

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JANUARY 1975

Price : Rs. 1-75

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Posting Date for MOTHER INDIA :

26th to 28th of the preceding month.

Annual Subscription : Inland — Rs. 18. Overseas — £ 2, \$ 5.

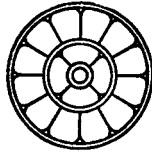
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Editor's Phone: 782

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

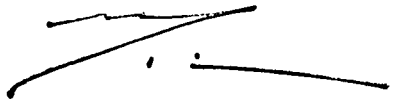


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXVII

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
A PRAYER AND MEDITATION OF THE MOTHER ON THE NEW YEAR	... 5
OUR GOAL FOR EVERY NEW YEAR: TWO LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO	... 6
SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO	... 7
THE SUPRAMENTAL CREATION AND THE PRESENT HUMANITY: A VISION FROM SRI AUROBINDO TO THE MOTHER ON NOVEMBER 24, 1965	... 8
PHYSICAL PAIN — THE TURN OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS — THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE'S TRUTH: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MOTHER ON NOVEMBER 25, 1962	... 12
	<i>Amal Kiran</i>
A DREAM-VISION	... 13
	<i>Huta</i>
LONGINGS FOR THE MOTHER	... 14
	<i>Indra Sen</i>
THE ANSWER TO THE CALL (Poem)	... 19
	<i>Sharon</i>
CORRECTION OF AUROVILLE STATISTICS	... 20
	<i>from Satadal</i>
THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE: A SEARCH APROPOS OF R.C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN	... 21
	<i>K. D. Sethna</i>
REBIRTH	... 31
	<i>Georgette Coty</i>
OIL CANVASES BY RUTTY PATEL	... 32
	<i>Rami Baldev Mehra</i>

CONTENTS

EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY	<i>Charles Maloney</i>	...	33
TRANSPORT FOR A JOURNEY (Poem)	<i>Seyril</i>	...	38
SEMINAR ON NATIONAL CONFERENCE		...	39
LOTUS-FLAME OR SURYAMAN (Poem)	<i>Romen</i>	...	40
THE SECRET SOURCE OF THE GANGES: A QUEST IN A STRANGE LAND (Transcreated by Gurudas Banerjee from the original Bengali)	<i>Promode K. Chatterjee</i>	...	42
OPERATION BRIDE (A Short Story)	<i>Manoj Das</i>	...	45
SEVEN LIVES: A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL	<i>Bina Bragg</i>	...	48
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE: GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO: LETTERS TO A YOUNG DISCIPLE — by Nagin Doshi	<i>Reviewed by Georgette Coty</i>	...	54
DIVYA-JIVAN: HINDI TRANSLATION OF SRI AUROBINDO'S <i>The Life Divine</i> , Vol. II, Part 2 by K. D. Acharya	<i>Reviewed by Dr. R. C. Trivedi</i>	...	56
“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”: UNIVERSAL EDUCATION	<i>Narayan Prasad</i>	...	58

STUDENT'S SECTION

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION, THIRTIETH SEMINAR, 21ST APRIL 1974: “IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL” — SPEECH BY MAURICE SHUKLA	<i>Compiled by Kishor Gandhi</i>	...	61
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Editor: K. D. SETHNA

Managing Editor: K. R. PODDAR

Published by: P. COUNOUMA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM TRUST, PONDICHERRY-605002

Printed by: AMIYO RANJAN GANGULI

at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-605002

PRINTED IN INDIA

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No. R. N. 8667/63

A PRAYER AND MEDITATION OF THE MOTHER ON THE NEW YEAR

To Thee, Supreme Dispenser of all boons, to Thee who justifiest life by making it pure, beautiful and good, to Thee, Master of our destinies and goal of our aspirations, was consecrated the first minute of this new year.

May it be wholly glorified by this consecration; may those who hope to attain Thee seek Thee in the right way; may those who seek Thee find Thee, and may those who suffer without knowing where lies the remedy feel Thy life piercing little by little the hard crust of their obscure consciousness.

I bow down with a deep devotion and limitless gratitude before Thy beneficent splendour; in the name of the earth, I thank Thee for manifesting Thyself; in her name I implore Thee that Thou mayst manifest ever more, in an uninterrupted increase of Light and Love.

Be the Sovereign Master of our thoughts, our feelings and our acts.

Thou art the reality of our being, the sole Reality.

Outside Thee all is falsehood and illusion, all is mournful obscurity.

In Thee is life and joy.

In Thee is the sovereign Peace.

January 1, 1914.

OUR GOAL FOR EVERY NEW YEAR

TWO LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

I

THE fundamental realisations of this Yoga are:

1. The psychic change so that a complete devotion can be the main motive of the heart and the ruler of thought, life and action in constant union with the Mother and in her Presence.
2. The descent of the Peace, Power, Light etc. of the higher consciousness through the head and heart into the whole being, occupying the very cells of the body.
3. The perception of the One and the Divine infinitely everywhere, the Mother everywhere and living in that infinite consciousness.

2

You know the three things on which the realisation has to be based:

1. on a rising to a station above the mind and on the opening out of the cosmic consciousness;
2. on the psychic opening; and
3. on the descent of the higher consciousness with its peace, light, force, knowledge, Ananda etc. into all the planes of the being down to the most physical.

All this has to be done by the working of the Mother's force aided by your aspiration, devotion and surrender.

That is the Path. The rest is a matter of the working out of these things for which you have to have faith in the Mother's working.

SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

I

It is very evident from his letter that in his mind he is not at all ready. If he has this wandering and experimental spirit, let him satisfy it first in the other places he thinks of visiting or the other experiment he wants to make. Here only those should come who feel a definite call and are sure that here lies their spiritual destiny and nowhere else.

2

There is no “my concern” and “his concern”. Everything is the Divine’s “concern” — since all belongs to the Divine.

3

I would like to add two questions.

1. Why do people in the Ashram (budding supermen) get furious against anything merely because it is new and unfamiliar? That is common and natural in animals; but human beings ought to have more open minds.

2. Why are they so ready to pass positive judgments on things about which they have insufficient knowledge? It would be better if they could accustom themselves to wait and learn.

THE SUPRAMENTAL CREATION AND THE PRESENT HUMANITY

A VISION FROM SRI AUROBINDO TO THE MOTHER ON NOVEMBER 24, 1965

DURING, oh! during more than an hour Sri Aurobindo had me live through the concrete and living vision of the relationship between the new or supramental creation and the different levels of humanity. It was marvellously clear, concrete, living.... There was all the humanity which is no longer altogether animal, which had benefited from mental development, creating a certain harmony in its life — a vital, artistic, literary harmony in which the great majority live contented with life. They have caught a sort of harmony living in the kind of life that exists in a cultured milieu; that is, a cultivated life with refinements of taste, of habits and in all this life there is a certain beauty in which they find themselves at ease and, unless something catastrophic happens, they are happy and content, satisfied with life. These people can be attracted (because they have taste, they are developed intellectually), they can be attracted by new forces, new things, a future life: for example, they can mentally, intellectually, become disciples of Sri Aurobindo. But they don't feel the least need to change materially and to try to compel them would first of all be unfair and premature and would simply create a big disorder, troubling their life in vain.

It was very clear.

Then, there were some — some rare individuals — who were ready to make the necessary effort to prepare for the transformation and to draw upon the new forces, to attempt to adapt Matter, to look for means of expression, etc. Those are ready for the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. They are very few. There are even those who have a spirit of sacrifice and are ready to take on a tough, painful life if that would lead to or help this future transformation. But one should not, should not in any way, try to influence the others (the unready), and make them share his own endeavour. It would be completely unfair — not only unfair, but extremely maladroit because that would change the universal rhythm and movement or, at the least, the terrestrial movement and, instead of helping, it would produce conflicts and wind up in a chaos.

It was so living, so real, that my whole attitude (how to put it? — a passive attitude which is not the effect of an active will), the whole position taken in the work changed. And this has brought a peace — a peace and a tranquillity and a confidence that are decisive — a decisive change. Even, that which, in the preceding position, seemed to be intransigence, maladaptation, unconsciousness, all sorts of deplorable things, all of it disappeared. It was like the vision of a great, universal Rhythm where each thing takes its place — and all is well.

The effort of transformation reduced to a small number becomes a far more pre-

cious and a much more powerful thing for the realization. It was as if a choice had been made for those who will be the pioneers of the new creation. All these ideas of having to “spread”, to “prepare” or to knead Matter — just infantile, human agitation.

The vision was of such a majestic beauty, calm and smiling, oh! ... It was full, truly full of divine Amour. Not a Love which “pardons” — it is not a matter of that at all, at all! — but each thing in its place and realising its inner rhythm as perfectly as it can.

It was a very lovely gift.

Now, all these things, one already knows them intellectually somewhere as an idea, like that, — one knows all this, but it's not worth a thing. Whereas there (in the vision) it was as if one were touching these things, seeing them, touching them, in their higher ordinance — in daily practice, one lives according to another thing, a truer comprehension.

This came after a vision of plants and the spontaneous beauty of plant life (which is a marvellous thing), then came the animal with such a harmonious life (when men don't intervene) and everything was right at its place. Then came the true humanity as humanity, that is to say, the maximum of what a mental poise can produce of beauty, of harmony, of charm, of the elegance of life and the taste for living — the taste for living in beauty — naturally suppressing all that is ugly, low and vulgar. It was a fine humanity, a humanity at its maximum, and pretty. It was perfectly satisfied with its human level because it lived harmoniously. It is also perhaps like a promise of what almost the whole of humanity will become under the influence of the new creation. It seemed to me that it was what the supramental consciousness could make of humanity ... Only, it was very far ahead, one cannot expect that it will be produced straight away, it is very far-off.

This is clearly, even now, a period of transition which can go on for a rather long time and is quite painful, only the sometimes painful (often painful) effort is compensated for by a clear vision of the goal to be attained, of the goal which *will* be attained, an assurance of it, a certainty. It will be something which would have the power to eliminate all the errors, the deformations and the uglinesses of the mental life and make for a humanity, happy, and very satisfied with being human, not feeling the slightest need of being anything other than human, but humanly beautiful and harmonious.

It was really charming and was as though I was living within it. Contradictions had disappeared. It was almost like the ideal conceived by the supramental consciousness of what a perfected humanity could reach. It was very fine.

This brings a great repose. Tension, friction, all that disappears, and impatience ... all that completely disappeared.

DISCIPLE: *That is to say that you will now concentrate the work instead of diffusing it all over?*

No. Materially it can be diffused because the individuals are not necessarily gathered together. But they are not numerous.

What has disappeared is the idea of a pressing need to “prepare” humanity for a new creation, that impatience has disappeared.

DISCIPLE: *It has first to be realised in some.*

That’s it.

I saw this in such a concrete way. Apart from those who are apt to prepare the transformation and the supramental realisation, whose number is necessarily very reduced, a superior humanity must be developed amid the mass of ordinary humanity. In addition to those who work for transformation and are ready for it, a superior intermediary humanity is needed, which has found in itself or in life this harmony with Life — this *human* harmony — and has a feeling of devotion, consecration and adoration for “something” which seems so superior to it, that it does not even try to realise it, yet seeks for its influence, its protection, and feels the need of living under this influence and of having the joy of being under this protection. It was so clear ... there was none of this anxiety and these torments of wanting something that escapes you because — because it is not yet your destiny to have it and the sum of transformation necessary is premature for your existence, so disorder and suffering is created.

For example, one of the very concrete things that well illustrates the problem: humanity has the sex impulse in an altogether natural, spontaneous and, I would say legitimate fashion. This impulse will naturally and spontaneously disappear with animality (like a lot of other things that will disappear like, for instance, the need to eat, and perhaps also the need to sleep in the fashion in which we now sleep). But it is certainly sexual activity which has remained as a source of ... beatitude is a big word ... but joy or delight in a superior humanity, which will no longer have any *raison d’être* in the functions of nature when the need for creating in this manner no longer exists. Consequently, the capacity to enter into relation with the joy of life will mount an echelon and will orient itself differently. But the negation of sex which the old spiritual aspirants had tried on principle is an absurdity because it should only obtain with those who have gone beyond this stage and who no longer have any animality in them. And it must drop naturally without effort, without a struggle — like that. It is ridiculous to make it an object of conflict, of struggle. It is only when the consciousness ceases to be human that this falls away as a matter of course. There — there is a transition which can be a little difficult because the beings in transition are always in an unstable equilibrium, yet they have within them a species of flame, and of need, which keeps it (sex-negation) from being painful, it isn’t a painful effort but something that can be done with a smile. However, to want to impose this on those who are not yet ready for this transition is absurd.

This is just common sense. They are human, let them not pretend to be otherwise. It is only when, spontaneously, the sex impulse becomes impossible to you,

when you feel that it is something dolorous and a violation of your profound need, then it becomes easy — at that moment you cut the external ties and it's finished.

It is one of the most conclusive examples.

The same thing goes for food. It will be the same. When the animality falls, the absolute need for food will fall. And there is probably a transition where one will take a nourishment that is less and less material. For example, when one inhales the scent of flowers, it is nourishing. I've seen this, one is fed in a more subtle way. Only, the body is not ready — it is not ready and it dwindles; that is, it eats itself which proves that the time has not come and that it is only an experiment. It is an experiment which teaches you that it will not be a harsh refusal to enter into contact with corresponding Matter and an ascetic isolation (one cannot isolate oneself, it is impossible), but rather a communion on a higher or a deeper plane.

(Following a pause)

Those who have attained to higher regions of intelligence, but who have not a mastery over their mental faculties, feel a candid need for having everyone else think as they do and understand as they understand and when they come to perceive that others cannot, that others do not comprehend, their first reflex is to be terribly annoyed, saying: "What an idiot!" But it is not at all stupidity — simply they are different, they are in another domain. One doesn't say to an animal: "You are an idiot," one says, "You are an animal"; well, here one says, "He's a man". He is a man. Only, there are those who are no longer men but who are not yet godlike, and these are in a very awkward position....

Oh, but this vision was so soothing, so sweet, so marvellous — each thing expressing its own species, quite naturally.

It is obvious that with the amplitude and the totality of the vision comes something which is a compassion that understands — not that pity of the superior for the inferior — the true, divine Compassion which is a total comprehension that each one is what he has to be.

PHYSICAL PAIN — THE TURN OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS — THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE'S TRUTH

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MOTHER ON NOVEMBER 25, 1962

SEHRA: The doctors say that when Amal's kidney stone will come out, there will be a great deal of pain.

MOTHER: The doctors always say things like that. You then make a formation of fear and keep expecting the pain. And the pain comes even when it needn't.

AMAL: I recently read the review of a book on heart-trouble. The reviewer says that unless one has the courage of a lion, the hide of a rhinoceros and the intelligence of a moron, this book will make one take as heart-trouble the slightest indigestion or touch of flatulence or twitch in the chest-muscles!

MOTHER: Yes. And even in the case of a real heart-attack, if one keeps calm and takes no notice of it and is unperturbed, the attack can pass off without any bad effect.

As for your stone, we have decided — haven't we? — that there shall be no pain in its passing out. You wrote to me asking for such a result.

About physical pain, I can tell you one thing. If the consciousness is turned upward, the pain vanishes. If it is turned downward, it is felt and even increases. When one experiments with the upward and the downward turnings, one sees that although the pain may not be there at all or on the contrary is very great, the body in both cases is in exactly the same condition. It is the turn of the consciousness that makes all the difference.

I say "turned upward" because to turn towards the Divine is the best thing, but what can be said in general is that if the consciousness is turned away from the pain to one's work or anything that interests one, there is the cessation of the pain.

And not only the pain but whatever damage there may be in the organ is set right much more easily when the consciousness is taken away from the trouble. Also, I may say that pain is not always indicative of great damage in the organ. The two are not balanced. The one can be without the other.

AMAL: What you have written out for me in your birthday present gives me hope again for my spiritual future. I was nearly losing hope.

