher. All decisions are made high above, it is true, but they are not made known to the planes with which they are concerned. A veil is interposed and each plane is left free to make its decision. The struggle is left to be decided by the contending forces on the plane. It is only when the decisive step has been taken that the highest decision is made known. You can help the greater knowledge to grow in you by trying to get the lower knowledge.

You cannot evade your responsibility in the Yoga. If you accept the suggestions of hostile forces, repeat their mantrams and say that it is not possible, you help them.

Our Yoga aims at the supramental being, the supramental world and nature and their manifestations in life. Anima, Garima, control of physical functions are supposed to constitute the supramentalised physical. In many cases these powers are acquired by persons who happen to open themselves consciously or unconsciously to the subliminal consciousness, where these powers lie. There are many such persons who have no idea of supermind or Yoga.

There is an idea that this Yoga has been attempted times without number in the past, that the light descended and has withdrawn again and again. This does not seem to be correct. I find that the supramental physical body has not been brought down; otherwise it would have been there. What the Yogins manifested in their life was largely due to the control of the vital *Siddhi*, the control of the physical substance and functions through vital force. Our object is to transform our entire being. In the old disciplines it was not transformation or victory over the physical being. They did not lay any direct hold on it.

There is the idea that since All is One, we have only to realise the One and have some experience of the one consciousness on the various planes of our being. This is a mistake due to the obsession of Vedantic ideas. We have not to stop with that. We have to change the whole being.

There is the idea that our Yoga is an attempt at conscious evolution. But we can also speak here of a movement of involution. The Taittiriya Upanishad speaks of the physical being taken up into the vital, and that into the mental, and that again into the supramental and Ananda. Another Upanishad says that the man who attains to the supermind escapes through the doors of the Sun. There is no idea of conscious des-

cent on life after ascending to the supermind. We bring down the light to govern and transform mind, life, body. But before this there is a taking up of the lower powers into the Truth. This can be called their involution upward. Then comes the manifestation of Truth in all the nature.

There is an idea that everybody can do this Yoga, but that is only partly true. All are not called to this Yoga. It may be said that all men have a latent capacity for Yoga. But that only helps them up to the point of a certain preparation for Yoga. The vast mental expansion, the difficult long task of rejecting the lower movement of the vital nature and the still harder task of changing the physical being—all this cannot be attempted by all.

Not only have we to transform our being into the supramental nature, but we have also to call down and throw that power on the external life and establish the truth and harmony there. It is not the time now to say what the nature of the ultimate transformation will be. When the time comes it will reveal itself. What is demanded of you is to open yourself more and more to the Truth, as the rest of it will all work itself out according to the will of the supreme Ishwara.

V. CHIDANANDAM

INWARD

OFTEN I have sought in troubled thought
 The barest yarn of paisley weave
 Whose dyes bedeck both gaudy sleeve
 And essence' eye.

Deep hidden
 Is the basic thread of hue unreal
 That ties the lusty world of life
 To death that edicts end of strife
 And justice gives.

Lost, I turn
 From my in to outmost sky,
 And know the cord that binds me
 Is knotted to the crested sea
 And every stone.

ANNE DESJARDINS
 (at 14 years)

EVENINGS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

A BROADCAST FROM HYDERABAD "AIR"
ON JANUARY 15, 1972

THIS year, the 'Birth Centenary' of Sri Aurobindo, the immortal son of India, patriot, poet, Lord of Yoga, and Rishi, it behoves us to remember with the deepest gratitude his stupendous services to our country and the world in various fields, and to reach his message to all people. Even to think of him is to be purified by the holy waters of the Ganga; to broadcast his message to all is to take the life-giving waters to them.

Especially this year all eyes are turned towards Pondicherry, which is sanctified by his Divine Presence and his herculean Tapasya, even as Brindavan is sanctified by Lord Krishna and Bodhgaya by Lord Buddha.

Darshan of such a Mahapurusha many of us ardently desire. Many of us also eagerly want to see him at close quarters, to observe how he talks, how he walks, how he laughs. We want to see from our human standpoint his outer life, his lighter side, the human side of his personality. The outer life of the man of God is an expression of his inner life. The Gita says of the Yogin, that always, in whatever he does, whether he sees, hears, talks, 'Pashyan, Shrunvan ... Pralapan', his mind is in Yoga, united in his inner consciousness with the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo lived the Gita. He lived in the light, moved in the light, and had his being in the light. Nearly fifty years ago I had the great good fortune of living near him and observing him in his daily activities. Once I asked him if his talks and writings did not disturb his Sadhana. He replied that they did not, and that outer conditions had ceased to have any influence on his Sadhana; his yoga was not interrupted by his talks, or even when he was writing the *Arya*, the philosophical monthly he published from 1914 to 1921; in fact it was all a part of his Yoga, a result of Yoga. All human activity, he said, should be made a means of living the complete spiritual life.

So it was that from 1918 to 1926 Sri Aurobindo used to meet his disciples and talk to them. They came to him, like bees seeking the lotus, from far and near, seeking light, inspiration, personal contact and guidance. In 1926 we were about ten of us living in a cluster of houses close to the Master's residence. Often in the mornings we met the Master individually, and all of us together regularly in the evenings. The nearness of this man of God living out the Truth, his influence, his example and his teachings reminded me of Vyasa, Valmiki, Vasishtha and other great Rishis of the Ashrams of ancient India. For the Guru it provided an opportunity to come into contact with the outside world and its activities. Has he not said, "All life is Yoga"?

He was a superhuman being many-sided, many-splendoured. His Godlike face radiated profound peace, wide serenity and calm dynamic strength. His very presence was a blessing. He was at once effulgent and gentle. He was Knowledge and Love incarnate. We looked up to him not only as Guru, but also as Father. I may say his

love of his disciples was more than a mother's. I can find a parallel only in Sri Ramakrishna's love of his disciples. He had an unbounded compassion for all, a sympathetic and luminous understanding, an uncanny insight and power to guide his disciples, and an enormous patience. He encouraged us untiringly. He was so informal, affable, genial, lovable, adorable, so willing to listen to us and answer any question, that we were never conscious of any reserve of manner in him, or any barrier between us. He made us feel quite at ease in his august presence. I never saw him aloof or austere. I never heard a wounding word from him or even a harsh word. He was most unassuming and most humble. The really great are really humble. The Mother once said, "The only humble man I have met in my life is Sri Aurobindo."

Every evening there were informal sittings in the Master's residence. At about 5.00 p.m. we gathered in the verandah upstairs, and took our seats in a line of chairs in front of the Master's chair and table. The table was covered with a cloth, and on it were a flower-vase, a time-piece, and a calendar. We eagerly awaited the Master's coming. He came from his meditation fresh and pure, emanating a serene atmosphere.

Spiritual fire shone through his eyes. I remember the epithet in the Mahabharata describing the eyes of the Tapaswin as 'Durnirikshya' 'unseeable'. It was not always so. Usually there was a soft and gentle light like that of the stars. The eyes were bright and clear and deep with the depth of the Sage, and very often twinkling with humour.

Then there was his face, gentle, tranquil and luminous. His complexion was now fair. Originally it was dark. We wondered at this great change. His dress consisted of only a white dhoti, one end of which he wore like a wrap around his shoulders in the Bengali fashion. His hair parted in the middle was long and flowing, and his thin beard barely hid his throat. Behind this outer appearance we felt there was a divine inner personality, we felt a sense of the Infinite.

His voice was soft and low but distinct and musical. His speech was spontaneous and clear. His talks were in English. An Englishman who had once heard him told me: "I never before heard such a beautiful voice." He was in raptures over it.

Our hearts were on tiptoe to listen to him, and someone would pick up a news-item from a newspaper, put a question and start the conversation. Often it was table-talk. All sorts of subjects we discussed: politics, poetry, books, authors, fine arts, philosophy, Yoga, world issues, our country's problems and the problems of the disciples. There was fare for everybody. It was all so informal and natural. The atmosphere was relaxed, free and jovial. There was no artificiality, no set topics for conversation. There were no inhibitions. Anyone could bring in any subject he liked. One could never foretell what course the conversation would take. Thus we were all "in a mood to enjoy the freshness and the delight of the unexpected". There was criticism, there was light talk, there were jokes in plenty and peals of laughter. The Master appeared cheerful and at ease. He loved laughter. His laughter was beautiful. He had a fine and subtle sense of humour; sometimes he overflowed with sparkling humour. He cracked jokes, was quick in repartee, and joined us in good-natured laughter. As a conversationalist he was superb.

Sometimes serious subjects were discussed; lines from the Veda, the Upanishads and the Gita, and from his own writings. Then he would give an illuminating explanation or discourse. Thoughts were always on tap for him, and his words flowed like the cool waters of a perennial spring. He spoke from "the true inner consciousness, a silent consciousness which has not to think out things like the outer consciousness but gets the right perception and knowledge in a spontaneous way". His intellect was receptive, inspired, always incandescent. It does not answer to our human intellect. Profound and matchless was his insight into human nature and the history of civilizations, his experience of the infinite levels of consciousness and of cosmic and supra-cosmic forces. The wavelength of his thinking spanned centuries and continents and worlds and opened doors on the Infinite. Therefore his talks were extra-ordinarily brilliant, illuminating and deeply satisfying. I was reminded of the discourses in the Veda and Upanishads, of the talks of Socrates and Plato and, in modern times, of Goethe and Whitehead.

I used to recollect and jot down on the next day some of the important talks. I could not be absolutely accurate, but I tried to preserve something of the thought and the language of the Master. I shall now give one extract from his talks.

Sri Aurobindo, who is at once the Prophet and Pioneer of Supermind, speaks about his unique Supramental Yoga:

"Above the body, the life and the mind which are in the Ignorance is the Supermind, the dynamic Divine Consciousness. It is a self-luminous and self-effectuating Power. My aim is to ascend to this Divine Consciousness, to live in constant union with it, and to bring it down and establish it in men as a new faculty, just as mind is now a permanent state of consciousness in humanity. If this Power can be established, at first only in a group, it will act as a potent force for turning human nature towards it. It was because of the difficulty of changing human nature, which Vivekananda calls the dog's tail, that the ascetics advocated flying away from nature as the only remedy. They did not think it possible to change human nature. Mind has not been able to change it radically. You can go on changing human institutions infinitely, yet imperfection will break through all of them. Only Supermind can change the whole basis of human nature.... Our Yoga is not like the other yogas where you ascend to the Higher Reality or some high Heaven, and leave nature and the world unchanged. Individual liberation of that sort or Mukti from the cycle of birth and death is not our aim. Our goal is not flight from life nor the extinction of life.... The goal of life must be in life and not an exit from life. Life is the field of our Yoga. We accept life and its abundance but that does not mean leading the ordinary vitalistic and egoistic life. We don't annul any of the faculties of the human being, we annul only his lower movements. We aim to transform the lower nature into the Divine Nature."

This is Sri Aurobindo's encouraging vision of human destiny, and the essence of his message.

