

MOTHER INDIA

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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

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The EVIL of APARTHEID and WORLD-ISSUES

We must give no quarter to the South African Union's relentless pursuit of Apartheid, the racial policy of segregation whose latest and most infamous manifestation is the Group Areas Bill. South Africa has indeed protested that this Bill is not really objectionable; but we must see through the specious argument and strike with all our might. At the same time we must look at Dr. Malan's country in the world-context and not allow our fight against the evil of Apartheid to incline us towards movements and forces that we may imagine to be helpful to our cause but which are even worse than the policy rightly called "Malanazism".

I.

* At a first glance, the Group Areas Bill does not lay bare its heinousness. Its main declared point is the provision of separate areas for Europeans, Africans and other coloured peoples. The areas marked out will be for exclusive ownership and occupation by the groups in question. Trade licenses will be issued, but trade can be carried on by each group within only the area marked out for it and the licenses will be issued only to those who can live lawfully within their particular area. The power, however, is reserved by the Minister of the Interior to issue special licenses under certain circumstances, by which this restriction can be mitigated. An identity card has to be carried by every citizen. If the regulations laid down are violated, punishment will be pretty severe: it may even come to two years' imprisonment. The aim of the Bill is stated as follows: "to do away with all racial discrimination by providing equal conditions of life for all racial groups."

These words sound most ironical, but there is a surface truth in them, for if the Africans and the Indians and the other Asiatics are segregated, so too are the Europeans and the same regulations apply to all. What the words camouflage is the arrant racialism implied by the very policy of segregation as practised by South Africa. It is on the score of crude racial segregation that the Indian Government has lodged its firm protest and refused to participate in the previously arranged Round Table Conference. The Group Areas Bill takes to a climax a process that has been going on in South Africa for decades on end. Even under the notorious Asiatic Land Tenure Act, Indians were not quite prohibited from trading in the European quarters and they held some properties in various parts of the Union. The new Bill deprives them of all rights and possessions outside their own small areas. Even if compensation be forthcoming for the loss of properties, the segregation does not cease to be complete and what makes it worse is that it operates entirely against the interests of the Indians.

On the question of segregation pure and simple a certain amount of discussion is possible. The habits, occupations and living standards of different communities may be markedly dissimilar and an indiscriminate mixture in residence of all communities may not be favoured by some. Of course, segregation is not something to be encouraged or perpetuated: the lower standards must be raised as much as possible, a common level of education sought after, and even the disposal, if necessary, of separate areas must be done on no rigid inhumane basis and lead not to ghettos but to flexible demarcations, interspersed localities, spheres of distinct yet interacting influences, if not also mutually penetrating ones in several respects. Still, some form or other of segregation may not always be avoidable and need not be considered devilish because a few ugly features are on occasion present in it.

Segregation becomes rankly criminal and calls for immediate opposition instead of a reformatory Fabianism when it rushes to extremes such as outrageously humiliate one party and when behind it are ulterior motives

of self-aggrandisement. In South Africa an ordinary European railway guard could kick a man like Gandhiji with impunity and even a highly educated Indian could be publicly addressed as "Coolie." The sign "For Europeans only" is put up in thousands of places. The coloured people have to enter railway stations by a side-gate. In buses or trams they have to travel in the rear seats. Of course, not all Europeans in South Africa are arrogant, quite a number of them are decent folk and the Rev. Michael Scott, a champion of the non-Europeans' cause, is himself a South African; but there runs through the official attitude of the Government a sense of race-superiority which is based essentially on colour-consciousness. The white skin is regarded as the sole sign of civilisation. All that is brown or black is deemed backward if not barbarous and looked down upon, insulted and penalised. How thoughtless is the prejudice in favour of the white skin may be gathered from the fact that even visitors from Portugal who are Europeans but happen to have sallow complexions are sometimes treated as if they might contaminate the Dutchman or the Englishman by their very propinquity. Surely, this is a state of affairs that cannot be tolerated. And together with it there is a cleverly laid plan to grind the faces of the brown and black population in order to make the whites prosper more and more. This plan wants to reduce the natives to hewers of wood and drawers of water and seriously to diminish trade-facilities for the Indians and curtail their prospects of social no less than financial betterment so that they may embrace more readily the proposal which is the culmination of the apartheid policy: mass repatriation.

To send two and three-quarter lakhs of Indians packing to India is not an easy job. Eviction by force is hardly possible. But if they are considerably impoverished they will prefer to be taken to India where equal rights and opportunities are assured to every citizen: even the difficulties they would have to encounter at the beginning of their resettlement would perhaps be less forbidding than the lot which would be theirs in the South African Union. Besides, there is the chance of their getting from the Union Government some compensation which may start them off on their new careers. All these factors seem to have been in view of those who have framed the Group Areas Bill. Dr. Donges, Minister of the Interior, who is mainly responsible for its clauses has openly stated that repatriation is the final objective and that the Bill is the preliminary arrangement. No doubt, he has not connected the two or interpreted the latter as a means to the former, but any impartial observer can read the implications of his handiwork. And, when repatriation is clearly suggested, the selfish motives of the Bill glare out. The Indian Government has seen the entire project in the true light as racialism going beyond natural bounds, and when it combats the idea of segregation it has in mind the iniquities and self-seekings packed therein by the South African bullies.

The Indian Government is vehemently opposed to repatriation. It says that what is proposed is in fact expatriation. In its eyes the Indian community in South Africa has no less right of residence than the English or the Boer. The major portion of the community consists of the third, fourth and fifth generations of settlers, those who know of no other country than South Africa as their home. Dr. Malan and his Government argue that the Indians still look to India as their native land and are, therefore, not true citizens of South Africa. But this is not borne out by the feelings of the Indians over whom they rule. This is just what their racialism prompts them to assert. Their racialism also makes them look askance at the Jews and wish for their extradition. Alec Reid reports the Jews as saying, "Thank God for the Indians, if it were not for them it would be our turn first." The Malanites go to the length of even doubting the loyalty of the English settlers. They grumble that the English settlers have come to South Africa for good and yet talk of England as "Home" and will not even take the trouble to learn the current majority language which is Afrikaans. Here is sufficient proof

The EVIL of APARTHEID and WORLD-ISSUES

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of the essential Malanite irrationality. We must fully support our Government in turning down all schemes arising out of such prejudice.

The Indians must remain in South Africa. And they must fight the Group Areas Bill tooth and nail. Theirs is a very hard task, for the only powerful rival to Dr. Malan's party is the party of General Smuts. General Smuts is by far the greater man, but he too is bitten by the racist bug and his more liberal ideas recede into the background when the Indian issue is raised. On this issue he appears to have become even less accommodating than his opposite number. His party contests the Group Areas Bill not from any love of the Indians or the Africans. It wants repatriation forthwith and sees no sense in putting off the day. It is also more anti-Asiatic on the whole, for it does not share Dr. Malan's animosity towards the English settlers. General Smuts cherishes the same empire-concept as Churchill, while Dr. Malan makes no special cult of it and extreme nationalists of his ilk desire not only, as the old slogan goes, to put the Kaffirs in their places and drive the Coolies out but also to give the English the status of "second-rate citizens" and be themselves the veritable top-dogs. "Africa for the Africaaners" is their cry; and this cry, rather than discrimination against non-Europeans, is opposed by the followers of General Smuts, in whose opinion it tends to split the Europeans socially and harm the country economically by keeping away much-needed capital from overseas. Between Smuts and Malan, or their probable successors Strauss and Strydom, there is not much to choose so far as Indians are concerned. Unless a third party or at least a coalition caretaker Government with a man like Dr. Havenga at its head comes into power, it is all up-hill work for the Indians. Only strong retaliatory action of some kind by the Government of India, together with similar action by Pakistan since Muslims too are victimised by Malanazism, and a compulsive move by the United Nations can bring the haughty South African racials quickly to heel.

II.

The stubbornness of Dr. Malan's racialism constitutes a danger to world-peace. A country calling itself a democracy yet granting its 8,000,000 and odd coloured people no more than 3 representatives and these also Europeans, while the 2,000,000 Europeans have 150—a country transgressing the code of civilised behaviour by oppressing nationals hailing from several Asiatic countries that have an important role to play in the world—a country indulging in shameless colour-discrimination in the midst of a Commonwealth wedded to ideals of liberty and equality cannot but create both internal and external ferment, with perilous global possibilities. And the situation assumes a yet graver complexion in view of the fact that the Asiatic nations are liable to look for sympathy in the wrong places. Here a warning is really needed for ourselves—not with the purpose of weakening our legitimate resolve to combat Malanite Apartheid but to sheer us off from believing that this racialism, rotten as it is, is the worst evil in the contemporary world and from making several illogical inferences which would be deleterious to our own future.

When we quite justifiably get hot at the cruel application of the colour-bar by South Africa and think of it in terms of Nazism, certain ideas take shape in our minds about the white race in general and about the western democracies. From the colour-bar in the South African Union we glide to the colour-bar that still exists, though in a diminishing state, in America against the Negroes. We picture Mr. Truman as secretly joining hands with Dr. Malan. We also remember the colour-bar that was at work in various forms of more or less in our own country under British rule. Then we let our minds move over the map of Asia and we think of the remnants of French colonialism in Indo-China and of British in Malaya and, instead of seeing them as dying relics which a large section in both France and Britain are ashamed of and opposed to but which cannot be entirely eradicated under present world-circumstances, we connect them up with the Malanite mentality. Mr. Attlee and Monsieur Auriol become also Dr. Malan's secret accomplices. Then we begin to think why the U.N.O. cannot wholly curb South African Apartheid. We suspect that the western democracies are not really shocked at this rampant racialism. We hardly consider that when Russia is constantly on the march, overtly or covertly, and the western democracies have to be on guard against her all over the globe, they cannot quite outlaw South Africa which has a strategic position of importance from the military standpoint. Our own wobbling policy and uncertain outlook on foreign affairs does not exactly dispose the west to be lavishly pro-India. Instead of realising genuine difficulties and trying to go ahead in the best way possible, we may commit the folly of tarring the whole west and South Africa with the same brush. Our folly may assume a still more dangerous complexion if we read subtle or shameless Nazism in all western countries not yet completely free of the racist taint and contrast to them the one country against which they all are forming a defensive alliance and which to a first view seems our friend because in it the colour-bar in the usual sense does not operate against the Asiatics—Soviet Russia.

