

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

MARCH 1975

Price : Rs. 1-75

LIFE-MEMBERSHIP RATES

Inland : Rs. 250/-
Overseas : £ 28 (Sea-mail).
: \$ 70 (Sea-mail).

OVERSEAS AIR-MAIL

Owing to the rise in postal rates, the revised

Air-mail charges are:

Overseas Life-Membership: £ 91 and \$ 238,
Overseas Yearly Subscription: £ 6. 50 and \$ 17.

Posting Date for MOTHER INDIA:

26th to 28th of the preceding month.

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

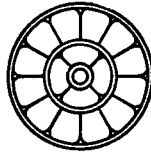
All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-605002, India

Editor's Phone: 782

Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

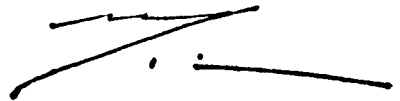


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXVII

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
WORDS OF THE MOTHER	... 189
THE PSYCHIC AND THE SUPRAMENTAL IN OUR YOGA: TWO LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO	... 190
THE LAST HANDWRITTEN LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO TO AMAL: MARCH 18, 1945	... 190
FROM SRI AUROBINDO TO ESHA: LETTERS TO A CHILD	... 191
SOME DIARY NOTES: MARCH 26, 1956 — MARCH 29, 1956 — APRIL 5, 1956 — MAY 24, 1956 — MAY 30, 1956 — NOVEMBER 25, 1956 — NOVEMBER 26, 1956	<i>Amal Kiran</i> ... 193
TO THE LIGHT (Poem)	<i>Alab</i> ... 198
REMEMBERING THE FUTURE: LETTER TO AN AMERICAN SCHOOLTEACHER, FROM PEACE, AUROVILLE, CITY OF DAWN RISING IN INDIA	<i>Seyril</i> ... 199
SOME THOUGHTS ON AUROVILLE AND EDUCATION	<i>Shraddhavan</i> ... 203
THE TEACHERS REPORT ON THE TEACHERS' TEACHING WORKSHOP	<i>Ronald Jorgensen</i> ... 205
UTOPIA OR OBLIVION?	<i>Rod</i> ... 209
HILL-SONG (Poem)	<i>Jean</i> ... 214

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
BEHOLD! ATHENS IN THE SOUL OF JERUSALEM! <i>Jehangir N. Chubb</i>	... 215
THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE: A SEARCH APROPOS OF R. C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN <i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 217
EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY <i>Charles Maloney</i>	... 223
LOTUS-FLAME OR SURYAMAN (Poem) <i>Romen</i>	... 226
NOTICE <i>Huta</i>	... 227
EUROPE 1974: A TRAVELOGUE <i>Sanat K. Banerji</i>	... 228
YOU CAN'T HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS (Poem) <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>	... 233
THE SECRET SOURCE OF THE GANGES: A QUEST IN A STRANGE LAND (Transcreated by Gurudas Banerjee from the Bengali) <i>Promode K. Chatterjee</i>	... 234
THE MAGIC CRYSTAL: A STORY FOR CHILDREN <i>Michel Klostermann</i>	... 236
SEVEN LIVES: A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL <i>Bina Bragg</i>	... 240
"LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL": UNIVERSAL EDUCATION <i>Narayan Prasad</i>	... 245

STUDENTS' SECTION

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION, THIRTIETH SEMINAR, 21ST APRIL 1974: "IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL" — SPEECH BY SACHCHIDANANDA MOHANTY <div style="text-align: right;"><i>Compiled by Kishor Gandhi</i></div>	... 249
---	---------

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

You can say to X, on my behalf, that he must look at this apparently unhappy circumstance as the proof that the Lord considers that he is ready for spiritual life and that he must no more be attached to any exterior or material thing.

If he takes things in that way, he will soon feel that all sorrow is gone away from him.

*
**

Stop fearing and the bothers will stop also.
A child of mine cannot fear.

*
**

Never grumble. All sorts of forces enter you when you grumble and they pull you down. Keep smiling. I seem always to be joking but it is not mere joking. It is a confidence born from the psychic. A smile expresses the faith that nothing can stand against the Divine.

THE PSYCHIC AND THE SUPRAMENTAL IN OUR YOGA

TWO LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

IN this Yoga the psychic is that which opens the rest of the nature to the Supramental Light and finally to the Supreme Ananda. If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic, then this Yoga can be done; otherwise it is impossible.

★

No sadhak can reach the supermind by his own efforts and the effort to do it by personal tapasya has been the source of many mishaps. One has to go quietly stage by stage until the being is ready and even then it is only the Grace that can bring about the real supramental change.

THE LAST HANDWRITTEN LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO TO AMAL

MARCH 18, 1945

DON'T wait for any poems for your Annual, I think the Pondicherry poets will have to march without a captain, unless you take the lead. I have been hunting among a number of poems which I perpetrated at intervals, mostly sonnets, but I am altogether dissatisfied with the inspiration which led me to perpetrate them, none of them is in my present opinion good enough to publish, at any rate in their present form, and I am too busy to recast, especially as poetically I am very much taken up with "Savitri" which is attaining a giant stature, she has grown immensely since you last saw the baby. I am besides revising and revising without end so as to let nothing pass which is not up to the mark. And I have much else to do.

FROM SRI AUROBINDO TO ESHA

LETTERS TO A CHILD

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1975)

(These letters were written in Bengali by Sri Aurobindo to Dilip Kumar Roy's niece, Esha. She was about six or seven years old when she came to the Ashram with her parents — most probably in 1930. She was the first child who received letters from Sri Aurobindo in Bengali. As will be seen from the letters, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo took special interest in her and considered her an extraordinary girl.)

17-5-1936

WHY have you written that we're annoyed with you? We never were nor are we now angry with you, there is no reason for annoyance, you haven't done anything wrong.

Did you not get my letter yesterday morning? I certainly wrote to you, about our love, also that you would attain union with us. Anyway, I'm writing the same thing again, we love you very much and that love will always remain unimpaired. Don't be sad or give any quarter to hopelessness in your mind. Foster this firm faith always in the mind — "I shall certainly attain union with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, shall have their vision even though I stay far from them." Remember us always, look towards us always. Those who do so achieve unity with us, you'll also do the same. And if you do this, it is very likely that there'll be such a combination of circumstances that you'll be able to come here and have our darshan. Come tomorrow definitely and see the Mother.

*
**

I could not reply to your letters because till now I had work all day every day. It is the same even now, but there is a little respite today, it being a Sunday; that is why I am writing a few lines.

Why do you feel sad if you think of us or see us in dreams? It should be a matter of joy that the Mother came to you in a dream. Don't allow yourself to be sad because you will not see us now. Remain calm, believing that the Mother is remembering you, loving you, is near you always; wait for the right moment; what obstacles are there now will not be there always.

Remember the Mother at all times, rely on her. If there is constant remembrance, one day you will see her, see her within yourself too.

*
**

Look, if I see you, will anybody else spare me? Won't they say, "You have seen Esha and you can't see us? What is this arrangement? Why this injustice! Aren't we also human beings?" And then when one hundred and fifty people will come crowding onto me, what will be my fate? Just think about it and tell me.

I have to write a long letter in Bengali? Have I got that capacity or the time? I am at the end of my tether trying to write this small one, the night also is over. All right, this time I have somehow written in Bengali, but I warn you that I shall not be able to do such an exercise again

*
**

I haven't been able to write to you for a long time — I wanted to but couldn't manage. This time more than seven hundred people have come for darshan — many came long before the 15th, many have stayed on even after that date till today, now they are departing. That is why there was a great deal of additional work. The Ashram work also increased a lot. It could not be finished in spite of working all day and night. That is why I couldn't write to anyone outside. Now it has eased a bit, I can therefore write this letter. But the decrease in work is very little. I still have a good deal of necessary work, can't finish it, can't find the time yet.

I can't understand why you haven't received Jyotirmoyee's letter and the flower sent by her — but you may have perhaps received the letter sent meanwhile, she must have given her own explanation.

I hope you are well. Even if you can't get fixed times to call the Mother, call her always and try to offer all your life and all your work to her.

*
**

Pondicherry, 4-8-1935

No, why should we be angry with you? I was very busy, there was no time to write. Even now I am indeed very busy because it is a darshan month. This time many people are coming for darshan. I hope your health will be better than it is now. You have written that you were ill twice recently — see to it that you keep good health. You have written that you will go to Ranchi. When will you go and for how long will you stay there?

Don't be anxious or sad because of the present condition. Remain calm and content, relying entirely on the Mother, wait for better times. One day you will certainly see her. Those who rely on her firmly and call her, they reach her at the end. There may be many obstacles and many upsets in life in this world, it may take time, but even then they will achieve nearness to the Mother.

(Translated by Arindam Basu)

SOME DIARY NOTES

March 26, 1956

YESTERDAY morning I wrote to the Mother, asking what had happened on February 29. I opined that it was something connected with the Supermind's gripping the physical vital.

In the evening after tennis the Mother passed by, smiling — and said: "You are behind by a century."

I gave her a note at the time of groundnut-distribution: "From what you said after tennis, I feel sure that the whole blooming thing has come down. Hurrah! And now there is hope for such as I."

She read the note and laughed and said: "Years ago I had told you that I would call you from wherever you would be when the Supermind came. So I did call you. But you didn't understand."

I replied: "Mother, I returned from Bombay as soon as I could. And on the very day of the descent — February 29 — I saw you standing in the railway compartment of the Bombay Mail in which I had left Madras."

"Oh it was the same day? It is very good that you saw me."

I may record that in 1938, before I left for Bombay at the end of February, the Mother promised to call me back if the Supermind came down. She was expecting the descent some time in May. I, however, got no telegram — and Sri Aurobindo's letter to me said that the event expected had not happened.

I learnt many years later that the Supermind had come but could not be fixed here.

Now, on February 29 this year, late in the evening, it came for good! What Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had worked for during 30 years happened at last.

I wonder when the world will realise that in 1956 the greatest event in its history took place. Of course the *detailed* working out of the Supermind upon earth and even in the Mother's body will take long, but the full general presence of it in her is there now and also its general working on ourselves and the world.

There is now hope for the weakest amongst us, for the Supermind is above the universe's laws and brings sheer omnipotence to our aid.

It seems that three immediate effects are possible. One is a sudden and radical clearing of difficulties. Another is a slow but quite perceptibly sure clearing. Still another is a final gathering up of difficulties prior to their clearance: difficulties may appear to increase, but really what will take place is like one's sweeping together the dust of a room before throwing it out. One must have no fear but face everything with faith and certitude.

I find examples of all these effects here. I myself feel the second effect.

I can hardly contain myself with joy at the Mother's victory. May all our hearts belong to her!

March 29, 1956

THIS morning the Mother distributed at Pranam time the printed copy of a painting by Krishnalal, "The Golden Purusha", with a quotation in French and English from an old "Prayer and Meditation" of her own, dated September 25, 1914 and beginning "O divine adorable Mère" — "O divine and adorable Mother". The English version ran:

The Lord has willed and Thou dost execute.
A new light shall break upon the earth,
A new world shall be born,
And the things that were promised shall be fulfilled.

After the Pranam the Mother went up. Those who daily met her on the first floor gathered there as usual. She sat in her chair to hear, as she did every day, the reports from various departments. But before starting the work she asked from each one present the copy of the message. In her own hand she scratched out certain words in the French original and substituted others. When she came to the English version she consulted her disciples about the right turns of expression for the change needed. I was sitting at the door of Sri Aurobindo's room, from where the Mother at work with the department-representatives could be seen. She called me and I contributed my bit to the suggestions given. The English message now read in its altered form:

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.

The transformation of the future tense into the present marked the Mother's first open disclosure of what had taken place on February 29. But we were asked not to broadcast the disclosure. She particularly told me that the changes done in the texts were not for general circulation yet. As the editor of *Mother India* I must have been suspected of the journalist's itch for a "scoop". I promised to keep the "secret". It was understood that on April 24 she would make an announcement and permit the changes to be made widely known. However, the same evening I was cross-questioned by a friend about them. News had leaked out that something very interesting and significant had been done upstairs after the Pranam, and people were curious to learn what it had been. I had a hard time of it to evade giving a straight answer and yet not tell a lie.

So far *Mother India* has carried the old version as its second motto, the first being Sri Aurobindo's famous two-paragraphed "The Supramental is a truth ..." From the issue of April 24, it has been resolved, the new version alone will appear as our motto.

April 5, 1956

I asked the Mother to tell me more precisely about the Great Event of February 29. I said I had to write about it in *Mother India*. "Has the whole Supermind descended?" The Mother answered:

"The Supramental Light, Consciousness and Force have come. But the Supramental Ananda has not yet come. You speak of a descent. But I speak of a manifestation. Descent is something that occurs in relation to an individual with the kind of psychological structure he has. You can refer to planes below and planes above in reference to this structure. Where the universe is concerned, there is no meaning in the term 'descent'. There is only manifestation."

I understood that we individuals have various levels connected with our bodies. The vital plane is connected with our abdominal region. The heart region has to do with the emotional being, the head with the mind plane. And above the head there are the spiritual ranges and at the top of them the Supermind. Our consciousness can ascend and the Supermind can descend. Such a system of levels does not hold for the universe. However, I could not help asking: "Mother, is not the Supermind superior to our universe? From where has it manifested?"

"There is no 'where'. It just manifested. You are using your mind too much in regard to these more-than-mental realities."

As the Mother seemed impatient with my attitude I did not press my investigation further. I only inquired: "Does the manifestation imply that the Supermind involved within matter has emerged?"

"I know that you have this impression, but that is not the fact. The involved Supermind has not emerged. But now its emergence is not a problem at all. It is inevitable as the result of the manifestation of the free Supermind in what I call the earth's atmosphere. It is merely a matter of time."

May 24, 1956

I wrote to the Mother: "Ever since I came back from Bombay I have been constantly feeling supported by the New Power that has come into the earth's atmosphere. I have been feeling that all difficulties belong to an old world that is really dead. But, although the sense of being a part of your life and of your work is often strong, I seem to be lingering just within the borders of the new world instead of penetrating right to its centre. I want so much to be wholly yours. Won't you do something to absorb me into yourself? What should I do on my side?"

I kept my note on a table near the place where the Mother took her lunch with Pranab. As usual I sat in the space outside her bathroom. When she finished her lunch she took my note and went into the bathroom by its inner door. Having read the note she came out through the outer door. I was on my knees to receive her. She said: "Ça viendra" ("It will come"). I asked her: "When?" She replied:

“Surely you don’t want me to mention the date?” Then I said: “No — but please make it come soon.” She smiled.

May 30, 1956

I wrote to the Mother: “Is it true that you have said the following or something like it? — ‘Only four people realised the fact of the Supramental Manifestation — one in the Ashram and three outside.’ I can very well believe that there was only one person in the Ashram — namely, yourself! But the three outsiders puzzle me. How did they manage to do what hundreds here didn’t?”

The Mother told me after her post-lunch visit to her bathroom: “What I said was not that four people knew it was the Supramental Manifestation, but that when the manifestation took place they had some unusual experience because of it even if they did not understand why. I at first thought there was only one person in the Ashram to whom an unusual experience had happened, but afterwards I found there had been two. Among those outside, I counted you.”

I was surprised to hear this. The Mother continued: “You wrote to me — didn’t you? — that on the night of the 29th February I was with you. I had promised you, long ago when you had gone from here, that I would inform you at once if the Supermind manifested. I never forgot this. And when the Supermind did manifest, I went out to tell you.”

“You did do that, Mother?” I said, hardly believing my ears. She answered: “Yes.”

I feel unspeakably grateful to find that she thinks me so connected with her work.

November 25, 1956

In the morning the Mother said: “On this birthday I am not giving you any books because you have all of them.” I replied: “Not all. I don’t have *On the Veda* and *Poems from Bengali*.” She asked Champaklal to pick them out for me.

When she went for lunch I kept a note ready for her: “The books you will be giving me are certainly welcome, but what I would most like to read today is something else. You once told me that you would show it to me one day — but I think you said you would do so when I would be more worthy. If greater worthiness is the standard, I feel sure I shall not be shown what I want. But one can always hope for Grace. I am referring to what you wrote on February 29, just after the Supramental Manifestation.”

On finishing her lunch the Mother stopped at the table where I had placed my note. Usually she takes these notes to the bathroom and reads them there. But this one she read, standing by the table. Then she came to me. I had kept ready the flower whose significance is “Prayer”. On taking it from me she said: “I have read your prayer. If I can find the paper on which I have written, I shall bring it for you in the

evening during the interview. If I have to search for it for an hour I shan't be able to show it to you."

In the evening, when I went into her room at the Playground, I saw that she had brought the paper with her. She said: "You won't understand what I have written, but try to keep your mind absolutely quiet and receive it." I said: "Perhaps it is not meant to be understood." She laughed and said: "Probably." Then she explained the background of the writing: "The whole thing is not so much a vision or an experience as something done by me. I went up into the Supermind and did what was to be done. There was no need for any verbal formulation as far as I was concerned, but in order to put it into words for others I wrote the thing down. Always, in writing, a realisation, a state of consciousness, gets somewhat limited: the very act of expression narrows the reality to some extent. Well, here is what I wrote."

