

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

SPECIAL ISSUE
24 APRIL 2018

PRICE: Rs. 30.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS

INLAND

Annual: Rs. 200.00

For 10 years: Rs. 1,800.00

Price per Single Copy: Rs. 30.00

OVERSEAS

Sea Mail:

Annual: \$35

For 10 years: \$350

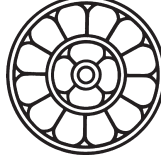
Air Mail:

Annual: \$70

For 10 years: \$700

All payments to be made in favour of *Mother India*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. DD/Cheque should be sent by speed post only. For outstation cheques kindly add Rs. 15 for annual membership and Rs. 50 for 10-year subscription.

Subscribers are requested to mention their subscription number in case of any inquiry. The correspondents should give their full address in BLOCK letters, with the correct PIN code.



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.



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

The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the journal.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry - 605 002, India

Phone: (0413) 2233642

e-mail: motherindia@sriurobindoashram.org.in

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust

Founding Editor: K. D. SETHNA (AMAL KIRAN)

Associate Editors: HEMANT KAPOOR & RANGANATH RAGHAVAN

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXXI

No. 4

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

CONTENTS

Sri Aurobindo

LIBERATION (Poem)	...	7
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	...	8
A POSTSCRIPT CHAPTER	...	14
THE CENTURY OF LIFE	...	26
PREFATORY NOTE ON BHARTRIHARI	...	31

The Mother

‘ALL IS LIGHT, ALL IS LOVE . . .’	...	36
THE MOTHER’S GUIDANCE IN THE GROWTH OF AUROVILLE	...	37

Amal Kiran (K. D. Sethna)

SPIRITUAL INDIA AND SRI AUROBINDO	...	79
-----------------------------------	-----	----

LIBERATION

My mind, my soul grow larger than all Space;
Time founders in that vastness glad and nude:
The body fades, an outline, a dim trace,
A memory in the spirit's solitude.

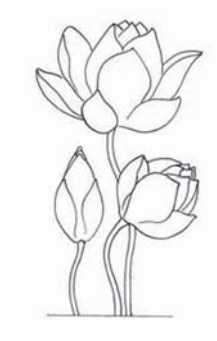
This universe is a vanishing circumstance
In the glory of a white infinity
Beautiful and bare for the Immortal's dance,
House-room of my immense felicity.

In the thrilled happy giant void within
Thought lost in light and passion drowned in bliss,
Changing into a stillness hyaline,
Obey the edict of the Eternal's peace.

Life's now the Ineffable's dominion;
Nature is ended and the spirit alone.

SRI AUROBINDO

(Collected Poems, CWSA, Vol. 2, p. 617)



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In other words, — and this is the conclusion at which we arrive, — while it is possible to construct a precarious and quite mechanical unity by political and administrative means, the unity of the human race, even if achieved, can only be secured and can only be made real if the religion of humanity, which is at present the highest active ideal of mankind, spiritualises itself and becomes the general inner law of human life.

The outward unity may well achieve itself, — possibly, though by no means certainly, in a measurable time, — because that is the inevitable final trend of the working of Nature in human society which makes for larger and yet larger aggregations and cannot fail to arrive at a total aggregation of mankind in a closer international system.

This working of Nature depends for its means of fulfilment upon two forces which combine to make the larger aggregation inevitable. First, there is the increasing closeness of common interests or at least the interlacing and interrelation of interests in a larger and yet larger circle which makes old divisions an obstacle and a cause of weakness, obstruction and friction, and the clash and collision that comes out of this friction a ruinous calamity to all, even to the victor who has to pay a too heavy price for his gains; and even these expected gains, as war becomes more complex and disastrous, are becoming more and more difficult to achieve and the success problematical. An increasing perception of this community or interrelation of interests and a growing unwillingness to face the consequences of collision and ruinous struggle must push men to welcome any means for mitigating the divisions which lead to such disasters. If the trend to the mitigation of divisions is once given a definite form, that commences an impetus which drives towards closer and closer union. If she cannot arrive by these means, if the incoherence is too great for the trend of unification to triumph, Nature will use other means, such as war and conquest or the temporary domination of the powerful State or empire or the menace of such a domination which will compel those threatened to adopt a closer system of union. It is these means and this force of outward necessity which she used to create nation-units and national empires, and, however modified in the circumstances and workings, it is at bottom the same force and the same means which she is using to drive mankind towards international unification.

But, secondly, there is the force of a common uniting sentiment. This may work in two ways; it may come before as an originating or contributory cause or it may come afterwards as a cementing result. In the first case, the sentiment of a larger unity springs up among units which were previously divided and leads them to seek after a form of union which may then be brought about principally by the

force of the sentiment and its idea or by that secondarily as an aid to other and more outward events and causes. We may note that in earlier times this sentiment was insufficiently effective, as among the petty clan or regional nations; unity had ordinarily to be effected by outward circumstances and generally by the grossest of them, by war and conquest, by the domination of the most powerful among many warring or contiguous peoples. But in later times the force of the sentiment of unity, supported as it has been by a clearer political idea, has become more effective. The larger national aggregates have grown up by a simple act of federation or union, though this has sometimes had to be preceded by a common struggle for liberty or a union in war against a common enemy; so have grown into one the United States, Italy, Germany, and more peacefully the Australian and South African federations. But in other cases, especially in the earlier national aggregations, the sentiment of unity has grown up largely or entirely as the result of the formal, outward or mechanical union. But whether to form or to preserve the growth of the sentiment, the psychological factor is indispensable; without it there can be no secure and lasting union. Its absence, the failure to create such a sentiment or to make it sufficiently living, natural, forcible has been the cause of the precariousness of such aggregates as Austro-Hungary and of the ephemeral character of the empires of the past, even as it is likely to bring about, unless circumstances change, the collapse or disintegration of the great present-day empires.

The trend of forces towards some kind of international world-organisation eventuating in a possible far-off unification, which is now just beginning to declare itself as an idea or aspiration though the causes which made it inevitable have been for some time at work, is enforced by the pressure of need and environment, by outward circumstances. At the same time, there is a sentiment helped and stimulated by these outward circumstances, a cosmopolitan, international sentiment, still rather nebulous and vaguely ideal, which may accelerate the growth of the formal union. In itself this sentiment would be an insufficient cement for the preservation of any mechanical union which might be created; for it could not easily be so close and forcible a sentiment as national feeling. It would have to subsist on the conveniences of union as its only substantial provender. But the experience of the past shows that this mere necessity of convenience is in the end not strong enough to resist the pressure of unfavourable circumstances and the reassertion of old or the effective growth of new centrifugal forces. There is, however, at work a more powerful force, a sort of intellectual religion of humanity, clear in the minds of the few, vaguely felt in its effects and its disguises by the many, which has largely helped to bring about much of the trend of the modern mind and the drift of its developing institutions. This is a psychological force which tends to break beyond the formula of the nation and aspires to replace the religion of country and even, in its more extreme forms, to destroy altogether the national sentiment and to abolish its divisions so as to create the single nation of mankind.

We may say, then, that this trend must eventually realise itself, however great may be the difficulties; and they are really enormous, much greater than those which attended the national formation. If the present unsatisfactory condition of international relations should lead to a series of cataclysms, either large and world-embracing like the present war or, though each more limited in scope, yet in their sum world-pervading and necessarily, by the growing interrelation of interests, affecting even those who do not fall directly under their touch, then mankind will finally be forced in self-defence to a new, closer and more stringently unified order of things. Its choice will be between that and a lingering suicide. If the human reason cannot find out the way, Nature herself is sure to shape these upheavals in such a way as to bring about her end. Therefore, — whether soon or in the long run, whether brought about by its own growing sentiment of unity, stimulated by common interest and convenience, or by the evolutionary pressure of circumstances, we may take it that an eventual unification or at least some formal organisation of human life on earth is, the incalculable being always allowed for, practically inevitable.

I have tried to show from the analogy of the past evolution of the nation that this international unification must culminate or at least is likely to culminate in one of two forms. There is likely to be either a centralised World-State or a looser world-union which may be either a close federation or a simple confederacy of the peoples for the common ends of mankind. The last form is the most desirable, because it gives sufficient scope for the principle of variation which is necessary for the free play of life and the healthy progress of the race. The process by which the World-State may come starts with the creation of a central body which will at first have very limited functions, but, once created, must absorb by degrees all the different utilities of a centralised international control, as the State, first in the form of a monarchy and then of a parliament, has been absorbing by degrees the whole control of the life of the nation, so that we are now within measurable distance of a centralised socialistic State which will leave no part of the life of its individuals unregulated. A similar process in the World-State will end in the taking up and the regulation of the whole life of the peoples into its hands; it may even end by abolishing national individuality and turning the divisions that it has created into mere departmental groupings, provinces and districts of the one common State. Such an eventuality may seem now a fantastic dream or an unrealisable idea; but it is one which, under certain conditions that are by no means beyond the scope of ultimate possibility, may well become feasible and even, after a certain point is reached, inevitable. A federal system and still more a confederacy would mean, on the other hand, the preservation of the national basis and a greater or less freedom of national life, but the subordination of the separate national to the larger common interests and of full separate freedom to the greater international necessities.

It may be questioned whether past analogies are a safe guide in a problem so new and whether something else might not be evolved more intimately and

independently arising from it and suitable to its complexities. But mankind even in dealing with its new problems works upon past experience and therefore upon past motives and analogies. Even when it seizes on new ideas, it goes to the past for the form it gives to them. Behind the apparent changes of the most radical revolutions we see this unavoidable principle of continuity surviving in the heart of the new order. Moreover, these alternatives seem the only way in which the two forces in presence can work out their conflict, either by the disappearance of the one, the separative national instinct, or by an accommodation between them. On the other hand, it is quite possible that human thought and action may take so new a turn as to bring in a number of unforeseen possibilities and lead to a quite different ending. And one might upon these lines set one's imagination to work and produce perhaps a utopia of a better kind. Such constructive efforts of the human imagination have their value and often a very great value; but any such speculations would evidently have been out of place in the study I have attempted.

Assuredly, neither of the two alternatives and none of the three forms considered are free from serious objections. A centralised World-State would signify the triumph of the idea of mechanical unity or rather of uniformity. It would inevitably mean the undue depression of an indispensable element in the vigour of human life and progress, the free life of the individual, the free variation of the peoples. It must end, if it becomes permanent and fulfils all its tendencies, either in a death in life, a stagnation, or by the insurgence of some new saving but revolutionary force or principle which would shatter the whole fabric into pieces. The mechanical tendency is one to which the logical reason of man, itself a precise machine, is easily addicted and its operations are obviously the easiest to manage and the most ready to hand; its full evolution may seem to the reason desirable, necessary, inevitable, but its end is predestined. A centralised socialistic State may be a necessity of the future, once it is founded, but a reaction from it will be equally an eventual necessity of the future. The greater its pressure, the more certainly will it be met by the spread of the spiritual, the intellectual, the vital and practical principle of Anarchism in revolt against that mechanical pressure. So, too, a centralised mechanical World-State must rouse in the end a similar force against it and might well terminate in a crumbling up and disintegration, even in the necessity for a repetition of the cycle of humanity ending in a better attempt to solve the problem. It could be kept in being only if humanity agreed to allow all the rest of its life to be regularised for it for the sake of peace and stability and took refuge for its individual freedom in the spiritual life, as happened once under the Roman Empire. But even that would be only a temporary solution. A federal system also would tend inevitably to establish one general type for human life, institutions and activities; it would allow only a play of minor variations. But the need of variation in living Nature could not always rest satisfied with that scanty sustenance. On the other hand, a looser confederacy might well be open to the objection that it would give too ready a handle for centrifugal forces,

were such to arise in new strength. A loose confederation could not be permanent; it must turn in one direction or the other, end either in a close and rigid centralisation or at last by a break-up of the loose unity into its original elements.

The saving power needed is a new psychological factor which will at once make a united life necessary to humanity and force it to respect the principle of freedom. The religion of humanity seems to be the one growing force which tends in that direction; for it makes for the sense of human oneness, it has the idea of the race, and yet at the same time it respects the human individual and the natural human grouping. But its present intellectual form seems hardly sufficient. The idea, powerful in itself and in its effects, is yet not powerful enough to mould the whole life of the race in its image. For it has to concede too much to the egoistic side of human nature, once all and still nine-tenths of our being, with which its larger idea is in conflict. On the other side, because it leans principally on the reason, it turns too readily to the mechanical solution. For the rational idea ends always as a captive of its machinery, becomes a slave of its own too binding process. A new idea with another turn of the logical machine revolts against it and breaks up its machinery, but only to substitute in the end another mechanical system, another credo, formula and practice.

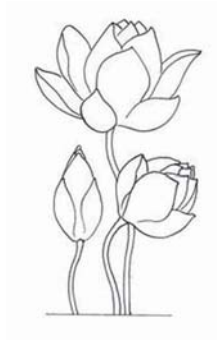
A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this is not meant what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development. A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of all our life, not merely a principle of cooperation but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be the realisation by the individual that only in the life of his fellow-men is his own life complete. There must be the realisation by the race that only on the free and full life of the individual can its own perfection and permanent happiness be founded. There must be too a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself, so that it may be developed in the life of the race. To go into all that this implies would be too large a subject to be entered upon here; it is enough to point out that in this direction lies the eventual road. No doubt, if this is only an idea like the rest, it will go the way of all ideas. But if it is at all a truth of our being, then it must be the truth

to which all is moving and in it must be found the means of a fundamental, an inner, a complete, a real human unity which would be the one secure base of a unification of human life. A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence.

Could such a realisation develop rapidly in mankind, we might then solve the problem of unification in a deeper and truer way from the inner truth to the outer forms. Until then, the attempt to bring it about by mechanical means must proceed. But the higher hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realise this truth and seek to develop it in themselves, so that when the mind of man is ready to escape from its mechanical bent, — perhaps when it finds that its mechanical solutions are all temporary and disappointing, — the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA, Vol. 25, pp. 571-78)



A POSTSCRIPT CHAPTER

At the time when this book was being brought to its close, the first attempt at the foundation of some initial hesitating beginning of the new world-order, which both governments and peoples had begun to envisage as a permanent necessity if there was to be any order in the world at all, was under debate and consideration but had not yet been given a concrete and practical form; but this had to come and eventually a momentous beginning was made. It took the name and appearance of what was called a League of Nations. It was not happy in its conception, well-inspired in its formation or destined to any considerable longevity or a supremely successful career. But that such an organised endeavour should be launched at all and proceed on its way for some time without an early breakdown was in itself an event of capital importance and meant the initiation of a new era in world history; especially, it was an initiative which, even if it failed, could not be allowed to remain without a sequel but had to be taken up again until a successful solution has safeguarded the future of mankind, not only against continued disorder and lethal peril but against destructive possibilities which could easily prepare the collapse of civilisation and perhaps eventually something even that could be described as the suicide of the human race. Accordingly, the League of Nations disappeared but was replaced by the United Nations Organisation which now stands in the forefront of the world and struggles towards some kind of secure permanence and success in the great and far-reaching endeavour on which depends the world's future.

This is the capital event, the crucial and decisive outcome of the world-wide tendencies which Nature has set in motion for her destined purpose. In spite of the constant shortcomings of human effort and its stumbling mentality, in spite of adverse possibilities that may baulk or delay for a time the success of this great adventure, it is in this event that lies the determination of what must be. All the catastrophes that have attended this course of events and seem to arise of purpose in order to prevent the working out of her intention have not prevented, and even further catastrophes will not prevent, the successful emergence and development of an enterprise which has become a necessity for the progress and perhaps the very existence of the race. Two stupendous and world-devastating wars have swept over the globe and have been accompanied or followed by revolutions with far-reaching consequences which have altered the political map of the earth and the international balance, the once fairly stable equilibrium of five continents, and changed the whole future. A third still more disastrous war with a prospect of the use of weapons and other scientific means of destruction far more fatal and of wider reach than any ever yet invented, weapons whose far-spread use might bring down civilisation with a crash and whose effects might tend towards something like extermination on a large scale, looms in

prospect; the constant apprehension of it weighs upon the mind of the nations and stimulates them towards further preparations for war and creates an atmosphere of prolonged antagonism, if not yet of conflict, extending to what is called "cold war" even in times of peace. But the two wars that have come and gone have not prevented the formation of the first and second considerable efforts towards the beginning of an attempt at union and the practical formation of a concrete body, an organised instrument with that object: rather they have caused and hastened this new creation. The League of Nations came into being as a direct consequence of the first war, the U.N.O. similarly as a consequence of the second world-wide conflict. If the third war which is regarded by many if not by most as inevitable does come, it is likely to precipitate as inevitably a further step and perhaps the final outcome of this great world-endeavour. Nature uses such means, apparently opposed and dangerous to her intended purpose, to bring about the fruition of that purpose. As in the practice of the spiritual science and art of Yoga one has to raise up the psychological possibilities which are there in the nature and stand in the way of its spiritual perfection and fulfilment so as to eliminate them, even, it may be, the sleeping possibilities which might arise in future to break the work that has been done, so too Nature acts with the world-forces that meet her on her way, not only calling up those which will assist her but raising too, so as to finish with them, those that she knows to be the normal or even the unavoidable obstacles which cannot but start up to impede her secret will. This one has often seen in the history of mankind; one sees it exemplified today with an enormous force commensurable with the magnitude of the thing that has to be done. But always these resistances turn out to have assisted by the resistance much more than they have impeded the intention of the great Creatrix and her Mover.

