THE SPIRITUAL FLAG OF INDIA

(THF MOTHER’S FLAG)

A full-blown lotus in gold with two rows of petals (inside 4, outside 12) exactly in the centre of a square field of silvery blue, the ratio of the side of the square to the diameter of the lotus being 6:2.5 —the Mother’s flag symbolises the Spiritual Reality at work in Sri Aurobindo’s Ashram. Out of the concentrated Seed-Shakti that is the centre, four primary powers of divinity are shown as breaking: they are Moksheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati—goddess-personalities of wisdom, dynamism, harmonious beauty, flawless organisation. These four are then depicted as putting forth twelve manifesting forces that operate within the periodic time-process. The supreme infinity, the all-containing and all-supporting spiritual Self is the silvery blue background, the foundational mystery from which the Divine’s revealion—emblemmed by the lotus—stands out in gold suggestive of sovereign Truth-consciousness. The roundness of the lotus combined with the squareness of the background betoken perfection and omni-competence of being, and there is in the whole flag the suggestion not only of a sky with an ethereal flower poised in it but also of a stretch of water with an earthly bloom afloat. The ever-existing ideality above and the secret wonder that is to be revealed below are both compassed in the symbolism. Here, then, is a flag charged with India’s spiritual mission, the mission of rendering victorious the Divine Mother, the infinite Self and Shakti. In this symbolism is the promise both of India’s own unity and of a world-union; for, the genuine indefeasible oneness can come only of a sense in all men of the one God who is their true reality.
THE WORK THAT IS SRI AUROBINDO'S: Unpublished Talks of the Mother LIGHTS ON YOGA: Extracts from Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo SAVITRI by Sri Aurobindo, Book VII—The Book of Yoga, Canto I, The Joy of Union, the Order of the Foreshadowings of Death and the Heart's Grief and Pain THE BRAHMA LINGAM OF LOVE THE MOTHER'S CHILDREN (A Song for the Children of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram) AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CENTER by 'Synergist' SRI AUROBINDO AND MARY'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT BY C. C. Dott THE MOTHER'S CHARACTER V: The Ashram: The Trials DREAMS (Poem) by Nirodhram ACHIEVED (Poem) by Indira Malhotra (translated by Dilip Kumar Roy) BY DAY OR NIGHT (Poem) by Tahami GOD'S WORLD (Poem) by K. B. Badhun PRESENCE (Poem) by Norma Dawson MOTHER INDIA by Annu Byrd Ibrahim (Data) "THEN SAITH JESUS TO THOMAS..." (From the Gospels) by Moraswoni Dondley HE HAS DONE IT by Kailash Santa Gupta SHE IS BORN IN THE WESTERN WORLD by A. L. Crampton Chalk SHRI AUROBINDO'S MESSAGE OF A NEW HUMANITY by Hugo Bergmann

MOTHER INDIA celebrates with the present day selected for the celebration because it is the birthday of the Mother who has it been the guiding spirit of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, that centre of Integral Yoga where the true Indian consciousness is to be developed in full for a new dynamisation of all life. We cannot open more appropriately the Anniversary Number than with some of the Mother's unpublished talks as the Editor remembers them.

OVERTHINK AND SUPERMIND

The work that is Sri Aurobindo's is a unique earth-transformation. Above the mind there are several levels of consciousness being among which the really divine world is what Sri Aurobindo has called the Supermind, the world of the Truth. But in between is what he has distinguished as the Overmind, the world of the cosmic Gods. Now it is this Overmind that has to press the present governed world: it is the highest that man has been able to attain in illumined consciousness. It has been taken for the Supreme Divine and all those who have reached it have never for a moment doubted that they have touched the true Spirit. For, its splendours are so great to the ordinary human consciousness that it is absolutely dazzled into believing that here at last is the crowning reality. And yet the fact is that the Overmind is far below the true Divine. It is not the authentic home of the Truth. It is only the domain of the futuremaya, all those creative powers and deities to whom man have bowed their knees since the beginning of history. And the reason why the true Divine has not manifested and transformed the earth-nature is precisely that the Overmind has been mistaken for the Supermind. The cosmic Gods do not wholly live in the Truth-consciousness: they are only in touch with it and represent, each of them, an aspect of its glories.

No doubt, the Supermind has also acted in the history of the world, but always through the Overmind. It is the direct descent of the Supremal mental consciousness and Power that alone can utterly re-create life in the terms of spirit. For, in the Overmind there is already the play of possibilities which marks the beginning of this lower triple world of Mind, Life and Matter in which we have our existence. And whenever there is this play and the spontaneous and infallible working of the innate Truth of the Spirit, there is the seed of distortion and ignorance. Not that the Overmind is a field of ignorance; but it is the border-line between the Higher and the Lower, for, the play of possibility, of separate, even if not yet divided choice, initiates naturally the likelihood of deviation from the Truth of things.

The Overmind, therefore, does not and cannot possess the power to transform humanity into divine nature. For that, the Supramental is the sole effective agent. And what exactly differentiates our Yoga from attempts in the past to spiritualise life is that we know that the splendours of the Overmind are not the highest reality but only an intermediate step between the mind and the true Divine.

SCIENCE AND THE SUPRAMENTAL YOGA

The climax of the ordinary consciousness is Science. For Science, what is upon earth is true, simply because it is there. What it calls Nature is for it the final reality, and its aim is to build up a theory to explain the workings of it. So it climbs as high as the physical mind can go and tries to make out the causes of what it assumes to be the true, the real world. But in fact it adapts "causes" to "effects", for it has already taken that which is for the true, the real, and seeks only to explain it mentally. For the yogic consciousness, however, this world is not the final reality. Raising above the mind into the Overmind and then into the Supermind, it enters the divine world of first truths, and looking down from there sees what has happened to those truths here. How distorted they have become, how completely falsified! So the so-called world of fact is for the Yogi a falsehood and not at all the only true reality. It is not what it ought to be, it is almost the very opposite; whereas for the scientist it is absolutely fundamental.

Our aim is to change things. The scientist says that whatever is is natural and cannot be changed at heart. But really speaking, the laws of which he usually talks are of his own mental making; and because Nature as it is he accepts as basic, things do not and cannot change for him in any complete sense. But, according to us, all this can be changed, because we know that there is something above, a divine truth seeking manifestation. There are no fixed laws here; even Science in its undogmatic moments recognises that the laws are mere mental constructions. There are only cases, and if the mind could apply itself to all the circumstances it would find that no two cases are similar. Laws are for the mind's convenience, but the process of the supramental manifestation is different, we may even say it is the reverse of the workings of the mind. In the supramental realisation, everything will carry itself in itself a new manifestation, at each instant without being bound by what has been or what will follow. That elaborate linking of the past with the present, which gives things in Nature such an air of unchangeable determinism is altogether the mind's way of conceiving, and is no proof that all that exists is inevitable and cannot be otherwise.

The knowledge possessed by the Yogi is also an answer to the terrible theory that all that takes place is God's direct working. For once you rise to the Supramental you immediately perceive that the world is false and distorted. The supramental truth has not at all found manifestation. How then can the world be a genuine expression of the Divine? Only when the Supremal is established and rules here, then alone the Supreme Will may be said to have authentically manifested. At the same time, we must always be clear of the dangerous exaggeration of the sense of the falsehood of the world, which comes to those who have risen to the higher consciousness. What happened with Shankara and others of his mind was that they had a glimpse of the true consciousness, which threw the falsehood of this world into such sharp contrast that they declared the universe to be not only false but also a really non-existent illusion which should be entirely abandoned. We on the other hand see its falsehood, but realise also that it has to be reproduced and not abandoned as a nonentity. Only, the truth has got mis-translated, something has stepped in to pervert the divine reality, but the world is in fact meant to express it. And to express it is indeed our Yoga.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF SPACE AND TIME

Space and time do not begin and end with the mental consciousness: even the Overmind has them. They are the forms of all cosmic existence: only, they vary on each level. Each world has its own space and time. Thus the mental space and time do not tally with what we here observe
in the material universe. We can move forward and backward at our own will and pleasure. The moment you think of a person you love, you feel closer to him; and no matter how near you may be to somebody you can still be away from him if your thoughts are not focused on him. The movement is immediate, so very free are the spatio-temporal conditions there. In the vital world, however, you have to use your will: there, too, the movement is less rigid, but the movement is not immediate: the will has to be exercised.

The knowledge of different space-times can be of great practical value in Yoga. For, so many blunders are due to the inability to act in the right way when you are in your vital and mental bodies. In dreams, for instance, you are there in the space and time that is your world and not try to act as if you were still in your physical body. If you have the necessary knowledge of the state of things there, you can deal much more effectively with those vital beings who terrify you and give you such unpleasant nightmares. One of the characteristics of activity in the vital space and time is that beings are able to assume huge shapes at will and create the vibration of fear in you which is their most powerful means of invading and possessing you. You cannot bear in mind this powerful terror of terrifying illusion, and cast out all fear. Once you face them boldly, unflinchingly, look them straight in the eye, as it were, they lose three-quarters of their power. And if you call upon us for help, then even the last quarter is gone and they either take to their heels or dissolve. A friend of mine who used to go out in his vital body complained once that he was always being confronted by a gigantic tiger which made the night very wretched for him. I told him to banish all fear and walk straight up to this tiger in the face, calling for assistance if necessary. He did so and lo, the tiger suddenly swelled into an insignificant cat!

You need not have any of the almost magical effect of staring fearlessly into the eyes of a vital being. Even on earth, by dealing with this way with all those incarnations of the vital powers which we ordinarily call animals, you are assured of easy mastery. A physical tiger also will flee you, should you without the least trouble look him straight in the eyes. A snake will never be able to bite you if you manage to rivet its gaze with yours without feeling the slightest dread. Merely staring at it with shaking knees will not help. There must be no disturbance in you: you must be calm and collected; let the snake catch its own gaze as it keeps swelling its head in order to fascinate you into abject fear. The animals are aware of a light in the human eyes which they are unable to stand if it is properly directed towards them. Man's look carries a power which nullifies them, provided it is steady and unshakable.

So, to sum up, remember two things: never, never have fear, and in all circumstances call for the right help to make your strength a hundredfold stronger.

THE ORDINARY LIFE AND THE TRUE SOUL

The ordinary life is a round of various desires and greedies. As long as one is preoccupied with them, there can be no lasting progress. A way out of this can be found. To realize this you have to be aware of the ordinary life's preoccupations—the constant thinking by people of what they will eat and when they will eat and whether they are eating enough. To conquer the greed for food an equanimity in the being must be developed which is not affected by purely individual considerations. It may be a large step. But then the way to the victory is clear. The animals are afraid of a light in the human eyes which they are unable to stand if it is properly directed towards them. Man's look carries a power which nullifies them, provided it is steady and unshakable.

So, to sum up, remember two things: never, never have fear, and in all circumstances call for the right help to make your strength a hundredfold stronger.

This will be very easy to do once you get into contact with your psychic being, the true soul deep within you. Then you will feel immediately how very unimportant these things are and that the sole thing that matters is the Divine. To dwell in the psychic being is to be lifted above all greed. You will have no hangovers, no worry, no fear, no desire... And you will feel that whatever happens happens for the best. Do not misunderstand me to imply that you must always think that everything is for the best. Everything is possible as long as you are in the ordinary consciousness. You may be misled into utterly erroneous conclusions, seeing things in the Supernormal, things that were to be but were somehow manifesting. I told Sri Aurobindo what I had seen and asked him if they would manifest. He simply said, "Yes." And immediately I saw that the Supernormal had touched the earth and was beginning to take form. This time I witnessed the power to make real what is true: it is the very same power that will bring about the realisation in you of the truth when you are in all sincerity saying, "This falsehood I want to get rid of," and the answer which you get is "Yes."
THEMOTHER

The Mother's consciousness is the Divine Consciousness and the Light that comes from it is the light of the Divine Truth.

One who receives and accepts and lives in the Mother's Light will begin to see the truth or all the planes, the mental, the vital, the physical.

He will reject all that is undivine—the undivine is the falsehood, the ignorance, the error of the dark forces; the undivine is all that is obscure and unwilling to accept the divine Truth and its light and force of the Mother.

That is why I am always telling you to keep yourself in contact with the Mother and Her Light and Force, because it is only so that you can come out of the confusion and obscurity and receive the Truth that comes from above.