Then the Mother read out the French. It began with the words: "La Présence divine est là parmi nous." She was as if addressing all of us. The next sentence, as far as I remember, was: "J'avais une forme d'or plus immense que toute l'univers." Then she went on to say that she found herself in front of a massive door, on whose other side was the world. And she heard the words: "The time has come." She heard them in English and not in French. Then she lifted up with her hands a huge hammer of gold and struck one blow upon the door. The door crumbled down. A tremendous flood of light poured out and swept all over the universe.

When the Mother had finished reading, I asked to take the paper into my hands and to read it myself so that I might catch better the French. She hesitated just a bit and said, a little shyly and doubtfully: "You'll give it back to me?" "Of course," I replied, laughing. After I returned the paper she remarked: "When I came back from the Supermind, I thought that with so stupendous an outpouring of light everybody would be lying flat. But when I opened my eyes I found everybody sitting quietly and perfectly unconscious of what had happened."

I thanked the Mother very much for the act of Grace in her showing me the precious document.¹

November 26, 1956

No hope for me until you break
 Even from within my Cave
 The gate of God the Gloom
 Just as you broke from the infinite room
 The door of God the Gold

¹ I did not know at the time what a rare privilege it was to have seen what the Mother made public only after four years had passed. The account of her experience was given to the sadhaks on February 29, 1960. As I had understood that she had shown me her account in private I never breathed a word about it to anybody. I have reason to believe that one or two others had also been told by her of what she had done.

And set free wave on dazzling wave,
 Omnipotence-sea that rolled
 Over all earth and gulfed all things
 In the love that turns clay Supermind.
 But, O Sweet Splendour, find
 Yourself not only high above
 But deep below in the blindnesses
 And crumble down my stone
 Of a heart ! Unless
 You are one with my night I shall never be
 One with your solar infinity.

AMAL KIRAN

TO THE LIGHT

O SOFT warm morning light
 Filtering through the trees,
 Thy welcome bright rays stand
 Mirrored in the trembling leaves.

O colourful one!
 Shimmering in spider's slender thread
 Or running through the dew-drops clear,
 Sparkling green and blue and red!

Do thou too enter, enlighten, enrich
 My living frame, my mind of dream,
 Till all my being shall bathe in gold
 As the sea in the warmth of the morning-beam.

ALAB

REMEMBERING THE FUTURE

LETTER TO AN AMERICAN SCHOOLTEACHER FROM PEACE, AUROVILLE, CITY OF DAWN RISING IN INDIA

Dear Ann,

On a Thursday pre-dawn morning this month I had a strange experience and I am curious to know if you shared it. Between 3 and 4 a.m. during the 3rd Nightwatch you came to pay a "return" visit to Matrimandir construction site at the Centre of Auroville. Were you aware of it in your house far away on the (Indian-named) Mohawk Street in Mobile, Alabama, U.S.A.?

Yes, it was you ... the silvery-haired luminous-eyed little elderly lady still actively teaching elementary schoolchildren, who had come with the wonder of a child all the way from the South of the United States to the South of India ... braving the rigours (for one of your age and apparent frailty) of the long flight halfway around the globe with the "Indian Seminar" Group, and all the humorous complications that ensued from trying to wield about the 119-strong and somewhat *unwieldy* (for us) seminar group of American educators In a few short days what distances you covered! Interior? And exterior From scattered guest houses in Pondicherry to Ashram theatre and Ashram departments and services to Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education school rooms and Sports grounds to far-flung Auroville settlements ten kilometres away and to the remote centre, at last, of Auroville. It was there you walked slowly around the Matrimandir being constructed, and learned that

*The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol
of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection.
The Union with the Divine manifesting itself
in a progressive human unity.*

Then on to Bharat Nivas, House of India in our International Zone where all wandering members of the Seminar and Aurovilians came together at last to share our work-in-progress "The Immortal Fire."

Your inward participation in the "happening" that night ... the kindling of a spark that renewed some secret bond amongst us ... was keenly felt. It was not merely that you recorded the presentation of the "mystery play" adapted from Sri Aurobindo's translation of *Katha Upanishad* and containing text in his mantric English from the Rig-Veda *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* and the seer-epic *Savitri* ... and the music forming its atmosphere, the Aurovilians' spontaneously lifted wordless "hymns" to the immortal fire within us all ... (Remember you asked who had composed the music?)

It went deeper than a tape-recording. Something, evidently, was recorded that was a *Remembering the future that must be* ...

*Truth superhuman calls to thinking man.
At last the soul turns to eternal things,
In every shrine it cries for the clasp of God ...
Remembering the future that must be.*

Is that what you came looking for on your "return" visit? If it *was* you who came to share the Watch ...

This is how it was experienced :—

Several hours before being called to Nightwatch duty I attended a filmshow given in our Matrimandir Workers Camp. (Remember the bamboo-vaulted, keet-thatched community dining room where you and eight others, stranded at our settlement *Peace* after missing the bus back to Pondi, took pot-luck lunch with us? Instead of waiting for transport back to your guest houses you of the Indian Seminar group chose to remain with the Matrimandir workers roughing it. Here where every item of food has to be counted out in a basket, distribution over the distances and bad roads always a problem and "the spirit wrestles with adamant necessity" daily, cared for by Providence we shared what one of your group described as the best meal of your travels. Prepared, it turned out, by a young Aurovilian formerly a schoolteacher in Connecticut! And you spent the early afternoon with us in the Matrimandir area, noting down later, a day "never to be forgotten.")

The filmshow consisted of Huta's paintings of *Savitri* i.i. in cinematic montage with The Mother reading passages from the epic. And an Auroville Documentation: *Filmaur's* editing of the Government of India's footage of the filming of Auroville's Founding February 28th, 1968.

The documentation was unexpectedly moving. It was ... *remembering the future*. There we sat in the dark before an improvised screen, shadows appearing from the "past" in the area so close to where we were seated, around the Inaugural Urn in its present form of a lotus bud. Young people were coming in pairs to bring earth from their native lands, pouring or sprinkling it into the marble urn; before our eyes the lands became One Earth. They were wearing every sort of dress, from Parisian miniskirt to flowing Nigerian robes ... and one caught a glimpse of the very American-looking young boy and girl who brought our handful of earth, red as that of Auroville's itself, from Crescent Moon Ranch in Sedona, Arizona, Southwest U.S.A.

And there ... presiding over the crescent new world of the future ... was The Mother as she gave Darshan from the balcony of her Ashram quarters in 1968. Such an infinite tenderness radiated from the face and figure moving slowly along the balcony rail, gazing intently, profoundly into the eyes upturned to hers from the silent crowd massed below like one single still cry *for the clasp of God* ... that one actually felt the enveloping love, the answering clasp. It came, too, in the words of the Auroville Charter she had read in French for the Founding, *Auroville wants to be a new creation expressing a new Consciousness in a new way and according to new methods ... offering itself to all who aspire to live the Truth of Tomorrow*. And it belonged to us

all, this gift, this chance! *Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole.* It is to be a site of material and spiritual researches for the living embodiment of an actual Human Unity. A promise of the love, the truth, the oneness that could be lived here and now.

After that filmshow Darshan it happened ... the surge of love that grew. And grew. One felt almost moved by it up the road from Camp going East to the Matrimandir site. Patrolling the site on Nightwatch was more like flying around it. One loved ... the concreted ribs of Matrimandir upturned like vast open arms to embrace ... *humanity as a whole.* One loved ... the very steel pipes catching the fullmoon light ... the structure of the central scaffolding like an enormous — 20 metre 24 cm high! — playground where *Love and lover and beloved Eternal* was building himself a *wondrous field* ...

*There in its circles and its magic turns
Attracted he arrives, repelled he flees ...
His bliss laughs to us or it calls concealed
Like a far-heard unseen entrancing flute ...*

He had been with us that morning ... yesterday? eternal morning ... while the heavy tubular steel pipes were being handed up from level to level to the heights, set in place, clamped, measured with plumb-line and spirit level to a “millie” of perfect centering, bolted tight by teams of Matrimandir workers — They looked like his — “acrobats of God” — in the sun’s blaze. In the moonlight still his golden laughter called to us —

— Gleaming through the night, there on a guide-wire the new Model Disk made by Auro-polyester workshop ... making one remember the future, The Mother’s dream of solar energy as source of physical energy one day Perhaps Matrimandir would provide in that future a field for such energy transformation, as well as the spiritual power for transformation of our own nature consciousness

Still high and floating on patrol around the Workshop, one came upon another glimpse of the future: the model being built there of the Matrimandir sphere-covering for the globe which would enclose the Meditation hall. There it was on its work-axis, a great, light, silver-meshed globe, woven silvery strand by strand by workers’ hands —

— The earth. Its latitudes and longitudes There glistened the country of my physical birth. On the other side of the globe, India, country of my spiritual birth. There was Ohio. There was Pondicherry. There was Alabama ... the Bible-belt ... The South ... the crying problems of the South-lands Of all the lands that lie in the old-world consciousness imagining they are separate islands and crying in the dark.

And suddenly I felt a surge of love for my “old” country, confused and humbled after the Watergate flood — cleansed? — longing for the truth? Some, like your Indian Seminar, searching for it? For their lost new world? And heard you saying softly, something about *The Gita* ... asking for your children in the South the Song of

the Divine who knows no man-made boundaries, no divisions of race or creed or colour or nation.

There you were: standing on the other side of the model globe. Watching with your luminous eyes. Gravely feeling with me the movement of love that linked the silvery distances and made us one. Remembering the future with me, its sound that you recorded ...

*A movement is abroad, a cry, a word
Beginningless in its vast discovery,
Momentless in its unthinkable return ...*

“The fire of transformation. The immortal fire.”

Was it my imagination? Or you, the mother, the teacher in you seeking a way to bring your children across the barriers of the old and into the new world? To make the links between us, you in America with us in India, weaving together the new creation?

Whoever it was who came ... left a curl of fine-spun silvery strands on the Workshop table.¹

With love, dear Ann,

At the service of Truth.

Seyril,
Matrimandir Workers Camp,
Peace, AUROVILLE

¹ It was the actual soft mesh wire used to weave the “globe” together and did look exactly like Ann’s hair.

SOME THOUGHTS ON AUROVILLE AND EDUCATION

IN Auroville we are given the opportunity to realise that all life is education, and that we are here in this world to share in the universal adventure of progressive self-discovery and self-perfection. Our society is based on the faith that if each one is given the possibility of realising his own unique potentialities he will not only become a fulfilled and happy individual, but will also fulfil his role in society in a truly productive way. We believe that the future is stronger than the past and that it is more worth living for; that Truth is stronger than Falsehood and that its inevitable victory comes closer under conditions of freedom and mutual support.

We have been given many freedoms; freedom from social and moral pressures and conventions, from family ties and financial worries; freedom to experiment, to grow and to change. For this reason the social structures, the ways in which the factories, the agriculture, the schools and the administration are organised constantly change, and will continue to do so. This is our guarantee of progress — that we be flexible enough to express ever more faithfully the inner truth which is living and growing.

In this atmosphere of freedom, protected and guided by the Truth-Force and Vision which Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have concentrated on this particular spot, are living around 300 Aurovilians, of whom about 100 are children under 17. In addition there are many local people from various social backgrounds who are working for Auroville, receiving payment for their work, continuing to live in their villages or in Pondicherry; they are an integral part of the experience of our city and make an essential contribution to its growth and development. There are the visitors from many parts of the world who come and stay for a few days or weeks or months, learning from Auroville and enriching us by their contribution to our communal life. There are the many friends in other places and countries of the world who share in the work and the joy of Auroville's unfolding. And there are the co-workers of the Ashram in Pondicherry who by an inner and outer support add to the tremendous richness which is here.

This diversity is increasing continuously, by the flowering, often in completely unexpected directions, of each individual. So that simply to be here can be an incomparable education.

We have a school for the children where they can learn to speak, read and write in several languages, to think mathematically, become acquainted with basic science, come into contact with the music and literature of different cultures, where they can draw and paint and dance and play. But we understand learning in a wider sense. In the factories, in the kitchens, in the offices, in the fields and on the building sites, we are learning. We are learning to be, to be together, to appreciate more truly the uniqueness of every individual. This is the condition for the realisation of human unity, the true unity which joyfully embraces all the richness of human diversity. We are

learning to recognise the value of a city, a place where many individuals come together. No longer fleeing from the chaos of the modern conurbation we can say, 'Yes. We want to belong to a community as wide, as vast, as complex as the universe itself.'

The soul can make this affirmation, quick and clear, but our minds, our emotions, our bodies have to learn through many varied experiences how to live in harmony with others, how to float easily with the rhythms of the Cosmos and at the same time be ready to spring forward at the impulsion of the Supreme Will. To observe and to reject the obstacles and resistances in oneself is one of the principal processes of this education. Auroville is a field, where, concentrated in a small area, under the searchlight of the Truth, we are continuously in contact with unfamiliar ways of thought and behaviour. So here it is easier to detect the hidden limitations in ourselves, and the difficulties can be overcome here more quickly and consciously than is possible anywhere else in the world at this time.

Our children are evolutionarily ahead of us. They are more plastic, more sincere and pure than we who have come here, full of aspiration it is true, yet weighted with the burdens of our past. But for each one of us the work is the same, always the same — to go deeper, to rise higher, to develop the outer being to express more exactly and subtly the truth of ourselves. The circumstances of our daily life provide us with the experiences which progressively unveil us to ourselves.

We experience that a poise of grateful receptivity is the most helpful support for our progress, a progress which is different for everyone at every moment and which must never end. We experience that only those elements which truly want to progress, which want to stay with the leading point of the evolutionary movement, can survive the trials and pressures which we undergo. Whatever wants to rest in indolent self-indulgence, or looks backward with longing eyes to a past pleasure or ideal of perfection, is cast out in the clash of events, clearly visible, and rejected or transformed in the light of a vaster consciousness. For the individual this process may be painful and so we suffer sometimes. But we are also learning that this pain points to the progress to be made and its occurrence gives us the occasion to grow.

We are discovering the faith which carries us through all the difficulties — the faith that in spite of all our limitations and incapacities it is the Supreme Will which triumphs, the will for a richer joy, a more perfect beauty and order, a higher knowledge, a purer truth; and that it was to participate in the process of this revelation that we took birth, that it was this Future which drew us on our different roads through the worlds until we came here, and that it still draws us as the magnet draws the needle, shaping us into worthy moulds, receptive instruments, so that through us it can manifest itself.

SHRADDHAVAN

THE TEACHERS REPORT ON THE TEACHERS' TEACHING WORKSHOP

ANNOUNCED in these pages last June-July and August issues, World Union's Teachers' Teaching Workshop has long since been held and written about, but there is an entirely untouched aspect yet to reach comment: the reactions of the participants themselves. That is, a report constituted by what the teachers in the workshop themselves later expressed.

A questionnaire was handed out just before all went home. Only now have enough replies been received to make any useful indications available; several are yet to be received.

Rather than giving a customary introductory explanation of the nature, design and actual events of the workshop, the responses of the attending teachers will be offered that canvas to paint and they may, in the unintentional sweep of what each participant thought only represented his personal opinion, surprisingly register all we might expect in a report, with possibly one pleasant discovery: a fresh set of tracks in the often arctic vistas of reports.

One of the questions participants seemed to like the best was "What things did you like best ...?" in contrast to its successor, "What things did you dislike most ...?" which made some respondents so uncomfortable they refused to answer it or wrote "nothing" and further down the page detailed their annoyances under the blander shelter of "What changes do you think would help to ...?". Another observation — there was not entire identity between things liked best and things deemed most important: an encouraging sign of candidness as far as most of us human beings are concerned.

Although there was a wide spray of things liked best — sixteen different items were mentioned — one ranked above the others in its shining generality. It was "the new approach" (that is, the new approach to what are called teachers' training camps and education). Nearly as strong were "the idea of group-soul" and "discussions on oneness" (what was actually done, beyond talk, about the group-soul and oneness may be described later).

The week of 24-30 October programmed a marked diversity of events, with lectures having the lowest profile. Only about five talks were given and the rest of the time was absorbed by activity which was new to most participants. At one point in the questionnaire they were asked to indicate how much of each kind of activity they preferred. Those most participants wanted more of were:

- the informal individual contacts with Ashram teachers
- the visits to Ashram departments
- the visits to (particularly educational) communities of Auroville
- the meditations woven into the work of the sessions
- a longer workshop in general (most said it should extend to two weeks)

Almost everyone indicated the following aspects were given the proper emphasis; no one seemed to feel there was too much

reading (reading assignments were given daily)
 group life (they met without the workshop leaders each evening)
 discipline (each person had to generate his or her own discipline)
 lecturing (there were even some who wanted more lectures, which is a happy switch)
 time spent in the sessions (the morning sessions' duration was 8-11 a.m.)

The one change overwhelmingly wanted was an increase in the length of the workshop altogether. Next in intensity was the request to have more opportunity to try out the teaching attitudes and methods that were learned. This, even though the workshop process was one of participatory learning and experimental tryout, suggests that there are teachers in India who are more ready to go beyond the lecture process into the application (practical) process than even our optimistic designs allow.

These teachers have written two summary statements of the week's work, read aloud at the closing day's special tea. The following passages from their reports — reports of predominantly government primary and secondary teachers scattered from Rishikesh to Jamnagar to Calcutta to Madras, etc. — may indicate where they are and where they are ready to go.