V. CHIDANANDAM

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 July, 1972)

4

SRI AUROBINDO'S ASHRAM, SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION, SRI AUROBINDO'S GENERAL PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION, HIS ATTITUDE AND TEILHARD'S TO SCIENCE

REALISING the impossibility of the Church's assimilating Teilhard by mere readjustments of nomenclature, recognising in Teilhardism a freshly started Christianity of Universal Evolution, which has an affinity though not identity with the cosmic Christ-vision in St. Paul and a few others, we cannot but feel at a loss how Zaehner can subscribe to Teilhard's belief as Zaehner¹ states it: "The Roman Church, with the supreme Pontiff as Vicar of Christ at its head, was still the only possible focus of unity which, acting as the axis of evolution itself, could mould mankind together into a unified and forward-looking collectivity destined ultimately to converge upon God as its true and predestined Centre." Besides, he² grants: "The Christian Church even now represents only a fraction of mankind, but ideally the body of Christ should encompass the whole human race—how and in what form we have not the slightest idea." Further, after affirming that "without love there can be no Christianity", he³ confesses: "Whatever we have advertised as Christianity has rarely been more than a caricature—make-believe, which makes fewer and fewer believe." Even about the ideal of "unity in diversity suffused by love" he⁴ says that very few Christians feel it as a living reality; and he characterises it as one that "not only Christianity proclaims but also the Śaiva Siddhānta and the Vedānta of Rāmānuja which have grown independently on Indian soil". Finally, there is the fact, the *raison d'être* of Zaehner's comparative study, that Sri Aurobindo, no less than Teilhard, has the vision of an evolution "from individuality through collectivity to a unity in diversity"—though the diversified union would be, in Zaehner's view,⁵ love-centred not on "the cosmic Christ" but on "the Hindu Trinity *sac-cid-ānanda* (Being-Logos-Joy)", a substitute whose "parallelism is exact". Hence, where is the need to fall back on the Roman Church

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

² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

as "the instrument of unity ready to hand"? With all the rest given, would not the Ashram of Pondicherry suffice as the instrument?

Zaehner's argument that "Aurobindo could find no such principle of unity in Hinduism"¹ is irrelevant. There was no call for Sri Aurobindo to look for it outside his own Ashram, which is not only growing apace in Pondicherry but also has, contrary to Zaehner's belief, a large number of centres both in India and abroad and has now extended its work in the project, supported by UNESCO as well as the Indian Government, of a model international "city of dawn" with the Aurobindonian vision as its guiding light: "Auroville." Moreover, this "instrument of unity", the Ashram, has sprung up around a figure recognised more and more in the whole world as what, according to Zaehner,² he saw himself to be: "the divine centre from which the transformation of man into 'super-manhood' was to radiate." Nor, we may add, has the unique distinction of this instrument diminished in any wise with the passing away of the Master *par excellence* of the Integral Yoga. Even apart from his spiritual presence persisting as a living force, there is at the Ashram's core the radiant personality whom Zaehner, with a tinge of incredulity, calls "a French lady whom (Aurobindo) was bold enough to hail as the Divine Mother and the eternal Śakti."³ If Sri Aurobindo was anything like "the utterly perfected Siddha" (Zaehner's words), surely he could be trusted to put at the very heart of his world-work a worthy fount of spirituality.

Here a point often forgotten is worth emphasising. When people make comparisons between Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard they mostly think of two men with a spiritual vision of the world's future and they start assessing whether one or the other was a greater and truer visionary. But actually there is no real comparison possible between the men. Would anybody dream of putting Teilhard along with the figure to whom he linked his scientific-religious message and whom he regarded as the once-for-all incarnation of God? Would we set Teilhard even in the lesser company of St. Paul, St. John of the Cross or St. Angela of Foligno—mystics he particularly extolled? Sri Aurobindo is precisely one whom we would have to bring into relation not only with the group of Teilhard's favourite Saints but also with whoever we would consider as incarnations or Avatars. All evidence builds him up as a being of the highest spiritual consciousness, a summation of all time's achievement of inner light, a God-realised guide to an achievement beyond any in the past. If a comparison in the Teilhardian context were to be made, it would have to be not with Teilhard but with his Christ. Even there we should have to hesitate in view of the plenary spiritual knowledge revealed by Sri Aurobindo. No Divine Messenger has come with such an intimate and masterful possession of the secret of existence and such a gigantic embodiment in his own person of the illumined states described and explained in his

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p.27

³ *Ibid.*

writings. Many a reader of Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine* has felt on putting it down that the author of this book must be the author of the universe! And all who have known him would agree with the Mother's declaration: "What Sri Aurobindo represents in the world's history is not a teaching, not even a revelation; it is a decisive action direct from the Supreme." To talk, in the same breath, of him and Teilhard as men with a world-enlightening or world-saving mission is to be a fumbler in the proper values of Divine Vision and Work. Some parallelism between certain aspects of their thought and some comparative estimate of their immediate impact on the modern mind are the only things one can attempt. To pass beyond them to balance the living sources of the thought or the impact is to risk floundering in a sea of incommensurables.

Once the Avataric status of Sri Aurobindo is perceived, all we have said of him must apply to the personality whom he set by his side at the centre of his Ashram. If there is a tinge of incredulity in Zaehner's mention of the importance Sri Aurobindo accorded to the Mother, it is just because of his insufficient appraisal of Sri Aurobindo the Avatar.

And the momentous companionate arrangement Sri Aurobindo instituted for his Ashram throws into relief a point Zaehner, though not lacking a clue to it, tends often to ignore. The clue is in his observation: "Hinduism has no central authority to lay down what you should believe nor is it committed to any particular form of religious expression."¹ This means that basically Hinduism is not at all a religion, but, for all its characteristic moods and modes historically and geographically cultivated, a many-sided synthesis of spiritual experience, which has a possibility of assimilating every existing kind of Godward movement as well as of developing new kinds, because of an extremely broad basis, a true "catholicity" or universality of essential mysticism. So it is rather inapt to term Hinduism "the national religion of India": it is actually a multitudinously single essence of spirituality explored under certain national conditions. This really is what is known as "Vedanta" and what Sri Aurobindo accepts as both his background and *point de départ*. Consequently—in the sense in which Teilhard wanted to change and expand his religion and his Church—Sri Aurobindo cannot be said, as Zaehner suggests,² to have wanted to transform Hinduism by his dynamic philosophy. In fact Sri Aurobindo explicitly declares that his Yoga and his Ashram have nothing to do with any religion as such. Does not Zaehner³ himself record: "The religions, Aurobindo thought, had served their purpose ..."? Although all of them have certain contributions to make to the coming culture, none of them has for Sri Aurobindo an inevitable utility any longer. There has been no religion practised under him and the Mother. Their disciples do not follow even Hinduism in distinction from Buddhism or Islam, Judaism or Christianity or Zoroastrianism. And the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Mother, coming from the West and put by Sri Aurobindo at the head of his Ashram, proves to the world that for him the age of any possible Indian religion no less than of all other ones is utterly past and we have to move forward into a new epoch of spiritual truth going beyond even the vast synthesis of God-realizations associated with historical and geographical India.

The Ashram of Sri Aurobindo and of the Mother, therefore, is above all such rivalries as Christianity must face—and still more the Roman Catholic brand of it which stands over against the Protestant within the same religion. It is the most natural locus of a future world-union in a progressive spiritualisation. Zaehner¹, in a very fair moment, has said in passing: “Perhaps (Sri Aurobindo) has left behind in his Ashram not only the ‘kingdom of God within us’ but also, however small it may be, a ‘city of God upon earth’.” It would be too tall a claim that the ideal combination, seed of the entire world’s unified spiritual evolution, has been actualised in embryo here. But, by all tokens, Zaehner has rightly divined the Ashram’s destiny.

On the general trend of Sri Aurobindo’s thought, which is the ultimate foundation of his Ashram, we may throw some light from what he wrote on the completion of the fourth year of his philosophical monthly, *Arya*, which ran from 1914 to 1921. The novel temper of this thought in spite of its relation to ancient India’s spirituality as well as to the modern world-vision comes out here very clearly in a brief compass. Sri Aurobindo did not intend “at any time a review or magazine in the ordinary sense of the word, that is to say, a popular presentation or criticism of current thought on philosophical questions”. Nor was the *Arya*, like some philosophical and religious magazines in India, “the restatement of an existing school or position of philosophical thought cut out in its lines and needing only to be popularised and supported”. Sri Aurobindo’s work was “the thinking out of a synthetic philosophy which might be a contribution to the thought of the new age that was coming upon the world”. He said: “We start from the idea that humanity is moving to a new life of the race,—in all countries where men think, there is now in various forms that idea and that hope,—and our aim was to search for the spiritual, religious and other truth which can enlighten and guide the race in this movement and endeavour. The spiritual experience and the general truths on which such an attempt could be based, were already present to us, otherwise we should have had no right to make the endeavour at all; but the complete intellectual statement of them and their results and issues had to be found. This meant a continuous thinking, a high and subtle and difficult thinking on several lines.”

After this introduction Sri Aurobindo dwelt a little on the series of essays standing first in the *Arya: The Life Divine*, and sharply distinguished their thesis from Shankara’s Mayavada, Illusionism:

“Here we start from the Vedantic position, its ideas of the Self and mind and life,

¹ *Ibid.*

of Sachchidananda and the world, of Knowledge and Ignorance, of rebirth and the Spirit. But Vedanta is popularly supposed to be a denial of life, and this is no doubt a dominant trend it has taken. Though starting from the original truth that all is the Brahman, the Self, it has insisted in the end that the world is simply not-Brahman, not-Self; it has ended in a paradox. We have shown that mind and life and matter are derivations from the Self through a sort of spiritual mind or Supermind which is the real support of cosmic existence and, by developing mind into that, man can arrive at the real truth of the spirit in the world and the real truth and highest law of life. The Self is Sachchidananda and there is no incurable antinomy between that and the world; only we see the world through the eyes of the Ignorance and we have to see it through the eyes of Knowledge. Our Ignorance itself is only Knowledge developing out of its involution in the apparent nescience of Matter and on its way to a return to its conscious integrality. To accomplish that return and manifest the spiritual life in the human existence is the opportunity given by the successions of rebirth. We accept the truth of evolution, not so much in the physical form given to it by the West as in its philosophical truth, the involution of life and mind and spirit in matter and their progressive manifestation. At the summit of this evolution is the spiritual life, the life divine."