MOTHER: You have a strong will that has carried you through a lot of things. Keep that will going.

AMAL: I can't say I am a man of strong will, but the will in me can at times be made to act strongly — as it has been on many occasions in the past.

MOTHER: Yes, you must set this will, which is capable of strength, against all troubles physical and spiritual.

People who are intelligent find always a difficulty in going through troubles. Those who are not particularly intelligent have an easier time.

AMAL: You are always having a dig at me like that! Well, I'll try to put to work the will which you refer to.

Now I want to ask you a general question. Is it you who have inspired the Chinese cease-fire?

MOTHER (*crossing her lips with the index-fingers of her hands*): Better not to pronounce anything. People see only a little way. The Divine sees much further. And there is a Truth which has to find its place on earth and create its own order. If you are quiet and allow it to come as it wants, things can be smooth. If there is resistance, there will be an amount of breaking. You may not know what exactly the Truth is like, but if you keep constantly the will that this Truth should be established, you will work for its arrival. If you start thinking one way or the other, you may not work in harmony with it. But if you preserve a calm consciousness and concentrate only on the victory of the Truth, you will help the Divine's Will to manifest. And this is what you must do always instead of deciding for yourself. You have yourself a will which can be very strong: use it for the swift establishment of the Divine's Truth.

AMAL KIRAN

A DREAM-VISION

ON 16th October 1974 early in the morning I had a dream-vision. I saw Durga's lion — a beautiful, majestic, golden-skinned creature. In front of him was a strange-looking being. It was felt to be *Falsehood*. The lion leaped upon it, tearing its face with his claws and then ripping the whole body. He pulled out, one after another, all the hidden parts and ate them up. What remained was only the hollow skin of the body.

But to my utter amazement this skin started to move, hopping forward in order to create an impression of life and have an effect in the world.

HUTA

A Comment

It is self-explanatory. The hostile force is destroyed, but its shadow remains for some time.

NOLINI

LONGINGS FOR THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of December 1974)

Mother, we read again Your 'Notes on the Way'

3

YOUR 'Notes on the Way', as they proceed, show us clearly an alternation of two states. One is of the 'material consciousness' open and full of the Higher Consciousness. Then all is bliss, and immortality is a vivid reality. And the other is of the material consciousness closed within itself. Then all is doubt, difficulty, defeatism, suffering and dissolution.

You have said:

"This morning (August 21, 1965), for example, several times, for some time (I do not know how long, but not very short, a quarter of an hour, half an hour, I do not know), the cells of the body, that is to say, the form of the body, had the experience that to remain together or to dissolve depended on a certain attitude — an attitude or a will; something of both will and attitude. And with the perception (sometimes double, at the same time, one being rather a memory and the other a thing lived) of what makes you move, act, know; the old way as a memory and the new in which evidently there is no reason for dissolving unless one chooses it — that has no meaning, it is a meaningless thing: why to dissolve? ..."¹

"But this change of initiating power, if one might say, this transfer of power, that had upon me the effect of an unique experience, of something that had never taken place before. Unhappily that did not last long. But the expression has left a kind of certitude in the body — it is less uncertain of the future. It came to it, as if to tell it: it will be like that.

"If that remains, it is evident immortality."²

This experience of the transfer of power, of a new attitude and will in the cells was obviously a marvellous thing. It was an experience of eternity and immortality for the cells, which made dissolution and death an unreality, no necessity of existence, or just a matter of choice. The experience showed that the transformed consciousness of the cells "will be like this". But it was an initial experience clearly showing that immortality was to the body a practical proposition. It was a wonderful promise and an assurance, which must naturally have its sequel of a realisation, final and settled whenever that might come about.

In the experience of the 21st August 1965, the alternation is marked by a transfer of initiating power to the cells, but the alternation between two states of the new consciousness of the cells and the old one continues in the instalments of the 'Notes on the Way' that follow.

Here is a statement, Mother, where you tell us that suffering is the method of

pulling Matter out of its inertia. You say on September 28, 1966:

“For a long time, quite recently, that is to say, for days together, there was a very acute, very intense, very clear perception that the action of the Force translated itself externally by what we call suffering, because that is the only kind of vibration which can pull Matter out of its inertia.”³

“But then, all on a sudden when there comes this true Compassion of the Divine Love and when one sees all these things that appear so horrible, so abnormal, so absurd, this great pain which is upon all beings and even upon all things...then there takes birth in this physical being the aspiration to soothe, to cure, to remove the thing.”⁴

Obviously, the transformation of the body, constituted of Tamas as it is, must entail a passage through great suffering. Thus alone it could come out of its Tamas and discover as cure the Divine Love and with it its eternity and immortality. And, Mother, what a suffering you have had in recent years! And all because you undertook transformation of the physical and this in the interest of an integral transformation of life, of raising general human living to the high supramental level.

You have also in your ‘Notes’ revealed the details and intricacies of the working of transformation. In the April issue of 1967, you have explained three approaches to the problem of transformation. And in the next issue, you state the problem as a whole in these words:

“The movements of the body almost in its totality are habitual movements. Behind, there is the consciousness of the physical mind (what I call cellular mind) which is itself constantly conscious of the divine Presence and is keen on accepting nothing but That; so a whole work is going on for changing, shifting the origin of the movements. I mean to say that instead of just being automatically the habit, it should be automatically the divine Presence and Consciousness that causes the movement.”⁵

And here is a statement of great joy, ‘a *hosanna* of all the cells’. You say:

“When the Contact all on a sudden becomes conscious and the sense of Identity comes, as I say for a few seconds, but when it comes ... it is a *hosanna* of all the cells, that say: Oh yes, yes, it is true! so it is true ...”

“That comes perhaps a hundred times in a day, but it does not stay.”⁶

Mother, how much we wish such a Contact could stay, for the completion of your and Sri Aurobindo’s great work and for a new destiny for all mankind. But that abiding contact is bound to be realised sooner rather than later through the large and the wide action of both of you in your present status of existence.

Mother, you have emphasised the enormity of the work of physical transformation again and again in your ‘Notes’ and we do visualise that to rid this unconscious body of its habitudes and to make it a supple conscious instrument of the Divine must be truly a tremendous job. The myriad activities of the numerous organs are all mech-

anical, unconscious movements ingrained in the body's nature. To make all this a conscious divine inspired behaviour and action is truly an enormous task.

Even in 1969, in the February issue of the *Bulletin*, you say:

"The feeling of being on the point of touching something and then ... it escapes. Something is missing.

"Still a long long long way to go."⁷

You have, Mother, stated again the problem, the task in hand. You have said: "The problem seems to have been to create a physical capable of bearing the Power that wants to manifest itself."⁸

5

In April, 1972, Mother, you talk of things getting 'terrible, terrible' and of 'a frightful Pressure' and of 'perpetual danger' and it all shakes us up. You say:

"It is becoming terrible, terrible. It is like a Pressure, a frightful Pressure — to bring about the desired progress. I feel it in myself for the body. But my body is not afraid, it says (*Mother opens her hands*): Very well, if I am to end, it is the end. Every minute it is like that: the true thing (*Mother brings down her fist*) or the end."⁹

And further:

"The body knows that this is the way for the supramental body to be formed: it must be *wholly* under the influence of the Divine — no compromise, no approximation, no 'it will come', not so: it is like this (*Mother brings down her fist*), a formidable Will."¹⁰

"But it is that, it is a kind of ... no half-measure, no compromise, no approximation, no ... not that. It is this (*Mother brings down her fist*).

"And it is so for the body, at every minute there is an imperative: it is life or it is death. It is not the approximation which has lasted indefinitely. For centuries it was neither altogether bad, nor altogether good — it is no longer so.

"But ... it is the only way for things to go fast."¹¹

And then comes the mention of perpetual danger:

"It is as though all the while you had the feeling that you were hovering between life and death, and the moment you take the right attitude — when the part concerned takes the right attitude — it goes all right."¹²

"It is as though by a kind of compulsion the body was being taught eternity."¹³

The note of danger is further emphasised in many issues that follow. You say:

"... there are a thousand experiences of the physical body which say: 'Ooh! this beatific state is an impossibility' — it is this stupidity which delays everything. It is as though it were the cells — the cells of the body that are accustomed to fight and suffer and unable to accept that things could be like that (*same gesture of self-giving, hands opened out*). But when it is like that ... it is wonderful."¹⁴

Again: "My body is beginning — just beginning to know that the Divine side means a life ... (*Mother stretches out her arms into an immensity*) a life progressive and luminous: but the accumulation of past experiences say: 'Oh! it is not possible!'

There you are, and so it is this idiotic 'not possible' which delays and spoils things.

"This is based upon the fact that as soon as the body gives up the true attitude, it becomes painful, everything hurts, everything is suffering — the impression is there as of death and dissolution everywhere."¹⁵

Further again:

"Things have taken an extreme form, so there is as it were an uplift of the atmosphere towards a splendour ... almost inconceivable and at the same time the feeling that at any moment one may ... one may die — not 'die' but the body may be dissolved"¹⁶

At the time these statements appeared in the 'Notes', we were naturally inclined to ignore the dangers and cherished the happier experiences. But now we realise that the dangers were equally serious. However, we feel that your passing is an incident connected with the progress of the work and, as worthy disciples, see your going in its spiritual bearings and learn to cultivate and strengthen spiritual connections and enjoy the true abiding relations.

6

You have given us, Mother, a most heartening and illuminating insight regarding Sri Aurobindo's passing too in your 'Notes'.

You have said:

"He (Sri Aurobindo) himself — possesses more action, more power for action now than when in his body. Besides, it is for that that he left, because it was necessary to act in that way."¹⁷

And you have also left us a command, a direction regarding our works in the future. You have said:

"For centuries and centuries humanity has waited for this time. It is come. But it is difficult.

"I don't simply tell you we are here upon earth to rest and enjoy ourselves, now is not the time for that. We are here ... to prepare the way for the new creation.

"The body has some difficulty, so I can't be active, alas. It is not because I am old, I am not old. I am not old, I am younger than most of you. If I am here inactive, it is because the body has given itself definitely to prepare the transformation. But the consciousness is clear and we are here to work — rest and enjoyment will come afterwards. Let us do our work here.

"So I have called you to tell you that. Take what you can, do what you can, my help will be with you. All sincere effort will be helped to the maximum."¹⁸

"You are here at this moment, that is to say, upon earth because you chose it at one time — you do not remember it any more but I know it — that is why you are here. Well, you must rise to the height of the task, you must strive, you must conquer all weaknesses and limitations: above all you must tell your ego: your hour is gone. We want a race that has no ego, that has in the place of the ego the Divine Con-

sciousness."¹⁹

This is, Mother, an inspiring message for us, clear and full as to what is to be done and what you expect of us. Mother, we are grateful for this direction. We are determined to follow it and do your will.

Mother, if Sri Aurobindo's power of action is now greater and his passing was an incident leading to such larger action, is your own passing not of a similar character and would your action too be not more powerful now? It seems to be already evident that it is so.

Mother, grant that we be thoroughly faithful to you and to Sri Aurobindo and enjoy more and more the pleasure of both of you.

(Concluded)

INDRA SEN

NOTES

¹ *Bulletin*, November 1965, pp. 83-85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85

³ *Ibid.*, November 1966, p. 75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁵ *Ibid.*, August 1967, p. 63.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁷ *Ibid.*, February 1969, p. 102.

⁸ *Ibid.*, November 1971, p. 99.

⁹ *Ibid.*, April 1972, p. 73.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, November 1972, p. 83.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, February 1973, p. 93.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, August 1972, p. 82.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

THE ANSWER TO THE CALL

To vacillate is to linger in a longer voyage,
For deep within our depths rises the answer to the call.

If thou carest, reject the moon's beams
Shimmering on thy will,
Peril lies beneath the quicksand surrounding the castle of Ignorance
And the experiences of its marshes
So dark without the light within.
Treading over dust and stones
Chokes by the still birth
The path which shines within.
We listen to silence.
We bloom and die to bloom again.
The sweet chord catches us
And soothes our*unseen wounds.
Aum,
Transform this being, unveil this seeing.

Surrender not to nature's idle flux of seeming.
If you will, leave nature below, freed from its
Constant grasp on your soul.
Complex,
Let her not wander from house to house.
She stands as a doorway of decision.
Remind her that she will not be lost,
Gently infuse her mind's movements
With that of perfection.
Seek her heart with unmixed love and bliss.
Consecrate will to its arduous climb,
Its eye upon the summit of eternal truth.
We go beyond rainbow hues which once
Showered us with faith.
Infinity's realm of immutability awaits
And beauty stands in all its might
Golden silver and
Shining white.

SHARON

A CORRECTION OF AUROVILLE STATISTICS

In *Mother India*, September 1974, appeared the article: "India Utopia Struggles with the Life Divine: 400 Aurobindo Devotees from Many Lands." The correct statistics are given below.

Aurovilians: Total Number=340 (Census as on 15.8.1973).

Residents of Auroville proper: 248+Aurovilians resident in Pondicherry: 92.

At present only 16 countries have participated in Auroville (*i.e.* as Aurovilians), not including two cases where two nationalities have been combined and four cases where the nationalities are not recorded. The full list is as follows:

Nationality	Total	Auroville	Pondicherry
1. Indian	101	47	54
2. American	69	63	6
3. French	61	52	9
4. German	45	35	10
5. British	14	7	7
6. Dutch	10	9	1
7. Australian	7	7	0
8. Italian	6	5	1
9. Belgian	5	4	1
10. Canadian	4	4	0
11. Swiss	4	2	2
12. Indian-Swedish	3	3	0
13. Swedish	2	2	0
14. Moroccan	1	1	0
15. German-Swedish	1	1	0
16. Tunisian	1	1	0
17. Mexican	1	1	0
18. Equadorian	1	0	1
19. Nationality not in the record	4	4	0
Total	340		

From SATADAL

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 December 1974)

6 (Contd).

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF TEILHARD'S FAITH: THE TRUE NATURE OF HIS CHRISTIANITY — WHAT IS BASIC TEILHARDISM? — WHAT PLACE HAS HIS CHRISTIANITY IN IT? — TEILHARDISM AND THE MODERN RELIGIOUS INTUITION

(o)

TEILHARD died on 25 March 1955. On 22 March André Ravier heard from him:¹ "... it is not only apostles of a new type that we require: but indeed (for the use of these apostles) a Gospel of a type that is 'new'. — It is inexact, I am increasingly more sure, to repeat that Society is de-Christianising itself.... It is solely and desperately awaiting to be super-Christianised.... The Christianity presented to us does not satisfy us any more, because its Christ is not great enough."

De Lubac² annotates this statement by saying that, already, Teilhard wrote to Claude Rivière on 20 October 1943: "What is it that Christianity awaits then for developing its possibilities of the Universal Christ or, as I am beginning to call him, the Evolver Christ? I indeed feel, and definitively, that it is the unique and final form of the objective to which the close of my life should consecrate itself." De Lubac is evidently sympathetic to Teilhard. At the same time he wants to set off the wholly critical attitude of our quotation by another from Teilhard himself, which attributes to the criticised Christianity of the Church inherent powers to bring forth the very Christ found missing in it at present. Doubtless, Teilhard is talking in two voices when he says through the two passages that, while the Church is gravely wanting in the Teil-

¹ *Lettres Intimes de Teilhard de Chardin* à Auguste Valensin, Bruno de Solages, Henri de Lubac, André Ravier 1919-1955, Introduction et notes par Henri de Lubac (Aubier Montaigne, Paris, 1974), p. 463: "... ce ne sont pas seulement des apôtres d'un nouveau type qu'il nous faut. mais bien (à l'usage de ces apôtres) un Evangile d'un type 'nouveau'. — Il est inexact, j'en suis de plus en plus sûr, de répéter que la Société se dé-christianise .. Elle attend seulement et désespérément qu'on la sur-christianise . Le Christianisme qu'on nous présente ne nous satisfait plus, parce que son Christ n'est plus assez grand."