When we speak of the Mother's Light or my light in a special sense, we are speaking of a special occult action—we are speaking of certain lights which come from the Supermind. In this action, the Mother's is the White Light that purifies, illumines, brings down the whole essence and power of the Truth and makes the transformation possible. But in fact all light that comes from above, from the highest divine Truth is the Mother's.

There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine, we have and always had the same path, the path that leads to the Supramental Character. The divine realization is not only at the end, but from the beginning they have been the same.

The attempt to set up a division and opposition putting the Mother on one side and myself on the other is quite false, and has always been a trick of the forces of Falsehood when they want to prevent a sadhaka from reaching the Truth.

Know that the Mother's Light and force are the light and force of the Truth: remain always in contact with the Mother's Light and force, then only can you grow into the divine Truth.

The Working of the Divine

...The Divine Force works here under conditions imposed by the Divine Will and Law; it has to take up an immense mass of conflicting forces, conditions, habits and movements of nature and out of it arrive at the result of a higher consciousness on earth and a higher state. If it went to act otherwise, then all would be done by miracle or magic, no sadhana would be needed, no way best out for the process of spiritual evolution to follow: there would be no real transformation of consciousness, but only a temporary feat of force which has no basis in the substance of creation here would vanish as it came. Therefore conditions have to be satisfied, the work to be done has to be wrought out by steps. The powers that hold the field up to now have to be given their chance to oppose, so that the problem may be solved and not evaded or turned into a sham fight or unreal game without significance.

Therefore there has to be a resistance to overcome, a choice made between the higher and the lower state.

The Divine Power doing the work gives a protection and guidance, but it is not here to use an absolute force, except when that is sanctioned by the Divine Wisdom and the Light of Wisdom justifiable. Then the decisive power acts of itself and does what it has to do.

The Call of Spiritualism

The house of the Divine is not closed to any who knock sincerely at its gates, whatever their past stumbles and errors. Human virtues and human errors are bright and dark wrappings of a divine element within, which once it pierces the veil can burn through both towards the heights of the spirit. ... Spirituality is something in the dualities and what is most needed for it is a true upward aspiration.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What is Manas?
A: "When we use 'Manas' in the general and wider sense, it means 'the mind' including the whole mental activity, the reflective, mental sensation all taken together. But when we use 'Manas' in philosophy, we mean by it the 'sense-mind'. It is located near the heart. For instance when people get preoccupations, they get them in the heart in the 'sense-mind'. That is why in the Upanishads it is called the 'sixth sense'."

Q: Is Chitta?
A: "Chitta is the basic stuff of consciousness according to the old phrenology. It is that which is behind all the movements of the being here. It is again different from Chit, which is the Higher Consciousness." 19-3-1927.

"How does one still the conceptual activity of the Manas?
A: "The real conceptual activity in the Manas—that of the Manas is simply a rendering of perceptions and impressions with thought-forms. There is no necessity of a special stilling of this function—it comes best with a general stillness of the mind."

Q: What knowledge can one get by itself?
A: "Yes. The knowledge comes of itself from within by the touch of the Divine. Reading can only be a momentary help to prepare the mind. But the real knowledge does not come by reading. Some preparation is helpful—but the mind should not be too superficially active or seek to know only for curiosity's sake."

Q: How should one stop thoughts coming into the mind?
A: "You can prevent them only in two ways:
1. Calling down an absolute peace and stillness into the mind.
2. Becoming aware of the thoughts at a distance before they enter the personal mind. Until then what you have to do is to reject them.

Q: How does one know the thoughts of another man?
A: "There is no 'how'—one knows or one does not know. It is a power of contact, of receiving the thoughts, that opens in the consciousness."

THE WORK IS SRI AURBINDO'S—Continued from opposite page

...We are moving nearer and nearer the hour of its complete triumph. Once the world-conditions are ready the full descent will take place carrying everything before it. Its presence will be unmistakable, its force will become irresistible; doubts and difficulties will not retard the new life longer. For the Divine will stand manifest—unveiled in its total perfection.

I do not, however, mean to say that the whole world will at once feel its presence or get transformed; but I do mean that a part of humanity will know and participate in its descent—say, this little world of ours here. From there the transfiguring grace will most effectively radiate. And fortunately for the aspirants, that successful future will materialize for them in spite of all the obstacles set in its way by unregenerate human nature..."
Fate followed her foreseen immutable road. 
Man's hopes and longings build the journeying wheels 
That bear the body of his destiny 
And lead his blind will toward an unknown goal. 
His fate within him shapes his acts and rules; 
Its face and form already are born in him, 
Its parentage is in his secret soul; 
Here Matter seems to mould the body's life 
And the soul follows where its nature drives: 
Nature and Fate compel his free-will's choice. 
But greater spirits than man can traverse 
And make the soul the artist of its fate. 
This is the mystic truth our ignorance hides: 
Doom is a passage for our inward force, 
Our ordeal is in the hidden spirit's choice, 
Ananke is our being's own decree. 
All was fulfilled the heart of Savitri 
Flower-sweet and adamant, passionate and calm, 
Half chthonic on her strength's sun-seeking road 
Forced to its issue the long cosmic curve. 
Once more she sat behind Jous hastening hooves; 
A speed of armoured squadrons and a voice 
Far-echoed of chariots bore her from her home. 
A couchant earth wakened in its dumb muse 
Looked up at her from a vast indolence: 
Hills wallowing in a bright haze, large lands 
That lolled at ease beneath the summer heavens, 
Region on region spacious in the sun, 
Cities like chrysolites in the wide blaze 
And yellow rivers pacing, lion-mated, 
Led to the Shalva marchers' emerald line, 
A happy front to iron vastnesses 
And austere peaks and titan solitudes. 
Once more was near the fair and fated place, 
The borders gleaming with the groves' delight 
Where first she met the face of Satyavan 
And he saw like one walking in a dream 
Some timeless beauty and reality 
The moon-gold sweetness of heaven's earth-born child, 
The past receded and the future neared: 
Far now behind lay Madra's spacious halls, 
The white carved pillars, the cool dim alcoves, 
The tinged mosaic of the crystal floors, 
The towered pavilions, the wind-rippled pools 
And gardens humming with the murmur of bees, 
 Forgotten noon or a pale memory 
The fountain's splash in the wide stone-bound pool, 
The thoughtful noon tide's brooding solemn trance, 
The colonnade's dim grey in the quiet eve, 
The slow moonrise gliding to front of Night, 
Left far behind were now the faces known, 
The happy silken bubble on laughter's lips 
And the close-clinging clasp of intimate hands 
And adornation's light in cherished eyes 
Offered to the one sovereign of their life. 
Nature's primeval loneliness was here: 
Here only was the voice of bird and heart,— 
The ascetic's exile in the dim-soled huge 
Inhuman forest far from cheerful sound 
Of man's blithe converse and his crowded days. 
In a broad eye with one red eye of cloud 
Through a narrow opening, a green flowered cleft 
Out of the stars of sky and soil they came 
Into a mighty home of emerald dusk. 
There toward led by a faint broad path 
Which thrilled through the shadow of enormous trunks 
And under arches mixers of sunshine, 
They saw low thatched roofs of a hermitage 
Huddled beneath a patch of azure sky. 
In a sudden clearing that seemed the outbreak 
Of a glad smile in the forest's monstros heart. 
A rude refuge of the thought and will of man 
Watched by the crowding giants of the wood.

Arrived in that rough-hewn homestead they gave, 
Questioning no more the strangeness of her fate, 
Their pride and loved one to the great blind king, 
A regal pillar of fallen males. 
And the stately care-worn woman once a queen 
Who now hoped nothing for herself from life, 
But all things only hoped for her one child, 
Calling on that single head from partial Fate 
All joy of earth, all heaven's beatitude. 
Adoring wisdom and beauty like a young god's, 
She saw him loved by heaven as by herself, 
She rejoiced in his brightness and believed in his fate 
And knew not of the evil drawing near. 
Lingered some days upon the forest verge 
Like men who lengthen out departure's pain, 
Unwilling to separate sorrowing clinging hands, 
Unwilling to see for the last time a face, 
Heavy with the sorrow of a coming day 
And wondering at the carelessness of Fate 
Who brings with idle hands the superfluous works, 
They parted from her with pain-brought burdened hearts 
As forced by inescapable fate we part 
From one whom we shall never see again; 
Driven by the singularity of her fate, 
Helpless against the choice of Savitri's heart 
They left her to her rapture and her doom 
In the tremendous forest's savage charge. 
All put behind her that was once her life, 
All welcomed that henceforth was his and hers, 
She abode with Satyavan in the wild woods: 
Priceless she deemed her joy so close to death; 
Apart with love she lived for love alone. 
As if self-poised above the march of days, 
Her immobile spirit watched the haste of Time, 
A statue of passion and invincible force, 
An absolutism of sweet imperious will, 
A tranquillity and a violence of the gods 
Indomitable and immutable. 
At first to her beneath the sapphire heavens 
The sylvan solitude was a gorgeous dream, 
An altar of the summer's spendour and fire, 
A sky-topped flower-hung palace of the gods 
And all its scenes a smile on rapture's lips 
And all its voices bards of happiness. 
There was a chanting in the casual wind, 
There was a glory in the least sunbeam, 
Night was a chrysoprase on velvet cloth, 
A nestling darkness or a moonlit deep; 
Day was a purple pageant and a hymn, 
A wave of the laughter of light from morn to eve. 
His absence was a dream of memory, 
His presence was the empire of a god. 
A fusing of the joys of earth and heaven, 
A tremulous blaze of pupille and rapture passed, 
A rushing of two spirits to be one, 
A burning of two bodies in one flame. 
Opened were gates of unforgettable bliss: 
Two lives were locked within a darkly heaven 
And fate and grief fled from that fiery hour. 
But soon again followed the summer's ardent breath 
And throngs of blue-black clouds crept through the sky 
And rain fell sobbing over the dripping leaves 
And Storm became the forest's titian voice. 
Then listening to the thunder's fatal crash 
And the furtive pattering footsteps of the showers 
And the long unsatisfied paining of the wind 
And sorrow muttering in the sound-veiled night, 
The grief of all the world came near to her: 
Night's darkness seemed her future's ominous face. 
The shadow of her lover's doom arose 
And fear laid hands upon her mortal heart. 
The moments swift and ruthless raced; alarmed 
Her thoughts, her mind remembered Narad's date.
SAVITRI —Continued from previous page

A trembling moved accountant of her riches
She reckoned the insufficiencies of days between:
A dire expectancy knocked at her chamber.
Dreadful to her were the footsteps of the hours:
Grief came, a passionate stranger to her gate:
Banished when in his arms, out of her sleep
Rose at morrow to look into her face.
Vainly she fled into abysses of bliss
From her pursuing foresight of the end.
The more she plunged into love that anguish grew;
Her deepest grief from sweetest culture in its grace.
(Reverence was a poignant pang, she felt
Each day a golden leaf torn cruelly out)
From her too slanderless book of love and joy.
Thus swaying in strong gusts of its monstrous round
Restore us to each other and our love!"