The point about evolution is worth an elucidatory comment. Having actually possessed "the spiritual experience and the general truths" by which the evolution of the life divine could be essayed, Sri Aurobindo cannot be expected to look to science for a foundational revelation. Teilhard based on physics his reconciliation of the God above with the God ahead: apart from a strong feeling of evolution as a universal "presence", a spirit at secret work behind or within the terms stressed by materialistic science, he had no substantial mystical realisation to fall back upon. The Christian scripture he deeply revered, and in portions of it he discerned a kind of grand analogue to what science, pressed to its ultimates and enlarged into "hyper-physics", laid bare to his researching eyes; but, with his rational mind the main leader available on the way to truth, he¹ could not but describe himself as he once did: "I am neither a philosopher nor a theologian, but a student of the 'phenomenon', a physicist (natural philosopher) in the old Greek sense." Inevitably he would differ, as Zaehner² has remarked, from Sri Aurobindo in his fundamental attitude to science. The attitude he took was natural to him. Sri Aurobindo did not need it at all. But this does not connote any neglect by Sri Aurobindo of science. Even to the most materialist, most secularist epoch of it he has paid a tremendous tribute and there was never any Tolstoyan or Gandhian cry by him towards a pre-machinery primitivism, a pre-scientific simplicity. At the conclusion of a long examination of the debit and the credit sides of Materialism he³ writes:

¹ *Nouvelles Littéraires*, January 11, 1951.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

³ *Evolution* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, Fifth Edition, 1950). p. 52.

“Three things will remain from the labour of the secularist centuries: truth of the physical world and its importance, the scientific method of knowledge,—which is to induce Nature and Being to reveal their own way of being and proceeding, not hastening to put upon them our own impositions of idea and imagination, *adhyāropa*,—and last, though very far from least, the truth and importance of the earth life and the human endeavour, its evolutionary meaning.”

The importance of the earth life and of the human endeavour was not unknown to ancient Indian spirituality. In the *Arya* Sri Aurobindo demonstrated by a close study of the Gita, the Upanishads and the Rig-veda how the concept of a divine life is consistent with the old Vedantic truth. But the “evolutionary meaning” of terrestrial existence and of man’s agelong odyssey could not be there in the past to a plenary extent: the vistas of natural progress, which the scientific theory of evolution discloses when plumbed to its depths, were very fitfully open to the ancient eye. Modern science alone could make them organic part of man’s world-vision. But modern science by itself is unable to provide us with the total possible content of progress or with the master-means to achieve it. Evolution has to be spiritually probed and a new spiritual verity corresponding to the new scientific discovery has to operate. This verity, automatically luminous with the profoundest secrets of the human body’s potentiality as well as with the largest powers for a material fulfilment not only individual but also collective, is what Sri Aurobindo designates Supermind, a level of consciousness which Zaehner fails to assess properly and about which we shall have more to say later. Suffice it here to note that Sri Aurobindo has called it a greater truth than any realised up to now and demanding, as we have already observed, a new Yoga, synthesising the past Yogas but carrying them further into an integrality of aim and process oriented towards an all-round perfection.

The modern theory of evolution, therefore, is in its essence the right background for the Aurobindonian spirituality. But it cannot in its purely physical form be of primary moment to Sri Aurobindo. One aspect of its vital philosophical truth, anticipated in the Vedanta though without being fully exploited, he has expressed: “the involution of life and mind and spirit in matter and their progressive manifestation.” The other aspect, also already in general in the Vedanta and hinted in the *Arya*’s fourth-year backlook, may be summed up for Aurobindonian purposes: “If there is an evolution of consciousness in an evolutionary matter taking various individual forms and if there is an individual soul with a developed consciousness inhabiting each of the highest developed of these forms, namely, the human, then this soul too must have an evolutionary past as well as future and it is the progressive experience of this soul which constitutes the evolution of consciousness in an evolving physical Nature. But how can that experience take place except through the soul’s rebirth? Thus rebirth is self-evidently a necessary function of the consciousness undergoing evolution—the only possible machinery of such a process.”

Teilhard, radical evolutionist though he was, no less than believer in the individual human soul, could not take any step in the direction of the theory of rebirth.

Involution in the Aurobindonian meaning he did envisage, even if he did not employ that word in a similar context and actually gave a different meaning to it as a rule and even if he was not always clear as to the state in which life and mind and spirit were involved in matter. Roman Catholicism so far has not subscribed to involution, yet Teilhard was not stopped by this oversight. But as regards rebirth he seems completely at one with orthodox Christianity. Rather an anomaly for one who subscribed to “spiritual evolutionism” and said of the man deeply convinced of the evolutionary viewpoint: “Body and soul, he is the product of a huge creative work with which the totality of things has collaborated from the beginning”¹ —and again: “his true being is not limited to the narrow boundaries of his limbs and his historic existence but... he forms part, body and soul, of the process that drives the universe.”² Zaehner too, for all his detached and impartial outlook on the Roman Church and his openness at several points to non-Christian religions, has no “hyper-Catholic” inkling at this particular point. Nor does he touch on the subject in relation to Teilhardism, science and evolution.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *The Vision of the Past*, translated by J. M. Cohen (Collins, London, 1966), p. 137.

² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

A TALK BY NIRODBARAN

APRIL 8, 1970

To tell the truth, I am feeling a little dullish and I hope that by your contact and by the atmosphere of the room the dullness will disappear and the genial spirit found. The cause of dullness is a very simple one—the fact that we have missed one day. As a matter of fact this should make no difference, but because of the holiday I find my memory has taken leave of me. I don't recollect or rather I mistily recollect what we talked about and where we stopped. I won't go into the philosophy of having holidays; most of you like them, enjoy them, I do as well. But sometimes I find the reverse action, when the stream of something is interrupted the fire dies, and then it is very difficult to rake up that fire; that is perhaps why some of us are now thinking about what to do with our holidays! However, there is a good point as regards holidays: the people who are particularly hard-working need some rest.

As I do not properly recall what I said in my last talk, I fear there might be repetitions in the present, but they are unintentional. If you feel bored plug your ears till I come to something new. But repetition has a place, especially in literature. It is a part of what you call 'alankar shastra', or figure of speech. Sri Aurobindo, you have noticed, repeats very often. And nowadays when I go to the sportsground, very commonly I hear from the mike: 'I repeat. I repeat' (*laughter*); so twice or thrice repeated once remembered, is the adage which I have culled from my pedagogic experience.

The principal points from last time are: the Mother started intense Sadhana, she divided her days or her spiritual work into three parts: Pranam, interview and soup-distribution. Of course you know Sri Aurobindo had retired and she had taken charge of the Ashram. So most of her time during the day as well as the night—but about the night I won't say anything just now—was occupied with the sadhana of the sadhaks.... I have mentioned what she was doing during soup time, the interview and the Pranam; and into their details I shall enter later on, where I can also speak from some of the personal experience I had when I came and settled here permanently. But just now these are the principal items. I told you how the Mother was bringing down the gods, but had to send them back. Then the sadhana came down into the subconscious and she was busy with something else. I might say in my own way—it was not the bringing down of the gods but the bringing down of the devils or the descent of the devils into the subconscious.

Now I shall read one or two extracts from our Talks;¹ perhaps I have either read them out or quoted them from memory more than once already, but here are Sri

¹ Talks with Sri Aurobindo, p. 2.

Aurobindo's words. I think I can also read a little from the preceding part which too is very interesting, till I come to our proper subject. We were talking about cures—not by medicines, but by faith: whether or not faith has the power to cure diseases.

M: "It is said that Christ used to heal simply by a touch. Is such healing possible?"

SRI AUROBINDO: "Why not? There are many instances of such cures. No doubt faith is necessary. Christ himself said, 'Thy faith has made thee whole.'"

N: "Is faith always necessary?"

SRI AUROBINDO: "No, not always. Cures can be effected without faith, especially when one doesn't know what is being done."—So here 'ignorance is bliss'. Faith is above mind, so any discussion or dispute spoils its action. Please remember this, young people. Then our medical chief Dr. Manilal says:

"Yes, I know of instances of cure or help by faith. When I first came to see you, you told me to remember you in any difficulty. I followed your advice and passed unscathed through many troubles."—I have given you many instances of where Sri Aurobindo has asked people to remember him in cases of difficulties, here is another.

Sri Aurobindo: "Yours was what is known as simple faith. Some call it blind faith. When Ramakrishna was asked the nature of faith, he replied, 'All faith is blind; otherwise it is no faith.' And he was quite right."

M: "Is it because there is something in our nature or in the surrounding atmosphere that doubts come and the results are not as before?"

SRI AUROBINDO: "For both reasons.... By contact with other people also the faith gets obscured. I know one or two shocking instances in the Ashram itself. Once a truthful man came to pay a visit. Someone told him that the habit of always speaking the truth was nothing but a superstition and that one must be free to say whatever one likes. There is another instance of someone advocating sex-indulgence. He said that it was not a hindrance to Yoga and that everybody must have his Shakti! When such ideas are spread, it is no wonder they cast a bad influence on people."—Manilal couldn't bear all this ... he was some sort of a moralist, so he asked: "Shouldn't those who broadcast these ideas be quarantined?" (*laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: "I thought of that. But it is not possible.... One has to change from within.. "

N: "Is exterior imposition good?"

SRI AUROBINDO: "It can be good, provided one sincerely keeps to it....Ours is a problem of world-change. People here are an epitome of the world. Each one represents a type of humanity. If he is changed, it means a victory for all who belong to his type and thus a great achievement for our work. But for this change a constant will is required. If that will is there lots of things can be done for the man."— Now we come to our point.

N: "We gather that sadhana was going on very well in the Ashram at the beginning and things became sluggish only afterwards."

SRI AUROBINDO: "Yes, it is when the sadhana came down into the physical and

subconscient that things became very difficult. I myself had to struggle for two years. For, the subconscient is absolutely inert, like stone. Though my mind was quite awake above, it could not exert any influence down below. It is a Herculean labour. If I had been made to see it before, probably I would have been less enthusiastic about it. There is the virtue of blind faith! ... Once the subconscient is conquered, things will become easy for those who come after. That is what is meant by 'realisation of one in all.' ”

N: “Then why should we take so much trouble? We can wait for that victory.” — He smiled and said, “You want an easy path?”

M: “More than an easy path; want to be carried about like a baby. Not possible, Sir?”

SRI AUROBINDO: “Why not? But you have to be a genuine baby....”

N: “You once spoke of the brilliant period of the Ashram.”

SRI AUROBINDO: “Yes, it was when sadhana was going on in the vital level. Then everything was joy, peace, ananda. And if we had stopped there, we could have started a big religion or a vast organisation. But the work would have been left unattempted and unachieved.” — So you see what a sacrifice has been made.

M: “Why did you retire? Was it to concentrate more on your work?”

SRI AUROBINDO: “No. It was in order to withdraw from the general physical atmosphere. If I had had to do what the Mother is doing, I would hardly have found time to do my own work; besides, it would have entailed a tremendous labour.”

N: “The Mother’s coming must have greatly helped you in your work and in your sadhana.”

SRI AUROBINDO: “Of course, of course.” — Such warmth was very rarely seen! (*laughter*)—“All my realisations—Nirvana and others—would have remained theoretical, as it were, so far as the outer world was concerned. It is the Mother who showed the way to a practical form. Without her, no organised manifestation would have been possible. She has been doing this kind of sadhana and work from her very childhood.”

