

# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JUNE 1976

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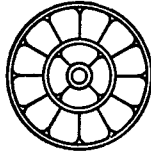
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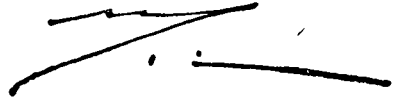


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXVIII

No. 6

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

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# WORDS OF THE MOTHER

## SOME UNPUBLISHED NOTES

### French Original

ENTRE les deux extrêmes de celui qui a pleinement, parfaitement réalisé ce qu'il avait conçu et celui qui n'a pu rien réaliser du tout, il y a, bien entendu, une échelle presque illimitée de cas intermédiaires; et cette échelle est remarquablement complexe puisqu'à la différence entre les degrés dans la réalisation de l'idéal, vient s'ajouter la différence entre les qualités diverses de cet idéal lui-même. Il est des ambitions qui ne visent que des intérêts matériels, sentimentaux ou intellectuels personnels, d'autres qui ont des buts plus généraux, plus collectifs, plus élevés, d'autres enfin qui sont, pour ainsi dire, surhumains et veulent escalader les cimes qui mènent vers les splendeurs de Vérité, de Conscience et de Paix éternelles. Il est facile à comprendre que la puissance d'effort et de renoncement doit être proportionnée à l'ampleur et à l'élévation du but qu'on s'est proposé.

A tous les degrés, depuis les plus modestes jusqu'aux plus transcendants, ce qu'il est rare de trouver c'est l'équilibre parfait entre la somme d'efforts sur soi, la puissance de sacrifice dont dispose celui qui s'est proposé un but, et la somme des renoncements de tout genre et de tout ordre exigés par ce but.

C'est lorsque la constitution d'un être permet la perfection de cet équilibre que son existence terrestre donne le maximum de son rendement possible.

23 avril 1915

### English Translation

Between the extreme of one who has fully and perfectly realised all that he had conceived and that of one who has been incapable of realising anything at all, there is, of course, an almost unlimited range of intermediate cases; this range is remarkably complex, because not only is there a difference of degree in which this ideal is realised, but there is also a difference between the varied qualities of the ideal itself. There are ambitions which pursue mere personal interests, material, sentimental or intellectual, others which have more general, more collective or higher goals, and yet others which are superhuman, so to say, and strive to scale the peaks that open on the splendours of eternal Truth, eternal Consciousness and eternal Peace. It is easy to realise that the power of one's effort and renunciation must be commensurate with the breadth and height of one's goal.

At any level, from the most modest to the most transcendent, one rarely finds a perfect balance between the sum of self-imposed efforts, the power of sacrifice commanded by one who pursues a goal, and the sum of renunciations of all sorts and of all orders required by this goal.

It is when the nature of a being allows this equilibrium to be perfect that his earthly existence yields its greatest possible return.

April 23, 1915

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of May 1976)

*(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat fragmentary incomplete form. The translation of the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother at the time of its first publication as a book in French, came out in book-form in 1973. We are giving this translation here.)*

March 15, 1957

The following talk was given on a Friday, the day Mother used to read to the children.

### *Reminiscences of Tlemcen*

ONCE again, this evening, I am not going to read, but I won't tell you a story either: I am going to tell you about Madame X.

Madame X was born on the Isle of Wight and she lived in Tlemcen with her husband who was a great occultist. Madame X herself was a very powerful occultist, a remarkable clairvoyant, and she had mediumistic powers. Her powers were quite exceptional; she had received an extremely complete and rigorous training and she could exteriorise herself, that is, go out of her material body in a subtle body, in full consciousness, and that twelve times in succession. That is, she could pass consciously from one state of being into another, live there as consciously as in her physical body, and then once again put that subtler body into trance, exteriorise herself from it, and so on twelve times on end, to the extreme limit of the world of forms.... Of that I shall speak to you later, when you can understand a little better what I am talking about. But I am going to narrate to you a few small incidents I saw when I was at Tlemcen<sup>1</sup>, and a story she told me I shall also tell you.

The incidents are of a more external kind, but quite entertaining.

She was almost always in trance and she had trained her body so well that even when she was in trance, that is, when one or more parts of her being were exteriorised, the body had a life of its own and she could walk about and even attend to some small material occupations.... She worked a great deal, for in her trances she could talk freely and she used to narrate what she saw, which was noted down and later formed a teaching (which has appeared elsewhere). And because of all that and the

<sup>1</sup> In 1907.

occult work she was doing, often she used to be tired, in the sense that her body used to get tired and needed to recuperate its vitality very concretely.

Now, one day when she was particularly very tired, she told me: "You will see how I am going to recuperate my strength." She had plucked from her garden—it was not a garden really, it was a vast property with hundreds of olive trees, fig-trees such as I have never seen elsewhere, it was a real marvel, on the mountain slope, from the plain right up almost half way to the top—and there were in this garden lemons and oranges...and grape-fruit or pomplemoose. Grape-fruit has flowers which have even a better fragrance than orange blossoms—they are large flowers and she knew how to make a perfume from them, she had given me a bottle—well, she had plucked a huge grape-fruit, very large and ripe, and she lay down on her bed and put this grape-fruit on the solar plexus, here, like this, holding it with both her hands. She lay down and rested. She did not sleep, only rested. She told me: "Come back after about an hour." An hour later I returned ..and the grapefruit was flat like a pan-cake. That showed that she had such a power to absorb vitality that she had drawn out all the life of the fruit and it had become quite limp and flat. And I saw that myself! You may try, you won't manage it! (*Laughter*)

Another time—and this is more interesting still. ... But first I must tell you something about Tlemcen, for probably you don't know it. Tlemcen is a small town in South Algeria, almost on the borders of the Sahara. The town itself is built in the valley which is surrounded by a circle of mountains, not very high but still higher than hills. And the valley is very fertile, verdurous, magnificent. The population there is mainly Arabs and rich merchants, indeed it is a very prosperous city—rather, it *was*, for I don't know what it is like now, I am speaking to you about things that happened at the beginning of this century—there were very prosperous merchants there and from time to time these Arabs came to pay a visit to Monsieur X. They knew nothing, understood nothing, but they were very interested.

One day, towards the evening, there arrived one of these men and he started asking questions which were quite absurd, besides. Then Madame X said to me: "You will see, we are going to have a little fun." In the veranda of the house there was a big table generally used for dining, a very large table, quite big, with eight legs, four on either side. It was massive, indeed, and heavy. Chairs had been arranged to receive this man, a little distance away from the table. He was at one end, Madame X at the other; I was seated on one side, Monsieur X also. All four of us were there. Nobody was near the table, all of us were quite far off. And so, he was asking questions, as I said rather ridiculous ones, on the powers one could have and what could be done with what he called "magic"... she looked at me and then said nothing but sat very still. Suddenly I heard a cry, a fearful cry. The table started moving and with an almost heroic gesture went to attack the poor man seated at the other end! It went and bumped into him.... Madame X had not touched it, nobody had touched it. She had only concentrated on the table and by her vital power had made it move. At first the table had wobbled a little, then had started moving slowly, then suddenly,

as with a single bound, it went and flung itself upon that man, who ran away and never returned!

She had also the power to dematerialise and rematerialise things. And she never said anything, she did not boast, did not say "I am going to do something", she did not speak of anything; she just did it quietly. She did not attach much importance to these things, she knew they were just a proof that there are other forces than purely material ones.

When I used to go out in the evening (towards the end of the afternoon I used to go for a walk with Monsieur X to see the countryside, or in the mountains, the neighbouring villages), I used to lock my door, it was a habit with me, I always locked my door. Madame X rarely used to go out, for reasons I have already spoken about, because she was most of the time in trance and liked to stay at home. But when I returned from the walk and opened my door (which was locked, and consequently nobody could have entered), I always used to find on my pillow a little garland of flowers. They were flowers which grew in the garden, they are called *Belles de Nuit*<sup>1</sup>; we have them here, they open in the evening and have a wonderful fragrance. There was a whole alley of these, with big, quite high bushes; and they are remarkable flowers (I believe it's the same thing here), on the same bush there are different-coloured flowers: yellow, red, mixed, violet. They are tiny flowers like ... blue-bells; no, rather like the convolvulus, but these grow on bushes (convolvulus is a creeper, these are bushes), we have them here in our gardens. She used to put them always behind her ears, for they have a lovely smell, oh! delightfully beautiful. And so, she used to take a walk in the alley between these big bushes which were quite high, and she gathered these flowers, and—when I came back, these flowers were in my room! .. She never told me how she did it, but certainly she did not enter the place. She once said to me, "Were there no flowers in your room?"—"Ah! yes, indeed," I said. And that was all. Then I knew it was she who had put them there.

I could tell you many stories, but I shall finish with one she told me, which I did not see myself.

As I was telling you, Tlemcen is very near the Sahara and the climate is of the desert except in the valley where a river flows which never dries up and makes the whole country very fertile. But the mountains were absolutely arid. There was only the part occupied by agriculturists where something grew. Now, the park of Monsieur X (indeed the large property) was, as I said, a marvellous place...everything grew there, everything one could imagine and in magnificent proportions. Now, she related to me (they had been there for quite a long time) that about five or six years before this, I think, they had felt that these barren mountains could one day cause the river to dry up and that it would be better to plant trees there; and the administrator of Tlemcen gave the order that trees should be planted on all the neighbouring hills; a very wide circle, you know. He said that pine trees should be planted, for in Algeria

<sup>1</sup> *Mirabilis*, Marvel of Peru; significance given by Mother: *Réconfort*, solace.



the sea-pine grows very well. And they wanted to try it out. Now, for some reason or other, forgetfulness or fantasy, heaven knows!—instead of ordering pines they ordered firs! Fir-trees belong to northern countries, they are not trees of desert lands. And very conscientiously were these trees planted. Now Madame X saw this and I believe she felt like making an experiment. So it happened that after four or five years these firs had not only sprouted but had become magnificent and when I was at Tlemcen the mountains all around were absolutely green, with magnificent trees. She said to me, “You see, these are not pines, they are firs,” and indeed they were firs (you know firs are Christmas trees, don’t you?), they were firs. Then she narrated how three years later when the firs had grown high, suddenly one day or rather one December night, as she had just gone to sleep and put out her light, she was awakened by a tiny little noise (she was very sensitive to noise); she opened her eyes and saw something like a moonbeam—there was no moon that night—lighting up a corner of her room. And she noticed that there was a little gnome there, like those one sees in the fairy-tales of Norway and Sweden, Scandinavian fairy-tales. He was quite a tiny little fellow with a big head, a pointed cap, pointed shoes of dark green, a long white beard, and all covered with snow.

So she looked at him (her eyes were open), she looked at him and said, “But ... Eh! what are you doing here?” (She was a bit anxious, for in the warmth of her room the snow was melting and making a little puddle on the floor of her room.) “But what are you doing here?”

Then he smiled at her his most amiable smile and said, “But we were given the signal with the firs! Fir-trees, they call the snow. They are trees of snow-lands. I myself am the Lord of the snow, so I came to announce to you that ... we are coming. We have been called, we are coming.”

“Snow? ... But we are just next to the Sahara!”

“Ah! then you shouldn’t have planted fir-trees!”

Finally she told him, “Listen, I don’t know if what you tell me is true or not, but you are dirtying my floor, go away!”

And so he went away. The moonlight vanished with him. She lit a lamp (for there was no electricity), she lit a lamp and saw ... a little puddle of water in the place where he had stood. Hence, it was not a dream, there was really a little being whose snow had melted in her room. And the next morning when the sun rose, it rose upon mountains covered with snow. It was for the first time, this had never been seen in the country before.

Since then, every winter—not for long, just for a while—all the mountains are covered with snow.

So that’s my story.

---

.

## THE MOTHER'S LETTERS TO SAHANA

I fully approve of your singing in your room and see no necessity to stop it.

As for the change in the vital, it will come by itself when you will take the habit of remaining in your higher consciousness where all these petty things and movements are tasteless.

With love and blessings.

17.4.1939

\*

It is very good to have recovered the calm. It is in the calm that the body can increase its receptivity and gain the power to continue.

With my love and blessings

\*

Sadhana is always difficult and everybody has conflicting elements in his nature and it is difficult to make the vital give up its ingrained habits.

That is no reason for giving up sadhana. One has to keep up the central aspiration which is always sincere and go on steadily in spite of temporary failures, and it is then inevitable that the change will come. Our help is always with you.

With my love and blessings

\*

Sahana my dear child,

For your own sake I must tell you that you are bound to receive shocks and hard blows too so long as you indulge in such false ideas as "my taking sides" with one or another, etc. This is completely wrong and baseless and you must get rid of this way of thinking altogether if you wish to feel close to the Divine.

With my love and blessings

\*

It is always better to control an experience of this kind rather than to be controlled by it. I mean that the experience in itself is good and useful but it must come when we want it to come and not at any time whenever it chooses to come. It seems to me that it is better to allow this experience to come only when you are quietly at home or during meditation. When you are at work it is always better to remain fully aware of your body and its actions.

