SRI AUROBINDO ON "SAVITRI"

EDITOR'S NOTE

Sri Aurobindo intended to write a long Introduction to Savitri: a Legend and a Symbol. Together with one Book out of the twelve of his epic-poetic-sig- nificant dramas, he left the Book of Death—the eagerly awaited Introduction never got written. Nothing that anybody may pen, however acute, can replace it as an expository and illuminative document on the unusual poetic affinities—unusual both in message and music—that blows through the twenty-five thousand and reddish lines of this Legend of the past that is a Sym- bol of the future. But luckily we have a substantial number of letters by Sri Aurobindo on what can be called, if any one achievement by so vastly and variously a creative genius can lay claim to the title, his literary life- work. Out of these letters an introduction can be assembled—necessarily in cer- tain places more informal, personal, unreserved, focussed on details, quick- shifting, repetitive than a specially composed piece for the public would be—has been made with the object of giving some insight into the poet's own valuable works, and light on the poem's conception and development and on its qualities of inspiration, vision, and technique. It may perhaps be of interest to touch upon the origin of the series of notes that have been collected and presented here. No sooner had I commenced my contact with Sri Aurobindo in 1957 than I found the air of his Ashram, husning with rich aromas of the masterpiece that had been on the make ever since his days in Baroda. Having always had a passion for poetry and having myself tried to catch a spark of the celestial fire, I was extremely thrilled and longed to set eyes on this most significant work of his which he was repeatedly recasting to make it accord with the ever higher ascension of his own consciousness in Yoga. But Sri Aurobindo was in no hurry to show it before it reached the intense spiritual perfection. It was not, as was known to some who had studied with him my own little efforts at expressing the few strange glimmers of beauty and truth that at times my discipleship under graced a spiritual and literary guru brought me. On one such occasion, to illustrate some sense point, he sent back with his helpful comments the following letter describing "the Ray from the transcendent penetrating through the window" as a "realization" of the mind's passive neutral reflection of the supreme quietude of the silent Brahman..."

"...Piercing the limitless unmoveable,... Breaking the vacancy and voiceless peace,..."

I was struck by the profound word-reverberations that reinforced the mystical word-suggestions with a tremendous immediacy of spiritual fact. I asked where the lines came from. The reply was: "Savitri."

I never forgot this first brief impact of the closely guarded secret. Even before it, Sri Aurobindo had tried to make me conscious of a certain element in poetry that had hitherto been the Overhead planes, the hidden ranges of consciousness above the intellect, with their inherent light of knowledge and their natural experience of the infinite. He distinguished four planes: Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind. The last-named has been, according to him, the top reach of the dynamic side of man's spirituality so far; a transcendental pulse of Intuitional Brahmat or Self Knowledge is the Beyond to it usually realized when in isolated cases there is a leap to the ultimate status of that infinite silence of self- liberation which can be attained on any plane of the cosmos by an inner withdrawal. The master dynamism of the Divine, the integral Brahman-re-
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The day of the days was October 25, 1926. From then onwards, for months, Sri Aurobindo kept sending passages which I typed out and he touched up again or expanded. About the next passage I remarked:

"It goes reverberating in deep and deathless feeling. What I admire is that the burden of infinite suggestion is carried with such a flexible ease. There is no attempt—as in the poetry of our lesser fry—to make things specially striking or strange or new—but a simple largeness of gesture which most naturally makes one surprising revelation after another of beauty and power."

His comment—intended, no doubt, for only my eyes, for in his public pronouncements he rarely spoke about his own work without reserve—was:

"Well, it is the difference of receiving from above and living in the ambiance of the Above—whatever comes receives the breath of largeness which belongs to that plane."

Our correspondence went on and it continued, though with several long breaks, up to almost the end. It was a correspondence with many features. All the critical appreciation and understanding I was capable of bringing to "Savitri" and its author I tried to express in my letters. For some time I was afraid that I might be misunderstood, but it is a measure of the enormous sympathy of Sri Aurobindo that he never felt that occasionally I overstepped the play of the surface intelligence overmuch on Sri Aurobindo's meagre and precious spare time. On the other hand, without that little amount and without my pressing upon his notice some unfavourable comment by an academic friend outside the Aurobindonian circle, the chance would have been missed for ever of seeing the finest critic I have known pass over my judgment on the greatest poem I have read—a poem written by the most enlightened Master of Yoga and the most patient as well as considerate Superman one could hope to have the privilege to serve.

K. D. SETHINA

LETTERS ON "SAVITRI"

I

There is a previous draft of Savitri, the result of the many retouchings of which somebody told you; but in that form it would not have been a "magma opus" at all. Besides, it would have been a legend and not a symbol. I therefore started recasting the whole thing; only the best passages or lines of the old draft will remain, altered so as to fit into the new frame.

No, I do not work at the poem once a week; I have other things to do. Once a month, perhaps, I look at the new form of the first Book and make such changes as inspiration points out to me—so that nothing shall fall below the minimum height that I have fixed for it.

Savitri is blank verse without enjambement (except rarely)—each line by itself and arranged in paragraphs of one, two, three, four, five lines (rarely a longer series), in an attempt to catch something of the Upnishadical and Khaldaic movement, so far as that is a possibility in English. You can't take that as a model—it is too difficult a rhythm-structure to be a model. I shall myself know whether it is a success or not, only when I have finished two or three Books. But where is the time now for such a work? When the Supermundal has finished coming down, then perhaps.

Don't make prophecies. How do you know that Savitri is or is going to be Supermundal poetry? It is not, in fact—only it is an attempt to render into poetry a symbol of things occult and spiritual.

It seems as if you were facing the problem of blank verse by attempting it under conditions of the maximum difficulty. Not content with choosing a form which is based on the single line blank verse (I mean, of course, each line a clear-cut entity by itself) as opposed to the flowing and freely enjambed variety, you try to unite finite lines and single line and further undertakes a form of blank verse quatrain. I have myself tried the blank verse quatrains—often, when I attempted the single line blank verse base on a large scale in Savitri, I found myself falling involuntarily into a series of four-line movement. But even though I was careful in the building it failed to be a stiff monotony and had to make a principle of variation—one line, two line, three line, four line or longer passages (paragraphs as it were) alternating with each other; otherwise the system would be a failure.

Savitri was originally written many years ago before the Mother came, as a narrative poem in two parts, Part I Earth and Part II Beyond (these two parts are still extant in the scheme, each of four Books—or rather Part II consisted of three Books and an epilogue). "Twelve Books" to an academic classicism, but the new Savitri may extend to ten Books—ill much is added in the final revision it may be even twelve. The first Book has been lengthening and lengthening out... As for the second part, I have not touched it yet. There was no "climbing of planes" in the first version—rather Savitri moved through the worlds of Night, of Twilight, of Day—all, of course, in a spiritual sense—and ended by calling down the power of the highest worlds of Sachchidanda. I had no idea of what the Supermundal World could be like at that time, so it could not enter into the scheme... As for expressing the Supermundal inspiration, that is a matter of the future.

Savitri is represented in the poem as an incarnation of the Divine Mother. The narrative is supposed to have taken place in far past times when the whole thing had to be opened, so as to "hew the ways of Immortality." The poem was originally written from a mixture perhaps of the inner and psychic, poetic intelligence, sublimed vital, afterwards with the Higher Mind, often illuminated and intuited, interwoven. Most of

* In the present version, there are three parts.
† As is actually the case now.
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...evitable thing not only as a whole but in each word; whether there is the right distribution of sentence lengths (an immensely important thing in this kind of blank verse); whether the lines are in their right place, for all the lines may be perfect but they may not compose perfectly together—bridges may be needed, alteration of position so as to create the right developmental and perspective. Pauses hardly exist in this kind of blank verse; variations of rhythm, as between the lines, of caesura, of the distribution of long and short, clipped and open syllables, manifold constructions of vowel and consonant sounds, alliterations, sonorities, etc., distribution into one line, two line, three or four or five line, many line sentences, care to make each line tell by itself in its own mass and force and at the same time forming a harmonious whole in each sense and as part of its confluence with all that is usually taken care of by the inspiration itself, for as I know and have the habit of the technique, the inspiration provides what I want according to standing orders. If there is a defect I appeal to headquarters, till a proper version comes along or the defect is removed by a word or phrase substitute that flashes—with the necessary sound and sense. These things are not done by thinking or seeking for the right thing—the two agents are sight and call. Also feeling—the solar Plexus has to be satisfied and, until it, revision after revision has to continue. I may add that the technique does not go by any set mental rule—for the object is not perfect technical elegance according to precepts but sound-significance filling out the word-significance. If that can be done by breaking rules, well, so much the worse for the rules. 

