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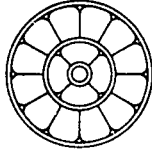
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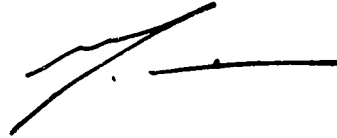


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled



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MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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No. 5

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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THE MOVEMENT OF KUNDALINI

ONCE more she was human upon earthly soil
But now the half-opened lotus bud of her heart
Had bloomed and stood disclosed to the earthly ray,
In an image shone revealed her secret soul .
In its deep lotus home her being sat
As if on concentration's marble seat,
Calling the mighty Mother of the worlds
To make this earthly tenement her house
As in a flash from a supernal light,
A living image of the original Power,
A face, a form came down into her heart
And made of it its temple and pure abode
But when its feet had touched the quivering bloom,
A mighty movement rocked the inner space
As if a world were shaken and found its soul.
Out of the Inconscient's soulless mindless night
A flaming Serpent rose released from sleep
It rose billowing its coils and stood erect
And climbing mightily, stormily on its way
It touched her centres with its flaming mouth,
As if a fiery kiss had broken their sleep,
They bloomed and laughed surcharged with light and bliss.
Then at the crown it joined the Eternal's space
In the flower of the head, in the flower of Matter's base,
In each divine stronghold and Nature-knot
It held together the mystic stream which joins
The viewless summits with the unseen depths,
The string of forts that make the frail defence
Safeguarding us against the enormous world,
Our lines of self-expression in its Vast
An image sat of the original Power
Wearing the mighty Mother's form and face.
Armed, bearer of the weapon and the sign
Whose occult might no magic can imitate,
Manifold yet one she sat, a guardian force
A saviour gesture stretched her lifted arm,
And symbol of some native cosmic strength,
A sacred beast lay prone below her feet,
A silent flame-eyed mass of living force.
All underwent a high celestial change

In the country of the lotus of the head
 Which thinking mind has made its busy space,
 In the castle of the lotus twixt the brows
 Whence it shoots the arrows of its sight and will,
 In the passage of the lotus of the throat
 Where speech must rise and the expressing mind
 And the heart's impulse run towards word and act,
 A glad uplift and a new working came. .
 All things now bore a deeper heavenlier sense.
 A glad clear harmony marked their truth's outline,
 Reset the balance and measures of the world
 Each shape showed its occult design, unveiled
 God's meaning in it for which it was made
 And the vivid splendour of his artist thought.
 A channel of the mighty Mother's choice,
 The immortal's will took into its calm control
 Our blind or erring government of life
 In the kingdom of the lotus of the heart
 Love chanting its pure hymeneal hymn
 Made life and body mirrors of sacred joy
 And all the emotions gave themselves to God
 In the navel lotus' broad imperial range
 Its proud ambitions and its master lusts
 Were tamed into instruments of a great calm sway
 To do a work of God on earthly soil.
 In the narrow nether centre's petty parts
 Its childish game of daily dwarf desires
 Was changed into a sweet and boisterous play,
 A romp of little gods with life in Time
 In the deep place where once the Serpent slept,
 There came a grip on Matter's giant powers
 For large utilities in life's little space;
 A firm ground was made for Heaven's descending might.
 Behind all reigned her sovereign deathless soul
 Surrendered into the great World-Mother's hands
 Only she obeyed her sole supreme behest
 In the enigma of the Inconscient's world.
 A first perfection's stage is reached at last .
 A camp of God is pitched in human time.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Savitri*, SABCL, Vol 29, pp 527-31)

MOHANA

(A Midnight Raga)

HEAR the moon ring Sorrow's knell
(Listen to her silver bell).
Through the mind and through the heart
Sound like sword-blade shadows part

Dark's misdeeming put to flight,
What espy by songcraft light?
Prester's realm, or the uncharted lea—
Pentexoire and Femenyc?

Swift as arrow cleaves to goal
Music flings from pole to pole—
Earth from aeon-depth of trance
Silvered forth to utterance

December 26, 1935

ARJAVA

Sri Aurobindo's comment: Very charming throughout with that felicity of turn in language and rhythm and that intimacy of image which seems to be now an assured possession of your poetry. These qualities rise to a great height and at the same time penetrate to a great depth in the two closing lines of the first and also the two closing lines of the last stanza.

SRI AUROBINDO'S RENDERINGS OF SOME OF THE VEDIC RIKS

(Continued from the issue of April 2001)

चित्तिमचित्ति चिनवद् वि विद्वान् पृष्ठेव वीता वृजिना च मार्तान् ।
राये च न. स्वपत्याय देव दितिं च रास्वादितिमुरुष्य ॥

(Rigveda, 4. 2 11)

May he the knower discern perfectly the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the wide levels and the crooked that shut in mortals; and, O God, for a bliss fruitful in offspring, lavish on us Diti and protect Aditi (SABCL, Vol. 10, p. 198)

कवि शशासु. कवयोऽदब्धा निधारयन्तो दुर्यास्वायो ।
अतस्त्व दृश्या अग्र एतान् पद्भिः पश्येद्भुतां अर्य एवैः ॥

(Rigveda, 4 2 12)

The seers unconquered declared the Seer (the Deva, Agni) holding him within in the homes of the human being; thence (from this embodied human being) mayst thou, O Agni, aspiring by the work (*aryah*), behold by thy advancing movements these of whom thou must have the vision, the transcendent ones (the godheads of the Deva) (SABCL, Vol. 10, p 199)

त्वमग्ने वाधते सुप्रणीति. सुतसोमाय विधते यविष्ठ ।
रत्नं भर शशमानाय घृष्वे पृथुश्चन्द्रमवसे चर्षणिप्रा ॥

(Rigveda, 4 2 13)

Thou, O Agni, youngest power, art the perfect guide (on that journey) to him who sings the word and offers the Soma and orders the sacrifice; bring to the illumined who accomplishes the work the bliss with its vast delight for his increasing, satisfying the doer of the work (or, the man, *carsaniprāh*) (SABCL, Vol 10, p 199)

अथा ह यद् वयमग्ने त्वाया पद्भिर्हस्तोभिश्चक्रमा तनूभिः ।
रथं न क्रन्तो अपसा भुरिजोर्ऋतं येमु सुध्य आशुषाणा ॥

(Rigveda, 4 2 14)

Now, O Agni, of all that we have done with our hands and our feet and our bodies the right thinkers (the Angirasas) make as it were thy chariot by the work of the two arms (Heaven and Earth, *bhuryojh*), seeking to possess the Truth they have worked their way to it (or won control of it) (SABCL, Vol 10, p 199)

अधा मातुरुषसः सप्त विप्रा जायेमहि प्रथमा वेधसो नून ।
दिव्यस्पत्रा अङ्गिरसो भवेमाऽङ्घ्रिं रजेम धनिनं शुचन्तः ॥

(Rigveda, 4 2 15)

Now as the seven seers of Dawn, the Mother, the supreme disposers (of the sacrifice), may we beget for ourselves the gods, may we become the Angirasas, sons of Heaven, breaking open the wealth-filled hill, shining in purity. (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, pp 199-200)

अधा यथा न. पितरः परासः प्रत्रासो अग्र ऋतमाशुषाणाः ।
शुचीदयन् दीधितिमुक्थशास. क्षामा भिन्दन्तो अरुणीरप व्रन् ॥

(Rigveda, 4 2.16)

Now also, even as our supreme ancient fathers, O Agni, seeking to possess the Truth, expressing the Word, travelled to the purity and the light; breaking open the earth (the material being) they uncovered the ruddy ones (the Dawns, the Cows) (*SABCL*, Vol. 10, p 200)

(To be continued)

(Compiled by Sampadananda Mishra)

AWAKENING OF THE CELLS

At the end of the physical demonstration on the 2nd December, all the children in a chorus are going to pray, and I have written for them the prayer

Perhaps they had read the *Bulletin* and so they asked for a prayer—a prayer that had to be truly of the body I answered

The Prayer of the Cells of the Body

Now that by the effect of the Grace we are slowly emerging out of inconscience and waking up to a conscious life, an ardent prayer rises in us for more light, more consciousness

O Supreme Lord of the universe,
we implore Thee,
give us the strength and the beauty,
the harmonious perfection needed
to be Thy divine instruments upon earth ¹

*

Physical culture is the process of infusing consciousness into the cells of the body. One may or may not know it, but it is a fact. When we concentrate to make our muscles move according to our will, when we endeavour to make our limbs more supple, to give them an agility, or a force, or a resistance, or a plasticity which they do not naturally possess, we infuse into the cells of the body a consciousness which was not there before, thus turning it into an increasingly homogeneous and receptive instrument, which progresses in and by its activities ²

THE MOTHER

¹ *Bulletin*, February 1968, p 49

² *Bulletin*, August 1986, pp 88-90

APROPOS OF NIETZSCHE

1

. that self which we are not yet, but have to become, is not the strong vital Will hymned by Nietzsche, but a spiritual self and spiritual nature. For as soon as we speak of supermanhood we must be careful to avoid all confusion with the strong but so superficial and incomplete conception of Nietzsche's superman

Indeed, since Nietzsche invented the word superman, when someone uses it to speak of the coming race, willingly or not, it evokes at the same time Nietzsche's conception. Certainly, his idea that to develop the superman out of our present very unsatisfactory manhood is our real business, is in itself an absolutely sound idea, certainly, his formula of our aim, "to become ourselves", implying, as it does, that man has not yet found all his true self, his true nature by which he can successfully and spontaneously live, could not be bettered, nevertheless, Nietzsche made the mistake we said we ought to avoid. his superman is but a man aggrandised, magnified, in whom Force has become super-dominant crushing under its weight all the other attributes of man Such cannot be our ideal. We see too well at present whither leads the exclusive worshipping of Force—to the crimes of the strong and the ruin of continents.

No, the way to supermanhood lies in the unfolding of the ever-perfect Spirit All would change, all would become easy if man could once consent to be spiritualised The higher perfection of the spiritual life will come by a spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has become himself, found his own real nature, but this spontaneity will not be instinctive and subconscious as in the animal, but intuitive and fully, integrally conscient

Therefore, the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age, will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being, an evolution or conversion of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity, even as the animal man has been largely converted into a highly mentalised humanity¹

2

Who is the superman? He who can rise above this matter-regarding broken mental human unit and possess himself universalised and deified in a divine force, a divine love and joy and a divine knowledge.

The superman is now in the making and a new consciousness has very recently manifested on earth to bring this process to perfection

But it is unlikely that any human being has yet arrived at this fulfilment,

especially since it must be accompanied by a transformation of the physical body, and this has not yet been accomplished.

30 August 1969

If thou keepest this limited human ego and thinkest thyself the superman, thou art but the fool of thy own pride, the plaything of thy own force and the instrument of thy own illusions.

This naturally implies that all the ambitious people who now declare themselves to be supermen can only be impostors or people full of pride who deceive themselves and try to deceive others.

30 August 1969

Nietzsche saw the superman as the lion-soul passing out of camel-hood, but the true heraldic device and token of the superman is the lion seated upon the camel which stands upon the cow of plenty. If thou canst not be the slave of all mankind, thou art not fit to be its master and if thou canst not make thy nature as Vasishtha's cow of plenty with all mankind to draw its wish from her udders, what avails thy leonine supermanhood?

To be the slave of all mankind means to be ready to serve mankind, and to make oneself as the cow of plenty means to be able to pour forth abundantly all the force, the light, the power that mankind needs in order to emerge from its ignorance and incapacity, for if this were not so, a superhuman being would be a burden rather than a help to earth.²

31 August 1969

THE MOTHER

[Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a "moralist who passionately rejected Western bourgeois civilisation. He regarded Christian civilisation as decadent, and in place of its 'slave morality' he looked to the 'superman' who would initiate a new heroic morality, which would consciously affirm life and the life values. This superman would represent the highest passion and creativity and would live at a level of experience beyond the conventional standards of good and evil." Last year was the hundredth anniversary of Nietzsche's death. His "will to live" was more a vitalistic monstrosity that had to be dealt with in a different way. —R Y D]

References

1 *Words of Long Ago*, CWM, Vol 2, p 161

2 *On Thoughts and Aphorisms*, CWM, Vol 10, pp 248-49

A LETTER

If I haven't replied to you promptly it has mostly been because I was myself seeking enlightenment on the problem you have posed

The problem logically divides into four interrelated questions

(1) If, after the body's death, the vital and mental parts of us, before getting dissolved, exhaust on other planes the effects of their actions done on earth, what becomes of the Law of Karma which says that the rewards and punishments come in the next incarnation on earth?

(2) If the psychic being, which is the inmost entity in us surviving every death and returning to a new birth, takes on a new vital and mental form when it is reborn, what happens to the Karma incurred by the old vital and mental parts?

(3) If there are new vital and mental parts at each rebirth and if the psyche which persists from birth to birth is untouched by any vital-mental action, how can those new parts be held responsible for what the old ones did?

(4) If the Law of Karma is valid as the best explanation of the inequalities that are in the world, through what medium does the Law operate under the conditions listed in questions 2 and 3?

The first question should not be very difficult to answer. After death, the vital and mental parts of the average man find themselves among presences and powers with which they have been in contact in the course of life by means of the desires and passions and thoughts they have indulged in. Circumstances which were not fully found on earth exist there and the discarnate vital and mental parts take advantage of them or suffer by them. This is the analogue of what is usually called heaven and purgatory and hell. It has nothing to do with the Karmic Law which operates on earth for actions done on earth. Of course, what happens on the other planes can be also subsumed under a Karmic Law but this Law is not a substitute for the other terrestrial one. The supra-terrestrial Karmic Law is all in all for the religions which do not accept rebirth, but even so the idea of rewards and punishments in the ordinary sense is declared by Sri Aurobindo to be a crude popular fiction. Suffering and happiness will be there but not meted out according to a narrow system of canings and lollipops. Besides, if rebirth is a fact and in general we reap what we sow, then reaping on the other planes what we sow here would mean duplication for poor us. We would have to pay twice for our deeds. The happenings beyond fall into a category different from the Justice done here.

As an introduction to answering the remaining questions I may say "The aim of evolution on the human level is a wide variety of experience for the soul, each time a new side of consciousness to be developed. For that reason a new vital and mental part no less than a new physical one is required. And the old notion of a relentless series of punishments and rewards holds here as little as it holds on the supra-terrestrial planes. Everything done by the vital and mental personalities in a life does not have a value for the next incarnation. So a mechanical comprehensive law of Karma

in every detail cannot be thought of as acting. The Karmic Law must act in consonance with the Law of Evolutionary Enrichment and Progression. In addition, there is the action of the Divine Grace which can annul a lot of Karma in response to the soul's aspiration. Certain things from the past do continue and have force but we cannot lay down rules. Motions of our own will, illuminations of our own intelligence, interventions from hidden worlds have their play in changing what we may term the map of regular Karmic consequences''

I cannot provide complete answers to questions 2, 3 and 4. The best thing is to quote some relevant sentences from the Mother and Sri Aurobindo

Q ... What becomes of the Karma and of the impressions—samskaras—on the old sheaths? Do they also dissolve without producing any result, good or bad, which they should according to the theory of Karma? Also, what becomes of the vital and mental beings after the dissolution of the vital and mental sheaths?

*A. ...the true mental, the true vital and even the true subtle physical persist. It is that which keeps all the impressions received in earthly life and builds the chain of Karma.*¹

*

The soul gathers the essential elements of its experiences in life and makes that its basis of growth in the evolution; when it returns to birth it takes up with its mental, vital, physical sheaths so much of its Karma as is useful to it in the new life for further experience.²

A distinction is made here between the true and the outer being on each plane. The outer in every case dissolves sooner or later. The true remains (God knows where¹) and comes back with whatever Karma the soul chooses to keep. Everything finally appears to rest with the soul's need in the evolutionary process towards Godhead. The Karmic impressions retained by the true mental and vital and subtle-physical are accepted or rejected according to the psyche's vision of the future.

Everything is not crystal-clear of the *modus operandi* of things in this matter. But if you want a detailed philosophical discussion of the problem of Rebirth in all its particulars, you cannot do better than turn to the chapters on the subject in *The Life Divine* of Sri Aurobindo.

6682

AMAL KIRAN
(K D SETHNA)

¹ *Collected Works of the Mother*, Vol 15, p 134

² *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol 22, p 433

SRI AUROBINDO MEMORIAL CONVENTION*

(Continued from the issue of April 2001)

Inaugural Message of The Mother

(24th April, 1951)

SRI AUROBINDO IS present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the university centre which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the elite of to-day into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life.

In his name I open to-day the Convention meeting here with the purpose of realising one of his most cherished ideals

Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee

It is difficult for an ordinary individual to realise in full the significance of the message of Sri Aurobindo's life and teaching. His philosophy forms an integrated system of thought created out of the highest and most sustained efforts of the human spirit. It is given to very few of us to attain that level of spiritual effort, for it demands a thorough discipline of the body and the mind, and what is still more difficult, the sacrifice of the immediate for the ultimate. Once upon a time, the Rishis of ancient India rose above the calls of the present, the clash of arms, the rise and fall of Empires, to contemplate the eternal verities of existence.

Coming much nearer to our own times, when the favourite disciples of Guru Govind wanted him to lead them in the affairs of the world, he declined and warned them not to tempt him with ephemeral offerings. Similarly, when in 1922 Mr C R Das asked for Sri Aurobindo's help in the political struggle, the sage declined on the ground that he had not attained the fullest realisation of the spiritual reality, without which efforts to seek the salvation of mankind would only create an illusion.

