SRI AURIBINDO ON "SAVITRI"

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Obviously, the Overmind and aesthetics cannot be equated together. Aesthetics is concerned mainly with beauty, but more generally with raw, the response of the mind, the vital feeling and the sense to a certain "taste" in things which often may be but is not necessarily a spiritual feeling. Aesthetics belongs to the mental range and all that depends upon it. It may degenerate into aestheticism or may exaggerate or narrow itself into some version of the theory of "Art for Art's sake". The Overmind is essentially a spiritual power. Mind in it surpasses its ordinary self and rises and takes its stand on a spiritual foundation. It embraces beauty and sublimates it; it has an essential aesthetic which is not limited by rules and canons; it sees a universal and an eternal beauty while it takes up and transforms all that is limited and particular. It is, besides, concerned with things other than beauty or aesthetics. It is concerned especially with truth and knowledge or rather with a wisdom that exceeds what we call knowledge; its truth goes beyond truth of fact and truth of thought, even the higher thought which is the finest spiritual range of the thinker. It has the truth of spiritual thought, spiritual feeling, spiritual sense and at its highest truth that comes by the most intimate spiritual touch or by identity. Ultimately, truth and beauty come together and coincide, but in between there is a difference. Overmind in all its dealings puts truth first; it brings out the essential truth (and truths) in things and also its infinite possibilities; it brings out even the truth that lies behind falsehood and error; it brings out the truth of the Inconscient and the truth of the Superconscient and all that lies in between. When it speaks through poetry, it remains its first essential quality; a limited aesthetic artistic aim is not its purpose. It can take up 'nd uplift any or every style or at least put some stamp of itself upon it. More or less all that we have called Overhead poetry has something of this character whether it be from the Overmind or simply intuitive, illumined or strong with the strength of the higher revealing Thought; even when it is not intrinsically Overhead poetry, still something can come into this precluding the Overhead element in poetry. A fundamental and universal aesthetic is needed, something also more intense that listens, sees and feels from deep within and answers to what is behind the surface. A greater, wider and deeper aesthetic then which can answer even to the transcendent and feel too whatever of the transcendent or spiritual enters into the things of life, mind and sense.

The business of the critical intellect is to appreciate and judge and here too it must judge; but it can judge and appreciate rightly here only if it first learns to see and sense inwardly and interpret. But it is dangerous for it to lay down its own laws or even laws and rules which it thinks it can derive from some observed practice of the Overhead inspiration and use that to wall in the inspiration; for it is the risk of seeing the Overhead inspiration step across its wall and pass on leaving it bewildered and at a loss. The mere critical intellect not touched by a rarer sight can do little here. We can take an extreme case, for in extreme cases certain incompatibilities come out more clearly. What might be called the Johnso-nian critical method has obviously little or no place in this field,—the method which expects a precise logical order in thoughts and language and pecks at all that departs from a matter-of-fact or a strict and rational (ideal) coherence or a sober and restrained classical taste. Johnson himself is plainly out of his element when he deals crudely with one of Gray's deli-cate trilles and tramples and flounders about in the poet's basin of goldfish breaking it with his heavy and vicious kick. But also this method is use less in dealing with any kind of romantic poetry. What would the John-sonian critic say to Shakespeare's mercurial lines?

Or take up arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them?

Ho would say, "What a mixture of metaphors and jumble of ideas! Only a lunatic could take up arms against a sea! A sea of troubles is too funda-mental a metaphor and, in any case, one can't end the sea by opposing it, it is more likely to end you." Shakespeare knew very well what he was doing; he saw the mixture as well as every critic could and he accepted it because it brought home, with an inspired force which a lesser language could not have had, the exact feeling and idea that he wanted to express. He was still more scared would the Johnso-nian critic be by any occult or mystic poetry. The Veda, for instance, uses with what seems like a deliberate recklessness the mixture, at least the association of disparate images, of things not asso-ciated together in the material world, which in Shakespeare is only an occas-iional departure. What would the Johnso-nian make of this Rik in the Veda:

"That splendour of thee, O Fire, which is in heaven and in the earth and in the plants and in the waters and by which thou hast spread out the wide mid-air, is a vivid ocean of light which sees with a divine seeing?" He would say, "What is this nonsense? How can there be a splendour of light in plants and in water and how can an ocean of light see divinely or otherwise? Any-how, what meaning can there be in all this, it is a senseless mystical jargon."

But, apart from these extremes, the mere critical intellect is likely to feel a distaste or an incomprehension with regard to mystical poetry even if that poetry is quite coherent in its ideas and well-appointed in its language. It is bound to stumble over all sorts of things that are contrary to its reason and offensive to its taste: association of contraries, excess or abruptness or crowding of images, disregard of intellectual limitations in the thought, concretisation of abstractions, the treating of things and forces as if there were a consciousness and a personality in them and a hundred other aberrations from the straight intellectual line. It is not likely either to tolerate departures in technique which disregard the canons of an established order.

Fortunately here the modernists with all their errors have broken old bounds and the mystic poet may be more free to invent his own technique.

Here is an instance in point. You refer to certain things I wrote and concessions I made when you were typing an earlier draft of the first books of Savitri. You instance my readiness to correct or do away with repetitions of words or clash of sound such as "magnificent" in one line and "lucient" in the next. True, but I may observe that at that time I was passing through a transition from the habits of an old inspiration and technique to which I often deferred and the new inspiration that had begun to come. I would still alter this clash because it is a clash, but I would not as in the old days make a fixed rule of this avoidance. If lines like the following were to come to me now—

His forehead was a dome magnificent,
And there gazed forth two orbs of lucent truth
That made the human ari a world of light—

I would not reject them but accept "magnificent" and "lucent" as entirely in their place. But this would not be an undiscriminating acceptance for if it had run—

His forehead was a wide magnificent dome
And there gazed forth two orbs of lucent truth—

* It is interesting to record that "at that time" Sri Aurobindo said he had orig-i-nally written "luminous" instead of "lucient" but had cancelled it because it came in again "a little later" in a line which could not be touched—"a little later" meaning actually an interval of 25 lines!
Sri Aurobindo on

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Savitri

I would not be so ready to accept it, for the repetition of sound here occurring in the same place in the line would lack the just rhythmical balance. I am, I hope, in the present version of Digest, 5.35, of the verses established by the modernists including internal rhyme, exact assonance of syllable, irregularities introduced into the iambic run of the metre and others which should have been equally painful to an earlier taste. But I have not taken this to mean that there is something wrong with the language as such. I thought it rhythmically justified; for all freedom must have a truth in it and an order, either a rational or an instinctive and intuitive order. (1896)

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Man alive, your proposed emendations* of A slow miraculous gesture dimly come to
Miraculous and dim

Miraculously dim

Dimly miraculous

Miraculous and slow

gesture came

are an admirable exposition of the art of bringing a line down the steps till my poor "slow miraculous" above—line meant to give or begin to the concrete portrayal of an act of some hidden Godhead finally becomes a mere metaphor thrown out from its more facile mint by a brilliantly imaginative poet. First of all, you shift my "dimly" out of the way and transfer it to something too adorned. Not without reason. I do not make an epithet of the gesture or an adverb qualifying its epithet instead of something that qualifies the atmosphere in which the act of the Godhead takes place. The whole structure destroys what is just and important to the action, its atmosphere. I never intended the gesture to be dim, it is a luminous gesture, but forcing its way through the black quietude it comes dimly. Then again the bald phrase "a gesture came" without anything to follow it is antithetical with what is important to the scene, to the action, the double epithets are wanted because they are the best, not only one way of securing that the "gesture" must be "slow miraculous"—if it is merely miraculous or merely slow, that does not create a picture of the thing as it is, but something quite impenetrable and ordinary or even ordinary and extraordinary, it renders the exact nature of the mystical movement, with the "dimly came" completing it, so that "gesture" is not here a metaphor but a thing actually done. Equally a "pale light" or an "enchanting light" may be very pretty, but it is only the condition which renders the luminosity which is that of a hand acting tentatively in the darkness. That darkness itself is described as a quietude which gives it a subjective spiritual character, but the double epithet "slow miraculous" is needed to express that the quietude comes to be something abstract and becomes something concrete, objective but still spiritually subjective. Every word must be the right word, with the right relation to the other words, just as every sound in its place and the whole sound together must bring out the imponderable significance which is beyond verbal expression. One can’t stop and change about on the principle that it is sufficient if the same mental sense or part of it is given with some poetical beauty. The other words, just as every sound in its place and the whole sound together must bring out the imponderable significance which is beyond verbal expression—brings out in full objectivity and also in the full mystic sense. If I can do that, well, other considerations have to take a backseat or seek their satisfaction elsewhere.*

As to the double adjectives in the lines—*

Then a faint hesitating glimmer broke

A slow miraculous gesture dimly came,

The persistent thrill of a transfiguring touch

Persuaded the inert black quietude

And beauty and wonder disturbed the fields of God.