N: “Yes We also find in the Mother’s *Prayers and Meditations* a striking resemblance between your ideas and hers.”

So you will agree, my friends, that such things do bear repetition.

Now I’ll give you an instance of what the effect was of the descents of the gods. I have already told you something and I referred to one gentleman or sadhak whose name was Purushottam; some of you might remember him, particularly our teachers.

He was made a sort of instrument between the Mother and the sadhaks. You remember how he used to pull or tug at people’s hair, in order to make them straight as it were! But the poor man himself had to leave the Ashram, later on. He was here when I first came. He was in charge of Prosperity; a very fine man indeed, but later on something happened to him. I’ve recorded it in my correspondence. I wrote it in 1936. You are familiar with my writing to Sri Aurobindo, so please don’t get shocked—the new ones amongst you! I wrote: “By the way, what is happening?”

Supramental descending? Purushottam going phut.”— I hope you understand the slang word ‘phut’.—“All thought that he was doing serious sadhana, as a result Purushottam, the Supreme Being, descended into him and he was calling Sri Aurobindo to come and bow to him. What next? Makes me shake to the bones!” Sri Aurobindo’s reply: “It appears that Purushottam has recognised that his Purushottama head was indeed all phut! He says he felt some evil forces making him do and say these things but he was so helpless that he was forced to obey them! That is a fall from Purushottama heights but a return to sanity if only temporary. (But let us hope it will increase) But that is evidently what happened.” Then to the other part— “he was doing serious sadhana”—he answers: “Serious? You mean not to sleep and all that sort of thing? Well, it is just that kind of seriousness which brings these attacks—earnestness of this sort does call down that kind of Purushottama or rather call him—for it is a horizontal not a vertical descent.” Then I had asked: “What next?” So he answered that point: “Next? Perhaps he will want you also to come and bow to him and pummel you if you don’t”, (*laughter*)—and I had said “makes me shake to the bones”, to which Sri Aurobindo replied, “Only the bones?” (*laughter*) So, there you are, poor fellow, that’s what happened. Then I wrote: “Already I am feeling awfully pulled down, on top of that Madangopal sits—where the Purushottama crowns them all—I ask myself, ‘Whither, whither are you going, my friend, and what awaits you?’ ”

SRI AUROBINDO: “Perhaps the Paratpara Purusha beyond even the Purushottama. But why this pulled downness? You are not pulling down Purushottama or any other gentleman from the upper storey, are you? It is strain and want of rest, I suppose. Sleep, sleep! Read Mark Twain or write humorous stories. (*laughter*) Then you will be chirpy and even Madangopal won’t feel heavy to you.”

Now here is something very revealing which I forgot to read to you. It was recorded in 1954; I had an occasion, I don’t remember how, to hear this talk of the Mother:

‘Today the Mother was unusually late. She had to see some people before her talk to Dr. Sanyal:

“For 8 days (or 10) I remained without the least bit of food and sleep except for an hour and half, “of rest” due to the heavy pressure of work. It was in the Library House after Sri Aurobindo had retired and I had taken charge of the Ashram. There were about 30 people, Amrita was one of them, he knows all about it. I was giving meditation three times and doing other work as well as cooking Sri Aurobindo’s meals. Suddenly one day I found that the teacup I was carrying felt heavy; then I noticed that my hands had become very thin like sticks. Sri Aurobindo also drew my attention to it and said jokingly: ‘You are not looking pretty.’ At that time I was young, so then I began to eat. But I used to take an inner wash and keep my bowels thoroughly clean. There was no water in the body, which is considered by doctors as dangerous. I also found that breathing flowers, *e.g.* jasmine, gave energy. So you see people saying that they can’t go on without food or sleep, is not true.’ ”

But you are young people, you are advised to have 8 hours' sleep. But the fact to be established is that one *can* do fasting—Sri Aurobindo has also experimented,—you've heard about it.

Now let's go forward. Champaklal, my friend, a very difficult friend indeed, but very ... what shall I say? ... Well, I won't say anything! Champaklal has given me some details about the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's work, or his own work during these periods. They are very interesting.

You know he was their personal attendant from the time they came to the Library House; so all the time he had to be practically near them. He was given a key for the main door—at the top of the stairs—which used to be always locked. Now the reverse—it's always open. Anyone can enter and do mischief or whatever you like. Now that the Supermind has descended, the door is always open. Many people come and go, nobody knows for what... No restriction at all. So is the case, with the main gate as I said, Champaklal was given the key so he could come at any time needed. There were some others who used to look to the cleaning of the rooms upstairs: Sri Aurobindo's room, the passage, the meditation hall, etc.... I am speaking of the beginning when the Mother's salon—the room where you wait for the interview, which is packed with Champaklal's things, that room hadn't been built; neither was the Mother's boudoir inside. Then I don't know exactly, as yet, what Champaklal's work was in the morning, his evening or afternoon programme he has told me. But I am waiting for an opportune moment or for his good humour, to tell me about the morning. Well ... but one thing I know: he was in charge of making Sri Aurobindo's bed; it seems Sri Aurobindo told the Mother about his bed and she assigned this work to him. Some of you may have known Haradhan who has gone into another world—he had been sending other people to that world by his funeral service. At that time he was in charge of some work. There was a joke, I remember now, when he was in charge, and was important—there have been many important people, my friends, and their importance has gone away later on. Either they were really great or greatness was thrust upon them. The joke about Haradhan was this. Some new person came and asked him, "Can you tell me who is the most advanced sadhak here?" "No, no, no, I don't know"—he tried to send him off with a rebuff. But the man insisted—"No, no, you must know, you are in charge of this, you are an important person, please tell me." Then after so much persuasion and coaxing he said, "All right, come, I'll whisper in your ear. Don't tell anybody... You know, there are two persons who are the most advanced—you and I." (*Laughter*)

However, he had charge of something in Sri Aurobindo's room, and Champaklal was entrusted, as I said, with the work of making Sri Aurobindo's bed and it continued till the last days. I have also shared with him, in my own way, in doing the bed. That part of my story will come later on. Now it is understood that while these people were busy cleaning the other rooms, Sri Aurobindo's room was always kept shut. When the other rooms were finished, he would shift to the corner room and they would clean his room. So he was always kept invisible, and unobserved; except by

Champaklal, because he was his personal attendant; naturally the Master and the servant had to cross their ways, so they met sometimes.

Yes...another piece of information I have...I told you the Mother was giving interviews and they continued till 12 or 1 o'clock; they were in the Darshan room, and she sat on the couch. I also had an interview there, in my first years here, and that reminds me of the subconscious. I may as well tell it to you now. It was my first interview, on my birthday. I went to the Mother, she was sitting on the couch, very gracious, very beautiful, full of smiles. Then she told me about the nature of the work that was going on. She asked me some personal questions, there was no privacy about them. She also asked me what my aspiration was, and what I wanted. She put it in a very formal manner...the words were a little abstract, which took me some time to understand; I was not very efficient in English at that time...because of my medical knowledge you know! "How is your aspiration formulated?" she asked. I couldn't understand what was meant. Then she explained and made it simpler; and I said, "Mother, I want Ananda" — "Ananda! It is very difficult, very difficult. It comes and goes, it doesn't remain." Then I said, "Well, then, shall I give it up?" "No, no, no, don't give it up." That is the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's way, they will never discourage you in anything, they will show you how to go on. "Surely you can have it but I only say that it is very difficult." But, well...certainly by Her Grace, I had an experience of Ananda later on, all on a sudden. I have written about it in my correspondence. But that is by the way. She also asked me, "Do you know what work we are doing at present? We are working in the subconscious. Have you any idea about the subconscious?" I said, "No, Mother." She said "It is like a pool, the water on the surface is very transparent, but all the mud is sitting below. So what we are doing now is, we are agitating, we are stirring the mud; consequently the whole becomes turbid, muddy, murky. This is the work that's going on." I am afraid it is still going on. We are, if I may mix my metaphors, still not out of the woods.

Now to come back to our story. After the interviews were over, it was Champaklal's turn to go and see the Mother, every day. He would lay his head down on the Mother's lap and rest and go to sleep. After a while the Mother would gently take up his head and put it down on the couch. She would go to Sri Aurobindo's room, open the door so that Sri Aurobindo might have some air and light. She would have something to drink with him and come back and wake up Champaklal.

So what a happy time he had, you see.

It seems that Sri Aurobindo also had to do some work. There used to be plenty of vases with flowers in the Mother's room, which had to be put outside in the evening; and it was his work, if you please, to do that! So, you see, the Mother made him work as well! I have told you how he had to boil fish for the cats. There would be other work too, later on, I haven't found the letter in which he had written to me, giving instances of physical work—I wasn't very willing to do physical work—you know, as was his habit, always giving personal examples—"So I also had to do it, which I did not like very much. But I have taken my M.A. degree, now it's your turn".

(*Laughter*) That's how he used to encourage us.

In the evening, I don't know at what time exactly, Champaklal used to bring in a flask of soup for the Mother, he used to pour it in a bowl, in the presence of Sri Aurobindo. The Mother was in her own room, and Sri Aurobindo used to carry the bowl in his own hands to the Mother. Champaklal said, rather humorously, that it was a sight for the Gods to see how Sri Aurobindo carried the bowl so carefully, so steadily, as if it were an offering he was taking.

Before the salon was ready, the Mother was living in the corner room, facing Pavita's house. And the adjacent room, where I have the privilege at present to work, was her toilet room. You know perhaps that even today the Mother has no proper bed. She has a sort of a couch, I don't know the length and breadth—mathematics doesn't come to me easily! But it's just enough, I think, for her body. She never lies flat, because that is a tamasic position. So, ladies and gentlemen, don't lie flat on your mat or your cot, always try to be propped up. I have seen the difference myself. Though the flat position is very comfortable, it is tamasic....

In that small room in the corner, she had a couch where she would rest rather than sleep. Once she fell ill. Sri Aurobindo used to take fruit juice to her in a flask. One day, the flask happened to be a new one, he didn't know how to open it. He called Champaklal to help him and Champaklal opened it in no time. Champaklal says that the way in which Sri Aurobindo called him was very humorous, though he can't remember the words.

Another instance: they had in their room a revolving fan. Sri Aurobindo wanted to make it steady. He didn't know how to do it. Again he had to call for the help of Champaklal. He asked him, "Do you know how to do it?" Champaklal didn't know (*laughter*) but he didn't acknowledge it. (*Laughter*) He was always an experimenter. He always examines, tries this and that. So he touched it with his hand and luckily his finger went to the right spot and it became steady! Sri Aurobindo smiled, "Oh! So simple!" (*Laughter*)

Then the next thing Champaklal had to do—I shouldn't say the next but another—was to bring hot water for Sri Aurobindo's bath, at about 10 p.m., but the time was never fixed, it was 10, 11, 12, 1 or even 2 a.m.—of course, often the Mother had retired by then. I might remind you here that I made a mistake when I once said that he used to take his bath with boiling water. Champaklal says not boiling water but very hot water. I asked him, "How do you know it was very hot water?" He said, "When I went there after the bath I used to dip my fingers into the water that remained, and it was extremely hot." So not knowing when Sri Aurobindo would begin his bath or when he would finish, Champaklal had to keep on duty throughout, for so many hours. You know where the bathroom is—facing the main door upstairs. I don't know where Champaklal used to remain; either at the staircase or listening to the splashes or the running of water. But he had to wait there, because he had to clean the room after the bath was over.