These spiritual efforts of the great masters often defy common understanding. Yet the call of the times was never so imperious as it is now. What India is suffering from today is not so much the poverty of material existence. She is suffering much more from the bankruptcy of her spiritual resources. The Government moves in the same vicious circle. Moral standards are at a discount. High purpose is reserved exclusively as an adornment of pontifical pronouncements from high offices. The scene is virtually littered with the debris of the spiritual achievements of a people that was once great.

* Extracts of the proceedings of the Convention and speeches by the participants. These had first appeared as a supplement to the August 1951 issue of *The Advent*.

The fact is that we have lost track of our real culture. The culture of a people, as Sri Aurobindo tells us, may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. "There is", he explains, "a side of thought, ideal, upward will and the soul's aspiration, a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and a side of practical and outward formulation." Philosophy and religion belong to the first of these three aspects of culture, art, poetry, literature to the second, and society and politics to the third. In India, however, the master idea that has governed the life, culture and social ideals of her people has been the seeking of man for his true spiritual self and the use of life. We have lost track of this noble idea. A base hedonistic view of life seems to inform all our activities today, even where they belong to the realm of the first two aspects of culture.

It is thus that the establishment of a University, where the eternal verities of life will be taught and re-taught to a stricken people, becomes supremely relevant. This is the task of an International University and it is in the fitness of things that the University should be dedicated to the sacred memory of Sri Aurobindo. It is in the fitness of things that along with its sister University at Santiniketan, named after another great Indian, this University should also be located in India where so many peoples and so many cultures have met and found their home. The Upanishads have expressed this synthesis and harmony by the three words, *Shantam*, *Shivam*, *Adwaitam*. Sri Aurobindo has also taught us the same truth. He even goes further and says that this synthetic turn of India's spiritual vision "is not peculiar to the mystics or the literate or the thinkers, nourished on the high sublimities of the Veda and the Vedanta, but permeates even the popular mind." It is here, on the sacred soil of India, where the call for synthesis first went out to the world and it is here that at the proposed University, scholars from the different parts of the world would assemble and inaugurate a new era of cultural renaissance for India and the world.

I have so far dwelt on the spiritual call of Indian culture, even though the call may be going unheeded today. As Sri Aurobindo says, it is a spiritual, an inner freedom, that can alone create a perfect human order. But this freedom does not ignore, cannot ignore, the evolution of man's lower, physical, vital and mental nature. Progress to the age of the spirit must pass through the three conceptions, each regarded as a reality, the third leading to the subjective age of mankind. We cannot skip over any of the intermediate stages without peril to mankind, though such an adventure may succeed in the case of particular individuals. Body, life and mind, all these must assume significance in man's adventure of the spirit. The highest achievements may yet elude all except a few. But the disciplines they indicate are meant for the upliftment of mankind as a whole, their ascent from the ignorant nature to the spiritual existence. This great adventure is characteristically typified in the life of Sri Aurobindo. It began in an urge for the political liberation of India. It paved the path for a miracle, the great revelation that came to him in 1909 in prison. The window that had been closed flew open and the Divine stood revealed before him. With the

same abandon with which he had struggled for India's political freedom, he began his long patient quest for the freedom of the spirit. The two Aurobindos merged with each other, the political fighter and the yogi. Even then his earlier patriotism was tinged with a spiritual penumbra. He was thus a true Indian. When we read from his books, he seems to appear out of the pages of our ancient sacred lore, the representative of all their wisdom made dynamic by an awareness of the present spiritual crisis. I am sure the proposed University will symbolise the world's urge for a new spiritual rebirth, it will stand out as an oasis amidst the barren tracts that breed jealousies, suspicions and petty conflicts.

(Extracts from Dr Mukherjee's Concluding Speech)

The work that is about to be undertaken is a mighty one. No doubt, there will be support throughout the world. Let us not minimise the difficulties and complexities of the task. We propose to work this University for imparting training to men and women in accordance with the highest standards for the purpose of participating in the great task of reconstruction of humanity. Institutions of this type are bound to fail unless we can gather men and women who will not only feel on the lines that Sri Aurobindo lived, but also act up to them. This place has already within its resources such men and women who will be able to undertake this gigantic responsibility. It is our hope that men and women from all parts of the world will be attracted by the ideology for which this institution will stand.

Men and women selected for training must be carefully chosen because they must be able to absorb cent percent the ideology for which this institution will stand. We need not pay attention to the quantitative aspect of the problem, because we have many Universities where thousands of students pass out and we do not want to see any replica of such institutions.

The policy of our Government should be to encourage experiments of the type being made here so that the work may be carried on without hindrance or difficulty.

Any institution, if it is to function, must be under proper discipline and be conducted in a manner which will lead to smooth and efficient work. At the Ashram, we see abundant evidence of the great organizing ability of the Mother, who is the presiding deity over this place. Everywhere there is regularity, smoothness and efficiency. There is no hue and cry. This is a remarkable feature which, obviously, is an asset to any institution of the type we propose to develop. And with the Mother here, we have not the least doubt that this institution will grow from strength to strength and will be the pride of not only India, but of the entire civilised world.

India has a mission and a destiny to fulfil. Some voice will rise from this land to which the world has to listen. It will not be the voice of conflict or chaos but the voice of peace where self-respect and honour will be kept. That voice was discovered by Aurobindo and the people all over the world will come to tread Aurobindo's path.

Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghose

I have given the proposal to establish an International University Centre at Pondicherry as a memorial to Sri Aurobindo my most anxious consideration, and give it my whole-hearted support. Sri Aurobindo was a great teacher—one of the greatest of the age in which he was born and which he adorned. It was as a teacher that Sri Aurobindo began his work in Baroda and it was to shoulder the responsibilities of a teacher that he left Baroda for Calcutta where, he thought, he would get ample opportunities to prepare his students for the struggle ahead. That struggle was not only economical and political but psychological as well.

In the words of Tennyson Sri Aurobindo could say when he became a teacher—

I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be

And his sight penetrated into the future when the vision of a new world rose before his mind's eye as rose the vision of New Jerusalem before the rapt eyes of the author of the Apocalypse. He was convinced that Spirituality alone could supply the passport to the new world. This realisation had come to him when he had studied the history of the world. He found that Rome under the heels of whose cohorts the earth shook, so to say, to its centre had faded away and only reminded one of the lines of the poet:

Where Empires towered that were not just
Lo! the skulking wild fox scratches in a little heap of dust

He found that Greece, the mother of Western civilisation, was sleeping the sleep that knows no waking and was almost forgotten. He found that Egypt hoary with age lay buried under the sphinxes and the pyramids of her desert. And lo and behold! India lived. She lived in her spirituality. And he said

“What was the secret of that gigantic intellectuality, spirituality and superhuman moral force which we see pulsating in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, in the ancient philosophy, in the supreme poetry, art, sculpture and architecture of India? What was at the basis of the incomparable public works and the engineering achievements, the opulent and exquisite industries, the great triumph of science, scholarship, jurisprudence, logic, metaphysics, the unique social structure? What supported the heroism, the self-abandonment of the kshatriya, the Sikh and the Rajput, the unconquerable national vitality and endurance? What was it that stood behind the civilisation second to none in the massiveness of its outlines or the perfection of its details? Without a great and unique discipline involving a perfect education of soul and mind, a result so immense and persistent would not have been possible.”

The realisation became clear with the revelation which awaited him in incarceration—

tion, and Sri Aurobindo began to teach a new Gospel which gave the world the eternal message in the shape which suited the needs of the age—the requirements of the people immersed in materialism

He sought political freedom, because “to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom is the very height of ignorance and folly”

He placed before the people the ideal presented in the *Gita*—the “living message” of the teacher who is “the God in man who moves our whole world of action, by and for whom all our humanity exists and struggles and labours, towards whom all human life travels and progresses”

Political freedom was not an end in itself, but a means to an end in view. And the end in view was the completion of what Sri Aurobindo has called the human cycle.

The system of education which is prevailing now is not conducive to the end in view. For though we talk of diffusing the fertilizing waters of intellectual knowledge from their great and copious fountain-heads at the Universities by a thousand irrigating channels, we overlook the significant fact that mere scholarship and learning and the knowledge of books do not by any means arrest and dissolve all the travelling acids of the human system. And as Sri Aurobindo has said—we are only beginning to understand the new aim of education—“to help the child to develop his intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, moral, spiritual being and his communal life and impulses out of his own temperament and capacities,”—a very different object from the prevailing education which is “simply to pack so much stereotyped knowledge into his resisting brain and impose a stereotyped rule of conduct on his struggling and dominated impulses.”

To achieve the end in view a new education has to be imparted. That education will be based primarily on Sri Aurobindo’s teachings. The proposed University, therefore, will give not merely instruction and education but a way of life to lead the students on to a greater, ampler and divine existence.

Far from ignoring—Sri Aurobindo recognised and accorded full importance to the idiosyncrasies of individuals and nations. In his article on the Doctrine of Passive Resistance he wrote.

“Hinduism recognises human nature. It sets one ideal for the saint, another for the man of action, a third for the trader, a fourth for the serf. To prescribe the same ideal for all is to bring about *varnasankara*, the confusion of duties, and destroy society and race”

In his *Ideal of the Karmayogin* he wrote.

“In all life there are three elements, the fixed and permanent spirit, the developing yet constant soul and the brittle changeable body. The spirit we cannot change, we can only obscure or lose, the soul must not be rashly meddled with, must neither be tortured into a shape alien to it, nor obstructed in its free expansion; and the body must be used as a means not over-cherished as a thing valuable for its own sake.”

The idiosyncrasies of the students, therefore, must be studied and every one of them given full scope to develop towards the ideal along the path it finds ready and on the line of least resistance

A University which will proceed on these lines will prove a boon to those who will be its alumni. They will not only learn to earn and serve society but, what is even more important, will help to create a new society for the new world of Sri Aurobindo's dream

Every department of knowledge—theoretical and practical—will be taught in the institution to students who may come from any part of the globe irrespective of nationality and religion. It will be a bold experiment but worthy of the man who conceived the idea of establishing an international university centre which will include within its ample sweep all departments of knowledge and students of every nationality.

There may be objections, hesitations, difficulties postulated. But all must be swept by the fervour of sincerity and the realisation of the nobility of the work. There will be criticism. It should be welcomed. For, criticism is something you can avoid only by saying nothing, doing nothing and being nothing.

In 1897 Swami Vivekananda, of whom Sri Aurobindo wrote that we perceive his "influence still working giganticly," wrote

"We Hindus, have now been placed under God's providence, in a very critical and responsible position. The nations of the West are coming to us for spiritual help. A great moral obligation rests on the sons of India to fully equip themselves for the work of enlightening the world on the problems of human existence."

For years Sri Aurobindo had been doing that work. Fully equipped for the work he gave the seekers after truth the secret of Life Divine, for as he said

"It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and saving light."

The equipment necessary for the teacher who will give the world spiritual life and saving light will be supplied by the University Centre which is to be established at Pondicherry. On its success will depend continuance of that stream of Truth which is to resuscitate a world desponding, distressed and drooping—to quicken the atrophied veins of the East and chasten the materialism of the West with the spirituality of the East so that a new world may come out and the struggles of humanity may become the cruel sweet pangs of parturition.

I have exceeded the allotted span of human life, the sands in the glass are fast running out

I feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead
And all but he departed

It may not be left to me to see the accomplishment of the work which is being undertaken. But I am confident that it will “orb into the perfect star” which we do not and cannot see today. I wish the undertaking the success it richly deserves.

Before I conclude I cannot help referring to an objection to the University Centre proposal which has been recently made. I would not have taken any notice of it if it had not emanated from one who had been one of Sri Aurobindo’s trusted lieutenants in his campaign for political freedom. Sri Barindra Ghose has opposed having an international university at Pondicherry for two reasons:

(1) He thinks that the memorial should take the form of an intensive Yogic Centre—“carried on under the guidance of great Indian Yogis”.

(2) He objects to Pondicherry being the seat of that centre till it ceases to be a French pocket in the Indian Union, as, otherwise, it may “easily degenerate into a means of further foreign grip in India and Asia”.

The first suggestion would take us back to the Mediaeval times—if not into the dim recesses of a more distant past. This would be contrary to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo who stood for progress.

The second would only mean the postponement of the work for an indefinite period. One fails to understand how the proposed University may degenerate into a means of further foreign grip on India and Asia though the author of the *Wounded Deer** had supported the retention of British supremacy in India. On the other hand the University may help to remove the grip of one people on another through the teaching of Sri Aurobindo.

The Ashram cannot be removed from Pondicherry redolent of the aroma of Sri Aurobindo’s teaching and the last resting place of his physical remains. The University ideal has not been vamped up in a hurry but had been the ideal of Sri Aurobindo himself, as we have been given to understand. And we are here today to give shape to that ideal of which we have the clay model.

Let us hope that the University will only help to spread Sri Aurobindo’s teachings so that the future may be flushed with the radiance of a new dawn beckoning us to a greater light than has ever yet shone on mankind.

May the Divine Mother whose creed stands today above the contending creeds of India, at whose temple Sri Aurobindo acted as a worshipper and a priest bless the organisation. May he speak to the world, trumpet tongued from the silence of his Samadhi—

When all the temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy worshipper outside?

Bande Mataram

* I think the word is “stricken” and not “wounded”. It is a poem by Thomas Moore —Amal Kiran

Prof. Somnath Maitra

I consider it a singular privilege to be allowed to address this distinguished gathering where disciples and admirers of Sri Aurobindo have assembled to discuss, under the guidance of the Mother, ways and means of founding an international university in Pondicherry to serve as a fitting memorial to our master

It is difficult for me, after the profoundly inspiring message of the Mother and the brilliant address of the President who is widely known as one of the foremost living authorities on matters educational in India, and after the thoughtful papers read by the speakers before me, to say anything of value about the details of the project for an international university I shall, therefore, content myself with putting before you my idea of the distinctive character which a university established in Pondicherry, under the auspices of the Mother, is likely to develop

There are universities galore in most countries of what we call the civilised world, and we have quite a few in India also They have more or less the same objective everywhere. the imparting of instruction and the encouragement of research in the various branches of human knowledge, with an increasing emphasis on the study of Science and Technology These institutions—some great, some small—are all attempting, according to their own lights, to equip their alumni with knowledge of the world and of themselves, knowledge that will give them control over the forces of nature and help them to remove the ills of humanity—ignorance and disease and poverty—and make them better and happier men and women

Are we then, it may be asked, endeavouring to add one more to the number of such useful—and one may say, more or less international—centres of learning and culture? If the answer were to be in the affirmative, if we were to say, ‘‘Yes, we desire to have another seat of learning in this part of the land as each such institution is an asset to the country,’’ there would be nothing to be ashamed of in such a reply But that would not be the whole truth about the matter.

The establishment of a University in Pondicherry sponsored by the Mother, besides being a welcome addition to the existing seats of learning has a special significance The new university will be informed by the spirit of our great Master, the spirit of the Life Divine. It will not only arrange for the study and propagation of his teachings and take steps to bring humanity nearer to the realisation of his supreme ideal of the perfectly integrated life, but it will also be invisibly fashioned and moulded at every turn by a sense of his deathless Presence And for this no better site could be chosen than the neighbourhood of the Ashram where the Master spent his best years labouring in silence to change man’s nature that he may be reborn in the Spirit, providing by the very example of his life a refuge to the spirit of man in a dark and distracted world and holding out, to a blundering and suffering humanity, the hope of the ultimate glory and bliss to which it is destined

A university here, therefore, under the Mother’s control and guidance will be something more than a mere centre for study and research in a wide variety of

subjects, or a congenial meeting ground for men and women of different races and cultures. The Mother's Shakti working behind the contemplated organisation will make all the difference in the world. Those who have any knowledge of her ways and of her power, those who have watched the marvellous working out of her will in the multifarious activities of the Ashram, will understand that whatever work she inspires becomes at once a service for the Divine, whose performance is regarded not as an irksome duty but as a joyful privilege. It is only natural to expect, therefore, that in any new undertaking launched by her, there will be this consciousness of a Divine purpose and goal directing all activity. To the architects and masons of the great edifice to be built she will give strength and courage and skill, and their myriad separate endeavours will be held together in a supreme unity of inspiration.

It is said that Divine Grace can put words of fire into the mouths of the dumb, and enable the maimed to scale and cross the proudest mountains. The Mother's Grace will transmute the common work of day-to-day into something rich and beautiful and the common worker into a master craftsman. For it is perfectly true to say of her, in the words of one of Rabindranath Tagore's famous songs

*Jara taba shakti labhula nija antara-majhey
Barjula bhay, arjula joy, sharthak halo kaje*

Those who receive your power in their hearts fulfil themselves in work, casting out fear and marching on to Victory

Prof. Tan Yun-Shan*

I can hardly express in words the joy I have been feeling since my arrival here after twelve years. This joy deepens with the hours of my stay here and as I stand before you now. In the midst of this joy there is a poignancy because our Master is physically not here, though his presence is there pervading the whole Ashram and I began to feel it as soon as I arrived.

Universities in ancient India were famous all over the world for their catholic outlook and particularly for the knowledge of the highest kind they imparted to all, irrespective of caste, creed or race. They were also alive to the need for disseminating the fruits of India's many-sided cultural endeavours through these selfless ambassadors whom they sent to various parts of the world. It is due to the work of these devoted sons of Mother India that the priceless gems of her eternal wisdom shine even to this day in the world's treasures of knowledge as the foundation of the future empire of the spirit.

