SRI AUROBINDO’S LETTERS
YOGA AND LIFE

(Won’t you tell me something to which I can always turn for help and contact during my stay in Bombay?)

“Remember the Mother and, though physically far from her, try to feel her with you and act according to what your inner being tells you would be her Will. Then you will be best able to feel her presence and insistently carry our atmosphere around you as a protection and a zone of quietude and light accompanying you everywhere.”

(12-13-26)

It happens sometimes that when something in me seems to go out towards people to whom I was attached in the past I make a violent inner rejection of their influence but then I feel bad about the violence and let a movement of pity or softness or warmth go out towards them so as to undo whatever inner harm I might have done that violence. I wonder if this movement has anything psychic in it and is permissible.

“The movement of which you speak is not psychic but emotive. It is a vital emotive force that you put out and waste. It is also harmful because, while on the one side you try to reject a past vital relation or tie with those people, you by this movement re-establish in another way a vital relation with them. If there was anything wrong in your first movement, this is quite a false way of remedying the defect.

Certainly, it would be better to reject without any violent feeling against any person, because the violence is a sign of a certain weakness in the vital which must be corrected—not for any other reason. The rejection should be quiet, firm, self-assured, decisive; it will then become radical and effective.”

(3-5-39)

How is it that one keeps shifting one’s quality of self-feeling and self-being? And what is it in one that does so? It cannot be the outer “I”, the ego-sense, the Ahankar; for you have written of the necessity of getting away from the Ahankar into a truer self. Something else then is there which is capable of getting away from the one to the other.

“It all depends upon where the consciousness places itself and concentrates itself. If the consciousness places or concentrates itself within the ego, your are identified with the ego—if in the mind, it is identified with the mind and its activities and so on. If the consciousness puts its stress outside, it is said to live in the external being and becomes oblivious of its inner mind and vital and innermost psychic; if it goes inside, puts its centralising stress there, then it knows itself as the inner being or, still deeper, as the psychic being; if it ascends out of the body to the planes where self is naturally conscious of its withness and freedom it knows itself as the Self and not the mind, life or body. It is this stress of consciousness that makes all the difference. That is why one has to concentrate the consciousness in heart or mind in order to go within or go above. It is the disposition of the consciousness that determines everything, makes one predominantly mental, vital, physical or psychic, bound or free, separate in the Purusha or involved in the Prakriti.”

(16-7-37)

(If the inner or overhead planes get realised by me, isn’t the realisation my outer waking personal consciousness? If it is not this consciousness—that is to say, the being of thought, feeling and sensation which I know normally as myself—then can I be said to have realised anything?)

“You take the outer waking consciousness as if it were the real person or being and conclude that if it is not this but something else that has the realisation or abides in the realisation, then no one has it—for there is no one here except the waking consciousness. That is the very error by which the ignorance is born and cannot be got rid of. The very first step in getting out of the ignorance is to accept the fact that this outer consciousness is not one’s soul, not oneself, not the real person, but only a temporary formation on the surface for the purposes of the surface play. The soul, the person is within, not on the surface—the outer personality is the person only in the first sense of the Latin word persona which meant originally a mask.”

(26-7-37)

(What is the European notion of the true soul, the real person?)

The non-materialistic European idea makes a distinction between soul and body—the body is perishable, the mental-vital consciousness is the immortal soul and remains always the same (horrible idea!) in heaven as on earth or if there is rebirth it is also the same damned personality that comes back and makes a similar fool of itself.”

(21-7-37)

(Why is X acting so strangely and what could be his grievance against us?)

His main grievance with respect to the intellectuals is that he is cut off from all discussion of mental things and mental stimuli and so his mental energies are becoming atrophied. But a man who has a mental life ought surely not to be dependent on others for it, since that life is found within—there ought to be springs within, that flow of their own force.”

(12-7-37)

(A friend of mine feels disposed towards the spiritual life. May I get his photograph for you to judge him? Do you think I should bring some persuasion to bear on him?)

You may get his photograph—It may help to see what kind of nature he has. But there is no need to go out of the way to persuade him; if you read his letter he does not seem altogether ready for the spiritual life. His idea of life seems to be rather moral and philanthropic than spiritual at present, and behind it is the attachment to the family life. If the impulse to seek the Divine of which he speaks is more than a mental turn suggested by a vague emotion, if it has really anything psychic in it, it will come out at its own time; there is no need to stimulate, and a premature stimulation may put him towards something for which he is not yet fit.”

(12-5-31)

(I feel divided and disturbed. Above me is the ecstatic light; below me is a voluptuous darkness: I strain my arms towards the high splendour but my feet carry me into the frenzied deeps. The Mother is very dear to my soul, but that does not help me to make the obscure impulses turn and follow her. You will tell me that I must do this or do that; but what’s the use of “musts” to one who feels too exhausted to move an inch in the right direction. I cannot conceive how possibly I can live without the Mother and yourself, but neither can I imagine how the mass of human folly in me is to be controlled and illumined.)

“The moral of the condition you describe is not that Yoga should not be done but that you have to go steadily healing the rift between the two parts of the being. The division is very usual, almost universal in human nature, and the following of the lower impulse in spite of the contrary will in the higher parts happens to almost everybody. It is the phenomenon noted by Arjuna in his question to Krishuna, ‘Who does one do evil though one wishes not to do it, as if compelled to it by force?’, and expressed succinctly by Horae: video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor.”* By constant effort and aspiration one can arrive at a turning point when the psychic asserts itself and what seems a very slight psychological change or reversal alters the whole balance of the nature.”

(2-3-37)

(What would you say of an experience, during sleep, in which a seminal emission is prevented by a powerful pulling back of the fluid so that it flows inward again and one can feel and even hear it boiling and swirling at the

* “I see the better and approve of it, I follow the worse.”
root of the sex organ. Also, may I have a few words from you on whether constant sex control could induce impotence?"

"If it is like that, then it is the power of self-control, automatic and therefore belonging to the inner being, that is coming—the genuine thing. Of course to be complete the sexual passion and the thoughts that encourage it should disappear also. The idea about impotence is rather irrational—impotence comes from over-indulgence or wrong indulgence (certain perverse habits) or it does not come from self-control. Self-control means only a diversion to other powers, because the controlled sex-power becomes a force for the life-energies, the powers of the mind and the more and more potent workings of the spiritual consciousness." (9-12-32)

(This afternoon I closed off. Presently I found myself trying to read a manuscript—especially where a part of it somehow came in a shadow. As this was difficult I thought of deciphering the brighter part, and concentrated then. I began to see designs and I don't recollect what else, until I felt my eyes getting drawn towards the centre between the brows. There was a strong pull towards it, resulting in my seeing a widening white circle, an aperture which grew about as big as perhaps an eight-anna piece. It struck me then that this was the famous "third eye" opening. May I know what you think?"

"It is very evidently the opening of the Ajapachakara or centre of inner thought and will and occult vision—there can be no doubt about it, from your description." (I had an attack of cold in the nose this morning, which grew worse in the evening. I was wondering what to do to check it—when I just happened to look out of my window and saw on a cloud above the sunset a patch of yellow gold vorting on light orange. I immediately felt that this glow was going to pass and I waited and kept staring at it—dipping imaginatively my nose into it. The effect was almost instant, and within a short time the cold was as good as gone. How would you explain this phenomenon? Did I become well because certain tones of light affect the nerves in a soothing way? The eyes and the nose have a close connection: irritation of the former by glare often produces a fit of sneezing; or perhaps what specially comforts the eyes acts as a 'soother' for the nose?"

"It is quite possible. The connection between the eye and the nose is understood. The nose has a healing (also disturbing) power on an energized fact. So your theory is perfectly possible. It is possible that your mind or something behind your mind (the inner will, say, in the third eye) acted on your nose (or the cold) with the imaginative nose-bath in orange light as a medium of transmission. You can take the thing by either end. Orange or red gold is supposed, by the way, to be the light of the supramental in the physical." (21-12-23)

("For Y's trouble, the advice of the doctors is a series of injections. I suppose he has the slight cold that has healed (also disturbing) powers on an energized fact. So your theory is perfectly possible. It is possible that your mind or something behind your mind (the inner will, say, in the third eye) acted on your nose (or the cold) with the imaginative nose-bath in orange light as a medium of transmission. You can take the thing by either end. Orange or red gold is supposed, by the way, to be the light of the supramental in the physical.")

(9-12-32)

"(If, after the Mother or you start working spiritually on some relative or friend of ours who is reported to be ill, some wrong information happens to be given about his or her identity, does the help sent miss its mark?)"

"Wrong information coming across the working creates a confusion so that it is no longer possible to say what is the result. Of course if the wrong information comes at the beginning, it would be still worse. It is very necessary that the information given should be correct." (16-4-35)

"(When a man has much to say, even a slight occasional impediment in speech has a somewhat depressing effect. But what is stammering due to?"

"I don't think stammering has anything to do with insufficient lung-power nor is it caused by malformation of the vocal organs—it is commonly a nervous (physico-nervous) impediment and is perfectly curable. I can't say that I know of any special device for it—people have used various kinds of aids to get over it, but behind them all will-power and a good discipline of the utterance are indispensable." (15-5-32)

(I have several times dreamt of some of my teeth falling. They come off in my mouth and I spit them out. The sensation is horrible. Is there any significance in such dreams?)" (9-12-32)

"(If you were thinking about your teeth. Symbolically, if the dream is symbolic, the falling of teeth means the disappearance of old or fixed mental habits belonging to the physical mind.)" (12-4-35)

(MOTHER INDIA, June 30, 1951)

Sri Aurobindo's Letters—Continued from page 1

(16-4-35)

(Last night—or rather early this morning—I had a dream in which I was vividly aware of being near you and touching your body. But I doubt very much the meaning, because in the dream you had a stomach ache and were rather upset by it! Nirod, too, was near and I asked him to give you some peppermint and then I was helping you to go upstairs somewhere. At the close of the dream I found myself reading a poem, but then I saw what exactly it was. I am not thinking about your stomach—a disorder in my own stomach must have got transferred to my dream-figure of you. But please tell me if my "experience" of being in almost physical touch with you was as mystical as your grip.)"

"Well, it is difficult to say. The vivid awareness seems to indicate an actual contact—but the stomach ache seems to be a thought. What happens often in these dreams of the vital plane is that the subconscious (which is mainly responsible for ordinary dreams) throws its figures across the transcription of the experience and one gets a very mixed record. As I have no stomach-ache and, if I had, would not be in the least upset by it (for I have reached the stage when even the aches come only as a form of Ananda and, besides, if any non-delightful ache came in the stomach I could at once dismiss it, for that much at least of the semi-supra-mental mind has been appeased)."