When we received invitations to take part in the Teachers' Teaching Workshop we were thinking there would be theoretical discussions on current educational problems. But when we came here to take part in the workshop, the scene was different. We solved the burning problem of the student community by giving answers to the questions put by both the guides, as they showed this practical path of solving such problems. The peculiarity of the workshop is not a lecture series but a questions-answers method. By that way we are able to be completely clear regarding our educational problems.

We have seen real education here at the International Centre of Education and at Auroville in comparison to other educational institutions in other parts of India. Here we saw that there is no traditional way of planning a syllabus, no rigid duration of class sessions, and no examinations. We have seen almost as many teachers as students in Auroville and a 1:3 teacher-student ratio in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. In addition the contacts with the teachers of the Ashram were very helpful in solving problems in the following areas:

- 1) teacher-student relationships
- 2) the system of education
- 3) introducing free, progressive classes

- 4) the teaching method
- 5) social needs in education
- 6) group oneness and world unity
- 7) freedom and discipline
- 8) co-education
- 9) teacher-parent relationships

We strongly feel that through meditation we can bring the psychic being to the forefront. Only through the realisation of the psychic being we can create a group-soul or world unity. Moreover we have experienced how to develop the group-soul by awakening ourselves to the inner consciousness latent in all of us. We are convinced that this is the hour of God in which we find the realisation of the higher consciousness to be indispensable.

We all have successfully completed the training with a joy and peace. By the Grace of the Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo, we can face our problems with confidence and courage.

We also submit our kind suggestion that there should be more workshops in the future.

And the report continues with another page of suggestions such as holding such workshops in each state, publishing exchanges of information on these events and their results in a newsletter distributed in the educational communities of India, and on.

Being as open to and ready for change and for the new as these young teachers seem to be (most were 20-30 years of age), how did they answer the questionnaire's "What things in the workshop were new to you?" Ten features were noted by them, such as the non-directive approach, the emphasis on and work towards becoming conscious of the psychic being, Socratic questioning as a teaching method (which is actually an application of Sri Aurobindo's first principle of teaching) and others. But the one mentioned by many as new was role play, a method of Western origination that is used in education, industrial and sales training, management development, and in group dynamics work.

Role play is the controlled use of empathy in drama to make perceptions possible that are ordinarily glazed over by mental habit or vital prejudice. For success, some degree of this empathy and social relaxation is necessary. If, for example, a group of administrators is in a difficulty with teachers over some change in the operation of the school — and these difficulties usually grow out of rocky turns and twists in the psychological roots of the relationships themselves — the organizer of a role play session with these administrators would give written or oral instructions privately to each of five or so persons. Each person would be given a role appropriate for seeing his prejudices and clarities and the psychological idiosyncrasies in his attitude toward fellow administrators and teachers. One person might be assigned to play the role of the most hardline administrator, another the leader of the teachers' group, a third of

the most reasonable and yet most timid person amongst the teachers and so it would go. The instructions given to each person would describe, to give an instance, his attitudes, fears, likes and dislikes, his recent experience with so-and-so from the teachers' group and the present situation of the role play he would be about to step into — which could be a meeting with the teachers' group's representatives on X issue — including his expectations, his suspicions and his responsibilities to his fellow administrators, the teachers, and students. The foregoing is quite a full role; not all would be given in such detail. Then with the non-playing members of the group and the role play organizer looking on, it would begin.

What usually happens is the development of such an involvement by each person in his or her role that, as the unplotted drama gathers force, climaxes and is discussed by all afterwards, the globular character of the situation's formerly two-dimension ego conflicts may become apparent to the participants; and in that global emergence the struggle's honey comes: a harmonious proportion of each faction resolved with each, the dharma of the situation clear for teachers, administrators, for the school.

Certainly not all role plays go that far. But with the effort for empathy and some social relaxation, even a flat-out failure can be ample in benefits for changes of vision, attitude and behavior in the discussion that follows. Role play done in the workshop seemed to be quite appropriate to this use; some of the requests for longer future workshops specifically suggested the use of more role play in the extended time.

The last item we will examine in the questionnaire is: "What things seemed to be the most important that we did?" The magnet for answers to that question was the session directed to consciousness of the group-soul. Being considered the most important by participants, and surely bringing the most profound and concrete effect into this writer, his participation in the workshop, and being what he could perceive, in his ignorance, to be the most radiantly forceful action of the Mother's presence in the week's attempts of work, beading all together in her Diamond Light's initiation of one group being — it would seem to demand much elaboration. But then one sees.....no, that is just why it does not take the color of language and will instead work its way from the Future into our future of what is called, in reports, the results of the workshop.

The participants and the two workshop leaders acknowledge their gratitude to Madhav Pandit, A.B. Patel, Kireet Joshi, C.N. Sharma, Prapatti, teachers of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education and the Auroville schools at Aspiration who so encouragingly and creatively participated with us and genuinely benefitted all that was done.

RONALD JORGENSEN

Note: The parent report, emphasizing the detail of preparation and design of the workshop, appeared in the November-December 1974 issue of *World Umon*. A second report, differing in emphasis, was carried in the January issue of *Sri Aurobindo's Action*.

UTOPIA OR OBLIVION ?

FOR many thinkers this is as much an imperative and inexorable Either/Or proposition today as it ever has been, though the nature of the situation has changed considerably, since the spirit of liberty, truth and justice first began making itself felt and labouring to articulate the question of its existence and its fulfilment in the minds and hearts of whole generations of men. And it strikes me that this is but one of three closely related, radical, disjunctive propositions in the terms of which that spirit must have suggested itself repeatedly, more or less consciously, to all those who have been the chosen exponents and trail blazers of its relatively recent historical zig-zag of heroic attempts to become at last a manifest reality. The other two propositions would have been 'Evolution or Extinction?' and 'Revolution or Stagnation?' But today the contents of each of these terms, the dimensions of the problem that they represent and the meaning of the solutions that they propose are radically different from what they were a century or two ago, although the urgency of the problem is no less critical than it ever has been. 'Utopia or Oblivion?' is not a rhetorical question and it is not a jest. It is a statement of the most extreme consequence made at an hour of grave peril for the entire human race.

In a recent book with this title, by R. Buckminster Fuller (*Utopia or Oblivion*, 1969), it is possible to discern both the new dimensions of the problem and its original and essential meaning. And because of the integrity and comprehensiveness of Mr. Fuller's view, his grasp of the present world situation and his concern for India in particular, his book may serve as a valuable starting point for understanding the complexity and gravity of a situation which we might otherwise fail to grasp in proper perspective. At the outset he asks three cardinal questions which make immediately clear the whole classical motive and intention of utopian thinking and, at the same time, its unique new outlook. The issues are the same as always but the emphasis is now on technological factors rather than on spiritual, socio-economical and political ones.

"First, what could society, backing up into its future, with eyes fixed only on the ever-receding and less adequate securities of yesterday, do to make this evolutionary process (the acceleration of technological development and consequent environmental transformations in this century) a gratifying rather than a painful experience?

"Second, what could the average intelligent and healthy, moneyless individual best contribute, singlehandedly, towards bringing the earliest and happiest realisation of advantage for society in general through taking and maintaining the comprehensive, anticipatory design-science initiative — in the face of the formidable axiomatic errors and inertias of academic authority as well as the formidable economic advantage of the massive corporations and their governments and mutually short-sighted foci of resource and capabilities exploitation?

"Third, assuming that by competently reforming only the environment instead of trying to reform man, a favourably designed environment can be realized which will

both permit and induce man to accomplish the same logical degree of physical success in universe as is manifest, for instance by the hydrogen atom, how then can the economic and technological capability of all humanity to enjoy freely all of its world be accomplished exclusively by design-science, without any individual interfering with another and without any individual being advantaged at the expense of another, with a design that will also induce its spontaneous adoption by world industrialization's managers?"

It seems too much to ask, but that is at least one definition of what it means to be utopian. With his magic wand of comprehensive anticipatory design-science man is believed to be able to vanquish in a flash of historical omni-anticipation, once he decides courageously and irrevocably to take it in hand, all of the immemorial and seemingly insuperable obstacles to humanity's social progress. And this he is destined to do as the leading representative of a comprehensive, superhuman, nonanthropomorphic Universal Intellectual Integrity. But one wonders if this altogether creditable life-affirming, ethical world-view, to borrow Schweitzer's criteria for a relevant and much needed modern philosophy, will actually be any more effective than such utopian aspirations have ever been in the past. Fuller's centrally and scientifically sound hypothesis is ponderable enough: "The only visible means of converting the momentum of negative employment of the physical principles operative in universe into making man a lasting success is in the design-science revolution, which fortunately may be joined by individual initiative founded on comprehensive intellectual integrity."

"May be", but will it be?

"A design-science revolution could solve the problem", but has it been sufficiently prepared for and recognised as an imperative necessity by humanity in general?

These are the decisive questions. And therefore the classical answers to the three cardinal questions, whether given from the spiritual, the social or the political point of view and irrespective of the particular form that the evolution-revolution-transformation should take at any particular time, have always been: 1) Society must join hands in a radical turn-about to free itself from those inadequate securities of yesterday and move concertedly and affirmatively towards its fuller future. 2) The individual must be truly himself to the extent that he is willing to sacrifice everything and undertake anything, in spite of all resistance, for the realization of the Ideal. (The modern Jewish prophet and master of utopian philosophy, Martin Buber, has put it succinctly, "He shall not withhold himself." And Fuller has supported this universal spiritual truth with fearless scientific evidence, "Since science's Law of Conservation of Energy states that energy may neither be created nor lost and experience shows that every time intellect experiments with energy it learns more, wealth can only increase.") 3) The form must be so well prepared and understood by the very nature of the situation itself that it is able to overthrow or supplant all undesirable structures efficiently and effectively without having to adopt any means that will ultimately prevent the realization of the Ideal.

Fuller undoubtedly and understandably believes that the time has come when these conditions can and should be fulfilled on a universal scale, but he also entertains a number of reservations about whether they actually will be or not. In any case it is the technological revolution that now makes it possible. As for the question of what is to be done with politicians, he is rather ambivalent. At one point he suggests that they be rocketed into orbit around the sun and that society can get on perfectly well without them. At another he implies that it is war-politics that provides the incentive for all of our life-saving discoveries. And at yet another, they are to be induced with design-science. Finally he simplifies it unequivocally to this: "granted removal of all political boundary restrictions, the physical resources of earth can support all of a multiplying humanity at higher standards of living than anyone has ever experienced or dreamed." Because, as Fuller beautifully illustrates and had anticipated at the turn of the century, acceleration has accelerated us and ephemeralization has ephemeralized us into an entirely new (not to say disastrous) situation, his model may be both the most universally acceptable and the most capable of actually inducing the Government, Management, Labour and Starving Millions quadrangle to circumscribe a happy circle around itself that would dynamise it into an evolutionary, revolutionary and anticipatory new relationship. But the essential and crucial question still has to be asked, — by each one of us, to himself and to his neighbour, — "Are we ready?" And I am afraid that as soon as this is done we will come up fast against a set of first principles which seem to stand in direct opposition to those put forward by Mr. Fuller.

"Ignorant, we cannot construct a system of entirely true and fruitful self-knowledge or world knowledge: our science itself is a construction, a mass of formulas and devices; masterful in knowledge of processes and in the creation of apt machinery, but ignorant of the foundations of our being and of world being, it cannot perfect our nature and therefore cannot perfect our life.

"It is only if our nature develops beyond itself, if it becomes a nature of self-knowledge, mutual understanding, unity, a nature of true being and true life that the result can be a perfection of ourselves and our existence, a life of true being, a life of unity, mutuality, harmony, a life of true happiness, a harmonious and beautiful life."

These axioms of the perfect life formulated by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine*, a work with which Mr. Fuller is by no means unfamiliar, have not indeed been overlooked and are sometimes implied in the latter's world-view. But they belong essentially to the other side of the coin and are rather taken for granted as an inevitable truth of Universe and its actual evolutionary unfolding which the acceleration of technology and material progress should illustrate and further. Yet while Sri Aurobindo admits that progress on both planes is reciprocal and comes about inevitably as a result of natural law in a Superconscient Universe, still, because of the greater significance and position of primary importance that Sri Aurobindo gives to the inner, spiritual change over and above that on the outer, environmental plane, we cannot help but feel that Mr. Fuller may be making a mistake by de-emphas-

izing something of the utmost importance and pertinence to the problem at hand. And our concern goes out not so much to him, for he is certainly capable of sorting these things out for himself, as to those who may aspire to follow in his footsteps. It is here that the danger in any partial human construction always appears. Conversely, those who take their stand on the other side of the coin have every right to emphasize their viewpoint so that we may not in our turn fail to give it its full value. Otherwise what purpose would there be in having two-sided coins? One day they may fill themselves out into spheres and we shall all walk on safer ground with a wider field of vision.

Here, however, I think that it may be wise to turn to Martin Buber for a better understanding of the historical and psychological importance of the spiritual side of the matter. In his classic study of utopian thought as it has developed during the past hundred years (*Paths in Utopia*, 1949), discussing the relationship of political revolution to utopian society and how each may strengthen or weaken the other, Buber quotes the utopian Landauer in a particularly revealing passage: "It will be recognised sooner or later that, as the greatest of all socialists — Proudhon — has declared in incomparable words, albeit forgotten today, social revolution bears no resemblance at all to political revolution; that although it cannot come alive and remain living without a good deal of the latter it is nevertheless a peaceful structure, an organizing of new spirit for new spirit and nothing else." And Buber continues, "This preparation, however, the real transformation of society, can only come in love, in work and in stillness." In the revolutionary epoch of 1848 Proudhon had told the revolutionaries: "You revolutionaries, if you do *that* you will make a change indeed." Proudhon went on living, although he bled from more than one wound; he now asked himself: "If you do that, I said — but *why* have you not done it?" He found the answer and laid it down in all his later works, the answer which in our language runs: "Because the spirit was not in you." The significance of this item (the "spirit") for the new society-to-be is something that none of the earlier socialists recognised as profoundly as did Landauer. We must realize what he means by it — always assuming of course that we do not understand spiritual reality merely as the product and reflection of the material world, as mere "consciousness" determined by the social "being" and explicable in terms of economic-technical relationships. It is rather an entity *sui generis* that stands in close relation to the social being, without, however, being explicable at any point in terms of the latter.

"A degree of high culture is reached," says Landauer, "when the various social structures, in themselves exclusive and independent of one another, are filled with a uniform spirit not inherent in or proceeding from these structures, but reigning over them purely in its own right. In other words: such a degree of culture arises when the unity pervading the various forms of organization and the supra-individual formations is not the external bond of force, but a spirit dwelling in the individuals themselves and pointing beyond earthly and material interests." But, Buber concludes later, "The point where the problem emerges, (of authenticity of spirit), where people are apt to

slip, is in their relationship to their fellows. It is not a matter of intimacy at all; this appears when it must, and if it is lacking, that's all there is to it. The question is rather one of openness. A real community need not consist of people who are perpetually together; but it must consist of people who, precisely because they are comrades, have mutual access to one another and are ready for one another. A real community is one which in every point of its being possesses, potentially at least, the whole character of community."

This, it seems to me, is the spirit to which not only we but all humanity are called in this hour of great need. And in proportion as we respond to its call, this spiritual achievement coupled with our technological capability of achieving a high level of civilization globally for all mankind, might enable it to carry us beyond the formula "Utopia or Oblivion" to the creation of a new man and a new world, the gnostic or divine life and society envisioned by Sri Aurobindo:

"In a gnostic consciousness there would be no ego-insistence on personal idea and no push or clamour of personal will and interest: there would be instead the unifying sense of a common Truth in many forms, a common self in many consciousnesses and bodies; there would be a universality and plasticity which saw and expressed the One in many figures of itself and worked out oneness in all diversities as the inherent law of the Truth-consciousness and its truth of nature."

If we can achieve an understanding of the interrelation and total complexity of these three points of view, the spiritual, the social, the technological, and their synthesis, and if we can demonstrate this in ourselves, in our small groups and in even larger communities up to the national and global level, then we will have done the least that in all conscience can be expected of us by the Spirit of our age and we will have not only honoured the words of its seers but acted heroically in their light.

ROD

HILL-SONG

17

*The ferns in the forest shed cool silver tears,
And I felt by those deep secret ponds
Where swift water fell lightly on smooth silent stones,
The caress of their trembling fronds ...*

THY hills had swept a faith into my soul,
A faith that Thou wouldst come to me, O Lord,
And holding my heart (my wild frightened heart!) in Thy hands,
Sing away sorrow with one sweet rapturous word ...

And as the twilight called its tender cry,
Across the darkness of the rustling evening pines,
That yearned from their roots towards the vast pure rain-softened sky,
I strode along a sweeping, lonely road,
Seeking only for Thee ...

And out of the heart of that murmuring dim dusk on the hill,
Just as faint stars began to shine shyly around me,
Lighting the night with its beauty, luminous, still,
Thy face (*O Lord Thy Face!*), Thy smiling face,
Leaned gently towards me ...