We may then look with a legitimate optimism on what has been hitherto achieved and on the prospects of further achievement in the future. This optimism need not and should not blind us to undesirable features, perilous tendencies and the possibilities of serious interruptions in the work and even disorders in the human world that might possibly subvert the work done. As regards the actual conditions of the moment it may even be admitted that most men nowadays look with dissatisfaction on the defects of the United Nations Organisation and its blunders and the malignancies that endanger its existence and many feel a growing pessimism and regard with doubt the possibility of its final success. This pessimism it is unnecessary and unwise to share; for such a psychology tends to bring about or to make possible the results which it predicts but which need not at all ensue. At the same time, we must not ignore the danger. The leaders of the nations, who have the will to succeed and who will be held responsible by posterity for any avoidable failure, must be on guard against unwise policies or fatal errors; the deficiencies that exist in the organisation or its constitution have to be quickly remedied or slowly and cautiously eliminated; if there are obstinate oppositions to necessary change,

they have somehow to be overcome or circumvented without breaking the institution; progress towards its perfection, even if it cannot be easily or swiftly made, must yet be undertaken and the frustration of the world's hope prevented at any cost. There is no other way for mankind than this, unless indeed a greater way is laid open to it by the Power that guides through some delivering turn or change in human will or human nature or some sudden evolutionary progress, a not easily foreseeable leap, *saltus*, which will make another and greater solution of our human destiny feasible.

In the first idea and form of a beginning of world-union which took the shape of the League of Nations, although there were errors in the structure such as the insistence on unanimity which tended to sterilise, to limit or to obstruct the practical action and effectuality of the League, the main defect was inherent in its conception and in its general build, and that again arose naturally and as a direct consequence from the condition of the world at that time. The League of Nations was in fact an oligarchy of big Powers each drawing behind it a retinue of small States and using the general body so far as possible for the furtherance of its own policy much more than for the general interest and the good of the world at large. This character came out most in the political sphere, and the manoeuvres and discords, accommodations and compromises inevitable in this condition of things did not help to make the action of the League beneficial or effective as it purposed or set out to be. The absence of America and the position of Russia had helped to make the final ill-success of this first venture a natural consequence, if not indeed unavoidable. In the constitution of the U.N.O. an attempt was made, in principle at least, to escape from these errors; but the attempt was not thoroughgoing and not altogether successful. A strong surviving element of oligarchy remained in the preponderant place assigned to the five great Powers in the Security Council and was clinched by the device of the veto; these were concessions to a sense of realism and the necessity of recognising the actual condition of things and the results of the second great war and could not perhaps have been avoided, but they have done more to create trouble, hamper the action and diminish the success of the new institution than anything else in its make-up or the way of action forced upon it by the world situation or the difficulties of a combined working inherent in its very structure. A too hasty or radical endeavour to get rid of these defects might lead to a crash of the whole edifice; to leave them unmodified prolongs a malaise, an absence of harmony and smooth working and a consequent discredit and a sense of limited and abortive action, cause of the widespread feeling of futility and regard of doubt the world at large has begun to cast on this great and necessary institution which was founded with such high hopes and without which world conditions would be infinitely worse and more dangerous, even perhaps irremediable. A third attempt, the substitution of a differently constituted body, could only come if this institution collapsed as the result of a new catastrophe: if certain dubious portents fulfil their menace, it might emerge into being and might even this time be more successful because of an increased and a more general

determination not to allow such a calamity to occur again; but it would be after a third cataclysmal struggle which might shake to its foundations the international structure now holding together after two upheavals with so much difficulty and unease. Yet, even in such a contingency, the intention in the working of Nature is likely to overcome the obstacles she has herself raised up and they may be got rid of once and for all. But for that it will be necessary to build, eventually at least, a true World-State without exclusions and on a principle of equality into which considerations of size and strength will not enter. These may be left to exercise whatever influence is natural to them in a well-ordered harmony of the world's peoples safeguarded by the law of a new international order. A sure justice, a fundamental equality and combination of rights and interests must be the law of this World-State and the basis of its entire edifice.

The real danger at the present second stage of the progress towards unity lies not in any faults, however serious, in the building of the United Nations Assembly but in the division of the peoples into two camps which tend to be natural opponents and might at any moment become declared enemies irreconcilable and even their common existence incompatible. This is because the so-called Communism of Bolshevik Russia came to birth as the result, not of a rapid evolution, but of an unprecedentedly fierce and prolonged revolution sanguinary in the extreme and created an autocratic and intolerant State system founded upon a war of classes in which all others except the proletariat were crushed out of existence, "liquidated", upon a "dictatorship of the proletariat" or rather of a narrow but all-powerful party system acting in its name, a Police State, and a mortal struggle with the outside world: the fierceness of this struggle generated in the minds of the organisers of the new State a fixed idea of the necessity not only of survival but of continued struggle and the spread of its domination until the new order had destroyed the old or evicted it, if not from the whole earth, yet from the greater part of it and the imposition of a new political and social gospel or its general acceptance by the world's peoples. But this condition of things might change, lose its acrimony and full consequence, as it has done to some degree, with the arrival of security and the cessation of the first ferocity, bitterness and exasperation of the conflict; the most intolerant and oppressive elements of the new order might have been moderated and the sense of incompatibility or inability to live together or side by side would then have disappeared and a more secure *modus vivendi* been made possible. If much of the unease, the sense of inevitable struggle, the difficulty of mutual toleration and economic accommodation still exists, it is rather because the idea of using the ideological struggle as a means for world domination is there and keeps the nations in a position of mutual apprehension and preparation for armed defence and attack than because the coexistence of the two ideologies is impossible. If this element is eliminated, a world in which these two ideologies could live together, arrive at an economic interchange, draw closer together, need not be at all out of the question; for the

world is moving towards a greater development of the principle of State control over the life of the community, and a congeries of socialistic States on the one hand, and on the other, of States coordinating and controlling a modified Capitalism might well come to exist side by side and develop friendly relations with each other. Even a World-State in which both could keep their own institutions and sit in a common assembly might come into being and a single world-union on this foundation would not be impossible. This development is indeed the final outcome which the foundation of the U.N.O. presupposes; for the present organisation cannot be itself final, it is only an imperfect beginning useful and necessary as a primary nucleus of that larger institution in which all the peoples of the earth can meet each other in a single international unity: the creation of a World-State is, in a movement of this kind, the one logical and inevitable ultimate outcome.

This view of the future may under present circumstances be stigmatised as a too facile optimism, but this turn of things is quite as possible as the more disastrous turn expected by the pessimists, since the cataclysm and crash of civilisation sometimes predicted by them need not at all be the result of a new war. Mankind has a habit of surviving the worst catastrophes created by its own errors or by the violent turns of Nature and it must be so if there is any meaning in its existence, if its long history and continuous survival is not the accident of a fortuitously self-organising Chance, which it must be in a purely materialistic view of the nature of the world. If man is intended to survive and carry forward the evolution of which he is at present the head and, to some extent, a half-conscious leader of its march, he must come out of his present chaotic international life and arrive at a beginning of organised united action; some kind of World-State, unitary or federal, or a confederacy or a coalition he must arrive at in the end; no smaller or looser expedient would adequately serve the purpose. In that case, the general thesis advanced in this book would stand justified and we can foreshadow with some confidence the main line of advance which the course of events is likely to take, at least the main trend of the future history of the human peoples.

The question now put by evolving Nature to mankind is whether its existing international system, if system it can be called, a sort of provisional order maintained with constant evolutionary or revolutionary changes, cannot be replaced by a willed and thought-out fixed arrangement, a true system, eventually a real unity serving all the common interests of the earth's peoples. An original welter and chaos with its jumble of forces forming, wherever it could, larger or smaller masses of civilisation and order which were in danger of crumbling or being shaken to pieces by attacks from the outer chaos was the first attempt at cosmos successfully arrived at by the genius of humanity. This was finally replaced by something like an international system with the elements of what could be called international law or fixed habits of intercommunication and interchange which allowed the nations to live together in spite of antagonisms and conflicts, a security alternating with precariousness and

peril and permitting of too many ugly features, however local, of oppression, bloodshed, revolt and disorder, not to speak of wars which sometimes devastated large areas of the globe. The indwelling deity who presides over the destiny of the race has raised in man's mind and heart the idea, the hope of a new order which will replace the old unsatisfactory order and substitute for it conditions of the world's life which will in the end have a reasonable chance of establishing permanent peace and well-being. This would for the first time turn into an assured fact the ideal of human unity which, cherished by a few, seemed for so long a noble chimera; then might be created a firm ground of peace and harmony and even a free room for the realisation of the highest human dreams, for the perfectibility of the race, a perfect society, a higher upward evolution of the human soul and human nature. It is for the men of our day and, at the most, of tomorrow to give the answer. For, too long a postponement or too continued a failure will open the way to a series of increasing catastrophes which might create a too prolonged and disastrous confusion and chaos and render a solution too difficult or impossible; it might even end in something like an irremediable crash not only of the present world-civilisation but of all civilisation. A new, a difficult and uncertain beginning might have to be made in the midst of the chaos and ruin after perhaps an extermination on a large scale, and a more successful creation could be predicted only if a way was found to develop a better humanity or perhaps a greater, a superhuman race.

The central question is whether the nation, the largest natural unit which humanity has been able to create and maintain for its collective living, is also its last and ultimate unit or whether a greater aggregate can be formed which will englobe many and even most nations and finally all in its united totality. The impulse to build more largely, the push towards the creation of considerable and even very vast supra-national aggregates has not been wanting; it has even been a permanent feature in the life-instincts of the race. But the form it took was the desire of a strong nation for mastery over others, permanent possession of their territories, subjugation of their peoples, exploitation of their resources: there was also an attempt at quasi-assimilation, an imposition of the culture of a dominant race and, in general, a system of absorption wholesale or as complete as possible. The Roman Empire was the classic example of this kind of endeavour and the Graeco-Roman unity of a single way of life and culture in a vast framework of political and administrative unity was the nearest approach within the geographical limits reached by this civilisation to something one might regard as a first figure or an incomplete suggestion of a figure of human unity. Other similar attempts have been made though not on so large a scale and with a less consummate ability throughout the course of history, but nothing has endured for more than a small number of centuries. The method used was fundamentally unsound in as much as it contradicted other life-instincts which were necessary to the vitality and healthy evolution of mankind and the denial of which must end in some kind of stagnation and arrested progress. The

imperial aggregate could not acquire the unconquerable vitality and power of survival of the nation-unit. The only enduring empire-units have been in reality large nation-units which took that name like Germany and China and these were not forms of the supra-national State and need not be reckoned in the history of the formation of the imperial aggregate. So, although the tendency to the creation of empire testifies to an urge in Nature towards larger unities of human life, — and we can see concealed in it a will to unite the disparate masses of humanity on a larger scale into a single coalescing or combined life-unit, — it must be regarded as an unsuccessful formation without a sequel and unserviceable for any further progress in this direction. In actual fact a new attempt of worldwide domination could succeed only by a new instrumentation or under novel circumstances in englobing all the nations of the earth or persuading or forcing them into some kind of union. An ideology, a successful combination of peoples with one aim and a powerful head like Communist Russia, might have a temporary success in bringing about such an objective. But such an outcome, not very desirable in itself, would not be likely to ensure the creation of an enduring World-State. There would be tendencies, resistances, urges towards other developments which would sooner or later bring about its collapse or some revolutionary change which would mean its disappearance. Finally, any such stage would have to be overpassed; only the formation of a true World-State, either of a unitary but still elastic kind, — for a rigidly unitary State might bring about stagnation and decay of the springs of life, — or a union of free peoples could open the prospect of a sound and lasting world-order.

It is not necessary to repeat or review, except in certain directions, the considerations and conclusions set forward in this book with regard to the means and methods or the lines of divergence or successive development which the actual realisation of human unity may take. But still on some sides possibilities have arisen which call for some modification of what has been written or the conclusions arrived at in these chapters. It had been concluded, for instance, that there was no likelihood of the conquest and unification of the world by a single dominant people or empire. This is no longer altogether so certain, for we have just had to admit the possibility of such an attempt under certain circumstances. A dominant Power may be able to group round itself strong allies subordinated to it but still considerable in strength and resources and throw them into a world struggle with other Powers and peoples. This possibility would be increased if the dominating Power managed to procure, even if only for the time being, a monopoly of an overwhelming superiority in the use of some of the tremendous means of aggressive military action which Science has set out to discover and effectively utilise. The terror of destruction and even of large-scale extermination created by these ominous discoveries may bring about a will in the governments and peoples to ban and prevent the military use of these inventions, but, so long as the nature of mankind has not changed, this prevention must remain uncertain and precarious and an unscrupulous ambition may even get

by it a chance of secrecy and surprise and the utilisation of a decisive moment which might conceivably give it victory and it might risk the tremendous chance. It may be argued that the history of the last war runs counter to this possibility, for in conditions not quite realising but approximating to such a combination of circumstances the aggressive Powers failed in their attempt and underwent the disastrous consequences of a terrible defeat. But after all, they came for a time within a hair's breadth of success and there might not be the same good fortune for the world in some later and more sagaciously conducted and organised adventure. At least, the possibility has to be noted and guarded against by those who have the power of prevention and the welfare of the race in their charge.

One of the possibilities suggested at the time was the growth of continental agglomerates, a united Europe, some kind of a combine of the peoples of the American continent under the leadership of the United States, even possibly in the resurgence of Asia and its drive towards independence from the dominance of the European peoples, a drawing together for self-defensive combination of the nations of this continent; such an eventuality of large continental combinations might even be a stage in the final formation of a world-union. This possibility has tended to take shape to a certain extent with a celerity that could not then be anticipated. In the two American continents it has actually assumed a predominating and practical form, though not in its totality. The idea of a United States of Europe has also actually taken shape and is assuming a formal existence, but is not yet able to develop into a completed and fully realised possibility because of the antagonism based on conflicting ideologies which cuts off from each other Russia and her satellites behind their iron curtain and Western Europe. This separation has gone so far that it is difficult to envisage its cessation at any foreseeable time in a predictable future. Under other circumstances a tendency towards such combinations might have created the apprehension of huge continental clashes such as the collision, at one time imagined as possible, between a resurgent Asia and the Occident. The acceptance by Europe and America of the Asiatic resurgence and the eventual total liberation of the Oriental peoples, as also the downfall of Japan which figured at one time and indeed actually presented itself to the world as the liberator and leader of a free Asia against the domination of the West, have removed this dangerous possibility. Here again, as elsewhere, the actual danger presents itself rather as a clash between two opposing ideologies, one led by Russia and Red China and trying to impose the Communistic extreme partly by military and partly by forceful political means on a reluctant or at least an infected but not altogether willing Asia and Europe, and on the other side a combination of peoples, partly capitalist, partly moderate socialist who still cling with some attachment to the idea of liberty, — to freedom of thought and some remnant of the free life of the individual. In America there seems to be a push, especially in the Latin peoples, towards a rather intolerant completeness of the Americanisation of the whole continent and the adjacent islands, a sort of extended

Monroe Doctrine, which might create friction with the European Powers still holding possessions in the northern part of the continent. But this could only generate minor difficulties and disagreements and not the possibility of any serious collision, a case perhaps for arbitration or arrangement by the U.N.O., not any more serious consequence. In Asia a more perilous situation has arisen, standing sharply across the way to any possibility of a continental unity of the peoples of this part of the world, in the emergence of Communist China. This creates a gigantic bloc which could easily englobe the whole of Northern Asia in a combination between two enormous Communist Powers, Russia and China, and would overshadow with a threat of absorption South-Western Asia and Tibet and might be pushed to overrun all up to the whole frontier of India, menacing her security and that of Western Asia with the possibility of an invasion and an overrunning and subjection by penetration or even by overwhelming military force to an unwanted ideology, political and social institutions and dominance of this militant mass of Communism whose push might easily prove irresistible. In any case, the continent would be divided between two huge blocs which might enter into active mutual opposition and the possibility of a stupendous world-conflict would arise dwarfing anything previously experienced: the possibility of any world union might, even without any actual outbreak of hostilities, be indefinitely postponed by the incompatibility of interests and ideologies on a scale which would render their inclusion in a single body hardly realisable. The possibility of a coming into being of three or four continental unions, which might subsequently coalesce into a single unity, would then be very remote and, except after a world-shaking struggle, hardly feasible.