"It's come to be a habit now to get out of my body, time and again. Occasionally I just see with my closed eyes. At other times I see clearly the body—and the coming back to it is often due to some disturbing thrust of impulse from it into the new condition. I am fully conscious when I leave the body and soon start testing the new surroundings and reality of the things I am experiencing. Usually I move about in my own room but now and then I go outside too. The room I move in is not quite the same as the physical: the furniture is arranged somewhat differently. My conclusion is that I move in a subtle body in a subtle plane; but is that always unavoidable? Does one's subtle body never move in the very physical plane? In my latest experience I went to the pier, but the street through which I ran to reach the pier was of a strange kind because I moved, shortly after, from room to room, as through some deserted building. At last I glimpsed the sea; many boats were standing in dirty green water close to the shore. The word 'lagoon' came to my mind. But further on I found myself in full sight of the sea. And there an extremely beautiful sunset had taken place. The sky had a violet colour mixed with indigo and there was an atmosphere of magic as the large waves heaved and broke with spray and sparkle.

"Two remarks I may make about the world I explore. While running I noticed or rather felt that the defect in my left leg was present there also. I wonder up to what plane my physical disability continues. Secondly, it is not always necessary to move step by step: one has just to wish to touch or reach an object and one is simply there without any sense of passing through the intervening space."

"(We have asked whether one is forced to explore only some subtle worlds. But take the following experience. I was meditating in my easy-chair. A book was lying on my left side where I had put it before closing my eyes: there was a book-marker inserted at the page where I had stopped reading. I began to move all around the book to explore it. However, each of these formations has a part truth behind it—with its advantages and disadvantages. As all religions and philosophies point to the Supreme but each in a different direction, so all medical fashions are ways to health—though they don't always reach it.)"

("It is evidently in a subtle world, not the physical that you move; that is evident from the different arrangement of things, but such details as the third arm and the book-marker removed yet there show that it is a subtle world very near to the physical; it is either a subtle-physical world or a very material vital domain. In all the subtle domains the physical is reproduced with a change, the change growing freer and more elastic as one gets farther away. Such details as the lameness show the same thing,—the hold of the physical is still there. It is possible to move about in the physical world, but usually that can only be done by drawing on the atmospheres of other physical beings and the physical being of the person when that happens one moves among them and sees them and all the surroundings exactly as they are at that time in the physical world and one can verify the accuracy of the details if immediately after returning to the body (which is usually done with a clear consciousness of the whole process of getting into it) one can traverse the same scene in the physical body. But this is rare; the subtle wandering is on the contrary a frequent phenomenon, only when it is near to the physical world all seems material and concrete and the subtle mental movements with the subtle events is closer.)" (25-8-37)

To be continued.
"Greater than the doers of aksa (tapasya), greater even than the men of knowledge and wiser than the men of works is the Yogi. Therefore, O Arjuna, become a Yogi." (The Gita, Chap. 6:46).

Such being the view of the Gita, which is itself a massive teaching of a syncretic school, or an imperfect image of the highest conventional triad of ancient Indra-

lism, it would not be unjustifiable to conclude that Yoga was regarded in ancient India as the very heart of spirituality. The other spiritual ways and methods are but approaches, preparations, subsidiary aids to purification and progress, but the way of Yoga is the royal way, the most rapidly effective and revolutionary means of spiritual realisation. If we study the lives of the greatest mystics, Eastern and Western, we shall see that the most momentous and decisive of their realisations came to them through Yoga and not through the mere pursuit of any set methods or routine practices. This does not mean that spiritual exercises and practices are useless—they have their indispensable place and utility in spiritual life, and without them no stable progress can ever be assured—but in order to be profitably used, they must be incorporated in Yoga and informed with its quickening and sublimating spirit.

What then is Yoga? The etymological sense of the word is union, yoke (Dutch juk, German joch, Latin jugum, Sanskrit yuj). It means the linking or union of the human consciousness with something higher, something fixed or enduring. Strictly speaking, the self is divided into two: the conscious, public or outer mind, and the unconscious, inner or innermost mind, the dividing mind, though not in spiritual fact, man is cut off from his transcendent source and sustenance. He regards himself as a separate being among countless separate beings and things, his life as his own personal concern, his thoughts and ideas as his own mental creation and possession, and his successes and failures as the exclusive outcome of his personal effort. This self-separation of the individual from the unity of the universe and eternity of the transcendent constitutes his essential ignorance, and forms the root of all the evil that he experiences. In this egoism, in this igno-

ration, there can be no recovery by him of his own infinite and immortal Self, his spiritual knowledge and freedom, and the truth and unity of universal existence. His mind may go on developing itself, but unless it extends its frontiers and consciously advances towards the Infinite, it will condemn itself to an endless and fruitless spinning round the desires and wants of the life-soul. A philosophy which is born of the mere intellect is either an abstraction or a specious justification of the socialised instincts and tendencies of the ignorant human nature. In the former case it is unrelat-

ed, to life, in the latter it is an apologist for life, an advocate of what is and has been, rather than a guide to what should be. Its humanism is a separation of man from God; the true religion and the real religion, wedded to materialistic science, a means of perpetuating the natural, unregenerate humanity of man. Salvation lies in breaking out of this vicious circle by turning the mind upwards, by an ascent of conscious-

ness towards the Infinite and Eternal and a transformation descending of the Infinite into the finite. This is Yoga.

Man has first to be conscious of the absolute ignorance in which he lives. It may be, in some cases, a learned or reflective ignorance, full of a smug self-conceit and self-satisfaction, but it is ignorance none the less, which, according to Sri Aurobindo, is seventhfold in its nature, and keeps the consciousness of man utterly wrapped in itself.

"We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming; we take partial facts of being, temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence,—this is the first, the original igno-

rance; we are ignorant of the spaces, the immobile and immovable Self; we take the constant mobility and motion of the cosmic becoming in Time and Space for the whole truth of existence,—that is the second, the cosmic ignorance. We are ignorant of our universal self, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; we take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as non-self,—that is the third, the psychical ignorance. We are ignorant of the true constitutive second becoming; we take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle or the whole account of what we are, losing sight of that which constitutes them and determines by its occurrence their relations,—this is the sixth, the constitutional ignorance. As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world; we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations, actions, return and hereafter. For every person in the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal,—that is the seventh, the practical ignorance."*7

This colossal and multiform ignorance is due to the alienation of the human consciousness from the infinite and universal consciousness; it can be abolished only by healing the division. And Yoga is the only means, the only effective spiritual dynamism that can completely heal the division. Here Yoga means not the union, which is the goal, but the process or method by which the union is achieved. This is the second meaning of the word. The ethical rules and austeritys, metaphysical speculation and contemplation, even religious creeds and ceremonies have nothing to do with Yoga—they rotate within the confines of the mental consciousness; but Yoga is a movement of the human consciousness to contact the Infinite by self-

knowledge; it is a direct approach to a plunge into the Infinite. Even its start is characterized by an aspiration for such a leap or plunge; its motive force is a hunger for the Absolute. So long as there is a complacency in the mind with its thoughts and ideas and principles, and a constant confidence in the will to achieve its ends, there can be no aspiration for Yoga; and all one’s spiritual or religious life may consist only in ethical efforts or ceremonial observances to purify and refine some surface strands of one’s nature. Yoga—all true Yoga of whatever denomination—is re-

volutionary spirituality, it is breaking out of the prison of the mind, or the life-force or the rigidity of the physical formula, and a passionate winging up towards the heights and widths of the Spirit. Mysticism is its very soul, and a supra-rational daze of the innermost being is its irrepressible drive. It is the spirit of the most intense hunger of the human consciousness, fraught with dangers and difficulties, liable to be misled by false glimmers and stranded or shipwrecked on the shoals of egotistic enjoyments. And yet it is an adventure which every human being has to launch upon in one life or another, because that is the only way of the inevitable self-transcendence and divine fullness, which is his destiny. What dangers does he not brave, what risks does he not manfully take in the adventures of his mate-

rial life! How many lives have not been sacrificed in the explorations and exploitations undertaken from age to age! Failures after failures have been accepted on the way to a cherished goal; dire threats and temptations, severe privations and difficulties have been resolutely passed through, and the Discoverers have been made. But the beauty, the beauty! It has embraced martyrdom and suffering in the service of science and the general advancement of its intellectual and material aims. If that is the price willingly paid for the accomplishment of passing terrestrial purposes, it is a matter to wonder that the spirit of humanity, those who are spiri-

tually evolved, have, in all ages and climes, staked their all on the discovery of the truth of their existence and the indestructible essence of their being? Is it any wonder that they struggled and suffered, denying themselves all respite and relaxation, for the realisation of the Infinite and Eternal? Is it any wonder that, feeling apostatised in the dim cave of the mind and tormented by the ceaseless goal of desires, they pantedy for a glimpse of the Light and a breath of the inner freedom? "... If the Divine has any value, is it not worse some trouble and time and an our to follow after Him and must we insist on having Him without any training or sacrifice or suffer-

ing or trouble? It is surely irrational to make a demand of such a nature."*

But there are Yogas and Yogas. There are spurious Yogas as there are genuine ones. There are partial and limited, as there are comprehensive and integral ones. But a genuine thing does not become suspect be-

cause it is counterfeited; but a mark that identification is there, what ob-

ject of man’s quest but is shadowed by shams and sought to be fooled by fakes? The seeker of Truth, if he has an inner perception of it and a faith in its existence, can never be dissuaded or discouraged by fakes and im-

potencies; he proceeds straight to the goal, and those who are ignorance of the identification of his aspirations and his activities he may meet on the way. Impostures are there only to deflect the weak in faith; they generate doubt and diffidence in them, cloud and wea-

der their intelligence and unnerve their will to achieve; but those who are possessed and moved by faith know that all that they have to do is to stand fast, and the counterfeit, whose function is only to prove the worth of its contrary. Be-

sides, all sorts of unusual fests and practices are often lumped together under the omnibus term, Yoga. From necromancy to levitation, from acid-

* "The Life Divine" by Sri Aurobindo.
* "Letters of Sri Aurobindo."
swallowing to fire-walking, any extraordinary display of occult or magical powers, is allowed to impress the mind and confuse its perception of spiritual values. Yoga, as I have already said, is a credulous or uncritical belief in the Infinite and Eternal, and not with any merely suprabehal physicals and forces. It is a direct movement of the consciousness and being of man through a series of self-purifications and self-enlargements towards the Truth of existence and its unconditional peace and bliss. It is a suspending of the ego, a conquest of desires and a release from the hold of blind passions. It is, at its best, a complete and irrevocable reversal of consciousness, a putting off on the immortality of the Spirit and a shuffling off of the normal, fated mask of humanity. Yoga is the only means by which we can become divine and his life of stress and cares a pulse and queen of light.

But there are varieties of Yoga, each having its own particular method and particular result. Though each aims at the Infinite and Eternal, the starting point, approach and contact of each are different. Most of them use one part of the being of man as a lever and lead his consciousness through it to the Infinite. Some attempt a greater sweep and a wider approach, working through the complex elements of human nature, loosening many a knot, strengthening out many a twist, and releasing into expression something of the splendour of the Infinite upon earth. I propose to deal with this subject of the varieties of Yoga in the next article. Here I shall confine myself to considering the inevitable—and, I could have also said, imperative—necessity of Yoga for a radical change of human consciousness, without which the present human culture and civilisation, weighted down with material pre-occupations and blinded by animal passions, will precipitate itself into disintegration and cease to exist ere long. In his evolution man arrives at that stage when his nature must either convert itself into the Supernature or go slithering down into perdition.