South Africa's racialism deserves not the least excuse or apology. And the official attitude of the western bloc is definitely against it. So, whatever bits of racialism linger in the west require to be weighed properly in the balance and with all the more conscientious care when in the other scale come to be placed the Communist ideology and the Stalinist policy. It is essential for us to perceive that though the term "Malanazi" is not invalid, the completest analogue today to Nazi Germany is Soviet Russia. Utter dictatorship, suppression of free thought, totalitarian politics, the secret police, periodic purges, ruthless expansionism, apotheosis of violence, belief in world-conquest with a single country having the whip-hand—these are the common features of Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany, features that are the very negation of freedom and of humane values. And it is as absurd as it is perilous to imagine that Russia has no colour-bar in any sense. Doubtless, the mere skin does not matter in Russia, but Stalin's Communism institutes a colour-bar of the mind which is more inflexible, more sinister than any differentiation between white and brown or white and black. The Kremlin divides the world into Red and non-Red. All men who are not dyed deep Stalinist Red in their outlook Russia liquidates or enslaves. If an artist or writer fails to express ideas that are Red enough he loses all means of livelihood and ends up in jail or mysteriously disappears. If a scientist or economist does not toe the Red line he suffers the same fate. If a peasant does not see red at the very mention of private farming he pays a terrible price. In the twenties, 5,000,000 kulaks (labour-employing peasants) were starved to death because they did not favour the Red plan of collectivisation. As for the innumerable camps of forced labour where the non-Reds pass their days in hell, the facts are staggering. To be documentarily convinced, we have only to open David Dallin's and Boris Nicolaevsky's *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia* or R. Swarup's latest publication, *Russian Imperialism: How to Stop It?* More than 1,000,000 Poles were deported to different parts of Russia in 1940. They worked in slave camps under such conditions that 270,000—almost as many as the total Indian population in South Africa—died in one year. In 1941, when the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic States, 200,000 men and women were seized; later the number swelled to nearly 800,000. Over 3,000,000 Germans were declared by the Russians at the end of the war to have been made prisoners: out of them not even half have been returned, and now the Russian Government says that the number returned is exactly the number captured—which involves the absurdity that not a single prisoner died in five years. Out of 60,000 Italian prisoners of war, about one-fifth only have been sent back. From Bessarabia, about 200,000 men were seized, and deported. 900,000 Japanese living in Manchuria were deported in 1945. These are but a few figures. It is not possible to calculate the full extent of slave-labour by non-Reds in the country about which men like Paul Robeson who as non-whites have borne some minor disabilities in the U.S.A. wax enthusiastic. They forget that Negroes in America can raise their voices in protest, whereas non-Reds in Russia have to be silent as the grave. They forget that a Negro is not unconditionally accepted by Russia: he has first to go Red and if he insists on having a mind of his own instead of a replica of Stalin's he will soon suffer hardships a thousand times worse than in America. They forget that the American Civil War was fought by whites among themselves precisely because the northern states wanted to free the Negroes. Will Red Russia ever risk internal dissension on behalf of any black or brown men who are not Communists? Even for Communists themselves she has no care if the specific brand of Russian Communism is not theirs. Yugoslavia is Communist, yet Russia is her deadly enemy. Why? The reason simply is that Yugoslavia will not let herself be exploited by Russia and be made a vassal state. Here we have the Red Russian mentality working not on ideological grounds alone: a narrow nationalist and a fanatical racist element is in action reminiscent of the Africaaner's cry but much more virulent. Paradoxically enough, the same Russian racialism plays havoc with countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia and Lithuania which Stalin has incorporated and communised: they are compelled to trade with Russia on most unfair terms and their whole economy is geared to Russia's needs. Even from them forced labour is drawn; 30,000 skilled Czech labourers were recently deported to the Urals. If all this does not out-Malan Dr. Malan in our eyes, fact and history have little to teach us and we shall hinder our growth as a great nation with a mighty spiritual message. Naturally, the Apartheid-mongers cannot escape blame for putting our backs up and tempting us to be anti-west and pro-Russia,—but we cannot shirk our own responsibility of correct vision and action. To make our fight against South Africa's injustice and insolence a wise and effective one we must look at things steadily, we must scrutinise them in the world-context, we must never by hasty judgment permit our fight to mean any accession of strength to the diabolic power that today stands armed with crafty propaganda and insidious materialism, no less than secret weapon of war, to submerge not only the white western democracies but also the whole of Asia including the Indian sub-continent where the ideal of man's growth into Godhead and of establishing on earth a divine freedom and harmony has always burned the brightest.

DANGER TO DEMOCRACY

BY B. C. SEN

Secretary, the Unity Party of India

MOTHER INDIA puts before its readers for their consideration the opinions expressed by several political parties in India whenever there is an attempt to make some approach to the true Indian genius or spirit. These opinions are not necessarily its own. In fact, MOTHER INDIA, as stressed in its editorial manifesto of February 19, 1949 represents no political party, although it may be in agreement with certain views held by one party or another.

Presiding over the joint session of the Democratic Convention and the Uttar Pradesh Zemindar's Conference, Mr. P. R. Das, former Judge of the Patna High Court and younger brother of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das had many severe things to say about the Government of India. Leaving aside the note of extremism in his opinions, one may take it as their gist that there are strong tendencies in those in power to impede the full development of a truly democratic State which should never come anywhere near being a one-party State.

The leaders of the Congress would do well to consider this charge as also Mr. Das's declaration that in the constitution prepared by the Congress Government the fundamental rights of citizens as provided in Article 19 are "not unqualified." "In point of fact," he said, "in various parts of India today, it is impossible to hold public meetings without taking the previous permission of an officer of the Government. This does not look as if we had an unqualified right to assemble peaceably and without arms. The danger which I apprehend is that the Government may suppress all political parties which do not believe in the Congress Government on the plea that the interests of public order demand that those parties should be suppressed." Mr. Das referred to the Preventive Detention Act, 1949, passed by Parliament, and said: "The liberty of the subject is placed at the mercy of a Sub-Divisional Magistrate." Of course, the Act is intended against Communists of a violent and insidious character. But it does vest wide powers in the Executive Government.

The way in which the Constitution is being actually worked does not always dispel the fears expressed by Mr. Das. As an illustration of this take the subject of an editorial comment by the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*:

Need of Criticism and Opposition

"Why should the Government of India be too anxious to influence public opinion in favour of the Delhi Pact? The Pact has been in operation for more than a month, and so much is being said about its merits that no educated person is likely to remain uninformed about it. But the Central Ministry of Education has, it is reported, issued a directive asking the authorities of different Universities to disapprove views and sentiments unfavourable to the Pact. University teachers are mature men with balanced views. Why should they be deprived of the right of criticising the Pact if they are not satisfied with it? After all, the Pact is nothing but an act of the Executive; it is not a part of the Constitution (which a citizen has the right to criticise), it is not a law of the land, it has not even been formally approved by Parliament. We do not suggest that propaganda against the Pact should be encouraged; but we do suggest that neither Government nor University authorities should enforce censorship on criticisms of the Pact. A democratic State should not seek safety in cen-

sorship. A democratic Government should be bold enough to face criticism."

Mr. Das remarked that the need for an Opposition Party was never greater than it was today. The same view has been expressed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Minister of Law, Government of India. He said there were moments when he thought that the future of democracy in India was very dark. But he did not want to say that he had not other moments when he felt that if all of them put their shoulders together and pledged themselves to "constitutional morality", they should be able to build a regular party system in which there could be liberty, equality and fraternity. He said: "The best guarantee of fundamental rights is to have a good opposition in Parliament in which case the Government is bound to behave properly." But the real danger is that the leaders of the Congress do not favour the formation of an opposition party, but want the people to put all their trust in the Congress party without any question. No less a personality than Sardar Patel has defended this position. He said recently in Ernakulam: "You must have faith in the people whom you have entrusted with the destiny of the nation. They will do the right thing at the right moment. After all, what is our concern except the well-being of you all? That is what we have worked for all our life, and that is what we intend to serve in the future part of our life."

The measure of the people's confidence in the Congress is the readiness with which they have accepted the extraordinary restrictions on civil liberty embodied in the Detention and other measures criticised by Mr. P. R. Das. In other days, any such measure, as also the extraordinary powers given to the police, including the right to shoot at sight, would have produced a storm of adverse criticism and wholesale condemnation from Press and platform. Formerly the Congress was the organ of the people, now it has become an instrument in the hands of the Government, and no other popular organisation has yet grown up to take the place of the Congress. And the present Congress leaders who have now formed the Government seem to be anxious that no other organisation should grow up to challenge their authority. Thus speaking at Ernakulam on May 13, the Sardar actually deprecated the idea of forming new parties. He said it was a very dangerous game. He said: "Some people say that since

there is no Opposition democracy cannot succeed and so they must organise an Opposition. Parties may grow like mushrooms or they may multiply, but when the Congress steam-roller begins to move, then it will level all other parties." But people do not want democracy simply for the fun of it. Leaders are human beings, and, however well-meaning and able, they may commit mistakes, and also they may misuse the great powers that they come to possess when they form the Government. Democracy is a means of keeping a check on the Government and it is indispensable for the welfare of the people and the State itself. Sardar Patel will be the last man to say that the Congress is above mistakes. Speaking at Porbunder, when he opened a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, he frankly confessed: "During the last three years we have worked in a manner which has brought us only shame."

Congress and Government

Such confessions and self-criticisms would be useless if they did not look into the causes of the failure and take proper steps to remedy them. Sardar Patel said he had no objection to parties being formed on regular lines and decent lines and with a good programme. But has the Congress, which he intends to use as a steam-roller in the ensuing elections, a good programme and is it formed on regular and decent lines? The Congress fulfilled all these conditions when it was fighting for the freedom of the country, but now it has become a machinery of power-hunting. He himself said in Porbunder: "If we continue to indulge in personal jealousies and power-hunting, we shall turn into poison what has been got for us by Gandhiji." The existence of wide diversity of opinions in the Congress Organisation and of groups in it pulling in opposite directions was referred to by Sardar Patel in his address to the conference of Chief Ministers and State Congress Presidents recently held in Delhi. He said: "We have not felt as a nation and the governing organisation does not speak with one voice." But surely he can expect nothing else. The Congress Party has no common ideological basis. As the Madras Mail aptly puts it, it is a political umbrella under which men and women of various views and opinions ranging from the extreme Left to the extreme Right take shelter. Each hopes to use the Party to further his or her own special interests. This exploitation of the great name and prestige of the Congress must be stopped if there is to be decency in Indian political life. Gandhiji foresaw this and in his last testament to the country advised that the Congress should not run elections but should turn itself into a Lokasevak Sangha. Sardar Patel spoke nothing but the truth when he admitted at Porbunder that "we have digested

nothing from the teaching of Gandhiji."

All people, including Congressmen, speak of the great corruption in the Congress, but no one suggests or is ready to accept the true remedy. If the Congress is to be revitalised and serve the country it must not be allowed to be used as a springing board for attaining to positions of power; the temptation to utilise and exploit the great name and prestige of the Congress for individual or sectional interests must be checked and that can only be done if the Congress definitely gives up the Parliamentary programme and remains an organisation for doing constructive work and also to serve as an unofficial Opposition to whatever Government may be in power. As it is now, the Congress organisation is not allowed to criticise the actions of the Government executive, it has become a servile instrument of the party in power and there is no other party which can serve as an effective check to the vagaries of the ministers. Once the Congress ceases to identify itself with the Government, it can freely serve as an organ of the people and thus serve the purpose of democracy. For the purpose of elections, parties should be formed with definite programmes independent of the Congress. Thus Nehru can form a Marxist party and contest the next elections on that basis instead of sailing under false colours of Gandhism. So Sardar Patel can form his own party with a programme of giving full scope to private enterprise to serve the country. There is no reason why parties cannot be formed on a religious basis as there is in the West. Freed from the steam-roller of the Congress, genuine parties can grow up in the country thus making the functioning of Parliamentary democracy possible, if that is to be accepted in India.