At one time it was possible to regard as an eventual possibility the extension of Socialism to all the nations; an international unity could then have been created by its innate tendencies which turned naturally towards an overcoming of the dividing force of the nation-idea with its separatism and its turn towards competitions and rivalries often culminating in open strife; this could have been regarded as the natural road and could have turned in fact into the eventual way towards world-union. But, in the first place, Socialism has under certain stresses proved to be by no means immune against infection by the dividing national spirit and its international tendency might not survive its coming into power in separate national States and a resulting inheritance of competing national interests and necessities: the old spirit might very well survive in the new socialist bodies. But also there might not be or not for a long time to come an inevitable tide of the spread of Socialism to all the peoples of the earth: other forces might arise which would dispute what seemed at one time and perhaps still seems the most likely outcome of existing world tendencies; the conflict between Communism and the less extreme socialistic idea which still respects the principle of liberty, even though a restricted liberty, and the freedom of conscience, of thought, of personality of the individual, if this difference perpetuated itself, might create a serious difficulty in the formation of a World-State. It would not be

easy to build a constitution, a harmonised State-law and practice in which any modicum of genuine freedom for the individual or any continued existence of him except as a cell in the working of a rigidly determined automatism of the body of the collectivist State or a part of a machine would be possible or conceivable. It is not that the principle of Communism necessitates any such results or that its system must lead to a termite civilisation or the suppression of the individual; it could well be, on the contrary, a means at once of the fulfilment of the individual and the perfect harmony of a collective being. The already developed systems which go by the name are not really Communism but constructions of an inordinately rigid State Socialism. But Socialism itself might well develop away from the Marxist groove and evolve less rigid modes; a cooperative Socialism, for instance, without any bureaucratic rigour of a coercive administration, of a Police State, might one day come into existence, but the generalisation of Socialism throughout the world is not under existing circumstances easily foreseeable, hardly even a predominant possibility: in spite of certain possibilities or tendencies created by recent events in the Far East, a division of the earth between the two systems, capitalistic and socialistic, seems for the present a more likely issue. In America the attachment to individualism and the capitalistic system of society and a strong antagonism not only to Communism but to even a moderate Socialism remains complete and one can foresee little possibility of any abatement in its intensity. The extreme success of Communism creeping over the continents of the Old World, which we have had to envisage as a possibility, is yet, if we consider existing circumstances and the balance of opposing Powers, highly improbable and, even if it occurred, some accommodation would still be necessary, unless one of the two forces gained an overwhelming eventual victory over its opponent. A successful accommodation would demand the creation of a body in which all questions of possible dispute could be solved as they arose without any breaking out of open conflict, and this would be a successor of the League of Nations and the U.N.O. and move in the same direction. As Russia and America, in spite of the constant opposition of policy and ideology, have avoided so far any step that would make the preservation of the U.N.O. too difficult or impossible, this third body would be preserved by the same necessity or imperative utility of its continued existence. The same forces would work in the same direction and a creation of an effective world-union would still be possible; in the end the mass of general needs of the race and its need of self-preservation could well be relied on to make it inevitable.

There is nothing then in the development of events since the establishment of the United Nations Organisation, in the sequel to the great initiation at San Francisco of the decisive step towards the creation of a world-body which might end in the establishment of a true world-unity, that need discourage us in the expectation of an ultimate success of this great enterprise. There are dangers and difficulties, there can be an apprehension of conflicts, even of colossal conflicts that might jeopardise

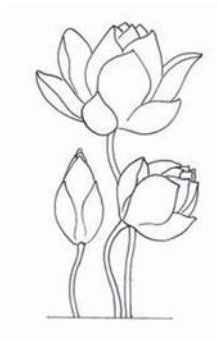
the future, but total failure need not be envisaged unless we are disposed to predict the failure of the race. The thesis we have undertaken to establish of the drive of Nature towards larger agglomerations and the final establishment of the largest of all and the ultimate union of the world's peoples still remains unaltered: this is evidently the line which the future of the human race demands and which conflicts and perturbations, however immense, may delay, even as they may modify greatly the forms it now promises to take, but are not likely to prevent; for a general destruction would be the only alternative destiny of mankind. But such a destruction, whatever the catastrophic possibilities balancing the almost certain beneficial results, hardly limitable in their extent, of the recent discoveries and inventions of Science, has every chance of being as chimerical as any early expectation of final peace and felicity or a perfected society of the human peoples. We may rely, if on nothing else, on the evolutionary urge and, if on no other greater hidden Power, on the manifest working and drift or intention in the World-Energy we call Nature to carry mankind at least as far as the necessary next step to be taken, a self-preserving next step: for the necessity is there, at least some general recognition of it has been achieved and of the thing to which it must eventually lead the idea has been born and the body of it is already calling for its creation. We have indicated in this book the conditions, possibilities, forms which this new creation may take and those which seem to be most desirable without dogmatising or giving prominence to personal opinion; an impartial consideration of the forces that work and the results that are likely to ensue was the object of this study. The rest will depend on the intellectual and moral capacity of humanity to carry out what is evidently now the one thing needful.

We conclude then that in the conditions of the world at present, even taking into consideration its most disparaging features and dangerous possibilities, there is nothing that need alter the view we have taken of the necessity and inevitability of some kind of world-union; the drive of Nature, the compulsion of circumstances and the present and future need of mankind make it inevitable. The general conclusions we have arrived at will stand and the consideration of the modalities and possible forms or lines of alternative or successive development it may take. The ultimate result must be the formation of a World-State and the most desirable form of it would be a federation of free nationalities in which all subjection or forced inequality and subordination of one to another would have disappeared and, though some might preserve a greater natural influence, all would have an equal status. A confederacy would give the greatest freedom to the nations constituting the World-State, but this might give too much room for fissiparous or centrifugal tendencies to operate; a federal order would then be the most desirable. All else would be determined by the course of events and by general agreement or the shape given by the ideas and necessities that may grow up in the future. A world-union of this kind would have the greatest chances of long survival or permanent

existence. This is a mutable world and uncertainties and dangers might assail or trouble for a time; the formed structure might be subjected to revolutionary tendencies as new ideas and forces emerged and produced their effect on the general mind of humanity, but the essential step would have been taken and the future of the race assured or at least the present era overpassed in which it is threatened and disturbed by unsolved needs and difficulties, precarious conditions, immense upheavals, huge and sanguinary world-wide conflicts and the threat of others to come. The ideal of human unity would be no longer an unfulfilled ideal but an accomplished fact and its preservation given into the charge of the united human peoples. Its future destiny would lie on the knees of the gods and, if the gods have a use for the continued existence of the race, may be left to lie there safe.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Ideal of Human Unity, CWSA, Vol. 25, pp. 579-95)



THE CENTURY OF LIFE

The Nitishataka of Bhartrihari freely rendered into English verse

I had at first entitled the translation “The Century of Morals”, but the Sanskrit word Niti has a more complex sense. It includes also policy and worldly wisdom, the rule of successful as well as the law of ideal conduct and gives scope for observation of all the turns and forces determining the movement of human character and action.

The Shataka or “century” should normally comprise a hundred epigrams, but the number that has come down to us is considerably more. The excess is probably due to accretion and the mistaken ascription to Bhartrihari of verses not of his making but cast in his spirit and manner.

SRI AUROBINDO

Invocation

To the calm Light inviolable all hail
Whom Time divides not, nor Space measures, One,
Boundless and Absolute who Is alone,
The eternal vast I Am immutable!

On Fools and Folly

Love’s Folly

She with whom all my thoughts dwell, is averse, —
She loves another. He whom she desires
Turns to a fairer face. Another worse
For me afflicted is with deeper fires.
Fie on my love and me and him and her!
Fie most on Love, this madness’ minister!

The Middle Sort

Easily shalt thou the ignorant appease;
 The wise more easily is satisfied;
 But one who builds his raw and foolish pride
 On a little lore not God himself can please.

Obstinacy in Folly

Go, with strong violence thy jewel tear
 From the fierce alligator's yawning jaws;
 Swim the wild surges when they lash the air
 Billow on billow thundering without pause;
 Or set an angry serpent in thy hair
 For garland! Sooner shalt thou gain their ruth
 Than conquer the fool's obstinate heart with truth.

On the Same

Nay, thou wilt find sweet oil in the sea-sands,
 Press them but firmly in thy strenuous hands:
 The desert-born mirage shall slake thy thirst,
 Or wandering through the earth thou shalt be first
 To find the horns of hares, who thinkst to school
 With reason the prejudgments of the fool.

Obstinacy in Vice

Yea, wouldst thou task thy muscles then the dread
 Strength of the mammoth to constrain with thread?
 Canst thou the diamond's adamant heart disclose
 With the sweet edge and sharpness of a rose?
 With a poor drop of honey wondrously
 Wilt thou make sweetness of the wide salt sea?
 Who dreamst with sugared perfect words to gain
 The dishonest to the ways of noble men!

Folly's Wisdom

One cloak on ignorance absolutely fits;
 Justly if worn, some grace is even lent;
 Silence in sessions of the learned sits
 On the fool's brow like a bright ornament.

A Little Knowledge

When I was with a little knowledge cursed,
 Like a mad elephant I stormed about
 And thought myself all-knowing. But when deep-versed
 Rich minds some portion of their wealth disbursed
 My poverty to raise, then for a lout
 And dunce I knew myself, and the insolence went
 Out from me like a fever violent.

Pride of Littleness

The dog upon a meatless bone and lank,
 Horrible, stinking, vile, with spittle wet,
 Feasts and with heaven's nectar gives it rank.
 Then though the ambrosial God should by him stand,
 He is not awed nor feels how base his fate,
 But keeps his ghastly gettings more in hand.
 The little nature deems its small things great
 And virtue scorns and strength and noble state.

Facilis Descensus

In highest heavens the Ganges' course began;
 From Shiva's loftiest brow to the white snows
 She tumbles, nor on the cold summits can,
 But headlong seeks the valley and the rose.
 Thence downward still the heaven-born waters ran.

Say not, "Is this that Ganges? can her place
 Be now so low?" Rather when man at all

From heavenly reason swerves, he sinks from grace
 Swiftly. A thousand voices downward call,
 A thousand doors are opened to his fall.

The Great Incurable

For all ill things there is a cure; the fire's
 Red spleen cool water shall at once appease,
 And noontide's urgent rays the sunshade tires,
 And there are spells for poison, and disease
 Finds in the leech's careful drugs its ease.

The raging elephant yet feels the goad,
 And the dull ass and obstinate bullock rule
 Cudgel and stick and force upon their road.
 For one sole plague no cure is found — the fool.

Bodies without Mind

Some minds there are to Art and Beauty dead,
 Music and poetry on whose dull ear
 Fall barren. Horns grace not their brutish head,
 Tails too they lack, yet is their beasthood clear.
 That Heaven ordained not upon grass their feasts,
 Good fortune is this for the other beasts.

The Human Herd

Whose days to neither charity nor thought
 Are given, nor holy deeds nor virtues prized,
 Nor learning, such to cumber earth were brought.
 How in the human world as men disguised
 This herd walk grazing, higher things unsought!

A Choice

Better were this, to roam in deserts wild,
 On difficult mountains and by desolate pools,
 A savage life with wild beasts reconciled,
 Than Paradise itself mated with fools.

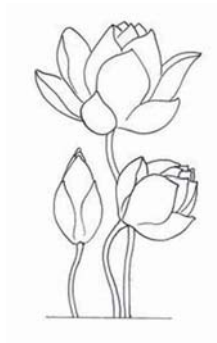
SRI AUROBINDO

(To be continued)

(Translations, CWSA, Vol. 5, pp. 313-20)

Editorial Note in CWSA:

Sri Aurobindo began this translation of the *Nitishataka* of Bhartrihari (sixth to seventh century) while in Baroda. He seems to have been referring to it when he spoke, in a letter to his uncle dated 15 August 1902, of “my MS of verse translations from Sanskrit”. Some of the epigrams were first published in the *Baroda College Miscellany*, presumably during the years he was a professor of English there (1898-1901 and 1905-06). A few others were published in the *Karmayogin* on 19 March 1910 and in the *Arya* in December 1917 and November 1918. The complete translation was preserved in the form of a forty-page typescript, preceded by an eight-page “Prefatory Note” (*see next page*). In 1924 the translation was published by the Shama’a Publishing House, Madras.



PREFATORY NOTE ON BHARTRIHARI

Bhartrihari's *Century of Morals* (Nitishataka), a series of poetical epigrams or rather *sentences* upon human life and conduct grouped loosely round a few central ideas, stands as the first of three similar works by one Master. Another *Century* touches with a heavy hand *Sringar*, sexual attraction; the third expresses with admirable beauty of form and intensity of feeling the sentiment of *Vairagya*, World-disgust, which, before & since Buddha, has figured so largely in Indian life. In a striking but quite superficial manner these brief stanzas remind us of the Greek epigram in the most masterly hands: *Mimnermus*, *Simonides*; but their spirit and the law of their internal structure relate them rather to a type of literature peculiarly Asiatic.

Classical Sanscrit literature, as a whole, is governed by an inner stress of spirit which urges it to a sort of lucid density of literary structure; in style a careful blending of curious richness with concentrated force and directness of expression, in thought and matter a crowded vividness and pregnant lucidity. The poet used one of the infinite harmonic variations of the four-lined stanza with which our classical prosody teems, or else the couplet called *Arya*, noble verse; and within these narrow limits he sought to give vividly some beautiful single picture, some great or apposite thought, some fine-edged sentiment. If a picture, it might be crowded with felicitous detail; if a thought, with pregnant suggestion; if a sentiment, with happy shades of feeling; but the whole must be perfectly lucid and firm in its unity. If these qualities were successfully achieved, the result was a *Subhashita*, a thing well said and therefore memorable. Sometimes the *Subhashita* clarified into a simple epigram, sometimes it overcharged itself with curious felicities, but the true type lay between the extremes. Similar tendencies are noticeable in the best Indian artwork in ivory, wood and metal, and even enter its architecture with that spirit which passed into the *Moguls* and informing new shapes of loveliness created the *Taj*. Many a small Hindu temple is a visible *Subhashita* in stone. In India of the classical times the tendency was so strong that poems of considerable magnitude like *Kalidasa's Race of Raghov* or *Magha's Slaying of Shishupala* are for the most part built up of stanzas on this model; in others there are whole passages which are merely a succession of *Subhashitas*, so that the account of a battle or a city scene affects us like a picture gallery and a great speech moves past in a pomp of high-crested armoured thoughts. A successful *Subhashita* of the highest type is for all the world as if some great ironclad sailing solitary on the limitless ocean were to turn its arc-light on a passing object; in the brilliant concentrated flood of lustre a small vessel is revealed; we see the masts, funnel, rails, decks, the guns in their positions, men standing on the deck, an officer on the bridge, every detail clear in the strange artificial lustre; next moment the light is shut off and the scene, relapsing into darkness, is yet left bitten in on the

brain. There is the same instantaneous concentration of vision, the same carefully-created luminousness and crowded lucidity of separate detail in the clear-cut unity of the picture.

But the Subhashita is not peculiar to India, it pervades Asia. The most characteristic verse of China and Japan is confined to this style; it seems to have overmastered Arabian poetry; that it is common in Persian the Rubaiyat of Omar and the writings of Hafiz and Sadi would appear to indicate. In India itself we find the basis of the style in some of the Upanishads, although the structure there is more flexible and flowing, not yet trained to the armoured compactness of classic diction. Subsequently the only class of writing which the spirit of the Subhashita did not invade, was that great mass of epic and religious literature which made its appeal to the many and not to the cultured few. In the Mahabharat, Ramayan and the Puranas we have the grand natural stream of Hindu poetry flowing abundantly through plain and valley, not embanked and banded by the engineer.