If we look with a searching and dispassionate eye into the heart of Nature's universal working in the material world, we perceive that all life is Yoga, a slowly, spirally, precociously evolving attempt of the ego to be the ego: an attempt, not at the egos of man, and only boring out of the human mind. What needs aim at a progressive reproduction and revelation of the divine image in her own terms. From the incipient surge of energy which permeates the spaces with suns and stars and the emergent life-sparkle which makes the earth smile with verdure, and the mobile wonder and variety of animal creation, its developing gamut of sensibilities and range of expressive faculties and organs to the growth of reason and imagination and intuition in man, his fine, symmetrical body, his rich heart of feelings and emotions, his in- trodip, adventurous spirit, his powers of foresight and invention, and, above all, his divination of the Godhead in himself and his persistent, though vaguely felt and very imperfectly realised, aspiration for its infinity and immortality, purity and freedom and blissful harmony, is nothing but a mounting travail, a purposive endeavour, a long and labouring Yoga of Nature for the unveiled manifestation of the One whom she holds secret in herself; and an ever, constant, dynamic, and individual division and play. Nature is not Inconsistent and blind, nor her universal striving a senseless gamble of caprice and chance and a purposeless expenditure of her force—she is big with God.

"But what Nature aims at for the mass in a slow evolution, Yoga effects for the individual by a rapid revelation. It works by a quickening of all her energies, a sublimation of all her faculties. While she develops the spiritual life with difficulty and has constantly to fall back from it for the sake of her lower realisations, the sublimated force, the concentrated method of Yoga can attain directly and carry with it the perfection of the mind and even, if she will, the perfection of the body. Nature seeks the Divine in her own symbols; Yoga goes beyond Nature to the Lord of Nature, beyond universe to the Transcendent, and can return with the transcendental light and power, with the fart of the Omnipotent."**

Yoga could also be said to be at once the way and the ultimate goal of evolutionary Nature, but in the ignorance through which Nature passes in order to reach the perfect Yoga or union with the Divine in the infinity of Hierarchy, She cannot forgets in her creatures, though not in the depth of her being, this primal and determining truth of her existence and evolution in the material world: the developing ego acts as a veil between her and her Lord. In man this ego erects a still more thick wall between the individual with the universal, with the result that the individual is aware of himself as only a finite, mortal being engaged in an unequal struggle with the immense, unpredictable forces that assail him from many invincible sources. But, paradoxical as it seems, the very ego which accentuates division and discord, chosen, after its development is complete, to break down the wall and seek by its willed self-extinction the expansion and fulfilment of the real spiritual individual. Nature then begins to yearn in the individual for the perfection of Yoga, and with him, through him, was a slow and unconscious Yoga, carried on behind the veil, with many recolls and detours, becomes now a swift-moving contingent of concentrated forces marching forward to the conquest of Reality. The conscious operation of the awakened and aspiring individual will have the Divine Will accelerates the pace of evolution and crowds the work of many centuries into a single life or even into a few compact but vibrant years. This is the true act of transformation, this is the quickening and revolutionary force, seconded, fortified and sped up by higher spiritual forces to achieve its end. Yoga breaks away from the tardy process of Nature and, springing up all the energies of the individual being and firing his central will, sweeps him to the inevitable fulfillment of his life—the freedom and immortality of the Eternal and Infinite.

The times are full of the promise of a generalisation of Yoga in human nature, the noble idenits, the higher spiritual values of human life have receded into the background, leaving only the animal appetites to rage and clamour on the surface. On the other hand, there is a seeing, an aspiring, hardly definite yet, faint and flickering in the gusty darkness, but persistent and steadily insistent, for a thorough overhaul, a radical change of the end and endeavours of life. There is, therefore, a critical conflict of possibilities between two contrary eventualities. Religion, ethics, social and political creeds, literature and arts, science and its materialistic ideologies have all failed to arrest the general decay and degradation; man is being fast drained of his humanity. And yet divinity is indenubly awaking deep down in him and the first glints of light are filtering into his darkness. Will not a heavenly spring blossom out of this bleak and blighting winter? What alchemy, what power of God can produce this miracle? There is only one alchancy, one irresistible power—it is Yoga. If the extinction of the human race is to be avoided, an ascent to a higher consciousness and a divine conversion and transfiguration of the whole being of man is the only means. A desperate and pervasive degeneracy calls for a radical and revolutiory redemption—and that can only be Yoga.

"All Yoga is in its nature a new birth; it is a birth out of the ordinary, the mentalised material life of man into a higher spiritual consciousness and a greater and diviner being. No Yoga can be successfully undertaken and finished, however quickened it may be, without an aim, a strong, unerring aim, a striving towards a progressive reproduction and revelation of the divine image in her own terms. From the incipient surge of energy which permeates the spaces with suns and stars and the emergent life-sparkle which makes the earth smile with verdure, and the mobile wonder and variety of animal creation, its developing gamut of sensibilities and range of expressive faculties and organs to the growth of reason and imagination and intuition in man, his fine, symmetrical body, his rich heart of feelings and emotions, his introdip, adventurous spirit, his powers of foresight and invention, and, above all, his divination of the Godhead in himself and his persistent, though vaguely felt and very imperfectly realised, aspiration for its infinity and immortality, purity and freedom and blissful harmony, is nothing but a mounting travail, a purposive endeavour, a long and labouring Yoga of Nature for the unveiled manifestation of the One whom she holds secret in herself; and an ever, constant, dynamic, and individual division and play. Nature is not inconsistent and blind, nor her universal striving a senseless gamble of caprice and chance and a purposeless expenditure of her force—she is big with God.

But what Nature aims at for the mass in a slow evolution, Yoga effects for the individual by a rapid revelation. It works by a quickening of all her energies, a sublimation of all her faculties. While she develops the spiritual life with difficulty and has constantly to fall back from it for the sake of her lower realisations, the sublimated force, the concentrated method of Yoga can attain directly and carry with it the perfection of the mind and even, if she will, the perfection of the body. Nature seeks the Divine in her own symbols; Yoga goes beyond Nature to the Lord of Nature, beyond universe to the Transcendent, and can return with the transcendental light and power, with the fart of the Omnipotent.**

Yoga could also be said to be at once the way and the ultimate goal of evolutionary Nature, but in the ignorance through which Nature passes in order to reach the perfect Yoga or union with the Divine in the infinity of Hierarchy, She cannot forgets in her creatures, though not in the depth of her being, this primal and determining truth of her existence and evolution in the material world: the developing ego acts as a veil between her and her Lord. In man this ego erects a still more thick wall between the individual with the universal, with the result that the individual is aware of himself as only a finite, mortal being engaged in an unequal struggle with the immense, unpredictable forces that assail him from many invincible sources. But, paradoxical as it seems, the very ego which accentuates division and discord, chosen, after its development is complete, to break down the wall and seek by its willed self-extinction the expansion and fulfilment of the real spiritual individual. Nature then begins to yearn in the individual for the perfection of Yoga, and with him, through him, was a slow and unconscious Yoga, carried on behind the veil, with many recolls and detours, becomes now a swift-moving contingent of concentrated forces marching forward to the conquest of Reality. The conscious operation of the awakened and aspiring individual will have the Divine Will accelerates the pace of evolution and crowds the work of many centuries into a single life or even into a few compact but vibrant years. This is the true act of transformation, this is the quickening and revolutionary force, seconded, fortified and sped up by higher spiritual forces to achieve its end. Yoga breaks away from the tardy process of Nature and, springing up all the energies of the individual being and firing his central will, sweeps him to the inevitable fulfillment of his life—the freedom and immortality of the Eternal and Infinite.

The times are full of the promise of a generalisation of Yoga in human nature, the noble idenits, the higher spiritual values of human life have receded into the background, leaving only the animal appetites to rage and clamour on the surface. On the other hand, there is a seeing, an aspiring, hardly definite yet, faint and flickering in the gusty darkness, but persistent and steadily insistent, for a thorough overhaul, a radical change of the end and endeavours of life. There is, therefore, a critical conflict of possibilities between two contrary eventualities. Religion, ethics, social and political creeds, literature and arts, science and its materialistic ideologies have all failed to arrest the general decay and degradation; man is being fast drained of his humanity. And yet divinity is indenubly awaking deep down in him and the first glints of light are filtering into his darkness. Will not a heavenly spring blossom out of this bleak and blighting winter? What alchemy, what power of God can produce this miracle? There is only one alchancy, one irresistible power—it is Yoga. If the extinction of the human race is to be avoided, an ascent to a higher consciousness and a divine conversion and transfiguration of the whole being of man is the only means. A desperate and pervasive degeneracy calls for a radical and revolutiory redemption—and that can only be Yoga.

*The Synthesis of Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo.

**K. D. Sethina**

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**Prayer for Perfection**

Out of our darkness lead us into light—
Out of false love to Thy truth-piercing height—
Out of the clutch of death to immortal space—
O Perfect One with the all-forbearing face!

From Thy pure lustre build the mind anew—
From Thy unshadowed bliss draw the heart's hue—
From Thy immense bring forth a godlike clay—
O Timeless One self-sought through night and day!

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"*Bri Aurobindo*"
SECTION III: THE NEW WORLD-VIEW

(i) THE SPIRITUAL METAPHYSIC

(ii) KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVINE REALITY

SUPRAMENTAL COGNITION

In the last essay the metaphorical significance of the Supreme Mind, at least in so far as it was related to the problem of Higher Knowledge, was pointed out, and a very brief general statement was made about the knowledge attained on this level.