India and Parliamentary Democracy

But then the question arises, is Parliamentary democracy really suitable to the conditions in India? Consider only one aspect of the question. In Britain, there is one Member of Parliament for fifty thousand people, and that is considered to be a too big constituency to be represented by one man. And in India one M.P. will have to represent about seven lacs and fifty thousand people; Does not that reduce Parliamentary democracy to a farce? We wonder how our constitution-makers adopted this arrangement. Even in Britain, where Parliamentary democracy is being worked under ideal conditions serving as a model for the whole world, there are already serious misgivings about the workings of true democracy under the Parliamentary system. It is supposed here, as we have seen, that democracy will be safe if

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THE SPAN OF HUMAN LIFE

BY RAJANIKANT MODY

It has been reported that an international congress of leading gerontologists of the world is to be held in Liege, Belgium, in July. Gerontology or the study of the causes of old age is a subject that catches the imagination of all men, for everyone is ageing as time passes on. It is a topic of universal interest.

From time immemorial man has always tried to combat the forces of physical disintegration and decay which in fact are the forces of time and of the destruction wrought by it. We hear a Vedic seer chant in one of the Rigvedic hymns, "Increasing mayst thou live a hundred autumns, a hundred winters and a hundred springs." Another Vedic stanza runs thus, "May we hear the auspicious with our ears, O gods; may we see the auspicious with our eyes, O venerable ones. Praising you with firm limbs and bodies, let us enjoy the life-span that is appointed by the gods."* An Upanishadic Rishi says, "Doing, indeed, all works here one should desire to live a hundred years."

What is this thing that makes one desire to live longer and longer? When, as at present, our life-span is seventy years we desire to live a hundred. If we are able to live a hundred years we shall desire to live a hundred and fifty. A hundred and fifty is, according to science, the minimum we should naturally live, since every animal lives five times the period taken to reach maturity. Man matures at 30. His natural death should not occur before he is 150. But, of course, if the scientists' confident expectation to increase the human life-span to this figure in a couple of generations from now is fulfilled, it is certain that we shall want to live longer even than that. The thing is that we do not want death; we want to live for ever and for ever; we want to fight tooth and nail against the ravages of time; in fine, we want immortality.

When we are under a spell of misery or disappointment we do occasionally say that we want to die, that death would be better than such a wretchedly sorrowful life. But such a feeling is only a passing phase of our mind and it does not last long. It is not the natural state, it is only something that is thrust upon us by outer circumstances. Inherently we love life and dread death.

Every living being fights against disease, decay and death. This struggle goes on every moment of one's life, in sleep as well as in waking, in swoon as well as in conscious state. Our conscious physical mind has got nothing to do or,

*Or, "let us enjoy the life-span that is dedicated to the Divine."

perhaps, very little to do with this struggle, for that goes on mostly on some sub-mental plane of our being. It is on the vital plane that the forces of sustenance and life are arrayed against those of decay and death. The actual fight takes place there. Anabolism and Katabolism are mainly the phenomena of the vital.

This brings us to the question which has been always asked by men, viz., are old age and death so inevitable and unavoidable as they are believed to be? Men have been born, have aged and have departed from life ever since mankind appeared on this earth. And this has raised a very powerful, perhaps an overwhelming sense of the inevitability of age and death. But that is no reason why immortality as it is instinctively conceived and desired by man should not be achieved in future. As the Upanishad puts it we have to reach immortality out of death. What is this instinct of living longer and longer imbedded somewhere deep down within our profoundest being, that even when our accumulated outer experience goes counter to it, it still persists unabated and undefeated?

As Sri Aurobindo says, "Death is the question Nature puts to life and her reminder to it that it has not yet found itself. If there were no

siege of death, the creature would be bound for ever in the form of an imperfect living. Pursued by death he awakes to the idea of perfect life and seeks out its means and its possibilities."* Here, then, is the solution of the paradox we have stated above. Although we have not yet attained physical immortality, still that is the goal, perhaps not the proximate but the ultimate goal of Life. Death is only an incident in the continuous life of the soul. It is only because we believe in death that death comes to us. This belief is the accumulated inheritance that has come down to us through all these ages, and this belief has got to be reversed.

But all the same it should be remembered that by simply prolonging the life of the physical body to some extent we cannot at the present stage attain immortality. Here, too, as Sri Aurobindo says, "Even if Science—physical Science or occult Science—were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and to pass on to a new incarnation. The material or physical causes of death are not its sole or its true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual necessity for the evolution of a new being."† It is for some such inner necessity that the soul assumes a physical vesture here

*Thoughts and Glimpses.

†The Life Divine, Vol. II, P. 807.

In Terram

Why this indignity that from the brave
Height of soul-lustre into a broken grave
Man's yearning flesh should drop and all his drouth
Of planet-passion kiss the worm's cold mouth?
What treasure yet unknown draws down his mood
Whose heart is fashioned for infinitude?
Surely some God-abyss calls out to him....
We die and all our winged senses dim
Because we have not dreamed the goal of birth,
The arcane eternity coring dull earth.
O omnipresent Light, break from below
As in the constellate seasons of our mind:
Rise up and flower in these cells of woe,
Flush the wan nerves, breathe your immense gold breath,
And make our limbs no longer grope to find
A heaven of quiet through world-weary death.

K. D. SETHNA.

DANGER TO DEMOCRACY

—Continued from page 3

there is only a strong party in Opposition; but recently Lord Cecil raised doubts on this point by moving a resolution in the House of Lords: "That the growing power of the Cabinet is a danger to the democratic constitution of this country." He would admit that the presence of a strong Opposition in Parliament, as in the House of Commons today, could help to keep a Government alert, but it could not prevent its pursuing dictatorial policies. This has been evident during the short life of the present British Parliament. Though the Labour Government has on two occasions only escaped defeat by six votes, it has

shown itself unwilling to depart one iota from its proclaimed policies and intentions. The Lord Chancellor admitted that there was justification for Lord Cecil's fears, but he could not suggest a satisfactory remedy. He thought that the right of putting questions in Parliament as also that of moving the adjournment of the House are valuable checks upon a tyrannical Government. They serve the purpose of giving publicity to the activities of the Government, but to say that they are checks is to exaggerate their power even in a country like Britain where the general public is very much conscious politically. In India a dicta-

torial government can simply ignore them.

The radical defects of the Parliamentary system are being more and more apparent, and when people are groping to find a true form of Democracy, India can give a lead to the world by following her own ancient genius. True democracy, that is, a government of the people by the people can take a direct share in their own government instead of simply allowing a so-called representative to do the governing for them. The Indian system, giving full autonomy to all sorts of small local bodies, with a central Government

and it is for some such other but equally inner necessity that it casts it away. The physical causes of age and death are only the apparent ones, are only the means adopted by the soul to disintegrate and finally get rid of the material sheath which has become useless or unsuitable for its inner purpose. Although the body in its growth and decay still obeys the laws of the lower Prakriti, there is no reason why it should perpetually go on observing them or for ever remain a creature of them. In the evolution of the Inconscient this kind of relation between the soul and the body was an arrangement that was inevitable, but that relation can be reversed and the soul can become what it was always meant to be, the real master of the physical frame and the vital forces that uphold and keep it in existence. It can use its will if the body becomes refractory. To keep it alive for any desired length of time, it can utilise life-forces directly and not simply depend on physical things like diet or hormones as put forward by the scientists today. Finally, it can embody in every cell of the being the substance of the Divine Consciousness and Bliss, the substance that is inherently immortal. This is the ultimate step of the radical and integral transformation envisaged by Sri Aurobindo's own yoga. By such embodiment the outer will become a fit instrument for the inner, a physical reflex of an attained psychological perfection. There will then be no need for the soul to abandon its earthly vehicle.

Of course, all this goes far beyond scientific gerontology. But it is a good sign that scientists today are making an approach along their own lines to the question of prolonging the life of an individual to a span longer than what was held by most of us to be the normal and even the inevitable span. The age-old notion of human life being three score and ten years according to the West and a hundred autumns according to the East, has been superseded and replaced by the scientifically possible notion of a life-span of a hundred and fifty at the least. This in itself is a step forward in the right direction. For our belief in death must be shaken. It is the inner Spirit in mankind who thus urges us to get rid of the many rooted and long persistent ideas that have become by habit a very considerable and insistent part of our mental make-up. They have got to be excised from the progressive mental vision before the Spirit in humanity can take the next inevitable step forward in the evolution towards the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA"

By "Synergist"

SECTION III: THE NEW WORLD-VIEW

(a) THE SPIRITUAL METAPHYSIC

(ii) KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE REALITY

Continued from previous issue

We saw in the last essay the limitations of the mind when it attempts to understand the nature of the Ultimate Reality. These limitations are recognised by all spiritual and mystical philosophers; and this is, for the reasons already mentioned in the preceding essays, quite natural, but many of them, especially those of the Mayavadi and Nihilist type, go to the other extreme and look upon mind only as a power that either distorts truths or creates falsehoods. Not possessing a metaphysic created out of an integral realisation of the Divine Reality, they are unable to understand that mind is not content to remain in ignorance but aspires to the Supreme Truth and seeks the Divine Light because it is in its origin a subordinate principle and power of the Supermind; they fail to grasp the fact that it is because there is an inherent relation between the human intelligence and the Divine Intelligence that the former is able to have even a little knowledge of the external world and see in it a plan and design, and infer that it is the expression of the Divine Idea. Though their point of view has behind it a certain amount of justification, it is not entirely true, and if given a wider application than it merits misrepresents the status of mind in terrestrial existence. If it refers to the crepuscular mind of the average individual, it is true, for in him the pure mind or the higher mind rarely functions or does not function at all. His mind builds its conceptions upon the evidence of sense-perception and the surface experiences of the nervous and emotional being, and the ideas it learns through education or absorbs from its sociocultural environment. It goes on moving in this narrow orbit of physical, vital and practical experiences, and whatever intellectual experiences it gains are concerned solely with practical utilities; any new experiences it has, it reduces to its habitual way of thinking. The consciousness of the average individual is poised on the lowest sub-plane of his mentality—the physical-mental; he depends upon the physical brain, the physical sense-mind, and the physical sense organs for the knowledge of the world. This mentality associates the real with the sensibly perceptible, and considers the supraphysical, the mystical and the spiritual to be unreal, because they do not fall within the narrow gamut of its experiences. Even when the pure mind does function in those who are above the average, it is most often not sufficiently receptive to the light of the Supermind which indirectly touches it through the intermediate gnostic levels connecting the two. This pure mind is obviously not the mind that is "the slave of life"—the mind that follows only the dictates of the lower vital-physical nature.