Kalidasa and Bhartrihari are the two mightiest masters of the characteristic classical style as it was at its best, before it degenerated into over-curiosity. Tradition tells us they were contemporaries. It is even said that Bhartrihari was an elder brother of Vikramaditya, Kalidasa's patron, — not of course Harsha of the sixth century to whom European scholarship has transferred the distinction, but the half-mythical founder of Malava power in the first century before Christ. To account for the succession of a younger brother, the old and common story of the fruit that changed hands till it returned disastrously to the first giver, is saddled on the great moralist. King Bhartrihari understood that his beloved wife was unfaithful to him, and, overwhelmed by the shock, fell wholly under the influence of Vairagya, abandoned his crown to Vikrama and sought the forest in the garb of an anchorite. The second stanza of the Century of Morals commemorates the unhappy discovery. But the epigram has no business in that place and it is doubtful whether it has a personal application; the story itself is an evident fiction. On the other hand the notion of some European scholars that Bhartrihari was a mere compiler of other people's Subhashitas, is not much better inspired. Undoubtedly, spurious verses were introduced and a few bear the mark of their extraneous origin; but I think no one who has acquired a feeling for Sanscrit style or is readily responsive to the subtle spirit in poetry can fail to perceive that the majority are by one master-craftsman. The question is for those to decide who have learned to feel the shades of beauty and peculiarities of tinge in words (a quite different thing from shades of meaning and peculiarities of use) and to regard them not as verbal counters or grammatical formations but as living things. Without this subtle taste for words the finer personal elements of style, those which do not depend on general principles of structure, cannot be well-appreciated. There are collections of Subhashitas in plenty, but the style of Bhartrihari is a distinct style and the personality of Bhartrihari is a distinct personality. There is nothing of that infinite variety of tone, note, personal attitude

— I do not refer to mere shiftings of standpoint and inconsistencies of opinion — which stamp a collection; there is one characteristic tone, a note strong and unmistakeable, the persistent self-repetition of an individual manner. All is mint of a single mind.

Bhartrihari's Centuries are important to us as the finished expression of a thoroughly typical Aryan personality in the most splendid epoch of Indian culture. The most splendid, not the best; for the vigorous culture mirrored in the epics has been left behind; the nobly pure, strong and humane civilisation which produced Buddha gives way to a civilisation a little less humane, much less masculine, infinitely less pure, yet richer, more variously coloured, more delightful to the taste and senses; the millennium of philosophy and heroism yields to the millennium of luxury and art. Of the new civilisation Kalidasa is the perfect and many-sided representative; he had the receptive, alchemistic imagination of the great world-poets, Shakespeare, Homer and Valmeki, and everything that was in his world he received into that alembic with a deep creative delight and transmuted into forms and sounds of magical beauty. Bhartrihari's was a narrower mind and intenser personality. He represents his age in those aspects which powerfully touched his own individual life and character, but to others, not having catholicity of moral temper, he could not respond. He was evidently a Kshatriya; for all his poetry breathes that proud, grandiose, arrogantly noble spirit of the old magnanimous Indian aristocracy, extreme in its self-assertion, equally extreme in its self-abnegation, which made the ancient Hindu people one of the three or four great peoples of antiquity. The savour of the Kshatriya spirit in Bhartrihari is of the most personal, intimate kind, not the purely poetic and appreciative delight of Kalidasa. It is with him grain of character, not mere mental impression. It expresses itself even in his Vairagya by the fiery and ardent, almost fierce spirit which inspires his asceticism, — how different from the fine quietism of the Brahmin! But the Century of World-disgust, although it contains some of his best poetry, is not to us his most characteristic and interesting work; we find that rather in the Century of Morals.

This Century is an admirable, if incomplete poetic rendering of the great stock of morality which our old writers summarised in the one word Arya, — Aryan, noble. The word Arya has been thought to correspond very closely to the English idea of a gentleman, — inaccurately, for its conception is larger and more profound in moral content. Arya and Anarya correspond in their order of ideas partly to the totality indicated by the word, *gentleman*, and its opposite, partly to the conceptions knightly and unknighly, partly to the qualities suggested in an English mind by the expressions English and unEnglish as applied to conduct. The Aryan man is he who observes in spirit and letter the received code of a national morality which included the higher niceties of etiquette, the bold and chivalrous temper of a knightly and martial aristocracy, the general obligations of truth, honour and high feeling, and, crowning all, such great ideals of the Vedic and Buddhistic religion, — sweetness,

forbearance, forgiveness, charity, self-conquest, calm, self-forgetfulness, self-immolation — as had entered deeply into the national imagination.

The ideas of the Century of Morals are not in themselves extraordinary, nor does Bhartrihari, though he had a full share of the fine culture of his age, appear to have risen in intellectual originality beyond the average level; it is the personality which appears in the Centuries that is striking. Bhartrihari is, as Matthew Arnold would have said, in the grand style. He has the true heroic turn of mind and turn of speech; he breathes a large and puissant atmosphere. High-spirited, high-minded, high of temper, keen in his sympathies, admiring courage, firmness and daring aspiration above all things, thrilling to impulses of humanity, kindness and self-sacrifice in spite of his rugged strength, dowered with a trenchant power of scorn and sombre irony, and occasionally of stern invective, but sweetening this masculine severity of character with varied culture and the old high Indian worship of knowledge, goodness and wisdom, such is the man who emerges from the one hundred and odd verses of the Shataka. The milder and more feminine shades of the Aryan ideal he does not so clearly typify. We have often occasion to ask ourselves, What manner of men did the old Aryan discipline, uniting with the new Helleno-Asiatic culture, succeed in producing? Bhartrihari is at least one type of its products.

And yet in the end a doubt breaks in. Was he altogether of his age? Was he not born in an alien time and an evil day? He would have been better at home, one fancies, with the more masculine temper depicted in the Mahabharata. Certainly he ended in disgust and fled for refuge to ascetic imaginations not wholly characteristic of his time. He had lived the life of courts, was perhaps an official of high standing and seems to have experienced fully the affronts, uncertainties, distastes to which such a career has always been exposed. From the beginning stray utterances point to a growing dissatisfaction and in the end there comes the poignant cry of a thwarted life. When we read the Century of Passion, we seem to come near the root of his malady. As in the earlier Century he has subdued to the law of poetical form the ethical aspects of life, so now will he deal with the delight of the senses; but how little of real delight there is in this misnamed Century of Passion! Bhartrihari is no real lover, certainly; but neither is he a genuine voluptuary. Of that keen-edged honey-laden delight in the joy of the senses and the emotions which thrills through every line of Kalidasa's *Cloud*, there is no faintest trace. Urged into voluptuous experience by fashion and habit, this high and stern nature had no real vocation for the life of the senses; in this respect, and who shall say in how many others, he was out of harmony with the moral atmosphere of his times, and at last turned from it all to cry aloud the holy name of Shiva by the waters of the pure and ancient river, the river Ganges, while he waited impatiently for the great release. . . . But this too was not his vocation. He had too much defiance, fire, self-will for the ascetic. To have fallen in the forefront of ancient heroic battle or to have consummated himself in some grandiose act of self-sacrifice, this would have been his life's fitting fulfilment,

the true end of Bhartrihari.

The edition followed in the main is that of Mr. Telang in the Bombay Sanscrit Series. The accepted order of the verses, although it admits a few gross errors and misplacements, has nevertheless been preserved. All the Miscellaneous Epigrams at the end have been omitted from the rendering;¹ and three others, the 90th which has crept in from the Shakuntala of Kalidasa, the 104th which is an inferior version of an earlier epigram and the 18th which has come down to us in a hopelessly corrupt condition. The 27th epigram occurs in the Mudrarakshasa but has been admitted as it is entirely in Bhartrihari's spirit and manner and may have been copied into the play. Some other verses which do not bear internal evidence of Bhartrihari's authorship in their style and spirit, have yet been given the benefit of the doubt.

The principle of translation followed has been to preserve faithfully the thought, spirit and images of the original, but otherwise to take the full licence of a poetical rendering. In translation from one European tongue into another a careful literalness may not be out of place, for the genius, sentence structure and turns of thought of European languages are not very dissimilar; they belong to one family. But the gulf between Sanscrit and English in these respects is very wide, and any attempt at close verbal rendering would be disastrous. I have made no attempt to render the distinctive features of Bhartrihari's style; on the contrary I have accepted the necessity of substituting for the severity & compact massiveness of Sanscrit diction which must necessarily vanish in translation, the greater richness & colour preferred by the English tongue. Nor have I attempted to preserve the peculiar qualities of the Subhashita; Bhartrihari's often crowded couplets and quatrains have been perforce dissolved into a looser and freer style and in the process have sometimes expanded to considerable dimensions. Lines of cunningly wrought gold have had to be beaten out into some tenuity. Otherwise the finer associations & suggestions of the original would have been lost or blurred. I hold it more pardonable in poetical translation to unstring the language than to dwarf the spirit and mutilate the thought. For in poetry it is not the verbal substance that we seek from the report or rendering of foreign masterpieces; we desire rather the spiritual substance, the soul of the poet & the soul of his poetry. We cannot hear the sounds & rhythms loved & admired by his countrymen and contemporaries; but we ask for as many as we can recover of the responses & echoes which that ancient music set vibrating in the heavens of their thought.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*Translations*, CWSA, Vol. 5, pp. 368-75)

1. Sri Aurobindo included a series of "Miscellaneous Verses" in the final translation. — Ed.

‘ALL IS LIGHT, ALL IS LOVE . . .’

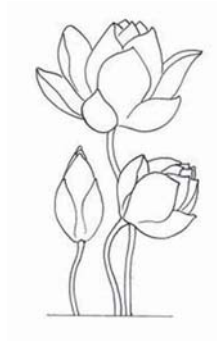
June 11, 1914

Every morning, O Lord, an innumerable salutation rises towards Thee, a salutation from all the states of being and from all the multitude of their elements. And it is a daily consecration of all things to the All, a call from ignorance and egoism to Thy light and love. And Thy answer comes constant and is integrally perceived: All is light, all is love, ignorance and egoism are but vain phantoms, they can be dissolved.

And over all things spreads Thy sovereign peace, Thy fecund calmness.

THE MOTHER

(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, p. 169)



THE MOTHER'S GUIDANCE IN THE GROWTH OF AUROVILLE

[Between March and August of 1970, Mother met weekly in her room a small number of Aurovilians, many from 'Aspiration', a community in Auroville. Some of the following passages are taken from those conversations.]

Some other selections are from Satprem's recording of his conversations with the Mother.]

The aspiration of Auroville

A: We would like to speak to you about work in Aspiration. What we would like to know, what we are looking for, is the right attitude . . .

What is the trouble?

A: The trouble is . . .

Each one pulls in his own direction.

A: Each one pulls in his own direction. No one is really in contact with what is true.

We have to bear in mind that we are starting from the present state of humanity. So you must face all the difficulties; you must find the solution.

(Pointing to the tape-recorder) What is that?

B: I am recording for the people of Auromodèle, Sweet Mother.

(Mother laughs) You shouldn't have told me!

A: But, Sweet Mother, you know, several solutions are open to us. For instance, on one hand . . .

Each man has his solution, and that is the great difficulty. To be in the Truth, each one has his solution. And yet we must find a way for all these solutions to work together.

(Silence)

So the framework must be vast, very flexible, and there must be a great goodwill from everyone: that is the first condition — the first individual condition — goodwill. To be flexible enough to do the best thing to be done at each moment.

A: But for example, we are told that we must have factories, that we must produce, and some of us have no feeling for that sort of work. We would prefer a seeking which is more . . .

More inward?

A: More inward, rather than to launch into factories, work, production for the sake of money, etc. That is not what we feel, that is not what we want to do in Aspiration at the moment. We would like to know what you think about it.

(Mother concentrates and there is a long silence.)

To be practical, you must first have a very clear vision of your goal, of where you are going. From this point of view, take money for example. An ideal which may be several hundred years ahead of its time, we don't know: money should be a power which belongs to nobody and which should be controlled by the most universal wisdom present. Put on the earth someone who has a vision vast enough to be able to know the needs of the earth and precise enough to be able to tell where the money should go — you understand, we are very far from that, aren't we? For the moment, the gentleman still says, "This is mine", and when he is generous, he says, "I give it to you." That's not it.

But there is a long way to go between what we are and what must be. And for that we must be very flexible, never losing sight of the goal, but knowing that we cannot reach it at one bound and that we must find the way. Well, that is much more difficult, even more difficult than to make the inner discovery. Truly speaking, that should have been made before coming here.

For there is a starting-point: when you have found within yourself the light that never wavers, the presence which can guide you with certitude, then you become aware that constantly, in everything that happens, there is something to be learnt, and that in the present state of matter there is always a progress to be made. That is how one should come, eager to find out at every minute the progress to be made. To have a life that wants to grow and perfect itself, that is what the collective ideal of Auroville should be: "A life that wants to grow and perfect itself", and above all, not in the same way for everyone — each one in his own way.

Well, now there are thirty of you, it is difficult, isn't it? When there are thirty

thousand of you, it will be easier, because, naturally, there will be many more possibilities. You are the pioneers, you have the most difficult task, but I feel it is the most interesting one. Because you must establish in a concrete, durable and growing way the attitude that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson that is needed to truly be an Aurovilian. To learn every day the lesson of the day. . . . Each sunrise is an opportunity to make a discovery. So, with that state of mind, you find out. Everyone does.

And the body needs activity: if you keep it inactive, it will begin to revolt by becoming sick and so on. It needs an activity, it really needs an activity like planting flowers, building a house, something really material. You must feel it. Some people do exercises, some ride bicycles, there are countless activities, but in your little group you must all come to an agreement so that each one can find the activity which suits his temperament, his nature and his need. But not with ideas. Ideas are not much good, ideas give you preconceptions, for example, "That is a good work, that work is not worthy of me," and all that sort of nonsense. There is no bad work — there are only bad workers. All work is good when you know how to do it in the right way. Everything. And it is a kind of communion. If you are fortunate enough to be conscious of an inner light, you will see that in your manual work it is as if you called the Divine down into things; then the communion becomes very concrete, there is a whole world to be discovered, it is marvellous.

You are young, you have plenty of time before you. And to be young, to be really young, we must always, always keep on growing, developing, progressing. Growth is the sign of youthfulness and there is no limit to the growth of consciousness. I know old people of twenty and young people of fifty, sixty, seventy. And if one does manual work, one keeps in good health.

So now you must find the solution.

A: All right.

Everything you can do . . . there are all sorts of things, all sorts. And you should see among yourselves how it can be arranged. You will come and tell me, all right?

B: Yes, all right.

Then, good-bye. Come again in a week.

(10.3.1970)
(CWM 13: 310-13)

*

Come in (*Mother laughs*)

(Those who enter offer flowers to Mother. Pointing to the flowers named "Service", she says, laughing:)

Service to Auroville.

(Mother arranges the flowers and distributes them. While giving "Service" and "Transformation" flowers, she remarks:)

It is service which leads to transformation. I mean it seriously.

A: Sweet Mother, may we ask you a question?

Yes.

A: It is on behalf of Aspiration in general.

Oh!

A: In Aspiration some people would like to know whether it would be possible for it to be not always the same people who come to see you on Tuesdays.

You see, I am quite willing, but it is up to you. (*Mother laughs*) No! I am willing to see four of you.

(Turning to C) I have called him for the first time today, but in his place other people could take turns in coming. In any case I will be seeing him. But with you three, a fourth person can come, taking turns, a different one each time.

A: Very well.

All I ask is that they should be sincere, that they do not come out of mere curiosity. If they are sincere, if they truly want to progress, they may come one at a time, I am quite willing. I do not even need to know their names. You see, that has no importance to me. It is only the quality of the receptivity that counts. If they are open and feel that it does them good, then fine, it is very good. . . .

(To C) So you will come once a week to keep me informed about the garden. . . . You, you people come from Auroville; him, he works here. . . . Is that all right?

A: Quite all right, Sweet Mother.

(Long silence)

How many of you are there out there?

A: About forty.

(Mother laughs) I'm going to ask you an indiscreet question. How many are sincere? You can't know that just by looking at them. There won't be forty coming here! How many asked you if they could come?

B: Five, six.

That's reasonable. Who?

B: There were D, E, F — and many people there feel much love for you, you know.

(Silence)

I am going to set two conditions. To want to progress — that is really a moderate condition. To want to progress, to know that everything is yet to be done, everything is yet to be conquered. The second condition: to do something every day, some activity, some work, anything, something which is not for oneself, and above all something which is an expression of goodwill for all — you are a group, aren't you? — simply to show that you do not live solely for yourselves as if you were at the centre of the universe and the whole universe had to revolve around you. That is how it is for the vast majority of people, and they don't even know it. Each one should become aware that, spontaneously, one puts oneself at the centre of the universe and wants everything to come to oneself, just like that, in one way or another. But one should make an effort to recognise the existence of the whole, that's all. It is to widen one's consciousness, just to become a little less tiny.