A wandering hand of pale enchanting light

That slow, miraculous, luring, sorrowful touch

Fired with gold panell and opalescent hinge

A gate of dreams ajar on mystery’s verge

if a slow wealth-burdened movement is the right thing, as it certainly is here in my judgment, the necessary means have to be used to bring it about—and the double adjectives are admirably suited for the purpose. Do not forget that Savitri is an experiment in mystic poetry, spiritual poetry cast into a symbolic figure. Done on this rule, it is really a new attempt and cannot be hurried by old ideas of technique except when they are assimilable. Lest of all by a standard proper to a mere intellectual and abstract poetry which makes "reason and taste" the supreme arbiters, aims at a harmonised poetic intellectual balanced expression of the sense, elegance in language, a sober and subtle unity of poetic decoration, a repressed trained emotive element. The attempt at mystic spiritual poetry of the

*These emendations were not suggested as improvements in any way on the original line of Sri Aurobindo’s which was splendid (though Sri Aurobindo himself subsequently altered it by an occasional interposing of new words of his own poem). They were only a hypothetical desperate resort in the interests of poetical fitness and verity of the present section, the object was to see if a certain change in the manner of adjectives was possible so that a technical variety might be introduced in the line of which in question was a part. The emendations unfortunately involved, among other things, the omission of one of the typical features of his later style, a sort of poetic emphasis, a sort of the present section. The object was to see if a certain change in the manner of adjectives was possible so that in the manner in which two epithets had been used—that is, either without the adverbial, or else immediately before a noun. An alternative—"a gesture slow, miraculous, dimly came"—was suggested, but this did not satisfy the revolutionary surge in Sri Aurobindo’s style as expressed in the "gestures" being mentioned too soon. Also, "Miraculous, slow, a gesture dimly came" would bring out the "slow" before the "miraculous, slow, a gesture dimly came" as in the original line of Sri Aurobindo and his general remark was: "The epithets are traceable from the original line of Sri Aurobindo’s which was splendid (though Sri Aurobindo himself subsequently altered it by an occasional interposing of new words of his own poem). They were only a hypothetical desperate resort in the interests of poetical fitness and verity of the present section, the object was to see if a certain change in the manner of adjectives was possible so that a technical variety might be introduced in the line of which in question was a part. The emendations unfortunately involved, among other things, the omission of one of the typical features of his later style, a sort of poetic emphasis, a sort of poetic decoration, a repressed trained emotive element. The attempt at mystic spiritual poetry of the

About the image of the bird and the bosom? I understand what you mean, but it rests upon the idea that the whole passage must be kept at the same transcendent level. It is true that all the rest gives the transcendent values in the composition of Savitri’s being, while here there is a departure to show how this transcendent greatness touches the psychical demand of human nature in its weakness and responds to it and acts upon it. That was the purpose of the new passage and it is difficult to accomplish without bringing in a normal psychical instead of a transcendent tone. The image of the bird and the bosom is obviously not new and original, it images a common demand of the human heart and does by employing a physical and emotional figure so as to give it a vivid directness in its own kind. This passage was introduced because it brought in something in Savitri’s relation with the human world which seemed to me a very rich by way of bringing a general promise to other nouns or epithets.

*The line discussed by Sri Aurobindo is a genuine and important one but it may be mentioned that the question which elicits the slight suspicion of obtrusiveness of method referred to is not the use made of the double adjectives but in the manner in which two epithets had been used—that is, either without the adverbial, or else immediately before a noun. An alternative—"a gesture slow, miraculous, dimly came"—was suggested, but this did not satisfy the revolutionary surge in Sri Aurobindo’s style as expressed in the "gestures" being mentioned too soon. Also, "Miraculous, slow, a gesture dimly came" would bring out the "slow" before the "miraculous, slow, a gesture dimly came" as in the original line of Sri Aurobindo and his general remark was: "The epithets are traceable from the
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order to produce an accumulative effect of multiple characteristics or a grouping of associated things or ideas or other similar meanings. (1946)

I am afraid I shall not be able to satisfy your demand for rejection and alteration of the lines about the Inconscient and the cloak. I looked at your suggestion about adding a line or two in the first case, but could get nothing that would satisfy either impression or the passage as a whole. I am quite unable to agree that there is anything jargony about the line any more than there is in the lines of Keats, “Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty” that is all. Ye know on earth and all ye need to know. That amounts to a generalised philosophical statement or enunciation and the word “beauty” and “truth” are abstract metaphysical terms to which to add a concrete value because of the idea of the associations with true and beautiful things of which our senses or our minds are vividly aware. Men have not learnt yet to recognise the Inconscient on which the whole material world they see is built, or the Ignorance of which their senses including our knowledge is built; they think that these words are only abstract metaphysical jargon flung about by the philosophers in their clouds or laboured out in long and wearisome books like The Life Divine. But it is not so with me and I take my stand on my own feeling and experience, not as Keats did about his own Truth and Beauty. My readers will have to do the same if they want to appreciate my poetry, which, of course, they are not bound to do. Is it really a fact that even the ordinary reader would not be able to see any difference between the Inconscient and the manifest one? If indeed the difference is expressively explained to him? This is not a matter of philosophical terminology but of common sense and the understood meaning of English words. One would say “even the Inconscient stone” but one would say, as one might, of a child, “the ignorant stone.” One must first be conscious before one can be ignorant. What is true is that the ordinary reader might not be familiar with the philosophical content of the word Inconscient and might not be familiar with the word “ignorant” and so he would be required to learn the idea of the Ignorance and the power behind the manifest world. But I don’t see how I can acquaint him with these things in a single line, even with the most illuminating image or symbol. He might wonder, if he were Johnsonianly minded, how an Inconscient could be tasted or how it could wake Ignorance. I am afraid, in the absence of a miracle of inspired poetical exegesis flushing through my mind, he will have to be left wondering. I am not set against adding a line if the miracle comes or if some vivid symbol comes to me, but I do not mean such is making anything appear.

In the other case also, about the cloak, I maintain my position. Here, however, while I was looking at the passage an additional line occurred to me and I may keep it:

The darkness failed and slipped like a falling cloak
From the reclaiming body of a god.

But this additional line does not obviate your objection and it was not put in that way. You have such a previous misapprehension of my image of the careful housewife; you attribute this line to her misapprehension.

A careful housewife is meticulously and methodically careful to arrange everything in a perfect order, to put every object in its place and to see that there is no disarrangement of any nature. But according to you she has thrust a wrong object into a wrong place, a wrong arrangement with her surroundings and inferior in beauty to all that is near it; if so, she is not a careful housewife but a slattern. The Muse has a careful housewife,— the cooking of Puri’s, perfect in the Indian style of poetic classical style or Tempsy’s, in the romantic or semi-romantic manner, while as a contrast there is Browning’s with her energetic and rough-and-tumble dash and clatter.

You ask why in these and similar cases I could not convince you while I did in others. Well, there are several possible explanations. It may be that your first reaction to these lines was very vivid and left the mark of a semenak which could not be obliterated. Or perhaps I was right in the other matters while your criticism may have been right in these,— my partiality for these lines may be due to the unjustified personal attachment founded on the vision which they gave me when I wrote them. Again, there are always differences of poetical appreciation due either to preconceived notions or to different temperamental reactions. Finally, it may well be that the vision was not true but from a different way in which it is necessary. Here I feel that it does serve subtly such an effect; I have used the repetition of this “a” very frequently in the poem with a recurrence at the beginning of each successive line in

The strength, the silence of the gods were hers.

You perhaps felt it to be an ordinary line with a superficial significance; perhaps it conveyed to you not much more than the stock phrase about the strength and the silence of the gods. I hope to me it meant very much and expressed with a bare but sufficient power what I always regarded as a great reality and a great experience. (1946)
SAVITRI

Onward she passed seeking the soul's mystic cave.
At first she stepped into a night of God.
The light was quenched that burned in the labouring world,
The power that struggles and stumble in our life;
This inefficient mind gave up its thoughts,
The striving heart its unsualving hopes.
All Knowledge failed and All flew.
To share the suffering and endure earth's wounds
And labour mid the labour of the stars.
This is our laugh and weep, our fire, our Exults in victory, struggles for the crown.
Identified with the mind and body and life,
It takes on itself its anguish and defeat.
Bleeds with Fate's whip and bars hung up on the cross,
Yet it is the un wounded and immortal self.
Supporting the actor on the human scene.
Through this she sends us her glory and her powers,
Pouring its heights, through misery's gulf.
She gives us strength to do our daily task.
And sympathy that partakes of others' grief.
And the little strength we have to help our race,
We must fill the role of the universe.
Acting itself out in a slight human shape
And on our shoulders carry the struggling world.
This is in us the godhead small and marred;
In this human portion of divinity.
She seats the greatness of the Soul in Time
To uplift from light to light, from power to power,
Till on a heavenly peak it stands, a king.
In body weak, in its heart an invincible might,
It climbs stummbing, held up by an unseen hand,
A tolling spirit in a mortal shape.
Here in this chamber of flame and light they met;
They looked upon each other, knew themselves.
The secret deity and its human part,
The calm immortal and the struggling soul.
Then with a magic transformation's speed
They rushed into each other and grew one.

Once more she was human upon earthly soil
In the moonlit night amid the rain-wet woods
And the rude cottage where she sat in trance.
That subtle world withdrew deeply within
Behind the sun-veil of the inner sight.
But now the half-opened lotus bud of her heart
Had bloomed and stood disclosed to the earthly ray
In an image shone her secret soul.
There was no wall severing the soul and mind,
No mystic fence guarding the claims of life.
In its deep lotus home her being sat.
As if on concentration's marble seat,
Calling the mighty Mother of the worlds
To make this earthly tem pest her house.
As in a flash from a supernal light,
A living image of the original Power,
A face, a form came down into her heart
And made of it its temple and its shrine.