I have spoken of Nishikanto's and my promenade and coming back at midnight

or after; passing under that window we used to hear the sound of water gurgling down the pipe; and we would say, "He is taking his bath." We were like night-birds!

Sri Aurobindo, after the bath, would go for his dinner or supper or whatever light meal, and come back to wash his mouth. Meanwhile Champaklal had to wash and clean the bathroom, and then remove all the dishes after his meal. You can see then from 10 o'clock to 3 or 4 in the morning he worked. More about that I'll tell you later.

I hope he won't contradict any of the things I have given here. Let us see!

NIRODBARAN

TEARS

LET the tears tremble
 Within the eye
 But fall not over,
 Leaving it dry.

Keep the tears standing,
 A quivering calm
 That leaps not outward
 To the moment's balm.

For, tears that are loosened
 Drain the small heart
 Of man: his sorrows
 Too soon depart

And the lack that is nameless,
 Beyond all brief
 Losses, grows never
 A glisten of grief

Calling the azure's
 Light without end
 To be for a life-time
 The mortal's friend.

AMAL KIRAN

GLOBAL TELEVISION—A CENTENARY CELEBRATION

FIFTH REPORT FROM THE CENTRE OF TELEVISION ART AT AUROVILLE

JUST before the birth centenary of Sri Aurobindo on August 15th, 1972, a communications satellite will go into stationary orbit over the Indian Ocean. The prediction of our first report in 1968 will have come true and the last link will have been added to a network of instant, live, global television. It seems significant that it happened at this particular time, just before the 100th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's birth, and in this particular place, in the sky almost directly above the Ashram and Auroville. Now, during the time when India is remembering and revitalizing the great world-vision of Sri Aurobindo, parts of this vision could be transmitted to the rest of the world instantly, through television.

There are such encouraging signs at the moment in India that perhaps now is the time for a global communication to begin.

Some of the foremost Indian political and civic leaders are in constant contact with enlightened spiritual advisers and they are being directed towards a peaceful realization of India's Nation-Soul. They are being encouraged to discover a whole new form of political life in which her citizens can realize that each is an individual person among many other individual persons and although all are at different levels in evolution and, in this sense, unequal, all are absolutely equal in the sense that they may be given the right to evolve further, and faster if they so desire. This, of course, will involve an end to poverty and a reduction in the gap between the under-privileged and the over-privileged. With Sri Aurobindo, these top Indian leaders seem to understand fully what was implied in India's original demand for freedom. They are trying to create an atmosphere where the Indian people can first achieve self-respect and then a mature respect for others; an atmosphere where India can fully discover and preserve her individuality as a nation, and express it ultimately in unity and peace with the other nations of the world. Some of these leaders even seem to show a beginning belief that a new political system which would protect true and constructive freedom might be preparing the way for a whole new stage of evolution where some kind of complete freedom and joy would exist. It is hopeful, not only for this country, but for all of mankind that India's temporal leaders, in their constant communication with India's great spiritual personalities, are making the humble admission that no important new system for freedom and full growth will be discovered through human vision alone. They see clearly that the most reasonable of men have never created a political system which has accommodated for long the great paradoxes of man moving forward in the process of evolution...out of the Divine, in the Divine, and back to

the Divine. They talk of the Divine without fear of ridicule, and they are accepting advice which, although never irrational, sometimes goes beyond reason.

Some of the foremost Indian economists and experts in modern technology admit that the really new plans they are trying to find for the future of India cannot be found simply by imitating or adapting systems operating in other parts of the world. They realize that in India any truly significant planning will be done only after deep concentration and discussion about the real and ultimate purposes of human life. They look with fear and loathing at the military-industrial complexes of the West. They see the futility of amazingly successful flights into space while the men who are flying the rockets remain restless and unfulfilled as human beings. They see some huge successes in their own country in business and industry, but where the businesses and industries are often run by over-materialistic, unfulfilled Indian families. The more highly evolved Indian economists and technologists, therefore, are looking intensely into the depths of human life to find ways of progressing which are not fraught with the chimeras of old-fashioned signs of success, like personal power and the accumulation of money. They seem to realize in a dynamic way at last, that man has a spiritual dimension and that this fact must be included in their planning. They see the necessity now of opening their well-trained minds to a much larger and unfathomable Concept which must be, after all, directing the universe. As Indians and as highly evolved men, they can admit this. They see that perhaps their task at this point in evolution is not so much to devise plans completely on their own but rather to recognize a large plan which has always been there waiting to be found. Some are now reading the particular works of Sri Aurobindo where he points out that systems like Capitalism and Communism can never really work because these systems have never included in their planning the full dimensions and direction of man in evolution...out of the Divine, in the Divine, and back to the Divine.

Some of the greatest Indian architects who have long ago stopped imitating Western styles now seem to be going beyond the search for any style at all, even though their own contemporary style might be recognized as more purely Indian. By going beyond a search for any personal style, they are opening themselves to great areas of inspiration where they will not be hampered by egoism and the gnawing need which most creative men have had to "make a name for themselves". A few of the most highly evolved architects, for example, are talking about an inner process which must be gone through to find the deep down reasons for a structure's coming into being. To move ahead towards the environments of the future they are trying to find deeper foundations in the real needs of human life, before they start laying the actual foundations in steel and concrete, or whatever new materials make sense in a particular time and place. They admit that they do not know all about buildings because they do not know all about men. They realize that the greatest innovations in significant architecture happen through accident, or chance, or an openness to the true destiny of man which will ultimately have to determine the environments of the future. The new Indian architect stands with his well-trained mind working and alert, before the mysterious

source of all significant innovations, and he is achieving the humility to let his human imagination be touched by a new and exciting creativity much larger than his own. Dissatisfied and disillusioned by satisfying man's surface needs alone, he has begun to look beyond surface dimensions. Through his healthy disillusionment and his openness, he seems to be on the verge of finding a whole new simplified process for contemporary architecture. By searching in depth for man's environmental needs he is automatically finding some of the deeper secrets of the very nature of man, always changing, always moving forward, unfolding in the fascinating process of evolution... out of the Divine, in the Divine, and back to the Divine.

The thing which is so encouraging about these great leaders in various fields of Indian life is that they are all looking intensely and in depth at the process of evolution. Whether or not they have all found the written words of Sri Aurobindo does not matter so much because they are finding the Wisdom he has bequeathed to India, and has caused to vibrate vividly and strong in the Indian atmosphere. These top Indian leaders, although they may be relatively few, will have a great impact simply by going beyond themselves and even beyond history to find new solutions to contemporary problems. They see, without pride, that the great men of history who thought they knew all the answers, never even knew the questions. In profound humility, they see that the deeper questions about man and his future go beyond reason before they are even asked. Without expecting to find all the answers, they are looking for directives and intuitions for the future in the particular fields in which they are being challenged as leaders. There is no reason why they should not find what they are seeking, and we can hope that their realistic and sincere aspirations be rewarded beyond their dreams.

Everything which Sri Aurobindo has written presumed that man would reach a stage where he would be forced to go beyond reason and move on to new levels of consciousness. Could this Centenary Year be the time when this great global move is to begin? It is encouraging that top Indian leadership seems on the verge of discovering new directives for the future of man which would put into practical and communicable terms the prophetic vision of Sri Aurobindo. It is encouraging, too, that the new satellite over the Indian Ocean gives this planet, at last, a communication medium geared and proportioned to the world-vision of Sri Aurobindo. If this year is to be the beginning, then the spiritual darkness across the earth now can be seen as really just the darkness before the dawn. We will be entering an era of new light where enlightened man can discover the true depths in his being, where his consciousness can be transformed into total and transcendent awareness, and where Divine Bliss can show itself as the core of everything that is.

WILLIAM T. NETTER
Auroville—July 11, 1972

TOWARDS AUROVILLE

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

(Continued from the issue of April, 1972)

THE idea of a religion of humanity was born in the minds of the forward looking rationalists of the eighteenth century who tried to substitute it for the formal spiritualism of ecclesiastical Christianity. Positivism, Humanitarianism, Philanthropy, Democracy, Socialism and Pacifism have been among its chief by-products. As a result mankind came to be worshipped as a godhead and the progress and service of human life became the chief preoccupation of its protagonists in place of family, the state and the nation. And war, physical or moral cruelty, capital punishment, oppression and exploitation came to be treated as cries against this new gospel. The body, life and heart of man were to be held sacred and their service supreme. This great idealism was always faithful to the values of human life and existence. "Faith, even an intellectual faith, must always be a worker of miracles, and this religion of humanity, even without taking bodily shape or a compelling form or a visible means of self-effectuation, was yet able to effect comparatively much of what it set out to do. It, to some degree, humanised society, humanised law and punishment, humanised the outlook of man on man, abolished legalised torture and the cruder forms of slavery, raised those who were depressed and fallen, gave large hopes to humanity, stimulated philanthropy and charity and the service of mankind, encouraged everywhere the desire of freedom, put a curb on oppression and greatly minimised its more brutal expressions. It had almost succeeded in humanising war and would perhaps have succeeded entirely but for the contrary trend of modern Science. It made it possible for man to conceive of a world free from war as imaginable even without waiting for the Christian millennium.That may not be a great step, but still it was a step forward."¹ This gospel of the religion of humanity will exercise on the vast majority only a modifying influence and can never entirely prevail upon individual class or national egoisms and leave the field still open to the arrogant and brutal adversary, unless it becomes the absorbing aim and passion of mankind as a whole. This can be accomplished only when the inner human nature and the inner way of living are radically changed. Liberty, equality and fraternity are, no doubt, the three godheads of the soul, and sooner rather than later human society has to be re-created in their image. But this cannot be achieved through any perfected external machinery of society so long as man lives in the ego

¹ *The Ideal of Human Unity*, pp. 360.

and works through it. For when the ego claims liberty, it arrives only at competitive individualism. And when it asserts equality it only constructs an artificial and mechanical society through hatred and strife. Moreover "a society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty".¹ And, fraternity is still a far cry; for it is entirely contrary to the egoistic nature of man. "Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else.... When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race".²

If the integral unity of mankind has to be realised, the present idea of the religion of humanity must spiritualise itself and become the general inner law of the life of the human race. Today, more than ever before, nations are thrown together in an increasing closeness of common interests which makes old divisions superfluous. Moreover the forces of a common uniting sentiment—a cosmopolitan, international sentiment, are steadily growing stronger and effective. Taking advantage of these forces and the evolutionary pressure of circumstances leaders of mankind must set themselves to the supreme task of organising human life towards the creative unification of the race. The alternative is a lingering suicide, a total annihilation of the human race. Respect for the human individual and the natural human groupings, love of liberty, a sense of human oneness are all the essential components of the religion of humanity. Such a religion does not refer to a single system of thought or a particular creed and a universal religion or outward dogma. Freedom and variation of self-expression is the very essence of spiritual life. By a religion of humanity is therefore meant "the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men

¹ *Ibid*, pp. 364-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 368.

will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of co-operation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete. There must be the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded. There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself, so that it may be developed in the life of the race".¹ This is the truth of our being and our existence; and towards the realisation of such 'a free inner variation and a freely varied outer expression' that mankind should progressively move. "The hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realise this truth and seek to develop it in themselves."² When man is disappointed and disillusioned with all his mechanical means and solutions, perhaps the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead the race to its luminous destiny.