I can never be certain of newly written stuff in Savitri until I have looked at it again after an interval. Apart from the quality of new lines, there is the combination with the whole in which I have written more than anything else in my past revisions.

Allow me to point out that whatever I did in a “jiffy” would not be any more than provisionally final. It is not a question of making a few changes in individual lines, that is a very minor problem; the real finality only comes when all is felt as a perfect whole, no line jarring with or falling away from the level of the whole though some may rise above it and also all the parts in their proper place making the right harmony. It is an inner feeling that has to decide that... Unfortunately the mind can’t arrange these things, and has to wait till the absolutely right thing comes in a sort of receptive self-opening and calling-down condition. Hence the months.

It is not a question of inclination at all. There is too great a pressure to do the necessary things done for the insufficiency of poetic inclination to be at all possible.

I have been kept too occupied with other things to make much headway with the poem—except that I have spoilt your beautiful copy of the “Worlds” under the pretext of the restless urge for more and more perfection; but we are here for World-improvement, so I hope that is excusable.

I have tackled the first two sections of Savitri again and have pulled up the third to a higher consistency of level; the “Worlds” have fallen into a state of manuscript chaos, corrections upon corrections, additions upon additions, rearrangements on rearrangements, out of which perhaps some cosmic beauty will emerge.

You will see when you get the full typescript of the first three Books that Savitri has grown to an enormous length so that it is no longer quite the same thing as the poem you saw some years ago. There are now three Books in the first part. The first, the Book of Beginnings, comprises five cantos which cover the same ground as what you typed but contains also much more that is new. The small passages about Aswapathi and the other worlds have been replaced by a new Book, the Book of the Traveller of the Worlds, in fourteen Cantos with many thousand lines. There is also a third sufficiently long Book, the Book of the Divine Mother. In the new plan of the poem there is a second part consisting of five Books: two of these, the Book of Birth and Quest and the Book of Love, have been completed and another, the Book of Fate is almost complete. Two others, the Book of Yoga and the Book of Death, have still to be written, though a part needs only a thorough revising. Finally, there is the third part consisting of four Books, the Book of Eternal Night, the Book of the Dual Twilight, the Book of the Uniting Day and the Rhetorical Wasteland, which have to be entirely rewritten and the third of them largely rewritten. So it will be a long time before Savitri is complete.

In the new form it will be a sort of poetic philosophy of the Spirit and of Life much more profound in its substance and vaster in its scope than was intended in the original poem. I am trying, of course, to keep it at a very high level of inspiration, but in so large a plan covering most subjects of philosophical thought and vision and formed of several spiritual experiences it has to be quite the variation of tone; but that is, I think, necessary for the richness and completeness of the treatment.

To be continued.
SAVITRI
By SRI AUROBINDO
BOOK VII: THE BOOK OF YOGA
Canto 4: The Triple Soul-Forces

Here from a low and groze and listless ground
The passion of the first ascent began;
A moon-bright face in a sombre cloud of hair,
A Woman sat in a pale luminous robe.
A rugged and ragged soil was her bare seat,
Beneath her feet a sharp and winding stone.
A divine pity on the peaks of the world,
A spirit touched by the grief of all that lives,
She looked out far and saw from inner mind
This questionable world of outward things,
Of false appearances and plausible shapes,
This dubious cosmos stretched in the ignorant Void,
The pangs of earth, the toil, and speed of the stars
And the difficult birth and dolorous end of life.
Accepting the universe as her body of woe,
The Mother of the seven sorrows bore
The seven stabs that pierced her bleeding heart:
The beauty of sadness lingered on her face,
Her eyes were dim with the ancient stain of tears.
Her heart was riven with the world's agony
And burdened with the sorrow and struggle in Time,
An anguished music trilled in her rapt voice.

Absorbed in a deep compassion ecstasy,
Lifting the mild ray of her patient gaze,
In soft sweet training words slowly she spoke:
"O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
To share the suffering of the world I came,
I draw my children's pangs into my breast.
I am the nurse of the dolour beneath the stars;
I am the soul of all who wailing whirleth
Under the ruthless brand of God's.
I am woman, nurse and slave and beaten beast;
I tend the hands that gave me cruel blows;
I am the earthy queen, the pampered doll,
I am the giver of the bowl of rice,
I am the worshipped Angel of the House.
I am in all that suffred and that cries.
Mine is the prayer that climbs in vain from earth,
I am traversed by my creatures' agonies,
I am the spirit in a world of pain.
The scream of tortured flesh and tortured hearts
Fall's back on heart and flesh unheard by Heaven
Has rent with helpless grief and wrath my soul.
I have seen the peasant burning in his hut,
I have seen the louder corpse of the slaughtered child,
Heard women's cry ravished and stripped and baled
Amid the bayings of the hell-hound mob,
I have looked on, I had no power to save
I have brought no arm of strength to aid or slay;
God gave me love, he gave me not his force.
I have shared the toil of the yoked animal drudge
Punished by the goad, encouraged by the whip;
I have shared the fear-filled life of bird and beast,
Its long hunt for the day's precocious food,
Its covert slink and crouch and hungry prowl,
Its pain and terror seized by hack and claw.
I have shared the daily life of common men,
Its petty pleasures and its petty cares,
Its press of troubles and haggard horde of ills,
Earth's trail of sorrow hopeless of relief.
The unwanted tedious labour without joy,
And the burden of misery and the strokes of fate.
I have been pity, leaning over pain
And the tender smile that heals the wounded heart
And sympathy making life less hard to bear.
Man has felt near my unseen face and hands;
I have become the sufferer and his moon,
I have lain down with the mangled and the slain,
I have lived with the prisoner in his dungeon cell,
Heavy on my shoulders weighs the yoke of Time:
Nothing refusing of creation's load,
I have borne all and know I still must bear:
Perhaps when the world sinks into a last sleep,
I too may sleep in dumb eternal peace.
I have borne the calm indifference of Heaven,
Witnessed Nature's cruelty to suffering things
While God passed silent by nor turned to help.
Yet have I cried not out against his will,
Yet have I not accused his cosmic Law.
Only to change this great hard world of pain
A patient prayer has risen from my breast;
A pallid resignation lights my brow,
Within me a blind faith and mercy dwell;
I carry the fire that never can be quenched
And the compassion that supports the suns.
I am the hope that looks towards my God,
My God who never came to me till now;
His voice I hear that ever says 'I come';
I know that one day he shall come at last.'
She ceased, and like an echo from below
Answering her pathos of divine complaint
A voice of wrath took up the dire refrain,
A grovel of thunder or roar of angry beast,
The beast that crouching growsl within man's depths,—
Voice of a tortured Titan once a God.
"I am the Man of Sorrows, I am he
Who is nailed on the wide cross of the universe;
To enjoy my agony God built the earth,
My passion he has made his drama's theme.
He has sent me naked into his bitter world
And beaten me with his rods of grief and pain
That I might cry and grovel at his feet
And offer him worship with my blood and tears.
I am Prometheus under the vulture's beak,
Man, the discoverer of the unyielding Fire,
In the flame he kindled burning like a moth;
I am the seeker who can never find,
I am the fighter who cannot win,
I am the runner who never touched his goal;
Hell tortures me with the edges of my thought,
Heaven tortures me with the splendour of my dreams.
What profit has I of my human soul?
I tol the animal, like the animal die.
I am the rebel, man the helpless serf;
Fate and my fellows cheat me of my wage.
I loosen with my blood my servitude's seal
And shake from my aching neck the oppressor's knees.
Only to seat new tyrants on my back:
My teachers lessen me in slavery,
I am shown God's stamp and my own true signature
Upon the sorry contract of my fate.
I have loved, but none has loved me since my birth;
My fruit of works is given to other hands:
All that is left me is my evil thoughts,
My world's quarrel against God and man,
Ease of the riches that I cannot share,
Hate of a happiness that is not mine.
I know my fate will ever be the same,
It is my Nature's work that cannot change:
I have loved for mines, not for the beloved's sake,
I have loved for myself and not for others' lives.
Each in himself is sole by Nature's law,
So God has made his harsh and dreadful world,
So has he built the petty heart of man;
Only by force and ruse can man survive:
For pity is a weakness in his breast,
His goodness is a laxity in the nerves,
His kindness an investment for return,
His altruism is ego's other face:
He serves the world that him the world may serve.
If once the Titan's strength could wake in me,
If Erotes from Eros could arise,
I then would reign the master of the world
And like a God enjoy man's bliss and pain.
But God has taken from me the ancient force.
There is a dull moment in my sluggish heart,
A fierce satisfaction with my special pangs
As if they made me taller than my kind;
Only by suffering can I excel.
I am the victim of titan's ills,
I am the door of demoniac deeds;
I was made for evil, evil is my lot;
Evil I must be and by evil live;
Nought other can I do but be myself;
What Nature made me, that I must remain.
I suffer and toil and weep; I moan and hate."
And Savitri heard the Voice, the echo heard.
SAVITRI