The next step is to examine the nature of the Supramental cognition—the mode of knowledge-apprehension on the plane of the Supreme Mind. Here we are on dangerous ground, for we are attempting to understand not only supra-rational realities in terms of the mind—that in itself is an extremely difficult task—but we are trying to understand a way of apprehending which is utterly different from the mental, a mode of apprehension belonging to a consciousness to which unity of existence, integrity of awareness, and totality of perception are intrinsic; this consciousness proceeds in its workings from unity to diversity, from the One to the Many and has inherent self-knowledge and world-knowledge. The mind, on the contrary, possesses knowledge merely for it, and being unable to grasp the essential as well as dynamic unity of things, proceeds to acquire it on a basis of division and fragmentation through analysis, and on a basis of "imagination" and imperfectly constructed unities and "wholes" through synthesis; imperfectly constructed, because this synthesis has behind it a system of ill-understood causality and ontological relationships. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the mind is a subordinate power of the Supreme Mind in earth-creation; it is not in its true nature a principle of falsehood or a distorter of truths. The knowledge that the mind acquires is partial and limited, but if, as we have seen, it learns to become silent and reflect the light of the higher planes above it, it can have images and representations of spiritual truths. This mental process works better if there is a clear and precise intellectual exposition of spiritual realities to help it in understanding them. The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga and other works of Sri Aurobindo adequately meet this need. Therefore the reader must keep a balanced attitude towards the problem of knowledge; he must neither think that his mental images and language-symbols accurately and completely express the truth of the realities they represent, nor must he go to the other extreme and take up the Johnsonian attitude: "If Mr. X has experienced the Unutterable, Mr. X will be well advised not to utter it." One who has spiritual realisation, scholarship, and power of expression of a very high order can to a certain extent describe the Ultimate Reality and give the rationale of the Cosmic process, that is, as far as the pure mind can follow it—the mental capacity of the learner must of course commensurate with the instructive ability of the teacher. If the reader can steer clear of the two exaggerated attitudes we have indicated, he will be able to follow Sri Aurobindo's philosophical exposition of spiritual realities, especially if he is able to think in a mental space and imaginatively and intuitively grasp truths whenever his ratiocinative faculty falters. Of course, if one desires to possess the real Higher Knowledge, it is necessary for him to have first-hand experience, because spiritual realities are essentially truths of Being and Consciousness whose real meaning and significance can only be known through immediate apprehension, not truths of thought to be imaged mentally. There is always a difference between epistemological and gnostic illumination. Once one has elementary epistemological facts are clearly grasped—and there is no reason why they should not be by an unprejudiced mind for they do no violence to the philosophic reason—it is not very difficult to have an inkling of the gnostic mode of knowledge-apprehension.

We shall approach the problem in two ways: through the intellect and through the intuitive mentality. The best way to understand the nature of the Supramental cognition would naturally be by contrasting it with the only cognition we really know—our mental cognition, the intellectual way of acquiring knowledge; therefore, we shall first see the points of difference indicated by Sri Aurobindo between these two types of cognition, the purely intellectual and the gnostic, and then examine those between the intuitive and the gnostic. We have already seen the manner in which the mind that is open to intuition works; here we shall examine how its powers are uplifted, heightenened and enhanced in the Supramind.

Only one thing remains to be said before we discuss this problem. The Life Divine and The Synthesis of Yoga were published at the end of the second decade; when The Life Divine was brought out as a book in 1939, it was revised and enlarged, but The Synthesis of Yoga was not revised in its entirety—only the first twelve chapters were recast by Sri Aurobindo, when they came out in book-form in 1948. If the whole work had been published Sri Aurobindo would have appreciably revised it and added some more chapters; from the letter quoted below it is apparent that some chapters on the Supramind were required to make the work really complete. When Sri Aurobindo discusses the Supramental cognition in The Synthesis of Yoga he does not refer to the Supramind proper, poised in its Truth-consciousness, but to a Supramind acting with a slightly diminished light—a Supramind that leans down to the Overmind level and modifies itself to get attuned to it; what he describes in this work is "the action of the Supramind when it descends into the Overmind plane and takes up the Overmind workings and transforms them." As The Life Divine has been revised, there is in it more of the Supramind proper than in The Synthesis of Yoga; however, even there the description is of a very general nature—perhaps he thought that the world mind was not yet ready to receive the profounder truths of the Spirit. It has been found necessary to state all this because the author has based his presentation of Sri Aurobindo's ideas regarding this particular subject mainly on these two works.

For the information of the reader the letter mentioned above is given here:

"At the time when the last chapters of The Synthesis of Yoga were written in the Arga the name 'overmind' had not been found, so there is no mention of it. What is described in those chapters is the action of the supermind when it descends into the overmind plane and takes up the overmind workings and transforms them. The highest supermind or Divine gnosia existent in itself, is something that lies beyond still and quite above. It was intended in latter chapters to show how difficult even this was and how very little there were between the human mind and supermind and how even supermind descending could get mixed with the lower action and turned into something that was less than the true Truth. But these latter chapters were not written."*  


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**O Magic Heart**

- Draw close to me, O magic heart,
  Red flames of love torn apart
  The veils of dream and screens of sleep.

- Draw close to me within the night:
  The wild beasts in the water-cave
  Are grappled in a deadly fight,
  And there is none but These can save.

- Stand far no more in star-carved trance,
  But in Thy beauteous warmth draw close,
  Capture me in Thy mystic dance,
  Enhance me in Thy deep repose.

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**TEHMI**
CHAPTER X

AVOWEDLY PERSONAL

(Continued)

I must pause here and insert a rather long explanatory parenthesis. For I fear I may have, at the beginning of this chapter, written (while referring to Sri Aurobindo’s innate love of humour and laughter) what is liable to be misunderstood by those who are interested in the all-too-leveller human side of his personality. What I mean is that I did not want to stress that he was over experienced by nature in the social sense of the term. For when I cast about for solid data, I must admit that I cannot name anyone in the Ashram with whom he joked in this way in any answer whatsoever. There were, indeed, a couple of others with whom he was equally free: Nirod was one of them. But when he joked with his doctor disciple assuredly quite another side of the question—he was not at all. The impression that I have was that what expressed itself through his letters to Nirod was his love of rivalry oscillating between a Schavian playfulness and a Remakrishnian ludic spirit. I shall present to the reader now by way of sample a few letters he wrote to him in the mid-thirties which will perhaps serve my purpose better.

Nirod wrote to him (in 1935):

"I wonder sir, if you have seen Professor Adhar Das’s inveighings against your "Lights on Yoga"? Does he not look like having grasped things very well—or, if he does not, he grasps the typical pedagogue? For he seems to be in a veritable quandary when he tries to write all out about you—even his nearest misses are wider than the Pacific, aren’t they?"

"Yes," replies, "I have read all those sweet things from the sweet Adhar." He had been favourable without understanding much before Anilbhusan had fallen in and gored him into bitterness. Grasp of things has never been his forte.

He seems to think that D.I.—E.N.R. or C.S.R. (Divinisation of the Individual—Emergence of a New Race or Creation of the Supramental Race). So, he holds, if D.I. is possible then C.S.R. must be superfluous or out of the question—but, why, I have never been able to fathom, because it takes individuals to make a new race and if a certain number of individuals are not divinised, I do not see how you are going to get a new race. As for its being ‘out of the question’, the great Panjandrums alone know why once an individual is divinised—one obviously is its own master—should it be out of the question to go on divinising others until you have a ‘new race’. But I suppose unless you create unnecessary qualibettes, there can be no ‘intellectual’ philosophy!"

"I thought, Sir," Nirod rejoined "that there is quite a difference between divinisation and supramentalisation, the former leading to the latter. But I suppose it is sheer presumption on my part to criticise one from whom, you say, you have learnt your philosophy. But aren’t they simply looking to see the first batch of the Supramental compound to be fabricated in your gurubhava Laboratory."

"Yes, of course," Gurudev returned, "only as I have never explained in these letters (in my Lights on Yoga) what I meant by Supermind, these critics are necessarily at sea. They think, pardonably enough, that anything above the human mind must be Supramental. . . .No, not learnt, say rather that it is being learned from him. I feel he is kindly teaching me what I want. . . .Go forward and show yourself."

Nirod readily complied with his invitation:

"I draw your attention then to Adhar Das’s verdict that your vision of the new race to be is an extraordinary claim inasmuch as it gives the lie not only to the lives and experiences of past seers. Well, Sir?"

"Well," Gurudev echoed, "I don’t suppose the ‘new race’ can be created by or according to logic or that any race has been. But why should the idea of the creation of a new race be illegitimate? It is not only my ideas that have baffled reason but Adhar Das’s also—he must really be a superman—self made of course—outside the laboratory. As for the past seers, they don’t trouble me. If going beyond the experience of the past seers and sages is so shocking, each new seer or sage in turn has perpetrated that shocking thing—Buddha, Shankara, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda—all did that wicked act. If not, what was the necessity of their starting new philosophies, religions, schools of Yoga? If they were merely verifying and merely repeating the lives and experiences of past seers and sages without bringing in any new life and spirit, would some new thing, why all that stir and bother? You may say: they were simply explaining the old truth but in the right way—but this would mean that nobody had explained or understood it rightly before which is absolutely impossible. It is in the lives and experiences of past seers! Or you may say that all the new sages (they were not among Adhar’s cherished past ones in their day) e.g. Shankara, Ramunji, Madhavdas, etc., were merely repeating the same blessed thing as the past seers and sages themselves had repeated with an unwearyed heart and mind before them. Well, well, but then why repeat it in such a way that each ‘gives the lie’ to the others? Truly, this shocked reverberance for the past is a wonderful and fearful thing! After all the Divine is infinite and the unrolling of the Truth may as well be an infinite process or at all events, if not quite so much, yet with some room for new indirections of one’s mental creed and goal because, even perhaps new achievement, not a thing in a nutshell cracked and its content exhausted once and for all by the first seer or sages; while the others merely crack the same nut all over again, each trembling in fear lest he gives the lie to the past seers and sages.

“But Guru,” pursued Nirod, “I must seek further clarification: What on earth does Adhar Das mean by ‘Our Yoga not for our sakes but for the Divine’? And what do you mean by it? Is it something like the Vaishnavite idea of absolute surrender, without ever the desire to see Him—only give, give, give? A sublime conception, no doubt, but can it be possibly feasible and practical?"

“Well” he explained, “I once wrote in my callow days: ‘Our Yoga is not for ourselves but for humanity’—that was in the Bande Matematime times. To get out of the self-created hole I had to amend that it was no longer for humanity but for the Divine! The ‘not for ourselves’ remained intact. Quite possible and practical and a very natural thing as anyone who has done it can tell you. It is also the easiest and most powerful way of getting the Divine. So it is the best policy also. The phrase, however, means that the object of the Yoga is to elevate the individual to a higher plane of the Divine and Consciousness, to love the Divine and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine. Its object is not to be a great Yogi or a superman (although that may come) or to grab at the Divine for the sake of the ego’s power, pride, or pleasure. It is not for moksha, though liberation comes by it and all else may come but these must not be our objects. The Divine alone is our object."

Agpropos of Professor Adhar Das’s waxing by the past, I must here quote a letter in which he gave me a similar clarification about humility sense of superiority. I had quoted in my letter from Vivekananda who often decried the so-called Sattva as the root of most intolerant scorn of others who did not or would not believe. I confessed that I could not as gospel truth many dogmas which the faithful swear by, thanks to educated education which made me believe in tolerance as against over assertiveness.