(Concluded)

Compiled by MADHUSUDAN REDDI

NOTE

The article, "A Look Behind: Some Recollections of Early Ashram Days", published in the Special Issue of *Mother India*, August 15, 1972, is one of the articles in the valuable forthcoming book, *Breath of Grace*. Its compiler, M. P. Pandit, kindly permitted us to print the article in advance.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 368-9

² *Ibid.*, pp. 378-9.

RHETORIC AND TRUTH

ONE of the major and most prominent symptoms of a degenerate society is the degeneracy of its language; in fact, it is *the* major symptom, the surest and most salient mark. It was noted as such by Confucius, who said that the first thing to do, toward the rehabilitation of a corrupt society, was to rectify the terms it used. For language is fundamental to humanity, and to human cohesion, and to corrupt or poison, cripple or denature language is to strike at the roots of human life. Modernity does this with a will—a will dark and intricately perverse, that cannot stand the light and the clarity of the true terms: it strikes at the very possibility of clarity and truth, and would hound out of existence something it calls “rhetoric”. By insistent repetition it has made this word one of the ultimates of pejoration, accepted as such by the ignorant, the unthinking and the fashionable multitudes. To brand something as “rhetoric” nowadays is to deny it the right to exist.

What rhetoric really is, of course, and why it is so reprehensible, is a subject that few seek or dare to enquire into. The fact that a study of rhetoric was the very corner-stone of civilized life, in the Western world, until the old Classical education finally broke down and was abandoned in this twentieth century, means nothing to our present-day minions of “progress”. It seems that the civilizing labours of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian and a host of others must be retired now to a limbo of dead names and outworn endeavors. Our progression, if not our progress, must take us quite away from what so many have considered so very important. Any attempt to defend any such thing as “civilizing labor” at all is now in danger of being labelled “rhetoric” and thus dismissed. It is as bad as speaking of “brotherly love”, or “human nobility”.

To state what rhetoric is, however, and why it is so important, should not be prohibitively difficult. The root meaning of the word is “oratory”—that is, the skill of the orator. His *linguistic* skill, that is; and thus by extension the word means “skill of language”. The orator was an immensely important figure in Graeco-Roman life, and the written word counted for comparatively little; and thus the use of language was studied primarily as the *orator's* use of it. But the principles are the same, whether for speaking or for writing; and rhetoric is the arrangement of words to the best advantage to present most forcefully whatever it is one has to say; to influence the listener and the reader, to make a strong impression upon him, to be *persuasive*.

One may see certain dangers here. Skill can be levied in any cause, and a man can be persuaded where he would do better not to be. Macbeth was persuaded, for one example, and lived to regret it. The difficulty was noted by Socrates, who taxed the Sophists with irresponsible rhetoric, that made the worse appear the better. And certainly we have had floods and floods of such treacherous persuasiveness, whether from irresponsibility, bad will or honest ignorance. Unfortunately skill in language is no proof of wisdom, knowledge or profundity; or even of simple honesty and fair-

dealing. So a mistrust of eloquence and "mere words" is not difficult to understand, and may even be salutary. What is not salutary is a denial and denouncement of rhetoric altogether; which leads straight to the positive disintegration of language that is now upon us, until any kind of articulate speech becomes suspect if not impossible.

Surely the obviation of skill in a bad cause cannot come from the renouncing of skill altogether. Because it is possible to walk over a cliff or into a bog, the race does not stop walking. The cure for the abuses of rhetoric—for the orotund empty language, the insidious perverse language, for all language that does not do best its proper work of leading the race upward—is in the study of rhetoric, and not in the abandonment of it. Only by having oneself sufficient skill and sophistication with language can one see through the abuse of it, and *not* be persuaded. Otherwise by one's very stubbornness and resistance to being persuaded of anything, one persuades oneself to a crippled narrowness. We must use language; if the use is not skilled it will be unskilled; and if one has knowledge and profundity, and stands for the better against the worse, he will not find that his cause is served well by ineptness with language, that is, by lack of rhetoric.

This Modern reaction is a reaction of the inept;—of people who are abjectly at the mercy of whatever they hear, and people who cannot respond to the high calls and the ennobling experiences. When they dismiss "rhetoric", they dismiss their evolutionary possibilities: they do not want to grow. Rhetoric is neutral; but they would make it synonymous with lying. Truth is inchoate, they think; whatever is crudest and most inarticulate, must be most truthful. A bungler is at least "honest": a "smooth talker" must be a fraud. So all the great expressions of humanity are denied, and thrown over; the filling and lifting eloquence of the leading spirits becomes no more than the flatulent verbiage of the hack politician, or the glibness of the "confidence-man". Truth is in the grunts and the stammerings of the linguistically disinherited, and the great wielder of words, even if he is not an outright liar, is misleading and dangerous.

The fruits of this wilful ignorance and incapacity have now become all too plainly abundant. They are jejune fruits at best, and bitter ones for any man of true cultural development. Whether in verse or in prose we have less and less, though the volume of the verbiage increases with an ever mounting acceleration. With all the dull and the shrill clamor of words about us, it is a rare man now who, even if he has something to say, is even minimally articulate. Modernity does not want clarity; probably largely because it does not want its own pitiful state to be clearly seen. Poetry gets the worst of it, for poetry is the best of language. Anything generous, high and noble is positively hated; the words in which these things are naturally expressed are pronounced empty and meaningless, and the blighting shadow falls across the great poetry of the world. What cannot be corrupted to a Modern interpretation, or "used" by the Modern consciousness, is "rhetoric" and not really poetry. One is not "sincere" if he is eloquent powerful, persuasive. If he is *elevated* at all he is even worse than insincere, and is something so reprehensible that our sputterers cannot find his proper designation.

It is only a very small consciousness that is so acutely afraid of being "taken in" that it will not come out, as it were. It is the badger-mind, that sticks close to its hole. There was a Zen-man who did not know philosophical matters—just the white cow and the wretched badger. To the Modern consciousness, alas, this disjunction is either nonsense or something with which to be intellectualistically clever—that is, nonsense is made of it. So these "progressive" people make triviality of the small part they can accept of all our great cultural heritage. Any bidding to rise and grow, any expression of the superior things and the splendours to be grown to, is just "rhetoric" to them. All the great things in poetry, the summit of language, they would belittle by this misuse of a word; and the poets are treated as if they, and not their traducers, were the corrupters of the language. It is only by being "taken in", to the realms of light, truth and freedom, that men can progress truly; and without being thus taken in, they can only putter and disintegrate. As a linguistic being, a man *must* be rhetorical. Humanity has an absolute need for the clarity brought by skill of language—that is, by rhetoric.

JESSE ROARKE

THOUGHTS

LIVE in permanent union with God.
 But do not go and stay permanently in God's abode.
 Rather make God stay permanently in your body's house.
 Let the Soul that you are develop to such an extent
 that God Himself may consent to come down to live in union with you.

*
**

Do you give an absolute place of honour, in your life, to matter?
 Then you are a materialist.
 Do you give an absolute place of honour in your life, to Spirit?
 Then you are an ascetic.
 If you do not give them any exclusive honour,
 but their due honour in your life,
 you are neither a nude ascetic nor a God-denying materialist,
 but an all-embracing blissful solver
 of the Riddle of this world.

GIRDHARLAL

THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 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 VII

Union

Awareness of the Origin

How high they are pulled!

Now the land below can no longer be seen. The elevator continues its ascent and they enter a heavy mist, so thick they can barely see one another. It is as if they were passing through an endless cloud. Higher, still higher they climb until suddenly there is a jerk and the elevator stops. Val and Pom-pom are still immersed in the thick mist and therefore unable to make out what has happened and why they have stopped.

Shortly, however, they are overcome by a very light, gay and carefree feeling, and gradually become aware that the elevator is starting to swing to and fro, to and fro, ever so gently. A peculiar elevator indeed! Is it supposed to do this? they wonder. Val and Pom-pom are somewhat frightened and hope the mysterious cable sustaining it will last under this gentle swing.

To and fro they go, like a giant pendulum.

At last the movement ends, they stop swinging and it seems just the right balance has been reached. A soft breeze begins to blow making the children feel light and airy. It continues so until, little by little, almost all the mist is blown away and everything now becomes visible; only their feet remain covered.

What a lovely place they have been brought to! The land glows with the pink colour that comes at twilight after a clear day. A wide avenue opens before them with elegant mansions here and there. Beautiful statues placed at just the right distance from one another line the street, and willowy trees in pastel tones shade the walk. Val and Pom-pom are anxious to go down this beautiful lane so they try the elevator gate and there notice the symbol \simeq and the number 7. Val uses the key and they are thus free to explore this exquisite land.

Off they go hopping merrily along, looking at the statues, running up to the mansions on whose doors they find funny-looking plaques that read: UNIFIED

ABODE OF JULIET AND JOHN PACE OR UNIFIED RESIDENCE OF CLAUDE AND JENNIFER ..etc. Who are these people and where are they? No one seems to be around.

“Valie, let’s ring one of the door bells. This is such a nice land, I’m sure it will be all right.”

Val agrees and they choose a door and ring the bell.

No answer.

They run up to another and the same: no answer.

Finally, after trying many doors, they come to one more elegant and grander than the others. On it a plaque reads: ULTRA COMPLEMENTARY HAVEN OF FRANK AND FELICITY HARMONY. They push the button and a flourish of chimes sounds within. Rushing footsteps are heard and someone quickly opens the door.

A little lad appears in the doorway, apparently a page of the residence; he is obviously getting ready to leave the house. On seeing them he immediately notices the medals pinned to their chests and ecstatically exclaims:

“You are the ones who have renounced for a higher cause! Quickly, quickly, everyone is gathered in the park. They are all waiting for you.”

“Waiting for us?”

“Of course. It’s already September 23rd and the yearly ceremony in Libraland is about to begin. Please follow me.”

Off he goes down the avenue, making sure Val and Pom-pom follow closely behind. As they round a corner they see a beautiful park, done in the best of taste, with wrought iron benches placed here and there under graceful trees. Little alcoves dot the strange vegetation tinged a light blue.