With my love and blessings

\*

I am very glad to hear of this new opening and fine experience. Always when one faces difficulties and overcomes them it brings a new spiritual opening and victory.

Our love and blessings

\*

Love and special blessing to my dear child Sahana.  
 Let this day be for you the day of a new birth and a new start in your sadhana.

17.5.39

★

Sahana my dear child,

You have indeed passed from one life to another, but it is in your body that this new birth took place, and now the door is wide open before you for a new progress.

With my love and blessings

19.4.1966

★

*(Sometime in 1931 I showed the Mother my dancing in accompaniment to Dilip's music. She then gave us a plan regarding Radha's dance in which Dilip would compose the musical part and I would do the part of dance. There were four movements in the plan. The first movement shows a great void in Radha's inner and outer being. She is groping in darkness. The second movement expresses an intense yearning for the one whom she seeks but does not find. The third brings the revelation of Krishna and the fourth ends with Radha's surrender at Krishna's feet. The Mother wrote to me the following letter to serve as a guide to the last movement of the dance.)*

★

To complete what I told you yesterday about Radha's dance, I have noted this down as an indication of the thought and feeling Radha must have when she stands at the end in front of Krishna:

Every thought of my mind, each emotion of my heart, every movement of my being, every feeling and every sensation, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood, all, all is yours, yours absolutely, yours without reserve. You can decide my life or my death, my happiness or my sorrow, my pleasure or my pain, whatever you do with me, whatever comes to me from you will lead me to the Divine Rapture.

---

# THE OLD YOGAS AND OUR YOGA

## Some Answers by Sri Aurobindo to a Disciple's Questions

*(These questions and answers are taken from the second part of the book, Guidance from Sri Aurobindo: Letters to a Young Disciple, which will shortly come out. The lucky disciple is happily still with us, though not quite so young, except inwardly.)*

*Q. Each religion or sect says something different about the creation of the earth. The Buddhists declare it as arising from nothingness; some from the Shabda (original word); the Mahabharata from the Cosmic Egg. What is actually the truth here?*

A. For the physical creation it is best to look to the knowledge science gives. The egg is only an image—if we accept the present scientific theory of an expanding universe out of an original compact mass, the egg may represent that original mass.

29.10.1935

*Q. It is said that before this Iron Age (Kalyuga) there was a Golden Age (Satya-yuga). It is also said that the world is always progressing farther and farther. How then comes this downward turn (Iron after Golden)?*

A. There is no great utility in such theories. It was supposed that there was only movement in a constantly repeated cycle. The idea of progress was not there when the theory came into existence. Progress of course can be by cycles and not in a straight line, spirals with downward and upward curves.

29.10.1935

*Q. "After all the Divine is infinite and the unrolling of the Truth may be an infinite process or at least, if not quite so much, yet with some room for new discovery and new statement..." In that case, are not the Vedas or Upanishads wrong in declaring that all the Truth is hidden in them and that there can never be any newer Truth than what is in them?*

A. Where do the Vedas or Upanishads declare that? I never heard of it. It is people who say that about them, not the Vedas or Upanishads themselves.

25.10.1935

*Q. It seems someone wrote to you: "I thought there is quite a difference between divinisation and supramentalisation, one being only one of the steps to the other." This statement urges me towards understanding exactly the difference between divinisation and supramentalisation. Is not the latter implied in the former? Is not the Divine greater than the Supermind?*

A. The Divine can be realised in any plane according to the capacity of that plane as the Divine is everywhere. The Yogis and Saints realise the Divine on the

spiritualised mind plane, that does not mean they become supramental.

25.10.1935

*Q. Did the ancient Yogis make no distinction between the realisation of the Divine and the divinisation?*

A. They aimed at realisation and did not mind about the divinisation, except the Tantrics and some others. The aim however even in these was rather to become saints and Siddhas than anything else.

26.10.1935

*Q. Do the philosophers always make their philosophies practical?*

A. In ancient times in Europe and at all times in the East many have done so or done their best to do so. Modern philosophy does not aim at practice, only at thought.

19.9.1935

*Q. When people speak of 'non-existence', do they mean the nothingness of the Buddhists?*

A. They mean an absence of all that we know of as existence.

22.10.1935

*Q. I came across this: "A silent or vacant mind does not necessarily mean a fit state for the true Knowledge. For anything divine or undivine may rush in through such a vacancy." I suppose this may be a cosmic silence which is always open to any universal forces and which does not care about the good or bad. But there does exist a silence which is open only to the higher knowledge and not to the mixture below. We may call it the soul's reticence.*

A. Yes, except that reticence is not an appropriate word, stillness is better. The cosmic silence also is not apposite because whatever forces pass through it, the cosmic silence is not disturbed or distressed by them. What they mean is an inert vacancy of the nature, not of the soul. The soul's silence is always good; true silence always is.

3.11.1935

*Q. I am told that all difficulties like ego, sex etc. would vanish if one said: "I am Brahman, Peace, Light, Knowledge, Power. How can anything rise against me?"*

A. It is the Advaita attitude corresponding to the attitude of being with the Mother above in the self. I don't know whether it will bring about the transformation of the lower nature. It may help you to detach yourself from it.

26.12.1935

*Q. Is it true that some ancient sages and Rishis have taken birth here in order to help your work?*

A. If so, it is not a fact of much importance.

27.10.1935

*Q. In his book, A Search in Secret India, Mr. Paul Brunton has published the central teachings of some great Yogis of modern India. I find nothing new in them. They seem like a repetition of the Yogas of ancient India. To leave the world and seek self-realisation is their goal. All that does not appear to me a very difficult stage.*

A. Wonderful! The realisation of the Self which includes the liberation from the ego, the consciousness of the One in all, the established and consummated transcendence out of the universal Ignorance, the fixity of the consciousness in the union with the Highest, the Infinite and Eternal is not anything worth doing or recommending to anybody—is “not a very difficult stage”!

Nothing new! Why should there be anything new? The object of spiritual seeking is to find out, what is eternally true, not what is new in Time.

*Q. I fail to understand how the ancient Yogis managed to spend their whole lives on only one pursuit—self-realisation? Their goal is not so high. Is it really such a long process?*

A. It is not a long process? The whole life and several lives more are often not enough to achieve it. Ramakrishna's guru took 30 years to arrive and even then he did not claim that he had realised it. 13.4.1936

From where did you get this singular attitude towards the old Yogas and Yogis? Is the wisdom of the Vedanta and Tantra a small and trifling thing? Have then the sadhaks of this Ashram attained to self-realisation and are they liberated Jivan-muktas, free from ego and ignorance? If not, why then do you say, “it is not a difficult stage”, “their goal is not so high”, “is it such a long process?”

I have said that this Yoga is “new” because it aims at a change in this world and not only beyond it and at a supramental realisation. But how does that justify a superior contempt for the spiritual realisation which is as much the aim of this Yoga as of any other? 13.4.1936

*Q. In the same book I read about “The Sage Who Never Speaks”. He remains in Samadhi day and night and comes out only once or twice for food etc. What usually does he do in such long periods in trance?*

A. Do? Why should he want to do anything if he was in the eternal peace or Ananda or union with the Divine? If a man is spiritual and has gone beyond the vital and mind, he does not need to be always “doing” something. The self or spirit has the joy of its own existence. It is free to do nothing and free to do everything—but not because it is bound to action and unable to exist without it. 13.4.1936

*Q. It becomes clear now that I did have some fundamentally wrong ideas about the old Yogas and Yogis. They were actually not my own but borrowed from some sadhaks. Still I am not quite clear about the old Yogas.*

A. I have heard that people from outside often find the sadhaks here full of an unsupportable pride and arrogance, looking on all others as outsiders far below them! If it is true, it is a most foolish and comically ridiculous attitude. 14.4.1936

As for the depreciation of the old Yogas as something quite easy, unimportant and worthless, and the depreciation and deformation of Buddha and Yajnavalkya and other great spiritual figures of the past, is it not evidently absurd on the face of it? 14.4.1936

*Q. By my question, "what does he do?" I did not mean any physical or mental action. Rather I wanted to know if by merely remaining in a samadhi of eternal Peace and Ananda, it would be possible to liberate one completely from the ego. Could it bring about other necessary changes like purification and transformation in the Yogis?*

A. Without purification it is not possible to live always in the Brahman consciousness. While living in that Brahman consciousness one is free from the sense of a separate ego. As for the transformation of the nature, that is not their object. 14.4.1936

*Q. By the same query I wanted to understand how one could bring down the higher things into the lower and conquer the lower resistance. Can all that be achieved by an impersonal and eternal Calm and Delight?*

A. All that is not necessary for those who seek only liberation as end. 14.4.1936

*Q. Is it not a fact that the mind, vital and physical are integrally woven into each other and that to separate them and put each one in its proper place is no easy task?*

*When the mind alone is realising the self, the vital and physical will constantly try to disturb it. (One cannot do this realisation in all these beings together). Thus the necessity of separating them becomes inevitable. Do you think that they all can be fundamentally separated without the help of the supramental planes, the planes above the human mind?*

A. There are many planes above man's mind—the supramental is not the only one, and in all of them the self can be realised,—for they are all spiritual planes.

Mind, vital and physical are inextricably mixed together only on the surface consciousness—the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical are separate from each other. Those who seek the self by the old Yogas separate themselves from mind, life and body and realise the self apart from these things. It is perfectly easy to separate mind, vital and physical from each other without the aid of supermind. It is done by the ordinary Yogas. 16.4.1936

*Q. You wrote the other day, "Certainly they can realise the self. It is not at all necessary to get the supramental planes for that." Then what is the fundamental difference between our Yoga and the old Yogas?*

A. The difference between this and the old Yogas is not that they are incompetent and cannot do these things—they can do them perfectly well; but that they proceed from realisation of self to Nirvana or some Heaven and abandon life, while this does not abandon life. The supramental is necessary for the transformation of terrestrial life and being, not for reaching the self. One must realise self first—only afterwards one can realise the supermind. 16.4.1936

*Q. You wrote, "Those who seek the self by the old Yogas separate themselves from mind, life and body and realise the self apart from these things." How do they manage to separate themselves from mind, life and body so easily? Will not these things interfere with their realisation? Since they allow them to do this, the mind, vital and physical will have to withdraw from their ordinary movements of tamas, rajas and sattwa.*

A. Of course they will—it can only be prevented by the lower movements if you assent to the lower movements; one who refuses to accept them as his real being can always withdraw from them to the self. The movements of Nature become for them an outer thing not belonging to their true being and having no power to pull them down from it. 17.4.1936

Those men who live in the self are always there at all times. Nothing in the outer nature can affect that. 17.4.1936

*Q. Is there any difference between our way of seeking the self and that of the old Yogis?*

A. Only that they often sought it by one line, the line varying in different Yogas, while in ours it may come in several ways. 17.4.1936

*Q. I suppose one who wants to realise the self cannot do it except by separating himself from mind, life and body.*

A. Naturally.

*Q. While referring to the supramental planes lately, I did not mean the supermind, but simply the spiritual planes above the human mind. To separate mind, vital and physical from each other, is there no need of the higher spiritual planes?*

A. Spiritual and supramental are not the same thing. The spiritual planes from higher mind to overmind are accessible to the old sadhanas so there is no difficulty about that. If they were not accessible there would have been no Yoga at all and no Yogis in the past in India. 17.4.1936

*Q. Your answer regarding the spiritual planes and the supramental plane urges me to inquire into the exact difference between spiritualisation and supramentalisation.*

A. Spiritualisation means the descent of the higher peace, force, light, knowledge, purity, Ananda etc. which belong to any of the higher planes from higher mind to



overmind, for in any of these the self can be realised. It brings about a subjective transformation; the instrumental Nature is only so far transformed that it becomes an instrument for the Cosmic Divine to get some work done but the self within remains calm and free and united to the Divine. But this is an incomplete individual transformation—the full transformation of the instrumental Nature can only come when the supramental change takes place. Till then the nature remains full of many imperfections, but the self in the higher planes does not mind them, as it is itself free and unaffected. The inner being down to the inner physical can also become free and unaffected. The overmind is subject to limitations in the working of the effective Knowledge, limitations in the working of the Power, subject to a partial and limited Truth etc. It is only in the supermind that the full Truth-consciousness comes into being.

25.3.1936

*Q. When you say that the self also can descend, is it the self as such that comes down or as peace, purity, knowledge etc.?*

A. As consciousness bringing all the rest after it. 7.II.1936

*Q. Is the self a consciousness or a being like the psychic?*

A. It is being, not a being. By self is meant the conscious essential existence one in all. 7.II.1936

*Q. Will you kindly elaborate the difference between “being” and “a being”?*

A. I suppose you would have to study philosophy in order to understand. Self is being, the essential conscious existence one in all, that is being. A being means one person out of many; an individualised conscious existence. 10.II.1936

*Q. When I asked you if the self was being or consciousness, I meant the self in its individualised aspect and not in its original universal status.*

A. The self is essentially universal; the individualised self is only the universal experienced from an individual centre. If what you have realised is not felt to be one in all, then it is not the “Atman”, only it is the central being not yet revealing its universal aspect as Atman. 9.II.1936

*Q. You once spoke of spreading out the Brahmic consciousness where one begins to lose the ego. What is this Brahmic or Brahman consciousness? Spread out where?*

A. In the wideness of the Self and of the universal Divine consciousness—these two together are the Brahman consciousness. 27.7.1936

From NAGIN DOSHI

## TWO POEMS OF NIRODBARAN WITH SRI AUROBINDO'S CORRECTIONS AND COMMENTS

*Is "dart" very appropriate for so massive a movement as the sea's ? "Dart" gives me a sense of something light and slender and swift in its movement.*

The sea is souled with myriad moods:  
Outspreading her green gorgeous hoods  
(darts)

Fiercely she bounds against the shore  
Her eternal foe—with a murderous roar.