So those who adhere to my programme will come once a week, in turn . . . those who want to progress and who think that the world is vaster than themselves, than their own consciousness.

(24.3.1970)

(CWM 13: 314-16)

*

A: . . . about visitors, the people who come to Aspiration. There are two categories: those who stay for the day and have their meals there, and those who want to spend the night and who want to stay. We do not know what attitude we should take towards them in general.

Spending the night is not possible, is it? You have no room?

A: No, we have no room.

But where do they come from? Are they sent by the [Sri Aurobindo] Society or do they come just like that?

A: Some of them are sent by the Society, but not all. We don't always know where they come from.

There ought to be some supervision.

A: Because sometimes it creates misunderstandings, which are not . . .

You should have an office, that is to say, there ought to be someone there all the time, someone who could receive people coming from outside, interview them, find out who has sent them, where they come from, why they have come. He should be an Indian. That is absolutely indispensable, someone who speaks . . .

A: Some Indians come, but many Europeans as well — Germans, for instance, and Englishmen, Americans and Frenchmen too; they just happen to be passing by and . . .

There should be one Indian and one European who can speak at least French and English. If he could speak German too it would be still better. But nowadays, with English . . .

Spending the night — I don't agree, because we know nothing about what they are like or what they want or why they have come. Those who come with a recommendation, someone knows them, they have been sent to us, that is different; but those who come just like that — there must be someone to tell them what it's all about, and that it is not an object of curiosity.

A: But, Sweet Mother, for instance, let us take an example: if someone has already come to Aspiration and has left to go and work somewhere else, and he would like to come back from time to time, what attitude should we . . . in that case, could he spend the night there?

Is he a nice person?

A: Yes, he is a nice person.

Then it is all right. That is quite different, it is different. I am talking about strangers, people whom we do not know and who come just like that. Who could receive them?

A: Well, in fact I don't really know. We ought to discuss it among ourselves. I don't know.

Yes, perhaps it would not be much fun.

A: Not always.

But it would be rather useful, it would be very useful. It would be enough to have a table and a chair — you invite them in and interview them. If necessary, there could be a stool for them!

A: We could also give them something to drink . . .

(Mother laughs) Oh! That's too much. "What do you expect from us, who told you about us", etc. . . . And then it ought to be someone with a little psychological insight. If he sees that the people are sincere and interesting, then it is all right; but to spend the night — better not.

A: On the other hand, we have decided to ask for money from people who have a meal there.

Yes, ask them to pay.

A: Ask them to pay — is it all right?

Yes, yes, it is all right. You have only to set a fixed price. Who is doing the cooking?

A: We have had a cook for a month, a Tamil man who learned to cook during the fifteen years he spent in France; and there are people helping him in the kitchen. But he is always there.

(Jokingly) You could open a little restaurant!

Do you know M?

A: Yes.

He has some sort of shop for selling things.

A: Yes, a store.

Yes, that's it. But there is no one to look after it at night and so there are thefts. And it seems that you have too many people and not enough accommodation. So what I suggested was that each month someone could go there to sleep at night and come back in the morning, if it's not too far.

A: It's three kilometres away.

G: Three or four kilometres, Sweet Mother.

Oh, well that's nothing.

A: By cycle it is nothing.

By cycle — do you have bicycles?

A: Yes, though actually we don't have enough. We must get some more. We don't have enough cycles but we can find some more.

And all you have to do is go there in the evening, at night, and come back in the morning. At night the bicycles won't be needed [at Aspiration]. But if you know M, he could take one of you along and show him and explain it to him.

A: All right.

I think it will be all right. . . . I don't know what it's like, I couldn't say, but I hope that it will be comfortable.

A: And what do you think about making a big hut to house twenty or twenty-five people? It was one of N's ideas.

I think that until there is enough accommodation for everyone it is quite indispensable. I'm not saying that it will be super-comfortable, but it is most indispensable.

(31.3.1970)
(CWM 13: 319-23)

*

[*The Mother commented to Satprem regarding her meeting with the Aurovilians in succession:*]

I see people from Auroville in rotation (once a week), in fact to try and work on this material, and it's really interesting (people I don't know: every time I am brought one or two or three new ones; some stay on, and others come in rotation). I said, "Those who want a bath of silence can come in turn", and not a word is spoken. It's really interesting. Well, there are people there who behave like . . . and despite everything, they feel that what they are here is superior to what they are there. But the others would need to have a lot of patience! . . .

(*Conversation of 22 April 1970*)

*

Do you know the small Ashram brooches? Well, there is going to be one for Auroville. Because there are people who come and settle down on Auroville land and they refuse to go and see the Committee, saying, "Auroville is free!" and they settle down there. But all the same, we need to be able to distinguish between those who are recognized Aurovilians and those who are more fanciful. So something is being prepared — of course, it is not ready yet. I only wanted to show you. (*Mother takes a sheet of paper from her table.*)

It will be a small brooch about this size. It is like this. The circle will be made of silver; and here are the four aspects, and Sri Aurobindo's square with the lotus. And "Auroville" will be written all around it. So you will wear that in your buttonhole — the recognised Aurovilians! (*Mother smiles.*)

(28.4.1970)

(*CWM 13: 329-30*)

*

[*Regarding the brooch, the following day the Mother told Satprem:*]

We're going to have to give Auroville people some identity object. Yes, it has happened that some people came and settled on Auroville's lands without asking for anyone's permission, and suddenly we find ourselves faced with a man or a family . . . So it's beginning to be troublesome. Because it's very scattered.

(*Conversation of 29 April 1970*)

*

[In August 1971 the Mother designed the symbol for Auroville.]



SYMBOL OF AUROVILLE

The dot at the centre represents Unity, the Supreme; the inner circle represents the creation, the conception of the City; the petals represent the power of expression, realisation.*

16 August 1971
(CWM 13: 212)

*

But I must say there's literally an invasion there (at different places in Auroville) because it's not watched over, some plots of land are free, and at the center especially, some people have settled there, and there are constantly people who come and settle without asking for permission. So there was a thought to have a "badge" for those who are really Aurovilians (*Mother shows a specimen of badge*). For a few days already they've been thinking of organising that: during the first year they will have a sort of identity card, and afterwards, if things are fine at the end of the year, you're given the badge.

(Conversation of 2 May 1970)

*

At Auroville nothing belongs to anyone

At Auroville nothing belongs to anyone in particular. All is collective property. To be utilised with my blessings for the welfare of all.

14 May 1970
(CWM 13: 207)

*

* Oral comment, noted from memory by a sadhak; approved by the Mother for publication.

Did you see the brochure [on *Auroville and Religions*]? It's nice . . . I had it distributed in Auroville. People from "Auromodèle" come in turn every Tuesday afternoon (five or six of them), so yesterday I gave them that.

But I too see some of them: one after another they come to see me.

Ah!

Yes, one feels they're beginning to wake up a little.

Yes, yes, it's beginning to stir.

A few are nice . . .

What do they tell you? It would amuse me to know.

Most of them have problems of action — or rather of lack of action.

Yes.

Also problems of relationship among themselves, and so on. So I try . . . I tell them what comes to me at the time. I try to make them understand the great thing behind.

Yes, it does them good. They need to be guided.

But one of them even asked me if I could go there! . . .

(Mother laughs)

So I told them, listen! . . . No, giving speeches is quite useless. All those who want to come like that, individually I can say something for them, but not collectively.

(Mother approves)

(Conversation of 20 May 1970)

*

Are there any questions?

A: There have been some reactions about the little booklet that you gave us on religions, about the sentence which says: "Our search will not be a search effected by mystic means."¹

They don't know what mystic means are?

A: Maybe they don't know, but perhaps what we do not know either is this: why not by mystic means? I have been asked the question.

By "mystic means" I mean the way of those who withdraw from life, like the monks, the people who withdraw into convents, or like the sannyasins here, those who abandon life to find spiritual life, who make a division between the two and say, "It is either one or the other." We say, "That is not true." It is in life and by living life entirely that one can live the spiritual life, that one *must* live the spiritual life. The supreme consciousness has to be brought *here*. From the purely material and physical point of view, man is not the last race. As man came after the animal, so another being must come after man. And as there is only one Consciousness, it is the same Consciousness which having had the experience of man will have the experience of a superhuman being. And so if we go away, if we leave life, if we reject life, then we will never be ready to do that.

But if you had read Sri Aurobindo, you would have understood, you would not have asked this question. It is because there is a lack of preparation from the intellectual point of view. You want to know everything without having studied.

(To A) Now, what else do you have to say?

A: That is all. Yes, there is something else, if you don't mind. It is a letter from T. A letter from T who is here and who asked me to read it to you.

All right.

A: (Reading:) "Concerning what you have written about religions, a prayer rises up towards you. We ask for the Divine's Truth, fulfilled in the Truth of our being; we ask that our actions may manifest His Truth, that our minds and hearts may be exclusively moved by His Truth. We implore the full Light of His Truth on all that is still unconscious. With His Truth we want to know, through His Truth we want to act, and in His Truth we want to be. This is the prayer of Auroville to the Supreme. Be the triumphant Mother of our consciousness."

1. "Our research will not be a search effected by mystic means. It is in life itself that we wish to find the Divine. And it is through this discovery that life can really be transformed."

It could be put up on the notice-board. It is very good, very good.

(R, indicates that he has a question to ask.)

What do you have to say?

R: I have a question, Mother, a practical question.

Practical?

R: It seems very difficult to be able to want to achieve any specific aim and at the same time to love everyone. When we begin to want something and try to act with a particular result in mind, immediately we cut ourselves off from everyone who does not agree with that. In practice, how can we do both at the same time?

You cut yourself off from people who do not think as you do?

R: Really . . . all the time. . . .

But not a single person thinks as you do!

R: Of course.

So how can you love anyone?

R: As long as I don't want anything, it is all right.

Oh!

R: Yes!

(Mother concentrates for two or three minutes)

It is because when you want something, it is the ego that wants. So, the ego . . . must be ignored. The first thing to do is not to act for yourself but to act in obedience to the Divine, to express the divine Will. For your part, you have no orders to give. As long as it is a personal will, a personal desire, it is not the true thing, and you cannot . . . not only is it not the true thing, but you cannot know the true thing!

That must be *(gesture of rejecting something forcefully)* . . . *that must be expelled!*

That is why alone, we are nothing at all. This is life. We do not act for ourselves. We do not act from our personal will and for a personal result. We act only by the divine Will and for the divine Will. So much so, that effortlessly, spontaneously, we can feel the greatest tenderness for our physical enemy. When you have felt that, you will understand. That is the whole limitation, the whole limitation.

When conflicts arise, and they arise all the time, for all of us — immediately it is as if one were drawing back into one's own skin. For that is what happens: each one draws back inside himself. But the difficulty is that even when one has relatively little personal will, if the person next to you expresses a personal will, it is exactly . . . First of all it creates a reaction and then too, if you are more or less in agreement with it, you take this will, you see, and you begin to reflect it all around. So you can see what happens. And that is going on all the time. First one person has a will, and then another, and so on, endlessly. That is happening everywhere; the strongest will prevails. It is worthless, worthless.

When we say, "We are at the service of the Divine", it is not just words. It is He who should act through us, not we ourselves. The greatest objection is: How can we know the divine Will? But as a matter of fact, I tell you: if you sincerely renounce your personal will, you will know.

R: Yes, that is clear.

Yes, that's it.

(Mother remains silent, concentrating on each person present, for about fifteen minutes. Then to A:)

So, you will explain that to them.

We want to change life — we do not want to run away from it. . . . Until now all those who have tried to know what they called God, to enter into relation with God, have abandoned life. They have said, "Life is an obstacle. We shall abandon life for that." So, in India you had the sannyasins who renounced everything; in Europe you had the monks and the ascetics. Well, they can escape, even though when they are reborn they will have to begin all over again. But life remains as it is.

(26.5.1970)

(CWM 13: pp. 330-34)

*

I have been asked to formulate the aspiration of Auroville. Because there is a lot of goodwill, but it is . . . it does not seem to be organised. So, I said: the best thing to do is to formulate what Auroville wants to be. That will provide some coordination.

But it is a great task.

Each time, we could formulate one of the aspirations, or else you could bring me a question each time. And there will be many of them, so, one question and then either I will answer right away or I will give you the answer the next time. Or else, we can try to express together the aspiration of Auroville.

A: Do you already have some vision of what this aspiration is?

Of course! Of course! I know what I want, I know what I want Auroville to be. But there is a considerable gap . . . It is Auroville in a few years' time, many years from now.

A: But you think that we shall achieve this future Auroville?

This is how we will proceed: each time you come, I will give you one of Auroville's aspirations and then we'll put them one after the other, and the next time you can ask me a question on what I have said the time before. There is one drawback; it is not always the same people who come. There are three of you who always come. You must keep up the continuity.

What must one be to be a true Aurovilian? You put the question like that. What must one be to be a true Aurovilian? (*To A*) Do you have any ideas?

A: For me, the first thing, to really be an Aurovilian, is the will to consecrate oneself wholly to the Divine.

That is good, it is good; but there are not many like that. (*To G*) Here, give me a piece of paper. I'm going to write that down as number one.

(*Mother writes*) "To Be a True Aurovilian." I have written it with only one "I" on purpose.

So, we shall see about number two.

From the point of view of behaviour, of more down-to-earth things, for example: We want to be free from all moral and social conventions. But that is where we have to be very careful! One must not liberate oneself from these things by sinking below them into license and the blind satisfaction of desires; one must liberate oneself from these conventions by rising above them and by eliminating desires, and replace moral rules by obedience to the Divine.

(*G offers Mother a notebook in which to write what she has just said.*)

It is not in a form which can be written down.

G: Yes, Sweet Mother.

Now we will be silent.

G: There is a question, Sweet Mother.

Eh?

G: There is a question.

A question? What question? Who has a question?

G: It is B here, who teaches Judo at Aspiration. He says, "Sweet Mother, why is it so difficult to carry on a physical activity, sports or any other, in Auroville in general and particularly in Aspiration?"

Difficult? Why is it difficult?

B: It is difficult, Sweet Mother, to be steady, to go on with an activity, sports or any other, which we have started. So I am asking you why.

Don't you have any students?

B: We have started Judo classes. There were eight of us two months ago, but now we are two or three. And for many activities it is like that.

What reason do they give? Is it laziness, indolence, or because they feel superior?

B: I don't know, Sweet Mother.

If it is laziness, you must begin slowly and gradually build up as the body becomes used to it. If it is because of a sense of superiority, that is a *serious* disease! (*Mother laughs*) It must be cured!

We have been given a body not to reject it but to make it into something better. And that is precisely one of the goals of Auroville. The human body must be improved, perfected, and it must become a superhuman body capable of expressing a being higher than man. And this certainly cannot happen if we neglect it. It is by an enlightened physical culture and by using physical activities — the activities of the body — not for little personal needs and satisfactions, but to make the body more capable of expressing a higher beauty and consciousness. And for that, physical education has an important place, which should be given to it.

The question "Why are they like that?" — everyone says to me, "They are like this. They are like that. Why are they like that?" And in every domain. And that is

precisely why I thought of doing what I spoke of before: formulating the true aspiration of Auroville.

And this cultivation of the body must be done with an enlightened sense, not to do eccentric or marvellous things, but to give the body the possibility of being strong and supple enough to express a higher consciousness.

That will be part of the long list.

They need to be told a little. . . . Each has come with an aspiration, the idea that he would find something new, but it is not very clear. And so they must be given a clear picture, comprehensive enough for all the aspirations to be able to find their place and their expression. We will do that. We see each other once a week. We will do it little by little.

(*To B*) You will have to tell them, but I have just said it. They can be told, you can tell them: physical culture has an important place in preparing the body for its new functions. There! (*Mother laughs.*)

(There follows a quarter of an hour's meditation. Then Mother takes back the notebook in which she has written "To Be a True Aurovilian" and point number one of the "long list" and says:)

There! I have written number two: "The Aurovilian does not want to be a slave to his desires." It is a major resolution.

(2.6.1970)

(CWM 13: 334-37)

*

Opening to the new consciousness

What I tried to tell him is that this new consciousness doesn't demand spiritual athleticism, great concentrations and meditations and tapasya [austerities], or special virtues. . . .

No.