But when it's feet had touched the quivering bloom,
A mighty movement rocked the inner space
As if a world were shaken and found its soul
A flaming seraph rose released from sleep.
It rose glorifying its coils and stood erect
And climbing mightily stormly on its way
It touched her centre with its flaming mouth.
As if a fiery kiss had broken their sleep,
They bloomed and laughed aflushred with light and blue,
Then at the crown it joined the eternal's space.
In the flower of the head, in the flower of Mother's base,
In each divine stronghold and Nature-knot
It held together the mystic stream which joins
The viewless stream, with the unseen depths,
The string of forts that make the fatal defence.
Safeguarding us against the enormous world,
Our lines of self-expression in its vast.
An image set of the original Power
Wearing the mighty Mother's form and face.
Arm'd, bearded of the weapon and the sign
Whereon occult might no magic can impose.
Manifold yet one she sat, a guardian force.
A sovereign gesture stretched her lifted arm
And, symbol of some native cosmic strength,
A sacred heart lay prime behind her feet,
A silent flame-eyed mass of living force.
All underwent a high celestial change.
Breaking the black Inconscient's blind mute wall,
Enfolding the circles of the Ignis and stone
Powders and divinities burst flaming forth;
Each part of the being trembling with delight
Lay overwhelmed with tides of happiness
And saw her hand in every circumference.
And felt her touch in every limb and cell.
In the country of the lotus of the head
Which thinking mind has made its busy space,
In the castle of the lotus twirl the boughs
Whence it shoots the arrows of its sight and will,
In the passage of the lotus of the throat
Where speech must rise and the expressing mind.
And the heart's impulse run towards word and fact,
A glad uplift and a new working came.
The immortal's thoughts displaced our bounded view,
The immortal's thoughts earth's drab, dead and sense;
All things now bore a deeper heaven lore sense.
A glad clear harmony marked their truth's outline.
Re-set the balance and measures of the world.
Each shape showed its occult design, unveiled
God's meaning in it for which it was made.
And the vivid splendour of his artist thought.
A channel of the mighty Mother's choice,
The immortal's will took into its calm control.
Our blind or erring government of life;
A loose republican oaths and needs,
Then bowed to the uncertain sovereign mind.
Life now obeyed to a diviner rule
And every act became an act of God.
In the kingdom of the lotus of the heart
Love chanting its pure hysenecle hymn.
Made life and body mirror of secret joy.
And all the emotions gave themselves to God.
In the mall lotus's broad imperial range
Its proud ambitions and its master lusts
Were tamed into instrumets of a great calm way.
To do a work of God on earthy soil.
In the narrow centre's petty parts
Its childish game of daily dwarf desires
Was changed into a sweet and boisterous play.
A romp of little gods with life in Time.
In the deep place where once the Serpent slept,
There came a grip on Matter's gate powers.
For large utilities in life's little space.
A firm ground was made for Heaven's descending might.
Behind all reigned her sovereign deathless soul.
Could abide its veil of ignorance.
Allied to gods and cosmic beings and powers.
It built the harmony of its human state.
Surrounded into the great World-Mother's hands.
Only she obeyed her sole supreme behest.
In the enigma of the Inconscient.
A secret soul behind supporting all.
Is master and witness of our ignorant life.
Admits the Person's look and Nature's role.
But once the hidden doors are flung apart
Then the veiled king steps out in Nature's front.
A Light comes down into the Ignorance.
Its heavy painful knot looses its grasp.
The mind becomes a mastered instrument.
And life a hue and figure of the soul.
All happy grows towards knowledge and towards bliss.
A divine Potency then takes Nature's side.
And pushes the movements of our body and mind.
Passion of our passionate hopes and dreams.
The beloved despots of our thoughts and acts.
She streams into us with her bound force.
Into mortal limbs the Immortal's capture and power.
An inner law of beauty shapes our lives.
Our words become the natural speech of Truth.
Each thought is a ripple on a sea of Light.
Then sin and virtue leave the cosmic lists.
They struggle no more in our delivered hearts.
Our acts chime with God's ample natural good.
Or serve the rule of a spiritual Right.
All moods unbelievably evil and untrue.
Forsake their stations in fierce disarray.
And hide their shame in the subconscient's dust.
Then lifts the m.n.d a cry of victory:
"O soul, my soul, we have created Heaven.
Within we have found the kingdom here of God,
His fortress built in a lost, forgotten world.
Our life is entrenched between two rivers of Light.
We have turned space into a gulf of peace.
And made the body a capital of bliss.
What more, what more, if more may ever still be done?"
In the slow process of the evolving spirit.
In the brief stade between a death and birth.
A first perfection's stage is reached at last.
Out of the wood and stone of our nature's stuff.
A temple is shaped wherein the gods could live.
Even if the struggling world is left outside.
One man's perfection still can save the world.
There is won a new proximity to the skies.
A first betrothal of the Earth to Heaven.
A deep concordat between Truth and Life.
A camp of God is pitched in human times.
The triple aim of the Integral Yoga demands a revolutionary start from a basis wider and deeper than that of the traditional Yogas and with a sanction and equipoise unknown, because unnecessary, to them. Since it is neither merely the personal salvation of the human soul, nor its self-extinction in the transcendental Absolute, nor any rapist and rapturous union with the Supreme in some Heaven beyond, but a constant, total and dynamic union with the Divine in life, it takes care to lay a triple foundation consisting of (1) the call and the response, (2) calm and equality and (3) surrender, each of which bears a special import and significance, and is indispensable to the effectiveness of the composite beginning. It can alone be an adequate and efficacious aspiration.

It is only a harmonious combination of these three primary factors that can ensure a more or less unimpeded progress on this long and difficult path of the Integral Yoga.

The Call and the Response

The most important initial element of the synthetic advance is the call and response. By the call we do not mean merely an aspiration for the Divine or a yearning for the bliss of the unitive life, but a definite call of our whole being, its unceasing and unfailing invitation to the Supreme to descend into us and manifest His supernal splendour in our life and nature. It is a call for the closest and most consistent union, but a constantly creative and revelatory union as well. It is the unimpeded self-expression and the perfect fulfillment of His Will in and through our transformed consciousness and being, steeped in the invariable peace and bliss of the essential identity, emergent even the tiniest tremor of the inner immensity of the soul. That is the faith that bears the imperative of our instant being that the escape or extinction of the individual soul in the unthinkable Eternal is not the end of our birth in terrestrial existence, and that there must be a definite purpose, a deeper intention, behind the drug and drift of the innumerable appearances—a reproduction of the luminous existence, consciousness and bliss of the Supreme in terms of man's mind, soul, life and body. This faith, this irresistible belief in the eventual Apocalypse in Matter unfolds the call with its steadfast intensity, and no other spiritual achievement, however high it may be, can fully satisfy those who have once had a glimpse of the unimaginable glory of this consummation. The aspiration of the individuals who have been inspired by this vision must needs, therefore, be different from the aspiration of those who have been following the traditional spiritual urge—it must be an original, pioneer aspiration lit with a new meaning of creation and winging towards new, unexplored horizons of an all-unifying Knowledge. The rejection of Nature for the realization of the Spirit and the recoil from life for the wooing of Light seems to this comprehensive aspiration something too narrow and drastic; it insists rather on the reconciliation of Spirit and Nature, Light and life on the highest plane of creative unity. There is something revolutionary in the very grain of this call and aspiration, a bold departure from the beaten track and the germinal idea of an unprecedented spiritual fulfillment. Born of an assimilation of the highest spiritual aspirations of the past, this call embodies the Time-Spirit of the present and the great Advent of which the seers have seen visions and the poets sung in strains of inspired delight.

But it must be "a fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below," "an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing—the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature."** Nothing like it has ever been conceived or attempted before in the past, for at no period of history, the light of the world was humanity so engrossed by the Spirit and rife in its elite for being a manifesting channel of Sachchidananda in the material world as it is today, in spite of the deepening gloom that envelops it. The call that rises from the earth is a call of the widest and profoundest love offering itself as a ransack and hoard for the great Advent.

The call from below is an earnest or rather, to be more psychologically accurate, a reflex of the call from above. The truth of the matter is, that it is the divine Will that is, as it were, thrust down into the heart of Matter and awakens there a memory and an aspiration for Light. This Will of the Divine is the Will of Love, and the aspiration that rises from below is a resultant of its action. But the first reaction of the awakening soul is the desire for the融入 of love and light takes the form of a flight of the alone to the Alone, an intense, precipitate and all-excluding aspiration for a naked retreat to the Absolute. The soul turning from what it regards as the "invaluable mystery of birth and the tardy process of mortality," impatient of the fourth state of the soul, turns back to Matter and tired of the toilings of life, longs to reach its eternal Home of Love and Bliss. But, however intense and insistent this longing may be, it does not exhaust all the potentialities of the being. It is the revelation of the mystery of the death that regards this flight as a defeat and a frustration, and determines to fulfill the divine mission for which it has come down. Its call upon the Supreme is, therefore, a reflex of the call of the Supreme upon it to remember its mission and invoke the Divine descent and manifestation in Matter. The normal spiritual aspiration of the awakened soul for the exclusive enjoyment of the peace and bliss of the Beyond turns in the nature soul, by an

** "The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo.

absolute renunciation of all personal enjoyment, into an aspiration for the service of the Divine and the perfect fulfillment of His Will to manifestation. A sincere and constant call of the whole being of man is a guarantee of the response of the Divine—a response which is the seal and sanction of the accomplishment of the soul's mission in its terrestrial existence. In the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo this response of the Supreme is the most momentous element, and without it no amount of human endeavour can achieve the great objective of supramental manifestation.