*I don't find this line very good—object to the two epithets as also the foe, roar sound. Total effect = cheapness + a too malignant resonance.*

She breaks and is broken—joy and sorrow  
Share in the fight; yet, on the morrow  
A spell is cast—she lies like a child  
Under the vast blue dome—her wild

Q: Not flat ?  
A: No.

Rage lulled to sleep as on mother's breast.  
But when on her many-pearlèd crest  
The crimson rays of morning glance  
She gleams like fairies in their dance.

Sri Aurobindo: Pretty good. The first two lines are quite good and 5-9 have a delicate lightness which is quite successful.

Nōthing/īn thē wōrld/I dē̄sire/sāve thȳ/swēet nāme/<sup>1</sup>  
(Naught in the world I crave save<sup>2</sup> thy sweet name)  
*6 feet ?* My Master, the one divine Dweller of my heart!  
Ambition, beauty, earthly love and fame  
Are but beggar's handful alms when I am a part

(holds)

*6 feet ?* Of the Supreme who in his mighty palm upholds

(a child's)

The triple universe like children's toy  
And at every single moment breaks and moulds  
Its destiny in a play of endless joy!

For thee alone I live and for thee I die,  
My soul like a labyrinthine cascade<sup>3</sup> runs  
To merge in the sea of thy unhorizoned sky

*Doesn't scan*    ǐllūmīnēd/bȳ thousand/resplēndēnt/sūns.

Nothing I crave, Beloved, nothing more  
*Doesn't scan*    Save thy heavenly flute's soul-enthraling lore.<sup>4</sup>

14.2.36

1. This line has an impossible rhythm or non-rhythm. You do not yet know how to "manage" irregularities in the iambic rhythm. Better keep to the norm with only slight variations for the present.

2. Crave save! Good Lord, how is it that your ear didn't howl?

3. A cascade is not labyrinthine and doesn't usually run into the sea. Also "the sea of thy sky", baldly like that, is impossible in English.

4. Q: I thought 'lore' means some music. Amal has corrected me.

A. "Lore" = learning, not music.

Be careful about metre and rhythm. A very good poem except for these slips. I have put a few improvements (at least I hope so) into Amal's improved version.

Naught in the world I crave but thy sweet name,

*My Master, sole Inhabitant of my heart!*

O thou eternal Master of my heart!

*love and*

Ambition, beauty, earthly passion, fame

*but scanty pauper*

Are a beggar's futile alms when I grow part

Of thy delight that in its palm upholds

*an infant's*

The triple universe like a child's toy

*at each*

And every magic moment breaks and moulds

*thy*

Its destiny in a play of endless joy!

For thee alone I live, and for thee *would* die:

*river*

My soul, a labyrinthine cascade, runs

*into thy oceaned*

To merge in the sea of thy unhorizoned sky

*with an infinite*

Illumined with infinitudes of suns.

Nothing I crave, O Master, nothing now  
But thy Love's altar where my heart may bow.

## UDAR REMEMBERS

4

I INDICATED in the last article that I would give another incident concerning faith but first I shall write on things connected with this incident.

There was a high officer of the Royal Air Force who had come to visit us during the war. He had discovered that he had the gift of water-divining with a forked rod. Generally a forked hazel twig is used but he had devised a nice fork with two steel-cord knitting needles stuck into a piece of rubber to form a V. If you move with this V held in front of you at right angles and with its ends held between the fingers and thumb of each hand then when you come to a place where there is water, the end of the V either swings up or down quite forcefully. I tried out this device myself and found it worked with me also.

Well, this officer went further into his experiences and found that with a pendulum of a silver knob hung from a silk thread he could get reactions working over a map, sitting in an office and remote from the actual spot. The reactions were in a clockwise or anti-clockwise rotation of the pendulum.

This gift he was able to put to use during the war in Burma where several R.A.F. planes were shot down and the crew baled out into the dense forests. The difficulty was to know where to send rescue parties. So his services were called in for this and he would screw into the pendulum a piece of the clothing of the lost man and get reactions on a map of the forests. Many successful rescues were made, he said, and he ran a special department for this work. His questions were two. What is the force that gives these reactions and why is it not always correct? Why should there be any failures at all? He had come to us to see if he could get the answers.

Purani was at our house at the time and he took all the officer's apparatus and his two questions to Sri Aurobindo and received the answers from Him. Sri Aurobindo explained that such knowledge and its manifestations come from a certain plane of consciousness where this occult knowledge exists. It was just a question of opening to this knowledge. The fact that the officer had had reactions showed that he had an opening to this plane and was able to receive indications from it. There are several others who have this opening without even knowing it. It was a matter of a larger development of this opening.

Sri Aurobindo explained further the difference between the basic Indian and Western approaches to this fact. In India, the traditional approach is to widen the opening by a spiritual method, by Yoga, and so get the knowledge direct by clear inspirations. The Western approach is generally through the material instruments and just because these are material there is always a possibility of deformation of the knowledge.

The R.A.F. officer was not so moved by this explanation, as really he was in love with his instruments, but I was very much excited by it and felt I should explore it

further. This I tried to do from time to time and I may tell of what happened if I really continue this series long enough. But the connection is this. I asked The Mother to use this method when we were building the Swimming Pool. We wanted to be very sure of putting our bore-well in the right place and so I pressed on Her to show us this place. The Mother came, meditated awhile and then put Her foot on a spot. We marked this spot and then put in the well at it. It still gives a copious supply of water even when there are drought conditions. I then asked The Mother to develop this capacity in me as She had said She would do so. This is the first link.

Manibhai Patel had come here to establish a flour mill, etc., and The Mother asked me to help him in his projects. First we had to find the land. This had to be at least 12 kilometers away from Pondicherry so as to be out of the Auroville area. I then went out with him, after informing The Mother and, at the 12 km spot, stopped the car and went into a meditation. Then the car moved on slowly till I saw an inward flash of light and stopped the car. There was just a field in front of us. We met the owner and found that he was ready to sell the land. It is now there that Aurofood has been set up.

Then there was the question of getting the machinery, which was coming from abroad. There were two possibilities for the import of these machines—either at Madras port or at Pondicherry. I felt we should bring the goods to Pondicherry both because it would cost much less and it seemed wrong to off-load at Madras while we had our own port. The Mother supported my view and Manibhai ordered the ship to Pondicherry.

When the ship arrived, it was a Greek ship, the captain was very disappointed to see the very inadequate crane facilities on the pier. He said it would be impossible to off-load the machinery with them. Now we had occasion to have many talks with the captain and spoke a great deal on Yoga and spiritual matters. He was inclined to be sceptical and finally said: "If you can off-load all the machines on to that pier, I will believe in all this talk of spiritual force. Seeing is believing." We left it at that.

Among the machines there was one piece that weighed about 6 tons and the question was really about that piece as the cranes were only of 3 tons capacity each. I had said that we would lift it with two cranes working tandem but the captain was rather doubtful. He said that tandem working was very difficult and needed highly trained cranesmen. Anyway, the work was taken up and Manibhai and I were present throughout. All the machines were unloaded without any hitch till we came to the last 6 ton piece. We decided that we would have a rest and do the work after lunch. The captain and his officers were invited by Manibhai to a good dinner that night. When we went for lunch, those present felt they should continue and try to lift the big machine even in our absence. So a special double boat-lighter brought this machine to the quai-side and the two cranes were hitched on to the box. The captain with his officers was in a boat, away off, to watch the drama. All this we were told later as we had not been present.

The cranes slowly lifted up the box till it came to the level of the quai-deck and then something happened and both the cranes tipped over. The cranesmen jumped out of the cranes and the whole box and two cranes were falling into the sea. It would have been a very major accident involving the loss of 20 boatsmen, the boats, the machine and the two cranes. But, in falling over, the crane jibs swung inwards and the box came over the deck and landed on it as on a cushion. Both the cranes then came upright again. At that time we came back from our lunch and found a great state of consternation and panic and then relief.

We looked for the captain. He went back at top speed to his ship and raised anchor and went off in a great hurry, cutting his dinner engagement and sent a message to say that there was something very strange here. He had never seen anything like it in his life and he wanted to get away from it all as soon as possible.

That is the story but the question I asked was this. Why did this have to happen in our absence? The answer I received is interesting. The whole procedure went on without any hitch because of the unshakable faith we had in The Mother's force. But for the last piece, if we had been there and actually seen the cranes tipping over, that faith might have been shaken and then the disaster would have been unavoidable. But at that time we were having a nice lunch and the faith was full and strong within us, and it is this that acted. So by its very blindness it acted. This is the point I wish to make.

Once Sri Aurobindo was asked if faith had necessarily to be blind and He said: "If it is not blind, it is not faith."

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# THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

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

*(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1975)*

(10)

“COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS”, SRI AUROBINDO’S “SUPERMIND” AND HIS  
VISION OF THE DIVINE LIFE, THE DEMANDS OF AN EVOLUTIONARY  
WORLD-VIEW, TEILHARD’S “PLEROMA”, HIS LATE CONTACT  
WITH SRI AUROBINDO’S THOUGHT

(a)

It would appear that for all his reference to Sri Aurobindo no less than to Bucke and the Sufis Zaehner is often all at sea about Cosmic Consciousness. A further muddle comes of equating it with Brahman. Brahman, to Indian spirituality, is a host of things. Brahman is Cosmic Consciousness but also a consciousness beyond the cosmos. And in cosmic terms He is not just the world of matter. The Taittiriya Upanishad<sup>1</sup> does have the statement: “Matter is Brahman.” But the statement is followed by four others:<sup>2</sup> “Life is Brahman, Mind is Brahman, the Knowledge beyond Mind (Vijnana) is Brahman, Bliss is Brahman.” Here the very constituent stuff of each level of existence seems to be called Brahman. But Brahman contains as well as constitutes and what He both contains and constitutes is in-dwelt and controlled too by Him. He is the one Self and the single Lord—and beyond all levels of distinguishable existence He is the sheer Absolute. In relation to those levels He is at once the static Ground and the dynamic Energy. His Cosmic Consciousness is both the Universal Being and the Universal Becoming. As the former He is the timeless and spaceless essentiality that is invariant in all: He is an infinity without dimension, wholly in an atom as in an Himalaya, entire in a moment as in the sweep of centuries. And as such He is not unconscious: He is sheer Consciousness, Consciousness from which all limits are removed, all name and form shed away. As the Universal Becoming He is a Consciousness spread out, an Infinite extended through all space and time, a perpetual continuity of active Consciousness where all the principles of dynamism in the universe are experienced as movements of one Consciousness. And the term “universe” connotes not merely the physical cosmos: there is the cosmos of Life, there is the cosmos of Mind. A triple universality of action is realised. All mind-phenomena are felt as one Mind, all life-phenomena as one Life,

<sup>1</sup> III. 2.      <sup>2</sup> III. 3-6

all matter-phenomena as one Matter—and Matter, Life and Mind are known as a unity of endless and multiform conscious energy. The individual centre from which the widening takes place grows no more than a focus-point of a cosmicity of consciousness, and all other individual centres are recognised in general as variations of that centre and instruments of the same cosmicity. Even an expansion of consciousness can take place, by which the whole universe is experienced as ensphered within oneself: this is the experience of what the Upanishads call Brahmanda, “the Brahman-egg”. And in the Cosmic Consciousness new powers of perception and conception unfold: awareness by outward contact and inferential thought is replaced by an intuitive awareness through identity. Supernormal powers—clairvoyance, clairaudience, inspiration, revelation—develop as part of one’s nature.

A proper reading of Sri Aurobindo should render clear all these diverse aspects of Cosmic Consciousness. And it should also tell us quite clearly—though Zaehner<sup>1</sup> says Sri Aurobindo “is not always consistent about this”—that Cosmic Consciousness is not the ultimate condition of spirituality. For, it is still a state of Cosmic Ignorance, half light half shadow. There is a tremendous enlargement but not a radical conversion from Ignorance to Knowledge. We may be open to forces that are undesirable, that can make one a leaf in a storm, that at the same time can give a sense of inner liberation and a helpless outer drift on the modes of unilluminated Nature. But, when the personality has been purified and calmed, the turn is towards the Cosmic Truth, and then the Supreme Divine takes charge of the liberated being and enlarged becoming: just as the ego-self gives way to the World-Self, the World-Self gives way to the Supreme Self, and the active parts spring into luminous harmony with the Supreme Doer, the Lord of Creatures, the Mother of the Worlds, the Ishwara-Shakti. And through one’s inmost Soul, which is a spark of the Transcendent working out individual terms of the Universe by a progression of rebirths in form after form, a passage is found to what is more than Cosmic Matter, Cosmic Life, Cosmic Mind. And through the Cosmic Truth as well as through the Individual Truth the aspirant is drawn towards the Vijnana-Consciousness, the transcendent Creative Knowledge-Will that is the infallible expression of the Absolute, the ultimate Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (Sachchidananda) turned to an organised manifestation of the eternal mysteries of unity-in-multiplicity implicit in its indescribable depths.