But if the stand-point mentioned above refers to the pure mind detached from its vital-physical teguments, it is partially true. Even this pure mind's transcription of higher truths is inaccurate and incomplete, because it too moves only within its own sphere and remains enclosed within its own formulae. It cannot escape the influence of the Ignorance. If on the other hand the stand-point refers to the mind which by a movement of ascension stretches out and intuitively seizes truths of the Spirit, or a silent mind turned upwards and calmly reflecting the truths of the Gnosis, it is obviously false. It is the indiscriminate and loose use of the term "mind", and an insufficient knowledge of its different movements, and of its real status in the hierarchy of the principles of Being and Consciousness, that has resulted in an incorrect understanding of its working in the individual on the one hand, and of its connection with the Supermind, on the other.

Following this particular line of approach, it is possible to arrive at a broad psychological classification and divide human mentality into four grades—the physical or corporeal mentality, the vital or life mentality, the pure mentality, and what may be termed the illumined mentality. The gnostic mentality is not mentioned in this classification because it is utterly different from these four types and belongs to another category.

The mode of its working will be described later.

In the first type the mind principle in the individual identifies itself with the physical part of the nature, and appears to be a derivative of matter—psychological processes appear to be entirely conditioned by physiological processes. This reminds one of the dictum: "No neuroses, no psychoses," made popular by nineteenth century thinkers, when psychology was in its infancy, and Materialists made vain efforts to apply the laws of physics to the functionings of the mind under the misapprehension that it was a by-product of matter. This corporeal mentality depends for its evidence of facts upon matter and the material world, upon the physical being and physical processes; its sense of reality, its awareness of the world is determined by the physical brain, the sense-mind, and the sense organs. Another mental process that works in the individual is that which is concerned with the larger and more dynamic action of the surface mind; it considers the physical existence as only a field for the fulfilment of life-impulses, for the play of power, ambition, love, passion and adventure, as well as for creation and conquest. The *élan vital* expresses itself through this life mentality. Then there is the third type, the pure mentality, which can dissociate itself from the vital-physical movements; by stressing and focussing his consciousness in this higher plane of his being, man can learn to live in the mind and the things of the mind, know himself to be an intelligence rather than a life and a body—become aware of himself as the mental being, *manomayah purusha*. In this consciousness, the mind is known to be a reality in itself and the world is understood not in terms of life and matter, but in terms of mind. But even this pure mentality is not free from the influence of the typical characteristics of the mind—separateness and division—the mind seeing itself as a separate mental self and looking at the world and its beings as other than itself. It does have an idea of a constructed unity and knows that others are parts of a universal totality, but owing to its natural limitations is incapable of understanding the essential and basic unity of all creation, and its own oneness with it; it is enclosed in a mental space, and however stratospheric that space might seem to the normal mind, it is still a mental ether; in order to transcend the laws that govern mind nature, the consciousness of the individual has to ascend still higher. If it can rise above its normal surface action and get poised on a higher overhead level, and become silent, passive and receptive to the light of the Supermind, it can reflect its truths, and may even become an instrument of a supramental action. Of course to possess the highest Truth, and know the "real-ideas", the divine archetypes, the seed-truths, an ascension through the gnostic ranges of the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuitive Mind, and the Overmind into the Truth-consciousness of the Supermind is absolutely necessary.

This clearly shows the limitations as well as the power of the mind. It is a very superficial psychology and metaphysic which reduces mind to the position of only a creator of illusions and falsehoods or a distorter of truths. For the sake of philosophical clarity, a right distinction has to be made between the four grades of mentality described above. If seen from the stand-point of motivation, it can be said that if the corporeal mentality concerns itself with the basic physical needs of existence, and the life mentality—with desire as its motive power—with achievement, conquest and possession, the pure mentality seeks knowledge for its own sake apart from the value it has for life. When it develops into the illumined mentality, it seeks the Divine Light and tries to attain to the Supramental heights.*

To be continued in the next issue

*No attempt is made here to divide humanity into psychological types, each representing one of the four kinds of mentality. This is only a very general description of the different grades of mentality.

Invocation to the World-Heart

Wide unfathomable heart of the universe!
Undrape thy wideness to my visionless mind
And all the secrecy of thy ageless soul
Throbbing with the effulgence and the gloom
And with the vast stillness of the topless Noon . . .
To my yearning spirit thy spirit reveal,
Sleepless, august, orb'd with a giant ray
Cradling viewless seas of abysmal depths
And burning ranges of altitude remote

And white kingdoms of star-hearted melodies
And dreams mirroring the distances of trance . . .
Ocean-unplumbed light! draw my voiceless earth
To thy heaven-spaced heart of golden flame—
A blue icon of dateless mystery,
And drown in thy all-engulfing bourneless fire
My clay of shadow-enamoured sleep,
To be changed into the blazing core of thy being,
An immense zenith of god-vastitude!

ROMEN

THE M ON THE SERVICE

By RISHA

Aspiration for Service.

A special sense attaches to the word "service" in the Mother's philosophy of Yogic action. She has given the word such a heightened connotation that it has become the key-word of human evolution and spiritual fulfilment. According to her, human birth has only one objective: the service of the Divine; and all human activities and endeavours, pursued from birth to birth, are but a long preparation for it. This view gives a definite teleological significance to the otherwise unaccountable phenomena of life and death and the continued participation even of many liberated souls in the travail of the world.

The soul comes down into the material world not to lose itself in the labyrinths of fleeting interests, not to become a sport of freakish desires and blind passions, not to sway between the conflicting lures of sense-objects, not even to awake, at last, to the futility of its peregrinations and beat a glorified retreat from this terrestrial existence, but to prepare its triple nature of mind, life and body till it is fit to fulfil its mission: the manifestation of the Spirit in Matter.

Man is not, therefore, a biological creature of a passing moment, but an immortal spark-soul, clad in mind, life and body and charged with the mission of revealing in redeemed and purified Matter the supernal glories of the Divine he houses in himself. This divine revelation or manifestation is the service he owes to his Master, this is the sole reason of his earthly existence. Some mystics postulate delight as the end of existence; some a deployment of Power; some, again, the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; but so far as the individual is concerned and his destiny, the Mother says, service is the great end, the End of all ends, the rapturous tryst of the Spirit with Matter, the sublimest expression of the eternal and ineffable relation between man and his Maker and Lover.

What is True Service?

Though service done in the spirit of sacrifice and with love and devotion and psychological and practical disinterestedness is the most powerful means of purification and liberation, it is not exactly this the Mother means when she speaks of it in its most sublimated sense. She gives, no doubt, the preliminary and purificatory service a considerable importance and declares it to be indispensable to our progress towards a dynamic union with the Divine, but, according to her, the crowning fulfilment comes only from the true service, which is not so much a means to as an expression of divine union.

By true service the Mother means the service of the Divine with the will of the servant in perfect tune with the Will of the Master and the whole being of the servant, surrendered and integrated, moved by the omniscient divine Force. It is, really speaking, a direct action of the Divine in and through the instrumental being of the liberated individual. It is, if we can so put it, a service of the Divine by the Divine Himself with the individual serving only as a fire-point of concentration and diffusion. The Mother calls it service, because it is an unerring accomplishment of the work of the Divine and a perfect fulfilment of His purpose in terrestrial existence through man. And in the last analysis, is not this the pivotal truth of all creation—the Divine, the sole Doer of all universal action, the Vishwakarma? In no other way could this work of a manifold manifestation be accomplished.

Describing the inner state of the individual from which this service proceeds, the Mother says, "Each activity in its own sphere accomplishing its special mission, without any disorder or confusion, one enveloping another, and all hierarchically arranged around a single centre: Thy Will" (*Prayers & Meditations*, p. 148) No discord between the different parts of the being, no contrary pulls or distracting drives of chameleon tendencies, no sting of desires or pang of frustration, but all nature, harmonized and integrated, quickened and illumined, ecstatically responding to the touch of divine Love and impeccably moved by the divine Force. The Will of the eternal Doer functions through the co-operating will of the apparent human doer, using the means and achieving the ends decreed by itself. The individual being is at once the receiver and the giver—it receives from the Transcendent above and it gives what it receives to the Immanent within and around it. It lives in a double identification—an identification with the supreme Light and an identification with the darkness of this sorrowful earth upon which the Light acts, and in this double identification discovers the "secret of Thy sovereign oneness." This divine commerce between the Transcendent and the Immanent, between the ordaining and initiating Spirit and actualizing Matter through the medium of the surrendered and emancipated human individual, is what the Mother means by true service.

Once we are convinced that our birth here is not a fall, an aberration or an exile, or a chance happening of mechanical Nature, but a purposive evolution and a divinely ordained mission, our whole outlook on life and its values undergoes a radical change. No longer do we struggle to escape from the earthly life, nor try to squeeze it to the last drop of its scanty sap, but we aspire and endeavour, as best we can, to discover its source and sustenance, its pulse and purpose, and live it as worthily, usefully and beautifully as the dignity and strength of our divine manhood seem to demand. Individual liberation ceases to be an ideal in so far as it implies a renunciation of life and its salutary activities, an atrophy of the motor springs of our being and a wilful or neglectful sterilization of our creative faculties, and service becomes the watch-word of our spiritual progression. Delight, power, peace, purity, all grow in service, for it is the most spontaneous, concrete expression of our love and devotion for the Divine. And when this initial, preparatory service culminates in what the Mother calls the true service, there is only a beatific interchange of love and a triumphant outpouring of redemptive Force upon the material world.

The Mother seeks knowledge, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the service of the Divine; even the bliss of divine union she seeks not for itself, but for the sake of service. In how many Prayers does she not pray to the Divine to let her be only a servant, an instrument, a docile manifesting channel of His Love and Grace! And in many a Prayer the Divine too asks the Mother not to revel in the ecstasy of the absorbed union, but to turn her look towards the earth and "work as an ordinary man in the midst of ordinary beings; learn to be nothing more than they are in all that is manifesting". He asks her to "associate with the integral way of their being; for, beyond all that they know, all that they are, thou carriest in thyself the torch of the eternal splendour which does not waver, and by associating with them, it is this thou wilt carry into their midst." And in words which give the right clue to the secret of service and the significance of the Mother's role in the world, the Divine says, "Hast thou any need to enjoy this light so long as it spreads from thee? Is it necessary that thou shouldst feel my love vibrating in thee, so long as thou givest it? Must thou enjoy integrally the bliss of my presence, so long as thou servest as its intermediary among men?"