“As for the sense of superiority,” he replied, “that is a little difficult to avoid when greater horizons open before the consciousness, unless one is already of a saintly and humble disposition. There are men like Nag Mahabhusya (among Sri Ramakrishna’s disciples) in whom spiritual experience creates more and more humility; there are others like Vivekananda, in whom it creates a great sense of strength and superiority-European critics have taxed him with it rather severely; there are others in whom it fixes a sense of superiority to men and humility to the Divine. Each position has its value. Take Vivekananda’s famous answer to the Madras Panditr who objected to one of his assertions, saying: ‘But Shankara does not say so’. Vivekananda replied: ‘No, but I, Vivekananda, say so, and the pandit was torn to pieces. That ‘I, Vivekananda’ stands up to the ordinary eye like a great Himalaya of self-confident egoism. But there is nothing false or unsound in Vivekananda’s spiritual experience. For this was not egoism, but the sense of what he stood for and the attitude of the fighter who, as the repre- sentative of something very great, could not allow himself to be put down or belittled. This is not to deny the necessity of non-egoism and spiritual humility, but to show that the question is not so easy as it appears at first sight. For if I have to express my spiritual experiences I must do that with truth—I must record them with their blots, their thoughts, feelings, extensions of consciousness which accompany them. What am I to do with the experiences in which one feels the whole world in oneself or the force of the Divine flowing in one’s being and nature or the certitude of one’s faith against all doubts or doubters or one’s oneness with the Divine or the smallness of human thought and life compared with this greater knowledge and existence? And I have to use the word ‘I’—I cannot take refuge in saying ‘This body’ or ‘This appearance’ especially as I am not a Mussalim. Shall I not, therefore, fall into an expression which may make some shake their heads at my assertions as full of pride and ego? I imagine it would be difficult to avert it.

“Another thing: it seems to me that you identify faith very much with mental belief, but real faith is something spiritual, a knowledge of the soul. What you quote in your letters are the hard assertions of mental belief projecting on to a vehement vindication of one’s present vindication because they are one’s own and must therefore be greater than those of others—an attitude which is universal in human nature. Even the atheist is not torn, but declares his creed’s truth and Matter as the only basis and on all who disobelieve or believe in other things he pours scorn as unenlightened morons and superstitious half-wits. I hear him groan for thinking me that, but I note that this attitude is not confined to religious faith but is spiritually natural to those who live their lives on the unbelief in Gods and Gurus. You will rot, I hope, mind my putting the other side of the question; I want to point out that there is the other side, that there is much more to be said than at first sight appears."

*Here the pen is on adhar, which, in Sanskrit means the under lip.
Another trait of his character impressed me even though with time I came to take it for granted, as it were. It was his reluctance to impose his views on others. He seemed almost always like pleading for his case, even when it was obvious that his position was untenable if only from the point of view of logic. To give one instance. A princess once came to the Asram as my guest. She was fond of music and asked me to sing to her. I readily agreed and told her that I would have a regular musical soirée for her the next evening. Next morning her secretary came to me and put me a number of searching questions in the course of which he gave me to understand that the princess could not possibly sit in the same room with other sadhus wherein I bluntly retorted, "Tell her then that she need not come if she does not like it. But it is not her State but an Asram where we all have the same status, and so if she insists on being received with special deference I must decline to sing to such a person."

Next morning she called on me in person, wanting to explain. But I refused to see her. This was reported to Gurudev by a bunny who said that I should have been impolite if not insulting to a rich and beautiful princess! Gurudev, however, smiled and sent word to me that not only was I right in my stand but that I had full support, because every sadhaka had a perfect right to solitude if and when he did not feel like receiving others. Our princess came after all and sang to her as she explained that it was all due to an unfortunate misunderstanding engineered by the same bunny.

But it so happened that a few months later a purusha was rude to a visitor. I quickly forgot my own similar misdemeanour and wrote to Gurudev condemning the delinquency of the sadhaka. It was a matter of principle to make people humble and courteous rather than rude and boorish. This time he reprimanded me politely, but firmly:

"When on earth were politeness and good society manners considered a part or a test of spiritual experience or true yogic siddhi? It is no more a test than the capacity of dancing well or dressing nicely. Just as there are men of other kind and kind women who are boorish and rude in their manners, so there may be very spiritual men (I mean here by spiritual men those who have had deep spiritual experiences) who have no grasp over physical life or action (many intellectuals too, by the way, are like that) and are not boorish, admirable and courteous because I refuse to see people, do not answer letters, and a host of misdemeanours. I have been accused of having thrown stones at somebody coming to his retreat because he did not want disciples and found no other way of warding off the flood of candidates. I at least would hesitate to pronounce that such people had no spiritual life or experience. Certainly, I prefer that sadhus should be reasonably considerate and not too much under the influence of their nature, no doubt that is a question of harmony, not as a siddhi of the yoga or indispensable sign of inner experience."

"And then how can the siddhas here, none of whom have reached perfection or anywhere near it, be a proof that spiritual experience is non-material? It is written and it is made clear that the soul has had any kind of spiritual experience or realisation one must at once become a perfect person without defects or weaknesses?"

"To be a make a demand which is impossible to satisfy and it is to ignore the fact that spiritual life is a growth and not a sudden and inexplicable miracle. No sadhaka can be judged if he was already a siddha yogi, least of all those who have travelled a quarter or less of a very long path as is the case with most who are here. Even great yogis do not claim perfection and you cannot say that they are not absolutely perfect, therefore their spiritual life is false or of no use to the world. There are, besides, all kinds of spiritual men; some who are content with spiritual experience and do not seek after an outward perfection or progress, some who are saints, others who do not seek after saithood, others who are content to live in the conscious consciousness in touch or union with the Self but allow all kinds of forces to fly through them, e.g. in the typical example of the Paramahamsa. The ideal I put before our yoga is one thing but it does not bind all spiritual life and all realisation. The spiritual life is not a thing that can be formulated in a rigid definition or bound by a fixed mental rule: it is a vast field of evolution, an immense kingdom potentially larger than the other kingdoms below it, with a hundred provinces, a thousand types, stages, forms, paths, paths, variations, etc. We must imagine that the ground is divided into a hundred provinces, each with its own particular value from the basis of this truth which I will explain in subsequent letters that things regarding spirituality and its seekers must be judged if they are to be judged with knowledge. It is only by so understanding that the spiritual life and its evolution can be judged or put in the true spiritual life of the past and the present or the relative and the different ideals, stages, etc. thrown up in the spiritual evolution of the human being."

But as he knew to his cost what human nature was and how liable to be...
ent forces moving him. (This is a fact which is being more and more established by modern psychology though it has got hold only of the lower forces and not the higher, so you need not turn up your rationalist nose at me.)

He writes intellectually, and fuelishness about the surface results and attributes them all to his 'noble self', ignoring the fact that the noble self is hidden far away from his own vision behind the cell of his dimly sparkling intellect and the reeling and clattering of his frail functionings. But I save you, dear reader, the torture of digestion of your own intellectual conceptions. Simply, your arguments are utterly absurd and futile. Our aim is to bring the secret forces out and unwound into the open so that instead of getting some shadows or lightnings of themselves out through the soil or being wholly absorbed, they may pour down, and flow in a river.

But to expect all that at once is a presumptuous demand which shows an impatient ignorance and inexperience. If they begin to trickle at first, that is sufficient to justify the faith in the downpour. You admit that a river is the result of secret forces coming to the fore. If you waited for the river, you would have waited for the snow (your opinion about its worth or worthlessness is not worth a cent: that is for others to pronounce); that is sufficient to blow your jereedam to Jeremiah; it proves that the force was and is there and at work and it is only your sweating Hercules labour that prevents you feeling it. Also it is the trickle that gives assurance of the possibility of the downpour.

One has only to go on and by one's patience preserve the downpour or else, without deserving, slide on until one gets it.

In yoga itself the experience that it is a promise not made to be fulfilled but gets absorbed in the nature of the fulfillment is a phenomenon familiar to every yogi when he looks back on his past experiences. Such were the brief visitations of ennui you have had in your life—by the grace of the eternal Brahman and afterwards by the grace of the tenacity—theenues are not the only type of Yoga. If you can stick anyhow or get stuck—that is sufficient. The fact that you are not Sri Aurobindo (you said you were?) is an irrevelence. One needs to be only oneself to make the river jump. If it is not, then you are simply to be shaken off without clinging to it with a leechlike tenacity worthy of a better cause.

"All the rest is mere stuff of the tamarisk ego. As there is a magical ego which really owns and dominates the person. I am, of course, conscious and peerless" (or course there are gradations in the pit, so there is a tamarisk ego which squawks 'What an abject hopeless, worthless, incapable, unendowed and uniquely incomparable person am I—am, all, all are great Aurobindo, all is big Aurobindo, all is great! That's me! That's me! (of course it expresses itself in various other ways at various times, I am only rendering your present pitch) which is responsible for the Man of Sorrows getting in. It's all show—stunt made up to excite the luxuriant imagination of the simple state now because you have descended faithfully and completely into the inert die-in-the-mudliness of your physical consciousness which, I admit, is a specimen! But so after all is everybody's only there are different kinds of specimens. What are you to do? Dig yourself out if you can; if you can't, call for ropes and wait till they come. If 'God knows what will happen when the Grace descends', that should be enough, shouldn't it? That you don't know is a fact which is quite true to your intelligence—but, well, your importance,—any more than your supposed fininess. Whoever was fit, for that matter—fitness and fineness are only a way of speaking, man is in his nature unaf and a misfit (as far as things spiritual are concerned) our own egoism, and above all there is the Grace of that is all you know or need to know. And, if you, don't well, even then you have at least stumbled into the path and have got to remain here till you get hold of it, and wake up with knowledge. Amen.

"By the way, what is that story about my four or five hours concentration for several years before anything came down? Such a thing never happened if by concentration you mean laborious meditation. What I did was four or five hours pranayam—which is quite another manner. And what flow do you speak of? The flow of poetry came down while I was doing pranayam—not some years afterwards. If it is the flow of experiences, that did come after some years, but after he had stopped the pranayama for a long time and was doing nothing and did not know what to do or where to turn once all my efforts had failed. And it came not as a result of years of pranayama or concentration, but in a ridiculously easy way, by the grace of a temporary guru—but it was not even that, for he was himself bewildered—by the grace of the eternal Brahman and afterwards by the grace of Mahakal and Krishna. So don't try to turn me into an argument against the Divine; that attempt will be perfectly ineffective."

But though he could go on like this reminiscing and scintillating if and when the spirit so moved him, few people who have known him will disagree with me if I say that he was essentially a man of deep reserve, a denizen of the deeps. It reminds me of a joke I had with him nearly fifteen years ago. On three (and later four) occasions in the year when he used to be here, I used to take a look at him, but not, alas, a long look. His eyes rested on each of us but for a few seconds—because the whole procedure had to be concluded in about a couple of hours. On me he used to look, but not long, he was in vain for a smile and expression, indeed, impressed by his grave face but I missed the smile of a friendly recognition, which made to me all the difference in the world.

When he came to know of my disappointment he did try to change but equally—-in vain. At all events, that was my impression, I insisted. But a lady who happened to be next to me (and who could-be me in the game of insistence with a handicap without turning a hair) drove me to the wall overawing that he had smiled at me. So I wrote to him in genuine shame and sorrow—"O Guru!" I suppose this sentence shows a little of the balance once more—possibly to pulverize the last vestiges of my self-confidence.