It simply demands trust in something else, a sort of childlike trust, and a need of something else.

Yes, that's right.

Above all, he was afraid it was again a question of "spiritual discipline".

No, no, no! There's no question of that.

But people always fall for that! Even in Auroville: they want "meditation"! And I can't decently tell them, "It's useless"! (*Mother laughs*)

(*Conversation of 23 May 1970*)

*

To be a true Aurovilian

Yesterday we started a work for Auroville, that is to say, we're basically trying to give people from "Aspiration" an idea, simply, of what Aurovilians want: why they are here and what they want. Because it appears that . . . in fact they've no idea about it. Each one of them came expecting something, but all that isn't coordinated, it's not clear. So R. asked me to clearly express important points. I thought it would be better to do it with the people so as to know what they themselves want, and to have them make an effort to find out. Otherwise . . . So we started yesterday (*Mother takes out a piece of paper*).

Yesterday I asked C. [*a resident of Aspiration*], "But why does one live in Auroville?" So he gave me the first paragraph:

TO BE A TRUE AUROVILIAN

1. The will to consecrate oneself entirely to the Divine.

That's what *he* said. I found it fine. After listening inwardly, I added this:

2. The Aurovilian must not be a slave to his desires.

The idea is this: "We come to Auroville to escape social and moral rules that are artificially practised everywhere, but it is not to live in the licentiousness of the satisfaction of every desire: it is to rise above desires in a truer consciousness." Something like that. . . . It appears they quite need this! (*Mother laughs*) So we should add it.

We could draw up a whole programme, that would be interesting enough.

Yes, but in the practical order, until people go a little behind appearances and stop living on the surface of themselves, nothing will mean anything!

But all that is precisely what they need to be told!

So the first necessity is to go deep down into themselves, a little. Because even if you tell them "the Divine", what does it mean to their surface consciousness?

Yes. . . . For him, this boy, it has a meaning, but for most others . . .

Yes, it doesn't mean anything.

So we should put: "The first condition is the inner discovery. . . ."

In the ideal order, the first condition is to need something other than the present world and human conditions.

That goes without saying.

Then, to reach there, the first condition is to descend deep down in oneself to find out what one is behind all these hereditary, social, cultural appearances — what one truly is. Then, at that stage, things take on a meaning, but before that they don't mean anything. Before that, they have the meaning given in morality, religion, philosophy — they mean nothing.

So we'll put (*Mother writes*): First essential condition . . .

It's more than a condition, it's a necessity.

1. The first necessity is the inner discovery so as to find out what one truly is behind all social, moral, cultural . . .

Racial?

Oh, yes.

. . . racial, hereditary appearances.

But then, we should tell them that there *is* a discovery to be made, because many don't know it at all! (*Mother laughs*)

In the centre, there is a free being, vast and knowing, which awaits our discovery and must become the acting centre of our being and our life in Auroville.

Then, after that, shall we put this (*Mother points to the former first point on the*

consecration to the Divine), or something else? . . . It seems to me that this is more an accomplishment, something that comes at the end.

(long silence)

We should teach them to free themselves from the idea of personal possession. . . . You see, everything belongs to the Divine, and the Divine gives you not only a centre (the centre of your individuality), but also the possibility of the personal use of a number of things; but you must take them all like that, as things lent to you by the Divine. The Divine is eternal, of course, he is *everlasting*, as they say in English, and at the same time as he creates this individual centre, a number of things are there to be used for his work, so those things are *lent*. That's exactly the point: you hold them in your possession for a time.

It's to uproot the sense of personal possession.

(silence)

That would be interesting: "The description of the citizen of tomorrow's city."

There's the second paragraph on desires, and the third would be on personal possession.

The only true way to cure desires is to give oneself to the Divine and accept what He gives you as the only things you need. But that's already very advanced.

At the beginning, you said that Aurovilians have come "to escape moral conventions, etc., but not to give free rein to licentiousness. . . ."

Yes, that's right (*Mother writes*):

2. One lives in Auroville to be free from moral and social conventions; but that freedom must not be a new slavery to the ego, its desires and ambitions.

Is that all? It's enough for today!

If you want to connect this to the other paragraph, might we say something like, "Desire is the most powerful distorter of the inner discovery"?

Ah, yes. (*Mother writes*)

The fulfilment of desire bars the road to the inner discovery, which can only take place in the peace of perfect disinterestedness.

One word comes to me, Mother: not only peace, but transparency.

Yes (*Mother writes*):

. . . in the peace and transparency of perfect disinterestedness.

It'll become something interesting!

That's the basis. Then there's the third paragraph. You said, "The Aurovilian must free himself from the idea of personal possession."

But it's not the "idea," it's the "sense"! (*Mother writes*)

3. The Aurovilian must free himself from the sense of personal possession. For our transition in the material world, what is indispensable to our life and action is put at our disposal. . . .

You don't say by whom?

(*Mother laughs*) No! . . . By the All-Possessing!

. . . according to the place we are to occupy.

Mother, I'd like to add: The more we are in contact with our inner being, the more the exact means are given to us.

Oh, that's fine (*Mother writes*):

The more we are consciously in contact with our inner being, the more the exact means are given to us.

It'll become interesting!

It gives them the basis.

Oh, but we'll be able to do something interesting!

(*Conversation of 3 June 1970*)

*

Wouldn't it be good to do the rest of the "Programme for Auroville" with Aurovilians, since you started it? . . .

I had them speak to see what they would tell me. . . .

Almost all of them are terribly lazy, so I'd like to tell them that manual work . . .

(Mother writes)

4. Work, even manual work, is indispensable to the inner discovery. If one does not work, if one does not put one's consciousness into matter, it will never develop. To let consciousness organise some matter through one's body is very good. To put things in order around oneself helps to put things in order in oneself.

Another point:

One should organise one's life not according to external and artificial rules, but according to an organised inner consciousness, because if one leaves life alone without imposing on it the control of a higher consciousness, it becomes hazy and inexpressive. It means wasting one's time, in the sense that matter remains without conscious utilisation.

(Conversation of 6 June 1970)

*

We have to complete our "programme" for Auroville. . . . Auroville has come to prepare the coming of the new species.

(Mother writes)

5. The whole earth must prepare for the advent of the new species, and Auroville wants to consciously work to hasten that advent.

6. What this new species is to be will be progressively revealed to us. In the meanwhile, the best way is to consecrate oneself entirely to the Divine.

Enough! . . . To be continued! . . .

(Conversation of 13 June 1970)

*

(To A) I have some work for you. (*Mother asks A to read the text of "To Be a True Aurovilian".*)

Well then, what would you prefer: silence first and that afterwards, or that first and silence after? It is in writing: what an Aurovilian must be. Not easy.

A: Silence afterwards.

(*Handing the text to A*) Look at it. Is there enough light?

A: Yes. (A reads the text of "To Be a True Aurovilian".²)

It will be continued. If you want to, make a copy, as many copies as you like, but on the condition that the copies are accurate, that there are no alterations.

A: Regarding copies, P told me that you had read the first conversation which we had together and that you didn't want it to be published in its present form.

Such things have to be written. As it stands, it is merely talk. When one is speaking like that, it is not in a form which can be preserved. You see, there is the way you speak, the tone of your voice, the force you put into it, and then the expression which completes what is not explicit. Then, when it is printed, all that is missing, and it becomes just talk. It lacks the essential thing: the consciousness one puts into what one says. The words are not enough.

If I had the time I would correct it for you and then you could publish it; but as it stands now, it is not possible. When you read, you are with the words alone, and very few people are capable of drawing on the force while they are reading. The words must be as precise as possible. That is why I have written down this text. When it is finished, I will put it in English, then those who don't know French will be able to understand.

(9.6.1970)

(*CWM 13: 338-39*)

*

2. To the end of paragraph number 4.

[*This is the final text, first published in the Ashram's Bulletin and in the Gazette Aurovilienne:*]

TO BE A TRUE AUROVILIAN

1. The first necessity is the inner discovery in order to know what one truly is behind social, moral, cultural, racial and hereditary appearances.

At the centre there is a being free, vast and knowing, who awaits our discovery and who ought to become the active centre of our being and our life in Auroville.

2. One lives in Auroville in order to be free from moral and social conventions; but this freedom must not be a new slavery to the ego, to its desires and ambitions.

The fulfilment of one's desires bars the way to the inner discovery which can only be achieved in the peace and transparency of perfect disinterestedness.

3. The Aurovilian should lose the sense of personal possession. For our passage in the material world, what is indispensable to our life and to our action is put at our disposal according to the place we must occupy.

The more we are consciously in contact with our inner being, the more are the exact means given to us.

4. Work, even manual work, is something indispensable for the inner discovery. If one does not work, if one does not put his consciousness into matter, the latter will never develop. To let the consciousness organize a bit of matter by means of one's body is very good. To establish order around oneself helps to bring order within oneself.

One should organise one's life not according to outer and artificial rules, but according to an organised inner consciousness, for if one lets life go on without subjecting it to the control of the higher consciousness, it becomes fickle and inexpressive. It is to waste one's time in the sense that matter remains without any conscious utilisation.

5. The whole earth must prepare itself for the advent of the new species, and Auroville wants to work consciously to hasten this advent.

6. Little by little it will be revealed to us what this new species must be, and meanwhile the best course is to consecrate oneself entirely to the Divine.

(13.6.1970)

(CWM 13: 207-08)

*

C: There is much illness at Aspiration just now.

Ah!

C: There are stomach troubles like diarrhoea, dysentery, gastroenteritis.

Oh! Is it because of the food?

C: The doctor says that it is the water. But we have disinfected the water-tank.

Is it surface water?

C: It's water which comes from a fairly deep well.

It would be better to have it analysed. You don't have a filter?

C: No.

There should be one. Only for drinking. Or else it should be boiled and cooled. Otherwise, it is troublesome. It is best to boil it first and then filter it.

G: He can speak of it because he was sick last week, Mother.

C: I am still sick.

G: He is still sick. He doesn't say that it's himself, but he is sick.

Enteritis?

C: Yes, gastroenteritis.

G: He's had it for a long time now, some fifteen days.

If the water is bad, it keeps coming back. You should get it analysed. (*Mother advises analysis of the water by E*) Give him some water and ask him to have a look at it. Then we will do what is needed. The best thing, the safest thing is to boil it and then filter it. And then you must be careful about the vessels; make sure they are clean. If you are careless . . . Boiling it, that's easy. Filtering it — someone could make a filter. Can you take care of it?

C: Perhaps we could buy one in Madras?

G: In Harpagon [an Ashram workshop], Mother, there is someone who knows how to make filters. If he goes there, they could explain it to him. Only the candles have to be bought in Madras.

And then, don't drink just anywhere! That is the only thing, the only precaution you have to take in this country: the water. You get all kinds of diseases from the water. I thought that this had already been explained to you. You can build a filter; make it a big one!

(23.6.1970)
(CWM 13: 339-40)

*

A: This is a letter from X. He would like me to read it to you. May I do that?

Yes.

A: (Reading) "Divine Mother, there is great confusion about Auroville's organisation, inner as well as outer. How can we work together towards the realisation of a higher consciousness? It seems that Auroville should become a more homogeneous community with a greater sense of unity. In order to realise this, would it be possible for all the inhabitants of Promesse, Hope, Aspiration, Peace, etc. to meet in order to work together one day a week on a communal garden, perhaps the garden of Truth? Or each person could devote one day a week to a communal farm, to produce food for Auroville. That would help us to get to know each other better and make us more capable of organising ourselves in the right spirit. And perhaps the people engaged in individual projects for Auroville could also work together more closely, so as to form a sort of guiding team in Auroville, so that each one's work could progress more effectively. Would such a concerted effort in Auroville just now help us to do your work?"

"With a prayer for perfection."

The aspiration is good, but . . . I don't know whether the time has come.

A: He is not the only one. There are several people working in different places in Auroville who feel this need to unite and to do the same work together.

Yes, the idea is good, but this is how I see it. We want to build the Matrimandir; and then, that was the idea: when we begin to build the Matrimandir, everyone who wants to work there will be able to do so. And that would really be working on the central idea.

And it should be soon. It should have been already. So there, there will be work for everyone. We have been thinking of beginning the Matrimandir for a long time. In fact, everyone should come and work there, except, of course, those who

work elsewhere. There will be work for everybody. It is better than . . . It is the centre of the town.

You could tell him this: in principle the idea is good. But as for the application, for a long time, more than a year, we have wanted to begin the Matrimandir so that everyone could work there. A person would have to say, "No, I do not want to" and have his reasons.

It is like the Force, the central Force of Auroville, the cohesive Force of Auroville.

There will be gardens. There will be everything, all the possibilities: engineers, architects, all kinds of manual work. So you can tell him from me that he has picked up the idea which was in the air, but that we want its application to be truly symbolic. And when we begin to build the Matrimandir, we will put everyone to work on it. Not every day and all the time, but it will be organised.

Is that all you wanted to say?

(Silence)

What has been done with what I wrote?

A: It has been put up on the notice-board. It has been read . . .

It doesn't seem to have had much effect.

A: It has surely had some effect, but no one has spoken to me about it.

Good. So now, do you want a meditation? Not a meditation: silence. If possible, mental silence. In order to have true knowledge one must achieve mental silence. You are still . . . who among you can be silent mentally? Does everybody understand French?

A: No, not everybody.

(In English) I was asking, who knows how to be perfectly silent mentally? No? Nobody? *(Laughter)* That's what we are trying here.

(To A) Shall we try?

A: Yes! (Laughter)

Who has succeeded? Not yet. Then, silence.

(Long silence)

A noisy silence!

(7.7.1970)
(CWM 13: 340-43)

*

Will children born in Auroville become the intermediary beings?

But if parents knew how to do it, they could . . . This child could be absolutely remarkable, you know, with a full conscious vital.

Nowadays they bring me all the children born in Auroville, and I see . . . I see surprising things. With some (not many, one or two), it's like a very small animal, it's nothing — it's very sweet: a very small animal. But with almost all of them, it's a conscious being. And the parents are absolutely stupid in their behaviour with them, because they don't know, they don't understand.

I saw one today again (*tiny gesture*): he is three or four days old, five days — this big — and I saw the consciousness there is inside: it's admirable!

But then, they treat him like a small animal — he has no means of defence.

(*silence*)

Is it those little ones who will become the intermediary beings? . . . I don't know.

(*Conversation of 14 November 1970*)

*

No propaganda at Auroville

(*The disciple reads out a passage from Sri Aurobindo about propaganda*)

“. . . I don't believe in advertisement except for books etc., and in propaganda except for politics and patent medicines. But for serious work it is a poison. It means either a stunt or a boom — and stunts and booms exhaust the thing they carry on their crest and leave it lifeless and broken high and dry on the shores of nowhere — or it means a movement. A movement in the case of a work like mine means the founding of a school or a sect or some other damned nonsense. It means that hundreds or thousands of useless people join in and corrupt the work or reduce it to a pompous farce from which the Truth that was coming down recedes into secrecy and silence. It is what has happened to the “religions” and is the reason of their failure.”

October 2, 1934, SABCL 26: 375-76

That passage should be typed and put up in Auroville. It is *indispensable*. They all have a false idea about propaganda and publicity. It should be typed in big letters; at the top, "Sri Aurobindo said," then put the quotation, and send it to Auroville.

Say I am the one who's sending it.

(Conversation of 31 January 1971)

*

The only true freedom

The only true freedom is the one obtained by union with the Divine.

One can unite with the Divine only by mastering one's ego.

1971

(CWM 13: 215)

*

To rise above contradictions

You said you did not want to make rules for Auroville. But recently you wrote, "Drugs are forbidden in Auroville." Have you changed your view of Auroville?

Perhaps Aurovilians have not yet attained the level of consciousness expected of them.

"You must rise high enough in your consciousness so as to be above contradictions. That is the solution."

(Conversation of 4 March 1971)

*

Work and discipline is indispensable

Listen, there's quite a lazy group in Auroville!

Oh, that, yes!

People who don't want to work. Now they say that according to your book, to get the true consciousness, one doesn't have to work!

Yes, that's it. I heard that also. They say, "Work belongs to the old world". . . !

Yes, that's how they understand it. So, what can you do? . . . What did you reply to them?

I spoke to R. I told him what I thought. I said that work is the foundation.

Yes.

It's by being and working in matter that one can bring a little consciousness into oneself.

Yes, that's it.

And if there isn't any work, there isn't any transformation.

Yes, that's exactly what I wrote to them.⁴ He told me, "They couldn't care less." . . . I need to know the number of people in the group, both those who work and those who do nothing. And then . . .