A very large crowd is gathered which begins to cheer at the sight of Val and Pom-pom. A small group hurries toward them and summons a chariot. The children are placed inside and are borne along by a delicate white wingèd horse, hardly touching the invisible ground beneath them. The crowd cheers and waves as they approach the centre of the park; Val and Pom-pom seem to be the heroes of the occasion and are very popular in this land. They are brought to a platform on which several very attractive couples are waiting to greet them. The children are really overjoyed at such treatment and kindness, though they are not quite sure what they have done to merit all this. However, if everybody wants to be so nice they’ll accept and ask no questions.

The couples are presented to the children, of these Frank and Felicity Harmony seem to be the most important. They are lovely creatures and very similar, in fact, almost identical except that one is a man and the other a woman. They step forward and motion the crowd to be silent. Alternating their phrases they begin to speak, as two complementary beings:

“It is with great pleasure” says Frank

“that we are able to welcome” says Felicity

“Val” says Frank

"and Pom-pom" says Felicity
 "to our annual ceremony."
 "They are a fine example to all"
 "for their just and harmonious decision"
 "to dedicate themselves to the higher cause"
 "to strive for UNION"
 "hereafter and always"
 "UNION!" they conclude in unison.

The crowd applauds and applauds after a lengthy speech, during which the couple sometimes forget what they were supposed to say. Then invitations are extended for the Twilight Ball, to be held in the Ultra Complementary Haven of Frank and Felicity Harmony. Again the chariot approaches through the cheering public and the couple and children are carried off to the abode of Frank and Felicity, where Val and Pom-pom will reside.

In the house they find the most exquisite surroundings: such luxury and elegance! Everything possible is done to make them feel at home. Frank and Felicity want to show the children to their rooms but between them they cannot decide on the proper quarters. Val and Pom-pom are escorted to the upper floor, through a long corridor with doors on either side.

"Let's put them in the Pink Room," says Felicity. She opens a door and reveals a place in shambles, which Val and Pom-pom just manage to see, for she quickly closes it again as if she had seen nothing.

"How about the Green Room?" Frank suggests. He opens a door and immediately they hear yelling voices of a couple arguing about something in a most disagreeable manner. With most gracious form Mr. Harmony closes the door as if nothing had been heard.

A third door is opened and this time a pair of shoes is flung at them. They gently close the door as if nothing had been felt.

At long last proper quarters are found and the children prepare for the evening's entertainment. There is much excitement in the house and when everything is just right, one by one the couples begin to arrive. All the lovely people are so elegantly dressed: women in long, flowing gowns laden with jewels, men equally fashionable in exquisite attire. They seem to have made a special effort to look their best and therefore the crowd that gathers at the Harmony's home are the most beautiful couples to be found in all of Libraland. In fact an award is given to the most outstandingly attractive couple. Everybody seems to be so interested in how everybody else looks.

A lot of fuss is made over Val and Pom-pom by these sociable people, and as the party goes on and on, with everyone having a grand time, the special moment arrives:
"TAKE YOUR PLACES FOR THE DANCE OF THE SETTING SUN!"

The music starts and delicate strains of lutes, harpsichords, cymbals and flutes, together with lively percussion sounds, fills the air, and the couples begin the graceful and rhythmic movements of the dance. Val and Pom-pom are made to join in but

always fall out of rhythm and constantly lose step. The dancers ignore them and pretend they have performed perfectly.

On and on they all dance until the music becomes livelier and the couples begin twirling. Round and round with arms outstretched, the ladies' gowns form enormous circles that cover the whole ballroom floor. They work themselves up into an exhausted frenzy until gradually all drop out and only one dancer remains. She has won and is therefore to be awarded her weight in gold!

A huge pair of scales is ushered in, the lady is placed on one plate and the other is filled with gold until both are perfectly balanced. After this is accomplished she descends and one by one all the other couples take their places on the scales, and to the amazement of Val and Pom-pom, each one perfectly balances the other.

Frank and Felicity step forward. It is almost time for the celebration to come to an end and they thank their guests for participating so harmoniously in the annual entertainment.

"Next year's festivities will be quickly upon us," says Frank...

"But meanwhile let us remember the motto," says Felicity...

"STRIVE FOR UNION!" they chant together.

"...and let us fervently hope that all those"

"who have not found their partner yet"

"have the good fortune to encounter during the year"

"the proper complement to their nature"

"for our only enemy is *solitude*"

"and against him"

"WE MUST UNITE!"

The guests make sounds of approval and some are beginning to take their leave. No one pays attention to Val and Pom-pom now since the party is over and they need no further reason to celebrate. Felicity exclaims:

"Goodness, we have almost forgotten to place our little newcomers on the scales!"

The parting guests laugh and quickly return to escort Val and Pom-pom to the bigger-than-life size scales standing in the middle of the room. The children are quite excited for they had been anxious to get on them. Pom-pom is placed on one plate and Val on the other.

PLOOOONNNKKKK!...her plate crashes to the ground, for naturally she outweighs her little brother. The guests are quite shocked. Frank and Felicity are at first stunned, then horrified, then very embarrassed that such an inharmonious thing should occur in their house, their haven, before all these people....

Val, who is really a bright young lady, understands that things are not going to end so well, and she also has a strong feeling that it is time to leave for another land. She gets off the plate, runs to take Pom-pom off his and hand in hand they approach Frank and Felicity.

"Thank you for a lovely party. We've really enjoyed it, but now if you could just

tell us how to leave Libraland we would certainly appreciate it”....

She notices that Frank and Felicity are even more indignant.

“... it’s really been very nice, but we must be off, right now”...

“How terribly ungracious!” speaks Felicity finally.

“Utterly unbalanced!” speaks Frank.

And Val continues....“We appreciate all you’ve done for us but....Oh me, Pom-pom, what are we going to do?”

Frank, Felicity and the guests huddle together trying to decide what to do. After much mumbling and exclamations, they take the two and the whole party goes out the door. They parade down the road until they come to a very imposing building with great pillars and many, many steps leading up to an enormous entrance.

Inside they go through a great, long hall with a ceiling so high and supported by such huge pillars that Val and Pom-pom feel even smaller than they are. At the end a man sits in a very massive chair placed on a high platform; he is obviously a judge. Respectfully the party approaches, with Frank and Felicity in the lead, still holding Val and Pom-pom by the hand. The couple begins telling him of the situation which to them is very grave, very grave indeed.

“... and they outweighed one another,”

“... and they refuse to strive for union and dedicate themselves to the higher cause of Libraland” ...on and on they go, giving their complete version on the events.

The Judge, though he is somewhat frightening because he is so high above the rest of the crowd, has a kind twinkle in his eye and seems to be a very just person. He asks the children to explain their story. This they do and when they have finished the Judge ponders, —he can’t make up his mind as to the best procedure. What a strange Judge, the children think. Pom-pom jumps forward.

“We must leave now. You have to hurry up and decide.”

“Insolence!” the crowd shrieks.

“Insolence and contempt of court! Banish them! Away with them!”

The Judge is really perturbed. Now he HAS to act and do something that will not be very nice. The crowd insists...and so he pronounces sentence:

“You are to leave Libraland and will be banished to the Unknown.” He summons an assistant who ushers in scales even grander than those of the Ball and continues.... “But before leaving here, you will be balanced.”

The children are placed on the plates and Pom-pom shoots into the air. The Judge summons once more and another assistant brings a load of golden swords.

One by one Pom-pom is given a sword to hold until finally the proper weight is found and he and Val are perfectly balanced.

“With this sword in hand,” continues the Judge, “you will complement each other in spite of yourselves.”

The party is satisfied. Justice has been done and they all parade out of the building. At the top of the imposing stairs the white winged horse and chariot is once again

hailed. Val and Pom-pom are placed inside and bidden farewell by Felicity, Frank, the Judge and all the guests who cheer the attributes of Justice. And as the chariot takes off and soars in majestic flight through the sky, they all shout in unison:

“UNION, LITTLE ONES, STRIVE FOR UNION!”

Libra is an Air sign, of Cardinal Energy Quality, masculine and ruled by the feminine planet Venus. In the signs of the first half of the wheel, those masculine are ruled by masculine planets and feminine, by feminine planets. Now a reversal takes place and there is a greater interplay and exchange occurring, the meanings become more intricate, more subtle, the individual must make an effort, he must strive to awaken his consciousness and seek his divine origin, no longer remaining a dumb pawn in the compelling play of Nature. Thus Libra, the second Air sign indicates an equilibrium: that which was divided in Gemini for the purpose of the Play is here balanced, rendered equal. It is the sign of Union, or Yoga, the Cosmic Sunset and the beginning of the soul's emergence into Light. As yet the rays of the Sun are mellow, indirect and subdued, but they are cast onto Creation and illumine the inherent possibilities hidden until now.

Libra is the complement of Aries, the sign ruled by Mars that lies in its opposition. Always in the Zodiac signs in opposition present a sort of complement to one another, a lower and higher octave. Venus and Mars, representing the female and male elements, are here joined. This counterpart deals with human manifestation, on that level indicating a union of the sexes. Further on in the wheel there is the true and complete inner union, accomplished when the solar-lunar poles are crystallised in matter. It is interesting to note that only here in the wheel the possibility of sexual interchange comes into play, and this does not involve procreation; in the Zodiac birth is not indicated as the outcome of intercourse but is seen to be directly connected to the solar-lunar currents experienced by man through the mechanics of in-coming and out-going breath. In the act, rather, man is recalling his origin, the Unity from which he sprang, a diluted taste of Divine Love Play. He seeks this sublime complement, but being still in ignorance the search is projected without. Since the spiral at this point pushes up into Light, the factor of Love (symbolised by Venus) is the necessary breath that will carry humanity through the subsequent stages and bring it back to the Origin: Love is the saviour.

There is indecision in the sign, as can be noted in the story. The individual continually faces the possibility of remaining in the lower sphere or moving to a higher level. Still too much importance is given to form. Frank and Felicity refuse to face the problems of the lower nature when they are revealed, which—in effect—have not yet forced themselves into evidence but remain hidden behind closed doors.

As an Air sign, Libra refers to the mental plane. Thus there is a mental awakening, a vague realisation of the necessity to unify the elements, a thirst for

the Companion and the impossibility to remain in a "solitary" condition. But all this is only an intellectual awareness and does not touch the profundities of the being: the soul still lies dormant, but the final chant, "Union, strive for Union," remains with the children and accompanies them to the next land where they will face the problem of Life or Death.

Pom-pom, the masculine element, receives that which makes them as One, in spite of themselves: the Golden Sword,—the Power of Truth.

(To be continued)

PATRIZIA

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1972)

GOD AND LIFE

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

FROM ancient times dancing has been considered a celestial art. The purpose of dance has been to propitiate the gods. During meditation, an idea flashed into the mind of a girl teacher that *The Hour of God* by Sri Aurobindo, would prove to be a fine subject for a dance performance. The Mother liked the idea so much that She breathed vibrant life and grace into the function of December 1, 1964; by reading the great piece herself.