Too well she loved to speak a falsefart word
And lay her Lorden on his happy head;
She pressed the outwandering grief back into her breast
To dwell within silent, unhelped, alone.
But Satyavan sometimes half understood,
Or felt at least with the uncertain answer
Of our thought-blinded hearts the unuttered need:
The unplumbed abyss of her deep passionate want.
All of his speeding days that he could spare
From labour in the forest heeding wood.
And hunting food in the wild savannas' glades
And service to his father's sightless life
He gave to her and helped to increase the hours
By the nearness of his presence and his clasp,
And lavish softness of heart-seeking words
And the close beasting felt of heart on heart.
All was too little for her bottomless need.
If in his presence she forgot awhile,
Grief filled his absence with its aching touch;
She saw the desert of her coming days
Imaged in every solitary hour.
Although with a vain imaginary bliss
Of fiery union through death's door of escape
She dreamed of her body robed in funeral flame,
She knew she must not clutch that happiness
To die with him and follow his seating robe
Across our other countries, travellers glad
Into the sweet or terrible Beyond.
For those sad parents still would need her here
To help the empty remnant of their day.
Often it seemed to her the ages' pain
Had pressed their quintessence into her single woed
Concentrating in her a tortured world.
Thus in the silent chamber of her soul
Chloistering her love to live with secret grief
She dwelt like a dumb priest with hidden gods
Unsuspected by the worldless offering of her days,
Lifting to them her sorrow like frankincense,
Her life the altar, herself the sacrifice.
Yet ever they grew into each other more
Until it seemed no power could red apart,
Since even the body's walls could not divide.
For when he wandered in the forest, oft
Her conscious spirit walked with him and knew
His actions as if in herself he moved;
He, less aware, thrilled with her from afar.
Always the stature of her passion grew;
Grief, fear became the food of mighty love.
Increased by its torment in the whole world,
It was all her life, became her whole earth and heaven.
Although life-born, an infant of the hours,
Immortal it walked unslayable as the gods:
Her spirit stretched merciless in its strength divine
An anvil for the blows of Fate and Time:
Or tired of sorrow's passionate luxury,
Grief's self became calm, dull-eyed, resolute
Awaiting some issue of its fiery struggle,
Some deed in which it might for ever cease,
Victorious over itself and death and tears.
The year now passed under the brink of change.
No more the storms sailed with tempestuous wings
And thunder stroke in wrath across the world.
Still was heard a muttering in the sky
And rain dripped wearily through the mournful air
And grey slow-drifting clouds shut in the earth.
So her grief's heavy sky shut in her heart.
A still self hid behind but gave no light:
No voice came down from the forgotten heights;
Only in the privacy of its brooding pain
Her human heart spoke to the body's fate.
THE BRAZIER OF LOVE

By RISHABHCAND

What is the central truth and essence of the Mother's life and the secret of her spiritual achievement? What is the key to the synthesis of her vast and complex personality, her irresistible magnetism and the unlimited sway she holds over the hearts of thousands of God-seekers? What has created the inner fire, the inner radiation, the divine spark in the Mother's life and love the nuclear force of her personality. In the Chaud (a portion of the Markandeya Purana), the Divine Mother has been hymned under her diverse aspects of Consciousness, Intelligence, Power, Pever, Beatitude, Power of Illumination etc. but all these forms & attributes are the most graceful and rapturous aspects of love—one wonders why—has been left unmentioned. Love is the first, highest and complete expression of the divine Truth in the world and the supreme Force that can lead the world back to the Divine. It includes all the other aspects and principles and is the eternal fount of the most ineffable ecstasy and sweetness that flow out of the union of the human with the Divine. And it is this love that is literally incarnating across the Mother—in her presence, in her carriage, in her words, in her gestures and in all her ways and dealings with men; so much so that the word Mother has come to mean love; and to be near her is to feel that we are in the physical presence of the divine Love itself, which is instinct with infinite Wisdom and vibrant with omnipotent Force. Human faculties are much too limited to fathom the mystery of this Love; they can only stand overpowered, thrilled, illuminated and influenced by it. It floods our being with its light and joy, and, healing us of all our ills and ailments and clothing us with fullness, makes us liberate us into our essential purity and perfection.

As we contemplate this living Love, this blazing embodiment of dynamical, the whole revelation of the Mother, she reveals herself to us under three arresting aspects; first, the Mother's love for the Divine,—a white psychic flame burning in unabated intensity; second, the Divine's Love, the dazzling sun-flame, clothed in flesh; and third, the two fires combined, the psychic love and the divine, pouring out upon the world, upon all mankind, in an unceasing flood of regenerating and transforming force. The three aspects, like the three strands of a string, are intertwined; and though our intellectual mind, in its penchant for analysis, may feel tempted to analyse them, they are absolutely unanalyzable and indistinguishable—they are one essence and movement.

In this article I shall try to contemplate the third aspect of this Love which we call the Mother, its aspect of delivering and transforming beneficence, its aspect of Grace. But to obviate a possible misunderstanding, I must make it clear at the very outset that this Grace or beneficence is not the act of a transcendent divine being stretching out its hands, like the Amritdwar Bhagwan across the ocean of life, to those afflicted souls who groan and thirst for the Beyond. It is a Grace that has assumed a human form, come down to our shores, the shores of Time, from its unthinkable eternity, consented to bear the toils and terrors of human life and to be the darkness of the material world, so that even here, on these very shores, in the very darkness of the darkness, the divine Light may be lit and shine undimmed, and a divine humanity manifest the glory of God. It is a Grace that has invaded God's own estate, to dwell the whole of life and suffering. "O Master, open my Heart." And the divine grace is not only a Grace for the不得已, it is a Grace that has come down not only to liberate, but to rehabilitate man, to reinstatement him in his divine heritage of luminous freedom and immortal, creative bliss, even here, even in this world of ignorance and suffering, and to open up the possibility of this unique aspect of the divine Love as embodied in the Mother, we shall miss all the significance of her sacrifice, the secret of her transforming power and the surpassing beauty and sweetness of her radiant presence in our midst. We shall then only concentrate exclusively on her transcendent divinity and ignore or misjudge her humanity, or date only upon her sweet humanity and ignore her transcending divinity—the divine mystery of the union of the two, the unspeakable embrace of God and man in a single being, will elude us.

The constant aspiration of the Mother's early life was to be transformed into divine Love. This aspiration finds expression in the Prayer of the 2nd February, 1951: "To be the divine love, love powerful, infinite, unfathomable, in every activity, in all the worlds of being—it is for this I cry to Thee, O Lord. Let me be consumed with this love divine, love powerful, infinite, unfathomable, in every activity, in all the worlds of being! Transmute me into that burning brazier so that all the atmosphere of the earth may be purified with its flame. "O, to be Thy Love infinitely." It is apparent from the above Prayer that it was not for the passive brazier of love that the Mother longed, but for the active brazier of love, the transporting thistle that she wanted to be transmuted into it; she aspired to be the divine love, "in every activity, in all the worlds of being", so that she might achieve what the supreme Love alone can achieve in the material world—the integral transformation of the whole human society, and to give to all those who are destined to receive the light, the exact nature and extent of the work it has been doing for humanity. One day when the Mother indicated to us, in passing, how she and Sri Aurobindo had been laboring in the Subconscious and the Inconscient to change the very elements and atoms that go to constitute the human body, how they have been conducting the supramental light into those dark bases of human existence, so that a new race of man may be born on the earth, it took our breath away. We wondered in what ignorance we live—in what woeful, colossal ignorance not only of our own true self and its inscrutable possibilities, but also of the uniqueness and the greatest of our brotherhood, the gods who, identified with the Divine, work out His Will in the silent majesty of their spiritual strength. The aim of their labour lies beyond our ken and beyond our comprehension. We are so lost in our daily lives and pursuits that we have left behind to God. We, who by material performance and surface results, acclaim a scientific or a religious or a political or a social reformer, a statesman or a political thinker, a religious preacher or an ethical teacher, whose achievements we can more or less assess and appreciate; yet we forget those who are of the spiritual and purifying kind and who change the very texture of our nature and prepare a divine destiny for the human race, we have nothing better than a lofty indifference or a cynical disdain.

The Prayer quoted above proves that the Mother aspired to be nothing short of the burning brazier of Love. She had nothing to ask for herself, nothing to acquire or achieve in the interest of her individual being; but she had to do—because it was the divine Will in her to do—all that was possible to root out for ever the ignorance and suffering of human life and make it a potent channel of the Light divine. Her love for the human soul, her solicitude for its release and harmonious perfection in the material world and her compassion for its besetting miseries, are very movingly expressed in one of the sweetest of her Prayers:

"Each time that a heart leaps at the touch of Thy divine breath, a little more beauty seems to be born upon the earth, the air is embalmed with a sweet perfume, all becomes more friendly.

"Oh, how great is Thy power, O Lord, and how vast is Thy presence, that an atom of Thy joy is sufficient to efface so much darkness, so many sorrows, and a single ray of Thy glory can light up thus the dustiest pebble, illumine the blacknessed consciousness!

"Thou hast heaped Thy favours upon me, Thou hast unveiled to me many secrets, Thou hast made me taste many unexpected and unhoped-for joys, but no grace of Thine can be equal to this Thou grantest me to when a heart leaps at the touch of Thy divine breath.

"At these blessed hours all earth signs a hymn of gladness, the grasses shudder with pleasure, the air is vibrant with light, the trees lift towards heaven their most ardent prayer, the chant of the birds becomes a canticle, the scales of the sea hallow with love, the smile of children tells of the infinite and the souls of men appear in their glory.

"Tell me, wilt Thou grant me the marvellous power to give birth to this dawn in expectant hearts, to awaken the consciousness of men to Thy sublime Presence, and in this base and sorrowful world awaken a little of Thy true Paradise? What happiness, what riches, what terrestrial power can equal this wonderful gift?

"O Lord, never have I implored Thee in vain, for that which speaks to Thee is Thyself in me as in a sea.

"The Mother knew early in life that the divine Vishthita, the divine Powers and Personalities of the spiritual-mental planes, even of the Ombrind, would not be capable of conquering the resistance of Matter and controlling the movements of the universe; she prayed: "... O Sweet Master, it is a Love more wonderful and formidable than any that has manifested up till this day, of which the earth has need; it is for this Love that she (the earth) implores..." And she felt and knew, though the knowledge was sometimes revealed to her and sometimes hidden, that she was that Love, the supreme Love, incarnate in human form. But the knowledge, rather than gratifying her heart, intensified a hundredfold its simple, selfless aspiration. "O my divine Master, my love aries after Thee more intensely than ever; let me be Thy living Love in the world and nothing but that... May my consciousness be identified with Thy consciousness so that Thou alone mayest be the will acting through this fragile and transient instrument.

"Omy sweet Master, with what an ardour my love aspires for Thee!

"Grant that I may be only Thy divine Love, and that in everything this Love may awake power in one of the sweetest of her Prayers:

"Let me be like an immense mantle of love enveloping the whole earth, penetrating all hearts, murmuring to every ear Thy divine message of beauty and peace.

The Mother's aspiration was fulfilled beyond measure: the divine Love prepared her whole being, part by part, hour by hour, till it became a pure flame of psychic love quivering in the embrace of the sempiternal fire of the Love Divine.

"My love for Thee, O Lord, it is Thyself, and yet my love bows down religiously before Thee."

Once she became the divine Love, the real work of her life began. Love revealed itself in a virile power of illumination and transformation, and it carried her into the obscure foundations of terrestrial life, the dark matrix of Matter, which it is the divine Will to churn, illumine and transfigure. Human mind is incapable of imagining the horrors and perils to which the Mother was exposed, the ordeals she had to pass through

and the battle she had to wage against the grim forces of Inconsincence and Ignorance, Falsehood and Death. It was the greatest test of her love for the Divine, this "Calvary of the terrestrial consciousness", this descent into "the unfathomable depths of matter", this touching with her fingers "the horror of the falsehood and the ignorance", "the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscenity." Had not the Divine said to her, "If thou wouldst learn how to love truly, it is in this way that thou must love... in the darkness and the ignorance."? Had He not created her, as He once confided to her, "to be his exceptional representative on the earth." She had nothing to complain of, for, she knew she was made for the most difficult work of material transformation, and she let herself be moved by the divine Will, which is one with divine Love. And yet something in her outer personality, something sweetly human—this plastic and receptive human element is indispensable to her work—had the modesty to find itself "poorly equipped" for such a tremendous task, and she asked the Divine with the exquisite candour and simplicity of a child, "Thou plagues me, O Lord, into the most obscure darkness, it must be then because Thou hast so firmly established Thy light in me that Thou knowest it will stand the perilous test. Hast Thou chosen me for descending into the vortex of this hell as Thy torch-bearer? Hast Thou deemed my heart strong enough not to fail, my hand firm enough not to tremble?"
The heart was, indeed, strong with the strength of divine love, and the hand was firm with the unshakable firmness of the divine Force; and she had beenlonging since, in resolute silence and endless patience, for the spiritual freedom and perfection of man.

Among the mysteries of India Mirabai stands apart as an exceptional example of the most passionate, the most consuming love for the Divine. With an unparalleled lyrical intensity she gave all herself to her beloved Master and turned her life into a constant hymn and a devoted worship. But it was a life of absorbed contemplation and rapturous exaltation, of rapt union and longing for re-union, of radiating purity and contagious sweetness; and not a life of dynamic union and divine action. The Mother's life affords a new vision of the Will of God in the material world and a new perspective to the goal of human existence. Union with the Divine, she holds, is the first objective in spiritual life, but the ultimate aim and the glorious consummation of human existence, the very meaning and purpose of human birth, is the manifestation of the Divine in man and the fulfillment of His will in the world.