For Lady Emphatic swears—and none can outwear her, she knows—that she saw your lips bent into a curve which can only be described as a smile, and you with your lips with a smile. So it follows, as the rain the drought, that I have forfeited even the right to believe in the testimony of my own senses, or is it that you only gave me a Supramental smile? If so, why did you waste such a boon on us, wasted, possibly a boon which I as a non-believer looked upon as a smile. So it follows, as the rain the drought, that I have forfeited even the right to believe in the testimony of my own senses, or is it that you only gave me a Supramental smile? If so, why did you waste such a boon on us, wasted, possibly a boon which I as a non-believer looked upon as a smile.

To that he wrote back: "But Lady Emphatic is right. For I did indeed smile to you though it was not the broad smile of a Tagore or the childlike smile of a Gandhi. But I assure you I will try to be more convincing in future." (He did laudably succeed in this.

But when—and here is my point—even his smile had to be warmly meoted before one could be convinced as to its authenticity, how could one call him anything but a reserved man?

And yet he was talking to me as to a 'friend and a son' and to Nirad like an old comrade when he almost considered to give him as much as he got! 'This I found a little difficult to account for and yet I feel I can safely assert that when he wrote his letters to us two, it did seem as though a lid had been suddenly lifted from the eyes of a man who had never been able to see to the bottom of his egotism on his own.

The glimpse of the man behind the masks was so keen to help me out of the ego's clutches is no more, this thought has become fraught with an added poignancy in that it has enabled me to see clearly how, and how much, I have reacted to it. Here and there I still find traces of it in me. I was not, of course, the only one who was to be chosen only to be a little more docile and humble. But perhaps it was my overweening self-confidence harnessed to an ineradicable pride in the vanity of my rational nature and demands that urged my downfall once again. Isn't the rational pride even blinder than purblind faith?)

To give a rather convincing instance if only to illustrate how I hampered him at every turn by constraining him to waste his precious time for the redemption of the Old Adam in me. I got your first letter, I wrote once in the heyday of my self-will, "and as I always look at yours if there is any and lay the rest aside for later reading, I sat down after my daily walk and concentration to answer your letter. I had waited till after I had seen the third—later—". If I had had it, I would of course have answered it at once. I am sorry you have had to wait the whole night without an answer.

There was a little turned back at the first letter, for my remarks about W had been perfectly casual and I attached little importance to them when I wrote. I would certainly not have written them if I thought they were of a kind to cause trouble to you. In scribbling them I had no idea of imposing my views about W on you—l had no idea of writing as a Guru to a disciple or laying down the law, it was rather as a friend to a friend expressing my ideas and discussing them with a perfect ease and confidence.

Both the Mother and myself have a natural delicacy of speech to write to you in that way, expressing the idea that comes without measuring of terms or any arrive-pensae because we feel close to your psychic being always and that is the relation we have quite naturally with you. That is why I wrote like that and I had no other idea of asserting on it as a law for others. I have not been in the habit of insisting that everybody must think as I do—any more than I insist on everybody following me and my yoga.

But that to brush aside what is an evident misunderstanding. Now about XYZ you should remember that what I wrote about them was not an after-invention or an idea formed as a result of their going away—all that I wrote about X, for instance, I had written long before he went—and also with the full knowledge that they would not be interested in them, except for Z with whom it was not necessary. I did not whole heartedly assure and praise and encourage while they were there nor whole heartedly damn when they were gone. Nor would I have said anything about them if I had not been questioned from every side. Why then should you think that I would attack you if you went away?—you, to whom I have
SRI AURIBINDO CAME TO ME—Continued from opposite page

always spoken with encouragement and kindness, and never, I think, with severe disapproval or warning as if I should be frightened. I had to write, what I have always said to you: 'Dilip had his difficulties, and he was gradually surmounting them, but his one great difficulty of doubt and self-distrust he did not meet sufficiently,' and I would add: 'And, in a wistful moment he had allowed it to carry him away. But I wish I had found that he can discover his soul here alone and then he will return.'

"But all that is really unnecessary since you are not, like X Y Z, content with the desire to go or feeling the call for action elsewhere. But why this constant slipping back to the idea of failure? Why this idea that I am offended? Have I ever taken offence or evinced any least idea of giving you up? How is it you still lend credence to a suggestion your wholesale expenditure of our relations to your own attacks of doubt and self-distrust are a weakness I have taken account of and I refuse to consider it as a bar to your arrival at the goal. It is in all sincerity that I affirm your possibilities.

But as the blackest clouds have a silver lining, I console myself today with this thought that even my worst moods did serve a twofold purpose: first, objectively, because they brought into relief his great understanding of and compassion for human nature which insists, suicidally, on cursing the hand that comes to save (an understanding that had made him write once to me: "My experience shows that human beings are much less deliberate and responsible for their acts than the moralists, novelists and dramatists make them believe and I look rather at what forces drove them than what the man himself may have seemed to have intended or purposed—our inferences are often wrong even and when they are right touch only the surface of the matter"); and then subjectively, because it can hardly be gainsaid that he had been by nature less irritable than I was, if it might indeed have been richer today in Yogi experience, but should I not have been ever so much poorer in my intimate knowledge of that human side of him which is so infinitely precious to me: the human in the Divine that made Krishnaji what he was and the great Pandavas—only the Guru and Pilot but the Friend and Guard as well who all but broke his pledge in the Kurukshetra and sprang out to slay Bhisma when he found his protégé Arjun's life in danger? A Muslim friend of mine recited once a Persian couplet which I translated in one of my right moods of gratefulness and exaltation which made me feel vividly that even failure in a great endeavour was far preferrable to success in little ambitions:

When I waste my years to win thee, friend, 
True then I best achieve my end: 
Only that life was rich in gain 
Which strove and strove for thee in vain.

And it was just such another exalted mood of mine inspired by my gratefulness for the right to his indulgence—which evoked to my joy, one of his rarest sallies—a mood, alas, which his life-long preoccupation with us, dolorous draws made it all but impossible for him to give vent to more often. I shall quote it not only to end on a happy note but also for the sheer delight of having had it in a mood of unbridled laughter and fun which will, I hope, be welcome to all who cherish the memory of his love-literality. It happened like this.

It was in 1934, a few days before his birthday, the 15th August. I was reading out to Chadwick a letter of his which he had just written to me in answer to my importunities.

"Sonnet?" he wrote. "I have no time for writing sonnets—my energy is too occupied in very urgent and pressing things—quite part from correspondence—"daily with the rhythmic line".

We were both cursing away in our hearts the utter wryness of this providential dispensation and wondering about the nature of his "pressing" work in hand when Sri Nolni Gupta brought me a telegram to Gurudev which read: "Wire permission for your Darshan on the Fifteenth August. Dilip, my friend, will recommend me—Aurobindo." On the margin was written in Gurudev's handwriting: "Please recommend and enlighten."

It was just that little query which, happily, made the wicked Goddess—Dushas Saraswati—fall plump and perks on my irreverent tongue. I dashed off then and there a poem in Bengali which I sent up to Gurudev hoping, against hope, to draw him out. Here is an English translation of my wicked bundle:

You ask me, Guru, who is this Aurobindo who desires to come To have your blessing on your birthday? I would rather now be dumb: Because if I know, I know four personalities distinct and great Who are your ambassadors and so wonder how to place this candidate? So I'll recount the deeds of each still graven in my memory, For your Supramental may shed light where I grope inhumanly, Humbledly.

The first of them is a vetricar whose toilette fue will dear eclipse He combed his curls for hours—a dandy out and out, to his finger-tips. Exhumed of pomadour, powder, silks and scents and fancies, He thinks he can humiliate all and sundry India’s emerald cloaked. Work he abhorred, yet such is fate—he was given a mill to supercise, But he resigned and married pelf—not less resourceful than he was wise.

It is not likely—but who knows—perhaps your mystic call he hears! And, sick at last of the world’s brief tinkles, echoes for the music of the spheres.

Then number two: he’d fallen in love with one whom he called his dream of love Come true on earth—but she, alas, proved subtrue whom no romance could move.

She smiled on him as Frau von Stein once smiled on Goethe: did not she Invite the Poet?—but then “Oh no, not too close,” said she warningly.

Only, while Goethe had for his fate to pay in poems, not in gold: This modern ‘Puckish’ gave her with his ‘love-eck’ heart his cash settlised.

Then, bankrupt, hugging me in London blubbered he between his tears:

“They kindred spirit, who but you can ever divine what my heart loves?”

You never can tell—perhaps he has since read your message of the One

Who can tell why love is given gulps of gloom instead of a place in the men?

Your namaste number three, a youth who lived in Pains by his vits,

Took me in tow and showed me round the Eternal city’s sweet retreats.

A specialist in gossip about prophets, poets and actresses,

“What is unknown to me,” he bragged, “is not worth knowing—I know what pays.”

And he made me know it too although I would pay what I could for him.

For he did clarify what to my mind had seemed intriguing, dim.

Maybe his “knowledge” has let him down and so he longs for a greater light

Then his continental fireworks—twinkles—helpless in his soul’s dark night!

The last though not the least, O Guru, of your namaste was so brave That we all stood aghast when, after lecturing “each his soul must save” He wooed a Belgian old maid who though not so wise as Solomon Was even as rich and “garn” when he led her to the altar in Boulogne.

I had to be his best man though no bridesmaids were available

But the great philosopher announced: “Without love even Heaven were hell!”

So the auvoir angel of his soul led him to the turf in a mystic glee And then in the presence of Monte Carlo gambled and lost exaltantly, I wonder: could his Eden ecket have failed him in the last resort? Else how could his brave ship want now to come to your Supramental port?

I know not human destiny, nor your celestial mysteries.

I only know your royal soul rich with the starry secrets.

So I implore: O make me see the greatness of your namaste now, Say, how do they come to bear your name and yet stay where they are—Oh, how?

Just one thing more: what shall I answer—oh, please tell me his address. I dare not recommend all, Guru, though all you can bless to. And lastly, O Compassionate, forgive my dread friend:

To have laughed at those who bear your name? Oh, damn me not everfastingly!

Chadwick chuckeled when I read this out to him, but shook his head. “It’s unlikely to draw him out, Dilip,” he sighed. “He’s too busy. But I wish you the best of luck.”

Next day, however, I ran to him, for the miracle did happen—Gurudev did reply.

“Dilip,” we read together, “Your epic of the four Aurobindos is luminous, informing and hair-raising! But there can be no doubt about who this Aurobindo is—it is, I presume, Aurobindo the fourth, ‘a doer of dreadful deeds’. I am referring to the phrase ‘Bhimkarna Birukodana’. —However a truism to unceaseously jest; let us come to grave practical matters.

Your address? How in the name of the wondrous am I to know? His address in the telegram is ‘Aurobindo, Bombay’ just as mine might be ‘Aurobindo, Pondicherry’. In his previous letter he wrote that he was going to Bombay and would wait from there straight to Pondicherry. He may have given his Bombay address but I don’t think so. Nolini who has his letter can perhaps enlighten you. I do not know whether he expects us to put him up—I suppose not, since although he is Aurobindo, Aurobindo does not know him from Adam. However, what I am doing is to send you his reply-paid telegram form and shave my responsibility on your shoulders.