And turning to her being of pity spoke:
"Madonna of suffering, Mother of grief divine,
Thou art a portion of my soul put forth.
To bear the unbearable sorrow of the world.
Because thou art, man yield not to their doom,
But ask for happiness and stretch to heaven.
Because thou art, the wretched still can hope.
But thing is the power to salute, not to save.
One day I will return, a bringer of strength,
And make thee drink the Nectar's cup.
His streams of force shall triumph in thy limbs
And Wisdom's calm control thy passionate heart.
The love shall be the bond of human kind,
Compassion the bright Kila of Nature's acts:
Misery shall pass abolished from the earth;
The world shall be freed from the anger of the Beast,
From the cruelty of the Titan, the devouring man.
There shall be peace and joy for ever more.
"

On passed she in her spirit's upward route.
An ardent grandeur climbed mid ferns and rocks,
Yet wind flattered the heart to warmth,
A finer perfume breathed from slender trees.
All beautiful grew, subtle and high and strange.
Here on a boulder curved like a huge throne
A Woman sat in gold and purple sheen,
Armed with the trident and the thunderbolt,
Her feet upon a couchant lion's back.
A formidable smile curved round her lips.
Heaven-fire laughed in her piercing eyes;
Her body a mass of courage and heavenly strength,
She smote the triumph of the nether gods.
A halo of lightnings flamed around her head
And sovereignty a great cestus roused her robe.
And majesty and victory sat with her
Guarding in the wide cosmic battle-field
Against the flat equality of Death.
And the all-levelling insistent Night
The hierarchy of the ordered Powers,
The high changeless values, the peaked eminences,
The privileged aristocracy of Truth,
And in the governing Ideal's sun
The trumvirates of wisdom, love and bliss
And the sole autocracy of the absolute Light.
August on her seat in the inner world of Mind,
The Mother of Might looked down on passing things,
Listened to the advancing tread of Time,
Saw the irresistible whirling of the suns,
And heard the thunder of the march of God.

Amid the swaying forces in their strife
Sovereign was her word of luminous command,
Her speech like a war-cry rang a clarion chime,
A charm restoring hope in failing hearts,
Aspired the harmony of her puissant voice:
"O Savitri, I am thy secret soul.
I have come down into the human world
And the movement watched by an unsleeping Eye
And the dark contrariety of earth's fate
And the battle of the height and sombre Powers.
I stand upon earth's paths of danger and grief
And help the unfortunate and save the doomed.
To the strong I bring the guaron of their strength,
To the weak I bring the armour of my force.
To men who long I carry their coveted joy;
I am fortune justifying the great and wise
By the sanction of the plunder of the crowd,
Then trampling them with the armed heel of Fate.
My ear is leaned to the cry of the oppressed,
I topple down the thrones of tyrant kings;
A cry comes from proscribed and hunted lives
Appealing to me against the universe's world,
A voice of the forsaken and desolate
And the lone prisoner in his dungeon cell.
Ides hail in my coming the Almighty's force
Or praise with thankful tears his savour Grace.
I smite the Titan who besrides the world
And slay the ogre in his blood-stained den.
I am the Durga, godess and proud and strong.
And Lakshmi, queen of the fair and fortunate;
I wear the face of Kali when I kill,
I trample the corpses of the demon hordes.
I am charged by God to do his mighty work,
Unceasing I serve his will who sent me forth,
Reckless of peril and earthly consequence.
I reason not of virtue and of sin.
But do the deed he has put into my heart.
I fear not for the angry frown of Heaven,
I flinch not from the red assault of Hell;
I crush the opposition of the gods,
Tread down a million goblin obstacles.
I guide man to the path of the Divine
And guard him from the red Wolf and the Snake.
I set in his mortal hand my heavenly sword
And put on him the breastplate of the gods.
I break the ignorant pride of human mind
And lead the thought to the widening of the Truth;
I rend man's narrow and successful life;
And force his sorrowful eyes to gaze at the sun
That he may die to earth and live in his soul.
I know the goal, I know the secret route;
I have studied the map of the invisible worlds;
I am the battle's head, the journey's star.
But the great destinant world resists my word,
And the crook-handed and evil in man's heart
Is stronger than Reeson, profounder than the Pit.
And the malignancy of hostile Powers
Puts craftily back the clock of destiny
And mightier seem than the eternal Will.
The cosmic evil is too deep to unroot:
The cosmic suffering is too vast to heal.
A few I guide who pass me towards the Light;
A few I save, the mass falls back unsaved;
A few I help, the many strive and fail:
But my heart I have hardened and I do my work:
Slowly the Light grows greater in the East,
Slowly the world progresses on God's road.
His seal is on its task, it cannot fail:
I shall hear the silver swinging of heaven's gates
When God comes down to meet the soul of the world."
She spoke and from the lower human world
An answer, a warped echo met her speech;
The voice came through the spaces of the mind
Of the dwarf-Titan, the deformed chained god.
Who strives to master his nature's rebel stuff
And make the universe his instrument.
The Ego of this great world of desire
Claimed earth and the wide heavens for the use
Of man, head of the life it shapes on earth,
Its representative and conscious soul,
And symbol of evolventing light and force
And vessel of the godhead that must be.
A thinking animal, Nature's struggling lord
Has made of her his nurse and tool and slave
And pays to her as wage and emolument
Inexcessably by a deep law in things.
His heart's grief and his body's death and pain;
His pains are her means to grow, to see and feel;
His death animates her immortality.
A tool and slave of his own slave and tool,
He praises his free will and his master mind
And is pushed by her upon her chosen paths;
Possessor he is possessed and, ruler, ruled,
Her conscious automaton, her desire's dupe.
Her soul is her guest, a sovereign mute, inert,
His body her robot, his life her way to live,
His conscious mind her strong revolting self.
The voice rose up and smote some inner sun:
"I am the heir of the forces of the earth,
Slowly I make good my right to my estate;
A growing godhead in her divinised mud,
I climb, a claimant to the throne of heaven.
The last born of the earth I stand the first;
Her slow millenniums wait for my birth.
Although I live in Time besieged by Death,
Precarious owner of my body and soul
House on a little speck amid the stars,
For me and my use the universe was made.
Immortal spirit in the perishing clay,
I am God still unsolved in human form:
Even if he is not, he becomes in me.
The sun and moon are lights upon my path;
Air was invented for my lungs to breathe,
Conditioned as a wide and wallless space
For my winged chariot's wheels to cleave the road,
The sea was made for me to swim and sail
And bear my golden commerce on its back:
It laughs cloven by my pleasure's gliding keel,
I laugh at its black glare of fate and death.
The earth is my floor, the sky my living's roof.
All was prepared through many a silent age.
God made experiments with animal shapes,
Then only when all was ready I was born.

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CHAPTER XIII
ASHRAM SPORTS
(Continued)

Our Ashram, as I have already said, started under the ægis of silence. In point of fact those who visited it, say, in the late twenties, were scarcely likely to recognize it any more than a child is likely to be recognized in the adult after a space of two or three decades. In the case of our Ashram, however, it is not time alone which is responsible for this momentous change. Rather it is that things connected with athletics and sports, by and large, I have referred in an earlier chapter to new disciples coming in and being admitted along with their children. However, as they grew up, had to be taken in hand, that is, given an education, so sports had to be introduced inclusive of games, general exercises and athletics and then—oh what a quandary I was in, overnight!