The legendary Radha is the very personification of an absolute and integral love for the Divine. From the physical to the spiritual, the whole gamut of her consciousness was completely at the disposal of the transcendent flute Player. Indian tradition records no more unpurified and joyous self-giving nor is there any parallel to it to be found in the spiritual traditions of the world. But it was a love that bore no cross except that of the Lover's playful self-hiding; it had not to burn, to bright and steady, in the enegeled darkness and black blast of the Inconsincence. It did not, besides, incorporate any specific Will of the Divine to a New Manifestation or a New Creation. It was not charged with a world-aversion or called upon to a supreme holocaust. The Mother's "Radha's Prayer" reveals the same psychic texture, an identical integrity of self-offering, but with a remarkable difference. Her love is the supreme self-Force of the Divine, redemptive and creative; it bears in itself the world-transforming fiat of the Absolute.

The four aspects of the Mother of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in his book, The Mother, "have stood in front in her guidance of this universe and her dealings with the terrestrial play," but her own unmanifested love—her divinity, because it is the divinity of the Divine Himself, transcends them all. "There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down and have not stood out in front, though so much speculation in the evolution of the earth spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramortal realization, most of all one who is Her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flow from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that assumes the gift. Between the highest heights of the supramental Spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its sacrosanctity the work of all the other Powers of the universe."

Her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flow from a supreme divine Love is, as I have already stated above, the highest aspect of the Mother, which we have to adore and approach with the utter love and self-giving of our whole being, if we aspire after the supramental realization on earth. The highest power of transformation is with the supreme divine Love, which the Mother embodies in this life for the accomplishment of her great mission in the material world.

But the Mother transcends even this highest aspect of Love and Ananda. "Outside all manifestation, in the immutable silence of Eternity, I am in Thee, O Lord, an unmoving Besitude." She is one with the Unthinkable Absolute, the ineffable Unnamed. All the powers and splendours of creation are her powers and splendours, derived from her, and Ananda is the One, directed by her, to become the power that can heal the gap between the highest heights of the supramental Spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, through which the Mother embodies in this life for the accomplishment of her great mission in the material world.

After all we have seen and known, felt and imagined of the Mother, she remains to us what she has always been, the same Divine-human Mother, closest to us even if she is transcendent, enfolding us in her liberating Love, protecting us with her Grace, transporting and transforming us with her irradiating smile and infinitely forbearing and forgiving to our countless recurrent frailties. She is the outside, sweet deliverer from the inflexible rigours of the Cosmic Law and the bestower of her own spiritual freedom and bliss. She remains for us the crystal fountain "which always lets waters flow abundantly for all, but towards which no stream can ever remount"; the giver of all bounties and the remover of all our burdens. Has not the Divine said of her, "... art thou not myself crystallised for my work?" And do we not love and adore the Divine Himself when we love and adore her, not in distant awe and amazement, but as her frail ignorant children, physically approaching her in freedom and confidence, and aspiring to be united with her to become deathless instruments of her great work upon earth? What is that great work? It is, as we have already noted, a "veritable work of creation... to create new activities and new modes of being, so that this Force, unknown to the earth till now, may manifest in its plenitude." And what is this Force that is going to manifest? It is the authentic, invincible Force of the supreme divine Love; and the Mother is this Force, she who has descended into our darkness and mortality and constituted all herself the burning brazier of Love, so that the atmosphere of the earth may be purified with its flames and our animal humanity transfigured into the glory of a divine humanity.

2. Mahakshari, Mahakshari, Mahakshari and Mahakshari.

3. "Prayers and Meditations".

The Mother's Children

(A Song for the Children of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram)

We are India’s sleepless sentinels,
Strength of her sinews, her heart’s delight:
Jealous of her soul’s inviolate honour,
Sons we remain to our Mother of might.

Refrain:
Our banner will flash, in peace and war,
Truth’s oriflamme, even as the morning star:
Our heads will not bend nor falter our feet,
Like gales we shall chase the hostile cloud,
Marching onward, dauntless, onward,
Death we will wrestle with, brave and proud.

Comrades from birth with storms, we have played
With fires as though in a carnival:
Our hands have wielded the bow of lightning,
Power of the sun of courage we call.

Refrain:
Our banner ——
Be strait the path or laughing with blooms,
We will to our Goal that we’re bound to attain
Ar 4 for our Motherland we, her sons,
Will wrest the jewels from the blue’s domain.

Refrain:
Our banner ——
Translated from INDIRA MALHOTRA’S
Hindi song by DILIP KUMAR ROY
CHAPTER IV

THE ASHRAM: THE CALL

Before I launch into the difficult task of setting down my various reactions to the Ashram-life that opened before me in 1928, I must endeavour to portray my deep-rooted dread of such a life prior to my being plunged into it overnight by a mysterious force which was at once too tangible a reality for any nothingness and too gentle to be grappled with by my pre-joyous mentality, acclimatized to a world of wonders. For this it is necessary to go back a little even at the risk of boring frankly autobiographically.

I was one of the most aristocratic Brahmin families of Bengal. My father's mother, I have been told, traced a direct and verifiable descent from the saintly Adwait Goswami, one of Sri Chaitanya's chief helpers and loyal intimates. My father's father, Dwarkanath Chandra Roy, was a Prime Minister of one of the noblest and most ancient States of Bengal. Apart from the position he enjoyed, his honesty and strength of character were legendary: for his honesty the Prince once offered to send him to jail, which did not please him because he could not possibly accept a reward for doing his bare duty. He was, besides, a bold freethinker and wrote an autobiography which shocked many when it saw the light, nearly a century ago, because therein he not only bluntly testified to his apostasy by saying that he did not believe in a good Sentinel watching over this incorrigible universe, but also openly wrote about his admiration of the mleccha (unclean) English and his partiality for their culture in toto—so much so that he began to drink regularly, though he usually refrained to attend to his duties of public obloquy, if not ostracism (for it was difficult to ostracize a princely Prime Minister of a noble Prince, whose ancestors had made history) rather than disobey his reasoned convictions. In my boyhood days I used to hear a great deal about him from my father and his friends, about his incredible incorruptibility and outstanding integrity of character.

My father, Dwijendralal Roy, who took after my grandfather, was a remarkable personality and a brilliant scholar. He went to England on a State scholarship, returned with a diploma from Cirencester, was appointed a Deputy Magistrate under the British whose overlordship he cordially hated and brought into obloquy in his historical dramas which earned for him the title of the greatest dramatist of India. I could willingly go on writing about his versatile genius and literary attainments but since that would be going beyond the purview of my undertaking, I must content myself with mentioning only such of his qualities as bear upon my theme.

My grandfather's robust uprightness and asceticism had cast in the Gita itself a remarkable influence on my formative, adolescent mind. His stay in England only deepened this trend he had inbided from his idol. No wonder he came back from England an avowed atheist, a fiery freethinker and an impatient iconoclast rolled into one. As, however, he was not a Prime Minister, he could be, and promptly was, ostracized by his relations. Nothing daunted, the rebel committed another and an irreparable indiscretion thus practically burning his boats:

In his youth, the eldest daughter, a widow who had married a second time! Having now little more to lose, he threw all out of the window, and went on squabbling our Hindu piety and formalism in his comic songs and satirical poems which won quick and lasting fame. I was then still in my youth.

Being congenitally fond of laughter, I laughed indeed with him even when he transgressed what seemed to me the limits, as e.g. when he did not exclude even the Gita as a target for his pasquinades. Of course he had to be abominated by the devotees who, instead of really being afraid of the Gita, simply could not bear it. I have heard from all out for those who lived an unclean life and yet made a fetich of the Gita in season and out. This I found very enjoyable and I remember how my sister and I used to sing merrily with him as the irreverent rollicked in the Gita. I give here a translation of only eight lines from his celebrated lampoon:

If I humbug the world to the top of my best.
Steel, metal, blaspheme or perjury,
There's no alluring charm to go astray with.
All ill's of the flesh she can cure.

There can be no scriptures, O friend, like the Gita.

Glory to thee, O Gita, my angel.

Whose magic nought else can eclipse.

But even when I did enjoy such irreverent songs I could not go all the way with him. Having religious ardent, having already indeed by the late Calcutta, the writer of the same name that I was born in the Bengali language (to Krishna, Shiva, Kali, Ganapati, Sri Chaitanya, the man to whom I sang often with tears in my eyes). But one thing I must make clear at this stage—to obviate misunderstanding.

In my summary description of my two immediate forbears, I may have unwittingly encouraged my readers to form a somewhat wrong notion about the part the Oriya language played in moulding their lives. From what I have just written, those who do not know well the best Indian minds may think that there is, in the last analysis, hardly any basic difference between these and those others who have been basically westernized and increasingly modified by the spirit of the Western materialism, or by the influence of the modern European outlook on life, as, has happened—to give a typical contemporary example—with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In other words, they may conclude, misled by our modern slogans, that the best minds among us may indeed, like him, achieve a lasting harmony only under the tutelage of the West. Such a view would be not only utterly unsound but demonstrably false. The best Indian minds, however, effectively inculcated by the doctrines of Western materialism, can never find any true subsistance at the fount of ascension and materialistic science.

At the same time there is much debris we have to clear before we can reach the pure fount of spiritual wisdom we thirst for. My father felt this deeply no less than my grandfather had, in his day. Nevertheless they did not, in the last resort, throw away the baby along with the bath water. That was the reason why my father had nothing but approval for my adoration of Sri Ramkrishna even when he criticized the degenerate ritualism of superstitions (I translate again):

O cling, my brothers, to this our faith,
Like leeches stick to your station,
No others can a like harbour be.
No pledge such sweet salvation.
Think! are you a thief, or robber?
Then just in the holy Ganges you dive,
Are you a sinner? then tramp to Gaya
Or Kashi or Pur or the holy land.

The point I want to make is that, when all is said and done, there is something in the submerged depths of the authentic Indian nature which cannot open permanently to any gospel other than that of the spirit, which yearns for what is native to it and lastly, responds to it in no matter how high the stakes may prove.

Augpore, I am reminded of a striking remark of Lowes Dickinson, the famous rationalist, who after touring the Far East wrote that neither Japan nor China was incomprehensible to the Western mind: it was only in India that he had been held up as before something utterly alien, even terrifying, to the Occident! And that is precisely why Pandit Jawaharlal feels so deeply touched by his feeling of no connection with it, and fails to understand the diverse ways its religious spirit has helped humanity, a failure which prompted Sri Aurobindo to write to me (commenting on a few excerpts I had sent him from Pittajit's views on religion):

It is not enough to take the same discovery of the Hindu religion as Jawaharlal. Religion is indeed always imperfect because it is a mixture of man's spirituality with his endeavours that come in trying to sublimate ignorantly his lower nature. Hindu religion appears to me as a cathedral-temple half in ruins, noble in the mass, often fantastic in detail but always fantastic with a significance—crumbling and badly worn out in places but a cathedral-temple in which service is still done to the Unseen and its real Presence can be felt by those who enter with the right spirit.

Lowes Dickinson and Pandit Nehru never felt this because neither could command "the right spirit". The reasons for this, however, would take me beyond the scope of my book. So to resume.

Unlike the typical positivist mind I have just referred to, I felt that I had a congenital streak of the mystic which Dickenson, dubiously incomprehensible and Jawaharlal medieval. Be that as it may, I was not only willing but eager to play for higher stakes—to "live dangerously" as Nietzsche has put it—but I could neither, alas, perceive the call nor find a way to give a practical shape to my mysticism. I was all but ready to "take the plunge" but where was the calling, haunting deep? And what is more, might not one hope to chance even upon a raft, if not a boat, which would help one to escape against all waves? That was the question I had to find an answer to, once and for all.

An Ashram, a spiritual centre, a nucleus of aspirants? But being a born individualist, with love of freedom bred in my bones, I was scared at the prospect of having to live in a garrison with compulsory seclusion under conditions which might prove more stringent than I could bear. Suppose I did not agree with the aadabaks? Suppose my Guru asked me to abide by rules I found impossible? Suppose I found it crumbling—the way the ashram is crumbling? All sorts of speculations seethed in my brain like irrepressible bubbles till, finally, I decided that we moderns, could not possibly find spiritual fulfillment through such a scarce sceptic device, a device, besides, that had been tried in antiquity and found wanting.
I saw and talked to Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1924. I have given the faithful record of our encounter. It was a spiritually spiritual and a spiritually spiritual experience. The world, as I saw it, if not actually hostile, was certainly indifferent, to all spiritual enthusiasm which could only attain fruition after an arduous effort at self-purification. All the good I professed and benefited from a God-seed planted in my heart. But the strange thing was that while you prepared for guidance I also discerned the conditions under which alone it could become fruitful in the actual field of life. I saw that I never could do anything unless I have lived and laboured and loved, just like the same people day after day, having to work may be that might go against my very grain and taking orders from one I would not be able to approach, even to talk to him, at the bleak prospect.