Calm and Equality

The second strand of the foundation is calm and equality. No Yoga can be based on the quicksand of a restless nature, subject to the assaults of blind desires and emotions and impulses; least of all this Yoga which seeks to bring the whole soul's achievement to its conclusion. Calm, a state of wide tranquility, is indispensable to the initial Yogic movement of concentration and introspection. In the other Yogas, calm is established by means of a fixed preparatory discipline of the nature, by shames, daras, uparadas, or by a progressive restriction of life and its normal activities and a detachment of the witness soul from the movements of Nature, so that by an intensive concentration the central consciousness may pass into its own depths or rise to a higher heights to realise its ultimate self and its absolute freedom. For the Integral Yoga this basis of negative calm, acquired by a suppression or a hulung of the lower unrest, is not enough; for, its aim being the transformation and perfection of the whole nature of man, it needs an unceasing foundation of a positive and permanent calm. A negative calm may well serve as a vaulting board for a leap into the Self or the Spirit, but fails as a platform or pedestal for a radical conversion and new-modelling of nature. Therefore the initiation of calm of quietude, the descent from the turmoil of nature has to be supplemented by a conscious opening and invocation to the spiritual calm, so that it may descend into us and fill our being with its invulnerable tranquility. In the beginning of the Yoga one feels the calming growing in that part of one's being which is most turned to the Light, while the other parts may still be writhing in the habitual disorder and disquiet. One can learn—it comes by a steady will and practice—to live in that island of calm and feel secure against the winds and waves of the enorthic ocean. But gradually this calm spreads out and infuses itself into the parts of the nature which have left themselves to the general work of purification. It is at this stage that a descent from above is most essential, for it not only fortifies the existing calm, but indeed imparts to it the quality of a positive and permanent concreteness. What was being gained and maintained by an unrelaxed labour of effort and vigilance, becomes now a settled and secure possession capable of bearing all the rush and swing of the contending psychological forces of light and darkness.

Sri Aurobindo attaches a great importance to this calm, for, according to him, nottine definite and abiding can be achieved without it. He deprecates all impatience and over-eagerness and straining as positively disturbing and impeding, and teaches that "wideness and calmness are the foundation of the Yogic consciousness and the best condition for inner growth and experience. If a wide calm can be established in the physical consciousness, occupying and filling the very body and all its cells, that can become the basis for its trægransformation; in fact, without this wideness and calmness the transformation is hardly possible." If the foundation of calm is not thus strengthened, the descent from the turmoil of nature has Ananda will withdraw, leaving the nature to pass and humble in its heaving obscurity. The long and uphill discipline of the Integral Yoga cannot be carried to its successful conclusion unless there has been established a serene calm, at least in the deeper self of matter, as the first achievement of the aspirant. It is only in peace and calm that one can contemplate the object of one's quest with a steady gaze of devotion, and at the same time detect the imperfections and impurities of one's nature and reject them in the dimmest dark of matter. Calm in the mind, calm in the heart of emotions, calm in the parts of life in which the executive energies have their play, and calm in the very cells of the body—this is what Sri Aurobindo means by calm as an essential element of the foundation of his Yoga of supramental self-transformation.

It is true that in some devotional Yogas in India, as also in some types of devotional mysticism in the West, a considerable premium is put upon over-eagerness and impatience in the spiritual life. Excessive and sloppy
emotionalism is made to do duty for a quiet and intense devotion, the steady, white flame of the psychic (soul) which moves straight towards God. The inevitable result of this extravagant emotional straining is a loss of peace and balance, which opens the door to the forces of disorder and confusion on the one hand, and clouds, if it does not altogether-electric, the faculty of inner perception and discrimination on the other. Much of the criticism and serious to which religious or spiritual life is often exposed deserts its justification from this want of calm and collected poise in its adherents. A calm and constant strength, entirely reliant upon the divine Grace, is the best condition for progress in the spiritual life.

Equality and calm go hand in hand, helping each other. The Gita, following the spirit of the Upanishads, insists upon equality as the most essential base of the spiritual life. It even goes to the extent of asserting that equality is Yoga itself, so great is the interconnection it attaches to this bedrock quality of the soul. Recognizing equality Sri Aurobindo says, "Equality means a quiet and unmoved mind and vital, it means not to be touched or disturbed by things that happen or things said or done to you, but to let them all pass away free from the distractions created by personal feeling. The wise man tries to understand what is behind them, why they happen, what is to be learned from them, what it is oneself which are cast against and whom profit or progress one can make and which one can make of them. It requires self-mastery over the vital movements—anger and sensitiveness and pride as well as desire and the rest—not to let them get hold of the emotional being and disturb the inner peace, not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of these things, always to set and speak out of a calm inner peace of the Spirit."

"Equality means another thing—to have an equal view of own and their nature and acts and the forces that move them; it helps one to see the truth about them by pushing away from the mind all personal feeling in one's seeing and in one's intelligence. It helps to develop will and mastery over the vital movements—anger and sensitiveness and pride as well as desire and the rest—not to let them get hold of the emotional being and disturb the inner peace, not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of these things, always to set and speak out of a calm inner peace of the Spirit."

Equality in the second sense as explained by Shri Aurobindo comes of a calm and consistent perception, which deepens into experience, of the One Self or the one Divine movement, in all beings and all things. In its perfect state, it is "a calm, impartial and equal self-identification" which all beings and things. One comes to see and feel the one Being, the One from which every form, be it the form of a dog or a dancer, of a kanga or a jaunper, of a man or a planet. It is a sense of equality, which the Upanishads describe when they say, "He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences; that sees in it all the perfect knowledge, how shall he be detainted, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere only itself?" It is a state of being universal, universal, universal from the shackles of the ego. It is to put on Brahmanhood and confront the world with the calm regard of the Eternal.

But it is not easy to have equality all at once in the beginning of one's Yoga. The whole play of the human nature is based on an invariable and unceaseful inequality. The prana or vital is a whirlpool of desires and passions, it zingers and strays after objects that attract it and runs away from those that repel, exposing itself to the transient reactions of pleasure and pain, joy and grief. In order to establish equality in the prana, one must cast all desires out of it and train it to be calm and equal to all objects. Since the prana is essentially an instrument of enjoyment and not of saving, its final perfection is not an equal enjoyment of all its contacts with the world. The heart must likewise be rid of the inequalities of attachments and affections, hatred and fear and ardent wrath and grief, and become wide and sweet and serene, a tranquil ocean deep and still, with no angry spiritual feeling. The mind must cast out all its attachment to its own preferences and prepossessions, its habitual subjection to its own ideas and thoughts and opinions, and see in ignorance an knowledge which is imprisoned and seek and wait for delivery, in error a truth at work which has lost itself or got thrown by the clinging mind into misleading forms. ... It will not hold itself bound and limited by its knowledge or understanding, but it will proceed to fresh illumination, nor lay too farre a grasp on truth, even when it becomes a tyrannyous chain it to its present formations." It must learn to be large and luminously equal to the inflation and expansion and Light in itself in the growth and increasing and increasing and increasing and expansion of darkness and twilight. Since the demand of the Integral Yoga is more a new birth or transformation than a new interpolation in the soul, but also in the whole of our nature, this preparatory purification will go on progressing till the equality thus acquired, passes into the spiritual equality, the eternal and ultimate and complete equality of Sachchidamanda, Himself, that basest the multitudinous movement of the universe.

What we have considered so far is the passive or negative equality, which acquires in and receives all impurities and all obstructions by the slightest remnant of unquiet or disturbance. There are three ways of developing and establishing it in the nature. The first is the way of endurance, that which in the way of the heroic or stoic will bear down and crush all reactions of dizziness, and remaining firm and unmoved in the face of all opposition. The second is the way of indifference, indifferance, which is the way of the philosophic intellect, detaching itself from the wheel of the lower energies regarding them, with the eye of knowledge, as horn of the ignoration or illusion of nature. The inertial indiffferance remains equal and impartial to all the shocks and surprises of life—a calm witness, silent and impassive and unamused in its immediate presence. The third way is the way of the Vaishnavic submission, promissary or mute, a devoted resignation to the will of God and a passive acceptance of all that comes, happiness or suffering, honour or obliquity, victory or defeat, success or failure,—as the just dispensation of divine Providence.

But passive equality, though an indispensable preliminary, is not enough for the basic perfection of the Integral Yoga. For, it is not a mere inhibition of the natural movements that is aimed at in it, but the complete transformation and conversion of them, a radical transformation. Therefore to the still passive equality has to be added the spiritual power, the boundless power of the positive and the irrational which, armed with the power of the Spirit, returns upon the nature and its movements to subject and attitude them to the divine Will and transmutes them into a limpid and whole stream of its self-expression in the material world. The final perfection of equality will be an impersonal power of the Being, containing repressing the eruptive dynamism of a harmonized and integrated nature for the conserving of the splendour of the Divine in human life.