² *Ibid.*, pp 463-4, note 4: "Déjà, T écrivait à Claude Rivière, le 20 oct. 43: 'Qu'est-ce que le Christianisme attend donc pour développer ses possibilités du "Christ-Universel" ou, comme je commence à l'appeler, du "Christ-Evoluteur" Je sens bien, et définitivement, que c'est la forme unique et finale, de l'objectif auquel doit se consacrer la fin de mon existence."

hardian religion, this religion is its own true unsuspected and concealed message which will come through (owing to Teilhard's persistence). But surely, whether he is right or wrong about the Church's future, he knows fully the nature of his Christ. Does de Lubac realise what exactly the Teilhardian Christ means?

He was friendly with the older man from 1922 onward.¹ Yet fourteen years later—on 26 January 1936—Teilhard² complains to Léontine Zanta: "I don't know whether among the many of my colleagues who are in front of me or behind me on the road I'm travelling, there are any (or even a single one!...that seems incredible) who realise the importance of the step that all are taking." This must mean some lack in the progressive mentality of Teilhard's sympathisers, and his sweeping assertion disqualifies de Lubac from being at the heart of Teilhardism — at least up to 1936. What Teilhard³ writes to Ravier in his very last letter extends the disqualification to the end of his life: "... it has often been my disappointment to discover that minds as penetrating as an Auguste Val [ensin], a Grandmaison, or even a de Lubac (? ...), still think and pray in 'Cosmos' and not in Cosmogénèse."

The adverb "even" before the mention of de Lubac indicates that, although from among fellow-Jesuits he had intellectually the most affinity with Teilhard, his insight into his older associate's mind was yet imperfect. And its imperfection would stay affirmed in spite of the interrogation-mark within brackets after his name. The interrogation-mark could not, in this particular context, show anything more than a passing doubt about completely placing him on a par with Valensin and Grandmaison. It would not exonerate him from the suspicion of a "Cosmos"-sense lurking in his mind and heart.

As if to set a seal on our fear that Teilhard, at his life's termination, stood unaccepted *in toto* by anyone, we have the passage⁴ in the "Conclusion" of his *Le Christique*, whose last pages were penned a couple of days before his death: "How is it ... that as I look around me, still dazzled by what I have seen, I find that I am almost the only person of my kind, the only one to have seen? And so, I cannot, when asked, quote a single writer, a single work, that gives a clearly expressed description of the wonderful 'Diaphany' that has transfigured everything for me." The absence noted in the Zanta-letter of "even a single one" is just as emphatically recorded here. The negative implication of "even a de Lubac" in the other communication finds also a perfect echo.

Teilhard's utter isolation leads us to question whether with Rome or even with his most intimate sympathisers he really had anything "Christic" in common. We may recall that in the letter to Valensin on 13 October 1933 he⁵ said: "There is, between

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8, Avertissement. "(je connaissais le Père depuis 1922)"

² *Letters to Léontine Zanta*, (Collins, London, 1969), p. 115.

³ *Letters Intimes*, p. 466: "... mon désappointement a été souvent de découvrir que des esprits aussi pénétrant qu'un Auguste Val [ensin], un Grandmaison, ou même un de Lubac (?...). pensaient et priaient encore en 'Cosmos' et non en Cosmogénèse."

⁴ *Let me Explain*, Text selected and arranged by Jean-Pierre Demoulin, translated by René Hague and others (Collins, London, 1970), p. 156.

⁵ *Lettres Intimes*, pp. 253-4.

the Roman authorities and myself, more than a misunderstanding of words. All of us dream of one and the same Christ; — and that is the fundamental thing, thanks to which we can remain associates without disloyalty or dupery. But, this capital point set apart, we differ, Rome and I, by two representations of the World, and two practical attitudes towards the World, *which are not merely complementary but contrary*. It is, at bottom, a merciless fight, — between a static pessimism and a progressive optimism. That, you see, is what we should frankly acknowledge, rather than cheating oneself with words." Now we are disposed to ask: "Is it at all true that all of them are dreaming of one and the same Christ? Are they not cheating themselves with a word?"

To Teilhard, Christ the Evolver who is also the Christ of all the Galaxies is the only Christ we moderns can henceforward adore. But right up to the present moment what he wrote despairingly in 1920 about fellow-Jesuits holds true, with reference to the urgency of illimitably enlarging Christ and, by cosmifying him, making him the organic centre of all things. He¹ noted on 28 February of that year: "I fail to understand how so many of the most learned people — even a Father Maréchal — do not *realise* this situation in which the knowledge of the real puts us by all its observations." In 1967 de Lubac² carefully hedged his own recognition of Teilhard's vision: "... the road he followed with such determination is, and cannot but be, only one of the converging roads that lead to Christ: the road, maybe, that best answers the expectations of our own days, but that must fail to reach its destination if it claims to be the only road." We may point out that Teilhard claimed his road — the one of Christian evolutionism or of cosmogenesis that is Christogenesis — to be the only road, whereas de Lubac insists that what cosmogenesis dictates is not all-binding at all even though, according to him,³ "Père Teilhard's 'vision' is integrated in the great Christian experience". Again in 1974, the Preface to *Intimate Letters* expresses reservations about the "Neo-Humanism" which Teilhard considered absolutely necessary for Christianity to adopt along with his Universal Christ, both of them being indivisibly linked on the basis of the fact of evolution which, in his eyes, was now indispensable to religion and alone gave Neo-Humanism and the Universal Christ their true sense. Assessing Teilhard and the spiritual situation of our times, de Lubac⁴ writes: "Should we be surprised that his analysis was not complete, or that ageing sometimes simplified

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57. "Je n'arrive pas à comprendre combien les gens les plus instruits, — même un P. Maréchal — ne *réalisent* pas cette situation où nous met, par toutes ses observations, la connaissance du réel."

² *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning* (A Mentor-Omega Book, The New American Library, New York, 1967), p. V.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Lettres Intimes*, p. 10, Avertissement: "Faut-il s'étonner que son analyse n'ait pas été complète, ou que l'âge en ait parfois simplifié les lignes à l'excès? Avouons-le, il s'est un peu trop aisément persuadé qu'il avait 'mis le doigt sur le point exact et central de la crise religieuse' ou, comme il dit encore, de la 'crise humaine' du siècle. Il y a, lui est-il arrivé d'écrire, 'ceux qui ne voient pas, et ceux qui voient', — et lorsqu'il eut formé son concept du 'Néo-Humanisme', quiconque hésitait à l'adopter tel quel risquait d'être rejeté parmi ceux 'qui ne voient pas'. Il ne lui était facile de supposer que d'autres pouvaient voir aussi d'autres choses, des choses que sa propre vision, juste mais partielle, laissait dans l'ombre."

excessively its outlines? Let us confess it, he persuaded himself a little too readily that he had 'put his finger on the exact and central point of the religious crisis' or, as he also calls it, the 'human crisis' of the century. There are, he sometimes wrote, 'those who do not see and those who see', — and once he had formed his concept of 'Neo-Humanism', whoever hesitated to adopt it as such risked being rejected as amongst those 'who do not see'. It was not easy for him to imagine that others could see also other things, things which his own vision, right but partial, left in the shadow."

The precise state of Teilhard's mind and the particular attitude he had towards both evolution and Christianity can best be deduced from two passages put together. One is an entry on 20 July 1947 in his diary:¹ "No longer to live, really, except for Christ, or more exactly the super-Christ, glimpsed by the Church. To consecrate my end to making the most of my vision" The second² is one we have already cited about Teilhard's feeling definitively that "the unique and final form of the objective" to which he should "consecrate" "the close of his life" was to help Christianity develop "its possibilities of the 'Universal Christ' or, as I am beginning to call him, the 'Evolver Christ' ". Clearly what Teilhard termed super-Christ, Universal Christ and Evolver Christ was the form in which what others termed Christ was fundamentally and ultimately significant for him. Christ, as conceived by others, had in himself no value for Teilhard. Only if connected with the Teilhardian Christ, who had concrete cosmic dimensions and was the soul of evolution, could that Christ have any status. Teilhard found the Church unreceptive of this greater Christ, since it did not encourage or even recognise the prospect of the ultra-human which inevitably went with the evolutionary world-vision of Teilhardian Christianity, the ultra-human whose complementary extension or prolongation was Teilhard's Supernature. The Pleroma, the divine fullness into which the universe is to be taken up by Christ at the end of history, cannot come for Teilhard unless the ultra-human has been first developed on the earth and has an affinity to it. The Church's Pleroma had nothing organically to do with evolution: the Church's Supernature stood opposed to Nature and implied no drive or need of Earth's self-achievement: the Church stopped with a merely moral preparation for an after-life and had no sense of the earth's intrinsic worth as a field of divine development and as a reality capable of creating in space-time an initial basic counterpart to that after-life. Therefore the Church, though acknowledging evolution as a fact of the material cosmos, could not be said to have the same Christ as Teilhard's. Both it and Teilhard take Jesus of Nazareth as their *point de départ* for use of the title "Christ"; but, unlike Teilhard, the Church fails to see the Cosmic Evolver in him, the Being who is equal in vastness to the universe and organically involved in its evolution as the World-Soul by whom and in whom all human entities reach the fulfillment of their personal essence in a supreme unity without losing their diversity. Christ, to the Church, is not "the axis and summit of a universal maturation

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 358, note 1: "... — Ne plus vivre, réellement, que pour le Christ, ou plus exactement le super-Christ, entrevu par l'Eglise. Consacrer ma fin à exploiter ma vision .."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 463-4.

tion".¹ Teilhard and the Church thus stand poles apart.

However, he has the phrase we have cited about the Universal Christ: "glimpsed by the Church."² He also looks forward to "a recasting of Theology", which would automatically happen when "Christian thought will apply itself to disengage the features of the Universal Christ as it has always adored him, but without understanding explicitly enough what the immense value of this attribute was".³ And he spotlights the place in the Church's tradition where the Universal Christ is to be first discerned: "...this Christ universal and transformative who showed himself, I believe, to St. Paul and of whom our generation has felt so invincibly the need".⁴

De Lubac too traces the Teilhardian Christ to the same source. One of his notes has a passage speaking of "the affirmations at the same time Christic and Cosmic of Saint Paul".⁵ Yet there is a deep difference between de Lubac's back-look and Teilhard's. Although Teilhard never completely loses sight of Jesus of Nazareth, he puts in a very minor place the historic earthly manifestation of God as compared with the cosmic omnipresence of Christ the Evolver. As long as the name "Christ" is employed, Jesus can never be ignored: in fact there can be no cosmic reality recognisable under that name without the Christ of history. And, as Teilhard was unaware of any other Incarnation who would endow a Universal Presence with the sort of reality he wished for it, he repeatedly dwells on the importance of the Man of Galilee. But the latter has not at all an all-round importance: he has only the importance of a starting-point for something which is the essential for Teilhard and which, once affirmed, throws that starting-point entirely into the shade — even to the extent of blotting it out. This perspective, ignored by exegetes like de Lubac, can be proved for Teilhard with the utmost ease. Even as far back as 1926 and 1927 we see him brushing aside the human perfections of Jesus, out of which his co-ministers made much capital. His heart makes no response to Jesus as an ideal man having various relationships of love with his fellows. Teilhard cares nothing for the picture of "the charm and goodness"⁶ of Christ's past human life: he prefers actual present relationships such as he can establish with dear ones living around him. And he comes out with an outburst of what is the decisive need in him: "why should we turn to Judaea two thousand years ago?"⁷ Not the man Jesus, incarnate God though he be, but Someone vaster, a Real Universal Godhead, is what he yearns for. The divine Christ built around the Man of Galilee is too small for a religious scientist whose eyes have been brimmed with the glory of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140, note 8 "... L'axe et le sommet d'une maturation universelle."

² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 139, note 8: "... la pensée chrétienne s'appliquera à dégager les traits du Christ-Universel tel qu'elle l'a toujours adoré, mais sans comprendre assez explicitement quelle était l'immense valeur de cet attribut"

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78, note 8: "... ce Christ universel et transformateur qui s'est montré, je crois, à saint Paul, et dont notre génération éprouve si invinciblement le besoin . . ."

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 453, note 8: "... affirmations à la fois christiques et cosmiques de saint Paul."

⁶ *The Divine Milieu*, an Essay on the Interior Life (Harper and Brothers, New York 1960) p. 106.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

the infinite evolutionary universe thrusting towards a super-humanity. A super-Christ, adequate to this ever-developing Godliness of a trillion-galaxied space-time, is all that Teilhard truly craves. The historic Jesus as such, the Son of Mary in himself, whom de Lubac along with the Church keeps stressing, is a nullity for Teilhard if a cosmic nature cannot explicitly be brought forward from his being. And, even when this nature is completely explicitated, its source in antiquity matters little to Teilhard. That is the central issue for us to focus our minds upon.

This issue, which meets us openly in the book *The Divine Milieu* written in the period we have mentioned, springs into the clearest prominence in a letter of 30 October 1926. He¹ writes to Marthe Vaufrey that though the first three gospels have an "irreplaceable value ... in presenting the real, historical *beginnings* of Christ (with a practical code of moral comparison with him)," he has no need of an "evangelism which limits itself to a glorification of the purely human or moral qualities of Jesus." And he adds: "in a sense the past does not interest me. What I 'ask' of Christ is that He be a Force that is immense, present, universal, as real (more real) than Matter, which I can *adore*; in short, I ask Him to be for me the Universe: complete, concentrated, and capable of being adored Have you read ... the beginning of the Epistle to the Colossians (Chapter 1, verses 12-23) and tried to give it the full, organic meaning it requires? Here Christ appears as a true soul of the World. It is only thus that I love Him."

This passage sheds light on three points. First, the man Jesus who once lived on earth is not needed in his own right by Teilhard. Secondly, Teilhard has love only for the ever-present Cosmic Christ who, according to him, is preached by St. Paul. Thirdly, this Pauline Christ as understood by Teilhard and as understood by the Church are two different Godheads. The last point is not immediately apparent, but the very fact that Teilhard speaks of St. Paul's famous verses as *requiring* a full organic meaning indicates the absence of this meaning in the Church's interpretation of the divine cosmicity celebrated there. Thus Teilhard, out of his own mouth, suggests that even if the Church has not been devoid of a Cosmic Christ, the Church's Universal Godhead has had a different status from the one Teilhard would accord to him.

A different status is unavoidable in the very nature of the case. The Teilhardian Cosmic Christ has no substance apart from the framework of an evolutionary world-vision. Whatever meaning St. Paul's Cosmic Christ can have will never coincide with the Teilhardian sense. The Church is more logical in interpreting the Christ of the Epistle to the Colossians. But, in being more logical, it reveals an impassable gulf severing its Christianity from that of Teilhard. There can be, for all that Teilhard may wish, no dialogue between the two Christianities.

Teilhard's unconventional and even scandalous attitude to the historical Jesus, on whom both St. Paul and the Church build, comes through most pointedly in a passage of *Intimate Letters*. On 18 January 1936, three years after the mention of "the

¹ *Letters to Two Friends, 1926-1952* (Collins, The Fontana Library of Theology and Philosophy, London, 1972), p. 52.

one and the same Christ” to Valensin, Teilhard¹ wrote to that fellow-Jesuit:

“I shall, I imagine, remain tied till the end to research work, which is my platform — and also my lot. But more than ever I feel my life’s deep interest migrate elsewhere: towards the rebirth of a Religion which would really make of faith in a personal God a *wheel* of the World in activity (and not a supererogatory ornament — or a weight — as it happens, in fact, now. It is about this, particularly, that I should have liked to talk with you. At bottom my attitude is always a rather illogical mixture of faithfulness and unfaithfulness. I can less and less do without Christ (and indeed my life of ‘prayers’ tends to become more regular and intense).