(*Prayers & Meditations—P. 221-222*)

Absolutely consecrated to service, the Mother prays: "O Lord, my sole aspiration is to know Thee better and serve Thee better every day. What do the outer circumstances matter? They appear to me every day more vain and more illusory, and I take less and less interest in what will outwardly happen to us; but I am more and more intensely interested in the only thing which appears to me important: to know Thee better in order to serve Thee better. All outer events must converge towards this goal, and towards this alone; and for that, all depends upon the attitude we have towards them. To be constantly in search of Thee in everything, to will to manifest Thee better in every circumstance; in this attitude is to be found supreme Peace, perfect serenity, true contentment. In it life blooms, widens, spreads out so magnificently, in such majestic surges that no storm can any more trouble it." (*Ibid. P. 73*)

"Life blooms, widens, spreads out so magnificently", says the Mother, if we are constantly in search of the Divine in everything, *bhuteshu bhuteshu vichitya*, as the Upanishad phrases it; if we "will to manifest" Him better in every circumstance. This attitude is essentially and fully psychic, that is to say, it comes from the central soul and does not originate either in the mind or the heart of man. When the soul awakes, a seeking for the Absolute or the Infinite or the Eternal awakes in us; our being instinctively feels a want, an inadequacy, an imperfection, sometimes even an illusoriness in the passing phenomena of life. Something above it, something to which it begins to respond with a growing thrill, draws it towards its inconceivable splendours. At this stage there are two possibilities open to man: if it is only the static side of his soul that yearns for the Eternal, he will feel an exclusive aspiration for its peace and silence and gravitate towards it, emphasizing the illusoriness of the world of appearances and turning away from it; but if it is a full opening of the soul, not only of the witnessing Purusha, but also of the Prakriti in it,—for, it comprises both,—not only of its status, but also of its purposive dynamism, then the natural aspiration will be for the realization and revelation of the Divine, the supreme Person of the Upanishad, the Purushottama of the Gita, in the very texture of terrestrial life. This integral awakening of the psychic accounts for the intense and comprehensive aspiration for service which has found such an exquisite and inspiring expression in many of the Mother's Prayers and Meditations.

OTHER OF THE DIVINE BHCHAND

"May every morning our thought rise with fervour towards Thee, asking Thee what is the best we can do to manifest and serve Thee."

(Ibid. P. 46).

"O Love divine, Knowledge supreme, perfect Unity, at each moment of the day I call to Thee so that I may be nothing else but Thou!

May the instrument serve Thee, conscious that it is an instrument, and may my whole consciousness be immersed in Thine and contemplate all things with Thy divine sight.

O Lord, Lord, grant that Thy sovereign Power may manifest; grant that Thy work may be done and Thy servitor solely consecrated to Thy service.

May the 'I' disappear for ever and the instrument alone live."

(Ibid. P. 104)

A perfect picture of the ideal attitude of true service is found in the following Prayer:

"To be immersed at once in Thee and in Thy work... To be no longer a limited individual... to become the infinite of Thy forces manifesting through a point... to be delivered from all trammels and all limitations... to rise above all restricting thought... to act and be beyond the act... to act through and for individuals and see only the oneness, the oneness of Thy Love, Thy knowledge and Thy Being... O my divine Master, eternal Teacher, Sole Reality, dissolve all the darkness of this aggregate which Thou hast formed for Thy service, Thy manifestation in the world. Realise in it that supreme Consciousness which will generate an identical consciousness everywhere."

(Ibid. P. 104/5)

All the essential strands of divine service have been woven together in this marvellous Prayer. The right spirit, the right attitude, the right way of service, the right definition of service as "Thy manifestation" have been given with an unsurpassable point and precision. At first, union with the Divine, but a dynamic and not a static union, achieved through an integral surrender and an intensive and inclusive concentration; then transcendence of one's mutable individuality and assumption of the infinitude of the divine forces manifesting through a point, that is to say, through the body; then the simultaneity of unrestricted action and freedom from action; and, last dealing with and acting for individuals, but seeing, contacting and communing with the One everywhere, in all individuals and units. This last experience of service establishes its sovereignty in a life of spiritual perfection—it is the only means by which the Divine can be loved and adored and served, embraced and communed with in every individual and thing and circumstance at every step and moment of one's earthly existence. It is service alone that can turn the whole field of human existence in the material world, a field so much spurned and reviled by short-sighted religions, into a heaven of constant and active God-union.

In a Prayer of flaming aspiration and melting sweetness, the Mother prays to the Divine "to let her only be His servant and nothing else. She puts service above everything else, above every other experience possible on earth, but she gives to it a depth and an amplitude of sense, unmatched in the history of dynamic mysticism.

"Let me lie down at Thy feet", she prays, "merge into Thy heart, disappear in Thee, be blotted out in Thy beatitude; or rather"—mark the climax of her "self-naughting", the absolute perfection of her self-surrender—"be solely Thy servitor, without pretending to be anything else. I do not desire or aspire to anything more, I wish only to be Thy servitor."

Hindrances to True Service

But such a consummation of divine service cannot be achieved at a bound or by a jolly trot over a bed of roses. There are many obstacles to be met and overcome, many a pathless desert to be crossed under the dire menace of storms and thunders. We shall touch upon only the cardinal hindrances here and leave out the tremendous question of physical transformation without which no service can be perfect. We propose to consider the question of physical transformation in a separate series of articles.

The greatest hindrance to the true service is the ego, the ignorant sense of one's being a separate individual. This self-insulation of the individual from the universal is the cause of all his besetting limitations—limitations of consciousness, knowledge and power. The ego, the circumscribing sense of I-ness and my-ness, *mamatwa*, must therefore completely disappear if the individual has to recover his innate infinity and immortality; and without this recovery it is impossible for him to serve the Divine. It is for a complete elimination of the ego, its elimination even from the physical consciousness, that the Mother prays to the Divine: "O Lord, O my sweet Master, dispel this feeling of the 'I'... tear out from my heart this illusion that Thy servant may become pure and faithful."

(Ibid. P. 98)

Another hindrance is attachment. Attachment keeps us chained to

persons or things or ideas and prevents our taking wings towards the Infinite. "One who would serve Thee worthily", says the Mother, "should not be attached to anything, not even to the activities which enable him to commune more consciously with Thee...."

O, to do everything seeing Thee alone everywhere, and thus to soar above the accomplished act, without any claim which holds us prisoners to the earth, coming to burden the flight."

(Ibid. P. 63-64)

Attachment to opinions, theories, creeds and principles, so much justified, perhaps even glorified, by the mind of man, has to go the way of all other attachments, if the consciousness has to open and be plastic to the higher light.

Another hindrance, a formidable one, is world-weariness. It comes usually from *Tamas*, the principle of inertia, incapacity and delusion, in the being. Long tradition and narrowness of outlook have sanctified it into a spiritual tendency, and its blighting effect upon life is completely overlooked or ignored. So long as world-weariness or world-disgust is allowed to obscure the consciousness of the individual and paralyse his creative powers, he cannot be an aspirant for divine service which demands, not a rejection, but an enthusiastic, wholesale acceptance of life as the field of the highest divine realization and revelation. Renunciation of life is a renunciation of the progressive play of God's Light.

Integral Self-Surrender—the Sole Means

A loving and unreserved self-surrender of the whole being to the supreme Consciousness-Force is the sole means of becoming a servant of the Divine. So long as the ego persists, surrender has to be effected by a constant and detailed self-offering; and it has to be renewed from day to day, so that it may not flag or falter. But when the surrender has been integral and complete, Grace descends and takes up the charge of the being, and begins its victorious work of purification and transformation. Personal effort then ceases and the divine Shakti expresses and fulfils her Will in the world through the liberated and universalised individual. According to Sri Aurobindo there are three stages of this long discipline. At the first "you have to regard yourself as a soul and body created for her (the Divine Shakti's) service, one who does all for her sake. Even if the idea of the separate worker is strong in you and you feel that it is you who do the act, yet it must be done for her. All stress of egoistic choice, all hankering after personal profit, all stipulation of self-regarding desire must be extirpated from the nature. There must be no demand for fruit and no seeking for reward; the only fruit for you is the pleasure of the Divine Mother and the fulfilment of her work, your only reward a constant progression in divine consciousness and calm and strength and bliss. The joy of service and the joy of inner growth through works is the sufficient recompense of the selfless worker."¹

At the second stage, when surrender has progressed far and the ego is fading out of existence, "you will feel more and more that you are the instrument and not the worker.... You will realise that the divine Shakti not only inspires and guides, but initiates and carries out your works; all your movements are originated by her, all your powers are hers; mind, life and body are conscious and joyful instruments of her action, means for her play, moulds for her manifestation in the physical universe...."

"The last stage of this perfection will come when you are completely identified with the Divine Mother and feel yourself to be no longer another and separate being, instrument, servant or worker, but truly a child and eternal portion of her consciousness and force.... You will know and see and feel that you are a person and power formed by her out of herself, put out from her for the play, and yet always safe in her, being of her Being, consciousness of her Consciousness, force of her Force, ananda of her Ananda. When this condition is entire and her supramental energies can freely move you, then you will be perfect in divine works; knowledge, will, action will become sure, simple, luminous, spontaneous, flawless, an outflow from the Supreme a divine movement of the Eternal."² It is this unobstructed luminous working of the Divine through the child-state of the individual that the Mother calls true service.

Service—A Life-Transforming Ideal

This conception of service is not only original, but revolutionary for life. Its initial, purificatory stage, so elaborately delineated in the *Gita*, is a radical preparation for infinity and impersonality; its final stage so vividly mirrored in many of the Mother's Prayers, is a supreme triumph of the Divine in man. The former is an ascent of man's love for the Divine, the latter is a descent of the Divine's Love for all creatures. The first is a God-ward service, the second is a God-possessed earth-ward service. The ideal of true service is the only ideal that can regenerate earthly life, redeem humanity and make it a vehicle of God-manifestation. True service is at once a victory of Love and a vindication of Grace.

NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

THE CONVERSATIONS OF BEES

BY GERALD HEARD

Enquiry

"I am passionately unwilling to accept such conclusions!" said a distinguished researching zoologist. And well he might be. New facts are fun when they fit in and give a finish to fine old theories. But bomb-shells are never welcome.

We thought we knew about bees. Their use as honey manufacturers had been gauged to a drop, their instincts, their varieties, their diseases—the literature is enormous for they have been of equal interest to the practical bee-keeper, the field naturalist and the experimental researching zoologist. If you asked what ran the whole complex of the hive, one and all of the experts replied with the one word Instinct, blind Instinct. If you questioned: How could something so blind be so clever, so resourceful, you were dispatched with one of two answers. Either you got "the spirit of the hive"; or, from the complete mechanists, "Tropism"—the bee is a particle drawn by a smell or a colour as an iron filing by a magnet.