(silence)

(Conversation of 28 April 1971)

*

It seems that things are much better in Auroville. S. is particularly interested and goes there, and she sent me word that there is a great progress in the atmosphere.

(Conversation of 22 May 1971)

*

Auroville — a link between the old way of being and the new

I have noticed something — already quite some time ago, but lately it has become very, very concrete. When I speak, there is a Consciousness which is expressed, and that Consciousness is what's important — but people catch the words and leave

4. Here is Mother's text:

"Consciousness develops best through work done as offering to the Divine. Indolence and inaction lead to *tamas*: That is a fall into unconsciousness, it is contrary to all progress and light.

To overcome one's ego, to live only in the service of the Divine — that is the ideal and the shortest way towards acquiring the true consciousness."

the Consciousness! So of course that makes a frightful muddle. Therefore it's better not to speak.

Well, maybe it makes a muddle for some people, but not for all — not for all!

But take this other example: I am trying to make Auroville a link between the old way of being and the new, but they are all sunk in . . . I mean they use their freedom to live in the most ordinary way. So . . . it's discouraging. There are some — a few — who are good, but the majority is a subhumanity, an altogether animal humanity. So . . .

Having to take care of one's own change is enough of a work as it is, no?

God, yes!

(silence)

To be at every moment as expressive of the Divine Consciousness as one can be. That's the only important thing.

(Conversation of 4 September 1971)

*

(Message for UNESCO)

Auroville is meant to hasten the advent of the supramental Reality upon earth.

The help of all those who find the world is not as it ought to be is welcome.

Each one must know if he wants to associate with an old world ready for death, or to work for a new and better world preparing to be born.

(1.2.1972)

(CWM 13: 215)

*

To behave accordingly with the villagers

From the spiritual point of view, India is the foremost country in the world. Her mission is to set the example of spirituality. Sri Aurobindo came on earth to teach this to the world.

This fact is so obvious that a simple and ignorant peasant here is, in his heart, closer to the Divine than the intellectuals of Europe.

All those who want to become Aurovilians must know this and behave

accordingly; otherwise they are unworthy of being Aurovilians.

(8.2.1972)

(CWM 13: 244-45)

*

Result of wrong attitude

Ten lakhs of rupees have just burned up in Auroville.

Ten lakhs!

Yes. A workshop with machines as well as the godown next door which contained the stock of food. Brrff!

That's how it is, like an imperative Order: Don't step out of line or else everything will go wrong.

It's become terrible. Another Auroville child died (a one-and-a-half-year-old baby) because his parents didn't have the right attitude. He has just died. That's how it works. It's getting terrible. Terrible. A kind of Pressure — a frightening Pressure — which compels the necessary progress. I feel it in myself, on my body. But my body isn't afraid; it says (*Mother opens her hands*), "Well, if I must be finished, I'll be finished."

That's how it is at every instant: the truth . . . (*Mother brings down her fist*) or the end.

That's what seems to have descended — you remember, I said something had descended on the 21st (I wrote it somewhere), and one day we would know, we would know soon what it was.⁵ Do you remember?

Yes, it was the 21st of February.

Well, this is it. Something like: "No half measures, no compromises, no halfways, no . . ." None — it's like this (*Mother brings down her fist*).

And that's how it is for the body. Every instant is imperative: life or death. No halfways. You know, we have spent centuries being neither too uncomfortable nor too comfortable. Well, that time is over.

The body knows this is necessary for the supramental body to be formed: it must be *entirely* under the Influence of the Divine. No compromises, no half measures,

5. (Note of February 22) "All day long on the 21st I had a strong feeling that it was everybody's birthday, and I felt an urge to say 'happy birthday' to everyone. A very strong impression that something new was manifesting in the world and that all those who were ready and receptive could incarnate it. In a few days, probably we will know what it was."

no "It will come later." Just like this (*Mother brings down her fist*): a dreadful Will.
And that's the only way for things to go fast.

(*silence*)

There was probably nobody over in the workshop; it wasn't open yet. But when I was told the news, I had a feeling someone had been burned inside — I didn't say anything because . . . It's only a vision, of course, but . . .

All the machines, all the stock of food, everything was burned to cinders.

Due to a wrong attitude over there?

Yes. Oh, they're all quarrelling among themselves! And some even disobey deliberately, they refuse to recognise any authority.

(*Conversation of 8 March 1972*)

*

Lack of unity is the cause of all difficulties

Well, there isn't enough money here, and there's even less there. . . . Because in people's minds, it's all the same thing [the Ashram and Auroville], and so they don't know where to give anymore.

There's so much money wasted in the world — some people don't even know what to do with it!

What would be needed for Auroville's protection, how much?

(*The architect:*) *We have to make a study, Mother. I think perhaps one or two lakhs for all of Auroville (for wells and fire hoses). That's for the time being, but there's also the future . . .*

(*after a long silence*)

What can we do? Do you have a suggestion?

Some time back, L. [an Indian industrialist] came up with an idea which I would like to discuss further with him. The idea was to interest individuals, give them a sort of participation in Auroville. I don't exactly know what India's financial situation is, but . . .

India's financial situation is *very* bad. Because they used to receive a lot of money from America, but that has practically stopped. It's very bad — India has become poor, that's the trouble. Otherwise we could ask, but they are really in trouble.

Perhaps some other countries are ready to help.

Yes, certainly!

Germany can help, maybe the United States. But the thing is, Mother, all this should be done as a coherent policy, no longer in a haphazard way.

Yes, yes!

We should try.

If only I were given a plan. I haven't seen to these things so far, but if there were an acceptable plan, I could work on it. Right now I don't know what to do.

I'll speak to N. right away, Mother, and see what he thinks. Perhaps today we can bring you a proposal and make some decisions — leaving things as they are may be possible but dangerous.

Dangerous.

I think something should be done. But I can't say what because I don't know — I don't know what can be done practically.

For many, many years, I had merely to exert a little pressure to get money — and I got it. But that was for the Ashram. Now the Ashram doesn't have enough, and nothing comes no matter how much pressure I exert — people no longer know where to give: there's this thing and that thing, and this and that . . . they are confused!

Give me a plan and I'll work on it.

There's too much dispersion, Mother.

Yes, yes! . . .

The solution is that people should become one, Mother: unity.

Yes, yes, yes — yes, exactly. Exactly!

Instead of a combination where each one has his place within a harmonious unity, instead of that, everyone pulls in his own direction. The real progress to be made is a moral one.

You have hit the point: lack of unity is the cause of all the difficulties.

Even the Ashram has been contaminated by the disease: each department considers itself a separate entity. And since there's no more cohesion, nothing works! That's the situation.

And I can no longer go from one place to another and bring a vigorous action. I can't anymore, I am held here.

That's it, you've put your finger on it. If you could propose a specific plan of action, we could see. That's what is needed: to coordinate the efforts and create a unity with the parts.

From the beginning there has been this lack of unity, and also because of the action I no longer perform. No matter how much I tell them, "You are not here to represent your own interests. You are all one and the same" — they just don't understand! . . .

In the end it always boils down to the same thing: a *substantial* individual progress is required — a serious and sincere progress — then everything works perfectly.

The atmosphere is dislocated; it has lost the cohesive power it had.

But if you want to collaborate, it would be wonderful, you know! I need someone, you see, someone who could get around, talk to people, see, take notes: re-establish unity on a higher level. Oh, that would be a wonderful work! Wonderful.

Once that is done, things would ease up. It's not that money is lacking, it's just being wasted, scattered. . . .

That's the situation.

Success is certain, but on one condition — *one* condition — that we become united. Supposedly, we are preaching unity to the world — it would be only decent to do it ourselves!

Instead, we are the example of exactly the opposite.

To visitors we say, "Here we seek human unity." But *we* constantly quarrel among ourselves, and we preach human unity!

That's absurd. Totally absurd! We can't even be *one* in our own work.

I keep telling them, but they don't understand.

. . .

I could put it this way: it's either progress, or death. Each and everyone must, must absolutely progress, make the required progress, or else . . . (*gesture of dissolution*).

That fire [*at Auroville*] was symbolic — I suppose you know about it: there's been a terrible fire.

R: Yes, yes. And I wanted to know what is the symbolic significance.

You see, we preach Unity, we say that humanity must be one, that all efforts must join together for the general progress, for the advent of the Supramental . . . but everyone pulls as hard as he can in his own direction. That's the situation.

So I wanted to tell all of you, "Practise what you say, or you will cease to exist."

One has no right to preach unity to the world when one gives such an example of utter division. . . . That's all. It's quite simple, so simple that a child could understand — but *they* don't understand.

As for me, the power of consciousness goes on increasing; for the time being — I repeat, for the time being — the physical power is reduced to almost nought. I am forced to stay here, minding nothing, and make shift with seeing people. So I need some persons to do the practical work I used to do before and can no longer do . . . I can't speak with the same strength as before — the physical is undergoing a transformation, you know. Sri Aurobindo himself had said — and rightly so — he said (because one of us had to go, and I offered to go), "No, your body is capable of enduring it, it *has the strength* to undergo transformation." It's not easy. I can assure you, it's not easy. Yet my body is good-willed, it is really good-willed. But for the moment it is in the process of . . . well, it is no longer quite on this side but not yet on the other. The transition isn't easy. . . .

If I can hold on — if only I can hold on — at one hundred things will be better. That I know. I am absolutely convinced there will be a renewal of energy. But I have to hold on. . . . That's all.

(*silence*)

So for the moment, we lack money. We lack money because money is being scattered. People no longer know where to give, so they stop giving: "Should I give here, should I give there, should I . . . ?" They don't give anything anymore.

(*silence; then Mother speaks in English*)

. . . if the work must be done, if Auroville must be built, not only do I have to remain in my body but the body must become strong.

I know. I know that. All depends on what the Divine Will is — He doesn't tell me! When I ask Him, I have the impression . . . (once or twice, in moments of difficulty, I have put the question regarding this body), and then (*laughing*) I seem to see a smile, you know, a smile as big as the world, but no answer.

I can still see that smile: "Don't try to know, it is not yet time."

(*the clock strikes*)

If we knew how to remain always in the true consciousness, there would be . . . a smile. But we have a tendency to become tragic. It's our weakness.

It is our limitations that make a drama. We are too small — too small and too short-sighted. But . . . the Consciousness knows — it knows.

(Conversation of 10 March 1972)

*

We want a race without ego, with the divine consciousness in place of the ego

(Mother speaks in English)

I will tell you that we are preaching unity — unity of humanity — and we are all quarrelling — horrible quarrels, resentments and all sorts of urgings that we condemn in the others. We are giving a nice example, and people laugh! *Voilà*.

It has come to me from many quarters.

Begin with yourself, they say, and they are right.

Each one, all of you have good reasons, everybody seems to lie. Everybody has “good reasons”. You know, the ego is the most clever rogue I have ever met. He takes such nice, nice appearances, and each one says: “I would, but I can't.” *Voilà*. And I tell you, from some places far away and from near, from far and from near, from India and from other countries: Begin with yourself. That is, we are ridiculous — ridiculous. And such good reasons we have! — all the people have good reasons. It is above reason, it has nothing to do with reason, nothing to do with that, we want . . . a new creation.

If the Divine had only for one hour the same feelings as men have, there would be no more world. That I can tell you. I have seen clearly — you believe me if you want — I have seen the world with the eye of the Divine. It is something so terrible, you know, so contrary to what it must be, that if the Divine said “only He”, brrrt! everything would go, there would be no world, there would be no men, there would be only That. *Des ego pulvérisés* [smashed egos].

It is difficult, it is the most difficult thing — we are here to do difficult things. We are in the period of transition. I can't tell you: be like this or be like that, because there is no example as yet. It is being done, and we are just at the time of the transition. It is very, very difficult — but very interesting.

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

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

The body has some difficulty, so I can't be active, alas. It is not because I am

old — I am not old. I am not old, I am younger than most of you. If I am here inactive, it is because the body has given itself definitely to prepare the transformation. But the consciousness is clear and we are here to work — rest and enjoyment will come afterwards. Let us do our work here.

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

(Here Mother starts talking in French again)

Now is the time to be heroic.

Heroism is not what people say, it is to be completely united — and the divine help will always be with those who have, in all sincerity, resolved to be heroic. *Voilà.*

You are here now, I mean on earth, because you once chose to be — you don't remember it, but I know; that's why you are here. Well, you must stand up to the task. You must make an effort, you must conquer pettiness and limitations, and above all tell the ego: your time is over. We want a race without ego, with the divine consciousness in place of the ego. That's what we want: the divine consciousness, which will enable the race to develop and the superman⁶ to be born.

If you think I am here because I am bound, you are wrong. I am not bound. I am here because my body has given itself for the first attempt at transformation. Sri Aurobindo told me so, he told me, "I know of no one who can do it, except you." I said, "All right, I will do it." It's not . . . I don't wish anyone to do it in my place, because . . . because it's not very pleasant, but I am doing it gladly, because everybody will benefit from the results. I ask only one thing: don't listen to the ego. That's all. The time of the ego is over. We want to go beyond humanity and its ego, to leave it behind, we want a race without ego, with a divine consciousness in place of the ego. There, that's all.

Anything to say?

(silence)

If there is a sincere "yes" in your hearts, you will have satisfied me fully. I don't need words: I need your hearts' sincere adherence. That's all.

(silence)

(To the architect:) Did you follow?

6. Mother later corrected "superman" to "supramental being".

Yes, Mother.

Are you in agreement?

Fully in agreement.

(The Mother speaks in English)

. . . you must agree. You are here for that. You have come to this place at this time for that. We must give to the world the example of what must be, not petty egoistic movements, but an aspiration towards the manifestation of Truth. *Voilà.*

(silence)

I can assure you that all sincere effort will be *pleinement*, fully helped by the Divine. Of that I am sure. And I can assure you of that.

(silence)

That is all I had to say.

(Conversation of 2 April 1972)

*

Coming to Auroville means a gigantic effort for progress

In a general and absolute way, difficulties are *always* graces. And due to . . . (how can I put it?) human weakness they fail to be helpful. Difficulties are *always* graces. I have been on earth for quite a while this time and always — always, always, always, without a single exception — I have seen in the end that difficulties are nothing but graces. I can neither feel nor see things otherwise because it has been my experience all my life. I might be upset at first and say, “How come, I am full of goodwill, yet difficulties keep piling up. . . .” But afterwards, I could have simply given myself a slap: “Silly you! It’s just to bring more perfection to your character and the work!” There.

(silence)

. . . Something could be organised with the people we can trust, and if the others are dissatisfied, they can leave. Do you understand what I mean? Instead of taking an

active position of “Go away” (which for many reasons is very difficult), if we put them under an authority they don't accept, they will be forced to leave. They will protest at first, but we must remain firm: “This is how it is.”

We must find the people capable of doing this, with the required strength of character, and once we find them, they can be given the authority, and if the others don't like it, they'll have to leave! And that's that. But we can't dismiss people who are already there as long as we don't have the person or persons capable of actively assuming that position.

Yes, Mother, it's clear. But there's also the problem of admissions to Auroville.

Oh — well?

For instance, certain elements seem absolutely undesirable to us from the start. And yet these people are sometimes accepted. Is there a reason for this?

On trial. Only on a trial basis, never otherwise.

. . . There should be one person — one or two (two is very good) — to present the admissions to me, the new admissions to Auroville, and I fully agree to send back those you find undesirable.

Do you understand?

Yes, Mother.

. . . You must give them at least one month. At least one month. But if they show the slightest insincerity, you understand, if they say, “I don't do this, I do that, I won't do this, etc. . . .”, just tell them, “You can leave.” You don't even need to ask me, you can just send them away. Simply inform me: such and such person has been found unsatisfactory. I give you the authority to do it. I won't protest. But I must be informed because plenty of people come to me and . . . they're very cunning, you see: they find another person to channel their request.

The question in our minds, Mother, was to know whether you saw these people as being useful in providing Auroville with a certain type of difficulty.

No! Certainly not! No, no, I don't favour deliberately adding difficulties! I know they come for . . . But they shouldn't be invited — on the contrary. They shouldn't. Things should be made as easy as possible. Only, we shouldn't be ruffled by difficulty, that's the point. I am not at all saying that difficulties should be accepted — don't invite them at all, at all, at all; life is difficult enough as it is! But when a difficulty comes, you must take heart and face it courageously.

We must strive for Order, Harmony, Beauty and . . . collective aspiration — all the things which for the moment are not there. We must . . . you see, being the organisers, our task is to set the example of what we want others to do. We must rise above personal reactions, be exclusively attuned to the divine Will and be the docile instruments of the divine Will — we must be impersonal, without any personal reaction.