A rediscovery of the truth of India's past as also the truth of all the ancient

* Director of the Cheena Bhavan of Visvabharati, Santiniketan

countries and a correct appraisalment of the values of modern culture in the light of the revelatory vision with which we have been blessed by the Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo, are of vital importance to the building up of the new world of God in which alone lies the hope of a happier future of mankind

The Master has therefore given us the sublime idea of an International University, the culture-centre where, as in those of old, men and women from the whole world would receive training in the various arts and sciences whose essential verities will be reinterpreted as dynamic factors in the cultural evolution of man preparing him for his divine destiny

Many of the well-known universities in the world have developed out of the medieval monasteries. In ancient India also her seats of learning traced their origin to the ashramas, hermitages and monasteries. We recall today a hoary tradition as we think of the future of this World-university growing out of this Ashram at Pondicherry whose aim is pursuit of knowledge for the attainment of a perfect life in which lies its unique character

I am exceedingly happy to be able to associate myself and my country with this great venture whose success is certain because it is the Mother who is planning and guiding it, the Mother who has come to give shape to the Master's vision

Dr. Kalidas Nag

I consider it a privilege to be invited to participate in the inauguration of the Sri Aurobindo University and to address the assembly after Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghose, who had the honour of collaborating with Sri Aurobindo in the epoch-making journal *Bande Mataram*. The fiery lines penned by Sri Aurobindo in that journal used to be quoted on the cover of the exercise-books and those lines used to inflame the soul of mere school boys like us. 1905-1910 was a quinquennium which opened with the expulsion of Sri Aurobindo as Principal of our first National Council of Education, and with the inauguration of the University of Freedom, where thousands of youths flocked in the highways, parks and bye-lanes of Calcutta, to get initiated into the cult of Swadeshi and total sacrifice for our country's liberation. Jails and gallows lost their terror and youths sacrificed their lives freely and cheerfully with the Bhagavad Gita and the words of Sri Aurobindo on their lips.

I remember today that Sri Aurobindo was born to celebrate in Asia, as it were, the centenary of the Rights of Man of the French Revolution, and naturally, the first phase of his public career was devoted to the political liberation of Man in Asia. After the Alipore Bomb case and his retirement to Pondicherry we witness the second phase in the evolution when Sri Aurobindo laid the foundations of our intellectual liberation through his creative and synthetic writings of the *Arya* epoch and the First World War. A synoptic vision of world literature and of future Poetry emerged from the profound utterances in prose and poetry by Sri Aurobindo the world poet, expressing himself in a world language which he enriched more than any writer of his age. Then,

when Rabindranath—who greeted him with a magnificent poem in 1908 —came to see him in Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo was already retiring completely within himself to work out the third and the final phase. the spiritual liberation of Mankind through “integral yoga”—the half-forgotten but eternal heritage of Mother India to humanity. Thus, Sri Aurobindo is the University pointing to a radically new conception of the term. It should not be a mere copy of any of the universities of India or abroad Sri Aurobindo University should aspire to provide the training ground for youths who would build up a new personality in a new universe

The syllabus as well as the system of studies in this university should attempt a synthesis of the East and the West; for, Mother—came to collaborate with Rishi Aurobindo of the Orient The magnificent sea-front of the Pondicherry Ashram reminds me of the fact that our Indian Ocean is the receptacle of the Atlantic and Pacific cultures, and into that confluence have flowed the spiritual rivers of diverse countries and continents. It is a striking coincidence that in the very year 1893 when Sri Aurobindo was returning after 14 years to Mother India from Europe, Swami Vivekananda was going by the eastern route to attend the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was going by the western route to South Africa to tackle, as “Coolie Barrister”, the ominous race problem of modern history. We must remember these fundamental facts while framing the basic regulations of the Sri Aurobindo University, and if we prove ourselves worthy of the great tradition of culture and spirituality that was Sri Aurobindo, we need not worry about the human or material side and equipments Let us work in that faith, and Sri Aurobindo will bless us in our endeavour to vindicate the Life Divine in this Atomic age threatening to annihilate Life and perpetrate the greatest sacrilege in history

Sri Surendra Mohan Ghose*

I am very grateful to you all for giving me this opportunity to associate myself with the main resolution of this noble and sublime conference. I also consider this opportunity to be a very great privilege in my life.

Friends, let me tell you frankly at the very outset that after hearing the learned speeches of eminent scholars those who are expecting to hear another speech from me will be very much disappointed.

At the very early age of fifteen I accepted Sri Aurobindo as my leader and have been all through my life a humble worker with his light as my constant guide and as such I have with all humility tried to execute his ideas avoiding speeches as far as possible.

Of all Indian leaders Sri Aurobindo was the first to rightly proclaim to the world that complete independence outside British control was the aim of the people of India in their hard struggle for liberation We bow down our heads with great reverence at

* Member of the Parliament

his feet, taking a solemn vow with all seriousness pledging every thing to translate into action the great ideals preached by him as a great Yogi. Those who have ears to hear will certainly hear, and are as a matter of fact hearing, the sacred voice of Sri Aurobindo out of silence. The voice of Sri Aurobindo is the true Voice of India with her hoary civilisation and culture and has universal application.

The first point in the main resolution is the establishment of an International University at Pondicherry, as was originally conceived by Sri Aurobindo himself, the entire control of which, in all its aspects, shall remain in the divine hands of the Mother. In this connection let me state that the use of the word "University" to express the ideas of Sri Aurobindo is liable or likely to create some confusion in the minds of some people.

We have to use the word "University" because we have not got at present a better and more comprehensive word to convey correctly the concept of Sri Aurobindo. But I am sure in due course of time with the development of this University either the word "University" will have fuller meaning or we shall have to coin some new word to fit in with the activities of the Pondicherry Ashram under the benign control and guidance of the Mother.

In the Memorandum it has been rightly pointed out that Sri Aurobindo teaches us that "there are two kinds of knowledge, that which seeks to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the intellect,—this is the lower knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world; secondly, the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source and reality, by spiritual realisation".

One of our previous distinguished speakers, Dr Kalidas Nag repeatedly and very rightly too emphasised the fact that Sri Aurobindo himself was the "University" and that University was already there at Pondicherry from the date when he came there and it has been functioning there vigorously till now and that our object is not to establish a new University there but we are to simply accept the University which already exists there, i.e., Sri Aurobindo.

Friends, I submit that truly speaking the University is the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. They are not two different personalities. We should not make the mistake in thinking that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo are two different personalities. Both represent two aspects of one and the same Personality. I would very much like to say that we should not think that Sri Aurobindo is the University but we should firmly accept and proclaim that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo are the University.

Another point and I have finished. The idea of having an international University at Pondicherry must not be confused with the idea of the present day Universities all over the world, because we are to always remember that the fundamental and essential conception of Sri Aurobindo is to build up a society of immortals on this mortal earth—that makes all the difference. We must not forget what Sri Aurobindo has said: the supramental descent is an absolute certainty.

Mr President and Friends, I whole-heartedly support the resolution in its entirety.

which, as it has been pointed out, is in reality one integral proposal although apparently divided into three—the different portions of the resolution are self-explanatory and do not require much elucidation.

With these few words I bow down my head most reverentially to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo and pray with all humility for their Blessings for the success of our efforts.

Bande Mataram.

Nolini Kanta Gupta

24th April, 1951

I just rise to call upon our friends and comrades to help us in our endeavour in whatever way each can and is willing—in deed, in thought or even in word. Our ideal is, as you know, the formation of a University Centre, an international university, as it has been called, which in fact is nothing less than the founding of a new mankind upon earth—with a new life and a new consciousness. The promise has been given that the thing can be done and will be done. And She is in our midst who will make good the promise.

25th April, 1951

Friends and comrades, we are now at the end of our deliberations—a happy and successful end, you will agree, which, however, is only the beginning of a still happier and greater end. It remains for me to thank you all for the sympathy and goodwill you have shown and the promise of help and co-operation meant thereby. I have to thank especially our President, Sriji Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, who has been so extremely affable and helpful to us.

I thank again all of you who have come from far and near, and we hope to see many of you in future coming here and spending a few days now and then in our midst.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Sri Aurobindo Memorial Convention held in Pondicherry at the Tennis Ground of Sri Aurobindo Ashram on April 24 & 25, 1951

24th April, 1951

The proceedings commenced at 4.15 P.M. after Tea.

Sri K. C. Dutt proposed Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee to the chair and Sri S. N. Jauhar seconded the proposal. Dr. Mukherjee then occupied the chair.

The Mother inaugurated the Convention with a brief Message in which she announced that Sri Aurobindo considered the formation of an International University Centre here as one of the best means of propagating his Ideal of a new supramental race.

This was followed by the singing of *Bande Mataram* and other songs by Sri Dilip Kumar Roy and party.

Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee then delivered his presidential address. He emphasised the need, at the present juncture, of such a university centre which would be not only the fittest Memorial to Sri Aurobindo but would, under the guidance and inspiration of the Mother, develop into a rejuvenating Force for the entire human civilisation.

Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta, following, made an appeal to all to contribute to the establishment and success of the projected Centre, each in the way he best could.

Messages received from all over India and abroad, wishing success to the Function and godspeed to the Proposal were read out.

Mr Soli Albless then spoke on the character and significance of the proposed International University and presented an outline of the Blueprints for the immediate beginnings.

Professor Somnath Maitra and Tan Yun Shan, Mr Pollack and Sri Keshavdev Poddar made brief speeches welcoming the formation of the University Centre on the lines envisaged by Sri Aurobindo.

After a closing song by Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, the President adjourned the session for the day, at 6 P.M., to meet again the next day at 9 A.M.

25th April, 1951

When the Convention reassembled at 9 A.M., the President Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee moved Resolutions, three in number (see pp. 357-58), for the consideration of those assembled.

Dr. Bernard Phillips, Justice Bhagavati, Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghose, Dr Kalidas Nag, Justice B. N. Rai, Sri Chapalakanta Bhattacharya, Sri Surendra Mohan Ghose and Dr. R. Vaidyanathaswamy spoke supporting the Resolutions and pledging their support to the proposals contained therein.

The President then put the Resolutions to the vote and they were, all three of them, passed unanimously, all raising their hands for *aye* and none for *no*. Dr. Mukherjee proceeded to make a few concluding remarks in the course of which he paid feeling tributes to the personality of the presiding genius of the Mother around whom, he confidently predicted, an eventual blossoming of a Centre which would be a credit not only to India but to the whole of civilised mankind and conveyed to her the gratitude of all those present and all those who could not be present but desired to associate themselves with the Great Cause in hand for what she has done and was going to do in this regard.

Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta, Secretary of the Ashram, spoke a few words thanking all for the warm interest and goodwill they had shown in assembling here for the deliberations of the Convention and specially thanked the President Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee for all that he did in guiding the proceedings to a successful close.

After a formal announcement by the President that the proceedings of the Convention were now terminated, the delegates and visitors dispersed with the prophetic utterance of a distinguished speaker, made earlier in the day, still ringing in their ears:

One day it will be said that a Daughter of the West fulfilled the Promise given by a Son of the East.

25.4.1951
Pondicherry

Sd S P. MOOKERJEE
President

Resolutions

I

This Convention resolves that with the purpose of realising one of the most cherished ideals of Sri Aurobindo and of giving concrete shape to what he regarded as one of the best means of preparing humanity to receive the Supramental Light, an International University on the lines approved by the Mother and under her guidance and control, be established in Pondicherry as a fitting memorial to the Master.

This Convention notes with satisfaction that encouraging response has already been received from various quarters within and outside the country. This Convention appeals with confidence to all people in and outside India to contribute liberally to the fund which has already been started by the Mother for the purpose and to send their contributions directly to the Mother at Pondicherry.

This Convention resolves that a suitable appeal for support be issued to be signed by representative men and women in India and abroad and the President be authorised to take the necessary steps on this behalf.

II

This Convention welcomes the move to establish as Memorials to Sri Aurobindo, Centres at Calcutta and Baroda—places long associated with significant and sacred chapters of Sri Aurobindo's life and activities—for the study and propagation of his teachings. This Convention expresses the hope that similar institutions will be opened at different centres of Culture in India and abroad.

The initiative for such Memorials should come from the localities in which these are intended to be established. It is desirable that such institutions should work in close association with the central organisation at Pondicherry specially to maintain co-ordination and a uniform standard in work.

III

This Convention requests the Mother to nominate a committee whose purpose would be to be in touch with the Mother and assist in the collection of Funds and materials.

Extracts from Messages

SEÑOR SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA, Professor of Spanish Studies at Oxford

I send you my best wishes The analytical age is coming to its close It fulfilled its purpose. But now something else is needed. The age of synthesis is about to begin And how could it begin if no high centre of perspective were provided for all the parts to fall into harmony?

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ASIAN STUDIES, San Francisco

Glorious success assured to your venture towards integral transformation The cooperation of all spiritual forces throughout the world certain

DR FREDERIC SPIEGELBERG, Director of Indian and Tibetan Studies, The American Academy of Asian Studies:

Glory to the International University Centre, which is certain to become the best school in the world The Master will live in it, just as he has been the life-giving flame of our new school here

M BRODETHKY, President Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Our wishes (for) successful establishment of the International University which we hope will contribute to the increase of knowledge and better understanding among nations.

M BERGMAN, Hebrew University.

May this be milestone on way fulfilment Ideal unity Mankind

DR R K YAJNIK, Director of Education, Saurashtra

This movement will gather momentum as it deals with the progress of human civilisation and perfection of man as man from within and without Sri Aurobindo's spoken and written words and the fountain-source of his magnetic personality will be an important bearing on the evolution of this International University On my side I can assure you of my whole-hearted support in this great mission

S G AMIN, Kenya.

We find great reverence in wide unexpected circles and enthusiasm for international university

DR P S NAIDU, University of Allahabad

I wish it were possible for me to go to the sacred Ashram and participate in the noble Function

I am deeply moved by the sentiments which have promoted the calling of the Convention. You are aiming at bringing together men and women whose thought and action are 'based on a knowledge higher than the intellect, and on capacities deriving their support from oneness with the Divine.' We do need, and need most urgently, a dynamic Centre for spreading the consciousness of our oneness with the Divine. The 'Sickle and Hammer' cult is furiously spreading the doctrine of our oneness with the animal. And it is succeeding as it is easy to rouse the animal in man. This doctrine has to be fought on all fronts. And the hollowness and tendentious pomposity of dialectical materialism has to be ruthlessly exposed. The University you are contemplating will, since it will be inspired by Sri Aurobindo's ideals, give the death-blow to Communism and all that it stands for.

DR K C VARADACHARI, Head of the Dept of Philosophy, Sri Venkateshwara College, Tirupati

I deem it a great honour and call to service to participate in the important Convention at Pondicherry the results of which may be considered to be most important and epoch-making in the history of not only India but the world. The founding of an International University on the lines envisaged by Sri Aurobindo who is more and more clearly being recognised as the most magnificent thinker of the present Age and the Prophet of the future may rightly be the turning point of human history.

(Concluded)

THE COMPOSITION OF SAVITRI

(Continued from the issue of April 2001)

The Vision and the Boon

A PASSAGE that illustrates the relationship of *Savitri* to Sri Aurobindo's *Record of Yoga* was shown in a facsimile in the previous issue. It is worth studying this and other examples of the connection between these two texts in the light of Sri Aurobindo's reference to *Savitri* as "the record of a seeing, of an experience which is not of the common kind"¹ It is largely because *Savitri* is the record of such a vision and experience, not merely a work of the human imagination, that it stands apart among the great poems of the world's literature.

The diary called the *Record of Yoga* is a day-to-day account of Sri Aurobindo's progress in the Yoga of self-perfection. It covers mainly the years from 1912 to 1920 and, after a long gap, 1927. In his quest for scientific precision, Sri Aurobindo developed and employed in the *Record* a technical vocabulary full of Sanskrit terms. Virtually all the entries are dated. Even seemingly trivial details of physical life are often noted. Sri Aurobindo considered nothing to be outside the all-embracing scope of his Yoga.

In style and structure, *Savitri* differs entirely from the chronological notations in the *Record of Yoga*. What the two have in common is what Sri Aurobindo, writing of his aim and method in *Savitri*, termed "spiritual objectivity"² It is easy to recognise this objectivity in the *Record*, for here the rigorous detachment and meticulous patience of the scientist are constantly evident, rather than the exaltation of the mystic poet. In *Savitri* the same objectivity takes the form of "an intense psychophysical concreteness"³ in the presentation of inner experiences. Once this is understood, we can see that *Savitri* is packed with the discoveries and observations of the scientist of the Unseen, no less than with the revelations of the poet and seer of the Infinite.

But in the early phase of his writing of *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo had not fully arrived at this conception of the poem. It was mostly after the period of the *Record of Yoga* that he made extensive use of *Savitri* to record the results of his Sadhana. The fact that there are relatively few close correspondences between the two texts is partly due to this.

It may be something more than a coincidence that the *Record of Yoga* stopped around the time when *Savitri* was becoming another kind of record of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. Important differences between the diary and the epic must be admitted. Yet if *Savitri* was coming to fulfil a purpose similar in certain ways to that for which the diary was kept, the cessation of the *Record* may have been a natural consequence. * Without speculating further on this question, let us turn to the passage that has prompted this discussion.

* This explanation of the discontinuation of the *Record of Yoga* was suggested to me by Jugal Kishore Mukherjee.