“But at the same time the figure of the historical Christ becomes to me less and less firm and distinct, misted as it is with all the historical unlikelihoods and all the moral inadequacies of the Gospel. Here reappears the basic disposition: what is past is dead and no longer interests me.”

The identical turn of thought is here as in the letter to Marthe Vaufrey and, though “the soul of the World” is not mentioned, the implication is certainly there in the phrase about a religion making “of faith in a personal God a *wheel* of the World in activity”. The implication may be affirmed with still more conviction when we realise that the letter was written only eight days before the one to Léontine Zanta where Teilhard² talks of “a new religion (let’s call it an improved Christianity if you like), whose personal God is no longer the great ‘neolithic’ landowner of times gone by but the Soul of the world — as demanded by the cultural and religious stage we have now reached ...”

Nor does the letter, any more than this of 26 January, have a reference to St. Paul. One may seek an indirect hint of him in the term “rebirth” in connection with the Teilhardian religion which is other than the current Christian in which the personal God is “a supererogatory ornament — or a weight” to “the World in activity”. But the original French noun “renaissance” from the verb “renaître” is to be construed in the light of Teilhard’s habitual usage. Thus, at one place in *Intimate Letters* (7 January 1934), he,³ deploring the common methods the Church adopts to effect conversions in

¹ *Ibid.*, p 312 “Je restera, j’imagine, lié jusqu’au bout à un travail de recherches qui est ma plateforme, — et aussi mon lot. Mais plus que jamais je sens l’intérêt profond de ma vie émigrer ailleurs: vers la renaissance d’une Religion qui ferait vraiment de la foi en un Dieu personnel un *rouage* du Monde en activité (et non un ornement — ou un poids — surérogatoire, comme cela a lieu, en fait, maintenant). C’est de cela, particulièrement, que j’aurais aimé à vous parler. Au fond, mon attitude est toujours un mélange assez illogique de fidélité et d’infidélité. Je puis de moins en moins me passer du Christ (et même ma vie de ‘prières’ tend à devenir plus régulière et plus intense).

“Mais en même temps la figure du Christ-historique me devient de moins en moins ferme et distincte, embrumée qu’elle est de toutes les invraisemblances historiques, et de toutes les inadéquations morales de l’Evangile Ici reparaît la disposition de fond: ce qui est passé est mort, et ne m’intéresse plus . ”

² *Letters to Léontine Zanta* (Collins, London, 1969), p. 114.

³ *Lettres Intimes*, p. 265: “Pour convertir, l’Eglise doit d’abord re-naître. Voilà ce qu’il faudrait dire aux Missiologues. Cette parenthèse, vous le comprenez, ne s’adresse en rien à votre communication au Congrès des missions, — laquelle est au contraire un exemple très réussi de légitime renaissance.

Asia, says to de Lubac: "In order to convert, the Church must first be re-born. That is what should be told to the Missionologists. This parenthesis, you understand, is not in the least directed at your communication to the Congress of Missions, — which is, on the contrary, a very successful example of legitimate rebirth. Thanks for sending me these pages, which show how simply a lot of very new views can make their entry into the Christian world." Here the sense is obviously of a "new birth": the mention of "very new views" clinches it. At another place (25 July 1933)¹ we are told: "I am more and more persuaded that a Christian rebirth is in process, under the influence of irrepressible intellectual and moral factors, — which reduce themselves always to the same point: necessity of a greater Christ for a greater world." Here also Teilhard is referring to a vanguard of progressive Christian thinkers who seem to be working for a "new birth" of their religion in the wake of the modern scientific world-perspective. Teilhard's "renaissance" is charged with a sense of present conditions and does not suggest any revival of past ones.

An earlier letter (28 August 1926)² brings us further insight into this term: "As regards 'conversions', Christianity is visibly marking time. It is obviously not along current lines that God's Kingdom will be established — but by some rebirth, some 'revelation', which (once again in human history) will spread through the human mass like fire and water. That is what we must wish for and prepare for." Now "rebirth" is coloured by the shade which goes with "revelation". And the sense of the total clause where it figures is that just as in the past a new revelation made a religion go naturally and swiftly everywhere, so too Christianity, by having a new message revealed to it and thereby getting re-born, will obtain a second new birth comparable to the occurrence of its first revelatory entry into the world. In short, the connotation of "renaissance" is general and can refer to the advent of any religion in human history — Christianity or any other — which carries a revelatory content: it does not narrow down to any specific subject-matter of Christianity itself or of Christianity alone in the historical past.

"Renaissance" in our passage has the same general bearing as here and everywhere else: it stands for self-renovation by means of a novel vision. It harks back to no Pauline preaching. As in the Zanta-letter, "a new religion" is involved, "an improved Christianity" with a re-visioned Christ.

Besides, the sentence where we hear of "renaissance" links up with another in

Merci de m'avoir envoyé ces pages, qui montrent combien simplement des vues très neuves peuvent faire leur entrée dans le monde chrétien "

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249: "Je suis de plus en plus persuadé qu'une renaissance chrétienne est en cours, sous l'influence de facteurs intellectuels et moraux irrépressibles, — qui se ramènent toujours au même point: nécessité d'un Christ plus grand pour un monde plus grand."

² *Ibid.*, p. 266: "En matière de 'conversions', le christianisme piétine visiblement sur place. Ce n'est pas par les voies actuelles, visiblement, que s'établira le règne de Dieu, — mais par quelque renaissance, quelque 'révélation', qui (une fois de plus dans l'histoire humaine) se répandra dans la masse humaine comme de l'eau et comme du feu. C'est cela qu'ils nous faut désirer et préparer." Our translation is from *Letters to Léontine Zanta*, p. 69.

the same letter. There Teilhard,¹ judging by what was going on in himself and looking at the response his mode of thought was secretly having around him, senses behind the rigidities and old-fashioned gestures of current Christianity his own brand of religious vision taking shape: "I am more and more convinced that a great thing is getting born now at the heart of the Church — something which will contagiously convert the Earth. And to this alone I feel myself really pledged. A mass of weights and of restrictions have ceased to affect me — because they no longer exist in my eyes and no longer have a hold on me — as if I have inwardly escaped from them." The word we have to note is the French "naît" ("getting born"): there is no soupçon of any old world-view being revived or taking rebirth. And the whole phrase links up also with the phrase where the Church, to get the power to effect conversions, has to get re-born. "New birth" again is the sense that emerges for our passage's "rebirth".

Perhaps the most direct path to the correct nuance of Teilhard's "renaissance" is through a word in a letter of 25 February 1929 to Valensin, where occur expressions which de Lubac² has elsewhere considered "what may well be the harshest judgment [Teilhard] ever made" on the Church. These expressions³ run: "... the only thing that I can be: a voice that repeats, *opportune et importune*, that the Church will waste away so long as she does not escape from the factitious world of verbal theology, of quantitative sacramentalism, and over-refined devotions in which she is enveloped, so as to reincarnate herself in the *real* aspirations of mankind Of course I can see well enough what is paradoxical in this attitude: if I need the Christ of the Church I should accept Christ as he is presented by the Church, with its burden of rites, administrations and theology. That's what you'll tell me, and I've often said it to myself. But now I can't get away from the evidence that the moment has come when the Christian impulse should 'save Christ' from the hands of the clerics so that the world may be saved." The illuminative word for us is "reincarnate", involving as it does in the context a past-free fresh religious start with a Christ seen in a novel way. Its noun-form "reincarnation" would give the true sense of the "renaissance" in our passage.

Everything considered, our passage is a tremendous eye-opener by playing down

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 312 "Je suis de plus en plus convaincu qu'une grande chose naît maintenant au cœur de l'Eglise, — quelque chose qui convertira contagieusement la Terre. Et à ceci seulement je me sens réellement voué. Une masse de poids et de restrictions ont cessé de m'affecter, — parce qu'ils n'existent plus à mes yeux et n'ont plus prise sur moi, — comme si je leur avais intérieurement échappé."

² *Letters to Léontine Zanta*, p. 34, Introduction The following English translation is from pp. 34-5.

³ *Letters Intimes*, p. 184. "La seule chose que je puisse être: une voix qui répète, *opportune et importune*, que l'Eglise dépérira aussi longtemps qu'elle n'échappera pas au monde factice de théologie verbale, de sacramentalisme quantitatif et de dévotions subulsiées où elle s'enveloppe, pour se réincarner dans les aspirations humaines *réelles* .. Naturellement, je discerne assez bien ce que cette attitude a de paradoxal: si j'ai besoin du Christ de l'Eglise pour sauver mon Monde, je dois prendre le Christ tel que me le présente l'Eglise, avec son fardeau de rites, d'administration et de théologie. Voilà ce que vous me direz, et ce que je me suis dit bien des fois. Mais maintenant je ne puis échapper à l'évidence que le moment est venu où le sens chrétien doit 'sauver le Christ' des mains des Clercs, pour que le Monde soit sauvé."

the historical Jesus entirely and suggesting that Teilhard has no psychological need of him: his "life of 'prayers'", that "tends to become more regular and more intense" is addressed only to a Cosmic Godhead who, "'panchristising' the universe" (as another portion of the Zanta-letter of 26 January 1936 puts it), has no concrete acknowledged role in orthodox Christianity. Indeed, one cannot affirm, except in a purely verbal form, that the Church and Teilhard are talking of "one and the same Christ" or even that anything in the Christian scripture talks of the Christ to whom Teilhard, the uncompromising religious evolutionist, prayed ever more devotedly, neglecting altogether the Jesus of history.

A further idea of how decisively Teilhard's way of thought on Christ-historical and Christ-universal diverged from the Church's Christology is forced upon us by the manner in which he dissociates Mary from the fundamental aspect of his Jesus. We are often told of Teilhard's fervour for Jesus's mother. Just as he frequently refers to the Jesus of history as serving a certain initial purpose in his all-important scheme of the Cosmic Christ, he has several "faithful" allusions to Mary. But he is totally at loggerheads with the Church's magnification of her part in salvational activity. Whatever cosmic function the Church attributes to Jesus is not in the least incompatible with the status it assigns to his mother. Teilhard, however, cannot put together the cosmicity of his Christ and the elevated position given to Mary by the Church. Mary, according to him, can hold that position only in regard to the historical Jesus divorced from his Teilhardianly cosmic function and focused only on terrestrial concerns. The letter driving home this highly unorthodox point in its concluding part is to Ravier on 24 October 1954:¹

"At bottom, you know, it is this question of re-thinking Christianity (and more specially Christology) which absorbs me more and more. And on this subject, shall I tell you that yesterday I shuddered when I saw the announcement of the new feast of 'Mary the Queen' ... which creates the risk of our sinking still deeper in the mortal conception of a specifically *terrestrial* Christianity, — while we can now adore only a cosmic Christ (a Christ of all the Galaxies...)? For, after all, if it is conceivable that, in a few generations from now, Christ-King would be truly universalised, — Mary, in herself, is definitely 'terrestrial' and cannot be the *Queen of the World* (unless one ele-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 445: "Au fond, vous le savez, c'est cette question d'une re-pensée du Christianisme (et plus spécialement de la Christologie) qui m'absorbe de plus en plus. Et, à ce sujet, vous dirai-je que j'ai frémis hier en voyant annoncée la nouvelle fête de 'Marie Reine' ... qui risque de nous enfoncer encore un peu plus dans la conception mortelle d'un Christianisme spécifiquement *terrestre*, — alors que nous ne pouvons plus adorer qu'un Christ cosmique (un Christ de toutes les Galaxies ...). Car enfin, s'il est pensable que, d'ici quelques générations, le Christ-Roi soit vraiment universalisé, — Marie, elle, est définitivement 'terrienne' et ne peut être *Reine du Monde* (à moins qu'on ne l'élève en symbole du Féminin ...). — A mon avis, il y a, dans cette poussée incontrôlée du 'Marial', un immense danger pour le plus grand 'Christique', — celui-ci se trouvant limité et paralysé par celui-là dans la mesure où on veut les maintenir 'semblables' entre eux. — Décidément, il y a quelque chose qui ne tourne plus rond dans la Weltanschauung chrétienne qualifiée d'orthodoxe en ce moment. — Nos dirigeants religieux n'ont pas conscience de ce que, depuis un siècle, l'Univers est devenu: à la fois spatialement, temporellement et *organiquement* — 'Leur' Incarnation et Rédemption ne couvrent plus le Phénomène ..."

vates her as a symbol of the Feminine ...). — In my opinion, there is, in this uncontrolled push towards the 'Marian', an immense danger for the greater 'Christic', — the latter finding itself limited and paralysed by the former — inasmuch as one wants to maintain them as 'similar'. — Decidedly, there is something that no longer turns round in the Christian Weltanschauung called orthodox at the moment. — Our religious directors are not conscious of what for a century the universe has become for us: at the same time spatially, temporally and *organically*. — '*Their*' Incarnation and Redemption no longer cover the Phenomenon."

It cannot be denied that the Mary-born Christ of Teilhard and that of the Church, in their universal dominating and divinising power, are very far indeed from being "one and the same Christ." This fact also distances off de Lubac from basic Teilhardism.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

REBIRTH

Now rises the force. Now is the thrill moving through the universe. Feel it? Feel it vibrating through everything? Watch it — stay ready! Registered now — here — it finds me.

I stand alert, electrified — and let it move through me. Up and down — back and forth — as it wishes — I offer no resistance.

Thought waves heave inside me. I am changing — this world is changing! Old ways are dying away and metamorphose into new ones. This world is transforming now! Not tomorrow — now! Everywhere, everywhere ...

The fresh winds of the New World brush against my cheeks. I can smell its fragrance, sweet and refreshing. Dear breeze, beloved messenger — you elate me. The Gods of Recreation must have sent you here.

I welcome you — I dance for you. Come, let us create together! Limbs, move — this is the dance you were waiting for! Ah, let us dance! Dance! Dance — Create — Become — Be!

World, old world — beloved, we are not dying — we are almost born!

20.10.1974

GEORGETTE COTY

OIL CANVASES BY RUTTY PATEL

Under the auspices of Max Mueller Bhavan, Bombay, an exhibition of oil canvases by Ratty Patel was held at their premises from the 23rd October till the 6th November. The exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Rein, Director, Max Mueller Bhavan, Bombay.

Mrs. Rami Mehra is a keen student of art and has been watching with interest the work of Ratty Patel. We produce below the review she has taken of the exhibition.

On January 21 an exhibition of Miss Patel's paintings will be opened at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay. It will run up to the 27th.

BRIDGES of understanding are built when one probes into the other person's feelings and makes an attempt to communicate at a deeper level. The inclination to listen with tolerance and open-mindedness is a sign of intellectual maturity. In art, to accept challenging forms and expressions is a vivid experience.

I have been studying the work of Ratty Patel from the beginning of her career as an artist when she painted in water colours, textile dyes and later took to oils. It has been a total self-expression indicating her inner growth and progress which I have watched with much interest since the first exhibition she held in Bombay in 1969, and the later ones of 1970 and 1972.

Looking around at the canvases in the Max Mueller Bhavan foyer one gets struck by the blending of colours and the brush strokes which bring out subtle forms and weave a story around each canvas.

"A Vision at Dawn" in clear pink rivals an all-captivating "Blue Skies Over Mirati" which has drawn most of the visitors to it from far and near. Other works such as "Temple Tower", a monument standing in silence, and "The Worlds Unexplored" revealing the flow of forms, "The New and the Unknown", a bold and striking picture — all these paintings reveal what a gifted and untrained artist can explore in the world of naive art.

RAMI BALDEV MEHRA

EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

(We are publishing in four instalments a paper by a competent American psychotherapist, Charles Maloney, who has been in living touch with Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and Ashram. Here he tells us how the psychotherapist can make his discipline more effective by using Yogic techniques based on Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision. Within the field to which the Paper confines itself the author brings an abundance of observations highly enlightening for his fellow-practitioners and of considerable interest to the disciples of Sri Aurobindo who wish to understand the higher possibilities of psychotherapy in service of the common man who may not always be ready for Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.)