But I had made one mistake, and a very serious mistake at that, as I came to realise. This I must try to explain at some length if only to be intelligible.

To be able to realise by and by, that, in the present world at least, one could not possibly live like the mendicant of old living on alms and trusting to the Unseen Providence to help keep our body and soul together, simply “giving all one had to the poor” and following a pathone, as my realist reason called it derivatively. One must have an organisation of some sort where one might reasonably hope to be able to live in comparative security in some sort of growing harmony with one’s environment.

But I felt dubious about my ability, first, to run in harness with a motley number whose susceptibilities were unlikely to leave mine alone, and, secondly, to find a living inspiration from the guidance of a Guru who was not accessible. For Aurobindo in those days used to be very strict: he saw none. Only the Master had access to his discipless, and that brought the disciples his messages and instructions from time to time. In those days, in 1926, he did not even write letters except occasionally. (It was only after 1939, I think, that his correspondence began to assume serious proportions, and grew more after about seven or eight as how had increased, till in the end he had to write letters from 9 p.m. till 5 a.m. the next morning, and this went on every night for eight consecutive years, without respite!

But my grave mistake was that I had counted without the Mother. It was perhaps not quite inexcusable, in those days I mean, for though in virtual charge of the Ashram, she not only acquired in reeding to the background but wellconsulted it. Only the disciples had thus appreciated her importance, outsiders or prospective initiates like myself were most left guessing. I can well remember my first impressions in 1926: I had indeed been drawn to her but I could not seriously think of surrendering myself to her: I accepted her as my Guru but only because Sri Aurobindo had wanted me to. So far as I was concerned she became, indeed, my guide for practical purposes but my heart had been given to Sri Aurobindo and Sri Aurobindo alone.

Is it any wonder then that I should have entertained the misgivings I did? How could one possibly practise Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga with the Mother, if not outside one’s purview, at least thrust out to an unimportant niche in one’s life so that one would not be bored by perfectionism? It would have been true that I came to realise—slowly, through deep tunnels with my ego what the Mother’s role was in Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. I had taken her initially as my guide and I did admire her genuinely, but it never once occurred to me to submit to her or to submit to her the little I had done. The magic figure did from the very start: an anchorage to cling to as well as a call to the shoreless. I had, besides—I am truly ashamed to own this but I must be truthful—a sort of deep-implanted notion that a woman could never be a spiritual Guru except as one remote as here. I know the Mother will not only forgive me for expressing such an opinion, but will be the first to smile at the comical pretentiousness of my masculine vanity. But one cannot very well claim to be at the start what one can only claim to be at the finish. And so it was I lived on and on and the supposed, with its real notions about the world and things—and so I need not. I hope, too repellant about my green inexperienced which fathered my masculine self-superiority.

But the main thing to be conscious of one’s congenital handicaps and quite another to get rid of these. The first step, however, is to grow conscious. This I learnt from the Mother herself who told me, the very first thing, that in Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga one had to aspire intensely and altruistically to the consciousness of what we were in every strand of our being—to become keenly aware, that is, how far we were from what we had to become. She told me also—a thing I had never realised so forcibly because it is part of the very act of integrating the movement in the direction of transformation. It sounded to my ears a little queer albeit strangely convincing because I took her to mean (by a simile which occurred to me) that it was as if the right diagnosis itself brought the right medicine. I had, of course, received a cut in the head by the Ashram life and the love you radiated on one who had come, if not exactly critical, yet with a certain reserve. What I came with has been left behind: what I have been given in exchange will always remain.”
Dream?

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<td>If dream is, let it be so; To have thy vision even in dream Is a rare grace they only know Who have bathed in the ethereal stream.</td>
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<td>Krishna I bought with my life, O friend! “Too dearly bought!”—say the wise. But how can the prudent guess His worth? Only Mira knows His price.</td>
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<td>To have thy vision even in dream Is a rare grace they only know Who have bathed in the ethereal stream.</td>
<td>To have thy vision even in dream Is a rare grace they only know Who have bathed in the ethereal stream.</td>
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I cannot, to this day, bring myself to use such words without a strange feeling of guilt—so I was indeed mortifying clichés. This in itself would perhaps be so culpable but my critical scepticism has by no means stood up to them. For I have never yet been able to give the same credit for sincerity as I claim for my own indifference whenever I find them sky-rocketing readily in purple words of the type referred to. I may have used such words myself in my less guarded moments—one cannot always control one's self over one's own volition. I may nor can I possibly claim for myself a consistency which I have found again and again, to my bitter cost, so difficult to achieve even in my normal day-to-day conduct. So I will only plead that even when I looked advance at some of my dear friends' colleagues it was never prompted by malice but sheer inability to sympathise with their temperaments, and that also because I have seen the harm slogans do when one is not on one's guard: they kill one too often, alas, with the pathetic delusion that quizzing with an object is nearly as good as growing into it. (Sri Aurobindo wrote to me once, "Perhaps I have come to believe it himself—that he had become a supremam— as George IV came to believe that he had won the battle of Waterloo by dint of repeatedly saying so"). But in return I will willingly wish them the joy of gloating over my deep discomfiture by furnishing them with evidence of Gurudeva's disapproval of my admiration for the Russelian type of rationalism. For example when he wrote to me soon after I came to the Ashram:

"Dilly, I have not forgotten Russell but I have neglected him first, for want of time; second, because for the moment I have mislaid your letter; third, because of understanding my part. What is the meaning of his 'taking interest in external things for their own sake'? And what is an 'introvert'? Both these problems baffle me."

The word 'introvert' has come into existence only recently and sounds like a new term. It is the term of understanding my part. What is the meaning of his 'taking interest in external things for their own sake'? And what is an 'introvert'? Both these problems baffle me. The word 'introvert' has come into existence only recently and sounds like a new term. It is the term of understanding my part. What is the meaning of his 'taking interest in external things for their own sake'? And what is an 'introvert'? Both these problems baffle me.

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I invited his comment on Russell's remark in his 'Conquest of Happiness': 'We are all prone to the melody of the introvert who, with the mandali spectacle of the world spread out before him, turns away and gassus the emptiness within.'

By Day or Night

Thou camnest not by day or night: Thy yearning heart's deep agony Gathered into a flame of light.

That burnt me inly, silently...

Yet day and night, Love, Thou wert there, Holding me in Thy close care. Only my soul lay unaware And sorrowed in her loneliness.

Ye, day and night Thy white love kept Its shining vigil over me, Nourished and warmed while I slept Within Thy world-womb's mystery.

But now that I am born again Of Thy pure mystic body's clay, Thy beauty, my pain, My heart in Thine all night and day.

God's World

How shall the witness mind's tranquility Catch the extravagant happiness of God's world? To reach one goal He flings a million paths Laughing with sheer love of the limitless, Wondering for centuries in secret glory, Then striking home a single light of lights! Marvellous the pattern of His prodigious power, But vainly the philosopher will brood This subtle serpent flecked with sudden stars: Coel after coel of unpredictable dream Will set his logic whirling till it drops Only the poet with wide eyes that feel Each form a shining gate to depth beyond Knows through the magic.measures of his tune Our world is the overflow of an infinite wine Self-tasted in the mystery-drunkened heart.
He wrote back: "Your translation is admirable. I did not know that the mathematician was also a poet." Then he went on to add, possibly a trifle amused:

"About Russell—I have never disputed his abilities or his character; I am quite convinced that no one can dispute his abilities or his character. I have no doubt about Russell, but I have never dreamed of disputing the greatness of Lenin, for instance, merely because he was an atheist—no wonder, unless he were an imbecile. But the greatness of Lenin does not derive from refusing assent to the credal dogmas of the church, and the beauty of character of an atheist does not prove that spirituality is a lie of the imagination and there is no Divine. I might add that if you can find the utterances of famous Yogis childish when they talk of marriage or on other matters, I cannot be blamed for finding the latter which I have absolutely no opinion about. And then, the latter is the only one of those opinions which I have from time to time, with very much wanting in light and substance. You have not named the Yogis in question and till you do, I am afraid I shall cherish a suspicion about either the health or the breadth of their spiritual experience. But of that hereafter, when I get a chance of an hour or two to write on it!"

Later when I began to see various colours, etc., he wrote to me in answer to my question whether it could be auto-suggestion or hallucination:

"No, it was neither optical illusion nor hallucination nor coincidence (chronic) nor auto-suggestion nor any of the other puerile and vacant vassalities by which physical science tries to explain away or rather avoid explaining the (scientifically) inexplicable. In these matters the Scientific of the mind is only an outer frame. The free lie whole worlds of experience which fill what seems to the natural man the gap (your Russell's inner void) between the earth-consciousness and the Eternal and Infinite."

"As for what showed itself to you, it was not a mere curious phenomenon, but a very symbolic colour, things which have a considerable importance... That this should be the first thing shown when the power of vision broke through its state of latency is very significant; it proves that you are pictures, the touch already there in your inner being and that this force of presence and protection is already around you or over you as an envioning influence.

"Develop this power of that inner sense and all that it brings. These are the Russells, it is only an outer frame. What is the inner world of experience which fills what seems to the natural man the gap (your Russell's inner void) between the earth-consciousness and the Eternal and Infinite?"

"Last year he wrote in a post-script: 'I remember when first began to see inwardly (and outwardly also with the open eye), a scientific friend of mine began to talk of after-images—these are only after-images!' I asked whether after-images remained before the eye for two minutes at a time—'he said, no, to his knowledge only for a few seconds.' I also asked him whether one could get after-images of things not around one or even existing upon earth, since they had other shapes, another character, other hues, contours and a very different dynamism, life-movements and values—'he could not reply in the affirmative. That is how these so-called scientific explanations break down, as soon as you pull them out of their cloudland of mental theory and face them with the actual phenomena they pretend to decipher.'"

In another letter he wrote commenting on an experience of mine: "I remember one day I was driving through your physical mind does not yet believe—that these experiences show at once that your inner being is a Yogi capable of trance, ecstasy, intense bhakti, fully aware of Yoga and Yogic consciousness and showing himself the very moment you get inside yourself even as the outer man is very much the other way round—modernised, externalised, vigorously outward-vital and knowing nothing of Yoga or the world of inner experiences. I could see at once when I saw you that there was this inner Yogi and your former experiences here were quite convincing to anyone who knows anything at all about these things. Where is this inner Yogi inside, the coming to the way of Yoga is sure and not even the most externalised surface consciousness—(not even a regular hokum Russellsian outside, and you are not that—only a little Russellsian on the surface)—can prevent final success in the Yoga. But the turning inward the inward and outward man can create a lot of trouble because the inward man pushes towards the Divine and will not let go and the outward man regrets, repines, pulls back, asks what is this shadowy thing to which he is being brought, this unknown, this (to him) far-off Inseffable. That, and not merely food or society, is the genesis of the struggle and trouble in you. And yet it is all a misunderstanding—for if the outer grow way entirely to the inner Yogi, he would find that what he lost or thought he was losing would be reconsidered at a second sight... and he would get in another spirit and consciousness, not any longer the transient and deceptive delight of the world for its own sake, but the delight of the Divine in the world a thousand times more intense, sweet and desirable."

I quote the above to underline the difficulty he experienced to persuade us to open ourselves to his wisdom and, incidentally, to stress his inexhaustible patience in dealing with us. For instance he would, tirelessly, go on arguing with me again and again whenever I would lament that I did not find anything in himself which might justify his high hopes of me as a prospective Yogi. Nay, he would even come down to my level to compound my scepticism and sometimes with the driest light of intellectual argument to be able to outmanoeuvre me with his own weapons.

It was because he allowed us such liberties that we could go on treating him almost as our equal in stature—so much so that Nirod (who later became one of his personal assistants) actually ran full tilt into him whenever his disdain impelled him to. I will give here just one or two examples.

"O Guru," he once wrote in 1935, "I observe that whenever I communicate an experience to you, the next moment it stops. I hope the Guru is not responsible for this!"

"Well," Gurudev wrote back, "that is a thing we used often to note when the austeras was in the early stages, namely, to speak something experienced was to stop it. It is the reason why many Yoge make it a rule never to speak of their experiences. But latterly it had altogether ceased to be like that. So why are you starting that curious stunt all over again?"