It is in connection with the creative Knowledge-Will that the question arises: What is the Supermind which Sri Aurobindo speaks of? Zaehner<sup>2</sup> identifies Supermind with Chit-Shakti, Consciousness-Force operating in the world, and he<sup>3</sup> equates it with the Second Person of the Christian Trinity—the Son who is Logos, “the rational principle and, as it were, the blue-print of the universe”—as well as with Teilhard’s “Soul of the World”, the divine presence in the cosmos that grows from

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

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 38-39, 104.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39, 60, 104.



more to more until it reaches the co-reflective collective state serving as the cosmic support of the final Pleroma which is the Transcendent Christ gathering up in Himself the cosmos at the end of history. Further, Zaehner<sup>1</sup> takes it to be Supermind's function to "reveal to the world that it has a common soul" and he associates Supermind with Cosmic Consciousness and "joy" as against "Overmind", that intermediary between the triple lower world and the transcendent "upper hemisphere": "man is likely to get stuck in the 'lower' hemisphere which has Overmind as its ceiling, if there is no outpouring of Supermind, of cosmic Consciousness and joy—of the Holy Spirit, we might say—to help it on its way." Finally, we have Zaehner's general interchange of the epithets "supramental" and "divine" and, by implication, the investing of Teilhard's Omega with the supramental divinity. Zaehner speaks of the common vision of Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard: matter's ultimate "convergence on to a centre of attraction which is supramental and divine."<sup>2</sup>

Many of Zaehner's identifications and equations have a validity but the validity is very general and mostly indirect. And surely Sri Aurobindo's Cosmic Consciousness is enough to reveal to the world "a common soul": Supermind as such is not required here. Nor is Cosmic Consciousness something more than Overmind: Overmind itself, as the cosmic "ceiling", is indeed Cosmic Consciousness *par excellence*, the highest form of it. Zaehner everywhere has missed the specific character Sri Aurobindo ascribes to Supermind.

Chit-Shakti, Consciousness-Force, is certainly basic to all manifestation, but it has a varied spectrum and only the highest formulation of it is what Sri Aurobindo terms Supermind. In the radical sense Supermind is not a formulation at all: it cannot be put in the same universe of discourse as Matter, Life, Mind or even Overmind. Supermind belongs to the Transcendent and is an eternal mode of it: the universe of discourse to which it belongs is Sachchidananda's. It is the mode in which the implicit truths of Sachchidananda stand forth in a supreme organised harmony of the One and the Many and constitute the creative Godhead from whom proceed the diverse ordered arrangements that are the several "planes" of cosmic existence, beginning with Overmind—the world of the Great Gods who are yet one God with many faces and fronts—and ending with the material cosmos evolving out of an infinite Inconscience by virtue of a push from within of all the higher powers "involved" in it and by virtue of a pressure from above of all these powers existing un-involved and freely active in their own right on their characteristic "planes". Supermind, along with Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, is also involved in the Inconscience, and the goal of our evolution is the manifestation of this divine quaternary under the action of Supermind from within and above.

To distinguish the specificity of Supermind Sri Aurobindo writes:

"Existence that acts and creates by the power and from the pure delight of its conscious being is the reality that we are, the self of all our modes and moods, the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

cause, object and goal of all our doing, becoming and creating....<sup>1</sup>

“Still, when we have found that all things are Sachchidananda, all has not yet been explained.... We have the key of the riddle, we have still to find the lock in which it will turn. For this Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight does not work directly or with a sovereign irresponsibility like a magician building up worlds and universes by the mere fiat of its word. We perceive a process, we are aware of a Law....

“But why should we interpose any special power or faculty between the infinite Consciousness itself and the result of its working? May not this Self-awareness of the Infinite range freely creating forms which afterwards remain in play so long as there is not the fiat that bids them cease,—even as the old Semitic Revelation tells us, ‘God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light’? But when we say, ‘God said, Let there be Light,’ we assume the act of a power of consciousness which determines Light out of everything else that is not Light; and when we say ‘and there was Light’ we presume a directive faculty, an active power corresponding to the original perceptive power, which brings out the phenomenon and, working out Light according to the line of the original perception, prevents it from being overpowered by all the infinite possibilities that are other than itself. Infinite consciousness in its infinite action can produce only infinite results; to settle upon a fixed Truth or order of truths and build a world in conformity with that which is fixed, demands a selective faculty of knowledge commissioned to shape finite appearance out of the infinite Reality.

“This power was known to the Vedic seers by the name of Maya. Maya meant for them the power of infinite consciousness to comprehend, contain in itself and measure out, that is to say, to form—for form is delimitation—Name and Shape out of the vast illimitable Truth of infinite existence. It is by Maya that static truth of essential being becomes ordered truth of active being,—or, to put it in more metaphysical language, out of the supreme being in which all is all without barrier of separative consciousness emerges the phenomenal being in which all is in each and each is in all for the play of existence with existence, consciousness with consciousness, force with force, delight with delight. The play of all in each and each in all is concealed at first from us by the mental play or the illusion of Maya which persuades each that he is in all but not all in him and that he is in all as a separated being and not as a being always inseparably one with the rest of existence. Afterwards we have to emerge from this error into the supramental play or the truth of Maya where the ‘each’ and the ‘all’ coexist in the inseparable unity of the one truth and the multiple symbol ...

“This distinction between the lower and the higher Maya is the link in thought and in cosmic Fact which the pessimistic and illusionist philosophies miss or neglect. To them the mental Maya, or perhaps an Overmind, is the creatrix of the world, and a world created by mental Maya would indeed be an inexplicable paradox and a

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* (American Edition, 1950), p. 105.

fixed yet floating nightmare of conscious existence which could neither be classed as an illusion nor as a reality ...<sup>1</sup>

“Supermind is the vast self-extension of the Brahman that contains and develops. By the Idea it develops the triune principle of existence, consciousness and bliss out of their indivisible unity. It differentiates but does not divide .... And it acts by the same operation on all the principles and possibilities which it evolves out of this all-constituent trinity. It possesses the power of development, of evolution, of making explicit, and that power carries with it the other power of involution, of envelopment, of making implicit. In a sense, the whole of creation may be said to be a movement between two involutions, Spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of Matter, Matter in which also all is involved and out of which all evolves upward to the other pole of Spirit ...

“This conception of the Idea points us to the essential contrast between our mental consciousness and the Truth-consciousness. We regard thought as a thing separate from existence, abstract, unsubstantial, different from reality, something which appears one knows not whence and detaches itself from objective reality in order to observe, understand and judge it; for so it seems and therefore is to our all-dividing, all-analysing mentality. The first business of Mind is to render ‘discrete’, to make fissures much more than to discern, and so it has made this paralysing fissure between thought and reality. But in Supermind all being is consciousness, all consciousness is of being, and the idea, a pregnant vibration of consciousness, is equally a vibration of being pregnant of itself; it is an initial coming out, in creative self-knowledge, of that which lay concentrated in uncreative self-awareness. It comes out as the Idea that is a reality, and it is that reality of the Idea which evolves itself, always by its own power and consciousness of itself, always self-conscious, always self-developing by the will inherent in the Idea, always self-realising by the knowledge ingrained in its every impulsion .... It is Real-Idea ...<sup>2</sup>

“The world is therefore, not a figment of conception in the universal Mind, but a conscious birth of that which is beyond Mind into forms of itself. A Truth of conscious being supports these forms and expresses itself in them, and the knowledge corresponding to the truth thus expressed reigns as a supramental Truth-Consciousness organising real ideas in a perfect harmony before they are cast into the mental-vital-material mould. Mind, Life and Body are an inferior consciousness and a partial expression which strives to arrive in the mould of a various evolution at that superior expression of itself already existent to the Beyond-Mind. That which is in the Beyond-Mind is the ideal which in its own conditions it is labouring to realise...<sup>3</sup>

“Above, the formula of the One eternally stable and immutable; below, the formula of the Many which, eternally mutable, seeks but hardly finds in the flux of things a firm and immutable standing-point; between, the seat of all trinities, of all that is biune, of all that becomes Many-in-One and yet remains One-in-Many because it was

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-10.

originally One that is always potentially Many. This intermediary term is therefore the beginning and end of all creation and arrangement, the Alpha and the Omega, the starting-point of all differentiation, the instrument of all unification, originative, executive and consummative of all realised or realisable harmonies...<sup>1</sup>

“We have to regard, therefore, this all-containing, all-originating, all-consummating Supermind as the nature of the Divine Being, not indeed in its absolute self-existence, but in its action as the Lord and Creator of its own worlds. This is the truth of that which we call God. Obviously, this is not the personal and limited Deity, the magnified and supernatural Man of the ordinary occidental conception; for that conception erects a too human Eidolon of a certain relation between the creative Supermind and the ego. We must not indeed exclude the personal aspect of the Deity, for the impersonal is only one face of existence; the Divine is All-existence, but it is also the one Existent—it is the sole Conscious-Being, but still a Being...”<sup>2</sup>

In view of Sri Aurobindo’s description of Supermind we may say that the Consciousness-Force, Chit-Shakti, which we find operating in the world is, in its definable origin, one aspect of Supermind at work rather than that Supermind is, as Zaehner opines, the Chit-Shakti aspect of Sachchidananda going forth into world-action.

Again, in view of Sri Aurobindo’s identification of Supermind with the God-aspect, in distinction from the Absolute-aspect, of the Supreme Reality, and in view of his precise statement that it develops, without dividing, the triune principle of existence, consciousness and bliss out of its indivisible unity, we may correct Zaehner’s notion<sup>3</sup> that the Christian Trinity can be equated with the Vedantic Sachchidananda. Even in orthodox Vedanta we have the creative Ishwara answering in orthodox terms to Sri Aurobindo’s Supermind. It is in Sachchidananda in its creative Ishwara-aspect that the Christian Trinity of distinguishable Three Persons who are yet One Person has to be located. Existence, Consciousness and Bliss as they obtain in the Ishwaric Supermind-poise of the Transcendent may be seen as the Indian and Aurobindonian counterparts of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit of Christianity.

Even here we have to make a significant reservation; but we shall come to it after pointing out the philosophical inaccuracy of Zaehner’s equation.

*(To be continued)*

K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p. 117

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 13, 38, 55, 103-4.

## YOGA IN EDUCATION

THE word “Yoga” has two authoritative and recognised Sanskrit roots:

1. “*to meditate*”. Patanjali in his aphorisms written in the second or third century before Christ defines Yoga as “... the restricting of the fluctuations of the mind-stuff.”

2. “*to join*”. This is from the same root as the English word ‘yoke’ and implies joining of the unenlightened nature of man to the enlightened and divine part of himself—the psychic and the spiritual being—so that the higher guides and transmutes the lower.

Sri Aurobindo says:<sup>1</sup>

“We are in an age, full of the throes of travail, when all forms of thought and activity that have in themselves any strong power of utility or any secret virtue of persistence are being subjected to a supreme test and given their opportunity of rebirth. The world to-day presents the aspect of a huge cauldron of Medea in which all things are being cast, shredded into pieces, experimented on, combined and recombined either to perish and provide the scattered material of new forms or to emerge rejuvenated and changed for a fresh term of existence. Indian Yoga, in its essence a special action or formulation of certain great powers of Nature, ... is now emerging from the secret schools and ascetic retreats in which it had taken refuge and is seeking its place in the future sum of living human powers and utilities. But it has first to rediscover itself, bring to the surface the profoundest reason of its being in that general truth and that unceasing aim of Nature which it represents, and find by virtue of this new self-knowledge and self-appreciation its own recovered and larger synthesis....

“In the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either consciously or sub-consciously a Yoga.”

Man’s ultimate purpose in life is to join with the Source of life, the Truth of life, the Support of life—to find the true union with God, the One and indivisible Divine.

All life is an evolution towards that Perfection. If done consciously it is a discipline of Yoga whereby man aids his own growth or evolution towards union with the Divine.

It is, then, quite obvious that as soon as man recognises this new movement of evolving truth in life it must form part of the foundations of that life, and education must be re-structured to receive this truth in the fullness of its sincerity to afford the greatest benefit to the new generation, the child, the nation, the ideal of a future human unity.

It is quite obvious that most thinking people today realise that the amassing of objective information and the feeding of this to the subjectively undeveloped is not a very wise procedure and can no longer be termed education.