They [psychologists and psychoanalysts] look from down up and explain the higher lights by the lower obscurities; but the foundation of these things is above and not below, ... The superconscient, not the subconscient, is the true foundation of things. The significance of the lotus is not to be found by analysing the secrets of the mud from which it grows here; its secret is to be found in the heavenly archetype of the lotus that blooms for ever in the Light above. The self-chosen field of these psychologists is besides poor, dark and limited; you must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest. That is the promise of the greater psychology awaiting its hour before which these poor gropings will disappear and come to nothing.¹

THIS paper is offered not as an attempt to propose a "new" psychology or therapy but rather to expand and integrate the multiplicity of approaches already present in Western society. While my perspective is that of the psychological discipline of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo my appeal is to all persons engaged in the task of healing psychological disorders and creating a more integral and harmonious being. More specifically it is to consider, not just theoretically but practically, the presence of a higher consciousness in man that can be evoked and brought to bear on the wide range of problems which present themselves to the healing professions.

We currently stand amidst an avalanche of therapies all vying for pre-eminence and some claiming a cure for the psychological maladies that plague Western man. Whereas it was once the province of the leaders of religious or spiritual communities to deal with these difficulties, the focus has now shifted to the psychotherapist. Bent on solving the persisting cultural problems of loneliness, boredom, anxiety and alienation from self, others and nature, this modern *shaman* prescribes an unending host of remedies. Among the ever increasing "new" therapies are transactional analysis, Rolfing, primal therapy, psychodrama, Gestalt, hypnotherapy, existential analysis, drug therapy and behavioral therapies. The objectives of these approaches vary from "cure" to personal growth and life enrichment with current controversies including: duration of therapy, cost, imposition of therapists' values on the client and whether the

source of the problem is social or personal. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed critique of these modes of healing, it is necessary to allude to both their positive and negative aspects from the perspective taken here.

Sri Aurobindo's standpoint, cited above, that "you must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest", implies an intimate relationship between metaphysics and psychology. Although most of Western psychology has eschewed an overt connection with philosophy it is hard to imagine a therapist who does not allow his reality principle to operate in his therapeutic techniques. While therapy is a reactive trade, treating the customers who bring, sometimes, quite specific problems, the approach and vision of the therapist can very much determine the extent of the "cure" or the horizons for growth. Who is the client? What potentialities does he bring? Does he carry the necessary resources for healing and integration within himself or are they to be found in a re-adjustment to or change in environment? What are the criteria for "success"? What is the principle of integration?

The optic through which the particular therapy views the healing and integration process varies in point of emphasis and thus the response to the above questions will vary. While the number of approaches are increasing and show no signs of diminishment it is possible to view them from three perspectives.

First, there are those therapies that emphasize the mind as the principle of integration and healing. Insight therapies would be an example of this approach and while the emotional and physical aspects of the being are not ignored it is the mental part that is the leader in the process. A common criticism of this persuasion is that although the person *understands* intellectually the causes for acting or feeling a certain way he does not have the power to change the undesirable actions or feelings. His life continues to be controlled by the persistent recurrence of these forces. This has been a major criticism directed against Freudian psychoanalysis which necessitates enormous amounts of time and money.

Secondly, there has developed almost as a reaction to and a corrective of the mental approach a host of therapies advocating the expression or acting out of feelings and emotions. Here a certain expansion of consciousness takes place inasmuch as the alleged causes of neurosis are not only understood with the intellect but also felt. There is a release of blocked or repressed energy which allows the person to lead a fuller and richer existence. Among the many proponents of this avenue to healing are existential analysis and primal scream therapies. The degree of liberation is often seen as being directly proportional to the depth of the feeling. There are, however, certain behavioral patterns that have become deeply ingrained in the being which are especially difficult to remove and even if they diminish are easily reactivated, *e.g.* sadistic, masochistic, obsessive and compulsive activity.

A *third* perspective takes man's physical body as a point of departure for healing. Again the mind and the emotions are not excluded but the therapeutic techniques centre around the consciousness of the physical as the key to the liberation of life

energies. Various massage techniques such as Rolfing could be included in this category.

It should be clear that the above categories are not exclusive inasmuch as the components of our being — the mind, the vital, the physical — can never really be separated. Any distinction or division is only conceptual; however, the various modes of healing do concentrate on certain aspects of our being either as a point of entry or criteria for “success”. While a lengthy debate is possible as to the healing potential of the various approaches several crucial questions remain as to the nature of our being and the process of its integration.

Although theories have abounded, the confluence of mental, emotional and physical forces has long been recognized in the psychological disciplines. But while this basic truth of our being is reflected in the efforts of the more enlightened therapies to effect a harmonious integration between these energies, can man be sufficiently explained in terms of mind, vital and physical? If he can, is one component the leader or more enlightened force of the healing or integrating process? Is the goal of the process a mutual and harmonious interplay between these components? How is it to be effected? Does one or more of these aspects of our being have both the power of knowledge and the power of action to arrive at a harmonious interplay?

It is the perspective of this paper that the consciousness and force necessary for the healing and integration of the being resides not in the mental, vital or physical components but rather in a higher consciousness which both transcends and is immanent in these three aspects of our being. This fourth dimension in man, the spiritual, is, as Sri Aurobindo says, “the true foundation of things ... the promise of the greater psychology awaiting its hour ...”. To speak of a spiritual dimension, especially to those in the mainstream of the psychological disciplines, often raises the question of either an activity apart from life, shunning the world, or an endeavor which bears fruit only within sectarian lines. It is, furthermore, a common conception that the utilization of spiritual techniques necessitates a renouncing of the mental, emotional or physical life. In light of this cultural bias one of the objectives of this paper will be to indicate the practical utilization of the higher consciousness or the superconscious for the treatment of mental and emotional problems. While it is not possible or necessary to give here a detailed account of Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual vision the broad outlines will be indicated in order to elucidate the significance of the application of yogic techniques to Western psychotherapy.

Yoga and Evolution

It is quite a common attitude among many practitioners of psychological disciplines to view spiritual approaches to healing as belonging very much to the “fringe of society” or numbered along with the transient or faddish new therapies. Yoga, when it is employed, is often considered as a technique for relaxation, increased body awareness or grouped with various massage techniques whose primary object is to

relieve tension. In the context of Sri Aurobindo's vision of the evolution of consciousness yoga has a much deeper and pervasive meaning. It is "nothing but practical psychology"² but with a much vaster range and depth than the goals and techniques of most Western psychology:

... we mean by this term [Yoga] a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos.³

It is crucial to note that no aspect of what we call life whether mental, vital or physical need be renounced or excised — the emphasis is on the expansion and transformation of consciousness. Therefore an exhaustive understanding of our being is demanded as a preparation for Yoga:

We are conscious of only an insignificant portion of our being; ... you must awake to your nature and movements, you must know why and how you do things or feel or think them; you must understand your motives and impulses, the forces, hidden and apparent, that move you ... you must ... take to pieces the entire machinery of your being.⁴

We begin to see that the varied goals and techniques of the many therapies are included and transcended in this spiritual approach. Yoga as "practical psychology" is a method whereby our actions, thoughts and feelings and their interplay as physical, mental and vital forces are to be brought into consciousness. In this movement to become conscious of *all* parts of our being the spiritual dimension is discovered both within and beyond the mental, vital and physical aspects. To become conscious of this higher consciousness as both the knowledge and power which will effect a harmonious integration of all aspects of our being is the ultimate goal of yoga. Any attempt on the part of the Western psychological disciplines to effect an integration on the basis of only a mental, vital and physical perspective will, at best, be only partial or temporary. To ignore the spiritual dimension is to remain unconscious of the key to a total healing and integration of the being.

Sri Aurobindo views this problem of integration in an evolutionary context. Man as he is ordinarily perceived, as an organization of mental, vital and physical forces with the mental as the highest or distinguishing feature, is a reflection or microcosm of the evolution of Nature. Matter has issued in Life and out of this physical-vital synthesis has evolved Mind. However, in Sri Aurobindo's vision of the evolution of consciousness Mind is not the term but rather a stage in the evolutionary process. Involved in the synthesis of Matter, Life and Mind that have manifested is a higher consciousness which Sri Aurobindo calls Supermind. Man's present conscious existence viewed as an amalgam of mind-formations, life-movements and physical functionings

is seen from this perspective as transitional. Just as a collectivity of mental beings have appeared on the earth, there will also emerge a community of supramental beings. Man is the laboratory in which this slow evolution of Nature can be taken up consciously, *i.e.* as yoga, and therefore hastened immeasurably.

It is crucial to note for the purpose of this paper that the evolutionary process is an integral one. As each stage manifests, the previous level is not left behind but rather is taken up and given new significance by the new manifestation. Thus Life and Mind originally involved in Matter "turn back" and infuse their precursor with new meaning. This cosmic process of Nature becoming conscious of herself is reflected in man becoming conscious of all parts of his being. We embrace past, present and future, inasmuch as we are composed of the prior levels of manifestation of the evolutionary process, *i.e.* Matter, Life and Mind, presently manifest as a certain physical-vital-mental organization within which is involved the future physical-vital-mental-supramental unfoldment. To become conscious of all parts of our being is to ultimately discover this future which is present but for most unconscious

While most spiritual endeavors employ either a physical, mental or vital vehicle to reach the higher consciousness, the eventual object is a renunciation or diminishment of these instruments of earthly life. The distinctiveness of Sri Aurobindo's integral approach to the evolution of consciousness is that the physical, vital and mental vehicles of existence are to become instruments for the manifestation of a higher consciousness and a more evolved organization of being. It is precisely within this context that Western psychotherapy and yoga can meet and engage in a common work. Here the limited perspectives or points of emphasis (mental, emotional or physical) of the current therapeutic methods can find an expansion of knowledge and power of healing through the practical application of yogic techniques. This concrete recognition of the spiritual dimension of man is embodied in Sri Aurobindo's challenge to psychologists, "...you must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest."

This brief indication of the direction of an integral spirituality or growth in consciousness will provide a background or context in which the pragmatic utilization of spiritual principles or yogic techniques in the treatment of mental or emotional problems can be discussed. It must be clear at this point that one need not be a disciple of Sri Aurobindo to employ the spiritual techniques either as therapist or client. The vision is wide enough to embrace all who aspire to the possibility of a "higher consciousness" manifesting to some degree in man whether this aspiration takes the form of the various spiritual persuasions or simply the "ideal" of a more integral and harmonious being. In this regard it is difficult to imagine any person who goes to a therapist with a problem not having at least an implicit faith in attaining a more harmonious state of consciousness.

(To be continued)

CHARLES MALONEY

SEMINAR ON NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

18, 19, 20 February 1975

A WORKING conference of devotees and disciples of the Ashram is to be convened on the next February Darshan occasion, under the auspices of Sri Aurobindo's Action, Sri Aurobindo Society, World-Union, Navajyoti, Auro-Service and Auroville.

The conference will be organised around a seminar which will discuss and present an integrated programme for national reconstruction based upon the Realistic Philosophy and the Yoga of Perfection of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The discussion is to proceed under four heads:

1. *Spiritual*: The sense in which this Philosophy and Yoga represent the fulfilment of the various spiritual traditions of India; India's role in the spiritual evolution of the world and the part that the Ashram and the Ashram community abroad have to play; the way in which the Mother's Birth Centenary occasion can be utilised towards a broader dissemination of the Teaching; practical steps to be initiated.
2. *Social*: Breakdown of social standards; disintegration of political and public values; reasons for this and measures to meet the challenges.
3. *Economic*: Causes of the breakdown of economy; what part we can play in the building up of the industrial, agricultural and commercial potentialities of India.
4. *Education*: Main principles of New Education as enunciated in the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; their applicability at different levels of national education; place of Yoga in the curricula.

The conference will be held on February 18, 19 and 20.

All the invitees and participants will bear their own expenses — this being their service to the Mother.

It is hoped that at the end of this three-day seminar, some substantial and workable programme would be drawn up, fixing responsibilities on our various centres and individual devotees in the carrying out of the programme with the Inspiration flowing from the Ashram and the Force active at this Centre. The conference will ensure follow-up action by constituting a permanent set-up for effective action in the matter.

There will be no delegates' fees.

All friends and well-wishers who wish to participate in the Seminar may kindly inform the Steering Committee. Those who wish to contribute Papers for discussion are requested to send them by 15-1-75.

SRI AUROBINDO'S ACTION
PONDICHERRY - 605002

STEERING COMMITTEE
for Seminar on National Reconstruction

LOTUS-FLAME OR SURYAMAN

(Continued from the issue of November 1974)

BOOK I, CANTO II *(Contd.)*

As yet half-hidden was the Spirit's face,
Half-seen the ray that built the universe.
All yet was an experiment and a quest
With ends unsure, with paths forgotten, unknown,
With a scheme that lived by the hour, the pulsation's point.
All yearned towards the Immortality's skies,
The white vastness of life and light and God.
But now the harrowing pangs of night were past,
The stark eddies that built a transient plan —
Moments of rapture and grim dire distress,
The rootless plant floating in the floods of Chance.
There was a ground where the soul could be and gleam,
Where all could stand upon the rock of bliss,
The soil of joy sprouting with ceaseless life,
The wide greenery of a rediscovered world.
And Lotus-Flame grew up amid the throng
Of men and nature and the ways of earth,
Imbibing all the ancient sphere could yield,
Its slow meandering passage to deathless dreams
And the unconquered vistas of the vast.
Knowledge came to him like a natural stream
Filling his silent cave with flares of thoughts
And strange whisperings sent from distant skies.
All he owned like a familiar firmament;
All turned a portion of his immortal Flame.
Without, the creation moved hesitant, unsure,
Reverting back to its original dusk
Or emerging from the tides of gloaming's shade
Into the fresh sunlight of spirit's space
To fall back into the dungeoned loneliness,
The abysmal vortex of a blind night-scheme
And recurring tides of a slow dubious ascent.
But every time it rose, a new foothold

Was seized, a fresh passage gripped to brighter suns,
 An ampler air lit by the Eternal's smile.
 In him the darkness fled, whipped and expunged.
 All hammerings failed to crumple his edifice' walls.
 Alone he stood naked within his hush
 Communing with his inner solitudes
 And the giant stature of his matchless heights;
 Alone he lived illumined by a power,
 A presence and a white supernal ray,
 A secret smile upon the firmament's face.
 He was its portion and its aureate wave
 Sent out into the grim agonised earth
 Tortured by fate's unchanging iron rule,
 The drunk fiat of an unseeing chance,
 To rouse a splendour in its meandering soul
 And felicity within its ignorant mass,
 So that the creation rose like a giant roused
 Out of the torpor, the vicissitudes of doom.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

SOME NEW PUBLICATIONS:

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THE SECRET SOURCE OF THE GANGES

A QUEST IN A STRANGE LAND

(Continued from the issue of November 1974)

(Transcreated by Gurudas Banerjee from the last chapter of Promode Kumar Chatterjee's book, Gangotri, Jamunotri O Gomukh, first published in April 1950)

2

THE downhill was so pleasant that I wished there would be no upward slope after that. It was then near upon evening; darkness had not yet overcome the fading light, so a long way off in front was still visible, straight, with no obstructions. Far away, below, glimmered a mountain-ringed bowl, a vale in rolling green which with its rich flora presented a magnificent spectacle.

As I said, this slope went down very far, maybe four miles from here, or more. There was not even a blade of grass anywhere on it, nor was there any patch of green on the ash-coloured mountain of a monolith that encircled the entire emerald plain below; nowhere on it was the least crack or gap. That this mountainous wall, of the same height all along, was a work of Nature could be easily conceived when surveyed from here. Espying hazily through the verdure of the plain a high-steeped temple and many buildings, I figured that there should be a big city there where, I guessed, we would go. I wondered if anyone had ever seen this enchanting land; I had never read about it in any itinerary.