And as I walked that winding way I sang,
“Out of my fear, of my hurt bitter fear,
Out of myself Thou hast called me to Thee,
O Lord my Lord
And now my heart is a scarlet blossom,
And as you pluck it from me,
I can laugh like Time, like its swift golden sands,
For bound in your arms I am free.”

*And when a quiet rock and a twisted old oak bade me pause,
And lean my face like a friend on the calm of their grave gray moss,
The wind as it whirled through the sheltering branches above
Was the musical breath of Thy whispering infinite Love ...*

JEAN

BEHOLD! ATHENS IN THE SOUL OF JERUSALEM!

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I have stated here in aphoristic style what I consider to be the true form of the ontological argument which I have presented in a more analytic form in an article entitled "A New Look at the Ontological Argument" and published in the September 1973 issue of the International Philosophical Quarterly. The language in the present version is more evocative, but it preserves the logical structure of the argument which can be stated briefly by saying that the act of total commitment determined by the true concept of God already carries within it the complete sanction of our rational nature and hence requires no further argument to provide a rational justification of religious belief.

LET not even a whisper of doubt be heard in this ear lest thy faith be judged impure and thy understanding pass under a cloud. Thinkest thou that the Being whom thou worshippest is one among many beings that thou canst adore Him and yet not give thy whole heart to Him, or that, while bowing thy head to Him, thou still mayest ask for a sign or that it is proper for thee to test Him with doubts and questionings? Is He not rather the Supreme Lord of all beings who hath said to thee, "I, thy Lord, am a jealous God. Turn to Me with all thy soul and strength and so shalt thy heart worship without misgiving and thy mind acknowledge Me without reservation and thou shalt accept Me for no reason but that thou art thou and I am the Lord thy God."

The Lord hath said to thee, "Be My-minded, My lover and adorer. Cast aside all things else and surrender to Me alone."¹ The Lord hath given thee the light of Reason. He doth not ask that this light be extinguished or dimmed. Let thy light shine, but know that it shall shine more brightly if it enters into the vaster flame of Love where it shall not be consumed but find its proper consummation.

Art thou a preacher and talkest about God and yet thou dost not understand that there is no fulfilment of Reason except in Love? Canst thou hold a true idea of God in thy understanding and yet can thy Reason stand aloof or ask, "Is there in truth such a Being?" Hast thou not understood that the idea of God is the idea of a Being to whom thou shouldst be committed totally and unconditionally? And is not this demand for a total and unconditional commitment of thy whole being included in the very idea of God? Reflect! thou canst not truly think of the Divine except thou give thyself without reserve and in all thy parts to the Divine².

Thou criest to the Lord, "Lord, I believe and in me there is no unbelief, but my faith seeketh understanding and my mind casteth about for proofs of Thy Being and findeth none. Although I believe, I do not fully understand. Illumine Thou my understanding with proof even as Thou hast 'moved my will to a free response to Thy gracious self-disclosure.'³"

What shall be the manner of thy understanding? Seekest thou a reason, a justi-

fication outside thy faith that shall be to thy faith a rational prop or support? How soon thou forgettest that the Supreme Being Whom thou dost worship calls for, nay, demands, thy free but unconditional self-giving⁴ and that thy faith is the response of thy whole soul that hath drawn up into itself already the total allegiance of thy Reason⁵ and the unwavering trust of thy heart⁶. If thou askest for a reason that will show thy faith to be justified, thou dost not truly believe, or there is a blemish in thy belief and it is not the true concept of the Supreme Being which thou contemplatest. Ask not what evidence is there for faith, for thou askest a foolish question⁷. Faith hath no need to go abroad for understanding, and it seeketh consummation not in understanding but in Love.

Reflect on thy faith and on the concept of the object of thy faith and thou shalt find the proof thou seekest in the heart of thy faith; for in thy soul's self-giving to the Supreme thy Reason too hath found fulfilment in this act of surrender. O ye of little faith! seest thou not that faith lacketh nothing? It brimmeth over and declareth its self-evidence to thy reason. Reflect deeply and thou shalt see that though thou believest, when thou sayest, "I believe but find no proof of the truth of my belief", then hast thou fallen back into unbelief. Thou hast not given thyself fully to Him but keepeth the door open for doubts and questionings. Cry, therefore, to the Lord, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."

Blessed are those that have not understood and yet have believed, for in their belief shall be revealed the fullness of understanding.

JEHANGIR N. CHUBB

NOTES

¹ Gita, Chapter XVIII.

² Sri Aurobindo.

³ Lovell Cocks referred to in John Hick's *Faith and Knowledge*, p 6.

⁴ This is the paradox of spiritual life. The self-giving is free since it is not conditioned by demonstration or swayed by argument. There are no reasons for believing in God Yet this self-giving is "the one thing necessary" One should say that though it is not necessitated by logic, it is, when it occurs, seen to be inevitable, since our rational nature finds consummation in it.

⁵ & ⁶ *Fides* and *Fiducia*. Faith includes these and goes beyond them. They are seen as contained in Faith, but they are not Faith

⁷ Not Anselm's fool. Anselm himself was foolish when he set out to provide a demonstration of God's existence *more geometrico*. He stopped with the perception of the spiritual self-sufficiency of faith, but foolishly failed to see that faith is also rationally self-sufficient.

But why pick on Anselm? The discussion of the relation between faith and reason throughout the centuries has been vitiated by the ill-conceived assumption that the autonomy of reason presupposes an *ontological* separation between reason and faith.

I shall call this Anselm's folly

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 February 21, 1975)

6

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

(q)

TEILHARD kept distinguishing throughout his life between "false" and "true" pantheism and pledging himself to the latter. Apropos of his essay, *How I Believe*, where he had sketched his notion of the "Person", he remarked to de Lubac on 23 June 1935:¹ "It is all the question of the *true* pantheism which lies there in its root." And how are we to distinguish the true variety from the false?

After mentioning "the 'pantheist' faith in the final unity", Teilhard² writes: "All the 'play' consists in recognising (showing) that there cannot be a true unification outside a PERSONALISING fusion of the elements in the bosom of a *maximum* of consciousness (that is to say, of personality)." On 3 April of the same year (1934) he voices the same idea in another context to Valensin:³ "Either indeed the spiritual phenomenon is an unintelligible accident (and then there is the death of Action). Or indeed it absorbs everything, and it imposes fundamental conditions on the structure of the universe around us. And, among these fundamental conditions, is the conservation of the Personal. No means of escaping it, — despite the (apparent) unlikelihood of Survival and the pseudo-repugnance which a mind of the 'pantheist' turn always feels to giving a definitive value to an element of the Universe." Thus the crucial

¹ *Lettres Intimes 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. 304. "C'est tout la question du *vrai* panthéisme qui gît là dans sa racine."

² *Ibid.*, p. 295 "Tout le 'jeu' consiste à reconnaître (montrer) qu'il ne saurait y avoir d'unification vraie hors d'une fusion PERSONNALISANTE des éléments au sein d'un *maximum* de conscience (c'est -à-dire de personnalité)."

³ *Ibid.*, p. 269. "Ou bien le phénomène spirituel est un accident inintelligible (et alors c'est la mort de l'Action). Ou bien il absorbe tout, et il impose des conditions fondamentales à la structure de l'Univers autour de nous. Et, parmi ces conditions fondamentales, est la conservation et l'accroissement du Personale. Pas moyen d'y échapper, — en dépit des invraisemblances (apparentes) de là Survie et des pseudo-répugnances qu'un esprit de tournure 'panthéiste' éprouve toujours à donner une valeur définitive à un élément de l'Univers."

difference is that true pantheism posits a total unity within which personal beings become universalised in relation to a Universal Person without losing their self-existence in the All, whereas in false pantheism the All submerges the elements uniting with it.

According to Teilhard, what philosophically goes by the name "pantheism" is the latter kind. De Lubac¹ has the note: "For him pantheism is 'the defective explanation of a quite justified (and for the rest perfectly ineradicable) tendency of the human soul.'" But the common Christian rejection of pantheism, bag and baggage, has no validity for Teilhard, because the Christian explanation of that which is an absolute desideratum to him — namely, the Unity of the world — fails to satisfy his mind. De Lubac² refers to Teilhard's essay of 1919, *The Universal Element* and summarises its conclusion: "There must be a unity of the World: but from where does it get that unity? After setting aside 'the pantheist solution', Teilhard considers as insufficient the explanations by 'the Will of God' or by His 'creative Action' and he indicates as a principle of unity 'the cosmic influence of Christ.'" It is because these orthodox explanations also are set aside that in introducing the Cosmic Christ, Teilhard³, in a letter of 17 December 1922 to Valensin, alludes to a discourse intended by him "on the pantheist aspect of Christianity". His Cosmic Christ, therefore, pantheises Christianity at the same time that it Christianises pantheism. And in *Intimate Letters* as nowhere else, except that Emile Rideau⁴ in his book has already culled the central passage from it, we get the most exact delineation of Teilhard's pantheist poise. The delineation is all the more important since it comes by way of criticising an article of Valensin's, written in a vein proper to Roman Catholic orthodoxy, on the subject in the *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique* (Vol. 3). Teilhard⁵ speaks out his mind to his friend:

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 94, note 8 "Pour lui, le panthéisme est 'l'explication defectueuse d'une tendance très justifiée (et du reste parfaitement indéradicable) de l'âme humaine'."

² *Ibid.*, p. 49, note 5 "Il doit avoir une unité du Monde mais d'où lui vient cette unité? Après avoir écarté 'la solution panthéiste', Teilhard considérait comme insuffisantes les explications par 'la Volonté de Dieu' ou par son 'Action créatrice' et il indiquait comme principe d'unité 'l'influence cosmique du Christ.'"

³ *Ibid.*, p. 89: "sur la face panthéiste du Christianisme."

⁴ Teilhard de Chardin. *A Guide to His Thought*, translated by René Hague (Collins, London, 1967), p. 528.

⁵ *Lettres Intimes*, p. 89 "1o Vous avez tort de mépriser le panthéisme des poètes. Ce panthéisme-là est la mystique dont Spinoza et Hegel ont été les Théologiens. Il représente une force psychologique, et il contient une vérité vécue considérable: il est le panthéisme vivant. Vous faites comme un homme qui, dans le Christianisme, dédaignerait Ste Thérèse pour ne s'occuper que de St Thomas ou de Cajetan

"2o Vous laissez le lecteur sous l'impression que la position spinozienne, par exemple, est simplement mala, falsa. — Comment n'avez-vous pas laissé entrevoir qu'entre l'Incarnation spinozienne où Tout est divin hypostatiquement, et l'Incarnation des Théologiens extrinsécistes et timides où le Plérôme n'est qu'un agrégat social, il y a place pour une Incarnation se terminant à l'édification d'un Tout organique, où l'union physique au Divin a des degrés? — Vous opposez la morale chrétienne à la morale spinozienne en disant que la première nous dit seulement de devenir 'semblables à Dieu' Je n'accepte pas l'opposition. — Pour le Chrétien, être *summorbhos Christo*, c'est participer sous la simi-

"1. You are in the wrong in scorning the pantheism of the poets. This pantheism is the mysticism of which Spinoza and Hegel have been the theologians. It represents a psychological force, and it contains a considerable lived truth: it is the living pantheism. You are acting like a man who, in Christianity, disdains St. Theresa in order to busy himself only with St. Thomas or Cajetan.

"2. You leave the reader with the impression that Spinoza's position, for example, is *simpliciter mala, falsa*. How is it that you have not suggested that between Spinoza's 'Incarnation', in which the whole is hypostatically divine, and the 'Incarnation' of the over-cautious, extrinsicist theologians, in which the pleroma is no more than a social aggregate, there is room for an Incarnation that culminates in the building up of an organic whole, in which physical union with God is at different levels? You contrast Christian morality with the morality of Spinoza by saying that the former tells us only that we must become 'like unto God'. I don't accept the distinction. For the Christian, to be *summorphos Christo* is to participate, under a similarity of behaviour, in a common being; it is really 'to become Christ', 'to become God'.

"Note that I perfectly understand the reserves which the Dictionary has imposed on you. — But, all the same, one has the right to talk like St. Paul! — That may be said, I repeat, without prejudice to the profound interest your article has created in me. But please do not only refuse! assimilate, construct!"

There we have Teilhard at his most Teilhardian. He takes a cue from St. Paul's concept of Christ's union with his followers when they are associated with him as members of his mystical body. Fernand Prat,¹ a fellow-Jesuit, has well expressed the concept while commenting on *Romans VI, 3-5*: "Ineffable union compared by St. Paul to the grafting, which intimately mingles two lives even to the point of blending them, and absorbs into the life of the trunk the life of the grafted branch; a marvellous operation which makes both Christ and ourselves *symphytoi* (animated by the same vital principle), *summorphoi* (animated by the same active principle), or as St. Paul says elsewhere, clothes us with Christ and makes us live by His Life." Unfortunately, orthodoxy, as evinced by Valensin's article, takes a more or less metaphorical view of Pauline thought. Teilhard, proceeding from that thought, outdoes it in literal organic implication. He comes as close as a Christian possibly can to the arch-pantheist Spinoza to whom universal being is one with God's own self — divine, as Teilhard suggests, in the same way that Christ's humanity was divine by the Word forming a single entity with it (hypostatic union) and not loosely linking itself to it. He openly declares that Spinozism is not "simply evil, false" and that a true Christianity is but a slight modification of the Spinozist stand and worlds away

litude de conduite, à un être commun, — c'est réellement 'devenir le Christ', 'devenir Dieu.'

"Notez que je comprends parfaitement les réserves que vous imposait le Dictionnaire — Mais, tout de même, on a le droit de parler comme St Paul! — Ceci soit dit, je le réptète, sans préjudice du profond intérêt que m'a causé votre article. Mais, je vous en prie, ne refusez pas seulement! assimilez, construisez!"

¹ *The Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. I, p. 223, quoted by Dom Eugene Boylan, O.C.S.O., in *The Mystical Body and the Spiritual Life* (The Mercier Press, Cork, 1964), pp. 38-39.

from official Christianity which drives a complete wedge between the being of God and that of man. True Christianity is in a real sense pantheism, but it is the pantheism of the poets more than that of a philosophical logician like Spinoza. What the latter does is to theorise the former into an extreme position, yet in its essence it is not far out. In the final union, we are a part of Christ, a part of God, but without being dissolved in them. As they are a Person, our becoming part of them can only hyper-personalise our own personal consciousness in the act of its growing universalised. That is the sole difference Teilhard would accept between his own *weltanschauung* and Spinoza's.

Strangely enough, he compares Spinoza as well as Hegel, in connection with the pantheist poets, to St. Aquinas and Cajetan in connection with St. Theresa. The two latter philosophers are not commonly supposed to have distorted in intellectual version the reality experienced by the mystic of Avila. If Teilhard's comparison has force, it would seem that they have pushed the authentic implications of St. Theresa's "living" Christianity into an exaggerated form which would not be altogether acceptable. Either this is an indirect dig at orthodox theory or it is an indirect welcome to Spinoza in spite of his apparent extremism. Teilhard is indeed most advanced in heterodoxy in this letter to Valensin.

At any rate, it is worth marking that nowhere in these passages or anywhere else in *Intimate Letters* do we have a clear statement that man is created by God, from nothing, as a substance quite distinct from Him — a statement which would divide Teilhard from Spinozism as trenchantly as Christian orthodoxy divides itself. All he insists on is that the human person be not submerged in the ultimate unity with the Divine and that the Divine be not only cosmic but also transcendent.

In how genuinely pantheist a sense Teilhard's God could be cosmic we may gather from three pronouncements in *Intimate Letters*. The earliest is a Note of 1 May 1921, quoted by de Lubac:¹ "The two religions of the future: — that of the cosmic Christ; — naturalist pantheism." Teilhard means: The two religions most likely to be adopted because of their common content of a Universal Godhead. Doubtless, a choice is posited because the common content can have somewhat different shades and emphases. Naturalist pantheism would not yield a Universal Person who would also transcend the universe: its Godhead would be a single impersonal World-substance with no transcendence of the world. But if it is just by the personal character that the Universal Godhead who is the Cosmic Christ has the quality of being transcendent, then in its cosmicity as such it need not be altogether a Person: it could share with naturalist pantheism an impersonality of One World-substance. The pair of religions, for all their difference of shades and emphases, may truly have a common content. Rather, the religion of the Cosmic Christ may subsume naturalist pantheism without excluding his transcendent nature.

¹ *Op cit.*, p. 102, Note 1: "Les deux religions de l'avenir. — celle du Christ cosmique, — le pantheisme naturaliste."

The same point arises in de Lubac's quotation¹ of a Note of Teilhard's on 12 October 1921: "Even though all men were to succeed in arriving at a concerted understanding about a religious attitude (for instance, pantheist), this accord (however well-founded it might be upon internal tendencies and the deep experience of the Cosmos) would be vain as regards informing us about the true nature of the Term. — There would still be necessary an 'answer', an *objective contact* with Omega which should corroborate and confirm this great aspiration of our souls. — Christianity, I continue to believe, needs at present a strong infusion of human sap. But all its value — *all its force* for uplifting souls lies in its presenting itself as *Imposed from above*, as from the *Other*, not only felt, desired, 'to be born from our united efforts', — but already *actuated*, constituted *extra nos*. Such is the essence of the idea of Revelation." Here the transcendent Omega is considered the essence of Christian revelation and the indispensable condition for the final fulfilment of humanity. Without assuming its touch on us as of an independent Being outside ourselves, we shall never have a proper insight into what Omega, the End or Term of evolution, is. However, the complementary of this much-required transcendence is a unifying Omega intrinsic to the Cosmos and realised through a pantheist religion shared as a great aspiration by all souls, a religion full of a human life-interest which Christianity with its eyes principally fixed on an Above badly lacks and must acquire. Clearly, this side of the evolutionary consummation, this Cosmic Omega, is compassed by a pure pantheism which is indeed incomplete without that transcendence but is not annulled by the latter: in fact it goes along with it as part of a larger ultimate Reality.