Even the best products of such an education seldom know what they are doing,

<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Chap. I.

they fail to identify the true motives of their thinking and their actions because they seldom know *why* they think or do a thing. Truth for truth's sake, like art for art's sake, is all right so long as one knows why one wants it.

Most of the problems of inadequacy in today's educational systems arise out of the psychological mixture of the various mind levels. If the mental mind is trying to solve an abstract problem or is on the verge of making a new discovery and it is suddenly invaded by an emotion from the vital mind or by a sensation from the physical mind, the problem is shattered. Children of a thinking age should always be made aware that words like "courage, evil, murder, holiness, vice," etc., are essentially opinions of men and not necessarily facts.

Purity of purpose, the discipline of putting things always in their right place, irrespective of expediency, preference or personal desire must have a fundamental place in the earliest life of the child.

It is well known that perhaps the most important *lacuna* in our school systems today is the poverty of moral and spiritual development. This arises out of two very fundamental causes. Firstly we have eroded the first principles of education which were well understood as far back as in the time of Vedic India, when the Guru took patience to *educate* knowledge from within the student: to bring forth or lead forth his inner potential. We have forgotten that the most important factor of education is the instrument of knowledge, the student *himself*, not how much objective information he can absorb. It is the student who is being educated and it is the student who must *contribute* something from himself that no one else can give. It is this contribution that will enrich his life and in consequence the life of the nation.

To push information already known into a student and expect him to use that to do a job second-hand and inadequately or even because it is the "accepted" thing to do, can merely create a continuing situation where we only do what everyone else has done, is doing and will continue to do in a circle of uninspired conformity. This may give the illusion of security but that is all it can ever be, an illusion, because security can only be truly found in obedience to the law of our nature—the *svadharmā* of our evolving being.

This is a truth that every Indian should be able to recognise—the knowledge carried in the soul of ancient experiences that every nation has its *svadharmā*, every human being has his *svadharmā* as also his *svabhāva*, his true nature—the psychological import of which has been known for thousands of years and based on solid irrefutable experiences of unquestionable spiritual integrity.

Why then do we not apply these truths to the present-day problems of a frustrated educational system—a system borrowed from the colonial expediency of a western administration with very little understanding of ancient Indian psychology?

Even the most advanced concepts of western psychology, say for example the aspirations found in Jung's last work, can hardly be taken seriously when placed side by side with the infinitely fuller knowledge—by experience and by identity—of those in India who have realised a Yogic consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo says in *Bases of*

*Yoga*,<sup>1</sup> referring to western psychologists: "You must know the whole before you know the part and the highest before you truly understand the lowest ... They look from down up and explain the higher light by the lower obscurities."

Even in the earliest times of Vedic India it was known that the true *foundation of things is above and not below*—in the superconscient not in the subconscient.

The Ashwattha (*Ficus Religiosa*); the Bo-tree; the symbolic tree of cosmic existence which has its *roots in the heavens*, and has no beginning and no end, gives the true indication of a greater psychological understanding. And through the re-statement of these ancient truths by Sri Aurobindo's exegesis in *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *The Life Divine*, there is the promise of the greater psychology awaiting its hour of acceptance.

Indeed, it is because of such authoritative works as these that we venture to predict the inevitable usage of this greater psychology in the Future Education of the human race.

If we can agree that every nation, as every man, has its own soul and its own self-law we should easily see that the soul of India and the true manifestation of its *svadharma* in the world should now express in life the spiritual truths it has so richly experienced for so long.

These truths can best be expressed by their application to fundamental problems of our daily life. This would imply life not only on an individual level but on a national and international level also.

Whenever we come face to face with a real problem in life we have to turn to the basis, the first principles.

Sri Aurobindo reminds us that the first principle in education is that "nothing can be taught". What exactly does that mean?

It means that if we persist in imposing factual knowledge upon a student in such a way as to leave him very little choice of interest—then inevitably he will arrive at a point in his studies when he has no longer any interest.

Traditional education has paid very little attention to the growing needs of the evolving child-consciousness with the result that today we have a situation of urgency which well-intentioned educationalists strive to deal with.

Obviously traditional education is unable to evoke and sustain interest of young people in the acquisition of knowledge, because knowledge has not only to be acquired from outside, such as the discovery of the universe around one, but from inside, so as to *educate* and discover that which is so preciously guarded within the being.

It is never by external compulsion that a child acquires *interest*, the key to all learning, but by finding within himself a security, a sanction, an authority from his own nature and the law of his own being.

The "ego" of a child has to be encouraged to organise its disparate parts around

<sup>1</sup> P 151.

the central being, the true psyche, if it is to have the assurance of the joy of learning, the joy of discovery, the delight of self-fulfilment.

Because of these highly important factors, implicit in the growth of the child, it is felt increasingly imperative that we introduce these psychological principles as foundation guide-lines to any future system of education. Psychological principles that would at least seek to attempt to make use of the vast resources of the inner potential which we know lie hidden in the unawakened depths of the human consciousness.

The present cultural, and perhaps soon a world economic, crisis and the shortcomings of educational research bear witness to the general failure and inconclusive results of such research and theoretical criticism in nearly every country of the world today.

It is perhaps now, more than at any other time in the history of mankind, that the spiritual experience of India can be put to the greatest good through the application of Sri Aurobindo's psycho-philosophy in education.

In Sri Aurobindo's work we have not only a re-statement of the ancient truths to be found in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita but an organised psycho-philosophy that embodies all these greatnesses in a modern language that can be applied to every educational and world problem facing man today.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

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## DEEP-DWELLING

DEEP-dwelling in our hearts you reign,  
Adorning on love's eternal throne;  
Your smile is shedding starry blooms  
God's ever-growing gardens own.

Felt or unfelt Your Presence is  
A world of joy that multiplies  
As more awakes our seeking soul  
And love becomes a bird of skies.

You call our souls by day, by night,  
Bright mornings bring Your music sweet  
And lotus-beauty and colours' charm  
To draw us closer to Your feet

Your unseen hands are tearing off  
Dark shrouding veils from our true face,  
And we behold before our eyes  
The Blue One whom our souls embrace.

PUJALAL



# THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA

## A BRIEF REVIEW

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1975)

(3)

### The Psychological Basis

THE Gita's teaching takes its stand on the psychological system provided by the ancient Sankhya, supplemented and somewhat modified by the Vedantic viewpoint which it clarifies and makes more precise; in the process it adds one or two points of capital importance. These we must briefly examine before coming to the Yoga process it enunciates.

In the Sankhya view man is a double entity, a conscious being, *puruṣa*, in his real innermost self of which however he is seldom aware, and an outer nature, *prakṛti*, with which the true man within constantly identifies himself in action and life. This external nature is a complex mechanism driven not by the conscious being within; for the *puruṣa* in the Sankhya view does nothing except to support by its presence the action of the outer nature, it is a witness and a passive giver of sanction to whatever the *prakṛti* decides to do or not to do; the *puruṣa* is *bhartā, sākṣi, anumantā*, in its relation to *prakṛti*. And yet the *puruṣa* of the Sankhya is an entirely luminous entity, silent and inactive but self-luminous; it does not have to derive its knowledge from outside. It allows the outer nature to act in ignorance, even when it knows about that ignorance, because it sanctions everything. But it can also, if it chooses, withdraw its sanction; if it does that, *prakṛti* will no longer play, life and action will come to a stop.

The action of *prakṛti*, we have said, is a mechanism, like a machine's movement. A machine is driven by forces that are applied to it; so in the Sankhya view is the outer nature of man. The only difference is that a machine is not supposed to have any kind of consciousness—though this is not altogether certain—whilst we in our outer nature are aware of things and react to them in a conscious way. The Sankhya explanation is that the consciousness of the outer man, his *prakṛti*, is derived from the luminousness of the *puruṣa*, the secret inner being. This, it says, is made possible by the ego-sense, *ahaṅkāra*, which makes the *puruṣa* identify itself with its *prakṛti* and is the cause of its bondage. The other parts of the outer nature are linked together by this ego-sense: the *buddhi* or discriminating intelligence and will, and the *manas* or perceptive mind which, through its *indriyas*, powers or organs of cognition, are the instruments of man's action and reaction to the impacts of the objective world. The ego-sense, aided by these instruments, produces in us the habitual responses

to existence, grief and joy, attraction and repulsion, anger, hatred and love, and all the other hundred and one things which constitute our normal life.

The nature of our reactions to the objective world as well as our general temperament and character are determined, says the Sankhya, by the action of the three *gunas*, essential modes of *prakṛti*. These modes are universal in Nature and not peculiar to man. But our psychology is profoundly affected, practically determined, by the way they combine and act and are predominant in our external nature. It might almost be said that, in the Sankhya view, the *gunas* are the man. They are three in number, described as *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. Stated in a very broad general way, *sattva* makes for stability and light, *rajas* for kinesis and desire, *tamas* for inertia and ignorance. All of us have these three modes present and active in us all the time. But the proportions vary not only with the individual but also with the different moments of the same individual's existence. According as one or the other of the *gunas* (or any combination of them) is dominant, the man acts and feels and thinks in a particular way. It is the normal predominance of a particular *guna* or any two of them that gives the general stamp to a man's character and action.

Here ends the Sankhya account of the matter. The Gita accepts it all, and bases much of its practical discipline on this psychology.

It might be well to dwell a little on the *gunas* in their psychological aspect. For it is this psychological aspect that has received the most emphasis in the Gita and provides a firm basis for its discipline of Yoga.

In the Gita's view, "it is a self-oblivious identification with the modes of Nature" that is the cause of man's bondage.<sup>1</sup> To rise above or get free from the *gunas*, be *nistraigunya*, as the Gita puts it, is a first condition for one who would be free in spirit. When *Sattwa* predominates, "the intelligence is alert and illumined, the senses quickened, the whole mentality satisfied and full of brightness and the nervous being calmed and filled with an illumined ease and clarity... *Rajas*, again, the Gita tells us,... is full of unrest and fever and lust and greed and excitement, a thing of seeking impulses... and even its pleasure of acquired possession is troubled and unstable.... *Tamas*, finally, is born of inertia and ignorance and its fruit too is inertia and ignorance.... *Tamas* brings incapacity and negligence of action as well as the incapacity and negligence of error; inattention and misunderstanding or nonunderstanding, indolence, languor and sleep belong to this *guna*."<sup>2</sup>

These qualitative modes of Nature determine in large measure, so the Gita affirms, all action and its guiding light, the faith that impels it and its resultant fruit. If a man is tamasic, obscure, clouded, he has "an ignorant faith, an inapt will, he will reach nothing true and will fall away to his lower nature. If he is lured by false rajasic lights, he can be carried away by self-will into bypaths that may lead to morass or precipice.... If on the other hand he has the sattwic nature and a sattwic faith and direction for his steps, he will arrive in sight of a higher yet unachieved ideal rule...."<sup>3</sup> The Gita has in this connection elaborated in some detail the influence of the three *gunas* on the main types of activity, which in the ancient view constitute

all man's works in the world. These are sacrifice, giving and askeſis, *yajña*, *dāna*, *tapas*. We need not go into the details here. Suffice it to ſay however that the nature and reſults of theſe activities depend on the nature of the faith with which they are undertaken.

But while we are on the ſubject of *guṇas* and *prakṛti*, a word muſt be ſaid about the Gita doctrine of the *deva* and *asura* natures. The ancient Indian mind, beginning right from the Vedic times, was much preoccupied with the conflict of divine and anti-divine influences that operate in human life and action, and the two Great Epics in their ethical intention have been built around this theme. The Gita which forms an integral part of the Mahabharata goes ſo far as to ſay that in this world there are two types of being that come into exiſtence, *dvau bhūtasargau loke aſmin*; one belongs to the god-like, the other to the titanic or demoniac pattern, *daiva*, *āśura*. Theſe correſpond, in eſſence, to the ſattwic and the rajasic tendencies carried to their limits. "The Deva nature is diſtinguiſhed by an acme of ſattwic habits and qualities: ſelf-control, ſacrifice, the religious habit, cleanness and purity, candour and ſtraight-forwardneſs, truth, calm, ſelf-denial, compaſſion to all beings, modeſty, gentleneſs, forgivingneſs, patience, ſteadfaſtneſs, a deep ſweet and ſerious freedom from all reſtleſſneſs, levity and inconſtancy are its attributes. The Aſuric qualities, wrath, greed, cunning, treachery, wilful doing of injury to others, pride and arrogance and exceſſive ſelf-eſteem have no place in its compoſition .... Aſuric men ...follow always the cult of Deſire and Ego .... They imagine that deſire and enjoyment are all the aim of life and in their inordinate and inſatiable purſuit of it they are the prey of a devouring, a meaſureleſſly unceasing care and thought and endeavour and anxiety till the moment of their death."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps it would not do to take the Gita's diſiſion of all beings into theſe two categories in too abſolute a ſenſe. There are ſupraphyſical worlds of gods and titans that caſt their influence on the life and nature of man in the phyſical plane of exiſtence.<sup>5</sup> This merely creates a poſſibility of man developing into the Aſuric type if he follows the rajasic bent unheeded, juſt as he can develop into the higheſt ſattwic type if he ſo chooſes. Man has always a choice. Man has in him a will to be, a belief in exiſtence, *śraddhā*, and whatever the nature of that will or conſtituting belief in him, that is he, *yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*, is the Gita's pregnant phraſe.