As if we had been flying down this scree, we almost reached its foot. Then I perceived, not too far, a running brook. On this side grew not a blade of grass, but on the other side there was a woodland and in it a long white line, probably a path. On the river bank five or six men could be seen. It was not yet dark, but whether that was due to the last rays of the sun or whether it was a full-moon evening was not clear to me.

My life-saver, well before reaching the men, was hailed by them; they lifted their right arms and chanted together some sounds like "Ho-vo!" And as soon as he went close they embraced him. I could not understand if any of them saw me, for nobody spoke to me.

Round in form, waist-high, bowl-like and roomy enough for a dozen people, such was the bark on the stream. My rescuer was the first to board it pulling me along. He sat down while motioning me to sit. The cushion was soft and thick. One of those five men dropped in, but did not sit; he stood there pressing a pole against the rim of the boat which, after taking a full turn, started going. At first it was slow, then it tore like an arrow towards the shore. It did not tilt at all on any side. When it steadily touched the shore I saw two men standing, wearing the same type of costume as my

acquaintance. They too had each of them a stick.

Getting down from the craft my friend was the first to greet them uttering something like "Ho-vo !" They did the same and embraced. Beckoning me to tag on, he companioned them. There was no talking. Now, after such a long time, it dawned upon me that here there was neither winter nor summer. I could clearly recollect how when I had been tramping through the snow my banian had got wet with perspiration. But when I had started down the slope there had not been a drop of perspiration.

Shortly we approached a portal. It had no doors nor sentries, only on its two sides stretched two tall, thick and long walls; it was surmounted by an arch which held a lotus of about a hundred petals. From this entrance ran a path straight to the temple through beautiful natural parks. This portal was not only the gateway of a new land, but of heaven. We entered; instead of stepping on the temple road my friend struck to the right. Soon we faced a tall, big building raised on a higher level. On its four sides was a verandah. Ten steps led to it. He went inside nodding me to sit. The room which he entered had no doors; there was light inside, but of what kind I could not discern.

Not that I had to cool my heels. So many thoughts raced through my mind when suddenly, catching the sound of a female voice, I turned and saw a delectably beautiful damsel standing; with her radiance she lit up the place. Calm like an idol was she. It seemed she was speaking to me. I stood up like an automaton and, when I peered at her questioningly, she smiled and pulled me by my hand.

Unusual and eye-enchanting was her apparel. On her breast was nothing other than garlands and necklaces. From her waist hung something like a skirt down to the knees. Precious jewellery embellished her arms and wrists.

She took me inside. In a corner hung a lamp from the ceiling in a sling. All that I could make out was that it was not an oil lamp. Its light was white emitting bluish rays, but not bright or dazzling. Everything could be clearly seen in it. Nearby before a cushion, on a big lotus leaf, chapatis, etc., were served. First she took me there, then she removed one by one my cap and puggree, and thick overcoat; she went and set them in a hole in the wall leaving them half hanging out. Then she removed my cotton-stuffed shirt, flannel shirt, fatua, twill shirt and even the long-sleeved banian; then she took off my footwear. She flung round me a sheet of fine texture. Words to me were not available to dissuade her from this extravagant empressment. She made me sit down, took my right hand and poured water on it. I washed my hand. She then beckoned me to eat. From the start I had been dazed, so I remained interdict, running short of words to object.

This was an unimaginable incident. Such a Venus had held my hand yet I did not get excited. The why and the how of it is to me still a mystery. That the credit is not mine I know full well. When you come down to it, to what extent one is a sadhu is not unknown to oneself!

Now, when I sat down to eat she moved away. What I ate was delicious. I think

all the items were vegetarian, but I am not certain, because all of them were unfamiliar to me, though all were equally delectable. I stood up after the feast. Instantly she came in; holding again my arm she led me back to the verandah and made me sit on a clean bed; this had been prepared meanwhile, it had not been there before. Gesturing me to lie down she retired.

I sat on the bed reflecting : Today one miracle has succeeded another since my acquaintance with that godlike person in the snows. A series of great and pleasant surprises ensued one after another through sceneries, incidents and gestures — and their spell still remains.

However, soon the exhaustion of the whole day gathered to my eyes. When exactly I sank in my bed I do not remember.

(To be continued)

REPORT ON THE TEACHERS' TEACHING WORKSHOP

Readers may remember a notice in the June-July and August 1974 issues of *Mother India* regarding a Teacher's Teaching Workshop. It was sponsored by World Union International and scheduled for the week of 24-30 October in Pondicherry. The workshop has been held and a report for *Mother India* readers will appear in the March issue.

OPERATION BRIDE*

A SHORT STORY

RAIN came down, suddenly, over Mount Luvurva, amidst the forest not very far from the capital. The wandering prince took shelter under the thick-leaved roof of a stout tree.

He could see, through the screens of rain, something swaying to and fro before him. Couldn't be a plant, for it not only swayed but seemed to prance about too.

And although it pranced about, it couldn't be a deer, for, it giggled so sweetly!

And before long the prince could clearly behold a lovely girl jumping from rock to rock and singing to herself and gazing up at the melting clouds and gazing down at the murmuring brooks.

Shouted the prince, "Hey, girl! Is it proper for you to run about in rain?"

The girl, startled, stopped for a moment, but soon resumed her speed and giggled and replied, "But how sweet are these clouds, rain and wind!" And she ran away like the mountain breeze.

The prince realised that the gale that had blown till then only around him had suddenly started blowing deep within him — and quite a strong gale at that!

He fell into a deep sleep, almost a swoon, he knew not when and for how long. When he opened his eyes, it was bright sunlight again which soon grew brighter.

With a sigh the prince tried to convince himself that the girl he thought he had seen was nothing more than a dream. And with yet another sigh he made a real manly effort to forget all about it.

But just then the girl whisked past racing with a deer.

The prince now breathed in deep and cried out, "Hey, girl! Is it proper to run hither and thither in the midday sun?"

"It is, indeed!" shouted the girl over her shoulder without stopping. And she and her deer disappeared inside the forest in the twinkling of an eye.

The prince cursed his own eyes, "You happen to be the eyes of such an exalted prince, and yet you cannot see through the wood!"

Back at the palace, the prince refused to open his mouth — except for merely eating and drinking. In an oral bulletin, his chief valet gave out that the prince sighed every two minutes and the sighs were becoming fiercer by the hour.

The prime minister told the king confidently, "It is bound to be a case of love at first sight, my lord."

"At first sight, eh? That is what I expect of my son. Promptness in everything. Runs in the family. Now, will you please find out who that lucky girl is? I expect a report before the whole of our sole heir is gone off in sighs."

* From *The Crocodile's Lady and Other Stories* by Manoj Das, to be shortly published by the Sterling Paperbacks, New Delhi. With acknowledgements to The Golden Jubilee Celebrations Souvenir of the Post-Graduate Department of English, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, 1974.

The prime minister reported to the king at night, "I regret to inform you, Your Majesty, that she is neither a princess nor from any noble house. Her father is just a poor wood-cutter living in a lone hut on the hilltop. But, no doubt, she is as beautiful as a fairy."

The king said, "It should not take long to carve a nobleman out of the wood-cutter. But I insist on one condition: the bride must be perfect in health and beauty. For some generations past the scions of this dynasty have not proved any ideal in terms of looks, to be confidentially frank. It was all so comfortable before photography was invented. Look at the oil-paintings on the walls and see how my forefathers have projected themselves — each one as round as the moon.... Now, it is my desire that the prince be married to the most perfect beauty so that we may look forward to comely descendants. You say the wood-cutter's daughter is like a fairy. Is a fairy a perfection of beauty? Well, don't just cook up an answer. I don't care if you are not a pundit on matters of beauty. But send our best experts to the hilltop and find out. In the meanwhile do not overlook the necessity of arranging for adequate oxygen for the sighing prince."

After a month the experts met the king.

"She is wonderful, my lord, but rather too quick-footed and light-minded for the royal family. For no reason whatever she bursts into songs when it rains or when there is a rainbow in the sky. Besides, should a sensible damsel dance with peacocks? But that is exactly what she does."

"Well, we must employ two experts to teach her discipline and etiquette. Till they succeed let a man run behind her holding an umbrella over her head. And expel all the peacocks from the mountain," the king paused and added, "Pity, we cannot erase a rainbow, but she can be given some powerful sedative and locked in a room whenever a rainbow is detected."

"She is wonderful, my lord, but she giggles too much."

"We should send two of the kingdom's most ghastly-looking officers to shadow her constantly and to make faces at her whenever she shows an inclination to giggle. That will surely cure her," said the king.

"She is wonderful, my lord, but only one tooth is slightly bigger than the rest."

"Knock it out and plant in its place one of solid gold," ordered the king.

"She is wonderful, my lord, but there is, quite unreasonably, a small mole on her left eye-lid."

"Plastic surgery, of course," said the king.

"She has had no attacks of appendicitis, my lord, but her grandfather died of it."

"No sense in taking a risk. Remove that organ and forestall any possibility of the attack," said the king.

But there were one hundred members in the committee of experts. One by one they spoke of so many, so varied and so very highly sophisticated defects and possible defects and possibly possible defects that the king soon thought it less trouble to limit his reaction to nodding his head.

The discussions went on till it was dawn. Still they remained inconclusive. It was only while rushing towards their 'conveniences' that they unanimously decided to hand over the responsibility of perfecting the would-be bride to a famous firm of specialists across the seven seas. Cables were exchanged. The firm accepted the offer and a contract was made.

The forest was done away with and a wide smooth road, strong enough for vehicles heavy with huge imported machines and instruments, was laid up to the hilltop. Specialists and experts, from those on skin, heart, nerves, eyes to ones on the arts of smiles and sighs, and eye-brow manipulation, were lodged there in hastily erected air-conditioned bungalows.

And the work of perfecting the bride went on, uninterrupted, for five years, at the end of which the king was informed that the project had been completed.

The date of the wedding was fixed and the prince, led by the king and followed by courtiers, proceeded to the hilltop.

Garland in hand, the bride stood ready to welcome the bridegroom. Amazingly perfect, indeed, she was.

The director of the firm of experts was personally supervising the ceremony. There was sweet music and the bride advanced towards the prince with such dainty steps as if she was treading on eggs.

But just as she was about to put the garland around his eager neck — something inexplicable seemed to happen — she stopped, pale and completely still.

The director, a bit upset but as smart and active as an orchestra-conductor, passed on some hurried instructions to his assistants.

"What is the matter?" queried the king.

"Nothing which can't be put right in a couple of minutes. It is like this: while working on the project we rejected a lot of the old girl — her original heart and liver, for example — apart from her teeth, hair, eyebrows, toes, etc. and put in their places perfect synthetic parts, lasting and insured. In the process, one day, that little old thing available in plenty in every creature — what people call soul — slipped away. But that does not matter. She will speak, sing, walk regally, smile and in fact do everything that is required of a royal bride, for she is powered by the latest super-electronic devices. Once in a while, though, there may be a lag in the relay mechanism for a few seconds which is programmed to correct itself. But look! it has already resumed functioning," jubilantly pointed out the beaming director.

The bride looked bright again as she began to move — stepping forward rhythmically with the soft music.

But the prince! He had collapsed.

"Death due to failure of heart due to a sudden shock due to something inexplicable," pronounced the doctor.

SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

(Continued from the issue of December 1974)

CHAPTER VIII, PART I

ONCE back in the goddess's embrace, the immaterial body of the one who had been Edward Everton went limp as she held him, his tired eyes closed, and he slipped into a dreamless oblivion as he had never done before. For never had any body been as much a prison for his spirit as had been his last. Never had the gifts and boons of the gods that he bore had to remain penned in so small a compass. And never had his soul so pined for its own freedom and its own open expression. Nor had its aspirations ever been so stringently hemmed in, if not denied. The whole life situation had made his innermost being profoundly tired.

While he slept, Silent Daughter cradled his head in her lap as she always did when he returned to her in his exhaustion, and kept passing her hand over his brow, so that with each motion the nectar of new life and strength slowly seeped into him as water into a drooping plant. At last a golden radiance once again began to animate his face, and his limbs and body appeared to swell and pulsate with a revived force. Finally even his eyes opened with their twin flames burning in their depths, and Silent Daughter saw that they were free once again from the soul's suffering, which had mercifully been so short-lived.

He was the first to speak and an urgency rang in his voice. "Beloved," he began, "The Master of the White Lion haunts me even in my sleep. My whole being strains to enter into his service and do his bidding. I feel I must depart immediately."

"Indeed you must, my dearest one. We may converse only a short while before you leave."

"First tell me then — what of yourself? Am I fated once again to go alone?"

"Not alone, my love, for you know I am always with you even when I am without a visible body. But another will accompany you whom you know well and who is of a more practical bent of mind than I. For I assure you, I would be no physical help to you in the life you are about to lead. Instead, Melisande, the flaxen one, shall be your faithful aide in all you do, and shall support your work with her quiet efficiency and her inborn judgment of the forces that move through the earth and men. As for Unicorn he must remain and await a more distant hour like myself, but invisibly he too shall follow you wherever you go, stranger though he will feel in this shiny modern world of metal and glass."

"And my Lord of the White Lion?"

"Physically you will not see him, though he will be on the earth till your thirtieth year. But you shall know him and live for him in your heart. His words shall be in-

scribed upon your soul, and the flame-spear of his aspiring movement shall be flung before advancing mankind by your hand.”

“I could ask for nothing better. Am I to spring then from the soil of my soul’s homeland?”

“One more time will you have to forego that privilege, beloved. You will awaken in the pale-skied lands of Europe’s north, for such is the Divine One’s plan, but you shall grow to move through all the nations of the world.”

“As the Divine One wills. Now I feel my time upon me. I sense the earth stretching out her tentacles to draw me to her. Farewell, most dearly beloved. Come to me again when the light first strikes my infant eyes ... come to me ...” His words trailed in the air as he was pulled forcibly away by an unseen force, and Silent Daughter was left alone, her arms empty of their precious burden, her divine eyes glistening with tears, for it was always a moment of sharp poignancy when a soul departed from her clasp like a small frail ship, for the perilous adventure of a new life.

It was indeed in the lands of the midnight sun that the Golden One awoke and subsequently waited out the years of his infancy and childhood. During that time the still, glacial fjords were his home, as were the dark coniferous forests and the wintry snowfields of northern Norway. Their predominance in a sparsely populated region wafted him back to the primeval ages when man was still young and nature still existed everywhere in her sole and pristine splendour. Here as a child, he found that forest spirits and icy water nymphs abounded as they had done everywhere during those forgotten eras of man’s nativity. Even some ancient memory of Arcadian glades with their dappled woods and torrential streams would return to him when as a young boy he would slip through the dense stands of giant pine. Would he not see Phoebus Apollo once more in the shafts of the morning sun? No, perhaps these white Arctic skies did not appeal to the sun-bright brilliance of the Mediterranean god, nor perhaps would he care to remember that the Norwegian child, Eric, had once spied upon him in the guise of the Argive, Asterion.

On the waters of the fjords, Eric Torgeir felt as content and as distantly pensive as he did among the trees of the forest. His parents owned several small motorized boats, one of which he was allowed to use freely by the time he was twelve — for he was a remarkably solemn and thoughtful boy and his parents trusted him as they would have trusted no other child of his age. Indeed, so proud were they of their son, third of their four children, who was both beautiful as well as exceptionally intelligent, that they nursed secret hopes of his achieving some rare eminence in his future life. But for the time being they had simply allowed him the privilege of a boat of his own plus the fishing tackle that he had learnt to handle so expertly. Thus on the silent waters that passed between the plunging walls of land framing the fjords, Eric would pilot his boat, sometimes in midstream and sometimes in and out of the steep-sided inlets. All the time that he did so, his inner memory would drift back and forth over the living rivers of its own recollection.