But Nirod was nothing if not dauntless.

"I recall an incident of my childhood days," he wrote back. "I was dining with my father when I was called out. 'Papa,' I said to him warningly, 'take care, you mustn't eat my fish.' Well, fathers may not, but Gurur!"

"No, sir," Gurudev retorted, "I don't eat your fish. I have oceans of fish at my disposal and have no need to consume your little sprats. It is Mures. Hostile Forces who do that—the dampas or robbers!"

In another letter Nirod flung a challenge: "Why not write something about this Supermind of yours which nobody understands or knows anything about? Surely it is not enough to claim that it is a different consciousness?"

But came the rejoinder the next morning: "What is the use? How much would anybody understand anyway? Besides, the present business is to bring down and establish the Supermind, not to explain it. If it establishes itself it will explain itself—if it does not, there is no use in explaining it. I have thrown hints about it in the past but without success in enlightening anybody. So why repeat the adventurage?"

To be continued

There's a Calm that pervades and surrounds,
And a Silence that beats the air
Like golden wings that reach to the bounds
Of the stars through earth's atmosphere.

There's a Peace that pours on the earth
Insistent—like tropical rain—
And a Voice that tells of a higher birth
Beyond all the strife and pain.

There's a Power, felt never before,
Which urges the blossoming soul;
A call from the heights for the spirit to soar
Towards a diviner goal.

There's a Sweetness as Dawn awakes,
Which echoes from hill to hill
'Tis the cry of His Flute as the sunbreaks through
In the heart with a sacred thrill.

There's a Love sunk deep in the Night—
Agivers the darkness, the cold,
As into the Abyss He plunged His Light
For the Sacrifice of God.

There's a Presence that steals through the hours,
That has paid the price of our wrongings,
It invades like the perfume of many flowers—
As a kiss in the heart that is longing.

NORMAN DOWSETT
MY LAST “DARSHAN” OF SRI AURIBINDO

By AGA SYED IBRAHIM (DARA)

We in the ashram had learnt not to associate the idea of death with our beloved Master’s name. In fact we rejected the very thought of death becoming the Master’s portion, filling our minds with ever-growing thoughts of Immortality and every thought of death, even the least suspicion of it, being the very opposite of our expectation, shocked our mind. Thoughts are very powerful things. They have an unseen effect and as our minds were opening to new ideas and getting transformed, thoughts too appeared to become dynamic. At times a thought would begin to manifest itself in life as if it were the Creator’s own Word in the manner of “Let there be light and there was Light.” We wished to ignore and avoid death in our effort to expand. But suddenly one day I thought, if death is part of life, then is it not possible for us to accept death as a natural part of life?

Very few in the ashram knew that for over two weeks Sri Aurobindo had been suffering from kidney trouble and passing through a crisis. How could any one guess it when we had all seen Him on the 24th November Darshans day? Then we reported, spoke stage plays on the 1st and the 2nd December and a cinema show in the 3rd in the playground. The last interested me very much for it was about the activities of the devotees in Calcutta in which the public had also taken part. The mile-long procession, the music and physical exercises were imposing and the music and dances before Sri Aurobindo’s Martial that had recently been installed were shown to us for the first time that night. The celebrations of Calcutta seemed to me so grand and on such a big scale that our own celebration appeared quite small. Sri Aurobindo had never seen a moving picture and I wished that he saw this too. So I wrote a letter to him on the 3rd December expressing my wish that he should see this picture in his room. Then, before I fell asleep, I felt that I had gone up to Sri Aurobindo and asked him, “Why don’t you ask Sardar Patel to work for you in Delhi? It will surely do so if you ask.”

I remembered Sardar Patel and that he was very good and had been shifted to Bombay. I wondered if he would get the experience of seeing a picture (which I was sure was certain to be open and free from work) and if he would after seeing the picture try to do something for Sri Aurobindo. I felt somewhat inquisitive about the matter and thinking that Sri Aurobindo had taken him to a high plane of God-consciousness I fell asleep. I had a sound sleep that night and woke up very early—about 7-8 a.m. I think and shortly after waking up I heard a knock at the door. I wondered who had come to meet me and I went and opened the door. It was an urn of our ashram, a school boy. He told me with a sad face in a low voice, “Sri Aurobindo died last night. For a moment I could not understand what he meant and then I thought of the newspaper politics and I remember I said to myself “There is a sensational news about death and event.” The boy once more told me “Sri Aurobindo died last night.” I thought of the picture and let myself be carried away by the picture. Sardar Patel died and called him Sri Aurobindo by mistake. So I asked him, and this time he cried while he said in a trembling voice, “Sri Aurobindo died last night. All are going for his Darshan upstairs and Bula has sent me to call you also.”

For a moment I did not know what to think. It was difficult to grasp the idea. I went down for my bath as usual and sat in the bathroom trying to understand what had happened before starting for the last Darshan of our great Master. “Can he be dead? How can it be true, the mind went on asking again and again and everything seemed to be turned against this thought. I dressed up and came out on the street. I wondered how many people would be near the ashram. A large number of people had come from the town and others were coming and joining them. There was no row or noise of any kind and all seemed very quiet. I was not shocked. The police were trying to keep them in the form of a queue and send them to the ashram in a line. As I was near the ashram a disciple told me that I could enter by the garage door. I followed his advice and went in and joined the queue of the people in the celebration appeared solid. I have always gone for the darshan with the disciples but today I liked going with the people of the town better. They, coming from the world of life and death, had more human sentiments and feelings. Some were sobbing and all looked sad and awe-struck. Some could even bring flowers and the dead and tears of manhood was so evident. The queue moved forward slowly and in about ten or fifteen minutes we reached the staircase. It was a quiet peace and a solemn and spiritual atmosphere! I don’t think any sound could be as holy as it was then though the whole town with all sorts of people was passing continuously over it like an endless stream. Nothing could disturb the sacred silence. There was not even one sound. Her consciousness pervaded the whole place and the time spent on the staircase was like that which is in meditation itself.

From the staircase we entered the meditation verandah and then turned into the central room from where Sri Aurobindo’s feet were visible as he lay in state in the next room which was his bedroom. I used to find his feet small and beautiful but always now they appeared big and so grand. At the sight of them I felt my condition changing and I got an inner wave of rising and getting transformed. Thoughts too appeared to become dynamic. At times a thought would begin to manifest itself in life as if it were the Creator’s own Word in the manner of “Let there be light and there was Light.” We wished to ignore and avoid death in our effort to expand. But suddenly one day I thought, if death is part of life, then is it not possible for us to accept death as a natural part of life?

Perhaps at darshans times my mind used to be in an introspective state and I watched my own condition and was eager to grab the experience at the moment. At times I could not believe it could be so. For example, I never saw the elaborate decoration of either the verandah or the room or how he was dressed and so on. I only wished to get an experience and to see His smile; perhaps there was some nervousness also I should get into a bad condition just at the time and lose my experience. This time I only wished to see Him and engrave on my mind his every feature, and I was surprised to see a wonder that I may never forget—the existence of Supramental Beauty as if in every grain and cell of the flesh. I could not take my eyes off his face and arms. It seemed to me that he was alive. It was certain that he was in a condition of deep sleep and upward soaring trance just then or when he passed into Samadhi. I am sure he remained in a trance for those two days. As I gazed on him the thought came to me that if Sri Aurobindo wished to charge anywhere on earth and met and talked with him no one would have been able to resist it. The Beauty would have utterly overpower him for it was something unknown. No one would ever have been able to resist the attraction of it. What powers and what power he had and he not being kept all to himself! Why did he not call everybody round him, all the rulers and great leaders of the world and guide them? The answer was, “Because He was God.” All His acts were in accordance with His own divine Law and Lila. His grace and smile were the smile and the grace of the Supreme Himself. He responded to every true aspiration and did not desire for himself anything at all. He did not act on the world or anybody for any inferior motive. It was impossible for him perhaps to follow the ways of the worldly men. It was quite clear to me from his face that he had no wish of his own except to become God and to manifest God more and more. Every line of his face proved it. He was only conscious of being fully God. It was only done to become God and that becoming did everything else He willed. And His will was to transform the earth. As I was passing into the next room I thought about the burial and wondered how could such beauty ever be destroyed? Can the earth envelop or mar it? The earth is a wonderful mother; but out of her mud come flowers and trees. She stretches out to us from her generous bosom a many-coloured wealth and variety of fruits. She creates life and she takes it back also into herself that she has given us. How well she hides her sorrow! What will she do with Sri Aurobindo’s body. There is much in it that did not belong to the earth. He cannot sleep in a grave! It would be better if the body were taken up to the heavens where he may say that from the moon and far above to the sky. The sky is the proper grave for Him and he will be as peaceful as its stars. When I reached the meditation verandah my eyes fell on a small table on which were placed some 20 magazines, periodicals and reviews, sent to him for reading. Sri Aurobindo’s thoughts tears into my eyes and I cried when I thought that he would never read any more. Such is human desire! We wished him to read books when he was on his earth-bed. The world has lost such a great reader and writer. It has lost such a great inner mind condition just as I met a couple of of Hali who wrote on Ghulam after his death.

Usho batata jo ji ko gad argiy
Kish batata se dil ko behain
Laghi kuch pochh na aagey hain
Ehing main jamna dehat

(When we remember his actions, by whose actions are we to console and sooth our hearts? The people have come to ask some questions: O funeral bearers, stop the funeral!)
Then Saith Jesus To Thomas... 'Be Not Faithless But Believing'

By Morwenna Donnelly

It is a humble tribute to the greatness of Sri Aurobindo that his passing away should come with so shattering an impact of personal loss to those who had felt his presence on their lives simply through his work, and who, were to all visible intents, otherwise utterly remote from his sphere of influence.

Personal experience, if it is felt in the deep heart's core, may sometimes illuminate the universal altitudes of the spirit for us, which by their majesty otherwise out-reach our vision. Faced by this event, I felt that for the first time I could understand a little of that desolation of spirit which the followers of Jesus must have endured between that terrible Friday and the evening of the 'first day of the week'.

Within the most august movements of the spirit there is always the same sublime pattern, and when news reached me of Sri Aurobindo's death I asked myself whether in that most poignant and beautiful of all the dreams of the Spirit in time, there might not be a luminous and relevant word to transform this bewildering loss. I think I found it—at least, and quite simply, one that spoke to my own questionings.

On the face of it, and badly, what happened in Jerusalem on that Passion Friday two thousand years ago was a fiasco; an utter debacle. So it must have seemed to the disciples hideously behind locked doors for 'fear of the Jews.' Peter had let down his Master in the hour of need. The others had not even faced it out as long as Peter but fled in terror at the first signs that things were going wrong. Nothing they had expected had come to pass. They had imagined something quite different—a transformation of another order; another Kingdom. Death had extinguished in anguish of body and soul the beloved Master who had taught and guided them. The battered and broken body had been anointed and laid in its tomb. They were utterly desolate and alive. Each in his own silence and emptiness of his own heart must have wondered if Jesus had spoken the truth; if God had not, after all, miscalculated matters. How were they to 'bear one another's burdens, and thereby overcome the sharpness of death', that he, too, had not bowed to the blinding and insurmountable forces of creation?

The answer came in accents that left no room for doubt.

On the first day of the week something so tremendously happened that it transformed a group of frightened and disheartened men into a fearless band of saints, prepared to face all the rigours of a hostile world in spreading abroad the news that had suddenly, overnight, become reality.

First of all Mary Magdalene, at the sepulchre, 'turned herself back and saw Jesus standing,' so aged by suffering that even she, who loved him, did not recognize him. Then, that evening, when the disciples were assembled together, Jesus appeared in their midst bringing with him so inscrutable a hint of His Presence that they knew the Divine was with them, simply by the out-flow of Peace that came from him. For we may surmise that like Mary (and Peter and Nathaniel later) they 'knew not that this was Jesus, whose hair was perhaps white with shock and whose face had become that of an old man, for it was only when he had shown them his hands and side that 'they saw the Lord.'

The Gospels are so universal in their symbolism, even in their smallest details, that they continually face us with what can only be termed a kind of personal application. How deeply—as creatures of the same calibre and frailty as ourselves, who had lived in the light of the Master's presence, who had talked with him, eaten with him, listened to him, who presumably knew his Divinity in every nerve and bone of his body, and yet who simply couldn't believe, in the shock of physical separation, that he was 'very God of very God.'