And this brings us to the *puruṣa* aſpect of the Gita psychology.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

#### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, Second Series (Calcutta, 1928), p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 251-52. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 315-16. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 318, note.

## DIALOGUES

### Chapter VII

(Continued from the issue of May, 1976)

*Synopsis:*

*The traveling soul has already seen much of life through her many existences when she is born yet again, this time as the daughter of humble servitors to a great war-lord of feudal Japan. At a young age the girl herself is compelled to enter the lord's service, and spends the better part of her life working in his castle, having left behind her all recollection of the great Spirit she had worshipped as a child.*

OSHICHI neither minded nor resented her fate. In fact she felt almost a relief that she need expect nothing further of great interest in her life. For now, free from desire and ambition—even to better herself among the other servitors—she accepted everything, and as a result found herself flooded with a great internal peace. No line of care marked her face, no surface emotion troubled her impassivity, no event took place that could ruffle her composure, until among her peers she came to be known jokingly as the philosopher forever speechlessly lost in her meditations.

Among her superiors, too, her self-containment did not fail to attract attention. The lords and ladies were always on the look-out for a servant who was faithful, reliable and knew how to hold her tongue. But even their favour failed any longer to impress Oshichi. What she found of paramount interest and importance to herself was the fact that she was learning to feel again, to see again, and to speak once more with her inner sense, her inner eye, and her inmost voice, while all around her the great Spirit seemed to hover with intimations of her renewed presence.

Finally moments would come to Oshichi when time seemed to stand still in carnoos of frozen beauty through which the divine goddess alone lived and breathed. Indeed sometimes the world seemed to exist as nothing but a series of exquisite pictures, dreamlike but silently evocative, distant, unreal, and with no surface meaning whatever. The meaning was elsewhere and apparently had no relation to human existence, which continued heedlessly to play itself out in its own futile cycles. But the breeze and the speckled sun in the trees, the wide-flung, green-blue countryside seen from the castle parapets, the still, brooding quiet of the castle pavilions when no one was about—all these existed for themselves. All lived in their own profundity of existence, and it was in this that she found her goddess took the truest delight. The trickle of the smallest garden water-fall ... the flicker of a carp's fin in the water ... the moods of cloud and sun playing upon the ancient timber columns of the castle verandahs ... the placement of a few leaves in a flower arrangement ... the rustle and movement of

a court kimono in which storks danced among river reeds—all these the goddess loved for their own sake. And all these she came to share with her re-awakened child, Oshichi.

Lost as she had become in her divine benefactor's gifts of small delights, the aging servitor failed to notice the particular interest a group of the most highly ranking palace ladies were taking in her. So it came as something of a surprise when she was summoned into their presence, without previously having been given any duty to perform on their behalf. Had she displeased these high echelons unwittingly? What could she possibly have done wrong? She went to her appointment prepared for the direst punishment, a prayer to her mother Spirit in her heart.

But she proved to be totally mistaken. It was a great honour rather than a punishment that was to be bestowed upon her. The court ladies had not been observing her good comportment for nothing. She was commanded to take as her sole charge the care of the infant princess who had just been born—one obviously destined to be the healthiest, most beautiful, highest-ranking of Kitamura's female children in the castle. For though she was not eligible to become a Shogun or a warrior prince, she might nevertheless fetch her weight in gold when she came of marriageable age. Silently, with a deep obeisance, Oshichi showed her gratitude and acquiescence in her new work. She was then conducted to the private quarters where the baby lay in a small silken bundle on luxuriant floor cushions—a minute picture of rosy perfection and plump good health.

Now the servitor's life became yet more tranquil than before, for now she took no part in the usual castle activities, nor even visited the kitchens or servants' quarters. Her life became exclusively confined to the small apartment and garden reserved for the little princess, Fumiko. Indeed Oshichi had been forbidden to leave that guarded area for an instant, and once again she had perforce to alter her outlook to accommodate this unexpected incarceration. No more could she look for the great Spirit's presence in different places, different scenes, different moods. Now her world had become too small for all that—even the garden was no more than a small fenced enclosure. And the paintings on the screens in the apartment she came to know so well and in such minute detail, that she could recollect them accurately with her eyes closed. So in her spare moments she learned to give herself up to dreaming, to allowing her imagination to bring her the scenes and images she could no longer see for herself, to finding the goddess's touch in these, rather than in life itself, as she had been free to do for so short a time.

And then there was the Princess Fumiko. Oshichi had found her a delightful child from the beginning, gentle as a flower, malleable and sweet-natured as the Japanese ideal of the feminine sex demanded, yet with none of the harsh and vicious undercurrents that so often lurk behind a lovely exterior. In fact time and again Oshichi had watched her growing charge in the same wonder with which she had been used to observe the great Spirit's constant but ever-changing manifestations of beauty. Now instead of seeing sun or forest, pool or wind in the reeds and finding

there her patron divinity, more even than finding the goddess in her own images of memory or dream, Oshichi found her in the marvel of this child, as instinctively and naturally charming as a finely bred kitten, yet already as nascently regal as the noble personage she would one day become. To the nurse, the sight of Fumiko playing absorbed with her toys would become a living painted screen of a miraculously animated yet timeless and perfect beauty. Watching her fall asleep on her silk cushions, or ... as she grew older ... beam with pride over a new embroidered kimono, or make her solemn obeisance when her parents came to visit her—all these too became such ideal moments—pages out of a picture book for the gods that she had somehow been privileged enough to see.

At last, when the old nurse, aged and slightly stooped by her forty-sixth year, had dressed the fifteen-year-old Fumiko on the day of her presentation at court, she knew that the final masterpiece had been achieved, for Oshichi recognized that she had before her the unflawed representation of the ideal of a culture. The princess was as splendid a young beauty as the castle court had ever seen, and as Oshichi escorted her to her place among the other ladies of the palace before her father Lord Kitamura's throne, she felt herself witness to the unfolding of yet another fairy-tale scroll painted by the great Spirit. But oh, if only the painted scroll could have been as bereft of human feeling as the word implied—a mere dead record of something that happened a long time ago and that did not matter any more! Yet this was happening in the living present, and Oshichi looked on helplessly, paralysed by presentiments she dared not look fully in the face.

She watched as her beloved princess rose from her place and hesitantly stepped forward to stand directly before her father, her mother at her side, and make her formal obeisance this time before all the multitude of gathered noblemen, vassals, and warriors, then return to re-seat herself among the other court ladies in the special enclave reserved for the noblewomen of the great gathering. She noted the still, suspended symmetry of the scene for all the world as though it lay against the yellowed silk of the scroll in the multi-coloured brilliance of its red lacquer woodwork, its chestnut and weathered oak, its robes of gold and white, of forest green and midnight blue, its mellow, shadowed profundities of grey and umber in ancient stone. And finally Oshichi, despite all her efforts to turn away from it, felt an all-pervading, icy frost of fear spread over the entire picture marking it and herself, and her princess with its dire, frozen touch, till she called out within her heart: "Great Spirit, help me. What has come upon my weakened senses?"

Softly then she heard the goddess reply, "Peace, child; see nothing, feel nothing, but reside in me. Reside in me and be safe, for beyond all is peril .... Close your eyes—close them tight and come to me—"

Long forgotten, time-obliterated words of Astarte. To Oshichi after a millennium they were new and freshly fearful.

"But my Princess Fumiko—" she cried out.

"It is already decreed .... Do not look."

But Oshichi had to look, even though her inner being did indeed shrink within her and take her refuge in the goddess's arms. And as she looked she found she was able to draw on a great hidden treasure of strength, or was it callousness? that enabled her to see again with the eyes of a Norse queen—eyes and mind and heart that flinched at nothing.

She saw the young visitor from the north, Lord Ihara, a finely proportioned samurai warrior of exceptional height, rise from his place and present himself before Kitamura, as the little princess withdrew. She saw him speak and knew what he said without hearing the words—or perhaps it was that she read in his heart his resolve that he would not leave the castle without the Princess Fumiko, his bride, in a palanquin behind his charger. Yet in the silence of her inner hearing she sensed rather than saw Lord Kitamura demurring, saying that he would have to wait—that it was not the season; that he would have to confer with Ihara's family, nobles and peers that they were, for such a great marriage could hardly be performed off-hand, that perhaps the prince was too young to understand such complexities of culture and civilization, but that he would have to submit to all the ancient laws and customs, however great his passion, which presided over so exceptional an affair as a dynastic marriage.

Bowing deferentially, Lord Ihara withdrew, but Oshichi saw the intensity of the fire within him and felt no reassurance. The court tableau melted away before her eyes and another formed where once again she was a dream-world spectator, unable to move, unable to act, unable to speak—empowered only to watch, and know, and admire dispassionately as one does an exceptional work of art.

It happened the evening after the princess's appearance at court from which she had returned exhilarated, breathless, flushed with delight and anticipation. As soon as she had found the privacy of her own apartment again she had turned impetuously to her nurse and cried, "Oshichi, did you see him? Wasn't he marvellous? As soon as he looked at me I knew ... What do you suppose his Highness, my exalted father, must have said to him when he asked for me? And he did ask, I know he did because of the look in his eyes. Surely my lord couldn't have said no? Oh, but then why haven't they told me? If I am to be married I must know!"

"My dearest little one," Oshichi had answered, "you wouldn't want to be married like a peasant girl in half an hour. For a great princess a marriage takes many months to arrange. Be patient and it's bound to come."

"Months? Oh, Oshichi!"

"And then you know our seigneur wishes for you the greatest marriage of all, and perhaps he should find a greater prince—"

At this a look of stark horror had come into the girl's face.

"Greatest marriage, greater prince! But—but Oshichi, what does it matter? He is the most beautiful."

"Indeed, my love, he is the most beautiful but it is only the gods, and men without reason, who value something beautiful rather than something great."

"No, no. I won't believe it." And she had buried her face in her old nurse's shoulder to weep.

Now it was evening. The storm of tears had long since passed. Oshichi sat by an inner wall looking out upon the small private garden in the centre of which stood Fumiko. The sleeves of the princess's white silk kimono floated in the warm breeze and her long skein of black hair caught silver-blue high-lights from the moon. To the nurse, this was as fine a tableau as all the rest, another perfectly designed portion of the great scroll at which she was looking as though over the hand of some dispassionate heavenly painter. Or was it once again her own great goddess who had wrought all this perfect beauty, yet stood off and observed it now not as a participant but as the artist enjoying her work, aloof, withdrawn, utterly detached from the drama she had portrayed? Whatever the identity of the creator, the drama ground as inexorably and silently on as a shadow-play of dancers in slow motion, and Oshichi continued to watch in the only role the Fates had permitted her, that of a hypnotized and speechless spectator.

Somehow Fumiko knew that he would come, for she stood beside the reflecting pool in the garden as though by appointment. And she let out no cry but trembled and then stiffened within the copious silks of her kimono when she saw a tall figure silhouetted against the night sky climbing over the far garden wall—a precipitous and hazardous ascent, for the princess's apartment was supposed to be impregnable above its bastions of stone. But Ihara moved like a cat in the dark, and even now as he jumped down into the garden he made no noise either with his footfall, his light armour, or his sword. Still like a stalking lion, slowly, ever so slowly he moved forward one step after another to meet his beloved. Oshichi saw his face rivetted as it was upon the princess, beautifully but coldly terrible with the consciousness, the pride of its young warriorhood. At last the two lovers stood facing one another, she with her head tilted back as she looked up at him in surrendered adoration, he slowly reaching forward to take her hand, handsome as ever in the new-found pride of conquest and mastery over the object of his infatuation, a pride softened only by the vaguest wash of tenderness. For somewhere within him as he held her hand with an almost incongruous delicacy, Ihara had remembered after all that he was a lord and not just an ordinary passionate man who had no control over himself or the animal fury of his passion. Nevertheless, Oshichi knew that that passion was there held firm behind the samurai exterior, and that it burnt with an uncommon intensity, for she saw it in his eyes and shuddered for fear of it.

That night Fumiko and Ihara spoke little before he departed as cat-like as he had come. But there were other nights when he stayed longer, and the final night when they exchanged vows of life-long fidelity before he left for his ancestral estate in the north. Meanwhile, the nurse had kept their secret—he had threatened her with her life if she betrayed them—and she found herself as a result more cut off from the others in the castle than ever. Silence had become her habit, and non-involvement in the life around her not only her creed but the bitter necessity of her existence.



Still, she could not help but come to hear several weeks later that emissaries from the north had arrived to formally ask for the hand of the little princess on behalf of their lord's son, Prince Ihara. No storm clouds stirred on that first day. The princess filled with an ill-concealed delight and excitement—for she had heard the news as well—hugging her old nurse repeatedly and telling her how they would both soon be travelling north together. Indeed, the entire castle seemed to rustle and whisper with pleasurable animation for a noble marriage was always a keenly anticipated event.