Again, take Teilhard's complaint to Ravier on 3 August 1952 about a newspaper's misrepresentation of him — inspired, as he asserted, by Rome's tactics — that "the God of Teilhard was becoming a God immanent to the evolution of the world"². The complaint³ runs: "What annoys me in the affair is this elementary manner of making me throw overboard a divine 'transcendence' which I, much to the contrary, have spent my life in defending, — while seeking, it is true (like everybody, but using the new properties of a Universe in a state of Cosmogogenesis), to harmonise it with an immanence to which nobody any longer doubts we should give a more and more import-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 297, Note 2. "Quand même tous les hommes arriveraient à s'entendre sur une attitude religieuse (v.g. panthéiste), cet accord (si fondé fût-il sur les tendances internes et l'expérience profonde du Cosmos) serait vain pour nous renseigner sur la véritable nature de Terme. — Il faudrait encore qu'il y ait une 'réponse', un *contact objectif* avec l'Oméga qui vienne corroborer et confirmer cette grande aspiration de nos âmes. — Le christianisme, je continue à le croire, a actuellement besoin d'une forte infusion de sève humaine. Mais toute sa valeur, — *toute sa force* pour soulever les âmes tient à ce qu'il se présente comme un *Imposé d'en haut*, comme de *l'Autre*, non seulement pressenti, désiré, 'à naître de nos efforts réunis', — mais déjà *actué* constitué *extra nos*. Telle est l'essence de l'idée de Révélation."

² *Ibid.*, p. 410. "Le Dieu du P. Teilhard devenait un Dieu immanent à l'évolution du monde . . ."

³ *Ibid.*, "Ce qui me vexé dans l'affaire, c'est cette manière élémentaire de me faire jeter par-dessus bord une 'transcendance' divine que j'ai au contraire passé ma vie à défendre, — tout en cherchant il est vrai (comme tout le monde, mais en utilisant les nouvelles propriétés d'un Univers en état de Cosmogénèse) à l'harmoniser avec une immanence à laquelle personne ne doute plus qu'il faille donner une part de plus en plus importante et explicite dans notre philosophie et notre religion."

ant and explicit part in our philosophy and our religion.” What do we find in these words? At once a corrective to the canard that Teilhard was exclusively an evolutionary immanentist and an admission that his stress does fall on evolutionary immanentism. But if his philosophy and his religion do give primacy to “a God immanent to the evolution of the world” he surely subscribes, even though he does not confine himself, to “naturalist pantheism” and he subscribes to it in a most prominent way in the very act of explaining that he is more than a subscriber to that belief alone.

After all this, it would be foolish to make much of his occasional declarations that his highly disturbing doctrines could be couched in more orthodox language in the future and be absorbed into Catholic thought when the need to employ shock-tactics was over and Rome had made its peace with him.¹ He was always eager not to be thrown out of the Church if he could help it and he also coddled a dream that his drastic-seeming innovations could be defended as a development from certain affirmations of St. Paul. His self-deceptions were natural in the context of his faith that, no matter how wrong and perverse the contemporary Church and even historical Christianity were, they were the bearers of a precious truth and that it was his mission to reveal to them the full meaning of this truth. His mission, according to him, could best be carried out by making his convictions active in the most subtle and potent way possible — that is, from within the Roman Catholic fold itself. What he sought to bring about was “the ‘implosive’ encounter, in the human consciousness, of the sense of the ‘ultra-human’ and the Christic sense (or, as I often say, of the Ahead and the Above)”² — or, in other words, “the ‘implosive’ encounter of the Christian and the Evolutive”.³ The result would be the interplay and intermixture of “naturalist pantheism” with transcendentalist Christianity, involving the “re-thinking of Revelation and Christology, in terms of a Universe recognised as convergent.”⁴

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Ibid.*, pp 314, 319.

² *Ibid.*, p. 448, Note 8: “la rencontre ‘implosive’ dans la conscience humaine du sens de l’‘ultra-humain’ et du sens Christique (ou, comme je le dis souvent, de l’En avant et de l’En haut)” (10 Octobre 1954).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 452: “la rencontre ‘implosive’ du Chrétien et de l’Evolutif.” (14 January 1955)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 404 “re-pensée de la Révélation et de la Christologie, en fonction d’un Univers reconnu comme convergent.” (30 Novembre 1951)

EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1975)

(This is the third instalment of a paper by a competent American psychotherapist, Charles Maloney, who has been in living touch with Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and Ashram. His paper 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 it confines itself it brings an abundance of observations highly enlightening for Maloney's fellow-practitioners and of considerable interest to the disciples of Sri Aurobindo who wish to understand the deeper possibilities of psychotherapy in service of the common man who may not always be ready for Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.)

Concentration and Consecration

It is generally true that what we call psychological or emotional problems arise from the *identification* of self, individual or person with one or more aspects of our being, *i.e.*, thoughts, emotions or physicality. For example, a person with a deeply ingrained fear might erect through reaction to that fear a certain way of being or life style designed to protect him. While out of habit he finds some security in his way of thinking, feeling and acting, he is also limited and controlled by his fear. Likewise, a person who has been treated habitually as a "bad" boy or girl may identify with the feeling of badness and may develop actions and thoughts consonant with those feelings. This self identification reaches great intensity in obsessive and compulsive modes of behavior. Another person may, because of his psychological conditioning, identify with his mind and develop it in order to protect himself from the emotional aspect of his being. Thus, what we presently refer to as our "personality" or "individuality" is a selection of mental, vital and physical aspects of our being which are organized around a temporary "center" called an ego. This surface construction has been formed according to the kind of conditioning (mother, father, education, religion, etc.) we have received within our psychological history. What we have received we become attached to or identified with in terms of the surface personality, thereby holding at bay those other forces generally referred to in the West as unconscious. To become fully conscious of *all* of the forces that constitute us we must move beyond the conditioned personality. Since, from a yogic perspective, our mind, vital or physical is neither the source of knowledge nor the power to effect an integration of the being but rather the instruments of a higher consciousness, the healing techniques must reflect this psychological organization. The key yogic techniques which will be offered here in reference to psychotherapy are concentration and consecration.

To become conscious or aware of any area of life requires some degree of *concentration* or the ability to bring back all the scattered threads of consciousness to a single

point. This is especially true in approaching psychological problems inasmuch as the person must give his attention as perfectly as possible to certain feelings, thoughts and actions in order to discover their nature and their true source. This indicates a certain disciplining of our ordinary mental and emotional consciousness which is dispersed or seizes upon an ongoing stream of objects. "By concentration on anything whatsoever we are able to know that thing, to make it deliver up its concealed secrets ..."¹ A very diffuse feeling of fear when concentrated on may reveal a much different cause and nature than appears on the surface phenomena of a person's life. For example, a person who has an apparently "baseless" fear of his mother may after a period of concentrating on an image of her or a feeling about her find other images and feelings coming into consciousness which reflect particular experiences in his psychological history. One often has the experience of passing through the surface point of concentration and entering another consciousness, *e.g.*, that of a period in childhood. What originally appeared on the surface as a puzzling fear begins to appear in a larger context and there is a widening of consciousness. This use of concentration will be indicated more concretely in the last part of the paper. The principle that is being emphasized is: "If you concentrate on any idea (feeling, memory, image) with sufficient obstinacy, you will 'go through', ... and behind the idea upon which you concentrate, you will find the light."² This principle must be applied, not indiscriminately, but with a knowledge of the capacities of the person to receive the light. The increase in consciousness may come on a mental, emotional or physical level or some combination of these according to the openness and receptivity of these various parts of the being. Concentration is viewed here as the active component or effort upon the part of the person desiring a higher or more integral state of consciousness.

The second yogic technique which really implies concentration and is central in our discussion of psychotherapy is *consecration*. Without consecration concentration would be no more than a technique now used in hypnosis or trance induction. Consecration is usually used in a religious or mystical sense but actually it has a much wider significance and application. It means a giving of oneself, not in a passive sense such as submission but actively: "To consecrate oneself is 'to give oneself to an action ...'"³ There are varying degrees of consecration or self giving but in a yogic sense the self giving has to progressively become total, with the ultimate objective being the highest or Divine Consciousness. Concretely, this means a total offering or opening of mind (thought and processes of thought), the vital (feelings, emotions, desires, impulses, drives) and body (all movement and action) to the action of the higher consciousness. This does not mean a giving up or excision of the mental, vital and physical parts of our being but rather an intentionality on their part to become perfect instruments through which the higher consciousness can manifest. A progressive consecration or self giving implies an evolutionary perfection, integration and transformation of our vital and physical by the higher consciousness. It is a recognition on the part of our mental-vital-physical organization that there is a higher self that moves towards manifestation. While the implications of this yoga or practical psychology are many

there are two points to be emphasized in relation to psychotherapy.

First it emphasizes a process of becoming conscious of concrete attachments or identifications with certain feelings, thoughts and actions which cause pain and produce disharmony and, secondly, surrendering our identification with these movements of our being to the higher consciousness. Consecration in this sense is a very detailed psychological process. It involves becoming conscious of all of the mental, vital and physical forces which have effected a certain habit of being. For example, if a person has a deeply rooted fear and he concentrates and consecrates the feelings or images connected with the fear to the higher consciousness he in essence opens himself to the source of the fear being brought fully into consciousness. This may mean re-experiencing certain childhood events if the source lies there. We must become *fully* conscious of the nature and source of the movements of our being before we can surrender our attachment to them. Consecration here implies becoming fully conscious of why we think, feel and act the way we do and simultaneously allowing the higher consciousness to break up certain psychological formations or habits of our present mental-vital-physical consciousness. It further means a turning towards or aspiring to a higher or more integral state of consciousness by *all* the parts of our being:

The mere idea or intellectual seeking of something higher beyond, however strongly grasped by the mind's interest, is ineffective ... unless it is seized on by the heart as the one thing desirable and by the will as the one thing to be done.⁴

This intentionality to move towards a higher consciousness or to open the point of identification (in the mind, vital or physical) produces a response whereby the nature and source of the identification or habit is brought fully into consciousness by the power of the higher consciousness. This is the key principle of the yogic technique of consecration. It presupposes on the part of the person only an openness to a higher or more integral consciousness beyond our present egoic organization of consciousness. In view of the objectives of psychotherapy it does not necessitate a particular spiritual or religious formulation but rather that man is an open-ended being in terms of the growth of consciousness.

(To be continued)

CHARLES MALONEY

NOTES

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970), p. 304.

² The Mother, *Questions and Answers 1950-51* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972), p. 305.

³ *Ibid.* p. 117.

⁴ *The Synthesis*, p. 63

**LOTUS-FLAME
OR
SURYAMAN**

(Continued from the issue of January 1975)

BOOK I, CANTO 2 (*Contd.*)

A WHITE eternity looked down on his soul.
Earth faced a greater beam than any known,
It came down timid like a trepidant child
Unsure of its path, the labyrinth of things.
Rose from below a mirroring, echoing cry,
Life was appealing to light's adventuring beam
Against the backdrop of fret and change and doom.
The pussance of the altitude now called
To the sleeping strength in the atom and the mire,
The seed of energy's laugh within the earth.
For all was there subdued, hidden, untraced
Behind the mask of sleep, or errant march
Of life towards the slow and meaningless shapes.
All was ingrained within the spot of Time,
The moment's dot, the fragment of the Unknown.
All that Suryaman sensed within his breast,
The rushing wings of intuition's downsweep,
The wide violence of sheer eternal life,
The bliss and beauty of the looming heights,
The stride of knowledge leaning from sovereign peaks,
Echoed in naked abysses far and faint.
But the night was too inviolable and sheer
To let the flame of life grow and emerge
Out from the stagnant pool of nought and dream
Into the open vistas of the Sun.
Obdurate was the gloom, unvanquished the gleam.
This was the god's assault, the pursuing hound
Chasing the demon's hades out from its lair.
All was a mask, a covered face of the One:
When nude it was the Flame, when veiled the Night;
When spaceless, timeless it was the eternal Whole;
When shut dumb and enchained it was the Pit.
All was the Self, the undivided Sky;

All was the nameless chasing its opposing pole
 As the mire, the drunk spaces of oblivion.
 All was a play between deep nature and God.
 These evolving tides of chance, these growing vasts,
 These fields of creation multitudinous, free,
 These amazing suns laughing their way to life,
 These waves and thoughts winging through infinite ways,
 These lights and obscurities, these poles of the Self
 Were the dimensions of the sole Unknown.
 There was nothing beyond this immeasurable One,
 All was this single theme, this single seed,
 The key that opened all the gates of the world.

(*To be continued*)

ROMEN

NOTICE

I HAVE received several requests for permission to print copies of the paintings of *Meditations on Savitri* and the paintings of *About Savitri* for various purposes, such as making the covers of books, greeting cards and so on. But it is The Mother's wish that it would be best if these paintings were not used in the ways proposed. It is felt that these paintings will have their best value if they appear only in the series of books — *Meditations on Savitri* and *About Savitri* — as planned by The Mother Herself. *Savitri* is sacred and should be left untouched, otherwise the truth behind each painting which is the creation of The Divine Mother will be distorted and everything will become common and meaningless. The Force and Power will not be there any more.

Also, many of my other paintings directed by The Mother are already printed as greeting cards without my permission. Besides, the writings from my books are taken without my knowledge. So I request all the Centres and their members to consider the matter. Whatever The Mother has given to me will surely appear in book-form in the course of time, according to Her Wish. Let us all respect The Mother's Wish and Will. Thank you.

HUTA

EUROPE 1974

A TRAVELOGUE

(Continued from the issue of November 1974)

(2)

God seems to have a particular aversion in Europe, at least in some of its great churches, to the sleeveless arms of women. The proof of it is that my wife had to lend her cape to one of her friends and companions, a Parsi lady, who might have otherwise been denied admission to the great cathedral at Milan. In some of the great temples of South India, on the other hand, God, or rather His representatives the priest, would not tolerate the sight of any clothes covering the upper part of the body of men. Strange vagaries of taste one has to put up with if one is not to miss some of the fun of travelling outside the limits of one's home town.

Among the many other points of difference between the Indian and the West European points of view, is one that, contrary to the belief fostered in certain quarters, Europe seems to lay much greater emphasis on the internal side of things than on the external, at least in so far as concerns the architectural theme in religion. With rare exceptions the main insistence in an Indian temple is on the outward view; it had best be seen in a good photograph. One is on the other hand likely to miss a great part of the grandeur and beauty of a cathedral in Europe, be it Gothic, Renaissance or Baroque, if one simply passes by it in a coach without caring to enter the portals. And I must hasten to add that there was never any question asked as to the creed or dogma we professed by anyone standing at the gates. All that is required is that one must be properly dressed, and refrain from loud talk in a place meant for worship. I thought this was very sensible.

*
**

We saw during our tour almost all the great cathedrals, and some less well-known churches too, and seldom were disappointed. St. Peter's in Rome, Our Lady of the Flora in Florence, St. Mark's in Venice, the Milan Cathedral and the great Duomo in Pisa, the cathedrals of Frankfort and Cologne, Notre Dame of Paris and its Invalides, the renowned church at Canterbury and Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's of London formed part of our itinerary. In St. Peter's and at Frankfort and Milan we were present when the service was on.

But I should perhaps begin with a less well-known monument that goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era when Christianity was still to receive the sanction of kings and emperors and paganism held the minds of men. It is the magnificent temple erected to pagan gods by the great emperor Hadrian in Rome. Hadrian was the one who built the strong fortifications known as Hadrian's Wall to protect Roman

England from inroads from the North. It was a symbol of Roman might, and it is the sense of overwhelming strength that has been immobilised in stone in his temple to the pagan gods of Rome. Twelve of them, Zeus and the rest, had their images placed high up on the walls. These images have since been pulled down by Christian piety, but the massive pillars on which the high edifice rests still bring to mind something of the solid faith of the old Roman worship and, still more perhaps, the almost inhuman strength of mind and body to which that faith looked for its support. I do not know if pillars of that size and girth have been erected anywhere since then. Hadrian's temple, standing still in its pristine might, brings home as nothing else perhaps does in Rome the reality of Roman greatness. We were however not a little surprised to find that Raphael's remains lie buried in this pagan Temple, Raphael the incomparable exponent in paint of all the softness and sweetness of the Christian theme, so utterly different from the Roman. Did Rome try in this way to make amends for its harsh and cruel treatment of the early Christian faith?