In a diary entry in 1927, under the date “Thursday Jan 27th”, Sri Aurobindo recorded that he was experiencing a “vertiginous rapidity of progress”. But as he ascended through the planes of overmind,* formidable realities at the other pole of existence were also disclosed to his view, though their opposition could not halt his advance. At this point, he seems to have reached the stage he would later describe in “The Kingdoms of the Greater Knowledge”:

Ablaze the triple heavens revealed their suns,
The obscure Abyss exposed its monstrous rule ⁴

Ordinarily our mental ignorance not only shields us from the blinding light of super-conscious planes above us, but protects us from a direct encounter with all that lies below the threshold of our awareness. To Sri Aurobindo’s universalised consciousness, the factors that impede our evolution and transformation were evidently assuming a more and more tangible form as he came into contact with higher and higher degrees of the force that can overcome these obstacles. He wrote:

The four Powers that resisted now appear more clearly,—the Dragon of the nether foundations who preserves the old Law intact till the will of the Supreme is manifested, the Sphinx of the eternal questioning, the Night of the eternal negation, the Rock (stone Purusha, inert Shiva) of the eternal inertia ⁵

In the corresponding sentence in *Savitri*, the last of these four Powers comes first and the symbol of the Rock is not made explicit. Otherwise there is a striking resemblance. In the manuscript where the sentence first appears, in the late 1920s, the sentence was originally written.

An inert Soul and a somnambulist Force
Have made a world estranged from life and thought;
The Dragon of the dark foundation keeps
Immutable the law of Chance and Death;
The grey Sphinx waits with the soul-slaying word,
Her dreadful paws upon Life’s swallowing sands,
And on his path sits the unconquered Night.

Though the manuscript cannot be dated precisely, it is likely that the passage was introduced into *Savitri* somewhat after the related entry in the *Record*—perhaps as much as a year or two later

* Until October 1927, the term “overmind” had not been found, its first occurrence in the *Record of Yoga* is on 29 October 1927. Earlier in that year, Sri Aurobindo was using the word “supermind” in the *Record* for what he would later call overmind. The true supermind had already been glimpsed, but was referred to during this period as “divine Gnosis”. See my article “Planes of Overmind in the Record of 1927”, *Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research*, December 1994, pp 224-30

The importance of this passage lies in the fact that it is a counterpart of the lines on overmind and supermind that start to appear in the manuscripts of *Savitri* around the same time. Sri Aurobindo was beginning to make the poem reflect the development of his experience since 1926. As a result, the epic would gradually acquire a significance going far beyond what he had written up to 1920. There was an immense broadening of its scope, a heightening of its treatment of spiritual vision and experience, and a more penetrating gaze upon the mystery of life in this world

The summary of the four opposing Powers that Sri Aurobindo jotted down in his diary in January 1927 and later worked into the Divine Mother's account of the human enigma is central to his formulation of the problem which *Savitri* takes birth to solve. Aswapati's Yoga, like Sri Aurobindo's own, was not a climb to spiritual heights for their own sake. It was a quest for the key to the transformation of life on earth. The discovery of the key presupposes a knowledge of the lock in which the key must turn.

These four fundamental aspects of the problem of material existence as seen by an overmental consciousness recur, singly or together, throughout *Savitri* in passages written or revised from the late 1920s onwards. We will look at some of the most significant of these passages in the next instalment, before glancing at a few more examples of correspondences between *Savitri* and the *Record of Yoga*.

(To be continued)

RICHARD HARTZ

References

- 1 *Savitri* (1993), p. 800
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 754
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 300
- 5 *Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research*, December 1994, pp. 149-50

THE ASCENT OF SIGHT IN SRI AUROBINDO'S SAVITRI

(Continued from the issue of April 2001)

Section II. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Savitri

(1) The Mother to Mona Sarkar.

“ALL the secrets that man possessed, He [Sri Aurobindo] has revealed,—as well as all that awaits him in the future, all this is found in the depths of *Savitri*. But one must have the knowledge to discover it all, the experience of the planes of consciousness, the experience of the Supermind,... He has noted all the stages, marked each step in order to advance integrally in the integral yoga. All this is his own experience, and what is most surprising is that it is my experience also.... Each object, each event, each realisation, all the description, even the colours are exactly what I *saw* and the words, phrases are also exactly what I *heard*.... Yes, all the descriptions, the colours, the pictures I had seen, the words I had heard, all, all,... put by him in poetry, into miraculous poetry. I repeat, it was not that I had told him my experiences and that he had noted them down afterwards, no, he knew already what I had *seen*. It is my experiences he has presented at length and they were his experiences also. It is the picture of our joint adventure into the unknown or rather into the Supermind.” (*Sweet Mother*, pp. 26, 27 and 28)

(2) Sri Aurobindo to Amal Kiran (K D. Sethna).

“I have not anywhere in *Savitri* written anything for the sake of mere picturesqueness or merely to produce a rhetorical effect, what I am trying to do everywhere in the poem is to express exactly something seen, something felt or experienced; if, for instance, I indulge in the wealth-burdened line or passage, it is not merely for the pleasure of the indulgence, but because there is that burden. . in the vision or the experience.” (*Savitri*, Cent. Ed., p. 794)

(3) Sri Aurobindo in the context of his poem *Thought the Paraclete*

“But they are not padding; . . only some large lines are given, but the description is true, the epithets hit the reality and even the colours mentioned in the poem, ‘gold-red feet’ and ‘crimson-white mooned oceans’, are faithful to experience.” (*Ibid.*, p, 797)

[Writer’s note: These observations of Sri Aurobindo apply with equal aptitude to all that is there in *Savitri*.]

(4) Sri Aurobindo apropos of the following passage from Savitri

All grew a consecration and a rite
Air was a vibrant link between earth and heaven,

The wide-winged hymn of a great priestly wind
 Arose and failed upon the altar hills;
 The high boughs prayed in a revealing sky

(*Savitri*, p 4)

“The picture is that of a conscious adoration offered by Nature and in that each element is conscious in its own way, the wind and its hymn, the hills, the trees. The wind is the great priest of this sacrifice of worship, his voice rises in a conscious hymn of aspiration, the hills offer themselves with the feeling of being an altar of the worship, the trees lift their high boughs towards heaven as the worshippers, silent figures of prayer, and the light of the sky into which their boughs rise reveals the Beyond towards which all aspires. At any rate this ‘picture’ or rather this part of the vision is a complete rendering of what I saw in the light of the inspiration and the experience that came to me . This last line [‘The high boughs prayed in a revealing sky’] is an expression of an experience which I often had whether in the mountains or on the plains of Gujarat or looking from my window in Pondicherry not only in the dawn but at other times ..”
 (*Ibid* , p. 790)

Section III. Analysis of the Process of “Seeing”

It has by now been made sufficiently clear that Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem *Savitri* embodies his visional experiences (and of the Mother’s too) in all their depth and height and comprehensiveness. We may venture to call *Savitri* “A panoramic Vision of the Ascent of Sight”. Indeed, it is with a thrill that we discover, mentioned in the body of this great Poem, hundreds of different ‘sights’ with their nature precisely delineated and their respective places and values clearly indicated. To satisfy the curiosity of the readers we mention below only a few representative ones amongst the various ‘sights’ and ‘eyes’, etc., referred to by Sri Aurobindo in his epic *Savitri* (Please note that there is no logical or psychological sequential order in the following enumeration. Sri Aurobindo’s expressions have been jotted down in the order they have come to the writer’s mind) Here is the brief list

ordinary mortal sight, vision’s sight, visionary sight, abstract sight, sightless sight, an immortal’s sight, transcendent sight, cosmic sight, the Supreme’s sight, the supreme sight, ever-lasting sight, ever-wakeful sight, original sight, originating sight, closed eyes’ sight, inner sight, absolute sight, prophetic sight, predicting sight, intuitive sight, ideal sight, thinker’s sight, sight of thought, soul’s sight, sight in the heart, Spirit’s sight, spiritual sight, eternal sight, instinct’s sight, mind’s sight, sight of the sage, dreamer’s sight, eternal eye, wisdom’s eyes, immortal eyes, deathless eyes, Timeless Eye, the Eye of eternity, Inner eye, the third eye, Spirit’s eye, dull body’s eye, eyes of creative Bliss, all-seeing Eye above, unsleeping eye, God’s eye, gods’ eyes, reason’s gaze, Godhead’s gaze, Omniscient’s gaze, unborn gaze, immortal gaze, gaze of life, seeing will, seeing mind, Matter’s self-view, unageing look, etc , etc.

Before we can appreciate in full this aspect of *Savitri* with its very rich harvest of "sights" and "visions" it would be advisable if we first form a very clear notion about what "sight" really signifies and what can possibly be its multiform levels of manifestation, widely varying in nature and quality, in value and importance, depending on the variability of the *eight* essential elements involved in any complete act of "seeing". These constitutive elements are.

1. the object to be "seen",
2. the space in which the object is placed,
3. the "light" which makes the object "viewable";
4. the presence or absence of any obstruction or obstacle intervening between the object and the viewer,
5. the optical sense-organ and its accompanying accessories,
6. the physiological-nervous phenomena produced in the visual apparatus of the would-be receiver of the "vision";
- 7 the sense-action of sight, this being the crucial link between the physico-physiological phenomena involved in any act of "seeing" and their *subjective* transcription in the *consciousness* of the "viewer", and lastly
8. the particular nature and quality of the "consciousness", operating in the "viewer", which mysteriously transcribes the *objective* physico-physiological nervous phenomenon into an "objectum" of *subjective* sight and vision which is qualitatively absolutely distinct and different from what is mentioned in 6 above

This eighth element is the most crucial factor in determining what type of sight or vision the viewer would have vis-à-vis the object he is "looking at". The readers are requested to ponder deeply over the process and implication of this last point, for this will have a great bearing on the proper comprehension of the discussion that is going to follow. Be it noted for the moment that although there is always a relationship and correspondence between the objective "objectum" the viewer is seeing and the subjective "objectum", its transcription, which belongs to the private domain of his "consciousness", these two "objecta" are radically different in nature and the objective "objectum" remaining the same in appearance, the subjective "objectum" produced in the field of the consciousness of the viewer may be widely divergent in the case of different persons.

In our unreflective thinking we may glibly assume, almost as an indubitable fact beyond all challenge, that every human being, unless suffering from some defect or disease of the visual organ system, will have the same identical subjective sight or vision of a given object, say a rose, placed before him. But this assumption is entirely invalid and not true to fact at all.

Why we make bold to say so will be made clear in the sequel of this essay.

(To be continued)

OVERMAN—THE TRANSITIONAL BEING BETWEEN MAN AND SUPERMAN

(Continued from the issue of April 2001)

The Levels above the Rational Mind (2)

As we are now a bit better acquainted with Mind, the pride of our species, we may turn back to the spiritual levels for a closer look, for up to now they have been defined only in a general, abstract way. Sri Aurobindo has described these four levels—Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, and Overmind—extensively in *The Life Divine*, for the very first time in the history of human thought and spirituality.³⁸ The description covers many pages and we will have again to content ourselves with a few key passages. These are not philosophical abstractions, but condensed and highly expressive wordings of spiritual experiences.

In “the natural configuration of the stair of ascent” there are “many steps, for it is an incessant gradation and there is no gap anywhere”, writes Sri Aurobindo, “but, from the point of view of the ascent of consciousness from our mind upwards through a rising series of dynamic powers by which it can sublimate itself, the gradation can be resolved into a stairway of four main ascents, each with its high level of fulfilment. These gradations may be summarily described as a series of sublimations of the consciousness through Higher Mind, Illumined Mind and Intuition into Overmind and beyond it.. All these degrees are gnostic [i.e. supramental] in their principle and power.. In themselves these grades are grades of energy-substance of the Spirit: for it must not be supposed, because we distinguish them according to their leading character, means and potency of knowledge, that they are merely a method or way of knowing or a faculty or power of cognition; they are domains of being, grades of the substance and energy of the spiritual being, fields of existence which are each a level of the universal Consciousness-Force constituting and organising itself into a higher status. When the powers of any grade descend completely into us, it is not only our thought and knowledge that are affected,—the substance and very grain of our being and consciousness, all its states and activities are touched and penetrated and can be remoulded and wholly transmuted. Each stage of this ascent is therefore a general, if not a total, conversion of the being into a new light and power of a greater existence.”³⁹

• **Higher Mind** “Our first decisive step out of our human intelligence, our normal mentality, is an ascent into a higher Mind, a mind no longer of mingled light and obscurity or half-light, but a large clarity of the Spirit. Its basic substance is a unitarian sense of being with a powerful multiple dynamisation capable of the formation of a multitude of aspects of knowledge, ways of action, forms and significances of becoming, of all of which there is a spontaneous inherent knowledge. It is therefore a power that has proceeded from the Overmind,—but with the Supermind as its

ulterior origin,—as all these greater powers have proceeded: but its special character, its activity of consciousness are dominated by Thought, it is a luminous thought-mind, a mind of Spirit-born conceptual knowledge. An all-awareness emerging from the original identity, carrying the truths the identity held in itself, conceiving swiftly, victoriously, multitudinously, formulating and by self-power of the Idea effectually realising its conceptions, is the character of this greater mind of knowledge. This kind of cognition is the last that emerges [in the descending order] from the original spiritual identity before the initiation of a separative knowledge, base of the Ignorance; it is therefore the first [in the ascending order] that meets us when we rise from conceptive and ratiocinative mind, our best-organised knowledge-power of the Ignorance, into the realms of the Spirit, it is, indeed, the spiritual parent of our conceptive mental ideation...’’⁴⁰

• **Illumined Mind** Illumined Mind is ‘‘a Mind no longer of higher Thought, but of spiritual light. Here the clarity of the spiritual intelligence, its tranquil daylight, gives place or subordinates itself to an intense lustre, a splendour and illumination of the Spirit a play of lightnings of spiritual truth and power breaks from above into the consciousness and adds to the calm and wide enlightenment and the vast descent of peace which characterise or accompany the action of the larger conceptual-spiritual principle, a fiery ardour of realisation and a rapturous ecstasy of knowledge. A downpour of inwardly visible Light very usually envelops this action; for it must be noted that, contrary to our ordinary conceptions, light is not primarily a material creation and the sense of vision of light accompanying the inner illumination is not merely a subjective visual image or a symbolic phenomenon. light is primarily a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality illuminative and creative; material light is a subsequent representation or conversion of it into Matter for the purposes of the material Energy. There is also in this descent [of the Illumined Mind] the arrival of a greater dynamic, a golden drive, a luminous ‘enthousiasmos’ of inner force and power which replaces the comparatively slow and deliberate process of the Higher Mind by a swift, sometimes a vehement, almost a violent impetus of rapid transformation.

‘‘The Illumined Mind does not work primarily by thought, but by vision, thought is here only a subordinate movement expressive of sight. .’’⁴¹

• **Intuition** ‘‘Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the

spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception. It is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its overwhelming and automatic certitude...

‘Intuition is always an edge or ray or outleap of a superior light, it is in us a projecting blade, edge or point of a far-off supermind light entering into and modified by some intermediate truth-mind substance above us and, so modified, again entering into and very much blinded by our ordinary or ignorant mind-substance, but on that higher level to which it is native its light is unmingled and therefore entirely and purely veridical, and its rays are not separated but connected or massed together in a play of waves of what might almost be called in the Sanskrit poetic figure a sea or mass of ‘stable lightnings’.’⁴²

• **Overmind** ‘The next step of the ascent brings us to the Overmind, the intuitional change can only be an introduction to this higher spiritual overture. But we have seen that the Overmind, even when it is selective and not total in its action, is still a power of cosmic consciousness, a principle of global knowledge which carries in it a delegated light from the supramental Gnosis. It is, therefore, only by an opening into the cosmic consciousness that the overmind ascent and descent can be made wholly possible: a high and intense individual opening upwards is not sufficient,—to that vertical ascent towards summit Light there must be added a vast horizontal expansion of the consciousness into some totality of the Spirit. At the least, the inner being must already have replaced by its deeper and wider awareness the surface mind and its limited outlook and learned to live in a large universality, for otherwise the overmind view of things and the overmind dynamism will have no room to move in and effectuate its dynamic operations. When the Overmind descends, the predominance of the centralising ego-sense is entirely subordinated, lost in largeness of being and finally abolished; a wide cosmic perception and feeling of a boundless universal self and movement replaces it: many motions that were formerly egocentric may still continue, but they occur as currents or ripples in the cosmic wideness. Thought, for the most part, no longer seems to originate individually in the body or the person but manifests from above or comes in upon the cosmic mind-waves all inner individual sight or intelligence of things is now a revelation or illumination of what is seen or comprehended, but the source of the revelation is not in one’s separate self but in the universal knowledge, the feelings, emotions, sensations are similarly felt as waves from the same cosmic immensity breaking upon the subtle and the gross body and responded to in kind by the individual centre of the universality, for the body is only a small support or even less, a point of relation, for the action of a vast cosmic instrumentation. In this boundless largeness, not only the separate ego but all sense of individuality, even of a subordinated or instrumental individuality, may entirely disap-

pear, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic delight, the play of cosmic forces are alone left: if the delight or the centre of Force is felt in what was the personal mind, life or body, it is not with a sense of personality but as a field of manifestation, and this sense of the delight or of the action of Force is not confined to the person or the body but can be felt at all points in an unlimited consciousness of unity which pervades everywhere ”⁴³

To the above should be added by way of completion and comment the following points:

The Soul What we have not yet read about is the essence, cause and support of our incarnation the soul. It is, once more, no exaggeration to maintain that the confusion about the soul in religious and spiritual literature is dumbfounding, and not only in Christianity. Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s view on this topic, as on all others, is on the contrary clear, complete, and a reliable basis for spiritual practice:

“*The Soul*, representative of the central being, is a spark of the Divine supporting all individual existence in Nature; *the psychic being* is a conscious form of that soul growing in the evolution—in the persistent process that develops first life in Matter, mind in life, until finally mind can develop into overmind and overmind into the supramental Truth. *The soul supports the nature in its evolution through these grades, but is itself not any of these things* ”⁴⁴

“The soul or psyche is immutable only in the sense that it contains all the possibilities of the Divine within it, but it has to evolve them and in its evolution it assumes the form of a developing psychic individual [the psychic being] evolving in the manifestation the individual Prakriti [Nature] and taking part in the evolution. It is the spark of the Divine Fire that grows behind the mind, vital and physical by means of the psychic being until it is able to transform the Prakriti of Ignorance into a Prakriti of Knowledge. This evolving psychic being is not therefore at any time all that the soul or essential psychic existence bears within it; it temporalises and individualises what is eternal in potentiality, transcendent in essence, in this projection of the spirit.