*(To be continued)*

BINA BRAGG

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## THE FINGER

MIDNIGHT—  
 pale moonlight  
 seeped through the window pane,  
 lay like stale spilt milk  
 with stench down memory lane.  
 In solitude's stillness  
 'Soul, that traveller  
 between Death and Birth'  
 bent with sinful chillness  
 checks his luggage,  
 finds hard to reject or choose,  
 to make it light.  
 As a shock  
 there comes a knock.  
 "Wait, involved," he murmurs.  
 "Then evolve and emerge,  
 no time to linger,"  
 came back the firm voice,  
 an echo from creation's dawn.

MURKOTH SRINIVASAN

# PSYCHE

## A PLAY IN VERSE

*(Continued from the issue of May 1976)*

ACT TWO  
SCENE THREE  
*(continued)*

*(ZEPHYRUS and the other SPIRITS have just gone out.)*

DAPHNE: Gone as swiftly as they came!  
EUNICE: A rather self-willed servant.  
PSYCHE: I did not think  
That he would leave me here alone with you.  
EUNICE: Are we so monstrous then that you're afraid  
To be alone with us?  
PSYCHE: Oh no, not that.  
But still I wish that he were here.  
EUNICE: Well, well.  
Your new life is a gorgeous mystery.  
What elegant appointments. How superb.  
DAPHNE: And this is nothing, in the house itself  
Is finery to make all this seem poor.  
Let Eunice see, please, Psyche. You must not keep  
Your riches to yourself. Please.  
EUNICE: No, don't beg.  
If she will not let even her sisters in,  
But makes them sit outside like commoners  
Or servants, it is not without just cause.  
Besides, she said that we would have to go  
Before too long.  
DAPHNE: I think it's terrible!  
Who would have thought that you would ever treat  
Your sisters with such high-handed disdain?  
We slept in the same room, shared everything  
Since we were little children; every dress  
Each piece of jewelry that I owned you wore  
At least as many times as I and now  
You will not even let us past the door.  
PSYCHE: But, Daphne, if it were my house, of course  
I'd let you in, but it belongs to him—

My husband—

DAPHNE: You see, she never says his name.

(to EUNICE) It's always "my husband" or else just "him".

EUNICE: I've noticed too. There's something very strange

(to DAPHNE) About her "husband".

EUNICE: But your servant Zephyrus

(to PSYCHE)

Called you the mistress of the mansion. Well?

Is it not true?

PSYCHE: He did say that, but still...

DAPHNE: Just for a moment, Psyche, then we'll go  
And tell them not to worry.

PSYCHE: Well, all right.

But just for a moment.

[*They go in.*]

EUNICE: Psyche, how divine.

DAPHNE: And look out the window. See, just like I said.  
It all has changed, you see?

EUNICE: It is some trick.

But this is not a trick. Feel this brocade:  
Damascus silk. And look, see this and this;  
A king's ransom. O Psyche, now I see,  
Your husband is a splendid oriental king  
Who hides his name in anonymity  
Because he is afraid that we proud Greeks,  
Might treat him haughtily. He must have thought  
That father would never have given you to him,  
At least not in the customary way.

And so the oracle, the mystery,  
The secret entrance; but you surely know  
That father is not so mean a man as that.  
Nor we such suspicious xenophobiacs.  
Forget the needless secrecy he enjoins;  
Tell us about your husband, Psyche, please.

PSYCHE: I know so little myself and what I know  
You must have heard from Daphne.

DAPHNE: Then that was true?

All that you told me yesterday?

PSYCHE: All true.

DAPHNE: But surely you must have been joking.

PSYCHE: No, not at all.

EUNICE: Then our worst fears have been confirmed.

- PSYCHE: What fears?  
 EUNICE: Fears fostered by that fatal oracle:  
 "No mortal man shall make this child his wife  
 But one whose power the Powers of Olympus fear."  
 Until now we had thought and hoped these words  
 Were a riddle, such as priests have always used  
 To dazzle and confound the credulous.  
 But now I fear for you. You are too young  
 And still believe that life was made for joy  
 And that no shadow of pain could ever fall  
 Across your path of sun-bright happiness.  
 How swiftly you have let yourself forget  
 The anguish of that last uncertain day,  
 That day of Fate, believing all is well.  
 You were the last-born, Psyche, and we all  
 Spoiled you and shielded you from life's harsh truth.  
 We doted on you and gave you everything  
 You asked for and allowed you to run free  
 And never scolded you. Now our mistake  
 Is painfully clear, but now it is too late.  
 DAPHNE: But still we have to try.  
 EUNICE: I suppose we must.  
 PSYCHE: But what on earth are you two talking about?  
 EUNICE: About your husband, Psyche. Listen to me.  
 She tells me you have never actually seen  
 This husband of yours.  
 PSYCHE: It's true, he never shows  
 His face to me.  
 EUNICE: But has he told you why?  
 PSYCHE: No.  
 EUNICE: No?  
 PSYCHE: He says I would not understand  
 EUNICE: But what is there to understand?  
 PSYCHE: He says  
 That there is something, but it goes beyond  
 The reach of my uncultivated mind;  
 But that he loves me and when the time has come  
 He will show himself to me and then I'll know  
 The reason for his secrecy.  
 EUNICE: Come here.  
 I know the reason.  
 PSYCHE: Oh, tell me, Eunice, please.

EUNICE: I want to tell you, dear, but I'm afraid  
It will make you so unhappy that you'll wish  
That I had never spoken. Do you think  
I should tell her, Daphne?

PSYCHE: You know too?

DAPHNE: Of course.

Poor Psyche, the whole thing is crystal clear.  
The only person in the dark is you.

PSYCHE: Then tell me.

DAPHNE: Listen to Eunice then, but try  
To hold back the effusions of your heart  
That blind the reason.

PSYCHE: I will do my best

EUNICE: If everything that Daphne says is true  
About your husband, his behavior is  
Most strange. It seems that he is rarely here  
And never when the clear light of the day  
Would show his face to you.

PSYCHE: This much is true.

He comes to me each evening but goes out  
Before the sun has risen and stays away  
Until the sun has set.

EUNICE: Yes, and forbids

His wife to light up even a bedside lamp  
When he is with her, much less keep the house  
Illumined in the dark and lonely night  
Like most wives. We may say he fears the light.

DAPHNE: A logical conclusion.

PSYCHE: Meaning what?

EUNICE: Oh Psyche, can't you see? He lies with you  
In darkness, takes his pleasure and departs  
In darkness and in darkness he returns  
When lust comes back and lies with you again  
In darkness.

PSYCHE: No. It's not like that at all.

How could you think a thing like that?

DAPHNE: You see.

Your stormy passionate unbridled heart  
Has made you blind.

EUNICE: She does not want to see.

PSYCHE: But you're wrong.

EUNICE: Yes, yes. The oracle was wrong

And I am wrong and everyone is wrong.  
The whole world is deluded, only you  
Are right.

DAPHNE:                   She does not want to hear the truth.  
EUNICE:                But we have to tell her. Psyche, can't you see?  
Your so-called husband, like the high-priest said,  
Is no man but a subterranean fiend,  
A one-eye cyclops or long loathsome snake  
That comes here to devour your energies  
And to fill your womb with his disgusting breed  
Of monsters destined to devour the world  
And to drive their helpless mother mad, until  
Her body has become too weak to bear  
The nightly outrage and the dreadful pain  
Of monstrous childbirth.

PSYCHE:                               I will hear no more!  
EUNICE:                But there is nothing more to hear, except  
That when your dugs are of no further use  
Your family will feed on what remains  
And death, so long awaited, will release  
Your soul from its unclean abode of flesh  
And hell will seem a paradise.

PSYCHE:                               No! No!

DAPHNE:                Poor little Psyche.

PSYCHE:                               But it isn't true  
Nothing could be less true. To even think  
Such terrible ungodly dreadful things  
Is criminal. Oh Daphne, do you believe  
The things that she has said?

DAPHNE:                               In part I must.  
Your husband is no ordinary man.

PSYCHE:                I know he is no ordinary man.  
He is a spirit or perhaps a god.

EUNICE:                A god indeed! Oh, Psyche, life is not  
A fairy tale.

PSYCHE:                               But gods have often come

To mortals and have given them their love.

DAPHNE:                But gods are born in light and move in light  
And when the gods descend a glorious light  
Surrounds them, greater than a thousand suns  
And men can hear the music of the spheres  
And signs are seen and perfume fills the air...

EUNICE: Don't waste your breath. Besides, what makes you think  
 A god would want to give his love to her?  
 Are you so much more beautiful and wise  
 Than all the other women of the world?  
 Such vanity! Such limitless conceit!  
 Daphne herself is no less beautiful  
 And I at least as wise.

PSYCHE: I never claimed  
 To be more than I am. I only know  
 One loves me that is good. I do not care  
 If he is god or man or animal.  
 I know that he is good and know he loves.  
 What more is there to know?

DAPHNE: Do you not want  
 To know if he is dark or fair, to know  
 How beautiful he is? Do you not want  
 To gaze into his eyes? He says he loves  
 But how can you believe he truly loves  
 If he will not permit even his wife  
 To look upon him?

EUNICE: Oh, it is no use.  
 She wants to keep her ignorance like a child  
 Who sleeps and hears the voices of real life  
 Calling to her to wake, but tries to keep  
 Her sweet untroubled dream. Sleep, Psyche, sleep!  
 Until you wake up suddenly to find  
 Your life a nightmare!

DAPHNE: Eunice, enough. She wants  
 To know the truth of him, is it not so?  
 Do you not want to see him?

PSYCHE: Of course I do.  
 I want to see him so much I could cry.  
 It is my only desire.

DAPHNE: Then satisfy  
 This natural desire—it is your due—  
 And at the same time set our fears to rest.

PSYCHE: But how?

DAPHNE: Just listen to Eunice, dear.

PSYCHE: All right.

EUNICE: Tonight conceal this lamp beside your bed  
 But cover it carefully with this black cloth  
 So no light can escape. Then let him come,





EUNICE: Well, keep your word! But in case you change your mind  
The lamp is here, right here, beside your bed.

PSYCHE: Let it remain and I will prove to you  
And to myself that I will never break  
My vow!—Please let me bring you something else.  
Another orange perhaps? a cup of wine?

DAPHNE: No, thank you. But it is time for us to go  
And soon your husband will return and you  
Must have so much to do before he comes.

EUNICE: Yes, we must go. We will tell all your friends  
And father and the family that you  
Are very well. Have one of your serving-men  
Escort us to the valley.

PSYCHE: But I think  
That they have all gone out. But I will try. (*Claps*)  
(*Enter THERME*)

THERME: Yes, Psyche.

PSYCHE: And where have you been hiding yourself?

THERME: I've been waiting, Psyche. We are always near.  
You only have to call us.

PSYCHE: Go with them then  
To Father's palace. So, dear ones, good-by.

DAPHNE: Good-by, dear sister.

EUNICE: Psyche, good-by.

PSYCHE: Good-by.

(*DAPHNE and EUNICE go out.*)

(*To be continued*)

PETER HEEHS

# CONSCIOUSNESS APPROACH TO BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

(Continued from the issue of May 1976)

## XIV. Money

WHAT has been said regarding animate and inanimate objects is equally true of money. It responds to attention. Keeping an exact account of what is spent is one form of attention which promotes a non-stop flow of funds for work. The principle of total and proper utilization also applies. It can be seen that when one is left with a few more dollars and further finance is not forthcoming, the incoming money flow awaits the spending of the last cent. If money has been improperly expended on a certain item and efforts are taken to reverse the previous act, before long further sources of funds are revealed.

But money is not merely an object. Rather the material currency employed "is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and true action it belongs to the Divine" (Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*). "Money is not meant to bring more money—money is meant to increase the wealth, the prosperity and the productiveness of a group, a country or, preferably, the whole earth. Money is a means, a force, a power, not an end in itself. As all forces and all powers, it is by activity and circulation that it grows and intensifies, not by accumulation and stagnation" (*The Mother*). The normal human consciousness fails to see the Divine in money, and it wants to possess it for its value in fulfilling desires and the self-gratification of man's ego. Money is a form of the Divine in manifestation and it has a higher role to play in the life of each individual and the collectivity.

A business institution is based primarily on the motivation of economic self-interest directly in competition with others. Yet one can see in a larger view that, through this competition, not only a single business and its employees but the economy as a whole grows and prospers. The principle of competition is true at one level. But a higher truth is that of association, mutual interchange and collective progress. Wealth is not a fixed quantity in the world to be fought over. It is an ever expanding movement of prosperity fostered by the creative activity of institutions. In the long run a successful institution is only possible in a strong economy where others also prosper and the individual success adds to the collective prosperity.

When a business institution recognizes this inter-dependence between all elements of the economy and chooses for its motivation and practical philosophy the development and prosperity of the economy as a whole, it oversteps the narrow bounds of competitive self-interest and rises to a higher level of idealism. All its decisions, policies, actions have a broader perspective and a sounder basis. The result is

that, having renounced the primary emphasis on its own survival, it becomes an essential component of the larger economic system. Life responds through the entire system to ensure that the company survives and prospers. In its activity the company becomes a broad channel for the flow of prosperity into the system. It attracts wealth to itself and freely distributes it to the rest, far more than was possible by its narrower pursuit.