Surrender

The third element of the foundation of the Integral Yoga is surrender. Usually all Yogas are practised by one of the three means: (1) personal effort and toil, (2) personal tapasya and purificatory sacrifice of life and (3) the direct working of the divine Grace and Force. The last means is that which Sri Aurobindo advises the followers of the Integral Yoga to avail themselves of, because it is the only means by which the only great objective of the supernal transformation can be achieved. In this Yoga personal effort is used only at the initial stages, and that too not for any prepossessed purification or progress, but solely as a way to making the surrender complete and constant which of course involves in itself and leading to it. The tapasya of the ascetic individual lies simply in resolutely and unceasingly composing his own devotions, in utter effacement, in favour of the true Individual, the soul and its eternal Master, the Divine. Each part of the complex human nature, each movement of its thought and feeling and emotion and sensation and action has to be surrendered and offered at every moment of life, so that disenchanted and dispossessed, the ego may disappear altogether, and the Divine take up the charge of the whole being and lead it to the perfect fulfillment of its destiny. It must be clearly understood here that the Integral Yoga whose only aim is the transformation of the entire nature of man and the unblushingly manifested Sachchidamanda in his life, cannot be practised by the normal or imperious powers of his mind and heart. The path is so steep and long, it winds through so many virgin valleys and rugged rocks and hights with so many hundred forces of darkness, that excepting the devoted divinely leading at every step, which a sincere call and an integral surrender cannot fail to secure, the goal would hardly be realised. Besides the goal itself is something not only beyond the highest conception of the human intelligence, but beyond and widest reach of human power, and cannot be reached by any one, only if the supreme divine Light consents to descend and lift man into its own union. In this integral Yoga, it is the Divine who is the Sadhana and the Sishtaka, the Maity and the Gita, and in order that His constant guidance may be available, it is imperative that the mind is free from all preconceived, unproving, unreserved, integral and absolute; and it must be a surrender to the supreme Consciusness of the divine, the eternal Mahashakti, the supreme Mother.

We have now to proceed to consider whether this Mother, the sole Pilot of the Integral Yoga, is, and if so how we can surrender all ourselves to Her transforming Love.
SRI AURIBINDO AND MAN’S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

PART II

Sri Aurobindo begins his book, The Ideal of Human Uty, by observing that man knows very little of the why and wherewithal of the evolution of his collective life. His sociology and his history do not unfold to him the inner meaning of “all this change and this continual streamlining forward of humanity, in the channels of Time”, of the institutions and the forms of corporate existence that have evolved in his long history. What is very necessary today is a wider, wiser and more potent research.

Today, the ideal of human unity is pushing itself forward in our consciousness as a thing, so yet, in a vague manner. Its appearance in man’s thought is an indication that Nature is at a point of decision to determine largely man’s life in the future. But, at the same time, it will be impossible of accomplishment until the mind and heart of man are truly prepared for it. Social and political adjustments can achieve little or nothing of a permanent character.

There has undoubtedly been in the past a tendency towards forming larger and larger human aggregations. But a larger aggregate is not, Sri Aurobindo warns, necessarily a boon. It is worth trying for, only if it means a richer, happier and more potent life for the individual and the group. In the centuries gone by, we have had innumerable instances where smaller units gave man a richer and fuller life.

“Modern Europe and two-thirds of its civilization to three such supreme moments of human history, the religious life of the congregrations of tribes which called itself Israel and, subsequently, of the little nation of the Jews, the many-sided life of the small Greek city states, the similar, though more restricted, activity of the small Italian city states. Nor was any age in Asia so rich in energy, so well worth living in, so productive of the best and most enduring fruits as that heroic period of India, when she was divided into small kingdoms.”

The impulse of the great empires like the Mogul, the Gupta and the Maurya “was rather towards elaborate organisation than original, stimu- lating and creative.” So far, so good. But there was in the small units an inherent defect characteristic of transience, often of disorder, which pushed man back towards a more personal and less institutional activity.

Sometimes even the bigger states have attained an intellectually vigorous life by concentration of vitality in some special centres like London, Paris and Rome. Yet, the pay was very great, for there ensued a marked stagnation in the life outside the metropolises. The Roman Empire is discussed at length in a later portion of the book, but there is some reference in the first chapter to both the advantages and the disadvantages of a strong and elaborate central organisation like that of Rome.

The vast imperial structure, though outwardly strong, became rotten and began to crack and dissolve at the first shock from outside.

We can attempt to compile a social and political unification of the race, we have to consider all this difficulty beforehand and be warned in time.

Sri Aurobindo, next, proceeds to examine the collective units formed by man in the past and observes that the perfection of human life depends on our harmonising the two poles of our existence, the individual and the collective. The perfect society is that which favours the perfection of the individual and the dual. The perfect individual is he who helps in developing the perfect society, and, ultimately, the unity of the race. The very gradual process of Nature, the advancement of man’s group life, has introduced a further complication. The family, the tribe, the nation, the empire, one after the other, and the successive stages that man has passed through. But the earlier aggregations have, by no means, vanished, and man is called upon to bring about harmony and accord, not only between the individual and the group, generally, but also between the greater and the lesser group.

There are many examples in history of both failures and successes, which are highly instructive. The two Semitic peoples, the Jews and Arabs, both failed to develop an unified State, except for a very brief period. Th Conservatism of the Mohammedan, which would combine the clan into a larger national aggregate. It was foreign rule which, ultimately, crucified out of existence their clan life. The failure of the Greeks to merge their city states in a Hellenic kingdom culminated in their subjugation first by Macedonia, then by Rome and lastly by the Turks. The failure of Greece is as instructive to the student of history as the remarkable success of Rome. As to India, Sri Aurobindo says, “her whole past has been the attempt, unre- solved, but full of many approximations to success, to overcome the centrifugal tendency of any one country, of any one race, and the variety of disparate elements.” In the end when the problem was not solved, Nature had recourse to her usual panaceas of a foreign rule.

But even the organisation of a nation-unit does not bring about complete unity. For, the conflict of classes always remains. The progress of all the component parts of a people does not proceed together. When the wave comes to a head, some stand still, some fall back. A dominant class is, therefore, bound to come out on top. But, as within a nation the rise of a domi- nant class is inevitable, so in the world race the emergence of a dominant nation is unavoidable. This is the law of Nature and its manifestations. It has been a fact of every stage of social evolution. Nature for her own purpose needs a particular type of man and whichever class produces that type easily will pre- dominate at that stage—the sage, the warrior, the organizer of production, the toiler.

But this necessity of a dominant class or a dominant nation can only be a passing thing. The final aim of Nature cannot be the expoliation or subjugation of one class by another. Such domination carries in itself the seed of its death. It ends in two ways; either by the ejection or destruction of the exploiter or by general fusion and equalisation. In Europe today, the masterful Brahmin and the masterful Khatriya are sinking back in o the mass of people. The present obstacle to a final equality seems to be the masterful Vaiyshya, the Capitalist, the profligee, whom Tagore once called the Mammon-worshipper.

About equality Sri Aurobindo says, “Absolute equality is surely neither desired nor possible. But a fair and moderate equality which will give the play of true superiority and difference unfruitful is essential to any conceivable perfectibility of the human race.” A dominant majority should not only look-out and abridge in good time after imparting its culture, ideals and experience to the rest of the aggregate. If this is not done, misfortune will overtake the whole structure of society as has happened in India, “where the final refusal of the Brahmans and other privileged classes to call up the bulk of the nation as far as possible to their level, their fixing of an unbridgable gulf of superiority between themselves and the rest of the society has been a main cause of eventual decline and degeneracy.”

But even if the unity within has been achieved, the question of the individual still remains. The human individual is not like a body cell. He tends to exist in himself and to exceed the limits of the group. All sorts of death in the ordinary way of the dominant men all and seek to coerce him must change or dissolve in the inevitable course of Nature. No plea of class interest or communal interest or national interest can save them from their inevitable destiny.

Individualism and collectivism are two human tendencies that are at constant strife. They appear equally matched and during the a era the balance leans now on one side, now on the other. Throughout this long-drawn struggle, they are possibly trying to arrive at some conclusion. But a compromise between two egoisms is no true conclusion. The only real solution is fusion of the two—"swallowing of each by the other" and the problem of State vs. Individual does not depend on the size of the State. Nor does it depend on the constitution of the State or on the nature of the majority in a democracy is every whit as bad as the caprice of the autocrat. Even if the collectivity is all mankind, the problem will still remain,—in Sri Aurobindo’s words, "even then the question will remain poised between man and humanity.”

Was man always the member of a group or pack, or was he a lone animal to start with? History and sociology tell us that our race began with a large pre-domestic group. Biological development at an equal pace was man’s necessity for survival. Originally, in Matter, uniformity was the law of the group. Free variation and individual development began with the growth of Life and Mind. From the point of view of evolution, then, we can say that man started with uniformity and subservience of the individual and proceeded towards variety and freedom thereof. But there is a very old tradition in the race that man was a lone animal to start with. From the scientific point of view, if the human being was ever unsexual, he must have been anti-social too, preserving only on other man, the implication of the saying, Homo homini lupus. The poetic point of view is, however, that the early unsexual age was an age when man was “freely social without society”—a golden age, some such romantic conception as we find in Rousseau’s Contract Social, We cannot ignore altogether the tradition of man’s isolated life. Sri Aurobindo says, “It is possible that our progress has been a development in cycles (rather than in a straight line) with stages corresponding to the noble dress of philosophical Anarchism—men asso- ciated by the inner law of love and liberty and right and self-appointed.” Various prob- abilities are put forth here, the most remarkable being our progress may be a devious round leading from the easy and spontaneous uniformity and identity which reflects Nature to the self-possessed unity which reflects the Divine”.