'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails... and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe!' So the eternal sceptic wrestled in the breast of every individual, and faith flinched because what happens we had not visualised happening in that particular way, and we had never seen the world, through signs and wonders, to be 'not faithless, but believing.'

The crucifixion was not a debacle, because God does not make mistakes. Jesus need not have gone to Jerusalem; he need not have chosen death. He was utterly free and uncompelled. Indeed, we do not know why he went to Jerusalem at that obviously fatal time, why he—so prematurely—chose to die. We only know that he deliberately did choose it, in obedience to that interior necessity that is called surrender to the will of God, and that out of his 'death' sprang something of world-wide and unprecedented power: that his influence, which during his life had been comparatively negligible, began from that hour to sweep across time and space.

But in the first hours no one had expected it to be like that; everyone had envisaged something so different, though Jesus had continually warned against presuppositions of the nature of his Kingdom: warnings which Sri Aurobindo also uttered about the forms the Supramental descent might finally take. It was then that compassionate command rang out to Thomas, and all who flounder with him in the difficult seas of incomprehension: 'Be not faithless but believing!'

HE HAS DONE IT

BY NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

He has done it; he has made Nature take the final leap. The mental being with its triple noli is at last bundled up and cast into the supramental status. As he has done and assured us

A seed shall be snor in Death's tremendous hour.

Nature shall overleap her mortal step—

the formed seed is now in the womb developing fast and sure, it awaits its moment to break out into the light of material and universal day.

We always said that Nature progresses by leaps: a crucial change in Nature, a change in the fundamental status and mode of being, involves a sudden jump from one level to another, there is no slow gradual progression, an imperceptible shifting down, by the accretion of infinitesimal alterations. Species change into species by a sudden overhaul, a quick somersault. We hazarded the theory, and scientists too cannot find any other way to explain the pace of Nature's stepping.

Here we have before our eyes the very phenomenon: its magnitude overwhelms us, for all other like phenomena in the past pale into insignificance when compared and contrasted with this one. Here is a supreme missing link forged, the hiatus that has joined the human and the divine. Death has never been chosen and utilised in such a supreme and sovereign manner: it has found its master.

Dissolution here means not disintegration and annihilation, but a temporal and necessary dismantling of parts in order to fill them with a new substance and reassemble them, re-create and re-integrate them. It is the process of a literal transmutation, the process a faint reflection of which the scientist seeks to reproduce in the transmutation of elements by a rearrangement of nucleons.

The physical eye cannot detect the purely physical details of the process of a physical change: it determine from the result. Much more remains occult in the case of the change in dynamic consciousness and life-forms involved in the changing of material elements. And the life divine is based upon such an occult process. He alone can see who eyes, the blind knows not: Pushkarni-akshar me vicharit snidhay, says the Vedic Rikth.

MY LAST 'DARSHAN' OF SRI AROBINDO

Continued from previous page

responsive to our aspiration almost as in his life-time. I even seemed to see the movement of his chest while he pressed his right arm from the shoulder to the elbow as if against his side! I still wonder if it was mere imagination or a vision I saw which made it seem as if it happened on the body itself. It might have been a vision but I clearly saw a current of energy rising from His feet and going continuously upwards above his head. There I felt it was uniting with God. That moment I felt that I had seen God with my outer eye. He seemed to be alive in a magnetic sense. The body was, as it were, independent of the usual mechanic process and lived by itself. The Mother had rightly called it a "thick concentration of Supramental Light in Matter." I thought that a layer of his flesh was alive because of its own force in it even if the rest was dead. When I think of this experience now I say to myself, "Even the dead body of my Master proved to me that He is God." Indeed He was and is still. We feel His Presence all the time. Sri Aurobindo came to give to the world the new principle he was trying to discover and make perfect in his body—the principle of keeping it young and ever-growing like a child, the child, and the principle of immortality. Had the Mother not been with us we would have thought the secret lost for the world but she is there who can yet establish this Truth. What He has given us in one life the earth will reveal in the world through the writings and teachings of the Rishi and that every true seeker and aspirant of God will soon discover. My prayer is "May the Mother live long with us and may we be worthy of doing Her great work of transforming the world!"
SRI AUROBINDO AND THE WESTERN WORLD

BY A. L. CRAMPTON CHALK

"It is, then, by a transformation of life in its very principle, not by an external manipulation of its phenomena, that the integral yoga proposes to change it from a troubled and ignorant into a luminous and harmonious movement of Nature." (The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 156).

The first, substance, and essence of outlook on life in the West is external. Life is accepted, almost without a hint of question, as consisting wholly of phenomena; there is generally a shadowy presumption that there must be other phenomena behind the grossest externalities, but it is taken for granted that all and everything is, or can be related to, measurable matter; whereas the organism itself is conditioned existence with close parallels to earth, to judge by religious treatment of that state. The whole attack upon the ignorance, misery, and gross unnaturalism of human life is through the external manipulation of phenomena, to use again Sri Aurobindo.

It is true that the validity of practical mysticism is, to a very small extent, admitted but this is considered to be rather a psychological aberration than a normal progression to a superior state of being. Such a thing as "a transformation of life in its very principle" has in general no effectual intelligibility to Western minds; there is no recognition or appreciation of any acceptable inner experience to which it can be related, nor is there any consciousness of the transpersonal or super-personal spiritual or Divine principle, whose Will it is that forms, refines and infers the phenomena of the universe, much as an artist does the work of his creation. Such an idea as that a normal human being might penetrate behind his own personal humanity to identify what he found left of "himsell" there with the Divine-principle of life, simply could not find general lodgment even in the front ranks of Western thought at this time of writing. But this idea is the essential of the teaching of Sri Aurobindo; so that it must be admitted at once that in this respect Sri Aurobindo speaks the truth, and nobly. This spirit is virtually an unknown quantity to the West at the present time. Even in the sympathetic closet of The Times, of London, the magnificent new conceptions opened up to the world in The Life Divine are noticed as "his massive work in two volumes" without comment. This pathetic myopia is characteristic of the Western world now, but what of the future? What vast designs of spiritual revolution may have been formulated as part of Sri Aurobindo's work, mission, and movement among men? The inner labour over its own lot and destiny; its notions and theories of its own existence are being shaken, tested, and unravelled by the weapons of the age-old adversaries— the Body versus the Soul, the Kaurava versus the Pandava. The days when the ballot-box was to rule in the face of events to ensure the need for fire sacrifice and action are numbered, if not already past, and humanity—the East as well as the West—is faced with choices that necessitate reference to the innermost souls of men. There never was, in recorded history, such profound crisis as that of the Western world now, and it is in this dread context that the implications of Sri Aurobindo's illumination and vast purpose must be considered. Is it not likely that this is the crux of human life to move forward of the spirit of man to a new conception of life and living, to a solution of its sorrow and perplexities, and to an Aurobindonian illumination of its duty and spiritual destiny? How this could come about physically need not concern us too much; there are facilities enough available in this scientific age and in the Time-Spirit's purpose, if necessary, and the printing press can put anything within reach of almost everyone in the world today, save only those souls who are at present pressed into the dark ranks of Russia and her satellites. The West is not fettered to tradition as closely and severely as is the East; it can change its mind, direction, its sciences, and its beliefs very quickly—indeed, with almost bewildering rapidity. The enormous energy, as well as the common sense and tough flexibility under strain, of the Westerner has saved his civilization before; if now his qualities were to be utilized within an extension of his general consciousness, through the intercession of the Time-Spirit, what marvels might not be accomplished? If, for instance, the supreme common sense and practicality of the Aurobindonian gospel and way of attainment were to get a grip of the whole Western world, the construction of spiritual enlightenment, material and executive ability that would be brought into being would be enough to sweep humanity to a new level of evolutionary attainment almost overnight. The overwhelming victory of the Pandava would be re-enacted once more in the human cycle, and by Krishna's help another vista of life fulfilled opened up to Arjuna and the race of man.

Let the present spiritual obsolescence of the West not blind us to the tremendous possibilities of its attainment through its own media and the channels which it has dug for itself; indeed, it may find the clue to the future through the very frustration of its present methods, combined with its restless power and fertility of expedient. Maheswar working with Mahakali, to give Mahabharata—the essential spirit of the West—her place once in the scheme of things, and to enable Mahakalas to give joy and lovefulness to man's life.

We may well believe that Sri Aurobindo, himself scrupulously and abundantly prepared and charged with the soul, learning and genius of the West, was and is chosen by Highest Destiny to bring the gospel of this new revelation of the spirit to the world-body which has been developed and brought to the purpose and critical point of receiving it.

SRI Aurobindo's MESSAGE OF A NEW HUMANITY

A LETTER BY DR. HUGO BERGMANN OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY, JERUSALEM

(From "Israel and India", January 1951)

Dear Mr. Pollack,

Your cable brought me the sad news of Sri Aurobindo having passed away. You have asked me to write an appreciation for India and Israel of the man whom the Western world has lost. No one of whom I would like to do so, would it not be possible for me at the present instance—numbed as I am by the distressing news—to do justice to the great task of exposing Sri Aurobindo's teaching and its importance for the religious life of present and future—humanity. Permit me therefore to say a few words as a Jew.

Sri Aurobindo's message about the arising of a new humanity touches the heart of every Jew brought up in an atmosphere of Messianic hopes. In my opinion, Aurobindo's guiding principle is actually almost identical with Jewish Messianic hope: the Man of today is considered a transitory being, a tool, which God has destined to prepare the way towards a new, re-born humanity; this new humanity will arise in the spiritual transformation that will bring the kingdom of heaven down upon the earth. Three times a day in our Aleinu prayer, which terminates every service in our synagogues, we Jews pray for the coming of the kingdom of heaven: "Tell it to return, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens in those days will I pour out upon all flesh."

We find the same message of a new humanity in Jeremiah (24, 7; 31, 32; 32, 39); Ezekiel (11, 19; 36, 20; 39, 29); Isaiah (32, 15; 44, 3); Zechariah (11, 10), and throughout the book of Daniel.

In last year's congress our Messianic hope and message has become coloured and trent; often it has even been misunderstood to support narrow political aims. Sri Aurobindo has revived the Messianic idea and hope in its full cosmic meaning and implications: he identified the kingdom of heaven with the Indian Satyageeta and saw it not as a far-off dream or vision but as a very topical idea and action-programme. He wrote: "The time is at hand for a first movement upward, the first attempt to build up a new harmony and perfection. The whole heart and action of mind of man must be changed, but from within, not from without, not by political and social institutions, but by realization of God in ourselves and the world and remoulding of life by that realization."

Here our Messianic hope forms the very core of a philosophy which does not successive in just being a theoretical mode of thought but aspires to become the way of life of humanity.

On the fifteenth of August, 1947, the day when Free India was born, Sri Aurobindo proclaimed: "I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, to achieve expansion, progress, power and glory—not though those too she must not neglect—and certainly not like others to acquire domination over other races, but to live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race." Those aims and ideals in their natural order were these: the achievement of India's freedom; the liberation of Asia and her restoration to the great role which she had played in the progress of human civilization; the rise of a new, greater, brighter, and noiler life for mankind the realization of which, would be outwardly expressed by an international brotherhood of peoples; the gradual illumination of the gift by India, of a great spiritual leader of mankind not only to Free India, but also to Free Israel.

Sincerely yours,
(SD) HUGO BERGMANN.
When, in the nineteenth century, the growth of physical science and biology gave rise to a materialistic interpretation of life, the existing metaphysical and theological structure of Western thought collapsed, with the result that the ultimate question behind moral and spiritual values was destroyed. With the advent of Comte and the Positivists, a man-centred world-view was substituted for the traditional God-centred one; God was eliminated from man's life—His Reality was either denied or He was reduced to a powerless, impotent, straw-like Entity who had nothing to do with man's existence on earth. Values, without a Higher Reality in which they could find their absolutes and their ultimate sanction, became relativised.

Viewing the success of Materialism in a larger perspective, it can be said that through the discoveries of science and the pursuit of secular ideals advocated by the Positivists and the Humanists have contributed to the growth of man's material, economic and social life to a certain extent, they have not succeeded in solving the fundamental problems of life—the riddle of the universe remains unanswered; and because it remains unanswered man is unable to co-operate consciously with the underlying purpose of existence.