For me it is somewhat difficult—and embarrassing as well—to have to trace my personal reactions to the Ashram sports and athletics, the more so because I had little excuse and even less justification for having chafed against them as I did, initially. But I must face up to it because otherwise I cannot fully bring out what I want to: Gurudev’s humility and unassertiveness going hand in hand with his firm vindication of his own vision and the Mother’s. So I shall have once again to go back for a little.

When the sports and athletics were first sponsored by the Mother and were being organized under her tireless personal supervision, I found myself strongly resenting their intrusions into our peaceful Ashram. I say ‘strongly’ because temperamentally I have never cared much for the sedentary life and the passive kind of peace. Since my adolescence I have had a predilection for sports and games and athletics in general. I do not claim that I have ever been particularly good at them, but I have always taken a pronounced pleasure in games like football and tennis and was fond even of exercises such as swimming, riding, dumb-bells, developing my body. I could never miss a good football or tennis match in Calcutta or Wimbledon and I used to play tennis regularly and not too badly. I liked billiards and loved chess passionately, in which I made my mark in England. I liked rowing too at Cambridge. The long and short of it is that I ought to, if anything, have rejoiced when Mother encouraged us to play and exhorted us to take exercise regularly, —in a word, literally drilled us into these with her peerless persuasiveness.

But what happened was just the reverse. From the very start I looked askance at these “trivial goings on” as I called them and vowed myself never to join the sports—even to save my life. This in itself would not perhaps have made so much difference as it was understood that nobody need join the sports unless he enjoyed them. But I took it into my head to persuade myself that such activities were utterly out of place in an Ashram —forgetting altogether that I was all these years doing regular exercise which so far had kept me in fine trim. But as I strongly approved of my own way, my mood, I found plausible arguments enough against what I decided to castigate. In a sense it was loyalty since I knew perfectly well that both Sri Aurobindo and Mother not only approved of sports but encouraged us all to profit by them. A quarterly magazine called Bulletin of Physical Education was started and printed in the Ashram in which Sri Aurobindo contributed articles after article, a privilege no other magazine in India could claim—during his post-pogic period—except of course the Arjuna which he himself had been the editor of. Also Mother herself wrote for the Bulletin regularly and, at considerable expense, had beautiful blocks made of the photographs of our boys and girls marching, playing, doing exercises etc. A beach quarterly magazine called Savitri

I was born weak and small and ignorant,
A helpless creature in a difficult world,
Travelling through my brief years with death at my side:
I have grown greater than Nature, wiser than God.
I have made real what she never dreamed,
I have sized her powers and harnessed for my work,
of her heritage, for I am but a child born of one primeval parent, I am but a part of,
I will make glass and rainbows out of milk,
Make iron velvet, water unbreakable stone,
Like God in his stature of artist skill,
Bred from one primeval parent, I am part of,
In single nature multitudinous lives,
All that imagination can conceive
In mind intangible, remotest snow
In Matter’s plastic void and concrete
No magic can surpass my magic’s skill.
There is no miracle I shall not achieve.
What God imperfect left, I shall complete,
Out of a tangled mind and half-formed soul
His sin and error I will eliminate;

by the Mother with all the emphasis of her strong personality. He dwelt also on the “National aspect” of the subject and was at great pains to explain and underline why “this strictness of training, this habit of discipline and obedience” could not be allowed to be “inconsistent with individual freedom” which he loved. He pointed out cogently that “in all kinds of concerted action” the habit of discipline created “the condition” not only for “the right use of liberty” but “even for its preservation and survival.”

I cannot possibly give long excerpts from his luminous articles in the Savitri and must content those who are interested to the study of the same. What I am concerned with here is to emphasize the fact that he gave his support to Mother wholeheartedly (as he wrote to me once) in her initiative in bringing in sports. But then had he not himself wanted all along for the Ashram the vacuum created by a want of enthusiasm, without which a synthesis of disillusioned faith and dead ritualism which are so often mistakenly by traditionalists as of the essence of religion) than for the deep reverence for the highest legacies and revelations of the past that

Savitri—Continued from previous page

What he invented not, I shall invent.
He was the first creator, I am the last.
I have found the atoms from which he built the worlds:
The first tremendous cosmic energy
Missioned shall leap to slay my enemy kin,
Expunge a nation or abolish a race.
Death’s silence leave where there was laughter and joy.
The flushed invincible shall spend God’s force
To raise my comforts and expand my wealth,
To speed my car which now the lightnings drive.
And turn the engine of my miracles.
With his hands of sorrow from his hands
And do with them greater wonders than his best.
Yet through it all I have kept my balanced thought,
I have studied my being, I have examined the world,
I have grown a master of the arts of life,
I have tamed the wild beast trained to be my friend.
He guards my house, looks up waiting my will.
I have taught my kind to serve and to obey.
I have used the mystery of the cosmic waves
of the East and the West, which had caused him to prophesy: "All this points to a new, a very rich, a very vast synthesis; a fresh and widely enfranchising harmonisation of our gait is both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity of the future." Also, had I not lectured often enough to large audiences across the broad and vast new imagery, that we have lived under the aegis of two such rare spirits of the East and West who were out to作文s to the way to the New Orientalisation, culminating in a new synthesis which alone could bring all the powers of the globe to an understanding, he would never have been aware of being a martinet and a disciplinarian, too Western in her outlook to be able to appreciate the millenial wisdom of India, when I knew that she loved India as she loved no other country in the world!

I had indeed complained against the Mother many a time in the past but I do not think that I had ever attacked her as bitterly and defiantly, turning myself into a heroic pitch and flouting a mood which nevertheless my heart suspeded all times. At times I was in despair, at times I could not bear to think of her. I had this now as I see clearly and I have laboured to express my view in the way I may, by confeating, help others to look at this new movement in the right perspective which is not able to achieve. That is why I am at such pains to bring out what many others felt rise and start through few had the temerity to be so desperately vocal about it. It was at bottom an imaginary grievance against what I chose to call the Western brand of discipline, imaginary not only because the Mother had made it clear from the very start that joining the school was not compulsory but also because I was one of those who had willingly and sincerely taken, a field in which the preparatory work has to be done. The Mother has to maintain it and for that all this order as well as organisation has to be there and it cannot be done without rules and discipline. Discipline is ever necessary for the evergreening of the ego and the ego's preference, and the rajasic vital nature, as a help to it at any rate. If these were overcome, outward rules etc. would be less necessary; spontaneous agreement, uniformity and spontaneity might action take their place — but while the present state of things exists, the abandonment of some or some part of discipline except such as people choose or do not choose for themselves, can only result in failure and disaster.

All the same I went on finding new reasons for my dissatisfaction although Mother continued to be kind as ever, all the while knowing full well how I was misrepresenting her. She only said once that she would wait till I saw things in the right perspective. Sri Aurobindo, however, followed a different line: he went on answering my charges against the Mother's outlook point by point. Once he actually wrote in vindication of her tolerance: "I do not find that Mother is a rigid disciplinarian. On the contrary, I have seen with what a constant leniency, tolerant patience and kindness she has met the huge mass of indiscipline, disobedience, self-assertion, revolt that has surrounded her, even revolt to her very face and violent letters overthrowing her with the worst possible allegations. A rigid disciplinarian would not have treated these things like that."

Dr. Johnson once roared: "Sir, there is no such thing as public worry — there is only private worry." I fear the remark conveys a larger measure of truth about human psychology. We may preach from the housetops about our being impelled to certain actions from abstract reasons but it is very often, if not always, some half-awaked or unwavowed private cause or motive from which such reasons derive. In my own case as in that of many

Because thou art in him, man hopes and dares; Because thou art, men's souls can climb the heavens And walk like Gods in the presence of the Supreme. But without wisdom power is like a wind. It can breathe upon the heights and kiss the sky, It cannot build the extreme eternal things. Thou hast given men strength, wisdom thou couldst not give. One day I will return, a bringer of the light; Then will I give to thee the mirror of God; Thou shalt see self and world as by him are seen Reflected in the bright pool of thy soul. Thy wisdom shall be vast as vast was the sky; Then hate shall dwell no more in human hearts, And fear and weakness shall desert men's lives, The cry of the ego shall be hushed within, Stein, discursive as food All shall be might and bliss and happy force."
OTHERS—for the sports were condemned by many of us, of whom I had become a self-chosen spokesman—the reason for our unsportswomanlike attitude towards sports lay in a very private grievance. (Of course we kept it in deep purdah while flourishing the impression that disrespect for the sport was the Mother knew it and had perfured to pass it by.) This reason so far as it applied to my own case, was that I feared that her interest of increase in children and sportmen was going to result definitely in a conflict of interest in those of us who were no longer sportsmen. Not that we felt this only now for the first time. 