But in 1922 an Austrian entomologist, von Frisch, began to notice something about bees that till then had been dismissed as unimportant. He put his hives in wild country where there were no other hives. He marked his bees and he watched for them as the different ones returned from their forages. What particularly caught his attention and puzzled him was that when some of them arrived back they did not, bee-business likely, get rid of their pollen or nectar and start out again. They fussed about a bit. It certainly looked at first sight like aimless fidgeting. Maybe that's why all other bee observers failed to see this was a clue and so never discovered the meaning. But von Frisch noticed that the other bees who were near the restless returner did pay very particular attention to her. They didn't attempt to unload her. They observed her. He watched his group of watchers and he caught their interest. He too followed, movement by movement, the returned bee's antics. At last he could have no doubt. He checked over many thousands of times. Then he faced up to the fact and in 1946 he published his first epoch-making paper.

The returning bee was talking by sign-language, she was speaking to the others, telling them what she had seen and found. The first discovery was, fortunately, comparatively simple and not too outrageously shocking. The bee flies to the hive and then crawls on to the upright comb. And, when she starts fidgeting, her movement is regular, in fact it is a circle. The bees near, watch, follow her, become excited and then, not waiting for her further, rush to the hive entrance and fly off—off to where (von Frisch found invariably when he followed and tracked them) the dancing bee had discovered a new rich forage spot. Those particular spots were never more than some hundred yards or so from the hive. That was not much nor was the means of communication more than a rather rudimentary signal. Could the bee report further-off finds? And if so could she direct the new foragers? Would she not have to be more explicit and how could she?

Here then lay the really great surprises, the shocking discoveries. Von Frisch had noticed that the returning bees' "fidget" was not always a simple circling, "milling round." Sometimes the movements were much more confused. So con-

fused, in fact, that this must be the reason why thousands of bee-observers have, all down the centuries, failed to read the signs.

If you have never before seen Chinese cursive writing and no one is with you who can read it, you don't think it writing at all. It's so complex that you might well take it for mere "doodling," a tangle of meaningless strokes. Some bees, instead of making a simple circle, clear and obvious, made something more like a figure-of-eight—or the outline of an orange with the core-line drawn with a rather wobbly stroke. Naturally, such a tangle of curve and line might be dismissed as aimless fidgeting. Von Frisch noticed, however, that all the other bees that were near paid as careful attention to this diffuse fidget as to the simple circling. If the simple circle conveyed a simple message might not the elaborate weave be giving complex information? And each watching bee (just as when they watched the simpler circler) suddenly acted, as though she had learnt something, been told something. Off she rushed, as had the others, headlong out of the hive.

And, being marked and tracked, she too was found to have gone straight to a new food find. But these finds were all much further off than the earlier ones, those indicated by the simple circle dance-sign. These later ones could be as much as four miles away. And they might be in any direction. How did they know where to go?

The answer was not too difficult if you were not too prejudiced. If the simple circular dance said in fact, "Food is near. You just circle round and you'll find it": the figure-of-eight message, on which the bees undoubtedly acted as they acted on the simple message, what could it be saying? It must be telling them how far and in what direction they should go.

Of course this sounded ridiculous to people who thought they knew that insects can't think. Fortunately von Frisch didn't think he knew. He wanted to learn, wanted the bees to teach him. If you wave your hand round, people watching you conclude you are indicating something somewhere in the immediate surroundings. If you point, you show where the thing lies. Could the returned bee be pointing? First it circles—that's the simple basic sign—"There is a new food source out there." But if the food is far away then it must point. And von Frisch has found that it does. The pointer is that waggly line drawn across the centre of the circle, bisecting it. But the distances were often so great that surely something would have to be said about them, and not merely about the direction, if the bees weren't to go astray? As he tracked the distant "caches" of food, von Frisch became convinced that they had been told not only the direction but the mileage also. They knew the direction and the distance, yes, up to some four miles.

How? Back he went to watching the complex figure-of-eight (or round-the-circle-and-down-the-middle) dance. Yes, that down-the-middle line was the pointer which, like the orientation arrow on a map, gave the direction in which the searchers should go. But there was a further mystery to be solved.

As the bee ran along drawing this line across the circle it had danced, it did not draw the line straight. The line was a wobbly line because as the bee ran it waggled its body. Always, as the bee mapped this diagonal direction line, it twitched the lower half of its body. Again, a less careful, less 'open-minded' observer might have said: Why, that's simply nervous excitement. Not so von Frisch. He observed that the wagging was regular. The whole performance, this beating out of a certain number of body-waggles while drawing out the direction line, is so regular, methodic, exact, that when von Frisch timed the dance with a stop-watch he found he could calculate precisely the distance of the spot from which the returned dancer had just brought in the new supply. So the dance that seemed tangled up was so because, precisely because, letters and written words are of necessity more tangled than simple geometric patterns. For letters, in order to give more information, have to be more elaborate than simple signs. The secret was out. Bees talk as clearly and accurately as air-pilots exchange information as to flights.

Of course the whole thing is very shocking. It is a revolution—or worse, a counter-revolution. Darwin told us we were apish (or apoid) and we have spent almost a century trying to face up to what seemed the inevitable conclusion—that we, being animals, and animals of course, being instinctive, intelligence was really an illusion, a "rationalisation." But now zoology is facing up to the fact that insects can talk, can exchange accurate information as intelligently as surveyors. No wonder the zoologist quoted above felt himself passionately unwilling to accept such a throw-back to fairyland. Is there no other possible explanation before we have to accept such a mystery? Can't the bees' behaviour be really an instinct of a sort and not intelligence? Von Frisch has exhausted every other possibility. True, the bee sometimes performs her dance on the alighting-board, *on the same plane* as "the country she has just travelled." So she might just be pointing from whence she had come—and her twitchings—well, they might be muscular rhythms, relaxing movements that might be quite natural.

And just as naturally these reflex twitchings might happen to be as numerous as the muscular exertions she had made in the actual flight. The first obstacle to that explanation is that alighting-boards only exist for domesticated bees. Could an instinct have been built up so soon? The second obstacle is far more grave. Bees as a rule do not do their information-dance on the alighting-board. They perform it in the hive on the comb—and the comb is upright. That means that the bee, in a shut space where she can't see the country and *on another plane*, still can and does convey detailed instructions to her fellows.

In short, she has to *translate* what she has experienced. And her audience has to *interpret* what she is showing them. What is the use of trying to call such advanced and flexible communication "blind instinct"? And once we stop trying to label and confine the bees' behaviour, once we are open to watch,

and not say what can't happen, the wonder grows. Von Frisch has shown that the bee takes her bearings by the sun. The sun, the hive and the cache of food are the three points, using which, she gives her audience their chart. And she can do this when the sun can't be seen from where she is. How?

Because she can see the polarisation of sunlight. We know (though we humans can't see it) that the whole sky is streaked with bands caused by polarisation—for the atmosphere tends to a certain amount to polarise the sun's beams. The bee detects this streaking, deduces from it where the sun must be at that moment, and so by this calculation she then conveys to her fellows in what direction and how far they should go. Even when the sky is overcast, the bee can see those guiding lines and make her reckoning.

What then are we to make of all this? The first thing is to keep an open mind. Why should we be "passionately unwilling" to accept what is surely an interesting fact? Are we afraid—and if so, afraid of what? Fairy stories, one must suppose—the longer word for which is superstition. But as H. G. Wells used to say, "The mind of the universe can count above two!" We need not have only two choices. Beside the possibility that bees may be machines or mannikins there may be a third type of mind, expressing itself in them. The one thing is to go ahead with these explorations, as von Frisch is doing.

What we do know to date is that the bee can think—think and make deductions from her immediate experience. Further she can translate: She can interpret direction, distance, etc. She can arrange her experience and then convey it to others. And they, attending to what she is telling them, can construe her complex messages through her elaborate method of recording direction and distance. What then would be the next step. Obviously we must now put the further question: Could the bee, who is so aware of things about her and can think them over, could she ever be made to signal to us? Why shouldn't we succeed in communicating with her? No doubt it is hard for her to believe that such incoherent moving mountains (as we appear to be) could ever be intelligent. And we should have to be watched very carefully for some time before one could be sure that our innumerable random fidgets really all built up and could be explained as the conduct of a consistently rational creature. What, for example would a bee make of our habit of smoking—offensive, dangerous, of no use to the community? Obviously the conduct of a repulsively irrational creature, no doubt the hang-over of a degenerate instinct. The first thing is to try and catch her attention by severely rational behaviour, as her severe code of community ethics conceives a reasonable creature to be and to behave. We must always conduct ourselves in her presence so that by her high standards she would wish to notice and if necessary puzzle over such a problem as we present. Once, however, we could get her to attend to us, could make her realise that we are rational and willing not to waste her time but forward communal, intentional living, why, then she might begin to signal across to us and we to her.

MYSTICISM—THE HEART OF RELIGION

BY NORMAN C. DOWSETT

In the West the word Mysticism is so bandied about as to be confused in the minds of many with mystification. This confusion is made even more concrete by the Positivists who are for ever trying to classify all phenomena into the catalogue of their own logic; whereas 'mysticism' is precisely a 'higher logic'. But what, after all, is this higher logic which we call mysticism? To put it in a few words: it is spiritual thought and experience which leads to realization and union with the Divine; or in another word, Yoga.

Of course the Positivists could find no credence in this: (a) because they admit of no other logic but their own, viz. the logic of the three-dimensional world in which they live, and (b) because they cannot accept spiritual experience as Truth unless it can be proved as something existing in their three-dimensional world. Naturally spiritual experience cannot be proved in that way for it belongs to another order than the order of physical facts. But how would one set about proving any unknown quantity unless by a study of it in its own field of experience? We cannot measure energy with a foot rule, but that does not prove that energy is non-existent. The scientist may fail to classify energy but still he cannot ignore its existence. He is quite willing to agree to Kant's doctrine of the *a priori*—i.e.: he does not go to the sun to find out its chemical composition, no, he uses a spectrum analysis; neither does he stretch a tape measure from the earth to the moon to discover the distance, he uses an *a priori* science (trigonometry).

To study mysticism one has to agree to enter into unknown worlds; to push on beyond horizons, with a fearless eye and the spirit of adventure spurring one on in a persistent and patient quest for Truth; with the belief and faith that Truth is there. Then after much searching one comes to it in all its golden glory, like the dawn of a new world.

Mysticism is a dawn of consciousness where knowledge is received under conditions of a growing receptivity—a state of consciousness in which there are many sub-states. These sub-states might also at times merge with emotional states such as passivity, transiency, ineffability etc., but when they transcend the emotional states through a growing receptivity they enter into the dawn of a higher consciousness—mysticism.

Today psychology recognises certain states of consciousness which it was loth to accept a few years ago and even tries to classify them; especially states of sub-consciousness. Is it too irrational to suppose, then, superconscious states?

To come into contact with anything higher than our normal consciousness one must first assume, as a hypothesis, that it exists or that it is possible. One must enter into its field of probable experience. If one wishes to understand Einstein's theory of relativity one must first study higher mathematics, the field of its criteria.