*

**

St. Peter's is deservedly popular, among the lovers of the grandiose in art as well as those who care only for the history of religion. It is by far the largest religious structure erected by Christian devotion; its magnificent dome remains the greatest tribute to Michael Angelo's genius. Its dimensions are stupendous. The distance from the main portal to the altar at the other end is more than that between the goals of a football field. And one forgets the immensity of the horizontals in the stupefying height of the dome. Once you enter the cathedral, the first impression is that of sheer amazement. There is a story told of a raw Indian diplomat accredited to the Vatican, which I do hope is pure fabrication. It seems that on being introduced to this edifice by the Pope in all his pompous paraphernalia, our diplomat was so overwhelmed as to burst out in an unseemly condemnation of everything Indian in matters religious. The Pope was not there when we entered, and we kept our head.

The medieval litany in melodious Latin echoing down the vaults of the dome was superb. And so was the organ music. A vast amount of the very rarest Italian marble has been used in the sculptural compositions that dot the floor and adorn the walls on all sides. But the simple Pieta standing on a side altar steals the show. Michael Angelo was a young man when he did the Pieta, Jesus dead and reclining on the lap of his mother. The mother is so dazed by the tragedy that she forgets to cry; there is not a sign of emotion on her impassive face as she gazes on her son. This is to my mind one of the highwater marks of European art where beauty has been achieved by sheer force of simplicity. There is here no attempt at embellishment, no effort to convey the deep pathos except through the posture of the limbs, the legs lying helpless and dangling across the knees of the woman, the rigid posture of the mother sitting motionless in grief. This simple composition in plain white marble is in sharp contrast to the rather flamboyant groups that are scattered all over the place. This is perhaps the best

work that Michael Angelo did in his portrayal of the human form in stone. Compared to this, his Moses offers a strange contrast. A work of mature years, that is a massive figure, muscular and strong, with a ferocious look on the long-bearded face. This giant figure has been done in precious marble of variegated hue and polished to an amazing sheen. It was obviously meant to impress, and is certainly a fine portrait of a stern leader of an unruly folk. But, in spite of its massive grandeur, it somehow gave me the impression of having been a little overdone.

Before leaving St. Peter's, I might add a little side-note that would evoke pleasant memories of bygone days in Pondicherry. Near the great church there is a stall where one can buy souvenirs which are returned the same day to the buyer after having been blessed by the Pope, who lives in an unpretentious block of the Vatican Palace next door to the cathedral. There are no signatures however ...

*
**

St. Peter's dome was suggested to Michael Angelo by the slightly smaller dome of the same shape that rises above the church of Our Lady of the Flora at Florence. The other great distinction of this lovely church is that it is here for the first time that Europe adopted the peculiar shape of the dome that characterises the other Renaissance and post-Renaissance cathedrals, in Pisa, Paris, London. In a smaller church nearby lie buried three of the greatest sons of Florence, Dante, Michael Angelo and Galileo Galilei, names that brightened up the face of the Florentine guide as he pronounced them.

St. Mark's in Venice, though oldest in date among the great churches on the Continent, is not really European. Its dome and general construction bear clear traces of the Byzantine style, which in its turn was of Saracenic origin. Its Campanile or clock tower — the word really means "bell tower" — is reminiscent of the tall minaret of a mosque from where the Muezzin calls the faithful to prayers.

There is another and more well-known Campanile, the famed leaning tower of Pisa that stands near the great Duomo. An interesting anecdote is told about this freak in marble. Let me in this connection introduce our charming mentor and permanent guide who accompanied us throughout the tour and looked after our comforts — hotel accommodation, food and amusement — with truly American efficiency. He was a young man of Belgian-Flemish origin, spoke five European languages with fluency, and seemed to know all that a tourist would be interested to know about the cities and the countryside we passed through. He was on the staff of American Express and was normally accustomed to escort American visitors to Europe. He must have felt bewildered at the strange manners of some among our company, but he managed the motley crowd with admirable aplomb — a truly yogic feat.... Well, our escort explained that this leaning tower of Pisa may actually have been meant as a joke by the designer : that is to say, instead of the tall edifice gradually sinking deeper and deeper into the ground on one side, it was actually intended to lean at an

angle from the very start. What led to this idiosyncrasy remains a mystery and a subject of debate among the scholars. But it certainly is a fact that a climb up its stairs gives one a queer sensation to be experienced nowhere else.

The great cathedral at Milan stands in a class apart. It fronts a large square and like St. Mark's in Venice is flanked by the palatial residence of the old rulers of this city-state. What lends it peculiar charm is the lyric quality of its façade. It is perhaps no accident that the Scala, the world-renowned Opera House, is just round the corner; the church façade shares some of the quality of Opera music, its lightness and gaiety and splendid crescendoes. This façade is made up of a rising series of spires on both sides forming a perfect triangle that is so pleasing to an Indian eye after the stern outlines of the Renaissance style. In its interior appointments it is much the same as the others — the long nave and aisles, the high ceiling, the huge candles of the size of thick bamboos decorating the altar. It is in this cathedral, as far as I remember, that we saw a large painting by Vasari, the Last Supper. Strangely enough, the famed Last Supper by Leonardo is in a dilapidated little church in a gloomy corner of Milan; the reason is difficult to guess.

*
**

Innsbruck, the neat little town on the northern slopes of the Tyrolean Alps in Austria, boasts of a fine church in Rococo style, one of the finest, we were told, in this highly decorative style complete with cherubim and golden fruits hanging from gilded pillars. The beauty of the church matches the grandeur of the hills in the background. We shall pay another visit to Innsbruck, this charming town, when I speak about the cities in a later instalment.

Notre Dame of Paris needs no introduction. Its stained glass windows (known as the Roses) remain a marvel of medieval workmanship, and they admit a mellow lighting into the interior which the chandeliers hanging high above serve only to accentuate. Notre Dame recalls to mind the story of Napoleon's coronation in this church. The Pope had come all the way from Rome to crown him king. But the crown was taken away from the Pope's hands and placed by Napoleon himself on his own head at the critical moment, so the Pontiff was shown who was to be master of church and state in France in spite of the Concordat. The gargoyles that deface the sides of the roof, our Parisian guide explained, were meant to ward off evil spirits; they are now used as drain pipes for the rain water. Apparently the evil spirits now have other work to do. There is not a trace of the Hunchback either, he too seems to have fled.

The Invalides, known for its sepulchre where the remains of Napoleon were brought from St. Helena long after his death, was originally meant to be a great church. There is an altar still but I do not know if service is regularly held. The church dome is magnificent. But the sarcophagus of Napoleon attracts most. Built massively in rich brown marble of unusual design with a large Corinthian scroll at its two ends, it lies below the floor level with a circular gallery from which one has

to gaze down on it; the impression is unforgettable.

Versailles has its dainty little chapel where Louis Quatorze used to say his prayers — to atone for all the wars with which he ravaged Western Europe. I do not know if Napoleon ever attended chapel or church. But looking at this place of mock worship, one still seems to hear the rustling and murmurs of the glittering company that followed the Roi Soleil in his exercises at devotion.

Across the Channel there are two notable examples of Gothic art and one of the Renaissance style, which deserve mention. The church of Canterbury, the seat of the Archbishop of England, stands on an eminence and seems to command the surrounding country by its solemn look, which however loses its sombre aspect when illumined with flood-lights at night. It has remained the symbol of church authority ever since the time of Thomas à Becket's quarrel with the English king, Henry the Second, in the twelfth century. Chaucer has made Canterbury immortal in his Tales; we travelled part of the way the pilgrims had trailed.

Westminster Abbey is as good as the photographs show it, a fine specimen of Gothic art whose beauty is emphasised by the stately Houses of Parliament when seen in alignment. It has the unique distinction of being the only existing cathedral where the sovereign is still crowned king and where the great ones of the land are laid to rest. The church of St. Paul's has been saved as if by an unseen Hand from the blasts of the Luftwaffe when fires raged all around. It still dominates with its majestic dome the entire City scene, and proclaims the eternal repose of God whilst men are busy counting the pennies at their tills and watching with an anxious eye the rise and fall of fortunes at the Bourse down below.

*

**

Every time I entered a cathedral and sat for some time in one of the pews, I tried to make clear to my mind what exactly the builder was aiming at in enclosing such huge horizontal spaces and those immense heights. I am not quoting here from the books but recording only my personal impressions.

Was the House of God the only place where the common man could come and seek relief from the narrow confines of his normal surroundings? He did live most of the time out in the open. But he was too preoccupied with his gruelling tasks to have time for silent communion with Nature; he had good enough cause not to be in love with Nature when for instance it sent a blizzard across his standing corn or a swarm of locusts landed on it. To find and enjoy a real sense of wideness, he had need of an enclosed space which did not bother him with a blazing sun or threaten him with rain.

Here, within a big church or cathedral, he could let his eyes gaze as far as they could go, to the far end of the nave where the crucified figure of the Christ hung over the altar. Here he could raise his eyes to the dim recesses of the high ceiling and imagine that he was peering into the eyes of God. Or, was it that the mellow lighting of

the atmosphere and the soporific spell of the chanted hymns and the organ tones helped him forget his normal humdrum self and pushed him a little inward, perhaps even made him find a moment's contact with his soul?

What the Nature-worshipper of today seeks to find in his breathless drive through the open space in his Thunderbird is perhaps the same search for peace that drove his ancestors of a less hectic age into the wide confines of the cathedral and church. But this is not to say that these edifices remain today only reminders of a long-forgotten past. If one is to judge by the throngs that enter them from all parts of the civilised world and by the satisfied look on the faces of those who come out after attending service, one would not care to pronounce hasty judgment that the religious spirit is dead or even that established religion is on the way out in Western Europe.

Certain idiosyncrasies may still be ascribed to God, but the House of God continues to have a place in the hearts of men.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

YOU CAN'T HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

You must to Mother give what to Mother is due:
 Blank cheque of your unconditional unshared love,
 Or troubles will never release their bear-hug of you,
 Her chess allows no play of double move.

You blunder, thinking together you can click
 Life's loves and Mother's love by your genius's sleight.
 Hiding you do wrong deeds, but your shrewdest trick
 Can't dodge the results from Her inescapable might.

You hunt safety, contacts, money, not love of Mother;
 She gives you love, you recoil or down you knock it,
 You break Her rules, indulge desires, soul smother,
 God won't thus hop or drop into your pocket.

You shall never be safe, never in peace till self-held
 You live wholly and solely within Her Love enshelled.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE SECRET SOURCE OF THE GANGES

A QUEST IN A STRANGE LAND

(Continued from the issue of January 1975)

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

3

IN this heavenly realm I now awakened with the dulcet notes of a bird. Getting out of bed I felt more refreshed and more strong than ever before. Stepping down from the verandah I followed the path by which I had arrived here the previous day, and came to the river bank. There was not much light yet. The earth on the bank was like marble. There were trees nearby, huge tamarisks, and two other kinds which seemed familiar to me, for the one resembled the eucalyptus and the other the palm. Small plants were there too, all sprouting from that stony earth.

Far away I descried two or three men entering the water. Instead of hesitating any more I also entered it. The water was ice-cold, a little bluish but clear. By and by the land became bright and the colour of the plants and trees blossomed forth. There were as many shades of colour among the trees as those in a rainbow. Their magnificence baffles description.

After the bath, admiring the explosions of wild flowers, I sauntered towards that verandah. Houses, gateways, roof-tops, I'll say everything here was constructed with the marble or earth that I saw on the river bank; but, though always smooth and snow-white, nowhere was it glossy. One might be deluded to think all was made of ice.

In the verandah the bed was missing, in its place was a low stool. Instead of anchoring there I went and paused, with scruples, in the doorway of the hall where I had taken my dinner the previous night. The hall was lighted by the sun. I saw a long dais against the room-wall. On it various things were neatly arranged; out of them a conch shell and a golden box with a spiry lid were particularly attractive. I had never seen such a conch before, it was two feet long, tapering to a point. Its colour was bright minium and the mouth was mounted with gold.

Below the dais was a bench long as the wall, covered with a painted leather piece. On the top of this I perceived some ochre utensils and in the middle a bell. As I gaped at these articles, I felt an urge to enter the room. Just then that godlike man who had taken me under his wing and, behind him, that nymph-like lady came laughing, stood flanking me and clasped my hands; they were delighted at my delight. In their heart-robbing diction they uttered something of which I caught the word '*mitra*' (friend). They seemed to be saying: "Dear friend, why do you stand outside? Come in!" Inside we gathered before the bench. Then my friend whispered something to the lady, whereupon she left us.

I scrutinized the dress of my guardian. On his head the coronet was missing; his dark thick hair flowed down to the shoulders. His neck displayed three rows of necklaces; at the bottom of each glittered a pendant on the chest. On both the upper arms there was a gold band and below it was a square periapt. On his wide chest there was a broad leather fillet — wrought with golden patterns — rolling down from the left shoulder and attached to the waist-sash. His upper body was thus practically bare. I concluded that the crown together with the upper garment formed his outdoor dress. Now he wore only a thick red brocade which reached to the knees. The feet were bare.

The dress of the nymph was the same as on the previous day. Her thick black hair was braided and the plaits, garnished with flowers, fell on her back. Her jewelled ear-rings were blue. On her forehead gleamed a tiny orb. She wore a necklace of seven strings which screened her breast. Her very small waist was a model of an ideal figure. From her waist girdle, decked with bijoux, hung a bright blue skirt down to the knees; the long golden fibres round its hem tremored and scintillated as she moved. Truly, she walked in beauty. Her personal appearance had all the attributes of a goddess.

Now, while gape-seeding the articles on the bench I saw near the bell those things which my host had dug out from the snow the day before. They were placed on a blue saucer. I grew foxy and made no bones about lifting one and questioning my host in Hindi, "What is this thing?" With a smile he cautioned — "Take it, don't put it back there." Then with few words and more of expansive gestures he explained that if even a little of this substance was taken with milk, 'ojas' (life-force) would grow, and the body would not fall an easy prey to decadence; a man could then live for a hundred years. Its name was '*tushar gothol*'.

I inquired with ill-concealed excitement, "Do you take this every day? How do you take it?" Instead of wasting words he picked up from the bench that attractive box with a spiry lid and showed me its contents; a white powder and a small golden spoon. He scooped up one spoonful of this substance and tilting my head he dropped it into my open mouth. Just then my hostess appeared with a thick flavescent milk in a silver bowl and handing it over to me she withdrew. I drank it; the flavour was a blend of saffron and musk; its taste was ambrosial. Almost instantly I felt its pep.

The walls of that hall displayed many articles of virtue: shields, coats-of-mail, helmets, scimitar, etc., and a variety of ornaments. Demonstrating all these, my friend called someone in a soft and grave voice. Immediately the lady reappeared. He gave her some instructions. Then clasping my hands in the way of taking leave, he spoke in his charming language. I gathered that he had to attend to some duty, perhaps a meeting or conference; hence this lady would now look after me. Hearing them speak I had good reason to believe that their vocabulary was rich in Sanskrit terms. I caught the words 'mitra', 'pati', 'mandal', 'samiti', 'pradhan' and 'satkaar'. As he quit we also went out on the verandah.

(To be continued)

THE MAGIC CRYSTAL

A STORY FOR CHILDREN

MANY strangers passed through the little village at the foot of the mighty Himalayas, and some of them were no ordinary travellers. Thus one day a young boy came down the road into the village. He was completely wrapped up in warm-animal skins and he carried a bundle on his back. His face wore an expression of vivid joy and as he walked along the street his bright eyes were watching the shopkeepers preparing their stalls and laying out their wares. Only a few hours before a heavy snow-storm had swept through the streets, so the little boy was the first traveller to enter the village that day. He walked on until he came to a small tea-shop beside the road. There he stopped, and then went inside.

Several of the old men of the village had gathered there to warm themselves and the small room was quite crowded. The boy placed his bundle on the ground in front of him and bowed in greeting.

“Allow me some warmth, before I pass on. Money I have not, but I can show you a marvel.”

His voice was sweet and melodious, and the old men enjoyed listening to the travellers who often had marvellous tales to tell, so they invited him to sit with them. The boy sat down and opened his bundle.

“See what I have,” he said, and placed on the table a stone which glimmered dimly.

“Oh! a crystal ... it is very beautiful. Is it valuable?” asked one of the men. The boy smiled mysteriously.

“So valuable,” he murmured after a moment, “that I would not part with it for all the treasure in the world.”

The old men became very alert and edged closer so as not to miss a single word, and to marvel at the crystal.

“If it is more valuable to you than all the treasure in the world,” reflected one of the group, “then truly it must be a magic crystal, with special powers.”

“Yes,” the boy replied simply. The response was a murmur of amazement, for none of them had ever seen a magic crystal before.

After a time the boy spoke again.

“Do you remember the time when you were my age? Surely then each of you had a dream, in which you could live as if it were the only true reality. Now you are grown up and wise and you know what reality looks like, don't you? — Come, make a circle around the crystal, then be still and open the gates of your hearts once more to that time, and once more dream the dream in which all your wishes are fulfilled.”