No. It had begun to broil more and more in our distressed selves in proportion as the Asram members increased. Even before the advent of sport they were most objectionable to the interviewees as well as the visitors who came. Personally, I did not mind that so much as Sri Aurobindo went on writing to me even after he had stopped writing to most of them, so that my personal importance had never been in jeopardy. But with the advent of sports the perspective underwent a further change in that I knew very well that here I would not be able to make my mark, far less compete with the "youngsters" as they called them. So I had to accept to be left out in the cold, and as it felt rather freezing there—the Mother being the life and soul of the Asram—I cast about for a way to get in edgewise to bask in the light of her approval. But to have to toe the line with the others as one of them—was to bow to mediocrity the very thought of which made my fate-sweet blood boil. I actually saw my self-complicity gore all over, but I made it as something worth having that my eyes so far with pain: the impersonal reasons about the non-seriousness of sports. I knew that the remedy was to eat humble pie but how could I do that without some "intellectual" (?) bickerings? There were probably a few honest misguidings so the problem was to Yogananda and not to my unhappiness and I could not have acquired the vitality necessary to the longevity of the dream which I bankered for half-consciousness. I am perfectly certain that both Mother and Sri Aurobindo knew full well how I was rationalising my anti-sportside sympathies, a philosophic and in the last analysis, utterly against my grain. But in such matters they always pressed the buttons in their invisible control-rooms and seldom showed their hand till at least we grew somewhat receptive to their vision and then they moved out. Consequently they had to wait for the time being, doing what they could in their compassion to make the suffering of these new a little less hard to bear. At all events that was how I myself was treated for—I went on receiving Sri Aurobindo's usual letters with intermittent questions. Once for instance I even accused him of his preoccupation with sports. I need not here frame all my charges, for these will be easily inferred from his first letters on sports which I am now going to quote in some length.

"Certainly Mother does not want only sportspersons in the Ashram: that would make it not an Ashram but a playground. The sports and physical exercises are primarily for the children of the school and they also do not play but have to attend to their studies as well. Incidentally, they have improved immensely in health and in discipline and conduct as one very valuable result. Secondly, the younger sadhaks are allowed, not encouraged as it should be, to join in sports, but certainly to participate in certain sports not supposed to be sportsmen only: they have other and more important things to do. To be a sportman must necessarily be a voluntary choice and depends on the taste and inclination. There are plenty of people available in the British-India, for instance, who do not frequent the playground or engaging in sports and the Mother also would never think of asking him to do so. So equally, she could not think of being displeased with you for shunning these delights. Some, of course, might ask why any sports at all in an Ashram which ought to be concerned only with meditation and inner experiences and the escape from life into the Brahman. But that applies only to the ordinary kind of Ashram to which we have got accustomed and this is not that orthodox kind of Ashram. It includes life in Yoga, and once we admit life we can introduce anything that we find useful for life's ultimate and immediate purpose and not inconsistent with the works of the Spirit. After all, the orthodox Ashram came into being only after Brahman began to shun all connection with the world and the world got to be overlaid and turned into monasteries. The old Ashrams were not entirely like that; the boys and young men who were brought up in them were trained in many things belonging to life, the son of Pururavus and Urvashi, practically raised in poverty and became the disciple of a great sage in order to acquire from him the use of powerful weapons. So there is no prior ground why sports should be excluded from the life of the spirit even when we are trying to live life more Simply. Even table-tennis and football need not be rigorously excluded. But putting all permissible aside, my point is that to play or not to play is a matter of choice and inclination and it would be absurd for the Mother even to be in league with you and to be linked with her for me to be a sportman. So you need not have any apprehension on this score; that the Mother should be displeased with you for that is quite impossible. So the idea that she wished to draw away from you for anything done or not done is absurd. She was trying to make any real foundation with you and giving you no ground for it and there was nothing farther from her mind. She has herself explained that it was just the contrary that has been in her mind for some time past and it was an increasing kindness that was her feeling and intention. The only change she could expect from you was to grow in your psychic and spiritual endevour and inner progress and in that she has never found you quite the contrary. Apart from that, the notion that she could be displeased with you did not cross my mind, according to this or that pattern is a wild idea; it would be most arbitrary and unreasonable.

"As for my going far away, your feeling is based on my slackness in giving answers to your letters, but this slackness had no such cause. My love and affection have remained always the same and it is regrettable if, by my slackness in answering your letters, I have produced the impression that I was more interested in things other than you know. I think your recent letters have been mostly about persons recommended for obtaining passports or for procuring something or for the benefit of others, or even of you, or for your own benefit; that this is not my opinion about the matter set your mind at rest. Although I cannot yet write back more than I read of your letters, I try to understand them and not just the slackness. I know very well how much you depend on my writing in answer to your letters as the one physical contact left which helps you and I shall try in future to meet the need by writing as often as possible."

This letter written in July, 1948 would have been of immense help to me if I had been in a mood to avail myself of its directive then and there. But it was in no such mood I received it, and I did my best to out being aroused to correct my wrong view of it all. In Yoga, as I knew to my bitter cost, this constantly happens: taking up a wrong attitude in this arduous path of self-transformation entails consequences which grow, and become, with the passage of time, more and more difficult to liquidate. That is why they always advised me to rip the nascent sleeping in the bud. But I had already let it grow into a veritable philosophical tree and the result was that I was more and more suffering under its influence, which was not a pleasant one. I could not well withdraw all on a sudden and leave them in the lurch when there was no other way to save those who showed me into the foreground. But to know something is not always to feel like realizing the knowledge. The Old Adam in each of us does not let go of his hold without a struggle. So I struggled all the way till I came to the last phase which for exigencies of space I shall describe as briefly as I can.

It so happened that labouring as I was under my foreseen growing or aggravated by a will to cling to my declared stand, I chose to forget this all-too-patent fact, which Vivekananda used to deplore so constantly and witheringly, that we, Indians, had not only grown exceedingly tame but in the worst possible way. Nowhere was the idea of taking our time nor was there any thing that could not help notching, without notching, that those of whom we condemned the sports as too jejune had never wanted to meditate with any perseverance when Mother used to hold daily collective meditation in the Ashram. Many used to be either in a foil or feel drowsy, and some actually went off to sleep happily soaring if and when Mother happened to stay in annadhi for even twenty or thirty minutes, as often happened with her in her meditative moods. Not for nothing Vivekananda said scathingly: "These tamasic people will pass their lives in wrong actions or sloth and then run helplessly to the Yogis in the expectation that these will redeem their misery with miracles of Yoga. They will persevere in nothing—nor undertake any spiritual act. My thesis is against such miracle-mongering pseudo-spirituality." I knew that in the Mother and Sri Aurobindo's annadhi, mother of all along with the great Vedanta, having always been against our temperamental penchant for lolling in vital lethargy and mental somnolence under the pretense of setmizing as setmizing or whatever that is. What one of the reasons why they held works undertaken in this direction as the essence of Integral Yoga. Besides, works not only must our nature remain untransformed, but so real acceptance of life can follow. And if life did not come that way a lot of our barkcloth shouted, they decided to utilize them, as Mother wanted to show them how wrong this was the whole story about the sports. By no means. For it was only too obvious that she could not possibly have changed overnight and taken to the sportists' side; she was the Mother of a world and an important experiment but this though was not altogether a mere objective judgment. I would prefer not to speculate about it. Those who would have more light on this subject may conferring with Sri Aurobindo's two articles entitled "Perfection of the..."
Body" and "Divine Body" in the second and third issues of the Bulletin in 1949, in which they will find, among other things, that to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo this body is not a mere conglomeration of irredeemable matter which serves only as a pitiful cage of the immortal soul, but a "temple of the Divine" or "temple of the spirit," a place where all the positive forces of the entire being of man unite to express itself through the temple of the physical, the spirit, and the invisible, in its most complete and perfect form. The Body is a temple in which the spirit dwells, and the spirit is the Dweller in the house of the temple.