One might say, to the born mathematician it is relatively easy, but to the layman it would be hard work. So it is with mysticism, perhaps more so; but it is childish to deny the existence of mystical experience because it cannot be proved, measured, made to conform to the canons of our limited fields of logic. To take the positivists' view that mysti-

cism is all quack-quack is the same as taking the view that Einstein's theory of Relativity is all rubbish because one does not understand nor does one wish to study higher mathematics.

Why is the Positivist so positive in denying mysticism? For the very simple reason that he cannot bear to think that he has made a mistake after having taken a very firm stand for his own ideal, putting his faith in all that he believes. He has not, as yet, grown up! There is nothing wrong in his taking a positive stand for his ideal. Where he is wrong, however, is in putting all his faith in one ideal; which is rather confusing idealism with moral rectitude—a fault mostly to be found in schoolboys.

Truth cannot be contained in one ideal unless it be the Absolute, the Divine, and even the Positivist would hardly presume his truth to be that; and yet he must continue to deny that which he has not experienced. As with children that cannot be told, experience is the only teacher.

Let us take what is perhaps the most general fact of mystical experience: "the peace that passeth understanding". Some may have experienced it only once, some often, according to their state of consciousness and receptivity. To the developed mystic it is a constant state of consciousness. Now such a state cannot be proved, but who, having experienced it, would deny its existence? The mystic is forever seeking that which will bring him into union with the Absolute, the Infinite, the Divine. How far would he get if he did not, from the first, believe the Divine to be a reality? How far would any man get if he did not believe that that which he sought existed?

All the great mystics through the ages have been "bridge builders" spanning the gulf between matter and spirit, the lower field of logic and the higher realm of consciousness. It is they who have patiently tried to show that this world does not end in sense perception, is not a mere accident in time, as some of our "moderns" would have it. It is the mystics who have built what connection there is between the world of matter and the higher worlds of the spirit. It is they who can bring us out of this impasse in which we find ourselves today—this state of material intellectualism which promises to plunge itself into the abyss of inconscient nature, if it cannot see in time the need to reconcile itself to that which is higher than intellect.

Mysticism is the corner stone of all religions; it is the heart and substance of all the scriptures. All the great teachers were mystics in the higher sense of the word. Their teachings were the resultant expression of their union with God—their

identity with the Absolute, with Infinity. It is only their followers who have perverted their teachings into sectarian creeds and dogmas, so forming separate religions to which they cling with the tenacity of Positivists, claiming that theirs is the only true religion. Hinduism based on Vedanta is perhaps the only religion which can be excepted, because it still contains and expresses its mystical truths. The Vedanta philosophy rests on the foundation thesis that in reality there can exist nothing but Brahman, that Brahman is everything, and everything is in the Absolute Brahman.

If Brahman is all in all, then nothing can be said to exist that is not Brahman. The infinite in man and the infinite in Nature must be the same: there cannot be two Infinities.

This is the axis upon which the Vedanta revolves. Then when Christ said "Seek ye within for the Kingdom of Heaven is within you" or when St. Paul uttered the words "In Him we live and move and have our being" does any one imagine that these words were only meant for Christians? How absurd! They are truths from the highest flights of consciousness, uttered by men who were indisputable mystics. The same as the highest lesson of the Vedanta doctrine: *Tat twam asi* (Thou art That). These three words contain the whole philosophy of life—the secret of our material existence and the certitude of That which is beyond matter. The Sphinx looks out across the sands of time into the face of eternity. Each truth uttered by the mystics does the same thing; it reaches out from the past and present into the unending future. Truth for all time yet out of time; for such truths are not bound to time, space and causation, they transcend the narrow three-dimensional world in

which we normally have our consciousness. Upon the pathway of such truths we can reach That which is behind all life, That which is the secret within and beyond all manifestation, which supports both Life and Death. Such truths can claim no special adherents and exclude others. Anyone is free to realise them and men have realised them all down the ages. Religions (as they stand today) can merely help the ordinary man to moral rectitude, they cannot help him to realise God unless they take into account the mystical truths contained in their scriptures. This is precisely the cause of the decline found in Christianity today (not in numbers of converts but in the practice of Christianity in society). It will be remembered that there was in Europe, at the beginning of this century, a great enthusiastic revival of secret societies, such as the Masonic etc. This was a clear indication of the need of man for some higher or more intense spiritual knowledge, and the failure of the churches to make it available to him. The churches have always placed the emphasis of their teaching on the Man rather than on what he taught. Which is simply putting the cart before the horse. His life was certainly the highest ideal upon which to model ours; but how can we hope to do that without first understanding what He said? The outer life of any of the great teachers meant little or nothing in comparison to his inner life. His exegeses came from his mystical states—those states of consciousness which made contact with the Divine possible.

This then is what mysticism means, the key to Unity of all religions, a common field of experience upon which they can all agree. Let man turn to the Mystics to find the heart of his religion.

The Seed of the Lotus

Waves of inertia strive with the fire of a longing,

An ache of the soul quivering in the deep

Clings to its Faith—while all around is wronging—

The heart is stilled to wonder and to weep.

Habits rise again once more to be broken,

While earthly needs are more insistent still;

Thought seems futile once the thought is spoken,

And words appease where once they honoured Will!

O seed of the lotus! break from thy mud-soil of yearning,

Reach through the waters of mortality—

For, though in patience clothed, the soul is burning

For one bold thrust to higher liberty.

O Flower divine, rise to the dawn that is looming,

Spread thy fragrance o'er the sullen air,

Open thy petals to the sunlight blooming—

Thy Light in the seed as in the heavens rare.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

THE DRAGON OF COLCHIS

BY PROF. JOSE DE BENITO

Centuries ago a great cataclysm befell the earth. Glaciers spread down from the north to Central Asia, and men, fleeing from the cold, set out in search of milder climates to the south.

The human horde travelled slowly. From time to time, the refugees heard the distant thunder of great boulders crashing down from heights, sounds which, in their terror, they took to be the angry voices of the gods. At other times, they heard the sighing of the wind in the trees or its dull moaning as it swept into a narrow mountain pass.

When they reached their new lands, the old people told the young, and the children born in the course of the migration, of those mysterious and wondrous sounds for which no doubt the gods were responsible.

One day, a huntsman loosing his arrow from the bow was delighted by the lovely sound made by the vibration of the vegetable fibre used to tense the curve of toughened wood. Then another man found he could make a whistling sound by blowing air through a dead animal's hollow shin-bone. Finally, after many experiments, men mastered this source of pleasure. In order to help maintain the rhythm of the march, which grew ragged as the people tired, someone had beaten time by clapping his hands. And perhaps, on another occasion, someone put side by side several bows of different sizes and realized that the sounds produced varied according to the length and tension of the cords.

Men had discovered how to produce sounds at will, so that they might enjoy the delights and taste the mysteries of which the old men had spoken. Music was born, and through it, through song and the earliest musical instruments—flute, drum and lyre—the spirit of man soared to the level of his gods.

Since then, since it first became part of the cultural patrimony of mankind, music has given man a means of transcending his lower nature. A lovely and symbolic instance of its power is provided by the legend of Orpheus, to whom Apollo gave his lyre and to whom the Muses taught the secrets of the art of music.

Orpheus with his lyre and songs charmed gods and men, beasts and plants and stones. Luca della Robbia's famous bas-relief on the Giotto campanile in Florence shows Orpheus seated on the ground and playing his lyre, surrounded by spellbound lions, birds mute with delight, and trees stretching their boughs towards the strange and wonderful music. Orpheus' whole life shows the triumph of music over unbridled passions, the spirit of evil and the corruption of material things; to compass his death the fury of the Maenads, the priestesses of Bacchus, was to be unleashed by their jealousy of the hero's faithfulness to the memory of his lost wife Eurydice.

Of course, the remembrance of Orpheus did not pass away; his body, torn limb from limb, was carried gently away by the waters of the River Hebrus (the modern Maritza) and borne by the waves of the Aegean to the Island of Lesbos, whence it was taken by the Muses and buried in Lebeithra at the foot of Mount Olympus. There it had a miraculous effect on the song of the nightingale, so that people came from far and near to listen to its extraordinary beauty. Orpheus'

lyre—perhaps so that no other hand should ever strike its chords—was transported to the heavens and hangs among the stars, one of the loveliest of the constellations.

In the "Orphic" literature and philosophy, which appeared in the sixth century B.C., the basic legend was combined with a purer ethical system and a belief in the immortality of the soul. These "Orphic mysteries", which sought to bring about reforms in relation to the doctrines then dominant, invoked Orpheus—that is to say, music—to help their new and more humane ideas to make headway among men. The most important of these ideas was the belief that the universe had been created by love and time, and that Zeus, Lord of the Lightning and source of fire, represented the universal principle of energy.

When we turn from the mythical ages of Greece to the people of the Bible, we find another solitary figure, that of David, the conqueror of the giant Goliath, the founder of Jerusalem and the author of the psalms, who was likewise a great musician. Orpheus' lyre has been converted into a harp and, in early times, the psalms were sung to the harp. The Christian religion was to preserve the idea of the supremacy of music, and angels, seraphs and archangels are represented as the heavenly choir, playing with marvellous skill on all instruments of music.

We all know that music is an essential element in the liturgies of most religions, and that Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt and Fauré devoted their best gifts to the development of religious musical themes. Through the centuries, from the finest of the "negro spirituals" to Christmas carols, from solemn ritual dance to the gay rustic festivals of pilgrimage, the notes of the scale have worked the miracle of refreshing man's spirit, relieving the cares by which he is oppressed, putting his sorrows to flight and causing him to forget the anxieties which might well have become obsessions.

We have already said that music can tame wild beasts, and it is therefore not surprising that it should be able to lull and appease the animal in man, when the sense of brotherhood is overwhelmed in him by the old, unregenerate Adam who preys upon his fellows. If Orpheus' lyre could put to sleep the dragon of Colchis who guarded the Golden Fleece—symbol of happiness—for which the Argonauts went in search under Jason's leadership; if the wild waves of the sea sank to rest before the prow of the "Argo" in which they sailed, when Orpheus sang to the accompaniment of his lyre; and if he so far succeeded in moving Pluto, the Lord of the Underworld, to compassion, that he was allowed to return, leading back to earth the gentle Eurydice his wife, who had died from a snake-bite; that is to say, if the miracle of music can abate malevolence, assuage fierce passions, and tame the perverse instincts of men, we may surely say that music is conducive to understanding or, which is the same thing, that music may be an able ally in the building of a peaceful world.

But the modern way of life, with its constant concern for what is "useful" in the material sense, has gradually led many people to conceive the idea that music is a superfluous refinement and the teaching of music an "unnecessary" luxury; and so it comes about that when, as now, anxieties so press on men that they seem overwhelming, we find that, for lack of a sound musical training, millions of human beings who, by composing, performing or simply listening to music, might have banished their cares and elevated their minds in one of the purest of all pleasures, have lost the capacity either to feel or appreciate the beauty of the least material of the arts.