For an individual or an institution, the true attitude towards money is neither a greed to possess it for oneself nor an active distaste for wealth or the activities which create it. Money is a power of the Divine to be utilized for the development and prosperity of every man, institution, country, all mankind.

### **XV. Motivation**

This subject has already been discussed in terms of the institution as a whole and its governing ideal. The same holds true for every smaller unit of the company down to the individual. Simply stated, the principle is that the higher, less selfish, personal and egoistic one's motivation, the more he grows, and the more he receives. On the lower levels man is motivated by a desire for reward—money, fame, prestige, respect, success. At a higher level he works out of interest. Interest is a broader, less personal, more mental motive than desire. By choosing it one does not necessarily sacrifice the lower rewards but adds to them the satisfaction which comes from following one's interest. The highest level of motivation is service to another, to the firm, community, society, mankind, the Divine. Service brings with it the pure joy of self-giving and in the process life sees to it that one's desires and interests are also fulfilled. The basis of service is a decision to give of oneself. It is man's highest motive for action and it is the key to life. The principle of giving can be applied at all levels. One can give wealth and material possessions, give interest or attention, sympathy, psychological support, etc. When the management of an institution is able to practise this in its relationship with employees, other institutions and the society at large, then it opens the way for an unlimited growth, expansion and prosperity.

### **XVI. Progress**

Progress is normally thought of as the end result, the goal of all one's efforts, not something that can itself be practised as a principle. But it need not be so, if one makes progress the governing ideal of all work and at every moment chooses it in favour of any other alternative. Progress means a constant effort to upgrade one's ideas, services, employees and systems. One may strive for the progress not only of the institution but of all its members, of all other institutions, of the larger society of which they are a part. To do this one must remember in every situation that the important thing is progress. No single job, no opportunity for quick profit should

move him to waver from this principle.

The key to progress can be found in the Mother's statement that one must always strive for perfection and that the particular level of perfection attainable today does not matter so long as one reaches at least one step higher tomorrow. Life never stands still. If we do not progress we regress. The best way to start is by a period of sincere self-observation. Examine the entire institution as a whole and in all its parts and let each man examine himself also. Then whatever the result one must be objective and not criticize or condemn himself or others, only let one know what he is. Then take the decision that tomorrow each aspect or as many aspects as possible must be upgraded one step. It is helpful to keep a journal of one's observations and to then put in writing a plan for progress in the coming day and week. The program must not be just a glimmering ideal one would like to attain. Then that small step should be implemented. This can be done on a group basis for the entire organisation or each department but it can also be done by every individual working member. Daily each man can decide to take one step towards greater perfection in work, a step which he can take himself independent of the behaviour of others. Let him daily take new steps while maintaining all the perfection attained in previous days. This maintaining of what has been previously accomplished is essential.

What one achieves in himself he has the power to pass on to others but only after he has gained complete mastery of it. There is an age-old principle, "Practise what you preach." Better than this, practise to perfection and communicate that perfection to others by a silent will and a living example. In this light, every job is an opportunity for progress. If one concentrates on growth, expansion and rising to higher levels of motivation, one creates an atmosphere which attracts success, prosperity and new opportunity. It is not necessary to share these thoughts with others in the institution if there is any resistance to them. All that one has to do if he accepts them is to work silently along these lines, exhausting his personal and official capacities. His responsibility ends there. Where he ends, life will take over.

### **XVII. The Consciousness Approach**

The basis of the Consciousness Approach is the correspondence between man's inner consciousness and events in outer life. Man is normally aware only of physical needs, life impulses, feelings and thoughts. Therefore the outer life of most men is a response to the quality of these inner elements. By changing the inner condition, one brings about a responsive change in the external world.

But consciousness is not limited to this. Behind the surface personality in man lies his true inner being. By contacting this deeper center he gains freedom from all the conflicting elements of his personality and the power to mould them into a unified harmonious whole. He discovers the Divine within himself. So too, behind and within all other living beings and material objects, there is a center of pure consciousness. By entering into conscious relationship with that center in other things

and beings he gains a direct knowledge of his external environment and the power to influence conditions and events. He discovers the Divine in the world and in life.

In this truer perspective the term Consciousness Approach means that all the problems of life, rather all items of life, positive and negative, are referred to one center in man, *i.e.* his deepest inner consciousness. That should be the only center of reference. The usual standards of behaviour, viz. mental understanding, ethical norms, social expectations, are for this purpose discarded. Therefore the method is applicable only in so far as one places total reliance on the inner consciousness to the exclusion of normal methods of life. By an inner mastery it is possible to control all outer events.

There has been no attempt here to construct a new system of business management. Systems are mental. Rather it is to evoke a response in the reader to the existence of a deeper center of functioning in man from which all the problems which perpetually confront life and mind can be effectively resolved in a higher order. The detailed discussion of principles is intended to stimulate the mind to seek this deeper center. This center, the true being in man, is the source of unlimited consciousness which can be channeled into creativity on any plane of existence. Yet the greater achievement is to forego the utilization of this consciousness for one's own ends and instead become a conscious personality through which it can flow in effectuating its own creative intention. That intention is nothing less than the progressive evolution of the individual and the human collectivity towards a life of greater knowledge, love, power and beauty.

GARRY JACOBS

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## COMPETITION

COMPETITION must go.  
 Where?  
 Where it deserves to go:  
 To hell.  
 You require two to compete—  
 And the idea of two  
 Is itself a falsehood.  
 The Truth is:  
 There is only One.

GIRDHARLAL

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo's Concept of the Superman** by Chitta Ranjan Goswami, Ph. D. SABDA, Pondicherry, 1976. Pp. 228. Glossary, bibliography and index. Rs. 35

THIS is one of the better among recent studies of Sri Aurobindo. The author covers many aspects of his yoga, but looks especially towards its culminating term, the Superman. This he chooses to call a concept. In my idea Sri Aurobindo is not a conceptual thinker. It is true, however, that he has expressed what he has seen in the language of mind, using the intellect and addressing himself to the intellect. Thus one may speak of "the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo" and approach it as one approaches any other philosophical system. This is what Dr. Goswami does, and his doing of it is in many ways admirable. He is, to begin with, objective. He deals with his material straightforwardly and fairly. It is clear, moreover, that he has taken the trouble to read Sri Aurobindo's works. There are, however, some *lacunae* in his sources. References from the *Letters on Yoga* are rare, from the works of the Mother, rarer. But without a knowledge of the practical elaboration of the yoga as contained in the *Letters*, one's understanding of *The Life Divine* remains undynamic and incomplete. The second omission is no less grave. If a knowledge of Nietzsche or Alexander or Plotinus or the Kashmiri Shaivites is necessary for an understanding of the Superman, what then of the words, oral and written, of Sri Aurobindo's collaborator?

This brings me to the chief bone I have to pick with Dr. Goswami. A good third of his book is devoted to "A Study in the Sources". But he all but admits in two or three places that Sri Aurobindo had no "sources". On page 26 he says, after noting that Sri Aurobindo very rarely refers to philosophers, "...the very attempt to trace the roots of his philosophy of the Superman in earlier thought tends to be questionable." Again, on page 34 the author gives Sri Aurobindo's unequivocal statement: "The only two books that have influenced me are the Gita and the Upanishads", but he follows this with, "it is possible that he [Sri Aurobindo] was influenced by other things as well, although not so consciously", and then proceeds to hunt for fictitious sources throughout the philosophical world. Leaving aside for the moment the question of how one whose attainment was in the field of enlightened consciousness could be unaware of mere intellectual influences, I will try to answer another raised by Dr. Goswami. He writes, in reference to Sri Aurobindo's comment that his writings came out of a silent mind, "For us it is difficult to understand how he could produce thought without thinking." Now, first, according to Sri Aurobindo, thought is not a product. "Our thoughts are not really created within ourselves independently in the small thinking machine we call our mind; in fact, they come to us from a vast mental space or ether either as mind-waves or waves of mind-forces that carry a significance which takes shape in our personal mind or as thought-formations readymade which we adopt and call ours. Our outer mind is blind to this process of Nature; but by the awakening of the inner mind we

can become aware of it" (*Letters on Yoga*, 1021-22). The yogin, who is aware of and can control the process, is able to retain a complete mental silence, a stillness of the mind's essential substance, while engaged in receiving and expressing thought-knowledge and word. "It is in the silence of the mind that the strongest and freest action can come, e.g. the writing of a book, poetry, inspired speech etc." (*Letters on Yoga*, p. 1254). It is not my aim, in criticising Dr. Goswami's approach to "sources", to assert that Sri Aurobindo stands apart from all others like a high and lonely monolith. Such a statement would be fine for the devotee, but inadmissible in philosophical contexts. Yet why try to demonstrate what is, in fact, undemonstrable? Why try, for example, to show the influence of Heraclitus on Sri Aurobindo when it appears that Sri Aurobindo first read the pre-Socratic philosopher in Pondicherry (see Purani, *Life of Sri Aurobindo*), that is, at a time when his own thought was fully developed? It is legitimate and worthwhile to study a philosopher (we are considering Sri Aurobindo to be a philosopher) in relation to other thinkers of the present or past. But why make the comparative study an excuse for embarking on a wild-goose chase after hypothetical sources? Dr. Goswami's discussions are well-researched, well thought-out and instructive. He says notable things about Nietzsche and Teilhard and finds interesting parallels between Sri Aurobindo and the Kashmiri Shaivites. But whenever he announces a source or identity or influence, one has to smile. Better to stick to simple comparison where positive proofs are lacking: the research and structure of presentation could remain the same, the same or greater substance could be given to the reader, and erroneous conclusions would be avoided.

Be this as it may, this second chapter (the first is an introduction) is full of interesting thoughts. The third and the fourth are also quite up to par. Although in fact little is said about the Superman himself, what is said is well said and worth reading. On the other hand, the fifth chapter, "Supramental Manifestation as a Movement", is excellent. I heartily advise every reader of this review to look through it. "Truth is uppermost, the movement is secondary," Dr. Goswami says, at once getting to the heart of the matter, and proceeds then to analyse "the movement", that is, the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, concentrating especially on its most visible manifestations, the Ashram and Auroville. His discussions under the heads "Dogmatic Scientism", "Dogmatic Spirituality" and "Integralism" (pp. 202-205) are clear-sighted and valuable. His remarks on religion are important. But there is absolutely no ambivalence on Sri Aurobindo's part about this subject: "It is not Sri Aurobindo's object to develop any one religion or to amalgamate the older religions or to found any new religion—for any of these things would lead far away from his central purpose" (*On Himself*, p. 97).

The book, by and large, is well written. To read Dr. Goswami's crisp, clear sentences was, indeed, a positive pleasure. The style is not flawless, but the flaws are rarely of a serious, annoying nature. The quotations from Sri Aurobindo and others are usually well chosen. Neither too short nor too long, they make the necessary

illustration without spoiling the flow of the prose. Ashram writers could imitate Dr. Goswami's method with profit.

The printing and binding of the book are of good quality. But I wonder why the author has submitted to our crazy indefensible Ashram style of capitalisation. No matter—all in all he has done an excellent job. I recommend his book to the student and the general reader.

PETER HEEHS

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**Aspiration: Paintings by Damodar.** Publishers: Jyotishikha Prakashani, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1976. 17 pages, Rs. 5/-.

THERE is indeed a possibility that this review contains more words than the very book it appreciates, for *Aspiration* is a slim volume that contains reproductions of nine of Damodar's paintings, each accompanied by a short apt quotation from Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. At the beginning also there are three quotations from Sri Aurobindo on Art. That's all. Nothing else to divert the attention and we can contemplate the paintings at our leisure.

All nine are executed in the same style—the artist likes to call them 'vision paintings'. They represent some aspects of the infinity of relationships into which one can enter with the Divine. The style is extremely simple and lucid and carries an extraordinary depth of expression.

One of my favourites is the painting of the child with arms outstretched about to step out into space and launch itself recklessly onto some fantastic adventure. And there behind it is the Mother, Her posture conveying all Her Love and Wisdom and Grace as She encircles the child with Her arms, protecting and guiding but not restraining it. Surely most of us will immediately be able to identify with the child in some instance of our inner or outer life. But, more than that, we can try to look within ourselves as we contemplate these fine paintings, for with time we are sure to find how helpful they can be in 'unsealing the doors of the spirit'. A good idea is to look at the pictures quietly each night before sleeping, because then the inner exploration can proceed quite comfortably during sleep when the being is relatively free of that distractor, the physical consciousness.

The artist has been a sadhak at the Ashram for many years during which he has kept up a good output of creative work from wood-carving to leatherwork to painting. He considers himself very fortunate to have had the contact and guidance of the Mother and his paintings are a record of his relationship to Her.

The content is small but one can look at the paintings again and again and meditate and enjoy them. And the price is just right, which makes *Aspiration* an excellent idea for a gift.

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