However that may be, history and sociology tells us only one thing, that man has ever been an individual in the more or less organised group. There are two distinct types of this man—saint and warrior in Sri Aurobindo. The first asserts the State idea at the expense of the individual, e.g., modern Germany. The second asserts the supremacy of the State but seeks at the same time to give as much freedom, power and dignity as is consistent with its control to the individuals who constitute it,—e.g., Athens.

Continued on page 9
FIFTY THOUSAND AMERICANISMS

By BERGEN EVANS

Americans have created or given new meanings to about 50,000 words in the past 300 years. These are now collected and comprehensively indexed for the first time in the Oxford Dictionary of Americanisms, edited by Dr. Milford M. Mathews, of the University of Chicago Press. It is a valuable supplement to the "Oxford English Dictionary" and the two, together, with the "English Dialect Dictionary," constitute a complete and accurate history of the English language as spoken in America in the past and at present.

Americanisms are not confined to any particular region or class and do not for the most part represent older forms abandoned by standard speech. They fall into two classes: words which first came into the English language in the United States and English words which have acquired a special meaning in American usage.

Of words used first by Americans many are thought to be American Indian names for native growths—such as tobacco, harmonica, and contributions to science—appendicitis, tularemia, moon. Words such as nerf, phooey, and bunk, expressing various degrees of disdain, are original Americanisms. New meanings for older English words have resulted in the American rube and pilsnet, for example, being not the same animals as the European robin and pheasant, but one looked and the other smelled sufficiently like their old-world counterparts to justify transferring the names. In a like manner, new objects, new circumstances, and new customs gradually forced new meanings into old words until they were wholly changed.

Of the 50,000 terms which the Dictionary of Americanisms lists as peculiarly American, one can find a stiffness from other languages. There seems to be very few, but it may be attributed in part to a lag between the adoption of a word and its appearance in a dictionary such as this, where each entry must have passed into printed use before it is included. The most modern class of Americanisms was borrowed from the Spanish in descending order of their frequency, from the American Indians, the French and the Germans. The large number of Spanish words is due to the United States having incorporated a number of areas in Spanish which was the established language. Thus there are words such as adobe, which is the name for clay or mud bricks laid by the sun and used in building houses; arroyo, meaning the dry bed of a stream; mesa, a small, high plateau with steep sides; lariat, a long rope with a running noose at one end, used for lassoing or tethering animals, and buckaroo, another name for the ranch worker, or cowboy, of the American Southwest.

Most of the French borrowings came from frontier contacts early in United States development and account for such words as detour, prairie, mackinaw, portage and toboggan. The mackinaw, for example, is a heavy short coat, named for Mackinac, in the state of Michigan, where the French at one time carried peltries to the American Indians. The Dutch borrowings in contrast are domestic, suggestive of well-fed warmth and snugness—waifie, cooky, cruller. The American Santa Claus is taken from the Dutch Sint Nicolaas. The German soubrette was also borrowed. The wiener, or frankfurter is the main ingredient in the American "hot dog." Hunk means a large piece, as of bread, and dump means to dip the bread into a liquid when eating. The American hamburger, a German fried cake made of ground beef; originally named for the city of Hamburg, Germany, but Americans now have cheeseburgers, beefburgers, nuthamburgers, turturburgers and more of the same.

The origin of many Americanisms is unknown. Those include words such as ginkgo, meaning a secret or a tricky device; grouch, which means to be sulky or ill-tempered; dogie, the name given to a motherless calf in the American West; shindig, American slang for a merry party or dance; bull-doze, meaning to frighten by violence or intimidation; grab a mouch; and hundreds more. Even the midwestern state of Wisconsin is not certain what its names means. And an old automobile is known to Americans as a jalopy, but they do not know why.

Of the 50,000 words in the Dictionary of Americanisms eventually may gain international usage, but at the present, only one can establish such claim. It is the American O.K., recognized as "all right; correct; approved" wherever language is spoken. (Special feature from "United States Information Service")

SRI AURIBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT—Continued from opposite page.

modern France. There is a third type in which the State abdicates as much and as much as the individual, boldly asserting that it exists for the good of both and to assure his freedom. Behind this third attitude there is a half belief that the best interest of the State is assured by granting the fullest freedom to the individual. "England has been, until recently," said Sri Aurobindo 30 years ago, the "greatest exponent of this type." But even then he found "the collective or State idea breaking down the old English tradition" and feared "that before long the great experiment will have come to an end in a lamentable admission of failure by the adoption of German discipline and efficiency organization towards which all civilized humanity seems now to be tending."

We have already noticed that the tyranny of an absolute monarch and the tyranny of the majority are forms of the same tendency, the manifestation of the same individualism. The idea behind is that the State is something sacrosanct and no limit can be set to its absolute supremacy. In the modern world the State idea dominates the thought and actions of humanity. It demands that the individual be self to it and asserts that the hope of human welfare and human progress lies in its efficiency and organisation. In Sri Aurobindo's words, "the State idea is rushing forward... and is prepared to crush under its wheels everything that conflicts with its force." It makes a twofold appeal—often to the external interests of the race, the other to its highest moral tendencies. It is incumbent on us to make a careful examination and see if this appeal is admissible.

It is easy enough to understand that the State idea is one thing in theory, but quite another in practice. Theoretically, it is subordination of each person to the good of all; practically, each person is sacrificed to a collective egoism—political, military, economic—egoism foisted on the State by a masterful individual or a masterful nation. The noblest noblest is the freedom of the individual. The idea behind is that the State is something sacrosanct and no limit can be set to its absolute supremacy. In the modern world the State idea dominates the thought and actions of humanity. It demands that the individual be self to it and asserts that the hope of human welfare and human progress lies in its efficiency and organisation. In Sri Aurobindo's words, "the State idea is rushing forward... and is prepared to crush under its wheels everything that conflicts with its force." It makes a twofold appeal—often to the external interests of the race, the other to its highest moral tendencies. It is incumbent on us to make a careful examination and see if this appeal is admissible.

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The State is not an organism, but a mere machine. In its dealings with other States, it is not hampered by any scruples. A "sacred egoism" is still the guiding force. It knows no restraint but the fear of defeat and an incapacity to create a better life. It shall immerse itself in a work it does not know it is doing, and sacrifice the brutality, intolerance and rapacity that marked its conduct. There has been much improvement of late. It feels the need of looking after the animal welfare of individuals and smaller aggregations. But that does not in any way justify its claim to absorb or subordinate all free activities of the individual. The swallowing up of individual thought and action by the State cannot be justified by the plea that its government is benign and humane. The idea is summed up beautifully by the sentence—"The State is a convenience, and a rather clumsy convenience, for our common development: it ought never to be made an end in itself."

Another claim the State idea, that its supremacy ensures human progress, is equally untenable. What a State Government can do is to facilitate cooperative action of individuals and to remove obstacles in its path and there its utility ends. When it presumes to control co-operative action, it condemns itself.

The State being a wooden machine, its working is bound to be crude. It lacks the force, the harmonious and intelligently varied action which characterizes an organism. Its tendency is to manufacture instead of helping free growth. This is amply exemplified in State-controlled education, which tends to become a routine, a lifeless system of endless memory learning. All the while, as Sri Aurobindo says, uniformity is death, not life. A State culture and a State education are unnatural violences. Progress, growth, realisation of wider life give the greatest sense of happiness to the individual, and status, safety and comfort give it to the collectivity. "The collective becomes a conscious soul, this must hold true. Therefore, it is very improbable that the State machinery would bring about a healthy unity of mankind, a World-State whatever be its form—a single empire or a federation. Still all the experience that man has gained in making and breaking and remaking his political and social institutions is very necessary."

To be continued
Does the crystal-clear self-luminous light of the sun need another light to make it visible? The obvious answer would be more emphatic. No. The works of the Mother, especially Prayers and Meditations of the Mother and Words and Writings of the Mother are so simple, so direct and so intensely spiritual that on seeing such a book as Rishabchand's, the first question that arises in one's mind is some such one as we have posed here. That is only the first question, the initial human reaction and that is all. When we look a little deeper we are utterly convinced that the words in the many quotations from the Mother's writings, but also in the entries, are direct expressions of the author; the turns of thought and the beautiful allusions that are forged by the writer in the silent midst of his psychic being serve as a luminous, but not at all a loud background, bringing out in relief the gorgeous lustre of the Mother's diamond words. And then once again we turn our eyes towards the upper question. And the reply comes through the vibrations of our being: the sun certainly does not need another light to reveal itself, any more than we need another light when we catch the splashes of a blithely flowing river or on the wind-scattered spray of a crystal waterfall. A writing that needs no commentary to yield its sense because it is so in tune with it is brought out in a new beautiful way by something that is in tune with it. Truth makes with us are the very words that describe Rishabchand's book in relation to the Mother's works.