“The central being [*jīvātman*] is the being which presides over the different births one after the other, but is itself unborn, for it does not descend into the being but is above it—it holds together the mental, vital and physical being and all the various parts of the personality and it controls the life either through the mental being and the mental thought and will or through the psychic [*antarātman*], whichever may happen to be most in front or most powerful in nature...

“The psychic is not above but behind—its seat is behind the heart, its power is not knowledge but an essential or spiritual feeling—it has the clearest sense of the Truth and a sort of inherent perception of it which is of the nature of soul-perception and soul-feeling. It is our inmost being and supports all the others, mental, vital, physical, but it is also much veiled by them and has to act upon them as an influence

rather than by its sovereign right of direct action; its direct action becomes normal and preponderant only at a high stage of development or by yoga''⁴⁵

Let us add the following clarifications "The Jivatma, spark-soul [Antaratma] and psychic being are three different forms of the same reality and they must not be mixed up together, as that confuses the clearness of the inner experience" Secondly. "The soul is a spark of the Divine in the heart of the living creatures of Nature. This spark of Divinity is there in all terrestrial living beings from the earth's highest to its lowest creature" But it is only in humans that it becomes individualised and enveloped or given shape, as it were, by a psychic being Thirdly "The psychic being is a spiritual personality put forward by the soul in its evolution, its growth marks the stage which the spiritual evolution of the individual has reached and its immediate possibilities for the future. It stands behind the mental, the vital, the physical nature, grows by their experiences, carries the consciousness from life to life."'⁴⁶

The realisation of the psychic being, i.e., becoming concretely aware of it and living in it, is the first important aim and *siddhi* of the Integral Yoga—the second being the realisation of the spiritual levels which are the main focus of our attention in this chapter, and the third the realisation of the Supermind and the transformation of the body

Reality of the Spirit As pointed out before, it is a common misconception that Matter is concrete and dense, while the Spirit gradually becomes less substantial, more ethereal at every higher level On the contrary, Sri Aurobindo, who knew what he was talking about, puts it like this "Consciousness, as we *descend* the scale, becomes more and more diminished and diluted,—dense indeed by its coarser crudity, but while that crudity of consistence compacts the stuff of Ignorance, it admits less and less the substance of light, it becomes thin in pure substance of consciousness and reduced in power of consciousness, thin in light, thin and weak in capacity of delight, it has to resort to a grosser thickness of its diminished stuff and to a strenuous output of its obscurer force to arrive at anything, but this strenuousness of effort and labour is a sign not of strength but of weakness. As we *ascend*, on the contrary, a finer but far stronger and more truly and spiritually concrete substance emerges, a greater luminosity and potent stuff of consciousness, a subtler, sweeter, purer and more powerfully ecstatic energy of delight''⁴⁷ Again, Sri Aurobindo is clearly relying on his personal spiritual experience The philosophic masterpiece that is *The Life Divine*, is in fact from beginning to end an account of his experiences

Interpenetrability We have clearly enumerated the four spiritual levels, just as we have neatly discerned the other tiers of the Great Chain of Being To do so is indispensable, but it may also, in part or on the whole, distort our view of the reality We should never forget that all is One, undivided, and that division is the typical way in which the Mind functions, because otherwise it can have no hold on reality, it cannot comprehend it But "the whole of being is a connected totality and there is in it no abrupt passage from the principle of Truth and Light into their opposite''⁴⁸

“In themselves these grades [i e. the four spiritual levels] are grades of energy-substance of the Spirit. for it must not be supposed, because we distinguish them according to their leading character, means and potency of knowledge, that they are merely a method or way of knowing or a faculty or power of cognition, they are domains of being, grades of the substance and energy of the spiritual being, fields of existence which are each a level of the universal Consciousness-Force constituting and organising itself into a higher status. *When the powers of any grade descend completely into us, it is not only our thought and knowledge that are affected,—the substance and very grain of our being and consciousness, all its states and activities are touched and penetrated and can be remoulded and wholly transmuted* Each stage of this ascent is therefore a general, if not a total, conversion of the being into a new light and power of a greater existence.⁴⁹

These words are of immense importance for people who do not have the experience—and how many have it?—and who are interested in this kind of adventure. For, firstly, they tell us that a realisation of one of the spiritual levels has a direct repercussion on the physical body, on the *ādhāra*. We will have to come back to this when we learn about the work the Mother did for ‘the new humanity’. For the Mind of Light, which is the consciousness of that new humanity, is part of the spiritual levels, as we shall presently see

Secondly, these words explain the complex, seemingly chaotic movements of the Integral Yoga. In the previous chapter we quoted ŚRĪ Aurobindo’s comparison of the Yoga with “an army advancing in columns which annexes new ground” and has to adapt to the situation. It is on the same occasion that he writes. “But evolutionary Nature is not a logical series of separate segments; it is a totality of ascending powers of being which interpenetrate and dovetail and exercise in their action on each other a power of mutual modification. When the higher descends into the lower consciousness, it alters the lower but is also modified and diminished by it; when the lower ascends, it is sublimated but at the same time qualifies the sublimating substance and power. This interaction creates an abundant number of different intermediate and interlocked degrees of the force and consciousness of being, but it also makes it difficult to bring about a complete integration of all the powers under the full control of any one power. For this reason *there is not actually a series of simple clear-cut and successive stages in the individual’s evolution, there is instead a complexity and a partly determinate, partly confused comprehensiveness of the movement.* The soul may still be described as a traveller and climber who presses towards his high goal by step on step, each of which he has to build up as an integer but must frequently redescend in order to rebuild and make sure of the supporting stair so that it may not crumble beneath him. but the evolution of the whole consciousness has rather the movement of an ascending ocean of Nature; it can be compared to a tide or a mounting flux, the leading fringe of which touches the higher degrees of a cliff or hill while the rest is still below. At each stage the higher parts of the nature may be provisionally but incompletely organised in the new consciousness

while the lower are in a state of flux or formation, partly moving in the old way though influenced and beginning to change, partly belonging to the new kind but still imperfectly achieved and not yet firm in the change.’’⁵⁰

(To be continued)

GEORGES VAN VREKHEM

Notes and References

38 Sri Aurobindo is reported to have told some disciples in 1938 “It was Vivekananda who, when he used to come to me during meditation in Alipore Jail, showed me the Intuitive Plane For a month or so he gave instructions about Intuition Then afterwards I began to see the still higher planes” (Nirodbaran *Talks with Sri Aurobindo I*, p 53) Sri Aurobindo was an undertrial prisoner in Alipore Jail from May 1908 till May 1909, Swami Vivekananda had died in 1902

39 Sri Aurobindo *The Life Divine*, pp 937-38

40 *Ibid* , pp 939-40

41 *Ibid* , p 944

42 *Ibid* , pp 946-47, 948

43 *Ibid* , pp 950-51

44 Sri Aurobindo *Letters on Yoga*, pp 267-68 (emphasis added) This corrects the often found error also in contemporary writings about the Great Chain of Being, of locating the soul as a degree in the grand scale, usually just above the mind

45 Sri Aurobindo *Letters on Yoga*, pp 268-69 (emphasis added)

46 *Ibid* , pp 280-81

47 Sri Aurobindo *The Life Divine*, pp 938-39 (emphasis added)

48 Sri Aurobindo *Essays in Philosophy and Yoga*, p 591

49 Sri Aurobindo *The Life Divine*, p 938 (emphasis added)

50 *Ibid* , pp 955-56

CAN THERE BE AN INDIAN SCIENCE?

(Continued from the issue of April 2001)

Science Becomes Big

IN 1938 Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann discovered the fissioning of the uranium nucleus when bombarded with neutrons. However, they hesitated to announce the results as they had no clue to the nature and cause of this process. Instead, Otto Hahn sent a copy of his findings to Lise Meitner, his former collaborator who had fled to Stockholm in order to escape harassment in Nazi Germany. She along with Otto Frisch hypothesised that the uranium nucleus becomes unstable under neutron bombardment and splits roughly into two equal parts. The in-coming neutron is absorbed and the new nucleus thus formed remains in an excited state. If this should exceed a certain critical energy, nuclear fission would then occur. The findings were published in a paper in January 1939.

But even before the results were out in print Niels Bohr came to know about the findings. At that time he was preparing for his trip to the U.S. to attend a conference of physicists. Bohr rescheduled his travel plans with a brief halt at Cambridge to consult Rutherford. Sensing the importance of the fission reaction, he shared the news with his American counterparts. At a meeting of the American Physical Society in Washington, held on 26 January 1939, he announced the conclusions of the uranium fission reported to him by Meitner and Frisch. Bohr's disclosure was taken seriously and experiments were planned to confirm the results. "Almost as soon as he had finished his remarks," say Holton and Roller, "confirmatory experiments were started. It occurred to many that when a few uranium nuclei were made to undergo fission they could release neutrons which could in turn trigger the reaction in many more uranium atoms. Once started, a 'chain reaction' could spread through a sample of uranium, setting free a large amount of energy in each nuclear fission. Here was the promise of a practical source of energy—and thus was born the nuclear age, with an unprecedented explosion of research interest." But the context of World War II had the imperative of converting this "promise" into a possible weapon to deal in a decisive way with the enemy.

Even as early as 1939 it was clear that only a tiny fraction of natural uranium was responsible for the observed fission. It was also recognised that each fission event is accompanied by a release of more than one neutron. Enrichment of the more fissile isotope of uranium and building up a system by which a sustained chain reaction could be established were the immediate technological objectives. All this had to be done in the War-context. There was the fear that Germany might forge ahead and produce weapons based on this discovery. German scientists had played such an outstanding role in the development of modern physics that the fear was quite understandable; in fact Werner Heisenberg himself was the head of such a programme

in the Nazi team set up to carry out the research. During one of his discussions with Bohr in Copenhagen, Heisenberg made the drawing of a heavy-water reactor on which he was working. Bohr got a distinct impression that the German was engaged in the development of nuclear weapons.

This also meant that War-pragmatism had to be kept in mind and it is this which led to a larger organised effort. The seeds of the Manhattan Project were thus sown in these great moments. Eventually the transuranic element plutonium was discovered when a self-sustaining nuclear reaction was maintained in a reactor. This element proved to be easily fissionable and therefore quickly became a candidate for producing a weapon. In fact, in a certain sense, a reactor of this kind at once becomes a nuclear weapon.

The actual intention of constructing a bomb was of course kept a top secret, restricted to the small boundaries of the laboratory at Los Alamos. It was here that one night Gen. Leslie Groves, the Military Commander of the Project, mentioned at dinnertime: "The real purpose in making the bomb was to subdue the Soviets." But there were also scientists in the group who began to speak out against the bomb. However, the general response was: "We started an experiment, we must see it through."

But the real danger was already seen in a different way. After the Alamogordo test Szilard voiced it thus: "During 1943 and part of 1944 our great worry was the possibility that Germany would perfect an atom bomb before the invasion of Europe. In 1945 we ceased worrying about what the Germans might do to us, we began to worry about what the Government of the United States might do to other countries." But then despite these internal protests the Manhattan Project, seen retrospectively, proved to be militarily successful in view of Japan's immediate surrender after the use of these weapons. But was this victory in War the only contribution of the Project? The question needs a deeper study of the issues involved and their socio-scientific implications.

The project was aimed at understanding the process of nuclear fission and, ultimately, exploiting the awesome power that is stored within the uranium nucleus for producing bombs more destructive than chemical weapons. As a first step towards this, establishing a controlled nuclear chain reaction became the immediate target. The production of sufficient fissile materials, uranium and plutonium, had to be considered next. The nuclear energy as a weapon was set as the final goal of the Manhattan Project.

These three basic stages that made up the Project required not only the contribution of physicists; they also called for the expertise of civil engineers, technical engineers, explosive experts, chemical engineers, metallurgists,—just to name a few classes of professionals who would be involved. And, most importantly, we should not forget that the Project aimed at constructing something that had no precedent—an atom bomb. Thus it needed a set of new laboratories and equipment to conduct scientific as well as technical research. To be able to convert this scientific knowledge

into an efficient military weapon was the set task. The handling and testing to assess the performance of the bomb asked for knowledge and skill of another group of men. Besides the research and development aspect of the Project, affiliated administrative and military bodies to provide financial and logistical support had to be set up. The grouping of these various experts, allotment of their respective responsibilities, and ensuring a smooth progress of the various departmental activities of the Project was indeed a task on a gigantic scale. It should also be remembered that all this had to be done in the context of a war situation—this implied that secrecy and speed were of the highest priority (“The Emergence of Big Science”, Anirban Deb, *Mother India*, 1997).

Along with the expertise of the professionals we should also acknowledge the managerial capabilities of the Project-in-charge. The military aspect too had to be fully borne in mind, particularly when during the War there was heavy spying and counter-spying. The basic principle that governed the organisation was, while ensuring scientific freedom, compartmentalisation including geographical separation of different functional units. During the advanced stages of development there was a need for the exchange of data and expertise of the various groups. Therefore a proper balance had to be struck between military secrecy and the give-and-take process.

The concept of day-to-day scientific exchange was new, in the sense that traditional European science always remained confined to small laboratories and the researchers hardly talked to their colleagues,—for fear that they might lose the race in getting recognition for their work. Only in conferences and scientific journals did they present their findings.

But in the larger context the speed of the Project brought out several innovative features with bureaucracy responding pliantly to the exigencies. Board meetings and hierarchical decisions were eliminated, instead the Department of Defence delegated powers directly to the in-charge on the spot. While he was expected to deliver the goods, he was also given full operational freedom. Thus the War Department gave unusual plenary powers to Gen. Leslie Groves and, through a directive, ordered him not to lose even a single day. When differences arose about the appointment of the nuclear physicist Oppenheimer as the chief of scientific activities, he wrote to the War Department the following: “It is desired that clearance be issued for the employment of Julius Robert Oppenheimer without delay, irrespective of the information which you have concerning Oppenheimer. He is absolutely essential to the Project.” This insistence got amply justified by the subsequent developments. And what an irony of fate that Oppenheimer is now identified with the bomb while Gen. Groves has been refused his due recognition in spite of the key role he played in the entire organisation! Men of stern determination who really deliver the goods seem to get relegated to history in the face of competent professionals.

Freedom coupled with insistence on results may be considered the motivating force behind the nuclear war effort. The luxury of trial and error or sounding of the unknown in the leisurely spirit of exploration normally associated with the academic-

laboratory type of research was not available here. Here was a goal clearly set in front of everybody concerned. Targets were set and demands made with the assurance that whatever was needed would be provided. Bureaucracy had no place in the operational speed that was required for reaching the goals. Not that there were no unproductive investments in terms of immediate gains; in the long run these also contributed in terms of other benefits. At times several fronts were simultaneously opened to tackle a given problem, thus making options available in terms of time, money and results. This also provided a competitive environment which also guaranteed maximum commitment of every contender.

Industrial participation in such a research programme was a bold innovative feature that in turn resulted in far-reaching changes in the scientific and technological developments. It enabled to exploit the already existing expertise in various fields of applied research and manufacturing. It was not only a question of expediency and matter-of-fact approach; it connoted the positive attitude of leaders of an organisation who introduce measures to metamorphose it into another system. The effort of the Manhattan Project could bear ripe and rich fruit only because of the industrial participation. To carry out production on a larger scale meant another wide dimension of operation. Thus the threefold involvement,—military efficiency and speed, academic and research capabilities motivated for a definite purpose, and the skill and managerial entrepreneurship of industry,—brought out another culture that has transformed society into another realm of values. If we have to attribute the success of the atomic contribution to human development perhaps it is this one which stands as the most significant. The comprehensive and sweeping ramifications could not have been visualised by the participants at that time.

We thus come to acknowledge the fact that science is crippled without the base of industrial expertise. Industries, in turn, fear to lose their competitive edge in the absence of joint scientific ventures. Add to that the criteria of efficiency and speed imposed by the factors of a war, and we have something that endures in the passage of time. The British invention of radar is now witnessed in every household activity. The American Little Boy and Fat Man were the creatures of a new spirit that had already appeared on the far edge of time. We now live in a collective *Zeitgeist*.