The Body is the temple of the spirit, and the spirit is the Dweller in the house of the temple.

But though all this was not by any means unknown to me I stumbled grievously, I repeat, because of my attachment to a false pride and reluctance to be made a fool of. Otherwise I could have written such a sorry figure at this late date—after having gone through so much all these years: and foolish, to boot, in that I indicted so eloquently the boisterous light-heartedness imported by "a thoughtless crew of children and young people" into the Ashram. But you remarked: "From a human point of view, even it could become a revealing vessel of supreme beauty and bliss.—casting the beauty of the light of the spirit suffusing and radiating from it as a lamp reflects and diffuses the luminosity of its indwelling flame, carrying in itself the beatitude of the spirit, its joy of the seeing mind, its joy and life of spiritual happiness, the joy of Matter released into a spiritual consciousness and thrilled with a constant ecstasy." That was his vision of the place and function of the perfect body in a full and rich life guided by the spirit and surrendered to the Divine who informs all life in a man of seemingly inart. For nothing less would have made him write in his message on the Perfection of the Body: "If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside, for the body is the temple of the spirit. Without the temple the dharma becomes without the means of fulfillment of dharma, and dharma means every ideal which we propose to ourselves and the law of its working out and its action."

But to think that I could have actually framed a charge against Gurudev himself who never stirred out of his flat for over twenty years! In reply he wrote a fairly long letter again on sports in which after assuring me once more of his abhorrence of "anybody in the Divine Body in sports" if he had "no inclination or natural bent for them" he added (4-3-49):

"I do not understand what you mean by my giving my time to sports! I am not giving any time to it except that, at the Mother's request, I have written an article for the first number of the Bulletin and another for the forthcoming number. It is the Mother who is doing all the rest of the work for the organization of the sports and that she must do, obviously, till it is sufficiently organized to go on by itself with only a general supervision from above and her actual presence once a day. I put out my force to support her work and the work of the Ashram but otherwise I am giving any of my time to sports. As to my silence, I do not think I have neglected anything you have asked for whenever you have written. Perhaps you mean your report of the interview you had with me which you want to publish? I think I have to be careful about such things."

* He later gave me the necessary permission and so that interview, revised by me, was published in full in the American edition of my "Among the Gurus" (pp. 351-359).

The Mother has never intended to put any such pressure on you and if anybody has said that, there is no foundation whatever for what they have told you.

"It is also not a fact that either the Mother or I are turning away from you and intend to interest ourselves only in sport; we have no intention whatever of altering the fundamental character of the Ashram and replacing it by a sporting association. If we did that it would be a most idiotic act and if anybody should have told you anything like that, he is either foolish or obsessed by a very upside-down idea. The Mother told you very clearly once through Nirod that what was being done in the playground was not meditation for yoga but only an ordinary concentration for the physical exercises alone. If she is busy with the organisation of these things—and it is not true that she is busy with that alone—it is in order to get finished with that as soon as possible after which it will go on of itself without her being at all engaged in the actual activity occupied by it, as we do in the various other departments."

As for myself, I am surely absurd to think that I am neglecting my yoga and interested only in running, jumping and marching! There seems to have been strange misunderstandings about my second message in the Bulletin."

I wrote about sports and their utility both in the physical and in the mental, the political or social development or any other matter. In the second, I took up the question, incidentally, because people were expressing ignorance as to why the Ashram should concern itself with sports at all. I explained why it had been done and dealt with the idea that sports and other human activities could be part of a search for a total perfection of all the parts of the being including the body and what would be the nature of the perfection of the body. I indicated clearly that only by yoga could there come a supreme and total perfection of all the instruments of the spirit and the ascent of the whole being to the highest level and a divine life on earth and the assumption of a divine body. I made it clear that by human and physical means such as sports only a limited and precarious human perfection could come. In all this there is nothing to justify the idea that sports could be a means of jumping on the Supramind or that the Supramind was going to descend into the playground and nowhere else and only those who are there will receive it; that would be a bad look-out for me as I would have changed!"
THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

By RISHABHCHAND

THE TRIPLE AIM

The Conception of the Infinite and Eternal

Union with the Infinite and Eternal can be said to be the aim of all Yogas. But this is a general description which easily lends itself to various interpretations. The aim of the Sankhyayoga is the release of the immu-
culate Purusha from his false self-identification with the mechanical workings of Nature into the immeasurable peace and silence of his ultimate self-existence. Jnana-yoga aims at a union with the Infinite and Eternal in its ineffable transcendence; Bhaktiyoga with the infinite and eternal Lord of Love and Bliss and Beauty; and Tantra, first with the infinite and eternal universe as the supreme Shakti, and, as the culmi-
nating movement of its Yoga, the Infinite and eternal Brahman beyond all names and forms. The difference in the conception of the Infinite and Eternal determines the difference in the conceptions of the methods of Yoga and their practice.

The one distinctive feature of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo is that its conception of the Infinite and Eternal is different from that of all the schools of Yoga in India, except of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. The Infinite and Eternal to whom it claims to lead is the One without a second, the omnipresent Reality, the immanent and transcendent Purusha, who is every being, every thing, every happening, the Creator and Master of the whole universe, which is His phenomenal self-existence in Himself, and at the same time the inconceivable, unutterable, super-


cosmic Absolute. The organic unity of all these aspects and states of being is conceived by Sri Aurobindo in terms of the Purushottama of the Gita. This integrality of its conception of the infinite and eternal Brahman makes the philosophy of the Integral Yoga the most rational, perfect and comprehensive monism ever formulated by spiritual experience.

Here there is no Maya or Karma or Sata or cut across or cast a shadow on the all-constituting and all-alleging unity of Brahman. All is Brahman, the mutable as well as the Immortal, the finite as well as the Infinite, the many as well as the One.

"The Purusha has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet; encompassing the earth on all sides, He stands ten fingers' width above." (Skewabhatara: 3, 14.)

"Divine, formless is the Purusha, He is without and He is within, unborn, breathless, mindless and luminously pure, He is higher than the highest Immortal.

"And of Him is born life and the mind and all the organs of sense, and of Him are Ether and Air and Light and Water and Earth that holdseth all." (Mundaka: 2, 1.)

The Supreme Truth-Consciousness or Supermind

This all-embracing monoism being the philosophical foundation of the Integral Yoga, the means and method of its practice and the way of its attainment must necessarily be comprehensive and all-inclusive, a synthet-
ic and unifying movement progressing through the complexity of the human being towards the integral divine fulfillment. But what is the nature of this unifying movement of progress, and what is that plane of consciousness on which the final reconciliation between the One and the many, between Time and Eternity, silence and activity and Spirit and Matter can be effected? We are awake on the physical, vital and mental planes of consciousness, all of them planes of the separate ignorance, which makes us see and feel things, not in their essential unity, but as distinct units and divided fragments. This is a false seeing and a false feeling. We do not see the truth, because we do not see the whole, of things. The discords of the surface elements disturb us, because we do not perceive the underlying harmony. And when we travel beyond the triple separative consciousness, we enter by trances into a state of absorbed immersion in the unconditioned Infinite, which excludes all awareness of the normal waking state and its movements. Both of these states are mutually exclusive, the Maha and the Akshara, and a simul-
taneous possession of them has been held to be extremely difficult, if not impossible. But Sri Aurobindo holds that "A common reason that a perfect union with Him must naturally make us participate in that simultaneous possession. What is the secret of God's possession of both?"