In the Mother's Light, we read or hear the title and deep-seated memories and experiences of the heart of one who has come into touch with the Mother at the Pondicherry Ashram. The Mother's Light is written by Sri Aurobindo in one of his letters, and even a slight degree of spiritual receptivity is enough to note one that it is white. But white is not a denial of the other hues; it is not a monotone; on the contrary, it is a combination, a perfect synthesis of all the rainbow hues - none of love and blue of devotion and red of illuminated physical and yellow of intellect and violet of spirituality and gold of Supermind. And Rishabchand's heart has become just those ripples of the blithely flowing river and that wind-scattered spray of the crystal water-fall in analysing the pan-chromatic aspects of the Mother's Prayers and Meditations and Words. As a matter of fact, it is not a superficial analysis that he has attempted, but a dual or rather binary process of analysis which is peculiar to the integral Yoga and of the writings dealing with it. Reason analyses and Intuition synthesizes; but there is also an Intuition that works through Reason giving us a global view of the parts covered by the latter. It is this strange fluency that is brought to the fore and made alive by the practice of the integral Yoga.

The Mother's Light is the Light of the integral Yoga and is therefore itself integral. Peace, Love, Self-surrender, Service of the Divine, Transformation of the material into the integral Divine in Matter, Divine Union are some of the many component parts of that Light. All these components are first of all taken together in the first essay ("The Mother") of Rishabchand's book, and then each one of them is separately dealt with in details in the subsequent essays. The first essay begins with the narrative of one of the earliest spiritual experiences of the Mother and the many implications deduced therefrom. About this experience the author says, as the aesthetic dawns of the Mother's life whose blazing noontide is revealed in Prayers and Meditations and Words, that he indicates the Mother's rôle here; her spirituality is not of the ascetic, world-shunning kind of the Adwaita Vedanta, but she is here to become 'the Mediatrix between the supreme Transcendent above and the material world below'. Her whole being, from the summit soul down to the physical body, constantly aspires for and surrenders itself to the Divine. The Divine is her one all-consuming passion. But she does not seek the Divine for herself alone. Her aspiration is, as the author says, to realise an integral union with the integral Divine and become the conscious intermediary between Him and the material world, so that His unflawed manifestation may be manifest to the transformed human nature.

The words 'manifestation' and 'transformation' have not a very special significance attached to them in Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's Yoga, which is explained by the author in the ninth and eighth essays respectively. It is generally accepted that all the objects contained in it are all a manifestation of the Divine. It is true, but it is not in this general sense that the word 'manifestation' is used in Aurobindonian literature. The material world is no doubt essentially a mode of the Spirit, but all the same it is a manifestation of the Divine. It is manifestly the opposite pole of the Spirit, its negation and denial in the evolutionary experience. Hence creation, although it can be called a manifestation of the Divine, is still its own. Manifestation in its special sense means 'the self-revelation of the Spirit in the conditions of materialization', that is to say, the perfect deployment of the divine qualities of Light and Peace and Purity and Freedom in terrestrial life. This Manifestation of the Divine, the author says, is the very meaning and purpose of the creation of the world. The progressive self-manifestation of the Divine took the first form of it in Matter, and the next step was the evolution of Mind in living Matter; but the climax will come only when the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Force will manifest themselves in their plenitude in the materialized living Matter. This is the goal towards which all the striving of men is consciously or unconsciously directed. Without that goal life would be a barren struggle against the life of the machine, the chaos of material circumstances' (P. 132). 'Life can have no sense, no justification for continuing, if it cannot be a manifesting channel of Light'.

A goal, then, is the fundamental concept of the whole book, viz., the Manifestation of the Divine, or the realisation of the goal of human life, in the essay on 'The Goal of Human Life', this idea is developed in detail. The author divides mankind into four categories. The first three are: (1) those men who never think of any goal, but drift similarly from moment to moment; (2) those who are seeking for a goal but have not yet found it; (3) those who have glimpsed some goal and are advancing towards it slowly or swiftly according to their capacity. Idealism, selfless service of society and the lives of heroes or holy men fall under the last category. The fourth category is a group of so-called 'popular' people. This is the last category of the four. They are the people who have no ideals, they are in search of an ideal that is going in ignorance towards some Light, she has so far been able to build up individuality and is trying to perfect it. But the perfection of the individual is of no use when he has become not only the universal individual but also the transcendent individual. As the author has put it, he has to combine in himself, the transcendent, the universal and the individual.

Man is destined to be the golden crown of the evolutionary Nature by becoming the most complete and creative embodiment of the Transcending Love, Light and beatific Force of Sacchidananda upon earth. This is the first goal towards which the Mother wants us to advance; this is the Goal of all goals. If this be the goal of human life, then it cannot be a separate isolated thing, for the individual must have universalised and transcendent-ed himself before he could arrive at it. And that means that human destiny is inextricably mixed up with the destiny of the whole earth. The universalization, the individual means his identification with the whole earth; and his transcendent-identification means his identification with the Supreme Divine. This is the double identification spoken of by the author in his essay, 'The Earth and her Destiny'. The identification of the Mother's Manifestation with the Earth, and, on the other hand, with the Divine, is very clearly brought out by the author in this essay. The first essay describes the spiritual dawn of the Mother's life whose blazing noontide is revealed in Prayers and Meditations and Words. The second double identification, says he, is the secret of the Mother's mission on earth. This is the final goal of her work, of the accomplishment of her work, because of the stark resistance of Matter. The long-established habits of Nature oppose the double movement of liberation and transformation. But still the tremendous work has got to be done and, as the author has beautifully said, 'the ultimate reward of all the miseries and turmoil she is undergoing at present. This is the promise the Divine has given to her. But, however inevitable this destiny may be, it will not be fulfilled as if it were a miracle. Man must become ready to be able to bear the Divine Descent. And what are the means by which Man can realize the Divine Manifestation can be brought about? The author has replied to this question in the essay on 'The Mother', and in many other essays following it. The first means is that the human love itself become the dynamic and creative divine Love, instinct with the supreme Knowledge and the supreme Power. This is the essential unity between the human, the psychic and the Divine Love is very clearly given in the essay on 'Love'. The second means is 'an unbridging, unreserved and loving surrender to the Divine throughout action'. Such a surrender removes all difficulties and obstructions and cuts another door into Man and his desires. It makes the ground clear for the Divine Will and the Divine Consciousness to take complete possession of our whole being and become the source of all. How such an interpretation can be given to the essay that will be its result is given by the author in the essay on 'Self-surrender'.

Over and above these two means, viz., Love and Self-surrender, there are other spiritual requirements essential for an integral division of the human being. First of all, they need an inner firm foundation for any spiritual achievements. It must be a settled peace in one's entire being. In one of the most beautiful of the Mother's Prayers, she says, 'In Peace and Silence, the Eternal manifests Himself; allow no...'

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Eleven

thing to disturb you and the eternal will manifest; have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there'. The author has quoted the following verse from a Buddha's Sūtra of Yogā: 'The first thing that he who is athirst has to get is a settled peace and an abiding mind. . . . To feel the peace above and about your head is a first step; you have to get connected with it and it must descend into you and fill your mind, life and body and surround you, so that you live in it—for this peace is the one sign of the Divine's presence with you.'

The next quality is the Service of the Divine. Like the word 'manifestation', as we have seen above, and the word 'transformation', as we shall see a little later, the word 'service' also has got a special sense in the Mother's philosophy. 'By true service the Mother means the service of the Divine with the will of the servant in perfect tune with the Will of the Master, and the whole being of the servant, surrendered and integrated, moved by the omniscient divine Force.' The Divine Force is using the instrumental being of the liberated individual for its own purpose of perfecting the terrestrial existence. As is finely put by the author, the will of the eternal Doer functions through the co-operating will of the apparent doer, viz. the liberated individual. The latter is at once the receiver and the giver, receiving from the Transcendent above and giving what he receives to the Immanent within and around him. This divine commerce between the Transcendent and the Immanent, through the medium of the surrendered individual is what the Mother means by true service. Knowledge must be sought not for its own sake but for the sake of the service of the Divine. In one prayer the Mother says, 'O Lord, my sole aspiration is to know Thee better and serve Thee better every day. . . . I am more and more intensely interested in the only thing which appears to me important: to know Thee better in order to love Thee better.'

All the above means are all right in their proper places, but if the end of evolution is the perfect manifestation of the Divine here on earth and in material life, then transformation of human nature is the principal means of achieving it. And what is this transformation? It is not simply a purification of the unregenerate animal propensities that are there in the being of man. Nor is it a moral or ethical control of these undesirable elements in human nature. For the ethical or moral element in the human mind, however high it may be, is still only a portion of the mind, and a moral rule or principle cannot bring about the radical conversion we seek nor the Manifestation of the Divine in man and on earth. Following the Master, Sri Aurobindo, the author has outlined the triple transformation,—the psychic, the spiritual and the supramental,—which alone can effectuate the next step in the terrestrial evolution, viz. the Manifestation of the Godhead on earth and the establishment thereon of the race of gnostic, supramental beings. The first stage of this great transformation is an increased emergence of the psychic being or the real soul within man and its gradually becoming the master of his mind, life and body. This is known as psychisation or psychic transformation. The second stage is marked by an ascent of the psychised consciousness into the universal Self and its participation in the vastness of the cosmic movements. This is the middle stage, known as the spiritual transformation. But the third, the supramental transformation, is the crown and summit of the whole long process. In this stage there is an ascent into the Supermind which is the Truth-Consciousness, and then a succession of descents of the Supramental Light and Force into the human nature in order to make it perfect. All these things and many others are dealt with by the author in the essay on 'Transformation'.