Is there a humanitarian angle to the discovery and use of the atomic bomb in World War II? Quick champions of altruism will perhaps continue to enumerate the disastrous consequences of the man-made weapon of mass destruction. But in which major war was destruction on a lesser scale? Even in this war the death toll on other battlefields was staggering. The forces that operate behind a war are the ones which one has to understand and take note of in any assessment. None knew about the war that was waged behind the war. Demonic agents had descended on earth and their single concern was to put the clock of progressive time backward. One shudders to think of the demise of values in the holocaust of the good and the ugly. "Paris shall be destroyed,"—that was the cry of the naked devil and it would have been a great tragedy for human civilisation had this been allowed to happen. Fortunately there

were instruments who did lend themselves, perhaps without their knowing it, to the spirit of the new era. But in India the response was rather deplorable, if not calamitous. The leadership did not understand the implications of the war and remained stupidly blank to the issues involved

Nor does the international leadership understand the strategies of a peacetime world. If we remember Harry Truman's words in this context, things appear ominous "We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. It may be the fire of destruction prophesied in the Euphrates Valley Era, after Noah and his fabulous Ark." Are we now capable of handling this menacing fire which is the creation of our own spirit of innovation, of nullifying the gift of malison that has come up from the gift of benignant time? Take the example of the helplessness of our best institution: the UNO. The principle reason for its poor functioning is, we all know too well, political. And the irony is that the principal producers and suppliers of weapons of mass destruction are the Permanent Members of the Security Council! Are the altruists aware of it? It seems that they are not. Pragmatics of self-existence have to be respected, but this need not come in conflict with a responsible attitude and approach towards genuine internationalism. In its deepest considerations it is not necessary that the member nations should renounce their sovereignty. Instead we have to adopt the real principle of federalism, which yet assures the individual character of each state-unit. Yet it seems that fair and equitable international governance is waiting for us to get ready. Perhaps we are preparing ourselves for another human cycle that will resolve the issues in a more complete manner than all our befogged solutions. Perhaps that is the authentic and enduring outcome of the Second World War.

Now we come back to the Manhattan Project. Seen from a practical or secular point of view, its essential contribution consists of introducing a major change in the very psychology of doing science. Science has now become Big. That is also the contribution of America to it, which we may justifiably describe as the American Science. In contrast to work-places of the erstwhile pioneers like Faraday, Rutherford, Roentgen or Raman we have now huge establishments. After the War a number of laboratories to promote the uses of atomic energy were commissioned in the U.S.A. and Europe. Berkeley, Argonne, Stanford, Caltech, Harwell, Saclay, CERN, Dubna, BARC are the direct outcome of the new approach towards science. In India the Atomic Energy and Space programmes engage large teams for carrying out research in diverse fields like physics, chemistry, metallurgy, electronics, engineering sciences and technologies. In all these places literally thousands of professionals from diverse fields come together and devote themselves to their respective fields of specialisation. The symbiotic nature of these responses has brought out another culture which rapidly builds the-state-of-the-art upon the-state-of-the-art. Now science requires a Hubble telescope in its quest for the origin of the universe and a 2-mile-long Linear Accelerator to study the tiny quark, the minutest grain of matter. The manufacturing, operation, handling and also the maintenance of these high-tech instruments neces-

sitate the involvement of an impressive array of experts, i.e., scientists, engineers, technicians and industrial professionals

Nor are these activities utopian. Society deliberately involves itself in these endeavours and supports them as something prestigious for it. The remarkable fusion of scientists and technologists has, in turn, necessitated modifications in the concept of management. Activities carried out by such specialist groups are not directly business-oriented; these involve a certain academic temper of pure research which is quite different in nature from the mere pursuit of production and profit as is prevalent in commercial set-ups. This has given birth to new modes of administration,—the management of big science. The conventional bureaucratic techniques fail totally when it comes to dealing with exceptional people who are by themselves highly individualistic. Freedom and motivation have to go hand in hand in such an enterprise. Historically this whole approach has its direct origin in the Manhattan Project and its principles of working that have turned out to be so radically different from an office or academic culture of the earlier times. In other words, a changeover from the individual to teamwork was inevitable for science to grow, to continue its unending search for the truth of the physical world. The foundations were laid, paradoxically, in the destructive vigour of the atom bomb

(To be continued)

R Y DESHPANDE

AFFINITY AFAR

I AM You
 As You are me,
 True

Inscrutable are Your ways.
 Like clouds into the rain
 Melting and dropping
 Regardless of time and clime
 That I can't feign

Make me penetrate
 Into all my being,
 O all-ruling Empress!
 That Something of You
 I might come to know.

G K SATPATHY

REFLECTIONS ON SAVITRI

EACH time I read *Savitri* it is new Lines or passages read a dozen times or a hundred times reveal themselves on a deeper level or offer an opening or an experience not glimpsed before.

Savitri is for me, the poem of the ages, the work of works that allows us a vision of the future of humanity surpassing that of all other poets and visionaries I have found in the reverberation of its mantric sounds, a door opening on worlds of higher experience leading to a golden dawn of the soul's evolution.

I do not find it necessary to attempt to "understand" mentally its epic vision in all its vastness, for its visionary truths are beyond the reach of even the most refined and perceptive mental insight

Reading *Savitri* aloud I try to consciously think of Sri Aurobindo, of the 'way' He has opened to all and what He represents in the world's evolution. I ask to be open, to focus my inner being on Him and to remember Him before, during and after I have read.

I no longer read long passages at one time for I have found that as His words penetrate directly within, only a certain amount can be absorbed as their powerful vibrations fill the psychic being with light, illumine the mind and thrill the aesthetic sense with their power, beauty, inevitability and splendour.

I believe that *Savitri* is the 'Accelerator' of the inner life and that it contains not only the record of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's realisations but, if approached in a spirit of reverence and humility, it offers the very vehicle of the soul's ascension through its transforming word-power.

Savitri speaks to our mind with its brilliance of poetic construction, to our heart with the intense beauty and divine love informing its lines, and to our inmost soul with its truth-light. Not only is it supreme poetry with an epic vastness unsurpassed by poets in the long history of earth, but its truth-vibrations resound within us long after we have finished reading its lines World upon world is etched in unforgettable detail as are all the gradations of the worlds above mind leading to the crown of the Supermind, all seen and experienced by Sri Aurobindo and written down directly from that experience without the medium of mind, by the Avatar and Seer-Poet of our age.

The inner being aspires that one day it might be a pure vehicle, free of intrusion of emotion and interpretation, allowing the mantric sounds of *Savitri* to sing through this soul given the name Narad, by the Mother For the moment, it asks to be conscious of the gift of Their lives and the new principle They have established in the evolving earth consciousness: before and during the reading, and always, to be grateful.

Although we read on occasion articles of high praise for the poem, still it is not widely known. One day, however, the world will be ready for *Savitri* and will take it into its heart as the song of the Divine showing us the path through higher and higher

realisations culminating in the soul's ultimate consummation—the manifestation of the Life Divine on earth

When we recite *Savitri* it is the Lord who speaks through us, when we listen it is He who hears the sound of His own creation reverberate in the hearts and voices of His children. As we grow in sincerity and openness, we become a clearer channel for the mantric chant of His radiant poetry; as we listen with a deeper inner hearing, *Savitri's* lines echo in heart and heart, soul and soul, with the music of the overmental spheres, the song of the Life Divine on earth

NARAD (RICHARD EGGENBERGER)

PRAYER FOR A CHILD IN ITS MOTHER'S WOMB

GIVE me skeins of living thread
with colours of gem hearts—
so that I can make them lovely for him,
his jacket of skin and his body of bone

Spin me long red and yellow fire, Agni,
that his heart should be strong
and his sinews.
And Vayu, Great Blower,
blow me some spaces that his lungs may breathe truth
Kubera, unreel your golden silk into my lap,
for in my belly I hold Hiranyagarbha
who will unfold the world
and grow into light,
and, Aditi, give him the might and the mild
to open the golden lid.

Give us riches untold, Kubera,
to build a sabha of light,
and mantric words, oh Rishis,
that his journey, oh Pushan,
may be made safely out of the night
into Their everlasting day.

MAGGI

QUEST FOR GOD

OVER hill and dale and mountain range,
In temple, church, and mosque,
In Vedas, Bible, Al Koran
I had searched for Thee in vain

Like a child in the wildest forest lost
I have cried and cried alone,
“Where art Thou gone, my God, my love?”
The echo answered, “gone ”

And days and nights and years then passed
A fire was in the brain,
I knew not when day changed to night
The heart seemed rent in twain
I laid me down on Ganges’s shore,
Exposed to sun and rain,
With burning tears I laid in the dust
And wailed with waters’ roar

I called on all the holy names
Of every clime and creed.
“Show me the way, in mercy, ye
Great ones who have reached the goal.”

Years then passed in bitter cry,
Each moment seemed an age,
Till one day midst my cries and groans
Someone seemed calling me.

A gentle soft and soothing voice
That said “my son, my son,”
That seemed to thrill in unison
With all the chords of my soul.

I stood on my feet and tried to find
The place the voice came from;
I searched and searched and turned to see
Round me, before, behind,

Again, again it seemed to speak
The voice divine to me

In rapture all my soul was hushed,
Entranced, enthralled in bliss.

A flash illumined all my soul;
The heart of my heart opened wide.
O joy, O bliss, what do I find!
My love, my love you are here

And you are here, my love, my all!
And I was searching thee—
From all eternity you were there
Enthroned in majesty!
From that day forth, wherever I roam,
I feel Him standing by
Over hill and dale, high mount and vale,
Far far away and high.

The moon's soft light, the stars so bright,
The glorious orb of day,
He shines in them; His beauty—might—
Reflected lights are they

The majestic morn, the melting eve,
The boundless billowing sea,
In nature's beauty, songs of birds,
I see through them—it is He.

When dire calamity seizes me,
The heart seems weak and faint,
All nature seems to crush me down,
With laws that never bend.
Meseems I hear Thee whispering sweet
My love, "I am near, I am near."
My heart gets strong With thee, my love,
A thousand deaths no fear.
Thou speakest in the mother's lay
Thou shutst the baby's eye,
When innocent children laugh and play,
I see Thee standing by

When holy friendship shakes the hand,
He stands between them too;

He pours the nectar in mother's kiss
 And the baby's sweet "Mama."
 Thou wert my God with prophets old,
 All creeds do come from Thee,
 The Vedas, Bible, and Koran bold
 Sing Thee in Harmony

"Thou art, Thou art" the Soul of souls
 In the rushing stream of life.
 "Om tat sat Om." Thou art my God,
 My love, I am thine, I am thine.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

AFTER THE BATTLE

On the floor where nothing ever happened
 the cotton-kitten slouched crumbled;
 it heard nothing, saw nothing.

No one asked for cakes or candy.
 The tired drums had gone to rest
 between the disgruntled sounds
 making blood a worthless trickle
 that could hold no oxygen.

Prayers were printed on the white belly
 of the crumpled cotton-kitten
 but the runes had lost their tone
 and could tell no tale at all

When emptiness heard with no-ears
 the tune of phantom hours
 no-mouth asked for cakes and candy

RANAJIT SARKAR

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

(Nagin Doshi's correspondence with Sri Aurobindo entitled *Guidance from Sri Aurobindo* (Part I) has been translated into Gujarati by Jyoti Thanki. Her Gujarati preface to this book has been rendered into English by Kirit Thakkar and is being presented in this article as a tribute to Nagin-bhai who passed away in May 1997 —R.Y.D.)

SRI AUROBINDO aims at transforming lower human nature into Divine Nature. His vision is to raise man to his highest possibilities and to make him perfect. He endeavours to lead humanity subjected to birth, old age, and death to Immortality, and to relieve mankind for ever from the bondages of pain and suffering. He envisages Life full of Joy and Ananda for men on earth. According to him the veiled divinity in man is to be awakened and to be manifested at every moment of his life so as to make him perfect.

Sri Aurobindo is the harbinger of the Supramental Consciousness and he has given a perfect system of Yoga called Integral Yoga. What is this Integral Yoga? How are we to practise it while leading the worldly life? What are the systems to be followed? What kind of experiences does the seeker of this Yoga usually have? What are the difficulties experienced on the way? What are the dangers of Yoga sadhana? All these questions besiege the minds of sadhaks. If timely guidance is provided then not only sadhana is not hampered but it gains momentum too.

This book, the Gujarati translation of *Guidance from Sri Aurobindo* (Part I) by Nagin Doshi is most welcome as it provides direct help and guidance on difficulties of the path and addresses all the problems of a sadhaka of Integral Yoga. The translation is done with such ease and utmost care that its reading gives rise to an impression that the correspondence may have taken place in Gujarati itself.

This book consists of Sri Aurobindo's letters written to a young disciple of sixteen, in response to his questions. In 1930 the Mother was not permitting youngsters in the Ashram. It was only out of her kindness that she made an exception and admitted Nagin-bhai to the Ashram. Thus Nagin-bhai's sadhana began at the age of thirteen and it continued till he left his body. Nagin-bhai left his physical coil on 9th May 1997 at 7.20 p.m. He was in constant inner communion with Sri Aurobindo till he breathed his last.

The moment he arrived in the Ashram, Nagin-bhai's sadhana commenced on its own. As the sadhana progressed and scaled the heights as well as gained depths the difficulties of human nature surfaced, which gave rise to numberless questions in his mind. He started writing to Sri Aurobindo in 1933 about his problems, confusions, his experiences and visions. Sri Aurobindo saw this young boy's intense aspiration, openness and strong will-power and replied to all his letters. The present volume contains the correspondence that took place during the years 1933-34.

As we know, Sri Aurobindo went into seclusion in November 1926 to concen-

trate on his sadhana of Supramental descent. He was not meeting anyone except on Darshan Days. But the sadhaks were allowed to write to him about their difficulties and their mental queries as well as their experiences. Sri Aurobindo himself used to reply to all such letters. This is how the sadhaks were able to maintain their contact with him and also were able to receive his guidance. In this regard Dilip Kumar Roy has written to the effect that, though Sri Aurobindo was not meeting any one, sadhaks used to receive his inspiring letters daily which not only shaped but also enriched their lives. Dilip Roy asserts that he was groping in darkness till he received Light through Sri Aurobindo's letters written to him in response to his. He further states: to some Sri Aurobindo wrote about poetry, to others about philosophy, about literature and art, whereas to others about science. Thus he distributed freely His Light, Love, Knowledge and Ananda. Dilip Kumar Roy himself wrote about 3000 letters to Sri Aurobindo.

Through his correspondence Sri Aurobindo was able to establish direct contact with different planes of human consciousness and the difficulties faced by the sadhaks. Thus these letters formed an integral part of his sadhana of transformation of human consciousness into Divine Consciousness. During the years 1929-1938 Sri Aurobindo through his Yoga Shakti acted directly on human consciousness which approached and opened itself to him through these letters. And that is why these letters are not ordinary letters, they represent direct action of the Divine Force intended for moulding human nature into Divine Nature. In fact these letters of Sri Aurobindo contain that transforming power. Nagin-bhai once asked him, "Is it not true that the letters we receive from you are full of power?" Sri Aurobindo replied, "Yes, power is put into them."

There are stubborn things in the lower nature which the sadhaks in spite of their best efforts are not able to get rid of on their own. But once that was brought to the notice of Sri Aurobindo, through writing and when the reply to that letter was received, the sadhak was immediately relieved of that difficulty. There are a number of cases which confirm the fact that these letters contain the direct touch of Sri Aurobindo's transforming power. Now it is the magnetic force of Divine Power which attracts its reader to higher planes. As long as human nature is not completely transformed, each sadhak is faced with the downward gravitational pull of the lower nature; this lower nature is full of hopes, despairs, despondency, worries, unhappiness, weaknesses, pain, fatigue, inertia, desires, impulses, sexual attraction, etc., and it is that which prevents the action of the Divine Force. How to get rid of all these lower movements? Which is the shortest way to overcome these movements? It is a way of opening to the Divine Force, a path of complete surrender. We can find this path by going through this book.

One can see here the young boy of 16 doing that, opening himself fully, presenting everything that is experienced in the lower instruments of mind, life and body. He has disclosed everything, all his thoughts, doubts, his experiences, visions—without reserve—and kept them there in front of Sri Aurobindo. It is this openness

which helped his release from the clutches of the lower nature and made him sport in higher realms. What Yogins achieved through years of tapasya, this boy could achieve in a trice through opening to Sri Aurobindo. Let us refer to what Shri Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna) has written about Nagin-bhai's correspondence with Sri Aurobindo. "A notable experience which his correspondence with Sri Aurobindo reveals is of the Brahmic or Universal Consciousness. No doubt, a very important state realised for a shorter or longer period, but one that has been undergone by a number of sadhaks. We find it indicated, for instance, in Sahanadevi's correspondence with Sri Aurobindo—but, as far as I remember, never so explicitly featured, as in Nagin's exchange of letters." Shri Amal Kiran further adds: "Nagin's correspondence...is of great importance, for certain aspects of Integral Yoga are brought forward there more strikingly than anywhere else."