The Supreme Divine includes and transcends the Kabara and the Akshara at the same time, because He is greater than the universe of His own creation and "higher than the highest Immortal". He takes His stand upon the plane of the Truth-Consciousness, the Rta-Clad of the Vedic description, the plane of the Truth, the Right and the Vast, which is the
eternal home of unity and harmony. Basing this plane of the creative Truth-consciousness is His own being of Sat, Chit and Ananda, which is the immediate definition of the upanisadic Brahman, the Immanence of all the worlds of His becoming, of flux and formation and manifold self-expression, It is this plane of the all-creating and all-governing Truth-consciousness, called the Supermind by Sri Aurobindo, that is the secret of the fusion and unity attributes of the Supreme, that is the non-dualism of all universal opposites. It alone permits of a full realisation of the Chaitanyapada or integral Brahman without causing any exclusiveness of concentration on the part of our being or an absence of any layer of its consciousness or movement of its force. This all-comprehending Super-


mind is the principal target of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

The Ascent to the Supermind—The First Aim

The foremost aim of the Integral Yoga being the Supermind, it cannot rest satisfied with any realisation short of the very highest and widest which the Supermind alone can give. It accepts and profits by all impart-


ant wayside experiences; the Sankhya experience of detached freedom, the silence of the Nirvana of Buddhism, the unfathomable peace of the immanent Immortal or the thrilled power of the universal Divine; but it proceeds beyond all these to the great goal of its difficult endeavours—the further illumination and all-harmonising unity of the creative Supermind. It is not by trance or an exclusive awakening in the depths or on the heights of the being accompanied by a partial or complete sleep of the parts and or the puruṣavasana of their natural movements, that it ascends towards its goal; its process is rather one of inclusion and synthesis, and a raising of the integrated being of man into the glories of the Supermind. It insists on an increasing expansion of the human con-


sciousness and its ascent beyond the mind, beyond even the spiritual ranges of the mind, to that plane where Saichchchadanda stands alone at once the transcendent Absolute and the timeless Creator of the universe. This ascent is a superhuman labour, impossible of achievement except by the Grace of the Divine, inasmuch as it involves, the opening of the higher layers of our being and an awakening into all the states and ranges of our consciousness in which we are at present fast asleep. According to ancient knowledge the individual soul lives simultaneously in five sheaths or koshas, but in most human beings, it is awake only in the three lower sheaths—the material or the food sheath, the vital sheath and the mental; it has to awake in the supramental or Vijñana sheath and the sheath of Bliss (Amadanaya Kosa). This awakening, unaccompanied by any stacy or cataplay in any part of the lower being, is what is known as ascent in the Integral Yoga. Sri Aurobindo says that as man has risen from the life-mind of the animal, wrapped up in the chaotic cravings and appetites of the lower nature, into the comparative clarity and control of the higher reason and reflection, so one day the higher vision and intu-


tionary an of his soul, he will rise to the Truth-conscious Supermind and live in its all-revealing Light. It is not stray saddles into the Spirit-
kshets that are meant by the term "ascent" in its widest sense in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. By ascent is meant, first, a climb to a higher plane of consciousness and then a more or less secure establishment in its characteristic principle and power. Every such ascent gives a new poised to the being and, opening up sealed horizons of vision, imparts a new rhythm to its movements. But the culminating evolutionary ascent is that to the Supermind in which the human consciousness undergoes a complete reversal and an unprecedented transformation. Instead of the mental ignorance, a plenary knowledge; instead of division, a perfect, manifold unity; instead of Sarcos, an unassailable harmony, and instead of the be-


setting limitations of the human existence, an unswelled infinity, are the basis of the life in the Supermind. All that the human soul yearns for, all that the human nature is meant to incarnate and reveal and all that the divine sense and destiny of the human birth are found in the Rites Jyoth of the Supermind. If an ascent to a higher consciousness is a new birth, an ascent to the supramental consciousness is a birth into the Super-


nature, Para Prekarit.

The ascent has two stages, initial and final. At the initial stage, the most developed part of the consciousness of the Yogi rises to the Higher Self-Mind where he is "a thinking, speaking and doing Mind" of Spirit-born concep-
tual knowledge." "An all-awareness emerging from the interior of his identity, carrying the truths the identity held in itself, conceiving swiftly, victo-


riously, multifundamentally, formulating and by self-power of the idea effec-
tively realising its conceptions, is the character of this greater mind of knowledge." From the Higher Mind it rises to the Illumined Mind, which is a mind not of Truth-thought, but of Truth-vision. "Here the clarity of the spiritual intelligence, its tranquil day-light, gives place or subordinates itself to an intense lucidity, a splendid illumination of the Spirit."* "The Life Divine" by Sri Aurobindo.

* The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo.
From the Illumined Mind it climbs to the Intuition, which is a “power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity.” Its perception is “more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence.” The next step of the ascent takes the consciousness to the Overmind, which is “a principle of global knowledge.” In it “intuition, illumined sight and thought enlarge themselves; their substance assumes a greater substantiality and, enhanced, they present a more comprehensive, global, many-faceted, more wide and potent in its truth-force: the whole nature, knowledge, aesthetics, sympathy, feeling, dynamism become more catholic, all-understanding, all-embracing, cosmic, infinite.” This is the highest that the human consciousness can achieve, sustained and aided by the divine Force; but the next step beyond, the crucial step into the Truth, the Right, the Vast (Satya, Ritas, Brhat) can only be a gift of the divine Grace, a crowning boon and blessing of the supreme Maker, and never an achievement of the will and force of man. The ascent to the Supermind is an ascent to the eternal home of the supernal Light and Force, the all-compraising and all-controlling state of Sachchidananda, the sun-realms of Purushottamam.

The final ascent is answered at every step by a descent of the characteristic power of the plane attained, which performances a dual work of liberation by purification and transformation on the one hand, and the gravitational force, even on the other. The liberation meant here is not only the liberation of the soul, but also of the whole nature in all its parts. But it is only a partial and preliminary work of liberation and transformation that can be done by this initial ascent.

The final ascent implies an irrevocable transformation, integration and sublimation of the whole being of man, consequent upon a series of initial ascents and descents. It consummates the establishment of the entire consciousness of man upon the infinite pedestal of the Knowledge-Will of the Divine. It unites the human consciousness with the divine consciousness in a permanent, integral and dynamic identification. On the sun-beathed heights of the Supermind, the Yogi enjoys at once the invaluable gift of the transcendent Sachchidananda and the variable, multifarious delight of the cosmic existence. He walks in the steps of the supreme Truth and works by the Will of the supreme Force, and wears his humanity as a transparent vesture of the unveiled Divine.

This ascent to the Supermind or the Vijnana was attempted individually by some of the Vedic Rishis, but there is no record of a collective endeavour for such an ascent; nor was any systematic descent of the Supermind for the transformation of the earth-consciousness envisaged in their aim. But the most outstanding feature of the aim of the Integral Yoga is that it seeks to raise the collective human consciousness into the divine consciousness of the Supermind and bring the Light and Force of the latter for the transformation and divination of the whole nature of man, including even his surface physical nature and its movements. We shall consider the conditions of this ascent and its implications and results when we come to dwell upon the details of the Integral Yoga.

The Descent of the Supermind—The Second Aim

We have seen that the ascent to the Supermind has to be achieved by a progressive heightening and expansion of our being and its manifold consciousness, and not by the traditional method of trance. The difficulty of this kind of waking ascent loomed as large before some of the Upanishadic Rishis that they declared that one could not pass through the gates of the sun (meaning the Supermind or the supreme Gnosis) and yet retain the human body. But Sri Aurobindo asserts that all that is involved here in the Incarnation must necessarily evolve. As Matter, Life and Mind have evolved, so in due and inevitable course, the Supermind too must evolve and become the foundation and governing principle of the human consciousness. We shall live in the supramental consciousness and work with the supermind even as we live in the mental consciousness and work with the mental force. The revolutionary nature of the transition from the mind to the Supermind need not paralyse our aspiration with doubt or distrust for the transitions from stones or minerals to plants and from plants to animals and from animals to our present human nature have not been any less revolutionary.

But an ascent to the Supermind, however great an achievement it may be, cannot be the end of evolution, which is not only an emergence for ascension, but an emergence for manifestation. If the Superconscient has descended here and masked itself as the Inconscient, if the soul has come down into the nature of ignorance and limitation, it is only to bring down and reveal, in the triple term of the human consciousness, the infinite splendour of the Supreme. Here below the splendour is evolving, there above it is ever unveiled; the evolutionary urge from below is aided and accelerated, first by an intermittent and indirect influence of the splendour above, and next by its direct and transforming presence. The descent is an invasion of the Life for the Infinite, of the Ignorance by Knowledge and of darkness and death by Light and Immortality.

The descent of the Supermind into the human mind will transform the latter from a groping and stumbling seeker of knowledge into a crystaline channel of the divine Knowledge. Not by strenuous reasoning on the misleading data of the senses and the dubious output of imagination and inference, but by a direct, positive, intuitive descent will the transformed mind know the truth and order its faculties in accordance with its rhythm. Its thoughts will be truth-thoughts, its ideas will be shining formations of truth, its discrimination an assured perception of the distinctions of things whose diversity is but a prismatic presentation of the essential unity and its imagination a true imaging of the various aspects of truth.