The men were filled with pleasant wonder by the boy's words, so they sat on the floor in a circle around the magic crystal. Then silence filled that simple room as each one of them unlocked the door which opened to his dream-treasure. It was marvel-

lous, it was enchanting! — If only it had been real.... It seemed that each one was moved by this same thought, for at that very instant the magic crystal blazed with a bright bluish light, and the room seemed to revolve. The little boy smiled — and then out of the shining crystal sprang princesses and kings and magicians and all the dreams became living realities. The rustic tea-shop was no more — it was transformed into a heavenly hall. Solemn, joyful music sounded, and the old men found themselves to be young bright heroes full of noble strength; some were even turned to gods. All became a festival and laughingly the heroes danced with the gracious magic girls. The magicians wove spells to shower them with flowers and perfumes and through it all the little boy was singing in a pure sweet voice:

‘Crystal magic, crystal magic,
Once more show to Men
The world they’ve almost lost —
The world where all is Real,
Believed by none
But sovereign still of all their life.’

At that moment, as joy increased from height to height, Babu, the richest merchant in the village, walked down the street.

“Eh heh? What sweet sounds do I hear?” thought he as he drew near the tea-shop. “Isn’t this the place where all the old good-for-nothings sit?” He peered inquisitively through one of the small windows — and what he saw truly made his hair stand on end, so that he had to hold on his turban with both hands. But then an ugly leer shadowed his face, for he was a wicked man who had come to his riches through deceit and extortion.

“What is going on there must be magic — and whoever can do magic like this is just the man for Babu the merchant. I will soon possess this charm.” With this thought in his darkened heart he went into the shop. He approached one of the shining heroes, who had been an old man, and asked him, “Tell me, lord, what is the auspicious occasion for this shining feast and this luminous gathering of noble youths and gracious ladies?”

“You will not believe it, but that young boy over there made all our secret dreams come true with the help of his magic crystal,” came the reply. Babu laughed inwardly,

“So! It is magic, and what’s more, a magic crystal! This mere lad will soon hand it over to Babu.... Heh heh heh!” Then he sidled up to the boy, who sat beside the crystal gazing at the happy revelry.

“Tell me, dear friend,” murmured Babu into the boy’s ear, “what is the price of your magic crystal?” And he jingled the money which he carried under his jacket.

The small boy turned towards Babu and immediately recognized his black soul, for his eyes had been trained by the many dreams which he had helped to make real.

"You can take it — if you are ready to show the secret treasure of your heart," the little boy said. For the second time that day Babu had to hold on his turban with both hands.

"I will do it immediately," he cried in reckless greed, "immediately."

Hardly had the words passed his lips before thunder and lightning-flashes and then a purple-red beam of light shot out of the crystal and enveloped Babu. A few breathless moments later the light vanished and they saw that Babu had turned into — a big, fat toad!

When he realised what had happened to him Babu wanted to cry out, full of horror, "What did you do to me?" but only an ugly croak came from his throat. And yet the little boy had understood. He said,

"You have only become what in the depths of your heart you were already. For this is the secret of the magic crystal, that it gives to each one his own Truth; Goodness to the good, Nobility to the noble, Misery to the miserable. Take the crystal — it is yours. But take care what you dream, lest it become even worse."

Everyone was listening with their hearts in their throats, and the toad Babu gasped,

"Oh, misery of miseries! I do not want the magic crystal. Never could I bear my bad dreams!"

At that moment an enchantingly beautiful being stepped from the throng and spoke,

"Have you forgotten me, Babu? I am one of the secret dreams of many men, and many here have given me reality today. I am Eternal Love. Once even you dreamed of me, in the time before you knew what possessions meant — can you not recall it now?"

Babu kept sadly silent. But then something did appear in his memory, something he had really almost forgotten, something like a warm friendly light which as a child he had wished might shine for everyone. But that was long ago.

"Yes, I am that," said Eternal Love, for she could feel his thought. "I am the friendly light which pours the warmth of its love onto everybody; for I am the Dream, from which all dreams come."

And the little boy said,

"Do you understand now, Babu? You wanted to possess all dreams, but you forgot the essential one. It is the one dream of all men, Babu, for which you have to give all others. Try, Babu! Recover it again, and again become a man!"

Babu wept as he looked at Eternal Love standing before him in all her beauty, and in his heart a deep longing awoke, not to be a nasty toad any more, but to become as beautiful as Eternal Love herself. And as the longing grew stronger, he slowly, laboriously changed — back into his human form. But yet it was not the old Babu, for now his eyes were full of warm, friendly light.

All had watched with astonishment the mysterious transformation. And when the new Babu had become entirely a man Eternal Love went towards him and

embraced him tenderly.

“Oh, Babu,” she whispered, “You have understood!”

He nodded and joyfully closed his beautiful eyes.

Then the little boy clapped his hands and again sang gaily:

‘Crystal magic, crystal magic,
Once more show to Men
The world they’ve almost lost —
The world where all is Real,
Believed by none
But sovereign still of all their life.’

As he sang they all danced joyously and even more dreams became real. Indeed, I believe that the festival which began in that small tea-house, somewhere at the foot of the Himalayas, has not yet come to an end; for who knows the end of all the dreams of the world?

MICHEL KLOSTERMANN

THE TALES OF INDIA

by

Daulat Panday
(Lalita)

Parts I and II are dedicated to
the Divine Mother, Part III
to Sri Aurobindo.

Price : Rs. 5

Stories that have won much praise
both in India and abroad from the
young and old alike.

Available from the Publishers:

Publication Department,
Sri Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry - 605002

ALTAR AND FLAME

POEMS

BY

AMAL KIRAN

Handmade paper

Price : Rs. 20

SRI AUROBINDO BOOKS
DISTRIBUTION AGENCY
PONDICHERRY-605002

SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1975)

CHAPTER VIII: Part 3

THE morning after the vision, Eric awoke still cushioned upon his euphoria, and called upon Silent Daughter so that he might tell her all that had transpired the previous evening. But the presence that came to him was that of the Divine Master himself, who wished to convey to his child that what was required of him now was not to dream or dally, but to work. Furthermore, he made Eric understand that though the Divine One gave his boons for love, he also gave them to be used in the service of heaven's Suns. Such an occasion had now come, through which Eric could show his true mettle and strain his every nerve to repay his godly obligation. The divine suggestion did not find Eric wanting. With a cry of inward delight and an overflowing of gratitude that the Divine Master himself was calling him to the work, he foreswore all further reflection and reaching his U.N. office half an hour early, plunged into his work. The inner call had rendered every particle of his body kinetic, and the white lion paced up and down within his consciousness, galvanized by the force of his Divine Master's presence.

From then on Eric's tempo never relaxed. He made no speeches and blew no trumpets, but simply worked like a relentless shadow behind the glamorous façade of the world-body. It was not long before he became a living example to his colleagues of the concepts embodied in the words "dedication" and "servant," as applicable to the employees of an organization which aspired to encompass and guide all humanity. Now again providence came to Eric's assistance, while he moved as rapidly as ever up the Secretariat's administrative ladder, and provided him with a desperately needed helper. He had just shifted to a new office and was arranging the papers on his desk when he looked up and saw her coming through the door. At the same moment, Silent Daughter's voice spoke within him and asked, "Surely you recognize her, my love?" And he knew without further hesitation, as the woman approached, that she was Melisande and that she was being given to him as a secretary and personal assistant.

Her name now was Marianne. She was flaxen, French, and as beautiful as she had ever been, also as wise and practical as on that day so long ago when she had proffered the elixir of life to Silent Daughter and her infant child under the great tree. She welcomed Eric like a dear and long-remembered soul-mate, and then both set to work with the perfect harmony and understanding of each other that was to mark their relationship for the rest of their lives.

That evening after a long absence, Silent Daughter returned to Eric. It was the

first appearance she had made since the day before the vision and Eric immediately begged her to tell him why she had stayed away. "Because you were entering into a new phase," she replied, "and the Divine One was guiding you himself. While I? I was the invisible sand beneath his feet, for that is where I retreat when I must be still and unseen." She smiled and the ecstasy of being lost in those grains of sand shone through and brought unexpected tears to Eric's eyes.

"Is that where you were during the vision too?" he asked.

"No, my beloved, I was in the vision itself, but hidden so that you could not see me. Within my veiled chariot drawn by a single horse of golden flame, I rode enconced in the centre of the throng. Of course, they could not bring me as a warrior but carried me in their midst as a furled banner of victory, a mascot of the divine promise that was to be, and that would blossom forth in earth's sweet air when the warriors had finished their hard and terrible work."

"And only then will the veils be removed, and you, my dear and secret one, stand revealed in all your native joy and beauty and tender exuberance?"

"Yes — till that day all shall continue to call me the secret and silent one as they have always done, for though I live even in the din of battle none can see nor hear me. But the day will surely come, my love, when I shall walk the earth as tangibly as I did in the form of Kamal Rani and no sombre or gaseous vapour from the realm of the Dark One shall rise to drive me back within my enshrouding veils. It is for such a day that the Sun God's forces bear me in their midst, non-combatant though I be, and guard the little veiled carriage with their flaming swords."

"If only a single one of those swords could have been mine —"

"No, my love — more crucial is the work you must do here. For each must perform his own appointed task and you know that since the beginning yours has been assigned by the Divine Master who personally guides your steps. Soon the moment of your trial too shall be upon you. You have been given everything that you need for its execution, and you can be sure that Melisande, steadiest and surest of hearts, shall never fail you. Go forward then without once looking back. For only the past can betray you. The future belongs to the White Lion and his eternal Lord."

Now Silent Daughter placed her hand on Eric's forehead and once again he fell blissfully asleep. Nevertheless, even as he left the waking consciousness, he took her words to heart, and when he awoke the next morning they were reverberating in his soul.

Several years later, in the late-seventies, after a mounting crescendo of work and responsibility, the world body finally saw fit to appoint Eric Torgeir the new Secretary General. They could not have done so at a more crucial time. It was a time of anomalies in international behaviour in which heights of perspicacity and forward thinking were juxtaposed with extremes of puerility, an overriding world-wide cry for peace with that same antiquated tinder-box national pride and stubbornness that had led to war upon war before and foreshadowed yet another, the desire for humanity to unite with the old fissiparous tendency for it to break up into a hundred intolerant and

warring regions. Truly it was a chiaroscuro spectacle of light battling with darkness in each man, in each group, and in each nation as the world had rarely encountered it, and it was as surely the moment when the light would have to strike out the more boldly and decisively of the two. So it was that Eric's moment had arrived, and with all the courage of Shankardev he pressed forward to meet the challenge. The United Nations had never seen the like of him in all its thirty years of existence, and many of its members were not sure they favoured the change. But the gods had taken hold of Eric, and made him absolutely fearless, so that whatever the issue, whatever the stakes, he spoke his mind as one that belonged to no nation, no local interest, nor any personal or petty end. He travelled the world's capitals and touched upon each of its trouble-spots. He spoke to the people, any people, all people as no public servant, national or international, had ever done. He offered himself freely as a mouthpiece for all that was struggling to be born in the earth's heart and mind and soul.

Without trepidation, he spoke throughout the world's forums on the subject of human unity. On the nature of freedom as the soul of man craves it. On the necessity to transmute the competitive spirit in men and nations into a drive for a harmonious and cooperative growth.

Indeed with the power of the divine hand behind him he established a whole new code of excellence by which humanity might gauge its own desires, reactions and behaviour. When he dealt with governments, he was thus able to appeal to their higher sense of truth and justice, to a transcendence of their own interest as none had ever been able to appeal to them before. As a result, for the first time, the earth felt it could look to a leader that represented it as a totality. For not only the Divine Master but Nature itself had superbly contrived to produce in Eric the perfect instrument. His cool Nordic temperament nevertheless inspired by flashes of Viking fire, his great sturdy frame bred and brought to maturity on the fringes of the Arctic, and his ice-blue eyes set deep in a face carved from the mellow though enduring rocks of honesty and self-reliance all made Eric the unprecedented power that he had grown to be as he approached his sixty-fifth year.

Marianne too was as admirably suited for her task, for in the decade that she had served as Eric's personal assistant, she had worked as selflessly and unobtrusively as some perfect and undemanding mechanism that does not rest on the uncertain base of a human temperament. Yet she found her life no drudgery, and tirelessly did her daily work of making the thousand arrangements a world figure constantly needs from moment to moment. All the while she was borne up by the inner link that tied her to her superior, by the perfect inner union between them when they worked together, and nourished too by the gentle, and ever-soothing presence of Silent Daughter who watched over her night and day, responsible as she was for having sent Melisande from her enchanting mountain and the ministrations of an anxious and solicitous Unicorn. Particularly at night, both would wait for her dream state to begin and then they would come upon her, Silent Daughter lingering behind with her soft and marvellous smile, Unicorn rushing forward to place his head upon his

mistress's shoulder and weep, for he missed her desperately.

Now Eric launched upon a project that had been one of his own dreams for many years — a task from which all others had quailed without exception for it had been branded an impossibility for the last quarter of a century — the revision of the United Nations Charter so that it might reflect a new era of world government rather than the antiquated and fear-ridden attitudes of a world just staggering to its feet after World War II. The world was a far different place now — both the air and the promise had changed and renewed themselves. In those few decades humanity had vastly aged; and though all the contradictions it manifested ranging from foolishness to sagacity still waged bitter war with one another, somehow through some unseen, unheralded divine miracle, a sense of inward unity did in fact seem to be blossoming from the depths of the human soul. Humanity's "man" did seem to be superseding the beast, while behind the manly form in surprising, unsuspected ways even the god seemed to lurk and stir.

So it was that Eric began preliminary talks with the heads of member governments on the subject of charter revision, while he set teams of international lawyers to work on the problems of drafting, of working out legal details and the inevitable legal 'knots,' that so unfailingly cropped up in such a momentous document.

The complications, the objections from almost every quarter, and the bemused cynicism of those who scoffed at even the possibility of progress besieged Eric not only daily, but from hour to hour. But he knew the call that beckoned him onward and he persisted doggedly in his purpose, until the atmosphere within the world body had been so profoundly influenced by his thinking, that several of his most critical suggestions began to find favour with previously intransigent major powers. Now at last the international politics of power and its precarious balance, that had been in vogue over the last hundred years, began to break down, the "blocs" began to merge and blend at the peripheries of thought and human feeling, and the glacial age of fear thawed appreciably as men and nations tired more and more of their senseless mutual animosities.

With the ground so prepared before him, Eric surged ahead with his drive for a new and more enlightened form of world government. Finally it seemed that the stage had come for the endless words both written and spoken, the parleys, the conferences and the thousand speeches and discussions, to begin to translate themselves into action. Tomorrow he would once again go over the final draft of the revised charter as it would soon be presented before the General Assembly . . . Tomorrow . . .

He prayed that night before he slept, prayed that the long labour might finally bear fruit, prayed that the new era in international affairs for which he had so assiduously worked might finally be born — prayed that his Lord's White Lion might at last be seen rampant on its field of gold. For answer, nothing came to him but a stupendous, suspended silence. It seemed almost as though in that silence something were being withheld from him, or that some momentous answer waited behind a deliberately impenetrable veil, and refused to reveal itself. The silence was dense and

total to the extent that it awakened in Eric a vague malaise. He called in turn upon his Divine Master and upon Silent Daughter, yet neither came, so encapsulated was he in the silence that enclosed him. Now fear wound its coils about him, rising out of some unsuspected cavern in his own being, but so unaccustomed was he to its touch that he flung it off without difficulty, and determined to sleep without brooding further on his curious condition.

Marianne too found it a strange night. She had returned home later than usual from her work and was more exhausted than she had been for months, with nothing but bed and oblivion in her thoughts as she prepared to retire. Yet she felt Unicorn constantly about her. He had not even waited for her to begin to dream before coming, and she could feel him fussing and prancing about her in a highly excited state.

"Poor darling," she thought as she combed her hair. "What's wrong, my lovely one? Why are you not with Silent Daughter?" But Marianne too received no answer and she slept with the same strange malaise that had come to Eric.

It happened at noon the next day after a normal and uneventful morning during which neither Eric nor Marianne had given a thought to their unusual mood of the previous evening. They were to fly to Paris for a flash conference and were hurrying from the main entrance of the U.N. building to the Secretary-General's official car when the shots rang out. Three people died on the spot while two were critically wounded, among the dead, as the crowd gathered around, being the crumpled figures of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Eric Torgeir, and his personal assistant, Marianne Fabré.

Senseless, unthinkable, tragic, insane? Of course — the world would find all the appropriate words, but the simple and implicit truth was that to the bitter end the vestigial beast was not to be denied.

No silence greeted the Golden One and Melisande now. The gods themselves were waiting to welcome them home, Unicorn whinnying with concern and delight, Silent Daughter standing by, among others, with her jewelled tears for her beloved who perforce had once more returned to her through violence, the Divine Master himself with his love that knew no bounds, and his compassion and ecstasy that vibrated through the heavens for a task nobly done and bravely concluded. All were there to rescue their earthly champions as they rose from their mortal bodies and fled from a world momentarily erupting with shock, pain and dismay. None of that mattered to the dead, however, for the work the gods had required of the Golden One as Eric and Melisande as Marianne was done and the rest of the earth's drama would unfold with other lives, other heroes, and other warriors without fear. For the Golden One and Melisande on the other hand, it was the hour for rest.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of January 1975)

UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

NATURE is driving towards some kind of world union. In 1970 Japan put forth a plan for a U.N. University which would enrol 900 students staffed by 130 professors so that the University could represent the cultures of its many members. It offered also 20 crores of rupees but the site and venue are yet to be chosen.

When the ideal of the World University was first mooted it was hoped that the site chosen would be Auroville. On November 11, 1969 Navajata said in his radio talk: “Auroville will be a living university.”