The correspondence with Sri Aurobindo published in this book is divided into four parts. Part one deals with higher and lower worlds. Here while replying to the questions raised by Nagin-bhai Sri Aurobindo has provided full knowledge and perfect understanding of centres as well as planes of Consciousness. We can find here an understanding about Kundalini Shakti and different Chakras in the body. In addition, clarification about the highest instrument, i.e., mind and its movements, thoughts, mind's enlightenment, knowledge and its realms, etc., have also been provided here. After mind there is a topic on the vital being and its parts, the true vital being, its characteristics. Then there is a discussion on the physical being and the Mother's action on the physical being, body-sense and sadhana. Thus, Sri Aurobindo's guidance provided here about the human body and human instruments (mind, life and body), about human nature, is not restricted to one individual, i.e., the questioner, but is useful for all those who aspire to grow out of their ordinary consciousness, who long to achieve victory over the lower human nature. For all aspirants these letters of Sri Aurobindo provide the same Light which the recipient of these letters has received himself. This correspondence also gives clear insight about the inner being, psychic being, psychic fire, about Ananda and Love which are part and parcel of the Divine Nature. As an example "You wrote a few days back that the signs of the psychic's coming forward are psychological. What are these signs?" In his reply to this question Sri Aurobindo has written: "A central love, bhakti, surrender, giving everything, a sight within that sees clearly what is spiritually right or wrong and automatically rejects the latter, a movement of entire consecration and dedication of all in one to the Mother." With this lucid explanation one can easily find out whether one's psychic being has come to the front or not! Thus this correspondence, though individual in nature, is really universal in its effect. It is a source of knowledge from which anyone and everyone, at any time and at every place, can draw knowledge according to one's need and in the measure of one's receptivity. These letters carry the transforming power of Sri Aurobindo and hence their value is immense; they are beyond Time and Space.

The second part of this book deals with states of consciousness and provides

guidance about essential matters for maintaining rhythm and speed in sadhana. What is Purusha and what is Prakriti? How can Purusha be freed from Prakriti? Such questions regarding ego have been answered here. Also answers on important aspects of sadhana—aspuration, concentration, will, surrender,—are found here, which provides effective knowledge of the subject. Understanding of the basis of Yoga, guidance about the state of emptiness as well as the state of self-realisation is also given here. What state of consciousness one has at the time of self-realisation, what experiences usually one has at that destined hour, and real knowledge about related matters flows from Sri Aurobindo's answers to Nagin-bhai's questions. This part also deals with the Mother's divinity, aspects of the Divine Mother, Her work and inner and outer relation with the sadhaks, Her help and guidance to sadhaks transmitted through flowers, through Her smile. The most important revelation that comes one's way while going through this part is the fact that Sri Aurobindo's photographs are emanations of Sri Aurobindo himself and one can approach him through the photographs. Sri Aurobindo confirmed it while replying to Nagin-bhai's question:

Q As I approach your photo in the Ashram Reception room, a feeling surges up that it is an emanation of yours. There seems to be special Light on it.

The sadhaks may themselves bring this Light by approaching me through the photo.

Thus, we learn from Sri Aurobindo that his photographs contain his living presence and one can receive his help through his photo.

Part three contains details of those routine matters of our daily life which are to be taken care of from the view-point of sadhana, i.e., food, sleep and dream, work, etc. True understanding of matters like impulses, sexual thoughts, desires, their origin and the precautions that the sadhaks have to take as a safeguard against these forces of the lower nature is provided here. These details are indeed most helpful. As the sadhak progresses on the way he hears voices, sees visions, there are experiences of every kind and coming from all planes. What are all these things? What is their utility? Are they useful? Do they provide any help in sadhana? What should be the sadhak's attitude towards them? Sri Aurobindo has answered all these questions here and, as usual, his answers are revealing.

The fourth part mainly deals with supermind and planes of higher knowledge. Questions on subjects like human greatness, spiritual greatness, supramental yoga, descent of supermind, Sachhidananda, Avatarhood, Avatar, the Supreme Lord and His incarnations, etc., are dealt with at length and thus the correspondence which starts with the subject of the lower worlds culminates in matters of the highest plane. In short, this correspondence has the power to lead the aspirant to the higher planes of consciousness. While going through this correspondence one realises that the Divine Consciousness is constantly at work on the reader's consciousness. One can also feel

the endless patience, infinite compassion and limitless munificence of Sri Aurobindo. Amal Kiran rightly states: "To go through the whole bulk of this exchange is to acquire a special insight into Sri Aurobindo's luminous pushing of his disciples onward and upward. Holding in mind its splendid revelations side by side with the memory of its recipient's sweet modesty and all-time geniality we shall be able to do some justice to the nature of the loss when Nagin parted from us."

If we too approach Sri Aurobindo with simplicity, spontaneity, openness, humility, with the full faith and devotion with which Nagin-bhai approached Him, then we also can have splendid revelations. We can increase the pace of our journey upward towards higher consciousness. This is the conviction one gets while going through this book.

JYOTI THANKI

THE BIRTH OF BLESSING PACKETS

THE tiny Blessing packets, associated with our Ashram, are unique in themselves in many and varied ways.

They have travelled all over the world, may it be by road, steamships, naval vessels, or on ordinary yet adventurous country rafts, on aircrafts like helicopters, supersonics, air buses, gliders, balloons, or even by Migs, by trains, by cars, by buses, by bullock-carts. But most of all they have travelled on bicycles, placed with love and reverence in the pockets of devotees. They travel very often close to the hearts of people.

If the small Blessing packet is seen—in whichever corner of the world it be—it is at once connected with the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry. There is nothing of the kind anywhere else associated with any spiritual group or temple. If there is a Blessing wrapped in a small 4 cms by 3 cms envelope made of decorated paper with the seal of a symbol, sure enough it has come from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

They are not only unique in their appearance; they have thousands and millions of stories to tell, each one unique in its own way.

This one was told by the Mother. Once a man was travelling by bus. It was in Goa, during the struggle for freedom from the Portuguese rule. Often there were mobs on the way. Stopping the vehicles, looting, stoning, even killing the passengers. This man was leaving Goa and on the way the bus was stopped. There was utter chaos and confusion and crying and shrieking. He was very scared. But at some moment he remembered about the Blessing packet in his pocket. He clutched at it and called for help. There is no need to say anything more. As experienced by many the help was there. It is a matter of faith, the Mother had said once.

This tiny packet had a very simple and humble birth. Our Champaklalji has this to say.

“Early in the beginning the Mother used to give a rose to sadhaks who went to Her for Pranam. Then She started giving rose petals.

Some people were very careful, they received the petals with both hands and put them in their handkerchief or pocket. Their feelings and reverence could be seen in their action. They were so consciously careful that even if a tiny petal fell down their unhappiness could be seen on their face. They would delicately lift the dropped petal, touch it to their eyes and forehead before placing it in the handkerchief. It was a scene steeped in bhakti.

While, alas, some others were careless, and were in a hurry. They seemed as if snatching the petals or a rose from Her hands. They would quickly push them in their pocket dropping a few petals on their way out. A few would turn back to pick up the petals; they would receive a lovely smile from the Mother. Some did not bother. But often lucky ones were called back by the Mother. She would sweetly point at the petals on the ground.”

When Champaklal saw all this, as he was always near Her when people went to Her for Pranam, he started making little packets for the petals. The very first ones were made by an old sadhak, Charu Dutt. He used to come to the Mother with lots of reverence and devotion, but could not manage the loose petals. So the tiny envelopes were specially made by him.

Thus was born the Blessing packet made in simple butter paper. Then Birendra, another sadhak, offered to make these envelopes with symbols embossed on the flap.

When the marbling of paper started in the Ashram, this paper made its way to the making of the second decorative envelope for the butter-paper bag holding the rose petals. Then came the work of drying the rose petals and pressing them flat. Lots of senior sadhaks are now busy making these Blessing packets.

With the practice of using decorative covers becoming common, fancy paper from all over the world started arriving in sweet competition, asking to be used for the purpose. And what a variety of beautiful paper poured in.

There were sober rice paper, bright shining foil, satin finish smooth paper, and silk thread embedded handmade paper. Sometimes they were printed or else they were plain. They were fanciful, they were aristocratic. They were quietly simple, they were brilliantly decorative. The outer cover was made according to the liking of the person who made them.

Later on yet another sadhak thought of putting small photos on the packets. This started the series of Blessing packets with the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's photos fixed on the envelopes. But the best were the plain butter-paper packets. The Mother sometimes wrote "Blessings" and the name of the person to whom She was giving it. These simple ones are really the rarest as just a few fortunate persons have them.

At times the Mother, as She gave them as Her Blessings, gave these packets special meanings. When She chose a packet for a particular person, She took Her own unhurried time to choose a packet from the various bundles She kept nearby.

"This blue one is for the man who is not able to sleep."

"This one is for his worried wife."

"These five packets for the family. But be careful, this one is for the girl with a sweet soul. Don't mix it with others."

These are just a few of Her innumerable little messages that accompanied the Blessing packets.

Sometimes She would press the packets in your palm making your whole body thrill with the touch. At other times She would tenderly keep the packet in your hand and whisper, "Mon petit." There are hundreds of stories regarding the ways in which the Mother gave these Blessing packets.

And how particular She was when She gave these packets!

When the head of a department or a Centre wanted a number of packets for distribution, he would say: "Mother, can I have some Blessing packets?"

She would ask: "How many?"

"About fifty."

She would pick up a pile or two at random, feel them in Her palms and give them. Invariably the number of packets would be precisely the requested number

SUNANDA

THE TREE

ONE can really only have an experience of identification with one of those big trees that are the kings of the forest—an ordinary plant is too small for a human to feel at ease in.

One day on our estate on Moorea I was sitting beside a little stream, leaning against a tree I didn't know what kind of tree it was I was fascinated by the big eels in the river, sacred eels Then I felt a presence behind me. First I noticed the rough trunk I was leaning against; then the tree began to vibrate inaudibly, in a very special way something a little like a cat purring, it was a slow vibration of contentment. This corresponded with a very deep note inside me Gradually I let myself be overcome by this contentment, and a door opened. Soon the whole body was seized by this ananda and I found I had become a tree. I was a tree I lost awareness of my human body I remained a tree for a long time I experienced the rhythmic pulsation of the sap being pumped upwards, the sparkling play of sunlight in the foliage, the vivid intimate presence of everything that lives in it, and all the little plants round about. It was a real paradise for that tree, to have its roots bathing in the coolness of the river. Its crown was very large and higher than the other treetops

It is very pleasant, soothing and enriching to be a tree. That species of tree is found in India too. The Mother called it "Health".

MEDHANANDA

(With Medhananda on the Shores of Infinity, pp 50-51)

RANDOM VERSES

WHOEVER wishes to quickly afford protection
To both himself and others
Should practise that holy secret.
The exchanging of self for others
—Shantideva

To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every inch of space is a miracle
—Walt Whitman

For not one sparrow can suffer and
The whole universe not suffer also. .
—Blake

He who would do good to others
Must do it in minute particulars.
General good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite and flatterer.
—Blake

In hell itself can your heaven be
If there, says God, you give your will to me
—A Silesius

What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen
With cold December's barrenness everywhere
—Shakespeare

One thing is certain and the rest is lies
The flower that once has blown forever dies
—Omar Khayyam

The spirit of the worm beneath the sod,
In love and worship blends itself with God
—Shelley

Money . the vast paper of illusion
—A. Ginsberg

(Presented by Fali Choksi)

OLD MOORE A HUNDRED YEARS LATER....

“OLD MOORE” is the popular name of an almanac founded in 1697 and still going strong. It deals with horoscopes, sun and moon tables, predictions ranging from the weather to world events, lucky numbers, racing tips, and matters of this kind. Our interest in it stems from the fact that Sri Aurobindo appears to have read it in 1901, and noted down some of the predictions. These notes have been published in *Archives and Research Journal* for April 1983 under the title *At the Turn of the Century*.

A comment by the editors on p. 66 of the Journal states: “Under this title the editors have published two short pieces evidently written in the first years of the twentieth century. Work on the first fragment was broken off abruptly; the full stop at the end was supplied by the editors. The second piece may have been copied from somewhere—perhaps an almanac called ‘Old Moore’?—but the general turn of the language appears to be Sri Aurobindo’s.”

We decided to have a look at Old Moore’s Almanac for 2001, exactly at the turn of the century one hundred years later, and to compare the content and style of writing to try to determine whether or not the passages in question were written by Sri Aurobindo or simply copied down by him out of interest. The result is inconclusive, but it is easy to understand that Sri Aurobindo might have been sufficiently intrigued by predictions concerning political unrest in India to make a note of them. Let us take a look at the fragment as published in *Archives and Research*:

At the Turn of the Century

The last century of the second millennium after Christ has begun, of the twenty centuries it seems the most full of incalculable possibilities and to open the widest door on destiny. The mind of humanity feels it is conscious of a voice of a distant advancing Ocean and a sound as of the wings of a mighty archangel flying towards the world, but whether to empty the vials of the wrath of God or to declare a new gospel of peace upon earth and goodwill unto men, is as yet dark to our understanding.

Old Moore for 1901

Opening months of the year	Political trouble and agitation for France Eastern question to be revived
February and March	Indian affairs cause anxiety
May	Recrudescence of troubles in Ireland
June	Anarchism rampant and Spanish King in danger from insidious foes
July	Numerous and startling catastrophes Widespread disaster in the East

Autumn	Plague and famine in India. Holland assumes diplomatic and dangerous attitude
November	Revival of sedition and turbulence in India and Egypt
December	Insurrections, revolts and sedition the order of the day

Old Moore For 2001

'Genetics' is the buzz word for 2001. Humanity is being 'reborn' into the next age of knowledge. This is the road to freedom from disease and hunger—but also lurking is the danger that it may be the path to Frankenstein. One way or another, tomorrow's world has always had a habit of becoming reality today, and this will never be more true than in our experience of the year 2001. At this 'true start' of the millennium, Old Moore takes the opportunity to offer sincere wishes for peace and happiness to all his readers. In the mix of all the progress that is so strongly indicated, may we also begin to experience the new era of humanity that quietly suggests itself to be a part of this new beginning.

Old Moore's predictions for the nations, month by month, are too numerous to be quoted. Most of them (predictably!) concern the United States and Russia. The problems in Ireland, after a hundred years, seem no closer to a solution. Notably, Old Moore failed to predict the terrible earthquake which struck the Gujarat region of India. However, Sri Aurobindo would have been pleased to note the prediction of 'a new era of humanity' about to begin with the turn of *this* century.

SONIA DYNE

PAN'S CAVE IN THE FOOTHILLS OF MT. PARNASSUS

I SPENT the night in Delphi, and the next day set out to find Pan's cave, which lies in the foothills of Mount Parnassus, on the backside of the high plateau that stretches inland from the cliffs above Delphi. I caught a taxi to reach the plateau, and from there proceeded to hike for an hour or so along the indicated trail, until I finally reached the cave.

When I stepped into the welcome cool of the cave, my eyes took several minutes to adjust to the darkness. Slowly I began to see an eerie landscape of stalagmites and jade green boulders. It was uncanny to think that people have been visiting this cave, at times to worship, at times simply to escape the elements, since time immemorial. Eventually I settled down and offered a meditation to Pan, the god of the vital force in nature. He was present but elusive, hesitant; he was certainly not forthcoming like Apollo. I went on trying to making contact with him for some time, and then just as I was about to give up and concede lack of receptivity on my part, I remembered to invoke the Mother. Inwardly I asked Pan whether he wanted to participate in the new creation, and that seemed to catch his attention. He came forward some, but again hesitated.

Then a most curious and unexpected event transpired in inner reality. I suddenly felt Sri Aurobindo's presence descend from above, and he pulled down a thread of light from his supramental spheres and offered it to Pan. I had a distinct impression of Sri Aurobindo saying to Pan: "Here, if you consent to participate in the new creation, I will let you wander in the supramental wilderness."

Presently this trickle of golden-orange light infused into and lifted up an emerging emerald vision of pristine hills and forests from prehistoric times, a wild beauty unsoiled by the human presence. Pan "tasted" this re-creation of virgin wilderness shot through with a new, supramental vibration, and he liked it immensely. He assented joyfully, happy to regain what humankind has taken away from him, and presently I felt a tremendous green force start to radiate throughout the body of the earth. Verdant rays of healing energy reached out into the desecrated and aching body of our beleaguered planet which has been so dirtied by humanity in recent times.

MICHAEL MIOVIC

(Courtesy *Collaboration*, Fall/Winter, 2000-2001)

CAN THERE BE INTELLIGENCE IN A PIECE OF STONE?

A New Idea about Consciousness

THE first thing that a child needs to understand is that our eyes cannot see everything, and even a very young child of three years can be made to understand this if he is given a magnifying glass and encouraged to look at many different kinds of things with it. So that education about unseen realities can really start with the toddler either at home or in the kindergarten.

Having shown what happens with a magnifying glass, it can then be explained that there is even stronger glass than that, so that we can see more wonderful things than we could ever imagine.

Let a child, or children, handle a piece of stone. The commonest stone in the world is granite. It is grey, hard, cold. Not very impressive. But then look at it carefully and photograph it, magnify it 150 times, it is a marvellous collection of different patterns.

A very young child will simply accept this as amazing, but older children may well ask how colour can be photographed from grey stone. Colour is energy, and different colours are different energies. Which means that from a small piece of stone all those energies are radiating out of it and reaching the emulsion on the colour film which turns each energy into its special colour.

This idea that something normally thought of as "dead matter" is vibrant and giving out something to its surroundings is the first lesson about inert matter containing some kind of "consciousness", "intelligence", "feeling", etc., and it can totally alter a child's attitude to this earth on which we live.

Look next at the photograph which is the same stone magnified again 150 times, and its actual formation is quite staggering.

Finally, consider all the implications of this. Whenever we go into a stone building we are surrounded by this beautiful energy radiating out and mixing with our own vibration.

All the religions have at some time stated that all creation is one, but they have never been able to explain it satisfactorily. But now through scientific instruments we can detect the signs of some kind of "life" in any kind of matter, whether it is stone, metal, chemical, plant, or animal—and human beings are animals.