He would think of the water on which he navigated as a great highway that led,

beyond the high cliffs, to the ocean and the world outside. Portions of that vivid and multifarious world existed in him as a series of cherished cameos — cameos where warriors fought for their hearts' loves, where joy abounded among throngs of men when the resplendent tropical sun of a god's adoration shone down upon them, and where the Divine One stalked across a luminous plain in the form of a white lion.

Again it was on the waters of the fjords that Silent Daughter came to Eric most often. Yet she dared not present herself to him even now in the full raiment of a goddess for he was still a child — not as he had been in the hands of Shukratma, where she would have been both welcomed and recognized by every portion of his and his guardian's soul, mind and heart — but brought up in Norway by Norwegian parents who knew nothing of such things. Thus, she would have to bide her time before she could assault the conscious mind and being of one brought up in Eric's world. She contented herself, rather, with hovering about him as an invisible presence. The boy for his part felt the warmth of her glow through all his limbs. He became diffused with contentment, joy and security, and, to his credit — for as a child he had retained enough spontaneity to override the little superimposed enclosures of nation and culture — he distinctly felt he was in the company of a presence he knew intimately; and that came to him not through his family or his other human acquaintances, but had come with him through the barrier of birth and had been a part of him ever since he could remember through all the ebb and flow of his recollection. Yet, in the form of a Norwegian boy, he did as he had done in the guise of an American physics professor: he kept his thoughts and inner experiences to himself, confining them to the holiday and afterschool hours he could reserve for his own solitary pursuits.

His contemporaries, of course, had no inkling of his inner life but merely saw him as a good but unobtrusive student. Unlike his parents, they did not allow themselves to be impressed by his brilliance, nor did they note any particular traits of leadership or dominance in him — he was too indrawn for that. But everyone found him likable and he inspired the same trust in those who knew him that he evoked from his family. For this reason, his classmates and teachers delegated to him any duty or errand which demanded reliability and a steady head, and Eric for his part never disappointed them.

By the time he had grown to be a young man and was engaged in studying at the University in Oslo, Germany invaded and occupied Norway in the course of the twentieth century's second cataclysmic war. But due to a fortuitous skiing accident in which he had recently broken his leg Eric was not pressed into service by the Germans. Instead, he was able to quietly pursue his studies, while surreptitiously helping his colleagues in the Norwegian underground. As a result, he was able to qualify for his degree in international relations plus an honorable mention in philosophical studies, despite the din, distractions, and various deprivations of the war. Then in the year and a half that remained before the collapse of the Third Reich, he was permitted to return to the small town of his birth, for he had succeeded in persuading "the authorities" that his leg had set badly and still needed attention. There he continued to

assist the underground in his usual quiet way without visible heroism or fanfare. But now he found that even while collaborating in the destruction of some hated enemy officer his heart was liquid with compassion, and sorrow flowed through the seas of his soul. For some hidden eye within him saw that those who strutted about the streets around him in the guise of victors and subjugators were living out the last pathetic months of their short lives. The dark mantle of death hung about them as surely as it does about the bedside of one in the throes of a fatal disease and, with all that he had known and seen with Silent Daughter, he could even now tangibly feel the Dark Lord's presence whenever death was imminent. Thus in the young faces under the military caps, that represented the flower of Germany's 'Aryan' youth, he sensed the ashen pallor of those that had already consorted with the Dark One and settled the dire hour of a violent and untimely passing. Already to Eric's occult gaze, the black trenches of their graves seemed to gape in the pristine snow of their last winter. Ah, how preordained was defeat and death, he would think. And how, he wondered, was one to mourn this man and not another because humanity, history's pawn, had been compelled to call one a friend and the other a foe? Eric found no joy now in the barbarity of war, for somehow after the long journey through the murky, semi-illuminated ages, even the "enemy" had ceased to be totally a beast, however bestial his apparent acts. By the twentieth century, the yearning, infant man in Kafur had somehow drawn strength from the countless Deogarh's he had besieged and demolished over the last six hundred and fifty years all over the world, until today in the eye of the ruthless conqueror it was possible to discern that the man stood shoulder to shoulder with the panther. Indeed, in the lines of twentieth century man's face, one could read the story of the bitter evolutionary struggle between the two. Each physiognomy was constructed and held together by those lines through which the man had tried so desperately to emerge through the beast and even today so often didn't quite succeed. All this Eric observed and thereby could feel none of the rancour so many of his countrymen nursed within them against the enemy, so soon to become the vanquished.

Then all at once it was over. The marked ones vanished into their appointed graves like voiceless, unremembered phantoms. The sky cleared as though with the sweeping gesture of an Olympian God. And the peoples of Europe were slowly permitted to re-establish their peace-time relations of courteous kinship with one another. The nightmare had passed and, like a nightmare, was forgotten if not the next day, then the day or the year after. In a decade the war, so vivid and hateful at the time, would be looked upon as a dangerous aberration of past history, and man would continue on his way with his happy and childish habit of an almost total non-recollection.

Eric, however, was one of the small number that was perfectly sure of the one conclusion that he had drawn from his observance of World War II, with its extermination camps and the final mushroom-cloud flowering of its atomic research — it must never recur. The time had come when man would decisively have to overpower the beast. Could Eric do anything concretely towards the realization of this conviction? For the time being, he couldn't say, but he had made up his mind that he would

make his start, however small, as a public servant in the Norwegian Government.

A year later he was well settled in Oslo as a junior administrative officer and was watching with keen interest the formation of the United Nations in San Francisco. Already having exhaustively studied the structure and working of the League of Nations while he had been at the University, he was in a position to knowledgeably compare the two bodies and draw his own conclusions as to the chances of success of this most recent attempt at the formulation of a world organization. He even made plans to offer his services to the U.N. as a member of its Secretariat — but then decided he would wait a little longer until he should be more highly trained and experienced. Meanwhile, he would neglect no detail of his present duties, and indeed he was soon being commended by his peers and superiors alike for the same qualities his parents, schoolmates and teachers had noted in him. He could be confided in, trusted, and relied upon to impartially do his best in every situation. No ordinary emotion ever seemed to ruffle him — neither annoyance, jealousy, rancour, or even simple low spirits. To the world the face Eric presented was one of a uniform quietness and courtesy. There were some who would have accused him of an excessive detachment bordering on coldness. But Eric was not really cold, any more than Edward Everton had been. It was merely that he was incapable of taking a partisan view of anything, incapable of jumping on one side or another for emotional reasons. Strangely, there was too much in him of Hiranyamaya and his inborn detachment might have been termed yogic in the most laudable sense. But his true feelings, those that moved him and for which he lived, ran as profoundly and as silently within him as they always had, and patiently awaited the hour of their outward manifestation.

Meanwhile Silent Daughter had gradually begun to reveal herself to him more and more openly, once again through the most easily available channel open to men — the medium of dreams. She assumed a form with which he became as familiar as he already was with her invisible presence, and he accepted her as the cherished companion of his non-waking life. But any further knowledge or recollection she withheld from him, for she well knew how frail though powerful a device was the motivational structure of a man. If interfered with at the wrong moment it could be so impaired that it may cease to goad its possessor altogether. Eric's, for instance, still dwelt in the uncertain grass huts of human idealism. The lofty palaces of divine certainty lay ahead of him, and on no account did Silent Daughter wish to disturb the organic inner flowering that would lead him from one to the other. Today he worked because he wished to serve his people, and he dreamed of going tomorrow to the United Nations so that he might serve the idea of a united world. But the day after when he had seen how far these aspirations would take him, when the human part of him had had time to become tired and worn and disillusioned, what then? Then indeed would the palaces be near at hand, and she had already laid her plans for that crucial time. Meanwhile she strolled in silence beside him in his dreams, and they gazed upon each other like old lovers enwrapped in the peace and delight of the pellucid air in which they met.

Despite their lack of concrete significance, these dreams did not fail to impress Eric. On the contrary they coloured his life fundamentally, until he felt at each moment that he carried about within him the unplumbed and incalculable treasure of an experience and a state of being that made the physical world look pallid by comparison, that rendered many of the preoccupations of other men trivial and uninteresting, and that bore instead the portents of a vast, infinitely superior world which lurked behind visible reality and cried for birth.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

THE TALES OF INDIA

Parts I, II and III

by

Daulat Panday

(Lalita)

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BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Guidance from Sri Aurobindo : Letters to a Young Disciple, *Nagin Doshi*.
Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, India. Price: Rs. 16 (Paperback)
Rs. 20 (Hardcover).

THIS book contains a rare gift, not to be compared with customary forms of literature. It is not a story in which the reader can enter into the author's world of memories and imaginations. It holds a different treasure, a 'guidance' for the spiritual seeker as its title aptly implies. It is in fact a text-book for Yoga.

This gift is invaluable. One receives a collection of absolutely precise and patient replies — advice given by the Spiritual Master to his young disciple.

Here the heart sits up and listens. For who could not treat this flow of pure nectar with the utmost reverence and gratitude? For this young devotee, now a man with many years of guided experience behind him, permits his image to stand naked before the reader, so that he may share his knowledge with other longing souls. Knowledge that he was so fortunate to receive from the pen of no less a spiritual light than Sri Aurobindo.

Indeed, Sri Aurobindo must not be thought of in the usual sense of the Guru, in the manner in which India has known Gurus in the past. For this Avatar, spiritual pioneer of the future's super-humanity, little encouraged the customary guru-disciple relationship. He clearly stated that this was not his work. Thus his sacrifice in replying to the thousands of letters he received must be considered with due gratitude.

Right at the outset, when reading the modestly few lines of Nagin Doshi's Introduction, one is deeply moved by the 14-year-old boy's realisation of a simple fact, which made him return to the feet of his Masters, not more than two days following his return to the parental home. As he writes, "I hurried back here with the full realisation, that I could not possibly live either happily or unhappily without the Mother and Sri Aurobindo." Immediately this grips the heart with the familiar tone of those who recognise the nature of this irresistible call.

From the beginning one is impressed by the fact that there is no irrelevancy. Not one word other than the truth comes from this great source of light. Concise answers given to the penetrating and vitally relevant questions that most of us would like to ask.

Herein lies a clear indication that it is not 'years' which bring one to the guided presence, but the soul when it is ready to answer the call. Fortunate and few indeed are the ones who, having found it, have also the steadfast strength required to remain with it, come what may. Until there finally comes a stage, as it came to Doshi, when one cannot possibly live either 'happily or unhappily' without it.

Let the reader answer his own question. How many would forgo what men call the 'sweet life', in exchange for that other infinitely sweeter inner life? Again we have the clear indication that it is the inner being, whom Sri Aurobindo called "the psychic

being, God's representative in incarnation" who takes the stand. Not the outer man, although he must be won over and reconciled and give his consent to the scheme.

The process of winning him over is the sadhana, and that is what this book of letters is all about.

The young sadhak's enquiries reveal his inner state. The questions relating to his problems and inner experiences are profound and intelligent, far surpassing the usual mental capacity of a boy of that age. And there is a wealth of illuminating replies given to them without reproach or any sign of impatience. Nothing is insignificant in Sri Aurobindo's eyes, no problem too small for his heights. He replied to everything, meeting the questions at the level to which he descended, in order to carry out his work, and where he could be understood — yet at the same time bringing the replies down from far above the realm of the limited minds of men, whom he loved and patiently addressed.

The love of a father, the wisdom of a teacher and the guidance of a friend flow through the book. Sometimes it is seasoned with his wonderful humour, at other times he gently teases the mischievous intellect. When one reads Sri Aurobindo's letters, no matter how brief, one cannot help receiving his superior light. For he never wasted words. Sometimes a one-sentence reply would suffice him to crystallize a concept, or describe a state relating to Yogic development, yet it was vast enough to fill a book with commentaries on each one. But is it not true — what the wise men have always stated throughout the ages — that "There is only Love and there is Truth, and all the rest is commentary"?¹

Can we say that we have embraced the state of existence where truth is expressed in symbol and replaces the gush of mental stuff which fills our lives? One cannot help thinking, when reading Sri Aurobindo, that even at the apex of our mental emanations we could not soar near the peak of his reality, from which he throws light, just in passing as it were, in one brief statement. The vistas which open beyond them are there to be discovered by each one in the times that lie ahead.

Here is ample food for the hungry. Food enough to sustain all those in need of it. Arguments on "Human Greatness", questions such as "What forces are at work in the cosmos?" and "What brings about death?" Sri Aurobindo answers them with patience and accuracy. To the first question: "There are higher forces of the Divine Nature — the forces of Light, Truth, Divine Power, Peace, Ananda — there are forces of the lower nature which belong either to the lower truth or to the ignorance and error — there are also hostile forces whose whole aim is to maintain the reign of Darkness, Falsehood, Death and Suffering as law of life."² To the second: "It is decay of the body or illness or violence or accident. The last three are special attacks of the hostile forces. The other is the pressure of the lower nature."³ One cannot but admit the authenticity of his replies.

Questions of Doshi's relating to "the Central Being and the psychic being" and "what is the difference between the Supermind and Overmind" clarify for the student

¹ The Talmud. ² p. 2 ³ p. 5.

certain important concepts. Sri Aurobindo's reply: "The Supermind is the total Truth Consciousness; the Overmind draws down the truths separately and gives them a separate activity — e.g. in the Supermind the Divine Peace and Power, Knowledge and Will are one. In the Overmind each of these becomes a separate aspect which can exist or act on its own lines apart from the others. When it comes down to Mind they turn into an ignorance and incapacity — because Knowledge can come without a will to support it or Peace can be disturbed by the action of Power etc."¹

Reading this book is a concentration and a meditation. One may take from it small or large doses, according to one's need, but not even the most sceptical mind can treat it with indifference. The urgent need of its comprehension and illumination may not be felt today, but felt it must be, for the doors upon the soul's inner light and truth may open up slowly and one by one, but open they must — and they will do so for all men, when it is time for them to receive the sun, that Spirit of Sri Aurobindo shining upon them.

Nagin Doshi has made a portion of his own illumination available to us.

GEORGETTE COTY

Divya Jivan: Hindi translation of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, Vol. II Part 2 by K. D. Acharya. Published by Divya-Jivan Sahitya Prakashan, Pondicherry — 2. Pages 520. Price Rs. 35.

The Life Divine of Sri Aurobindo has been rightly acclaimed the greatest work in philosophy in the twentieth century, bridging the gulf between matter and spirit, between man and God, between Earth and Heaven, between the spiritual wisdom of the East and the scientific knowledge of the West. This treatise presents the vision of the Divine Life, the materialisation of which has been attempted for humanity by the askesis of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It describes this Universe as a sub-expression of Sat-Chit-Ananda; through the process of Sachchidananda's involution of itself this material world has come into being and through the process of evolution it is moving slowly but steadily towards a divine perfection. Sri Aurobindo shows to suffering and struggling humanity the way towards the manifestation of the divinity concealed within it. His masterpiece gives the message and the hope of the appearance of a Divine Race, a Divine Age, a Divine Rule, the Kingdom of God upon earth in the near future — the Life Divine, as the very name of the book suggests.

But its complex language, expressing subtle and novel and many-faceted ideas and rapidly moving from one philosophy to another, from philosophy to science and from the known to rare dimensions of illumined knowledge, presents difficulties in an age of facile reading and tabloid information. To translate such a classical work, conceived and executed with a profound mastery over English, into an Indian language is a most arduous task. Only a highly gifted scholar steeped in its concepts and its forms of speech can do it successfully. It is a matter of great satisfaction that

¹ p. 256-7

K. D. Acharya, who published his translation of Volume I in 1971, Volume II Part 1 in 1972 and Volume II, Part 2 (the book under review) during 1974, is one of the few fitted for the task.

With a very good understanding of the English language, a deep study of Indian as well as Western philosophies, a mastery over Sanskrit and Hindi, Acharya has successfully dealt with the problem of finding the appropriate equivalents for the terms used by Sri Aurobindo in his *magnum opus*. He has selected them from the ancient Indian literature or, where they were lacking, coined new ones from Sanskrit roots. His sadhana under the guidance of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for more than thirty years and his deep reflection and meditation on each and every word and idea of the book have enabled his mind to plunge deep into their heart and bring their hidden secrets to the surface. His teaching and preaching of its contents have given him a power to carry a lucidity and clarity in his language — while following faithfully and closely the letter and the spirit of the text — qualities which can rarely be found in the translation of such a classical work.