* From Sanskrit—meaning literally: "wolf-belly of dreadful deeds."
SRI AUROBINDO'S HUMOUR

By R. BANGARUSWAMI

The present installment and the one before it of Dilip Kumar Roy's "Sri Aurobindo Came to Me" have brilliantly exhibited Sri Aurobindo's ample capacity of humour and wit and badinage. This capacity has also been shown in other features in past issues of "The Mother". As a further testimony we publish below a brief pick from some of Sri Aurobindo's writings:

While reading some appraisements of Sri Aurobindo's works, I alighted on a passage by the Times reviewer in which he has stated: "the only elements Aurobindo misses are the Indian sense of humour and the Indian gift for irony."

The remarks amused me because I have all along been crediting Sri Aurobindo with a remarkable fund of humour. About the great value of humour in life Sri Aurobindo himself says:

"Sense of humour? It is the salt of existence. Without it the world would have got utterly out of balance—it is unbalanced enough already—and rushed to blazes long ago."

And again:

"I am not aware that highly evolved personalities have no sense of humour or how the person can be said to be integrated when this sense is lacking. 'Usefulness' applies only to a frivolous levity without any substance behind it. There is no law that wisdom should be something rigidly solid and without a semblance."

Those who have known Sri Aurobindo during the period of his youth and middle age pay testify abundantly to his keen sense of humour, quick wit and ready repartee.

The Indian Patriot once wrote:

A man of very fine culture, his is a lovable nature: merry, sparkling and full of fun, ready in refined repartee, he is one of those men to be in whose company is a joy and behind whose exterior is a steady growing fire of unseen devotion to a cause.

V. R. a brilliant writer of Tamil prose who had the good fortune of knowing Sri Aurobindo during his early days at Pondicherry says that Sri Aurobindo would burst into spells of laughter like Subrahmanya Bharathi, the Bard of Tamil Nadu.

The internal testimony of Sri Aurobindo's writings gives ample proof of the presence of the element of Haag of his thought. Speaking about the allegation that the mass was seized with lunacy he asks:

"Seized with lunacy? But this implies that the nation is ordinarily led by reason. Is it so? Or even by commonsense?"

Here is Sri Aurobindo's description of the League of Nations: 'an otiose appendage'! Brevity is the soul of wit.

Answering a correspondent's question as to what is a perfect technique of yoga or world-changing or nature-changing yoga Sri Aurobindo says with a smile:

"Not one that takes a man by a little bit of him, somewhere attaches a hook and pulls him up by a pulley into Nirvana or Paradise."

Here is playful irony in the issue of a curfew order:

"It appeared that we were peaceful citizens until sunset but after sunset we turned into desperate characters—well, I was told, even half an hour before sunset; apparently even the sun could not be entirely trusted to keep us straight."

Commenting on a joke of Anatole France about God, Sri Aurobindo

initiates that ironical Frenchman's own manner and visualises a picture of God meeting Anatole France and telling him:

"Recon came along and told me: 'Look here, why do you pretend to exist? You know you don't exist and never existed or, if you do, you have made such a mess of your creation that we can't tolerate you any longer. Once we have got you out of the way all will be right upon earth, tip-top, A-1; my daughter Science and I have arranged between us . . . peace, peace, peace, reason, order, unity everywhere.' There was a lot more like that, Anatole, and I was so much impressed by the beauty of the picture and its convenience, for I would have nothing to do or to supervise, that I at once retired from business—for you know that I was always of a retiring disposition and inclined to keep myself behind the veil or in the background at the best of times. But what is this I hear? It does not seem to me from reports that Reon even with the help of science has kept her promise. And if not, why not? Is it because she's lazy? Or is it because she both would not and could not? Or because she both would and could, but somehow did not?"

In his drama Perseus, the Deliverer, Sri Aurobindo gives some delightful hints of humour through Circe. Circe's open declaration about the scanty reward that has met his long and meritorious service of the image of Poseidon the Sea-God finds vent in a vitriolic volley of words:

"Hang the robustous storm-shaking cumulogene! I have rubbed him and scrubbed him and bathed him and washed him for these eighteen years, yet he never sent me one profitable piece of wreckage out of his sea yet."

And again:

"A grey thee tote up the price of those swablings and be not dishonest with me nor miserly. Eighteen by three hundred and sixtyfive by two, that is the sum of them; and forget not the leap year either, O great Poseidon."

And still further:

"Am I a sponge to suck up these insults? Not! I am only moderately porous."

Circe decides 'to do any bad turn to that scanty-hearted rampagous old ship-swallower' and later exclaims: 'O Poseidon, had I known there was more to be pocketed in thy disservice than in thy service, I would have misapplied these eighteen barren years?'

Towards the close of the play when the popular leader Tharops pays allegiance to the Queen against whom he had conspired only a little while ago Circe says:

"This it is to be an orator! We shall hear him haranguing the people next market day on fidelity to princes and the divine right of queens to have favourites."

Other instances could be added. But what has been given is sufficient to show that Sri Aurobindo, far from being deficient in humour or irony or satire, was fully endowed with those gifts and that he wielded them with considerable beauty and force whenever there was occasion to do so.

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME—Continued from previous page

You will decide these things according to the ripe wisdom of your many-Aurobindian experience. Whether you wire 'come and be blessed' or 'stay where you are in your Eden' is your shout—I back out. To sum the matter up in two far-flowing Alexandrine couplets:

Tell him, by wire: 'Come on' with a benignant nod, Or leave him journeying to the devil or to God, Decide for the other Aurobindo what you please, This same-sake-fooded Aurobindo leave at ease.

In fact my Supermind is almost staggering helpless to make any decision under the weight of all these Aurobindos and others. I am told there will be 38,000 names in them and singles apart from the 200 who are here, and unless the divine mercy descends with a greater force than the 'gentle dew' from Heaven, we may be still there receiving people till past three o'clock in the afternoon. So one Aurobindo more or less can make no difference to me. It is you who will rejoice or suffer—according as he falls on you like a ton of bricks or envelopes you like a soothing zephyr in the spring.

But look at the irony of human decisions and human hopes. My father who wanted all his families and singles apart from the 200 who are here, and three of them—in a sudden inspiration gave me the name Aurobindo, till then not borne by any one in India or the wide world, that I might stand out unique among the great by the unique glory of my name. And now look at the swarm of Aurobindos with their mighty deeds in Germany and elsewhere! Don't tell me it is my fault because of my indiscretion in becoming famous. When I went to the National College in the Swadeshi days which was my first public step towards the ignominies of fame, there was already an Aurobindo Prakash waiting with the patriotic commendation of the gods printed on his learned forehead. Aurobindo Prakash, indeed.

"As for the explanation, your epic of the four Aurobindos has suddenly revealed to me why the name Aurobindo has spread and why its hearths are the heading for Pondichery. I have it—Eureka! And I am released from all kohoba* at the violated uniqueness of my name. Your description shows that the world will find me and the many types of the congeneration and sublimation of great world-types that the supernal-terrestrial will be made. You may not have appreciated their greatness, but that is not their fault. Also the formula for the Supramental may sound to you too chemical like the formula for a patent medicine, but there it is. Incidentally, I am more convinced than ever that you lived and wrote and sighed ('I am between tears and sighs,' said Maceonas as he sat between the weak and watery-eyed Virgil and the aesthetic Horace) under Augustus Caesar. You have kept the spirit and turn and most even of the manner.

"Your 'epistolary frivolity' was all right. There is laughter in the Kingdom of Heaven, though there may be no marriage there."

* Chagrin.
WE WHO live in this day of India's reawakening to the Yogic secrets of her own spiritual bequest may well be said to engage to the Threefold Mission of Vivekananda and his Master. Together with his guru, Ramakrishna, he was the most potent early shaper of the resurgence of our national genius. His also was a tremendous impact on the mind of the West. And yet, if we are to work for a complete spiritual illumination, we see that Vivekananda, as it were, the golden torch of truth when compared to the conjectural ingenuities of metaphysicians who are not Yogis, falls short of what we may term the integral Gospel. It is only when we move into the religious sphere of different Eastern cultures, for a particular type of spiritual realization; but this realization, necessary and grand as it is, could be overstressed, and Vivekananda did not overstress it because of a certain division between his deeply dedicated heart and his partial sacrifice at the hands of materialism.

The most momentous event in his life was the great act of Ramakrishna, a little before Ramakrishna's own death, which endowed Vivekananda with the divine energy to carry out his mission on earth. "I have become a fakir," cried the Master after imparting to the young disciple by means of a long intimate meditation his own abiding sense and thrill of the divine World-Mother's presence within and without. The subsequent march of the homeless sannyasi, possessed of the Mother, is part of Indian history. Through his physical body, by virtue of the lives he was to live and the souls he was to possess, he was the human expression of the true self of the Mother that was to be entered by the ideal of the renunciate. The human self of the Mother expresses itself not only in the life of the ideologue but also in the personality of the ideal. In other words, if God is omnipotent, He is not benevolent, since He has deliberately and not-avoidably caused the cosmic wheel to revolve, and if He is either not omnipotent or benevolent He is not God at all! This dilemma in one form or another always pursued Vivekananda; it is a purely intellectual difficulty solved the moment we are humble enough to acknowledge that our puny human standards of benevolence cannot be applied to the Ultimate Being. Indeed our intuitive sensation after absoluted, after the final law of righteousness, is indicational, as all feeling-out towards absolutes is, of something in the constitution of the Ultimate Being, but we have to realise that God is not good in our sentimental human way: His is a benevolence which surpasses our notions of it as much as our notions would exceed those of, say, the most altruistic ape!

Vivekananda, however, never definitely struck upon this truth nor has, for that matter, any intellect which has been too acutely alive to the "still sad music of humanity" and forgotten or at least underestimated the battle-hymns of the superhuman wisdom of God. Has H. G. Wells, an idealist of our own day, uttered the crashing blasphemy that he would split in two not only the world, but the human brain, who did not utilize His intuition to lend a flat to "the Open Conspiracy" by which a "Capitalist-ridden" world is to be saved? The same humanitarian conscience anxious to spare an almighty Maker the responsibility of an imperfect world has compelled Bernard Shaw to conceive absurd or nearly contemptible experiments urging a better selection in the constitution of beings. Vivekananda, being a true Indian, could not be Wellsian or Shavian and fargo the Supreme and the Perfect: he had a gigantic hunger for the immeasurable Infinite. But the only way which seemed open to him, in order to reconcile the Perfect with the suffering world and its baffling problems of sin and ignorance, was to turn Shankarite.