This evident "life" in the stone explains beautifully why grass and other forms of plant life can grow out of it and be sustained.

And, as the soil from which all our own food grows is simply eroded rock, full of all this force and beauty, how much more this has to tell us about true nourishment!

Science is giving us a different perspective from anything that we have had before in our education.

We can take these thoughts one step further and relate everything that makes up our bodies, in a very different way, to the life of the earth itself. Then even a step further than that—that as we ourselves rely so completely on the purity of the earth—so must the earth rely completely upon the human beings that live on it to maintain that purity and order.

Here is the most marvellous material for ideas about Harmony with Nature, and it is an essential part of Peace Education.

The mere holding in the hands of a piece of stone or crystal, will now give a greater feeling of identity with it than we could have imagined previously. We can also understand that our own radiation can be received by the stone, hence it can feel our love!

MARGUERITE SMITHWHITE

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

A Dual Power of God: Sri Aurobindo's Satyavan and Savitri—A Brief Study by K B Sitaramayya and Swarna Gouri, M. C. C Publications, 1999 Available at SABDA, price: Rs 60 00, pages 76

I

THE main theme of *Savitri* by Sri Aurobindo is based on Savitri Upakhyana which appears in *Vana Parva* of the *Mahabharata*. But regarding the tale of Savitri, Sri Aurobindo has mentioned

“The tale of Satyavan and Savitri is recited in the Mahabharata as a story of conjugal love conquering death. But this legend is, as shown by many features of the human tale, one of the many symbolic myths of the Vedic cycle. Satyavan is the soul carrying the divine truth of being within itself but descended into the grip of death and ignorance; Savitri is the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goddess of the supreme Truth who comes down and is born to save, Aswapati, the Lord of the Horse, her human father, is the Lord of Tapasya, the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavour that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal planes; Dyumatsena, Lord of the Shining Hosts, father of Satyavan, is the Divine Mind here fallen blind, losing its celestial kingdom of vision, and through that loss its kingdom of glory. Still this is not a mere allegory, the characters are not personified qualities, but incarnations or emanations of living and conscious Forces with whom we can enter into concrete touch and they take human bodies in order to help man and show him the way from his mortal state to a divine consciousness and immortal life.”

We can say that the authors of the book have portrayed the ideal mankind and a divine beauty of virtue and an ethical order, a civilisation founded on Dharma, the ideal Law of Conduct. Woman pictured not only as Beauty and Law but also as Strength and Will.

The authors have illustrated the passages which are masterpieces of sustained philosophical motivation and steeped in mysticism and Yoga Sadhana. The well-known story of the young wife, Savitri, who saved her husband from an untimely death, thus scoring a victory over the seeming inexorability of Fate, is here swathed in the robes of Vedantic metaphysics and given a poetic reincarnation. Savitri thus evokes, not only the heroic girl-wife of immemorial legend, but also our universal Mother who bears with infinite patience and strength the trials of mortality and succeeds in the end in vouchsafing immortality to the children of the earth.

The authors have mentioned

“We see Savitri to be none other than the Incarnate Word and Satyavan as the Lord, the radiant God, the Soul of the world and Man's representative in the home of God.” Once the Mother was asked, “If Savitri is the Mother, who is Satyavan?” She said “He is the Avatar, isn't he? He is the incarnation of the Supreme Savitri and

Satyavan are not different from the Two who are One.’’² We can quote from the lines of *Savitri*.

There are Two who are One and play in many worlds;
In Knowledge and Ignorance they have spoken and met
And light and darkness are their eyes’ interchange.
Our pleasure and pain are their wrestle and embrace,
Our deeds, our hopes are intimate to their tale;
They are married secretly in our thought and life ³

Savitri and Satyavan are incarnated in the human form.

In a thousand ways he serves her royal needs;
He makes the hours pivot around her will,
Makes all reflect her whims, all is their play
This whole wide world is only he and she.⁴

Strange is the relationship between Purusha and Prakriti, Purusha consents to veil himself in ignorance for an uncertain term and plays the part Prakriti allots to him. Life in Matter commences a purblind game and the first hectic chapter of evolution comes to be scrawled

In the canto dealing with the Vision and the Boon, Aswapati asks the Divine Mother:

How long shall our spirits battle through the Night
And bear defeat and the brute yoke of Death,
We who are the vessels of a deathless Force
And builders of the godhead of the race?⁵

The Mother answers,

One shall descend and break the iron Law,
Change Nature’s doom by the lone spirit’s power...
Nature shall overleap her mortal step,
Fate shall be changed by an unchanging will.⁶

The authors have quoted appropriate lines from *Savitri*, illustrating that the story is based on the victorious fight of love against death. Such is the theme of the poem. In order to show the conquest of death the debate between Savitri and Yama has been depicted. Savitri says:

Our lives are God’s messengers beneath the stars;
To dwell under Death’s shadow they have come

For I, the Woman, am the force of God,
He, the Eternal's delegate soul in man ⁷

Savitri asserts:

My will is greater than thy law, O Death,
My love is stronger than the bonds of Fate,⁸

We can see from the book that the authors have studied *Savitri* a number of times in minute detail. They will feel happy if a part of that joy can be shared with others. In reading and re-reading the work the readers would consider that has not failed in its object

In the opinion of the authors the "Supreme Epic of *Savitri* presents not *the* Conquest of Death but *a* great Conquest. *The* Conquest is yet to be We are shown how the Dual Power of God was born many times before and will appear many times more before the final Conquest is possible The Epic brings before us the possibility of the day when Death can exist no more"⁹

NILIMA DAS

References

- 1 *Mother India*, 1971, June, p 312
- 2 *A Dual Power of God*, p 2, *CWM*, Vol 5, p 391
- 3 *Savitri*, p 61
- 4 *Ibid*, p 63
- 5 *Ibid*, p 341
- 6 *Ibid*, p 346
- 7 *Ibid*, p 633
- 8 *Ibid*
- 9 Back cover of the book

II

Sitaramayya and Gouri's *A Dual Power of God* has the honour of a foreword by the eminent literary writer and exponent of *Savitri*, Prema Nandakumar. She rightly asserts that Sri Aurobindo's epic contains many worlds and that in it philosophy becomes an "experienced reality". Of course this is true in all of Sri Aurobindo's writings, but it has a particular relevance in the context of *Savitri*. Indeed in no way can his philosophical prose, for instance *The Life Divine*, be considered as a work of speculative metaphysics, or a dialectical treatise,—the least that of an Aristotelian arm-chair reflective thinker. Sri Aurobindo himself said that whatever he felt, saw

and experienced it is that he put in his writings. However, in the case of his *Savitri* we get a sure feeling that it is actually a double autobiography: it is a yogic record of the pursuit and achievement of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in their divine task. In that sense also it occupies a different position amongst all his works.

The foreword makes an apt recommendation of the book by pointing out that Sitaramayya and Gouri have built a helpful pathway to the epic's theme. Choosing only the passages which directly reveal the subject, the endorsement affirms that the monograph has been able to give a pretty good idea about the epic argument. "Savitri and Satyavan were sent forth 'of old' with the beginning of Time and their work continues till the total descent of the Supermind takes place. The supreme epic of Savitri presents *one* great conquest of Death and not the last." But this is such a significant statement that it needs to be considered in several details with their far-reaching implications.

Thus we may have to ask the question whether from the text of the poem we can make such a distinction as has been done in the tract, between *a* conquest and *the* conquest of Death. Here is certainly an important issue and we would have expected an elaborate discussion of it; but it is disappointing that it is not there. Savitri has already vanquished Death, but she also tells him to be still there, to be the instrument of her will and her work: functionally she still needs Death,—as if nothing is superfluous in this creation.

Will this continued presence of Death then imply that further conquests are yet to be achieved? We do not think so,—because in whatever form he might continue to exist at the bidding of Savitri, he is always going to be her instrument in universal affairs, in the universal commerce. What greater conquest or greater mastery over Death is then needed than making use of him for her own purposes in the scheme and details of the evolutionary process? The meaning of the mortal world, *mrityuloka*, indeed becomes clearer to us only when we see the positive dynamism of Death in it. Were we not told that Death himself was a failing star above Satyavan's fate? There is a strange mystery in the presence of Death and we have to see a deeper intention in what he tells to Savitri.

I, Death, am the gate of immortality

To our immediate view this may appear to be a rebuttal or a sarcastic statement in the clashing of argument against argument, as if made in the heat of the debate; but there is also a truth in it. This is an old truth and now the gate has to open outward, towards mortality, the mortal life has to be pragmatically fulfilled in the divine sense. Savitri was told by another voice, of another Death.

O miracle, where thou beganst, there cease!

If this comes to Savitri as advice from radiant Death and if she refuses to accept it,

then it may not be quite proper to speak of other triumphs yet to be accomplished. She has now made herself one with the highest will of the Supreme. If it were not so the mission for which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had come, that mission itself would have stood unperformed and incomplete.

Has the labour failed? Is Savitri going to face another Death to carry out her God-given assignment, her task half-done? That eventuality would mean a major commentary on the Avatic achievement of the dual power who took the earthly burden upon itself. However, this "her task half-done" is not true and there is no reason to take it so.

Apart from the aspect of the conquest of Death, there is another contentious element in the brief dissertation of Sitaramayya and Gouri. The imperative is that that element, the basic study of the dual power itself, should have been given a more deserving, a more urgent and detailed treatment than what we have here. This main consideration is missing.

If Savitri is the executive Force sent forth to lift up the earth's fate and Satyavan the soul that climbs from nescient Night to Supernature's Vast, then while the first has been well brought out in the thesis the second has not received the needed attention. It is quite necessary to show how Satyavan was actually playing his role as an aspect of the Supreme's dual power. Sri Aurobindo has broadly hinted at it in the eleventh canto of *Savitri*, and also in other places, and we have to pick up these hints and present them with respect to the climbing of the earth's soul, the soul that is now ready to receive Supernature's transformative gifts, her powers and potentialities ready to emerge in their manifestive glory for which it had taken this mortality-bound birth.

The question that needs to be answered is. Why did Satyavan at all take this mortality-bound human birth? come here, to all immediate appearances, without any power as the "Eternal's delegate soul in man"? No definite explanation for it emerges from the *Dual Power of God*. Thus when the authors say that "Savitri's is the active and dynamic aspect, Satyavan's, as presented in the epic, more passive," a certain justification in the parity of their *dual*-aspect is appropriately called for.

Is it not desirable that we should be told about that which was remarkable in Satyavan's wise passivity? And how did that wisdom take him closer to the fiery Princess of Madra, Savitri whom none would dare approach claiming her hand in marriage? Then, what is the role of passive wisdom in the dynamics of life? Can it really rise to the stature of being complementary to the active spirit of the truth? Or is it that there is a silent helpless preparation under the yoke of fate and circumstance to which Satyavan was tied, with all human weaknesses? Is to suffer so unredeemably, accepting the dicta of the evolutionary nature, also a means to acquire transcendental awareness? Or is there some smouldering fire by which the fuel itself gets somehow kindled in its quiescent transformative blaze? Is it for that reason that Satyavan used to go to the forest and fetch firewood? What was that which had qualified him to become the lordly spouse of the creatrix affirming herself in a greatness which is to

manifest and shape itself in this mortal world? Can the contours of things to come configure the character of this passive wisdom?

Savitri discovered her soul. She found that

These Gods and Goddesses were he and she.

(*Savitri*, p. 525)

In the luminous depths of her being she became aware of her identity with Satyavan; indeed, that identity was in the manner of Word in Brahma's clasp, or World-Puissance on Shiva's lap, or else like the Master and the Mother watching the worlds, Krishna and Radha entwined in bliss, the Adorer and Adored in their inseparable union. Did Satyavan also experience such conscious inalienable oneness with Savitri? On the other hand, if that was something unique to Savitri alone, then which was the corresponding or correlative realisation he had by which he would fulfil the other term of their dual nature?

We are quite aware that Savitri would choose the destiny's curve and stamp her will on time; she as the Sun-Word would bring down God into the lives of men. But then what about Satyavan, what would he do? in what manner participate in the great endeavour?

The incarnate dual Power shall open God's door
Eternal supermind touch earthly time

(*Ibid*, p. 705)

This is what the passage says. What so far was a revelation has now materialised and taken actual shape. Supermind has touched earthly time, has entered into the terrestrial process. "Touched"—yes, that was set as the present goal. Sri Aurobindo's task got fulfilled by achieving it. Because the supermind has entered into time, time itself shall unfold the dynamism of its growing ages.

But there is a problem,—of grasping the implications of this wonderful event that has taken place in our midst

If we read *Savitri* as a double autobiography of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, there is no difficulty in identifying the story's Aswapati, the father of Savitri, with Sri Aurobindo; nor is there a difficulty in Savitri herself being considered as the Mother who, as the supreme executrix, made manifest what was yogically realised and revealed by the ceaseless tapasya of Sri Aurobindo, the Lord of Life. If so, do we take the "dual power" as this double divinity, incarnate in the context of terrestrial work? That would raise the question: Who then is Satyavan with all his passive wisdom as the collaborator of his Savitri? Perhaps we may attribute the nature of this double power as belonging to a different category. The Mother speaks of Satyavan as the permanent Avatar, evolutionarily climbing from mortality to divine felicity in life. And there lies his passive wisdom waiting upon the establisher of the truth to

manifest himself in the earthly play. Satyavan of his own accord cannot do so without the arrival of Savitri whose birth needs the occult-yogic support, the tapasya of her father Aswapati. To this dual term we have therefore to add the most important aspect of the divine Will now directly entering the matured evolution. In it we can understand the story of Satyavan and Savitri:

Two fires that burn towards the parent Sun
Two rays that travel to the original Light.

(*Ibid* , p 720)

The quiet flame and the roaring flame merge into a superfire that it may be kindled in the heart of the earth Has this not happened? The dual power of God has been set on the march by God. In saluting that power we indeed salute God himself.

R Y DESHPANDE

Sunlit Days, Sweet Steps, and Towards Light by *Shyam Kumari* (Price Rs. 15, Rs 15 and Rs 12 Published by Shyam Kumari at All India Press, available with Shyam Kumari C/o Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. e-mail shyamkumari@eth net)

THESE three sweet booklets, first published in 1994—and later reprinted in 1997—are a welcome addition to rhymes and poems for young children.

Shyam Kumari's inexhaustible inspiration can evoke beauty and wonder in the simple heart of not only children, but in whosoever reads these poems

Sunlit Days seems to be for the very young, teaching them numbers in a beautiful way and filling their hearts with the joy of Nature. Then there are poems which create a powerful imagination and even build the foundation for a good character

Sweet Steps takes the children further to light "a lamp of joy." They are poems with sweet aspiration, such as to be "The Mother's Lion" or to be her star and "shine like a silver jewel / on the brow of night "

Towards Light offers us "poems with a difference" both in their thought content and in their beautiful imagination from the usual rut of common poems taught to children in schools Here, the poems have an uplifting and soaring effect as they inspire children to live by high and noble ideals of love, compassion, generosity, courage and dignity. And one would wish them to be included in schools' programmes

In these poems Shyam Kumari takes us through the path of Light to the land of heavenly Beauty, Harmony and Bliss The children would love to venture into the New and the Unknown with the author and experience the joy of adventure For, her poems have the magical effect of instilling in their hearts and minds a sense of beauty, courage, hope and cheer

The older generation grew up inspired by the high ideals and character-building stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and stories of the Upanishads, Buddha and Jain Tirthankars. Then came inspiring poets of Sanskrit and many Indian languages, like Mira Bai, Kabir, Narasimha Mehta, and others. The minds and hearts of the people who were nurtured by the high vision set before them by these poets thought and felt and lived by those ideals

Then came a yawning gap in high inspiration. And it is Shyam Kumari's honest claim that, though our life is beset with inequality, injustice and mundane concerns, the poet's work is still "to stress the beauty and delight inherent in every atom of the creation." She says, "It is unfortunate to paint life's canvas with sombre colours when rainbows are waiting behind each dark cloud. Why sing of the darkness when a radiant dawn is awaiting us?"

One is moved by her indomitable faith

It is a joy to read these poems. They are an attempt to be praised as a befitting tribute to the new millennium, bringing a new Light of hope to the children of the Future.

I would like to illustrate my point with a few extracts, but when each poem offers its own charm, it is difficult to choose. However, here are some examples.

In the poem "Not Before Time" from *Towards Light* we see that the mother gives to each of her two daughters a pot of tulip flowers telling them, "A magic of beauty is hid inside." Both are anxious to know the secret. But the calm one says, "Mine will be golden-white" and goes to sleep, the one "with a fiery impatience" is restless. She tries to open the bud and in the event breaks it from the stem. She is stunned and horrified, whereas the other one is glorified as

The morning rays played
On the other plant
Its golden heart stood revealed
A marvellous sight!

I would end with a portion of the beautiful poem "To Be a God" which is a pure delight. It begins thus:

My mom explains
That when in heaven
The gods take a shower
Then here on the plains
It suddenly rains

"Do gods bathe even at night?"
I wondered
"My child, in heavens

There is no night
It is always sunny and bright ”

“Mom, how can I become a god?
Please explain ”

“O my son, to become a god
Is given to few.
To be the master of oneself
Is the first cue.
One must also never lie
And always hold
Truth’s flag high ”

And it goes on encouraging young children to instil in themselves godlike qualities

We hope Shyam Kumari will write more such poems and stories which may prepare our children to be good citizens worthy of Indian culture

KAILAS JHAVERI