The question of the teaching of music and musical education thus comes to the fore. For this reason, UNESCO, as an Organisation whose purpose it is to train the world for peace, has in its Department of Cultural Activities a Division specializing in the study of musical problems, and has promoted and sponsored the establishment of the International Music Council, which recently held its first General Assembly in Paris.

I have just been reading the programme of this Council, whose establishment was first mooted at the Second Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, held at Mexico City in 1947. It contains a general section constituting the long-term plan of action, but there is another section, which might be described as the priority programme, the third part of which is concerned with this very problem of musical education and, in the first place, contains a proposal that the Council "promote the convening in 1952 of a conference on the problems of musical education, teaching and culture, as a part of general education". This conference I feel, may be able to supply a solution to the problem of the present neglect of music, and

suggest how it may be fitted into general education.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, education, for which, in many countries, the city councils were responsible, included not only instruction in the basic subjects, but also instruction in music for religious services. There was, therefore, a certain amount of sifting by the "choirmasters" (a post occupied by Bach in Leipzig), but in theory, no-one was necessarily excluded. In the nineteenth century, possibly due in part to the influence of Rationalist doctrines, religious music suffered an obvious eclipse. Civil instruction was separated from the religious side, and the prestige and renown of the great virtuosos transformed what had previously been regarded as one of the normal branches of study into a special subject or "accomplishment". The result was that musical education has been considered a luxury and the people's opportunities to take part in the creation or performance of music have been reduced. This is the matter with whose solution the above-mentioned item in the programme of the International Music Council is concerned.

International tensions, which may again develop into open strife unless they are carefully watched and efforts are made to diminish them, today stand where, long ago, the dragon of Colchis stood barring the way to the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece, symbolizing happiness. And since Orpheus was able to lull the dragon to sleep and so remove the obstacle to the happiness of men, we cannot, in our plans for education, neglect means of fortifying what may prove an effective instrument to help restore to this world the peace for which we all long and for which so little is actually being done.

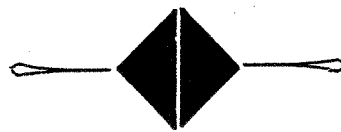
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TIPS FOR YOUR EYESIGHT

By Dr. R. S. AGARWAL

Quite frequently eye discomforts, pain and headache are due to wrong use of the eyes. Glassees often fail to relieve them because such eye complaints are not due to an error of refraction. Many weak eyesight patients, not wearing glasses, complain of no trouble except dimness in the vision; while others having a fairly good vision complain of pain and headache. In many cases headache and eye troubles continue or are increased by wearing spectacles. A doctor patient, who suffered from headache and pain in the eyeballs while reading, was fitted with spectacles fifteen times and was relieved of the pain in fifteen minutes by adopting the proper method of reading.

1. **EYELIDS:**—The upper eyelids should remain downwards, keeping the eye half open without screwing the lids. While looking upwards or in front the upper lids should not be raised, but the whole head. It is very important for the myopic patients to keep the lids in the right position.

Look at a figure in the calendar hanging in your office, raise the eyelids and lower the chin, and you will note that the blackness of the figure fades. Now lower the lids and raise the head, and you will note that the blackness increases.

2. **BLINKING:**—The greatest things are always the simplest. The act of blinking is the first and the simplest, and a most important action of the eyes. In blinking the upper lid comes a little downwards and is again raised; it does not touch the lower eyelid. In wrong blinking the upper lid touches the lower eyelid and an effort is made; it is

just like winking.

Gentle and correct blinking rests the eyes while wrong blinking or winking strains them. Many an eye-discomfort is relieved simply by the correct habit of blinking. Blinking should be done all the time one is awake; the normal eye blinks quite frequently. A boy had acquired partial blindness by staring and was cured in a week by blinking.

READERS:—Keep the book at a lower level than the chin so that the lids are not raised. Hold the book at a distance from where you see the letters best; the distance is immaterial. Blink once or twice in reading a line. Slightly move the head or swing gently from side to side or forward and backward while reading. Do not allow the bright rays of the sun or artificial light to fall on the book, because the glare reflected from the paper causes strain and dimness in the vision.

Fine print reading is an aid to eyesight. Get a specimen of fine print or photographic type reduction from Dr. Agarwal's Eye Institute, Delhi, and read it daily for two minutes to keep your eyes free from pain and headache which might be troubling you in reading.

READING IN MOVING VEHICLES:—Persons who wish to preserve their eyesight are frequently warned not to read in moving vehicles; but since under modern conditions of life many persons have to spend a large part of their time in moving vehicles and many of them have no other time to read, it is useless to expect that they will ever discontinue the practice. Fortunately the theory of its injuriousness is not

borne out by facts. When the object regarded is moved more or less rapidly, strain and lowered vision are, at first, produced; but this is always temporary, and ultimately the vision is improved by the practice.

WRITING:—Some persons get eye strain and headache by writing. A Rani of a native state had good eyesight but suffered from great strain and headache while writing and the trouble made it impossible for her to write even a letter to her father. Doctors prescribed various devices and she had accumulated a number of spectacles. When she demonstrated the way of her writing we quickly observed that while writing she was trying to look back at the words already written. It is most improper, from the optical point of view, to write forward and try to read the already written words. We gave her a piece of blotting paper to shut off the written words while writing and lo! there was no complaint any more.

SEWING:—Many girls and women complain of eye-strain, fatigue and headache while sewing or doing needle work or after finishing work. They are advised by their guardians and the experts to stop sewing, but this is not the remedy. Moreover it is not practical because they have to pass some leisure time or do necessary stitching. In fact, fine sewing or stitching is an aid to eyesight. The right method of sewing is to move the sight with the needle. When the needle goes up, the sight goes up; and when the needle comes down, the sight comes down. The shifting of the sight with the needle keeps the eye under relaxation. In continuous stitching or machine

work, frequent and gentle blinking is necessary.

CINEMA:—Cinematograph pictures are commonly supposed to be very injurious to the eyes, and it is a fact that they often cause much discomfort and the lowering of vision. They can, however, be made a means of improving the vision. When they hurt the eyes, it is because the subject strains to see them. If this tendency to strain can be overcome, the vision is always improved and if the practice of viewing pictures is continued long enough, many eye troubles are relieved. While seeing the movies keep the upper lids a little lowered and blink. During the interval one may close the eyes and cover them with the palms, avoiding any pressure on the eyeballs, and try to remember the episode just seen.

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LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(32)

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many important questions which arise in the minds of thoughtful persons all over the world. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not only a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in various spheres of life and thought. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it directly applicable to the problems that present themselves to an observing intelligence, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers directly taken from Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

- Q. 1: There is a strong tendency in modern poetry and art to seek for bare simplicity and directness of expression as can be seen in the poetry of D. H. Lawrence and certain recent movements in art like Cubism, surrealism, abstract painting etc. What is the basic idea behind this tendency?
- A. 1: "The idea is to get rid of all over-expression, of language for the sake of language, or form for the sake of form, even of indulgence of poetic emotion for the sake of the emotion, because all that veils the thing in itself, dresses it up, prevents it from coming out in the seizing nudity of its truth, the power of its intrinsic appeal. There is a sort of mysticism here that wants to express the inexpressible, the concealed, the invisible. Reduce expression to its bareness and you get nearer the inexpressible; suppress as much of the form as may be and you get nearer that behind, which is invisible. It is the same impulse as pervaded recent endeavours in Art. Form hides, not expresses the reality; let us suppress the concealing form and express the reality by its appropriate geometrical figures—and you have Cubism. Or since that is too much, suppress exactitude of form and replace it by more significant forms that indicate rather than conceal the truth—so you have "abstract" paintings. Or, what is within reveals itself in dreams, not in waking phenomena, let us have in poetry or painting the figures, visions, sequences, designs of dream—and you have surrealist art and poetry. The idea of Lawrence is akin: let us get rid of rhyme, metre, artifices which please us for their own sake and draw us away from the thing in itself, the real behind the form. So suppressing these things let us have something bare, rocky, primarily expressive."
- Q. 2: Is this theory quite sound? Has it been worked out with success in the creations of modern poets?
- A. 2: "There is nothing to find fault with in the theory provided it does lead to a new creation which expresses the inner truth in things better and more vividly and directly than with its rhyme and metre the old poetry, now condemned as artificial and rhetorical, succeeded in expressing it... But the results do not come up to expectation... What the modernist metreless verse does is to catch up the movements of prose and try to fit them into varying or variously arranged lengths of verse. Sometimes something which has its own beauty or power is done—though nothing better or even equal to the best that was done before, but for the most there is either an easy or a strained ineffectiveness."
- Q. 3: Does this mean that new metrical forms are bound to prove a failure and should not be attempted?
- A. 3: "It does not follow that new and free forms are not to be attempted or that they cannot succeed at all. But if they succeed it will be by bringing the fundamental quality, power, movement of the old poetry—which is the eternal quality of all poetry—into new secrets of poetic expression. It cannot be done by reducing these to skeletal bareness or suppressing them by subdual and dilution in a vain attempt to unite the free looseness of prose with the gathered and intent paces of poetry."
- Q. 4: Surrealism has been the most influential of all modern movements in art and poetry. The theory and aim of this movement are differently explained by different critics. What is the true aim and significance of surrealism?
- A. 4: "Surrealism is part of an increasing attempt of the European mind to escape from the surface consciousness (in poetry as well as in painting and in thought) and grope after a deeper truth of things which is not on the surface. The dream-consciousness as it is called—meaning not merely what we see in dreams, but the inner consciousness in which we get into contact with deeper worlds which underlie, influence and to some extent explain much in our lives, what the psychologists call the subliminal or the subconscious (the latter a very ambiguous phrase)—offers the first road of escape and the surrealists seem to be trying to force it. My impression is that there is much fumbling and that more often it is certain obscure and not always very safe layers that are tapped. That accounts for the note of diabolism that comes in in Baudelaire, in Rimbaud also, I believe, and in certain ugly elements in English surrealist poetry and painting."
- Q. 5: What is the explanation of so much obscurity and unintelligibility in surrealist poetry and art? Is it its deliberate aim to remain obscure and unintelligible as some critics try to maintain?
- A. 5: "Obscurity and unintelligibility are not the essence of any poetry and—except for unconscious or semi-conscious humorists like Dadaists—cannot be its aim or principle. True dream-poetry has and must always have a meaning and a coherence. But it may very well be obscure or seem meaningless to those who take their stand on the surface or 'waking' mind and accept only its links and logic. Dream-poetry is usually full of images, visions, symbols that seek to strike at things too deep for the ordinary means of expression. The poet does not deliberately make his poems obscure; he writes what comes through from the source he has tapped and does not interfere with its flow by his own mental volition. Thinking it out may give a satisfaction and an appearance of mental logicity, but the deeper sense and sequence can only be apprehended by an inner sense. This is a special kind of poetry and has to be dealt with according to its kind and nature. There is a sequence, a logic, a design in them, but not one that can satisfy the more rigid law of the logical intelligence."

K. G.

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