We must “be” in all sincerity. What the Divine wants — let it be. That’s all. If we can be that, then we are as we ought to be, and *that* is what we must become. For the rest . . . for all the rest, we do the best we can.

I know it’s not easy, but we are not here to do easy things; the whole world is there for those who like an easy life. I would like people to feel that coming to Auroville does not mean coming to an easy life — it means coming to a gigantic effort for progress. And those who don’t want to keep up with it should leave. That’s how things stand. I wish It were so strong — the need for progress, for the divinisation of the being, so intense — that those who are unable (unable or unwilling) to adjust to it would leave by themselves: “Oh, this is not what I expected.” As it is now, all those who want an easy life and to do what they please as they please, say, “Let’s go to Auroville!” It should be just the opposite. People should know that coming to Auroville means an almost superhuman effort for progress.

It is the sincerity of our attitude and effort which makes a difference. People should feel that insincerity and falsehood have no place here — they just don’t work, you can’t fool people who have devoted their entire life to go beyond humanity.

There is only one way to be convincing — it is to *be* that.

Then we’ll stand strong, we’ll have all the divine force on our side.

We are here to prepare a superhumanity, not to fall back into desires and easy life — no.

People must feel it; it should be so strong that the sheer force of our sincerity would drive them out — that’s what they have to feel. At that point, we will be what we should be. The power of the realisation — of the sincerity of the realisation — is such that it’s *unbearable* to those who are insincere.

(*silence*)

That’s all.

Yes, Mother.

(*silence*)

If in all sincerity we are on the side of the Divine, we *are* all we should be.

That’s what Sri Aurobindo always said. If men only knew this: if in all sincerity — in all sincerity — they give themselves to the Divine and side with the Divine, they become all they should be.

It may take time, there may be turmoil and difficulty — you must be . . . inflexible: “I am for the Divine and the divine manifestation, in spite of everything and anything.” *Voilà*. Then it is omnipotence — *even over death*.

I am not saying tomorrow, I am not saying immediately, but . . . it's a certainty.

(Conversation of 4 April 1972)

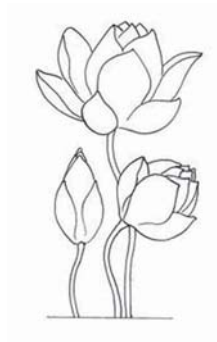
*

Religion and the wide faith of knowledge

Jesus is one of the many forms which the Divine has assumed to enter into relationship with the earth. But there are and there will be many others; and the children of Auroville should replace the exclusiveness of one religion by the wide faith of knowledge.

1972

(CWM 13: 220)



SPIRITUAL INDIA AND SRI AUROBINDO

The old picture of spiritual India with the dreamy unpractical look has been stripped off the wall. Not that the picture was false in every detail; but unhappily it overlaid the true with the fictitious. India does “dream” a great deal of what is behind the veil of earth’s appearances and she definitely is not concerned with only the dust and heat of an outward-going life. Even in the tumultuous twentieth century, she is tremendously “inward”: political slogans and economic formulas do not wholly absorb her, but her “inwardness” is not unpractical, her otherworldly dreaming does not end in an emotional haze, a mental mist.

CONCRETE REALISATION

Ever since the hymns of the oldest scripture in history, the Rigveda, began to be sung, it has been dinned into Indian ears that the way of the inner life is not blind belief or vague speculation. We have to pierce the veil of earth’s appearances and seize the hidden Beauty as no less real than the universe to which we are accustomed. To rest content with faith in God and in the Hereafter is far from enough from the Indian standpoint; it is equally insufficient to chop logic about the Absolute and the soul’s immortality.

The Gospel of Mark has the famous query: “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” The Indian mystic, from the Rigveda down to our day may be taken to have asked more pungently: “What does it profit a man if he possesses a soul but never realises it?” Realisation: that is the keyword in India. A man realises what love is by actually falling in love with a woman and taking her to himself — not by emotionally reading Shelley or intellectually studying Havelock Ellis. So too by a psychological process within him, which brings him into actual touch with a divine reality, and not by mere religious belief or philosophical speculation does he grow aware of his true soul and become a mystic.

SEEING GOD

When the young Narendra, who later made a name on three continents as Swami Vivekananda, met the God-intoxicated Ramakrishna, the first question he shot at him was: “Sir, have you seen God?” A crude question for the awed religionist and a naive one for the abstract thinker, but typically Indian in its approach to the

Unknown. And typically Indian was the answer it evoked: “I see God more concretely than I see you.” Indian mysticism begins to be understood as we start grasping its concreteness.

When the sacred books of this land spoke, for instance, of God’s light, they did not use a poetic figure. They meant light just as concretely as Raman meant it when he won the Nobel Prize in Physics. In India the concrete was not synonymous with the material, even as consciousness did not stop with the level of the *élan vital* and the mind. Beyond apparently unconscious Matter and the grades of organic evolution there was for the Indian a Power which was the Spirit.

And this basic stuff of being, this divine substance of consciousness, could be perceived by the subtle senses lying latent behind our imperfect physical instruments. A faint and faltering image of it entered our perception in the cosmos around us. Listen to a stanza from those chants of mystical seerhood, the Upanishads, describing the supreme spiritual Existence: “There the sun shines not and the moon has no splendour and the stars are blind; there these lightnings flash not nor any earthly fire. For all that is bright is but the shadow of His brightness and by His shining all this shineth.” Super-Science is here, a statement of some concrete fact. Even while denying the ultimate reality of the things we know, it denied by means of a greater affirmation of the Real. Our lustres faded in the high trance of the mystic because a mightier one which was more substantial took their place.

PRACTICE OF YOGA, STATIC OR DYNAMIC

A wishy-washy play with the Unknown is not Indian mysticism. India has established a sustained systematic process leading to it from many starting-points, and that is what is meant by Yoga. Yoga is “yoking”, a union of the human with the Divine: its results are concrete and verifiable. Long and arduous is the path, but there can be no mistake about its practicality: thousands in India even today take it up and pursue it to one end or another.

Various ends have been put before the Yogi, all realisable by a steady endeavour, but they fall mainly into two classes of realisation: the static and the dynamic.

The masters of the static path regard the world as a thing to be thrown aside, a temporary bagatelle. They aim at an absorption in the vast Divine. Their experience of a mysterious Eternal, compared to which the world is like an empty hallucination, is overwhelmingly concrete, but it diverts the consciousness from the earth’s normal activities and gives no final *raison d’être* to them.

Why did the Eternal bring about or permit the pageant of Time and Space if its aim was merely to renounce it? Such a renunciation is indeed not unpractical escapism towards a sort of day-dream — it is escapism without being unpractical, for what its

escape leads to is felt as a greater reality behind Nature rather than as an imaginary or theoretical “thin air”. All the same, there is a certain one-sidedness which is not in tune with the modern trend of life no less than with the secret instinct of mankind that the earth too has importance and is no flimsy foil to heaven. India today is awake to that deep instinct and its *penchant* is for synthesis, for many-sided unity. And the dynamic Yoga which is the other side of spiritual realisation in India’s past falls in with such a *penchant*.

THE DOUBLE PRACTICALITY OF THE GITA

This dynamic Yoga regards the world as a field of God’s manifestation, not as a trap from which the soul must break out. The finest expression of it in our history is the “Song Celestial”, the Bhagawad Gita. The Gita is not an ascetic cry; it does not seek to pluck one away from the throbbing heart of things. It is a gospel delivered on a battlefield with warriors brandishing their spears and holding drawn bows of destruction. In fact the scene is remarkably like the modern world with the holocaust of a terrible conflict not long past and the heart-numbing threat of the Cold War all about us. And the word of Sri Krishna is not a pious advice to stand aside from the grim actuality but “Go forth and fight: conquer a mighty kingdom” because on the one side stood in burning indignation the defenders of civilised values and on the other a titanic tyranny. Sri Krishna, however, did not look forward to just an outward triumph. The warrior was asked to rise above the ordinary human consciousness and live in the light of the Eternal and be by Yoga the instrument of a Will wider than his own.

The Gita is not a gospel of action in the common meaning of the term: it teaches a new way of action which absorbs human push and power into an inspired and illumined initiative that is divine. It combines two species of practicality — the practicality of Yoga and the practicality of life. The former is present even in the static realisation and its presence everywhere gives the lie to those who think that mystics live in a “glorified gas”. But the static path lays an overstress on the Beyond: Sri Krishna makes the Beyond dynamic here and now, he links up with it the concrete human.

THE GREATEST YOGI OF OUR AGE

An attitude similar to the Gita’s is to be found in the greatest Yogi of our age, Sri Aurobindo. That is why in these times of tense body and alert mind, with upheavals in our midst and upheavals around us, he stands as a modern among the moderns. The eyes of renascent India turn to Pondicherry, the little town on our east coast,

capital of the one-time French India, where a school of spirituality, an Ashram with hundreds of disciples, sprang up with him as its centre.

A magnificent leonine personality — a writer educated from boyhood in England and using the English language like a mother-tongue in splendid poetry as well as prose — a scholar in Greek and Latin — at home in French, German and Italian, not to mention Sanskrit and other Indian languages — once a politician of profound constructive power — a gigantic philosophical intellect whose chief work, *The Life Divine*, has been hailed as epoch-making — a still more towering Master of Yoga, whom Tagore in the East and Rolland in the West called the custodian of the future — Sri Aurobindo was a figure to dominate the world's gaze.

For six years he led his country's fight for political freedom. Then suddenly he left politics to concentrate more completely on the Yoga he had already been practising for some years. He felt his withdrawal into the background a most necessary step, because the true genius of India was itself a background — the deep Spirit waiting secretly behind the clamour and conflict raging in the outer being of man. India's greatness in the past arose, according to Sri Aurobindo, from her possession of the hidden Spirit by Yogic experience.

The Spiritual Background, however, was not his whole objective. In India's finest hours the contact with the outer being was never lost. Sri Aurobindo sought for something more than a contact which, after a brief flash of illumination, lets the outer being remain the half-lit and stumbling creature it normally is. As in the background, so too in the forefront there must always be the Spirit. His Yoga is integral, an all-round fulfilment of the Divine on this very earth and not in a remote paradise or a transcendental Nirvana. That is why Pondicherry, with its Ashram, can be regarded as the gateway to a wonderful future.

DIVINISATION OF LIFE

Sri Aurobindo holds that man's hopes and dreams can be crowned only if, with the help of the highest consciousness developed up to now, we rise beyond ourselves to a new level of being, a level above mind as mind is above animal life and animal life above mere matter in which everything lay latent and unevolved.

This new level has to be a step forward in evolution and not just Science, Philosophy, Art, Ethics or Religion achieving combinations and permutations of the various aspects of man at his cleverest and noblest. Sri Aurobindo takes up the whole beautiful heritage of past progress but does not rest with giving it a novel shape: he seeks to divinise the entire self by a special experience and ultimately permeate with a spiritual power of consciousness every means of manifestation and the entire outer form so that even the poor body which lives a victim to disease and decay and the sudden stroke of death may become king of Nature.

Our mind boggles at the colossal scheme. But surely one for whose constructive insight men of practical force like Tilak and Das bore the deepest esteem cannot be dismissed as the chaser of a magnificent mirage. The fact that his Ashram is not an abode of complacent “navel-gazers” but a scene of varied enterprise, astir with architects, engineers, scientists and manual workers as well as artists, poets, musicians and thinkers — this fact is enough to testify that the source from which such a complex fountain sprang must have still been a manifold creative vitality. The Ashram is an experiment to form by a profound psychophysical transformation the nucleus of a super-mankind to be.

THE INTEGRAL YOGA

Patiently and without lust for fame the Master kept moulding his vision of super-mankind. The method of his Integral Yoga is a very plastic one. There are no mechanical breath-exercises or painful physical postures; it is our consciousness that the Yoga starts with, a constant remembrance of the Divine and an offering of all our movements, inward and outward, to Him by a consecrated attitude, a self-surrender that brings about a series of extraordinary yet concrete and convincing experiences affecting every side of us, down to our physical substance.

“A quixotic hope!” cries the man in the street in the face of a Yoga so far-reaching and revolutionary. The claims of the Rigveda, the Upanishads and the Bhagawad Gita are difficult enough to accept, but here in our midst we have something that exceeds them all. Can that intractable old stumbling-block of every spiritual effort in the past, the physical body, be illumined and transformed together with the mind and heart? The signs of such a change would not be the ability merely to stay in a sealed trance, insensitive to outward attacks of pain, or a vague and intermittent exaltation in the nerves, or a few spectacular capacities as developed by “naked fakirs”.

An immense wakeful consciousness that is unfettered by human limitations and uses a body that has taken on itself the divine immunity of the Spirit — this is the Aurobindonian ideal. There is nothing fantastic here, once it is admitted that the Spirit is the supreme underlying reality. For, if everything has come from the Spirit, Matter too must be a diminished aspect of some divine truth and can by awakening to that truth get divinised. The trouble is that life does not always bear out logic. Doubt, disbelief, denial are bound to dog the path of Sri Aurobindo’s experiment, but we must not forget that we are living in a country where the Spirit has trafficked with the earth for ages and the Divine and Superhuman are no strangers. Above all we must remember what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter to a disciple apropos of an inveterately sceptical intellectuality like Bertrand Russell’s as contrasted with the temperament which easily and eagerly believes or rests happy with lofty notions. Referring to himself and to his associate and co-worker in the Integral Yoga, the

Mother, he begins the letter:

“I must remind you that I have been an intellectual myself and no stranger to doubts — both the Mother and myself have had one side of the mind as positive and as insistent on practical results and more so than any Russell can be. We could never have been contented with the shining ideas and phrases which a Rolland or another takes for gold coin of Truth. We know well what is the difference between a subjective experience and a dynamic outward-going and realising Force. So although we have faith — and who ever did anything great in the world without having faith in his mission or the Truth at work behind him? — we do not found ourselves on faith alone but on a great ground of knowledge which we have been developing and testing all our lives. I think I can say that I have been testing day and night for years upon years more scrupulously than any scientist his theory or his method on the physical plane. That is why I am not alarmed by the aspect of the world around me or disconcerted by the often successful fury of the adverse Forces who increase in their rage as the Light comes nearer and nearer down to the field of earth and Matter.” [*Letters on Himself and the Ashram*, CWSA Vol. 35, p. 322]

THE BACKGROUND OF AUROVILLE

It is, on the one hand, the process of an unheard-of spiritual transformation and, on the other, the presence of a super-scientific this-worldly genius, that are the background of the larger field of work into which the Aurobindonian inspiration has broken forth in the project of Auroville, a growing city on the borders of Pondicherry. “Auroville” is a name derived from the French word “Aurore” meaning “dawn”. So it stands for “City of Dawn”, with an appropriate undertone of the Master’s name because of the common component “Auro”. Extending to a greater range of human material than the intensive life of the Ashram could allow, this project has sent out a call to the four corners of our disillusioned earth. The call is to find at last a centre of manifold yet unified existence, marking the first flush of a new era of peace and harmony in the secure working of the new principle of divine dynamism which Sri Aurobindo terms “Supermind” or “Truth-Consciousness”. Not that all who give their services to Auroville have to be full-fledged Yogis; but all must be aware that the City of Dawn is a dream meant to come true under the shaping hand of the guide and guru of Sri Aurobindo’s Ashram: the Mother.

[August 1969]

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

(Reprinted from *The Sun and the Rainbow — Approaches to Life through Sri Aurobindo’s Light: Essays, Letters, Poems, Short Stories*; Second edition 2008, pp. 1-9)



an honest business for honest people

With Best Compliments from:

S. N. Sunderson & Co.

**1, Deshbandhu Gupta Road
Post Box No. 5713
New Delhi - 110 055**

E-mail: snsunderson@gmail.com

Telephone: 23612728, 23612776

Fax: 011-23620632

Our Lines of Business:

- *Limestone and Dolomite*
- *Coal Handling Agents*

Branches at:

**Kolkata, Dhanbad, Katni, Jukehi, Niwar, Varanasi, Singrauli,
Asansol, Ranchi, Bilaspur, Nagpur, Ramgarh, Khelari,
Manendragarh, Guwahati and Puducherry**

Completed 92 years on Basant 2018

*“Generosity is to find one’s own satisfaction
in the satisfaction of others.”*

THE MOTHER

Blue Star Diamonds Pvt. Ltd.

Tower “C” 9010,
Bharat Diamonds Bourse,
Bandra-Kurla Complex,
Bandra (East)
Bombay - 400 051 (India)