Auroville — The Highest Gift of the Mother to Humanity

The very charter of Auroville declares: “Auroville belongs to nobody in particular, Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole.” None should be there who fostered in his heart the claim for name and fame. None should be possessed by the sense of possession. In this non-economic town the one binding force will be Service to the Truth. Let your talents, the best in you, be utilised for the Truth, for the Divine and you will feel the blessedness of human life.

The March of destiny will compel man to seek some kind of unity, for, in spite of racial no less than individual variations of type, humanity is one in nature.

What is needed is a complete revolution not so much in the world’s political situation as in man’s consciousness. It is in the divine depths that man can find himself one with other men. We have not yet been initiated into this *mantra*. A way must be found to kindle the light of the Self. It is only by the inner illumination that a true solution can be found to the world’s puzzling situation.

Behind each finite there is the Infinite. It is not a mere word; without the support and sustenance of the Infinite, there is no existence of the finite.¹ But how to shift the attention of man from the finite to the infinite?

Each student may best serve the Divine by developing the universal qualities in him. He should be given some idea of his relation with the universe. It should form a part of the educational process.

Who are the people who will free humanity from the hold of the present-day politicians? Only those who carry heaven in their hearts. When their nectarous words will give the audience a touch of heaven, glad — too glad — will it be to give the reins of its life into their hands. Then Spirituality will be the order of the day. Such a change is possible only by the power of Yoga.

¹ Adapted from Sri Aurobindo’s *The Life Divine*, Am Ed, pp. 297, 301.

Yoga means the capacity to apply the power of the soul to raise the status of life. It was by the power of Yoga that a hunter — a Sudra, a man of the common run — rose to the status of a world poet, Valmiki, whom Sri Aurobindo has ranked among the four greatest poets.

Sri Aurobindo's ideal of human unity by Yoga does not want us all to be full-fledged yogins. It exhorts us to seek the aid of the Divine for the solution of our life problems. During World War II, when he gave a call to India to side with the Allies it was not meant that they would bring the reign of God on earth. What he prophesied was that the victory of the Allies would allow the evolutionary forces to carry us forward. This was in the days when the destiny of the world was in the hands of Europe. Its action influenced all the five continents. Had Hitler swallowed Europe, could the colonial era have come to an end? Could anyone in Asia have breathed fresh air? Even in India very few could understand Sri Aurobindo's divine diplomacy.

Another instance. We all know how the fiery word of Sri Aurobindo of the Swadeshi days went deep down into the hearts and minds of the people. All did not go to jail or mount the gallows, but the sacrifice of the few¹ spread sparks to such an extent that even the man in the street became national-minded.

The education that the British regime introduced in India "could not make more than 2 per cent of the population speak English but it offered leadership". Similarly, even if a few could succeed in embodying the new consciousness, the door would be flung open for others to follow. Those blessed few will give the lead.

Auroville invites the great minds of the world to build a city where all will learn to live together.

In her attempt to build a new man, a new society, a new humanity as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo, the Mother adopted three procedures.

She started with us, the human clay, that gathered round her, drawn by the Light or by an inner call. We who formed the body of the Ashram became, as it were, the green manure. Those who came after us and had their education under her care from their early years formed the roots. We entertain the hope that when the appropriate season comes and Auroville begins to flower, people at large will taste the fruit of the Mother's life-long labour and tapasya.

Auroville — The World City

For thirty years, the Mother nourished the dream that there should be on earth a spot where:

¹ "Khudiram was the son of a poor Brahmin. He heard the inspiring speeches by Aurobindo Ghose and Barin Ghose. He took a vow to help free the country from British rule even at the cost of his life. He was only 19.

"H. D. Odman, the District Magistrate, Muzafurnagore, was greatly astonished to see Khudiram smiling when he admitted, 'I threw the bomb'"

(Extract from an article by Shrinath Sahai)

All will be done for the Divine;
 All will live for the Divine;
 All will belong to the Divine.

N was the first to catch the vibration of the Mother’s vision and he was quick to respond. The vibration never ceased to influence him. From his early teens he had been yearning for something great. Better to be in the air than to remain stuck in the mud — this seems to be his life’s motto.

Tradition has it that purity and prosperity cannot go together. Purity can flourish only on the barren tract of austerity. N’s life is a living example of how the two can go together — how the combination of the two makes a joyous living. Two outstanding qualities in his life are: business acumen and the spirit of dedication. He has to work with a hundred hands. He knows how to put dynamism in others, put things in a way that will touch a man’s heart-strings.

Auroville has not yet emerged as a city but within six years of its existence it has formed a personality of its own. Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, expressed the hope: “May it truly become the City of Light and Peace!” In her message she further declared:

“Pondicherry was Sri Aurobindo’s place of political exile and spiritual unfolding. His effulgent message radiated to different parts of the world from Pondicherry. It is appropriate that seekers of enlightenment from various lands should found a new city there bearing Sri Aurobindo’s name. It is an exciting project for bringing about harmony among different cultures and for understanding the environmental needs for man’s spiritual growth.” (25-3-1969)

Auroville has been acclaimed by men of eminence a unique conception. It has been termed:

The City of the Future,
 The Dream City,
 The Educational City,
 The International Town,
 The City of Dawn,
 The Universal Town.

While laying the foundation stone of the Tamil Nadu pavilion, the Chief Minister Karunanidhi hailed Auroville as:

The World City.

Dr. Adiseshiah, Deputy Director General of UNESCO, saw in Auroville a hope for all, particularly for children and youth who are disillusioned with the world we have built for them.

This explains that Auroville is not concerned merely with the welfare and well-

being of people at large. According to him all methods so concerned have failed to build a world which will ensure peace and prosperity for all. So, to repeat his own words, "We turn to Auroville."

Dr. McDermott, American Editor of some of Sri Aurobindo's works, envisages in Auroville "a bridge between man's present stage of evolution and the divine life".

According to April 1974 statistics, the number of Aurovilians was 322: Male 181, Female 141.

Auroville-born 32, Indian 81, USA 59, French 47, German 41, U.K. 14, Dutch 11, Australian 10, Italian 6, Swiss 5, Canadian 3, Swedish 3, Belgian 3, African 3, Mexican 1, Tunisian 1, New Zealand 1, Malaysian 1.

Thus people from all over the World have come to a remote corner of India — at Pondicherry, home of our soul. Why?

An Aurovilian utters a great truth when he says:

"There is something basically new in the air and Auroville wants to bring that down and manifest it. We ourselves do not know what it is. But we sense, almost smell, some of its qualities. It is not of the mind, that traditional concept of analysing, reasoning, planning, a quality of human nature.

"There is something in the air," he goes on, "not only in the South Indian air, but in the air of the East and the West, in the human air and in the cosmic air", something not yet born.

The meeting of two diverse cultures is another feature of this remarkable city. One from the West working as planners, architects, engineers with a high degree of proficiency and the other representing one of the ancient cultures of India — the Tamilians from the adjoining villages, rooted to their almost primitive traditions. Once one joins the main stream of the life in Auroville, he loses all distinctions of caste, creed, kind, type and the country he belonged to in the past. Now he is an Aurovilian.

I can't give here even a brief resumé of how this graceful city is coming to life. I shall merely touch on one or two of its main aspects.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

THIRTIETH SEMINAR

21st April 1974

(Continued from the issue of January 1975)

IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

SPEECH BY SACHCHIDANANDA MOHANTY

THE spectre of a nuclear Armageddon may have made a global war infructuous but it has not made strife obsolete. Beneath a façade of peace, a covert war goes on: a war of labels, banners and slogans. Gone is the day of courage, valour, chivalry and magnanimity. Instead, cunning, deception, hypocrisy — these are the sacred idols of the modern man! Lofty and noble ideals are constantly on his lips but “passion and evil/ Feign august names and mimic the gait of the deathless.”¹

Under the garb of a collective progress and efficiency, a monstrous State Idea, unprecedented in the entire human history, is sweeping like a whirlwind across the entire globe. None is spared from its fatal clasp, not even the very protagonists of liberty. We hear the clarion-call of a new dawn but are embittered and dismayed at the appalling spectacle of the *status quo*. Like a runaway horse, the world seems to be plunging headlong into a “No Man’s Land where obscure mysticisms, materialistic, vitalistic or mixed clash and battle for the mastery of human life.”²

This must not be! For such an eventuality will clearly ring the death-knell of the arrival of a New Age in human evolution. The birth of a new order will then have to wait for a more propitious time in some distant future. It is even possible that the terrestrial evolution might bypass man and a greater race might arise that is nearer to the Divine. But this is not inevitable. Man himself might overcome the present *impasse* and, making himself fit for spiritual transformation, resume the curve of his higher evolution.

But what relationship is there, one may ask, between a spiritual transformation and the importance of the individual? Unity, concord, harmony, efficiency and, above all, communal happiness — are these not the characteristic attributes of a spiritual life? And how can these best be attained if not by subduing the insatiable hunger of

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Ihon* (Ashram Edition, 1957) p, 57.

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle* (Centenary Edition), p 194

the individual human ego to a higher and worthier ideal of promoting the collective good, the collective well-being and the collective progress?

As an answer to this, Sri Aurobindo would reply that, despite its apparent soundness, the contention is shaky because its basic postulates are false; its very standing-ground is on shifting sands. For such an argument presupposes two fundamental assumptions. First of all, that the individual human nature is irremediably egoistic and self-seeking and, secondly, that the collective will and reason are reducible to a uniform mechanical formula of social life. In reality, however, an expansive and protean life can never fit into a rational strait-jacket. Such attempts have always been a *trompe-l'œil*, mere intellectual moonshine.

Sri Aurobindo maintains that it will be incorrect to attribute a mark of permanence to something which is transitory. The individual ego does appear as perverse and intractable at the initial stage of the evolutionary ascent; nevertheless it was an important stage, for it brought the amorphous individual being a coherence and a stability in the universal flux. But in the future evolution it has to be dissolved and replaced by the spiritual individual. "Ego was the helper, ego is the bar."¹

According to Sri Aurobindo, just as the individual is a reality, so also is there a truth of the aggregate. On the surface they may have conflicting interests, but deep down there is a basic underlying unity. The individual's plane of action is the society not only because he is gregarious by nature, as habitually believed, but also because his growth and development depends on a constant commingling and interchange with his fellowmen. Man is a growing soul placed upon the earth to blossom his Divine seeds together with his brethren with whom he is in a secret alliance.

When the implications of this integral view of the relationship of the individual and the group are fully realised, it becomes easy to understand why Sri Aurobindo is the greatest champion of the freedom of the individual even while affirming his solidarity with the collective group. For evolution is a journey in the aeonian travail, winding spirally towards the eternal summits. And, as in a march, there are the spirited harbingers, eager to court danger, and there are the flagging sluggards. When we speak of the Age of Pericles or the Age of Augustus, we do so not for a chronological convenience alone, we express a profound truth. What distinguishes an era is not its material prosperity but its great luminaries, the firmament of its inspiring souls. Thinking of the Renaissance in India or of Elizabethan England, it is difficult to ignore the stupendous breakthroughs made by the great personalities of these periods — the physical no less than the psychological — resulting in the upliftment of the masses. Notice the meteoric advent of Sri Aurobindo on the national scene and how almost overnight he made lions out of docile sheep. Or take the example of Galileo or Copernicus but for whom planetary travels would have remained in the poet's imagination and the dreamer's fancy. Indeed it is fascinating to see that there is no branch of human knowledge in which we are not indebted to such a host of olympians, of which history obsessed with violence and turmoil has recorded but an infini-

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glances* (Centenary Edition, Vol. 17), p 377.

tesimal fraction. As Sri Aurobindo said: “man’s greatness is not in what he is, but what he makes possible.”¹

On the other hand, we see that the mass is always ignorant, clinging to the lower ranges of life. It is preoccupied with the satisfaction of average wants and petty squabbles. It has no time or inclination for higher pursuits and culture. With its mind “shut up in the brilliant shell of the past” it is conformist *par excellence*. It feels secure and complacent in the comforting and familiar present and is reluctant to step across the threshold of the unknown. Fiercely dogmatic and obscurantist, progress it views with suspicion and not seldom with hostility. With the ferocity of the mob and the blind fanaticism of the bigot, it has burnt a Giordano Bruno at the stake, poisoned a Socrates, crucified a Christ. As if by such an inhuman persecution and derision, the resolute and indomitable spirit of the progressive individual could be thwarted! Thus strove the heralds of Light leaving their footprints’ track as a “pathway towards immortality”. As Sri Aurobindo has exquisitely portrayed in *Savitri*:

“This world is in love with its own ignorance,
 Its darkness turns away from the saviour light,
 It gives the cross in payment for the crown...
 Hard is the world-redeemer’s heavy task;
 The world itself becomes his adversary,
 His enemies are the beings he came to save ...
 He carries the cross on which man’s soul is nailed;...
 He has signed salvation’s testament with his blood:...
 His escort is the curses of the crowd;
 Insult and jeer are his right’s acknowledgement ...
 His march is a battle and a pilgrimage.
 Life’s evil smites, he is stricken with world’s pain:
 A million wounds gape in his secret heart.
 He journeys sleepless through an unending night; ...
 The weeping of the centuries visits his eyes:
 He wears the blood-glued fiery Centaur’s shirt,
 The poison of the world has stained his throat.
 In the market place of Matter’s capital
 Amidst the chafferings of the affair called life
 He is tied to the stake of a perennial Fire,
 He burns on an unseen original verge
 That Matter may be turned to spirit stuff.”²

Man needs freedom to breathe and elbow room to grow. And so we see that in history any society or nation which has been unduly oppressive and, however efficient

¹ *The Hour of God* (Centenary Edition), p 9.

² *Savitri* (Centenary Edition) Book 6, Canto 2, pp. 448, 445, 446, 447.

in administration and outwardly symmetrical, has slaughtered liberty, had an awesome price to pay. Athens is the matrix of western civilisation because by permitting full freedom to its citizens it created a rich and many-sided culture, but where is Sparta today? Once basking in her strength and discipline, it lies now forgotten in the Hellenic wilderness. So did the Roman Empire perish by an excessive centralisation and regimentation that stunted its imperial growth and sterilised its culture. We observe this phenomenon everywhere else also and are led to the conclusion that progress is the brain-child of freedom and it is the illumined few that have always been the torch-bearers in this human cavalcade.

Looking from a deeper point of view, we notice that the individual is not limited to a meagre span of terrestrial life, though even there his importance is unquestionably paramount. He is a being that has countless lives behind him stretching infinitely into the past; lives stretch before him too, infinite lives for a myriad revelation of the spirit's face.

When we consider the individual from this deeper spiritual point of view a more fundamental question arises. What is his relation with the cosmic self and Nature and the transcendent eternal? There is a view that since the individual is a portion of the cosmos, he must necessarily be inferior to it though he does contain within him a divine Godhead. Such a position, though it may seem logically sound is yet not wholly valid. For it is futile to impose our narrow, limited mental formulas on the deeper truths of the Spirit. The spiritual relationship between the individual and the cosmos is not to be judged in finite and temporal human terms of "more" or "less", "inferiority" or "superiority". As Sri Aurobindo says: "every view that affirms the cosmos only and dismisses the individual as a by-product of the cosmic Energy, errs by laying too much emphasis on one apparent factual aspect of the world-action; it is true only of the natural individual and is not even the whole truth of that: for the natural individual, the nature-being is indeed a product of the universal Energy, but is at the same time a nature-personality of the soul, an expressive formation of the inner being and person and this soul is not a perishable cell or a dissoluble portion of the cosmic Spirit, but has its original immortal Reality in the Transcendence."¹

Further, out of the tenebrous womb of the inconscience must evolve the manifested being. And it is only the individual soul that can execute this evolutionary ascent.

"Therefore man's importance in the world is that he gives to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery becomes possible. To fulfil God in life is man's manhood."²

If the aim of life were some quietistic Bliss, then all divine manifestation and liberated play become superfluous. But in reality each of us is an individuality of that one conscious Being and set apart for an infinite experience. To lament over the present imperfections and *lacunae* serves little. Instead let us join our voices with the poet —

¹ *The Life Divine* (Centenary Edition), p. 673.

² *Ibid.*, p. 36

“The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star
 Hath had elsewhere its setting ...
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home.”¹

Or, better still, as Sri Aurobindo says, in a more inspiring melody —

“Soul in the Ignorance, wake from its stupor.
 Flake of the world-fire, spark of Divinity,
 Lift up thy mind and thy heart into glory.
 Sun in the darkness, recover thy lustre.

One, universal, ensphering creation,
 Wheeling no more with inconscient Nature,
 Feel thyself God-born, know thyself deathless
 Timeless return to thy immortal existence.”²

Let our prayer be an ardent aspiration for “more light and more consciousness”. Let our soul be constantly athirst for knowledge, our body for being a perfect receptacle for the Divine Epiphany. Let our entire being be saturated with the inexhaustible fount of Ananda, for indeed, as Sri Aurobindo says: “The greatness of the individuals is the greatness of the eternal Energy within.”³

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

¹ Wordsworth, “*Ode on Intimations of Immortality*”.

² “*Soul in the Ignorance*” in *Collected Poems* (Centenary Edition), p. 570.

³ *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, 1950, p. 76.