Apart from all this, there is a special grace of Sri Aurobindo behind his work, for, in 1942 the Master gave him the three volumes of the book with his autographs for the purpose, and the Mother later blessed him by writing, “My blessings for the translation of *The Life Divine*.” All these factors have thus helped him bring into his translation such light and force (Tejas) that it looks like the original work of an extremely accomplished writer.

Two appendices added at the end of the book help the reader to understand it more clearly. In one Acharya has explained — giving necessary references from the writings of Sri Aurobindo or other relevant books — words and ideas which could not be made clear in the translation and which otherwise would remain vague and burdensome to the reader’s mind. The second appendix contains a long list of Hindi words with their equivalents in English used by Sri Aurobindo in his original work. Apart from the two appendices, Acharya has written in the beginning an introduction of twenty-five pages which gives in brief the whole philosophy of the book and helps the reader’s mind to proceed in the right direction to understand it.

Acharya has thus taken all pains to make his translation perfect in every possible manner so that it may not only satisfy the needs of keen intellectual seekers but be equally useful for ordinary readers. It is therefore capturing more and more the attention of educated people and scholars so much so that several Universities have prescribed it as a text-book for Post-Graduate classes of Philosophy and are using it for higher research and advanced studies. No other translation of *The Life Divine* in the Indian languages has perhaps won this credit.

Acharya Keshava Deva deserves to be complimented on his achievement; his translation of what has been hailed as the “greatest book of the Age” is a solid contribution to the national language, and an asset to all Libraries that seek to answer the needs of advanced studies in Philosophy and Spirituality.

DR. R. C. TRIVEDI

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of December 1974)

Universal Education

WE have said something about the future education. Now we proceed to understand the implications of the concept of universal education.

In response to the need of the time, more and more countries are moving towards the goal of universal education. Those responsible for the education of tomorrow must infuse into the students a new life-breath, a new vision of life. Their training must lead to a unity of souls, for the destiny of all is the same spiritual fulfilment.

The world needs a new species of highly evolved human beings who will be the pioneers of a new civilisation, harbingers of a new race of the sons of God.

As modern education has thrown up giant figures who have changed the very face of the world within a century or two, let us entertain the hope that universal education will produce men endowed with universal qualities. The world is in dire need of such leaders who are men of vision, who think and act for all, love all, and not themselves and their country alone. Each of them will be a light. One who has no light himself, how can he bring light to others? Above all, universal education must arouse in the students the spirit of oneness and vastness.

Is it a mere dream? Something impractical?

All great deeds of the world were at one or another time a dream of someone. Sri Aurobindo does not think this is an unrealisable dream. He¹ asserts about each of us: “The subliminal mind in us is open to the universal knowledge.” Sri Aurobindo’s yoga invites the great minds of the world to make that discovery. The future expects that they will rise to the occasion, accept the challenge and set themselves to discover their subliminal parts with the same maddening zeal with which they have been exploring the mystery of Nature—and, today, of outer space in particular. When modern science is hopeful of awakening inanimate matter to life and creating life synthetically, why should it prove an impossibility to acquire knowledge that will bring a unity of souls? The soul always cries for something higher but Nature and the destiny of man war with each other. How to bring unity in these warring parts in us is the real issue.

World Unity

Man has been seeking unity from time immemorial in diverse ways. Mention is there in our Puranas (legends) about *digvijay* (world conquest). Great monarchs pledged themselves to bringing unity by world conquest. There is no recorded history of their achievements. History tells us of the first attempt towards this by the great Persian Emperor Cyrus in the 6th Century B.C. His successor Darius

¹ Sri Aurobindo: *The Life Divine* (American Ed), p. 934.

Hystaspes created perhaps the largest interconnected land-empire known.

The next attempt was made by world religions — projecting the great ideal of brotherhood. Some religions (Islam and Christianity) did not hesitate to use arms to bring other nations within their fold. Buddhism became the most wide-spread of all religions because of its universal appeal of brotherhood and compassion. World-conquest by self-conquest has always been the special trait of the Indian religious spirit. The 20th Century tried to bring unity through ideology. Communism attempted to convert the whole world to its way of thinking but neither physical conquest, nor religious conversion nor ideological propaganda has so far succeeded in bringing the unity of human beings. Mankind, says Sri Aurobindo, has been experimenting with various kinds of thoughts, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of perfection. Nowhere has it succeeded in realising the ultimate secret of life. Nowhere has it found satisfaction.

Now let us see what chances are there for spirituality to succeed where other means have failed.

The Life Divine has the passage: “There is an all-seeing purpose in the terrestrial creation, a divine plan is working itself out through the contradictions and perplexities ...”. And it can be safely asserted that “the divine plan” cannot fail, however colossal the crises.

Sri Aurobindo’s Vision of the Future

The tragedy of the situation is that formerly a world crisis took place once in a century or two. Now there is no end of problems; some have developed into a world crisis. Sri Aurobindo does not take an alarming view of the situation. According to him this is not a man-made crisis but an evolutionary crisis. The more the awakening of the collective consciousness, the more bitter the struggle. It has to be worked out so that the universe might evolve on new lines, new principles, leaving the old world behind, and enter a new one.

Animals have no problems except food. The gods have no problems, for they are satisfied with their status. It is man who is unable to remain contented with mere “animal enjoyments” and with what he is. It is the evolutionary nature that compels him to march on, however painful the journey. He must climb the high hill, rise ever higher, up to the highest peak. Infinite is his thirst for the Infinite.

By close study one may mark that after almost every world crisis there has been the emergence of a new world order. Has the world not grown stronger after the First World War? Do we find the world the same as what it was after the second World War? Have we not entered the Space Age?

As the crisis deepens, Sri Aurobindo emphasises that there will be more and more realisation of the fact that “The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality.”¹ The trend seems to be towards universal

¹ *Ibid.*

education but Roger Savery points out: "the claims of universal education are too often overruled by the demand for immediate tangible benefits."¹

The only instrument the soul could utilise so far are mind and life. Till the soul finds an instrument of a higher faculty there will be no end to crises. This is the considered view of Sri Aurobindo the Seer of the Age. The ideal may be explained with the help of his vibrant words.

"A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being is the only truth that can successfully replace" the modern civilisation which is a creation of the mind. "It is such a change and such a reshaping of life for which humanity is blindly beginning to seek, now more and more, with a sense that its very existence depends upon finding the way."²

"Science and education" have so far been used to raise the status of man economically, now they should be used for the growth of consciousness, "the awakening of the knowledge of the self, the discovery of the self and the release of its self-power". It is a step for which the whole evolution has been a preparation and which is brought closer at each crisis of human destiny.

World University

"A university should be a place of light, of liberty and learning" (Benjamin Disraeli): There is talk in the air about universal education. But an inescapable question poses itself. What will be the purpose of universal education? In what respect will a World University differ from a National University?

The universal crisis of today demands universal education leading to a World University, a World Union, a World State, a World Government. This may set the stage for the development of an international consciousness. It must lead to the concept that there is one science, one spirituality and one destiny for all.

In Nordenfjord World University in Denmark in August 1973, a conference which was attended by 36 participants from nine countries was held on: Alternative Designs for World Colleges and Universities.

It found that "the regional educational system was incapable of solving world problems and issues from World perspective. Despite all worthy efforts they are limitedly national and regional pressures leaving a critical need for radically new approaches to an education for living together in one World."

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ *Prospectus: Quarterly Review of Education*. UNESCO, Vol III, no, 2, P. 209.

² *The Life Divine*, p. 934.

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

THIRTIETH SEMINAR

21st April 1974

IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

SPEECH BY MAURICE SHUKLA

(Continued from the issue of December 1974)

MAN must first get a clear picture of the enmeshing net of Ignorance he is trapped in, only then can he consciously make an attempt towards Knowledge. Human ignorance, according to Sri Aurobindo, is sevenfold. "We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming; we take partial facts of being, temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence, — that is the first, the original ignorance. We are ignorant of the spaceless, timeless, immobile and immutable Self; we take the constant mobility and mutation of the cosmic becoming in Time and Space for the whole truth of existence, — that is the second, the cosmic ignorance. We are ignorant of our universal self, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; we take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as not-self, — that is the third, the egoistic ignorance. We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time; we take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space, for our beginning, our middle and our end, — that is the fourth, the temporal ignorance. Even within this brief temporal becoming we are ignorant of our large and complex being, of that in us which is superconscient, subconscient, intraconscient, circumconscient to our surface becoming; we take that surface becoming with its small selection of overtly mentalised experiences for our whole existence, — that is the fifth, the psychological ignorance. We are ignorant of the true constitution of our becoming; we take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle or the whole account of what we are, losing sight of that which constitutes them and determines by its occult presence and is meant to determine sovereignly by its emergence their operations, — that is the sixth, the constitutional ignorance. As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world; we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questionings of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, fol-

low a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal, — that is the seventh, the practical ignorance.”¹

Of these seven ignorances we would best concentrate on the psychological and constitutional ignorances only because they are the most important, in the sense that if they were removed the remaining ones would naturally disappear.

Our understanding of the psychological nature of the individual is extremely limited and superficial. We see him only in his surface existence which is “a mere result of selective outer experiences, an imperfect sounding-board or a hasty, incompetent and fragmentary translation of a little out of the much we are”.² What we know of the individual is an insignificant amalgamation of certain dominant mental and vital ideas, desires and emotions arranged in a “disorganised order”. The outer mind, vital and the physical body are according to our understanding his first and last constituents. This is a totally false view of his personality. Even the Western psychologists have arrived at the conclusion that man’s consciousness is not only what it outwardly appears to be but that it is like an iceberg. Sri Aurobindo has a still more felicitous and appropriate simile for this. He says: “Our mind and ego are like the crown and dome of a temple jutting out from the waves while the great body of the building is submerged under the surface of the waters.”³

The outer egoistic personality is a distorted fragmentary projection from within for a surface use. The divinities are seated deep within inside the temple of the being, but by unduly stressing the frontal consciousness the individual eclipses and obscures those vast inner ranges in which lie hidden the endless riches of conscious knowledge, power and bliss. But to realise the extensive powers and potentialities that are concealed within, he has to unlock the door of his inner consciousness. Only then will he perceive that behind our normal external consciousness there stretch out vast regions of wondrous realities.

On all the levels of being there is an outer and a corresponding inner consciousness. Behind the external mental, vital and physical states of being there is a subliminal state of being where man becomes aware of an inner mind, an inner vital and an inner or subtle physical.

The subliminal mind is a much more effective, complex and luminous instrument of knowledge than the outer mind; it is not bounded or hampered by the limitations that the latter is subjected to. Its workings are of a wider, more profoundly intuitive and powerfully intimate nature. The subliminal life or vital being is not “cabined between the narrow boundaries of our physical birth and death”.⁴ Similarly the subliminal physical, behind the external physical body, is more subtle, self-sustaining and powerful; this subtle physical in fact is the source of the substance not only of our physical but of our vital and mental sheaths as well. Our subliminal part — although it has obscure and submerged regions below it, the chaotic inarticulate subconscious and the nether original Inconscience — is nevertheless in its own brighter realms a

¹ *The Life Divine* (American Edition, 1949), pp. 583-84. ² *Ibid.*, p. 205.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 496-97 ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

consciousness much more in possession of itself and things than the outward mental vital or physical consciousness. Nothing escapes its grasp and perception; all that touches or influences us is caught and absorbed by this vigilant self-conscious part. It retains the memory of all the experiences that the outer personality has missed or forgotten, ready to hand for use. The subliminal intelligence is not dependent on the physical senses for knowledge and perception, it has extra-sensorial powers at its command which gives man a more profound, direct and intuitively intimate understanding of things. Its "comprehensive extended memory", its "subtle-sense and perception", its "intensive selecting intelligence, will and self-consciousness" are more wide, developed and self-mastered than the instrumental capacities of the outer being.

This inner subliminal being is supported from behind by a subliminal soul which is not the outer desire-soul which craves for an ego-centric understanding and satisfaction of desires and ideas and feelings. That subliminal soul, often called the psychic being, is neither the mind nor the vital being nor the body but something which supports all these and "holds in itself the opening and flowering of the essence of all these to their own peculiar delight of self, to light, to love, to joy and beauty and to a refined purity of being".¹ It absorbs the quintessence or *rasa* of all experience and stores it within itself as a source of replenishing joy, knowledge, and strength. Our true individuality lies in this part of the being situated deep within the inmost temple of the heart. The soul is a spark of the Divine Himself, the flame of the Godhead ever burning in us and aspiring and striving ceaselessly to turn Ignorance and suffering into Knowledge and Bliss by its divine alchemy. The soul is "the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic".² Delegated as the deputy of the Supreme, it is the true original Conscience, greater and more profound than the "conventional conscience of the moralist" and it always takes us nearer to a world of an ever-increasing Light, Beauty, Harmony, Love, Freedom, Knowledge, Power, Truth and Bliss. The mystic seers, sages and saints live guided by this psychic principle. Poets and artists in their moments of grandeur and inspiration create from this inexhaustible source of Beauty and Joy. An intimate awareness of our psychic being opens us to the knowledge of the self and the world and the Divine. Bathed by its effulgent light and pure ecstatic love, we are made ready instruments of the Supreme for transfiguring earthly life into life divine.

The central being of man has two aspects — the Jivatman or the individual Self which is self-existent and above the evolving manifestation and the psychic being or the Chaitya Purusha which as a deputy of that Self participates in the evolving manifestation. When the individual lives in his soul or the psychic being, he not only realises through it his own real individuality, his Self, but through that Self he becomes one with the Cosmic Self and Consciousness. Then his subliminal mind communes with the universal knowledge of the Cosmic Mind, his subliminal life mingles with the

¹ *Ibid.* ² *Ibid.*, p. 207.

universal force of the Cosmic Life, and his subliminal body is fused with the universal force-formation of the Cosmic Matter. The subliminal soul dallies in harmony with the Cosmic Soul of the world and takes into itself and transcends all the myriad multiplicity of the universe. The contradiction and opposition between the collectivity and the individual is resolved and cosmic oneness and sympathy become an inherent truth of being. The inner state of equanimity and freedom from the dualities enables him to take all life into himself while still retaining his spiritual individuality. And even when he embraces the world of suffering and pain and obscurity he is not affected by it, for he remains untouched by the Ignorance.

There is in man, besides the subliminal range of consciousness, the range of an enveloping consciousness called by Sri Aurobindo "the circumconscient" in which his hidden relations with the world are determined. It is only by becoming aware of this consciousness — often called the environmental consciousness — that the individual can freely communicate with the universal consciousness and control his interchange with the universal forces.

Beyond all these planes is the superconscient which is also a part of our total being. In it we are in possession of our supreme highest Reality which we variously term Oversoul, God or Brahman. It is on this plane that we become aware of our Jivatman too, who is eternally in total identity with the supreme Spirit or the Paramatman. "If the subliminal and subconscient may be compared to a sea which throws up the waves of our surface mental existence, the superconscience may be compared to an ether which constitutes, contains, over-roofs, inhabits and determines the movements of the sea and its waves."¹

It is the vast totality of these manifold ranges of our being that constitute our real 'I', the spiritual individuality, and it is in the luminous possession of this divine personality that lies the immense importance of the individual. As long as man lives in the mere surface mental and egoistic consciousness and obstinately clings on to the false idea that all consciousness is only mental, he cannot lay a claim to being the highest evolved entity in God's creation, and as long as he is not that the Divine Purpose of changing our present ignorant life into a Truth-Conscious Life Divine will ever remain a distant fantastical utopia or, as Sri Aurobindo puts it, a 'noble chimera'.

(Concluded)

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 501