This he did without flinching: he called himself an Adwaitin and held Adwaita to be the ultimate both in philosophy and Yoga. Still, he could not get off the ethical and social influence of his gurus who followed Bhakti and Jnana with equal fervour. So he accepted the worship of the personal Godhead who creates, preserves and destroys the cosmos, as a preparatory training for the higher ecstasy of the absolute union in which the whole cosmic Self is relived out from the ego's self. What he could not accept was that the sealed trance of non-duality is only a sort of sublime sleep, and could logically as well as pragmatically mean not the annihilation but merely the obliteration of phenomena.

He, no doubt, endorsed the common-sense of Ramana's contention that so long as the soul is aware of Nature and its own individuality it needs believe in a Lord and Originator of them both. But he unmistakably said that his own personal and direct point of view towards the One bar to the highest realization, since the One alone truly existed and could not suffer any multiplicity in its all-consuming Ananda. Confronted with the question how, if the One alone existed, the many had ever come to be, he would ask: "Where is the indescribable Maya? Not that he entirely rejected the aspect of the world as Lila—it was indeed the play of Ishwara, the personal divinity, but then Ishwara himself was no more than the most marvelous play of the original Phantasy or Ignorance, the Shankarite Bhagavata; the cosmic spiritual position is not that. The relative bliss and Ananda's eyes, a splendidly cathartic emotion, cleansing the being of much egoism, yet not sufficiently, since the "I" of the lover remained over against the "Thou" of the beloved. But, seizing upon the profound mystery of love by which the lover and the beloved are somehow one though apparently distinct, he veiled the apparent distinctness of the non-dual union of Jnana. Unfortunately, he over-cold the other side of the matter—namely, that if this is true the union of Jnana could never be exclusively non-dual, since Bhakti even in its intense fusion of "I" and "The Other" must be the same, a difference-in-equality. Thus his contribution to Bhakti was the result of the pro-Jnana temper of his intellect and based on a philosophical misunderstanding of the ultimate essence of love—"the misunderstood helping to soothe somewhat the dominant conflict of his spiritual life—just a hint to the One Perfect with the imperfect many. And it is characteristic of him to have made the significant remark that the bhakta must never argue. Love is a relationship which comprehends the unity of all. And only in love," he said to the attentive reader, "can a man be finally dim and without question. In order, therefore, that the bhakta should accept the claim on his being that is should set aside his intellect and yield completely to the psychic urge which does not ask whether God is almighty and also benevolent but adores Him just because He is the Vision Splendid and the Beauty of Ancient Days that is yet ever new. Love, according to Vivekananda, is a maddening intoxication with Beauty: Bhakti must be rapt with the Supreme as Beauty, must take Beauty as an end in itself and ask no questions as to whether it is good or evil, of immorality other as of morality.

The truth, however, is that in genuine Bhakti Yoga the attributes of omnipotence and goodness are just as prominent as that of beauty. God is the most lovely of all objects because He is the superhuman power of an unimaginable love and benevolence. All qabbles about His perfection are vain for the born devotee because they amount to measuring with little wit the supreme wisdom. But, according to Vivekananda, when his intellect put the personal God on the horns of a dilemma, the horns were fatal to his God's existence: hence he envisaged a non-dual. The same idea is again responsible for the sorry reducing of Devotion to a superb kind of art for art's sake with reference to the Highest, ignoring the final necessity that the Highest should also be an infinite or inconceivable yet real goodness and righteousness.

But when the Buddha, a religious visionary, a theologian, a philosopher, a poet, a personal Creator could never be that, and if love is to be valuable as a step in spiritual life it must at least forget if not disbelief that its object is a creative Person. Otherwise, it must go by the board; and in any case Jnana was deemed sure ground inasmuch as it tried to do away with creation and divine personality by means of the theory of Maya—without exactly omitting the baby with the bath-water. The divine Child still remained but in a bit abstract form; it became the divine Consciousness, the unaging Bliss, just as the divine Existence because the sole Existence and the divine Knower the pure Consciousness. What is more, the unaging Bliss was conceived as so lost in childlike super-sleep that for i:the world ceases, as it were, to exist, and with its cessation the old conflict is permanently dissolved, though yet never satisfactorily accounted for.

This, in general, was Vivekananda's philosophy in which Duasim was regarded as a superficial truth and qualified Matisim as a phenomenal edition of the authentic truth which was stark and set in Maitreya. In all his lectures, this threefold division is either explicit or implicit, and though he admits the provisional efficacy of the first two methods of the soul's progress, he goes on as if like flint against their claim to finality. "Erahma sayam, jatam satya" remains his philosophical motto.

Mark now the inconsistency between this philosophy and his own spiritual career. He was an undeviating worshippers of the Bhakti—that is to say, of the same creative Force which his intellect riddled with arguments. He was a most zealous devotee of Ramakrishna as an incarnation—that is to say, of a real manifestation of the Supreme Essence without that Essence's ceasing to be supreme for a moment. For him to look upon the Divine Mother and upon Ramakrishna as illusions to be renounced would have been to make a mockery of his holiest feelings. And the fact stands that he did not deem them illusions: his every thought was an act of adoration at their feet, every moment of his audacity was filled and glorified by his perfect happiness. The personal god, sovereign of his own being, was the secret of his entire spiritual adventure, whether at Dakshinawar, at Amarnath or at the Parliament of Religions. His whole dynamic Yoga was shaped and guided by this one living motif, this pure psychic life. Why, then, did he not preach the One, only? But for Vivekananda's philo-

SHYAMRAO THEBHAKTE: 'LIBRA'NANDA AND OUR SPIRITUAL FUTURE

By "LIBRA"
of sadhana as Her son and devotee, his philosophy would not have been such a Pyrrhic victory of the treacherous intellect over the illumined soul.

He was right in holding that each finite is necessarily a front and face of the whole infinite which is hidden behind it and is its Self of self; but the obvious conclusion from it would be that the Infinite possesses, owing to its omnipotence, the power of appearing divided and imperfect in spite of remaining essentially one and unaltered. To say that it cannot and does not have such a power and yet to believe that somehow the illusion of division and imperfection comes to be, even phenomenally, is to deny the Divine Its omnipotence. Besides, if spiritual realisation is to be at all real, it must be the soul of the individual that achieves and attains it, so that even when it unites with the Supreme it must still possess a sort of distinct reality. If there is no unity, no basic identity between the two, there can be no union; but if there is no difference there can be no progressive attainment of union either. And if the experience of the attainment is to be real, then the bondage from which the individual soul escapes must also be real—else there is no actual self-liberation, no realisation by the individual of his basic identity with the Highest. But if bondage has a reality, however phenomenal, the sealed trance of so-called exclusive non-duality must be only an oblivious spiritual slumber and no negation of the cosmos, and the opening of the individual soul must always be conceived as necessarily co-existing with the Divine, and the Divine as not a vast void but as an inexplicable yet genuine unity-in-multiplicity; for otherwise there would be no ground of truth in the Ultimate to support and correspond to Its phenomenal manifestation.

It is this ground of truth or perfection that It brings out of Its stability not only to support but also to govern this lower manifestation, which is our world, by a higher manifestation or perfect harmony of what Sri Aurobindo calls Real-Ideas. The Real-Ideas constitute an organised play of supernal archetypes or truths of what is here expressed and worked out by a course of difficult evolution. They are a faultless cosmos in which no division of ignorance is made between the One and the many contained in It and which guides covertly or overtly this evolutionary mould of itself where the Divine has set up Its all-mighty figure of a great initial nescience as if in a wager with itself in order to manifest the Truth in the terms of all that begins as its utmost contradiction. In that faultless cosmos there is no absence of the individual soul and its instruments of mind, life and matter. A supreme individual soulfulness is there the counterpart of the evolving spark of the Divine that is here our soul; it is measured out and distinguished from its like by a movement of ideative definition which is the supreme counterpart of what we know here as mind, while the dynamism which sustains the differentiation and interplay of ideative soul-nature is the supreme counterpart of the life-forces of our experience, and finally the form taken by the soul's idea-forces, that which substantiates distinctiveness and energy-patterns, is the supreme counterpart of matter. It is the sense of these ideal realities behind everything and of the great wager, that Vivekananda lacked and that sums up the advance made by Sri Aurobindo on the traditional Yoga. But the sense is possible only if the human intellect stops sitting in judgment on the character of God and understands that the evolutionary working out of the full supernal Truth which can make man perfect and solve at length all the jarring riddles of his mortality is the grand aim set up by the Divine.

The Truth is being manifested here by a process and play of possibilities through repeated births, in which each of us has to behave as if he were free to choose and act; for such indeed seems to be the law of evolution, that the provision of our supreme selves is to be worked out by the exertion, effort and experiment of our earthly souls, aspiring after the Divine and, without questioning or criticising Its design, calling It down to possess them and all their members, so that body, life and mind may be converted into luminous figures of their own archetypes of Truth. This direct calling down of the Truth, constantly and persistently, with full self-surrender to Its demands is what Sri Aurobindo terms the Integral Yoga by which the very body will also be transformed into an incorruptible vehicle of the immortal Bliss, Consciousness and Power of the Divine—the Divine that is conscious of Its manifestation and capable of holding relations with what It manifests and hence personal in the highest sense of that word—the Divine which is the one yet multiple ground of truth of all that constitutes our humanity and which possesses on the plane of ideal realities the one yet multiple symbol of the perfected human form. Thus even the anthropomorphic conceptions of Shiva and Kali are justified as types of the living divine reality which is to be incarnated in us and to whose infinity of essence, conscious force and beatitude we have to respond. If, therefore, we are to profit by the example of Vivekananda, we must turn from the rigid mental heights of his Shankarite metaphysics to the psychic depths of his sublime childlike discipleship. Else we shall fail to avoid the intellectual pitfall which made his philosophy a voice from the Mayavadin past and we shall miss that in him which bears most luminously on the issues of our spiritual future.

Perhaps the psychic depths of his mighty nature—a nature keenly conscious of the anomalies of existence and aware of the especially hard lot of a spiritual hero destined to revive a fallen nation's soul—perhaps these depths never found tongue with such perfection as in a little-known poignant lyric of his which expresses the brave confidence of the luminous warrior-child of the Supreme Mother and at the same time the tragic punishment of one whose intellect discovered not the master-key to life's riddle. A quintessence of the Vivekananda who inherited the world-enlightening mission of Ramakrishna in a mind void of immersion in the illicitable Formless where no questions arise, this lyric which we may well regard as one of the treasures of English poetry makes the Divine Being utter to him the Wisdom beyond thought:

**THE CUP**

_This is your cup—the cup assigned to you From the beginning. Nay, My child, I know How much of that dark drink is your own brew Of fault and passion, ages long ago. In the deep years of yesterday, I knew._

_This is your roof—a pleasant roof and dry, I made the stones that never give you rest, I set your friend in pleasant ways and clear, And he shall come, like you, unto my breast— But you, My child, must learn to travel here._

_This is your task—it has no joy nor grace, But 'tis not meant for any other hand, And in My service it is the only proper place. Take it. I do not bid you understand. I bid you close your eyes to see My face._

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