In the words of a teacher of our school, dance constitutes the training of body-coordination from the eyebrows to the toes. This demands constant practice.

A little detail is called for about how the above mentioned teacher's dancing began. Her first performance before the Mother was sometime in April 1953. Her first visit to the Ashram was in 1942 when she was only eight. She has been here since 1952. The very sight of dance refreshed her soul and made the cells of her body leap with joy. In dancing, she felt that her whole body vibrated with the movements. The Mother liked her dance and wanted her to give a performance that very year on the school anniversary. The Mother said that she herself would choose the subject: "I would like you to dance on Devotion and Aspiration. The first part of your dance will be your devotion to the Divine and the second part will express aspiration. And you will have to compose it yourself."

This took her breath away. How was it to be done effectively? She had no idea of dance composition or its technique. She had never composed a dance before and was only used to performing as she was taught by her teachers of the Kathak and Manipuri School.

She tried and tried but nothing came. In the meantime she was granted another interview. When she said everything, the Mother replied:

"Keep on trying and it will come."

"But, how long Mother? December is approaching; I have to be ready."

Then the Mother concentrated on her for a long time and observed,

"Why, devotion is not difficult for you" Pointing Her finger towards her heart She affirmed: "It is there."

We will tell the rest in the girl's own words:

"As for aspiration the Mother kept quiet for a while and then what She said and did still rings in my ears and comes vividly to my eyes. This I will never forget.

The Mother was dressed that day in white, She told me: ‘Do some uplifting movements, something that uplifts you.’ Then She postured quite a number of movements with Her own body. On parting She gave me a flower and again said in an assuring tone, ‘Go on trying. It will come’.

“And it did come. The dance was composed by me. I don’t know how! Her Grace and Guidance flowed through my limbs. While engrossed in executing the difficult subject I lost all sense of myself. I didn’t feel it was ‘I’ who was doing it. The Mother was pleased and said, ‘See, you have got it.’ That was one of the richest experiences of my life.”

Having explained all this the teacher added, “Looking back, I feel the Mother wanted to bring down something new through dance. Once the medium of worship by devotees, it has deteriorated and become a means of entertainment or romance (sword dance, lamp dance). The Mother wanted me to completely break the old traditions but I did not prove to be a fit vehicle. At the time I was too young to understand all this”.

Later the performance of subtle subjects like “The Spiritual Destiny of India” were put under the Mother’s own direction.

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It was perhaps the inherent love of beauty that prompted X to turn to art. X was among the four early comers mentioned before. First she had come as a baby of six months with her mother. Next time when she was ten. Till the age of 16 she knew nothing about dancing.

News came that Uday Shankar was coming to Madras. It seemed to her a call of her soul to see his dance. His art of dancing captured her heart. She felt so thrilled by the beauty of his harmonious movements that she passed the whole night lost in excitement. It put her feet on the destined path. On return, she expressed her desire to her father to learn dancing. He wrote a number of letters to different places. A response came from Kalakshetra run by Rukmini Devi, in Madras. X was called for an interview and was accepted. Thus started her career of dancing, playing the Veena, etc.

It was announced that Uday Shankar would give a summer course in dancing for two months. She applied and was admitted. But what could be learnt in two months? She made up her mind to undertake the full course of five years. Uday Shankar himself gave training for two hours a day. After a stay of two years in Almora, X returned to the Ashram in 1942. At the time there was no scope for her art within the precincts of the Ashram, so she left the practice and forgot all about dancing.

Once the Mother asked her to give a dance performance for the anniversary of the Ashram School and She herself chose the subject. There were three words —

one of them was Peace. This proved very difficult for her.¹ How could she give a demonstration of Peace in action? All she had learnt so far was to give expression to human feelings and human emotions. Dancing outside is done for the pleasure of life, at best for religious beliefs. All stress was on the surface movements. "By nature," said she, "I was very impatient and again and again expressed my inability to give the wanted performance, it was a very hard task but the Mother put up with all my impatience and told me very softly, very sweetly: 'Try, try again', flooding my being with the sweetness of her smile. Her gentle words and comforting arms took away all sense of labour."

The corner portion of a big building is now allotted for dance and music. It is called "The Dancing Hall". The number of participants has now reached one hundred. In X's own words, "I never took the position of a teacher. I gave my students full freedom so that they might feel at ease and be as merry as they liked." She herself loved to laugh and made them laugh, jump at her, cling to her arms; thus she made the place beautiful by her loveliness.

Sri Aurobindo has said, "The outer singer must disappear, then only the inner singer will appear."²

X recalls with her eyes touched with tears of gratitude that in the strenuous part of goddess Durga, Shiva Parvati etc. she forgot that she was dancing. Those were auspicious moments which made her realise dancing was part and parcel of her sadhana.

Another girl spoke in a similar vein, "The moment I stood on the stage I felt a pouring of the Force and it continued till the performance ended. At the time I could mark the shifting horizons of my consciousness."

The first drama in the Ashram was enacted under X's supervision at Dortoir on January 15, 1945. It was called "Gopal Bhaya".

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ "To be a real artist one has to work hard, years together."

On Yoga, Tome I, p. 681.

² In three days' practice X's feet were full of blisters. "It was unavoidable," she told me "The Mother said, 'You must not stop practice. After a time the skin of the sole will become hard.'"

³ *On Yoga*, Tome I, p. 657.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

TANTRA ASANA By *Ajit Mookerjee* — 161 pages; 97 plates Fine Art paper printing—Price \$40 in USA. Published by Ravi Kumar, Basilius Press, Ch4002 Basel, Switzerland 1971.

If the standard of quality is showmanship in production, then *Tantra Asana* could be rated as a superbly illustrated book with its fine art printing and attractive color jacket. The book contains 63 colored plates—reproduction, mostly from Rajasthan and others from Kangra, Basholi, Nepal, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and 34 black & white temple stone carvings from Khajuraho, Konarak, and some South Indian temples.

As for the text, out of 161 pages it covers hardly 16 pages in extra-large type print and 6 pages of Select Bibliography. I fail to comprehend why a book of Eastern Esoteric topic could not be printed and published from India.

On going through the book carefully, one finds that though it appears rich externally, it is empty and poor in its *Sattva* content. *Rajas & Tamas* have imbalanced the *Sattva*, the basic truth of Sri Vidya in Tantra Shastra, which is the topic of the book, and the author has not emphasised this enough to present the background of Tantra Yoga. The emphasis is on sex—in fact the whole book has been conceived from a purely sex angle highlighting sex play and eroticism as part of Tantra Ritual. The title itself is suggestive and is a catching title for the Western world now open to Eastern philosophy, occult and secret religious practices. A lay reader would conclude that Tantra is Sex after reading the description of the ritual involving mainly sex as described by the author without giving the proper background and true interpretation of sex in Tantra. The following extract from the Preface of the *Tantra-Raja Tantra* (Sir John Woodroffe) is relevant to the above statement:

“Tantra is wrongly stigmatised as a libidinous phallic necromancy. This is due to instances of the excesses of some misguided Vamamargins. The real Tantrika is neither a cynic nor a cyrenaic hedonist. He is rather an eudaemonist than a slave to passions. The much-ridiculed five M’s are only esoteric symbologies.... No wine or woman is needed to attain the Divya Tantra Siddhi. On the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to regard woman as the Divine Mother and to conquer lower vital emotions. Lust is the greatest enemy of Yoga.” (Shuddhanda Bharati).

The book *Tantra Asana* opens with a striking illustration of a male organ with a dedication as TO ME AND THEE. There is not one illustration of Lalita Tripurasundari in the whole book. There is no discussion on the origin of the Shakta

Marga. The treatment of the subject is very superficial and sketchy. If one goes through the Select Bibliography it will reveal the level of material handled, except, of course, a few original references to Sri Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan, Kane and others. You find a reference to the SEX & ARTS EXPLOSIVE SCENE from *Newsweek* and to the HIPPIE SEX FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN SEXOLOGY, but you do not find a single reference to works of giants like Bhaskararaya, (commentaries on *Lahita Sahasranama* and many original works on Tantra such as *Setubandha*, *Vidyaranya-Mumsvara*, *Bhatta-Narayana*, and others.

The presentation of the text is ill-conceived and abrupt; it contributes negatively to the already existing impression on the subject in the Western world. Instead of feeding the Western mind with correct interpretation of our scriptures we ourselves are exploiting them by presenting such glamorous titles. It will not be out of the way to mention here that learned British authors like Arthur Avalon devoted a lifetime of research to Tantra Shastra and presented translations from Sanskrit, revealing to the Western world for the first time this ancient Hindu philosophy and yoga in a most balanced and honest way. So, titles like Tantra Asana strike a very disharmonious note and misinterpret this Sacred Yoga.

Actually I would say that the title of the book should have been "Revised Edition of *Kama Sutra*", not "*Tantra*". Tantra in its own land has suffered in the past from malpractice of the ritual as mentioned earlier, and the author has presented the same angle with greater emphasis. It is a pity that we ourselves degrade our own sacred values. No wonder authors like Ouspensky wrote of Kundalini Yoga as "nothing but imagination without any base and playing with sex...." We are responsible for creating this impression of Kundalini and Tantra Marga. What more proof do we need of our own blindness?

Tantra and Yoga are already being brought down to a commercial level by many, though there are some serious-minded persons keeping up the sacredness of these ancient Shastras. These are like two Peaks on the Himalayas, the abode of Shiva—Kanchanjunga and Dhavalgiri; no one can bring down these Peaks, but we can ourselves tumble down these peaks in the dark valleys of *Tamas*, and *Tantra Asana* is one such example.

AMRIT G. IMAMDAR

Students' Section

EYE EDUCATION

RELAX AND SEE

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1972)

IF there is pain or discomfort, strain or headache or double vision in reading, it is an indication that the person tries to concentrate the sight on the black part and makes an effort to see consciously or unconsciously. Any sort of complaint in reading indicates a wrong way of reading. All these troubles can fade away by the methods of Relax and See.

Here is a case of a European lady who was on the verge of giving up reading. At the age of forty-three she had difficulty in reading so much so that even with a 200 watt bulb she found it difficult to read. The letters got messed up and she could not read for more than half an hour at a time. To put it in her own words: "After five days of exercises at the School for Perfect Eyesight while looking at the white lines in between the photographic type reduction, I suddenly realised that the letters were very clear and that I was able to read the whole page of the smallest print which was impossible before. From then onward I never got the experience of messed letters again; not even after three hours of reading and more at one time. There is no strain and tension in my head any more and I am practically relieved of all complaints."

Another remarkable cure is that of an American girl. This American scholar wearing contact lenses of—7.0 diopters undertook the treatment and within three days, having learnt the art of seeing, gained almost normal vision without the lenses. As she puts it: "I can now read almost the whole chart without the contact lenses. I can also read a book at one foot distance, which was not possible before."

(To be continued)

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