The last essay of the book is on the subject of 'Divine Union'. This essay too is characterised by the same integral outlook which we find throughout the whole book. Even the union with the Divine must be integral and not partial. There are as many kinds of union with the Divine as there are mystics in the world. But the union that is integral is not one that is realised only at the heights of our being and consciousness, but in every part down to the most physical constituent of our being. As memorably put by the author, 'Not union with the Divine in the soul alone, not in the soul, mind and heart alone, but a union, a constant, dynamic, honey-dripping, life-transforming union even in the physical being, even in the cells of the body—a complete and creative union between the Summit and Base—has been the labour of the Mother, not for herself alone, but for mankind.'

RAJANIKANT MODY.

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If a poised clean beyond the mind is consciously taken with an assured wide-awake transcendence of mental values and temperamental slants, the three-faced spiritual reality may be seized in its harmonious integrity as is done, with an immense extension of its usual meaning and effect, by Sri Aurobindo who calls that transcendental poise the Supermind, the Truth-consciousness, Vijnana or Gnosis. Otherwise, a certain inequality of stress between the three faces must remain—and is even necessary in order that a many-sided development may take place by there being, to begin with, a move towards centralisation and harmonisation, a pursuit of each face to its exclusive ultimate. Again, whether in the mental or the supramental poise, there must be no rigid unification. To quote Sri Aurobindo: 'Spiritual truth is a truth of the Infinite, one in infinite variety, and it can assume an infinite variety of aspects and formations . . . .

This many-sidedness is the sign of the approach of the soul to a living reality, not to an abstraction or a constructed figure of things that can be petrified into a dead or stony formula.'

To be concluded.
Mysticism and Science—II
By K. D. Snethna

Mr. Jagjit Singh has been kind enough to take notice, in the National Herald, of my paper entitled Mysticism and Einstein's Relativity Physics. His review is critical throughout. This is not unexpected since he has a general notion that truth is relativism which is true in my own way—poo playing to live in the light of the supra-intellectual experience that is Sri Aurobindo's. But we must not forget that mysticism need be no enemy of intellectual statement and exposition, though, of course, they cannot be quite compatible with all its depths. In India's greatest philosophers—Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Vallabha—were mystics, and Sri Aurobindo the Master Yogi of our times is also a philosopher par excellence. For, mysticism is not just a supernatural way of feeling: it is, in addition, a supernormal way of knowing as well as seeing and it is all these because it is primarily a supernormal way of being. A follower, however humble, of a mystic like Sri Aurobindo is, therefore, not unlikely to build a structure of thought whenever he attempts either to express his mystical experience of any kind or to bring his sense of the mystical to any other activity of the human consciousness—say, art or science. What my reviewer has failed to take cognisance of is precisely the structure of thought in my paper. That, and not his critical attitude to my standpoint, is the head and front of his offence in my eyes.

I sent my paper to him for consideration because his articles in the National Herald had given me the impression that he does not pass summary judgments: I had enjoyed his articles for their close scrutiny of various lines of thought before evaluating them and approving or disapproving. It was my hope to test the intellectual structure of my thesis against a mind which I would know was out of tune with my own but which I also knew was acute in understanding. My hope has been dashed. Mr. Jagjit Singh for once has condemned out of hand whatever I had to say, as if there were not the slightest movement of grey matter in it. This is an injustice to me and also to his own usual perceptive self—an injustice increased by his trotting out against my thesis conventional and superficial arguments setting science and mysticism at absolute loggerheads.

Mystical Experience and its Verification

He begins by accepting the hoary fallacy which I have already pointed out—namely, that mystical experience is not at all intellectually formable and has never been intellectually formulated. No doubt, an ineffable remains after all such formulation, but this ineffability is analogous at the upper pole to the ineffability we realize to be in the concrete physical universe that the intellectual formulas of science try to chart out with their neat definition. The infinite and eternal Spirit, which the mystics are after, escapes the abstracting and discursive mind by being inexactable and concrete just as in its own way does the world which we live in and which science studies. But exactly like that world it too admits of not only an intellectual formulation but also a passage from that formulation to experimental verification. The various schools of Yoga teach us how to verify it and it is no argument against verification to say that mystical experience is "possible to a rather rare group of specially gifted individuals."

The argument, as stated, is somewhat mistaken in its very terms, for even we may speak of a Sri Krishna or a Sri Ramakrishna or a Sri Aurobindo as specially gifted individuals the mysticism they bring is meant for the common man and not solely for geniuses. The vast number of people who practice sadhana are not individuals enjoying special gifts of nature: they are ordinary sincere folk with a clear call in their hearts to pursue the Divine—they are of the same human quality as those who form the bulk of scientific students and they arrive at their goal by the same sort of self-dedication and the same type of concentrated energy, however differently the dedication may be directed and the energy orientated. If their number is smaller, that is mostly because the goal they strive for is at first sight more remote than any other from common concerns, but the comparative remoteness of the goal does not in itself prove the strikers specially gifted any more than one is who walks to a place a hundred miles away instead of walking the same length by going round and round in one place.

Even if we say that since a mystic's is a rarer calling than any other he must be a specially gifted individual, the point still stands about the verifiability of his experience. The essence of verification is surely not that all should be able at any time to verify a result but that whoever follows a certain discipline to arrive at it be able to do so. Under such verifiability may restrict the race's experience of a truth, it does not show the truth to be non-existent or unverifiable. In fact, there is no scientific truth which man on earth, exactly as he is at present mentally and physically, can verify: to the extent to which it remains unverifiable by all it does not become a falsehood. Between a scientific truth and a mystical truth, the difference is merely in the number of people who go through the process of verification and not in any essential feature: a limit as good as none can only be beyond the scope of the human mind to be able to experimental knowledge. It is naturally different in its concrete- ness, its expressive terms, its experimental modes; but that is simply because it is a spiritual truth and not a material one. Unless we start with the dogmatic assertion that it can only be a spiritual truth, I do not see how we can hold mysticism to be either incommunicable or unverifiable.

"Objective" and "Invarient"

We must not allow ourselves to be impressed by Mr. Jagjit Singh's pro-science statement that scientific theories unlike mystical experience can show their validity by objective criteria. The word "objective" is rather ticklish. If it means "common to all people" we have already dealt with the point and found it to be of no essential importance. If it means "material" or "physical" the statement still means cogency only by the dogmatism to which we have already drawn attention. Besides, the opposition between "objective" and "subjective" has to be carefully weighed. Whatever be the case with a supreme Beige's consciousness, our ordinary mind, with its initial incapacity for the universe and its imagination—except rarely—of a laboriously built knowledge and controlling power, is evidently not the creator of things. Things have their reality by what is within them and independent of our mind's interpretation. But this knowledge we build up is in many ways only a guess and through and within consciousness that all reality is confronted and evaluated. In this sense everything is subjective, and a particular activity of consciousness with its use of our normal means of perception cannot have a limit as far as the object is concerned. There can be many species of objectives—physical, non-physical, supra-physical—each compassed by means of perception suitable and proper to it and no objectivity can be depreciated because the means of perceiving it happen to be ordinarily labelled as "passive" or "subjective." Conventionally the material world can be defined as physically subjective, while other things are non-physically or supra-physically so. What we may further say about the material world is that it is something which many consciousnesses share and hence it may be termed inter-subjective. By being inter-subjective it may lend itself to a certain treatment which synthetizes differing physical experiences and produces an "invariant"—in other words, a view which brings together the features of many views and produces out of them a new concept of general agreement.

Mr. Jagjit Singh makes some play also with the word "invariant." He writes: "There may be various types of mysticism, e.g., the logical mysticism of a Wittgenstein, the religious mysticism of Sri Aurobindo, the poetical mysticism of a Blake or a Tagore, and the scientific mysticism of Eddington, etc. All these scientific outlooks claim to give us a view of or an "insight" into reality, whatever that may mean. Now if it is claimed that all these differing mystical views of reality are different because they represent different facets of the same 'reality', then the mystic is under obligation to produce an 'invariant' or a 'synthesis' of different views which could be taken as the view of reality. But no such 'invariant' of the various mystical experiences has ever been given or could be given. And, of course, no mystical would ever accept any such obligation, being a law unto himself!"

To answer this passage we may begin with the remark that there may be various types of mysticism also, e.g. the dialecatical materialist mysticism of Vavilov and Mitter, the logical positivist scientific mysticism of Bohr and Heisenberg, the metaphysical relativist scientist of Einstein, the realist interpretative scientist of Peirce, the epistemological relativist scientist of Eddington, etc. All these scientific outlooks claim to give us a certain perspective of "fact", whatever that may mean. But how are we to find a properly significant "invariant" for all of them? Besides, physics has two branches—the macroscopic and the microscopic—and they are ruled by entirely different fundamental concepts: the former goes by absolute continuity and determinacy, the latter by intrinsic discontinuity and indeterminacy, and though Einstein has recently propounded a unified theory it is impossible to say at present whether it will stand or whether it will fail. Like all other attempts of his the attempt is only provisional. What chance is there then of striking upon a reliable meaningful invariant? A merely tentative or working invariant is the sole one we can hope for in ultimate scientific matters. Surely an at least as satisfactory invariant can be found in ultimate mystical matters.

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