The descent of the Supermind into the human heart will transform all emotions into gleaming waves of bliss and all feelings into feelings of love and devotion for the Divine in all beings and all things. The relations of life will not be abolished, but become widened and illumined figures in His mysterious relations with the Divine, the diverse ways of our meeting and embracing Him.

The body too, transformed by the supramental force, will be released for ever from the obscure hold of the Subconscient and the Inconscient, and, based on Light, filled with Light and moved by Light, become a flexible means of divine action.

Manifestation of God in Matter—The Third Aim

The ascent to the Supermind and the descent of the Supermind lead inevitably to the third aim of the Integral Yoga—the full embodiment and manifestation of the Divine. Though we have called it the third aim, it is, in fact, the sole aim; but because by manifestation we mean the supramental manifestation and no other, we think we are justified in calling the ascent to the Supermind and the descent of the Supermind the first and the second aims respectively. But the three together in an indissoluble unity form the great aim of the Integral Yoga. Manifestation or the divine self-revelation is the key to the riddle of the world. A progressive manifestation starting from the creation of dumb Matter and culminating in a perfect Esharn in man is the ultimate sense and significance of terrestrial existence. The soul’s wandering from birth to birth and assumption of form after form is a long and complex preparation of its instrumental nature for the perfect manifestation of the Divine. That is not the purpose, the acme and travell” of Nature can have no other goal. Delight? But it must be the varied delight of a harmonious self-expression, not the chaotic joy of an aimless drift. Knowledge? But it must be the all-seeing and all-revealing Knowledge which guides its wise and Will of Force the developing harmonies of the worlds. This supreme delight and this supreme Knowledge-Will, creative and consummative of the universal movements, are found only in the Vijnanam or the Supermind, which is the eternal abode of the essential unity of existence embracing and deploying its eternal multiplicity. Therefore the supramental manifestation is the crown of terrestrial evolution and it is this that is the definite aim of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. The Creator self-revealed by the supermind splendour in transformed and perfected human individualities, is the formula of the supramental manifestation.

The foregoing elaboration of the triple aim must have made it clear that it is not any kind of contact or union with the Divine that is regarded by Sri Aurobindo as the ultimate objective of his Integral Yoga. He does not think that the realisation of the immobile, impersonal Brahman is the highest realisation. This impersonal Brahman is the highest and transcendent, and can be realised as either, separately or both together; but the highest and widest realisation, what Sri Aurobindo calls integral, is that of the supreme Purusha who unifies in Himself all poises and aspects of His ineffable existence and is higher than the Immutable, Ahankar-
Be Mute...

Be mute, O heart,
Till thick dark o'er the limbs and lips
Seals their shivering, skin impassioned whips
Have cut apart.

Before your word
May meet the winds and waters, come
To silent places where all dumb
Lone things are heard.

Let no tear flow
Why should you try so very hard
To search and see if night is starred,
Or suffer so?

Lest you should tell
Your pain, your tears or vacant eyes,
Take care, before the moon arise,
To cloak them well.

If aught reveal
In you the hatred and the sting,
Go down the dark, discovering
The pools which heal.

TEHMI

The Shadow on the Sunless Surf

You came,
A tongue of flame
From the heart of time...

And then I saw myself, and you were gone.

Years later in an omnibus
Beyond the dead, and altogether dubious
Dumb play I saw your smile: I know your face...

But when I called to you, O You were gone.

Since then along the moon
Of winter winds,
Across far fallow sun-struck sands
I've sown
My deep lament — flung "Lore! O where? O where?"

Or will you never never never come again?"

Last night in some strange eagle-veering lift
And heightened stop, some steep and open shaft
To Time, of words now hopelessly bereft
Nude need and ache and the emptied query turned,
Through enigmatic Silence slowly burned:

When the shadow on the sunless surf is gone.

ELEANOR MONTGOMERY

BOOKS in the BALANCE
THIS EUROPE

By Girija Mookerjee

Published by Saraswati Library, College Street Market, Calcutta. Pp. 215. Rs. 7 or 10s. 6d.

There have been several books written on Europe during the war, but there is none that has recorded the trials of the period so clearly and frankly as Dr. Girija Mookerjee's This Europe which is the first book of its kind to be written by an Indian. He experienced the tragedy of devastated Europe from the first "signs" of war to the termination of peace. Living as he did in comfort and peace in France, it broke his heart as well as the heart of the Parianas, to see values being destroyed overnight and clear roads being the haunt of the enemy whom they neither knew nor understood, but from whom they were fleesng because dreadful stories were told. Stark terror reflected itself on the faces of the young and the old and railway stations were crowded with people who knew not where they were going but who wanted to move somewhere rather than be bombed. An old woman takes another old woman in a pram and gives her a running commentary on the war situation. Paris, the hub of life, is desolate... The author goes with some friends, taking with him his rucksack and leaves behind his typewriter. Journalists are held suspect and the author burns his identity card and feels safe, but not for long. He has to experience the trials of a concentration camp in France, and it is lucky enough to be under people not quite ruthless. The news of Svisas Bose trying to redeem India from foreign rule was heartening and we get an insight into the character and personality of the man and patriot in the chapter entitled "Subhas Bose"—on insight which, we must say, is not complete, for we are not made to see the twist in idealism, by which British Imperialism was put on a par with or even below the Nazi mind in international matters. But Europe is not safe and in spite of merry-making on Christmas and New Year Eve, 1942, "one had to go about very warily... and had to take care also of every word one uttered" because, as the chapter indicates, there was "Dancing on a Volcano!"

Much as the Germans thought of dominating the world the end of the Third Reich showed them in an anextenuating light. They grumbled at nobody nor did they make gestures of failure. They observed a silence which seemed menacing, and one wonders if it was wise to subject them to hard conditions after the war. Many Germans fought doggedly because of the fear of the Gestapo as the account of the German officer taken prisoner will illustrate. "For how many years," he was saying, "have I not seen a lighted house? It seems ages and ages..."

For six long years I have never left these uniforms. I have been everywhere...everywhere. And in all these years I have seen my wife and children only four times." And Dr. Girija comments: "Then being unable to control himself he put his both hands over his eyes and cried... We were the only witnesses of the mental agony of this officer who spoke in a cultured voice and appeared to have been moved to its depths by the sight of light on the shores of Switzerland. How many there were, I thought, like this man in Germany, who felt the futility of war!"

We must not, however, forget that there is a strong strain of "race-superiority" in the German mind and this can be exploited so that it is not always compulsion which guides Germany to world adventures. What is called De-Nazification includes the removal of that strain from the national consciousness or at least a reduction of it to a normal national pride. This Europe could only be written by one who, as an Indian, fought for his country's freedom and was imprisoned for his nationalist tendencies; who, as President of the Bengal Students' Association, fired the youths of the country with zeal that no bullets could unnerve; who, as a patriot won the affection of the revered C. F. Andrews, with whom he wrote a book on the rise and growth of the Congress; who, as a journalist in Europe, contributed to The Hindustan Times articles as war correspondent; and who, again, after twenty years' absence from his mother country, sees much that fascinates and disappoints him at home and abroad. A graduate from Calcutta University, the author studied in Europe and saw much there at an early age; and This Europe reflects that clearly and beautifully. It is a book that reads like a novel and in its pages one finds atmosphere, characterisation, plot, suspense to whet the appetite for the real and the true as opposed to downright fiction. Towards the beginning, i.e., in 1939, Paris is too gay and wanton to anticipate disaster; the passage about it—The first bombardment of Paris! I felt a bit panicicky as I thought that it would have been better to have gone to a shelter after all. Until now all these alarms had always proved to be more or less false, and although the search of events had been rather alarming lately, yet on this beautiful May afternoon, in Paris, war, bombardment and all such things seemed to be out of place—could almost be the opening of a novel, with the conclusion of a wiser and sadder man, not devoid of humour.

I pace the floor of the cell number 48 partly because I cannot sleep and also because I can no longer remain still. I am now resigned to my fate but I cannot help asking myself again and again: What is wrong with me that since my youth I have had to see so many prisons and so many cells? I am a normal, timid and law-abiding citizen...

WILLIAM HOORENS.