He finds himself in a world which is either hostile to him or indifferent to his needs and aspirations. He does not know why he has been born on this earth, or what the goal of life is. If he is given the gift answer: "To serve humanity," he answers back: "And what is humanity created for?" He wants to be able to create a perfect society wherein an individual may live happily, but he does not possess the light by which he can act truly and effectively; he has the knowledge neither of the true nature of man nor of the God centre of his moral and spiritual life. He is utterly ignorant of ends and purposes. This is the plight in which the thinking man finds himself today; there is turmoil and confusion and the individual life and anarchy and chaos in his collective existence. The machinery of civilisation which he has created by reason of his scientific and technical science has become unmanageable for him. His moral and spiritual development has not been able to keep pace with his material and economic development: his psycho-spiritual growth has not been proportional to his physico-vital growth; and more reason, instead of seeking the highest truths, he ministered to his desires and hangover.

So it is apparent that what is really needed today is an interpretation of existence, a philosophy of life that can show man his right place in the universe, his relation to his Divine Source and the raison d'etre of existence; a philosophy that can give him a law of right action and conduct, not a narrow and rigid code of morals, but a dharmic, a law of life based upon a direct knowledge of the Divine Reality—a Spiritual Ethics; a philosophy that can teach him to raise himself up from a lower state of being to a higher one, and show him the process by which he can conquer and transform his lower nature and evolve into a higher type of being; a philosophy that can give him an insight into the working of the forces that govern his individual and communal life and show him his relation, to his fellow-beings, and guide him in his international relationships and help him to forge a world-unity. It is obvious that for creating such a complete philosophy of life only intellectual power is not enough; together with it, spiritual illuminations of a religious order are also needed; just as it was taught by Gandhi in his World Crisis and India: With Kamal's philosophy woke up from its dogmatic slumber and became critical; now it has to wake up from its agnostic stupor and become not merely constructive but revolutionary and creative, and this can only become possible if the metaphysical which forms the foundation of the new world-view, its Unterbau, is itself based on an integral spiritual realisation; that is, if it has for its leading concepts truisms apprehended in immediate spiritual experience of the Integral Divine Reality.

Whilst the metaphysical and theological structure of European thought was being destroyed and the old world-view was being discarded by the Materialists and the Agnostics, attempts were being made by some of the non-materialistic philosophers to salvage higher values by giving an interpretation of existence. This tendency gained in strength in the twentieth century, when attempts were made to create a secure foundation for the eternal verities in man's philosophical and moral reason. Whilst thinkers in Europe were trying to create a spiritual basis of life with their philosophical and socio-political philosophies, the American-inspired neo-philosopher in the south of India was writing new values on new tablets. Metaphysician, poet and socio-political philosopher, a God-realised rishi and Master of Yoga, Sri Aurobindo of Pondicherry becomes reincarnated in a body on earth in 1914, a "newly awakened soul, the first of valiant spirits, the leader of the highest of the highest integral spiritual experiences. After establishing contact with the all-revealing light of the Divine Intelligence, the Supermind, he began to create a new Weltanschauung; he wrote treatises on spiritual and socio-political philosophy, together with interpretative works on the traditional philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is this traditional philosophy of India that he reinterpretated in the light of his own realisation. When he created new values he by no means discarded the traditional values, but took what was true and abiding in them and assimilated them in his higher synthesis, thereby raising them up to their highest significance and showing them the way to their fulfillment.

It is only now that these works are getting the attention and recognition they deserve. Professor Sorokin of Harvard University, known as the most translated sociologist in the world, writes: "From the scientific and philosophical standpoint the works of Sri Aurobindo are a contribution to the pseudo-scientific psychology, psychiatry, and educational art of the West. Sri Aurobindo's life-long works on the practical and theoreetical values of man are of great importance for the world of science, ethics and humanities..." And Professor Piper of Syracuse University remarks: "The greatest gift of Sri Aurobindo to me as a philosopher is his magnificent perspective of existence, in three directions: the dignity and destiny of man; the meaning of long-time evolution, the laboratory of the Divine; and the universal dynamic of Cosmic Intelligence... He realises a happy blend of the perennial wisdom of the East and the best of modern western thought, for we should not forget that he was educated at London and Cambridge, and was acquainted with European culture."

The scheme of his world-view, the architectonics of his Weltanschauung, is briefly stated by Sri Aurobindo in the following extracts taken from the Argo.

"The main idea which has governed our writing, was imposed upon us by the very conditions of the problem. All philosophy is concerned with the soul, the fundamental nature of man, the fundamental meaning and the forms in which existence presents itself to our experience. The deeper experience shows that the fundamental truth of the Spirit; the truth of life, truth of form and shaping force and living idea and action... Our view is that the most directly created by reason of the self is an unreal one. Spirit being the fundamental truth of existence, life can be only its manifestation; Spirit must be not only the origin of life but the basis of its pervading reality and its highest and total result. But the forms of life as they appear to us are at once its disguises and its instruments of self-manifestation. Man has to grow in knowledge till they cease to be disguises and grow in spiritual power and quality till they become in him his perfect instruments. To grow into the fullness of the divine is the true law of human life and to shape his earthly existence into its image is the meaning of his evolution."

"The problem of thought therefore is to find out the right idea and the right way of harmony; to restate the ancient and eternal spiritual truth of the Self so that it shall re-embrace, permeate, dominate, transfigure man and physical life; to develop the most profound and vital methods of psychological self-discipline and self-reflection, that the mental and psychical life of man may express the spiritual life through the utmost possible expansion of its own richness, power and complexity; that it seeks for the means and motives by which our external life, his society and his institutions may remodel themselves in progressive self-mastery; that the truth of the spirit and develop towards the utmost possible harmony of individual freedom and social unity... This is our ideal and our search..."

"The effort involves a quest for the Truth that underlies existence and the fundamental Law of its self-expression in the universe—the work of metaphysical philosophy and religious thought; the sounding and harmonising of the psychological methods of discipline by which man purifies and perfects himself—the work of psychology, not as it is understood in Europe, but the deeper practical psychology called in India Yoga and the application of our ideas to the problems of man's social and collective life."

"Philosophy and religious thought based on spiritual experience must be the beginning and the foundation of any such attempt; for they alone go behind appearances and processes to the truth of things. The attempt to get rid of their supremacy must always be vain. Man will always have to generalise and try to penetrate behind the apparent fact, for that is the imperative law of his awakened conscience. Harmony will always turn his generalisations into a religion, even though it be only a religion of positivism or of material Law. Philosophy is the intellectual search for the truth of things, religion the attempt to make the truth dynamic and the motive power of the soul. They are essential to each other; a religion that is not the expression of philosophical truth, degenerates into superstition and obscurantism, and a philosophy which does not dynamise itself with the vitality of spiritual and religious spirit is a barren light, for it cannot get itself practised. But again neither of them gets their supreme value unless raised into the spirit and cast into life."

"What then shall be our ideal? Unity for the human race by an inner oneness and not only by an external association of interests; the resurgence of man out of the merely animal and economic life or the
merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence; the pouring of the power of the spirit into the physical mould and mental instrument so that man may develop his manhood into that true supermanhood which shall exceed our present state as much as this exceeds the animal state from which science tells us that we have issued. These three are one, for man’s unity and man’s self-transcendence can come only by living in the Spirit.”

“This truth had to be worked out first of all from the metaphysical point of view; for in philosophy metaphysical truth is the nucleus of the rest, it is the statement of the last and most general truths on which all the others depend or in which they are gathered up. Therefore we gave the first place to The Life Divine…”

“The Gita we are treating as a powerful application of truth of spirit to the largest and most difficult part of the truth of life, to action, and a way by which action can lead us to birth into the Spirit and can be harmonised with the spiritual life. Truth of philosophy is of a merely theoretical value unless it can be lived, and we have therefore tried in The Synthesis of Yoga to arrive at a synethetical view of the principles and methods of the various lines of spiritual self-discipline and the way in which they can lead to an integral divine life in the human existence. But this is an individual self-development, and therefore it was necessary to show too how our ideal can work out in the social life of mankind. In The Psychology of Social Development, we have indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In The Ideal of Human Unity, we have taken the present trend of mankind towards a closer unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting to them in order that real human unity may be achieved…”

A seer-philosopher with such a lofty mind and illuminated vision, a God-attained spiritual figure worshipped by people of all sects and creeds, is indeed a World-teacher—one who can give the man and women of this world and their sons and daughters not merely instruction and education but a way of life, a dharma, and lead them on to a greater and diviner existence. Therefore it is but fitting that there should be a proposal to establish at Pondicherry an International University Centre open to students from all parts of the world. In an appeal for donations issued by the Mother, Sri Aurobindo’s co-worker to whose able hands he has entrusted his mission, we are told that one of the most recent forms under which Sri Aurobindo conceived of the development of his work was to establish at Pondicherry such a University Centre, and that the instruction given there will be based primarily on his own teachings. What the basic nature of this instruction will be, can very well be judged from the extracts given above. It is obvious that the boys and girls who will be attending this University will learn not merely how to earn a living, but what life is, and the high purpose behind it with which they have to co-operate; not how to be “successful” in an egoistic worldly sense, but how to live in the light of the Highest Truth and attain perfection—this they will learn not through a stern discipline imposed on them from without, but by a growth of consciousness from within. Further, as the ideal of Sri Aurobindo is the integral perfection of man, it is certain that no side of man’s many-faceted being will be neglected—not only will his intellectual, aesthetic and emotional being be moulded to express the Highest Truth, but his physical being will be so conditioned as to become a fit and pliant instrument for receiving and manifesting the Divine Light. Matter too is Brahman, a mode of the Divine Reality, and therefore cannot possibly be left out if a total perfection of the earth-consciousness is envisaged. So the education given will naturally include physical culture—gymnastics, sports and athletics.

This University Scheme is sure to receive support from people both in India and abroad, especially America, England and France, for Sri Aurobindo’s appeal is very wide—all faiths and nationalities find the light they have been seeking in it. This once again goes to prove that wherever there is a genuine manifestation of the Divine Light men with all their sins will be drawn to it—for when the Light beckons there is no holding back. In spite of the upsurge of the brute in him from time to time, there is in man a spark of the Divine, a scintilla dei, that always responds to the Light when it manifests. It matters not whether he is an Englishman or a Hindu, an American or a German; the secret bond between the human soul and its Lord transcends all sectarian and credal barriers. An English Churchman, Rev. Hill writes: “Aurobindo is the greatest contemporary Indian philosopher and great in the company of the greatest mystics of all time …...Because Aurobindo is in the world, the world is becoming able to express progressively Unity and Diversity instead of Division, Love instead of Hatred, Truth-consciousness instead of Falsehood, Freedom instead of Tyranny, Immortality instead of Death; it is becoming progressively that which it is: a movement of the Spirit in itself.” And a Hindu poet, Rabindranath Tagore prophesies: “You have the Word and we are waiting to hear it from you; India will speak through your voice to the world.” It seems that the time has now come for the people of the world to take to heart the Word that has been given to them, and to try to understand the full significance of its great Message—the progressive divinisation of the human race, and the beginning of a new life for them, a life that is an expression of the Spirit, a life that fulfills God’s purpose in the world, a life that re-unites Spirit and Matter in the divine consummation of both. Sri Aurobindo’s teachings together with his personal influence which works silently from behind the surface veil of life and overtly through the Mother, should go a long way towards moulding the future of humanity and forging a world-unity on the basis of spiritual oneness.

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The Sri Aurobindo Memorial Fund

One of the most recent forms under which Sri Aurobindo conceived of the development of his work was to establish at Pondicherry an International University centre open to students from all over the world.

At this University the instruction given would be based primarily on Sri Aurobindo’s own teachings and writings, and the education generally would be along the lines indicated by him.

It is considered that the most fitting memorial to his name would be to found this University now so as to give concrete expression of the fact that his work continues with unabated vigour.

To give effect to this proposal, it is necessary to collect a substantial amount of money and the public are requested to support this fund generously.

Payments should be made only to those persons specifically authorised by the Mother. They will produce, as authority, a copy of this appeal signed by the Mother. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to “Madame M. Alfassa, Sri Aurobindo Ashram”.
There are three well-marked stages of man's evolution. Man started as an infra-rational being, guided entirely by his instincts and impulses. He had a crude mind, but no intelligence to whose judgment he could refer his life and action. The next stage was that of reason when his rational instincts coincided with his activity for its own third, spiritual and super-rational, man's whole life will pass into the hands of the Divine—yes, the Divine not the frail fallible priest. These three stages are purely internal and do not depend on external circumstances. They are stages in the human mind, not in the human world. No man is wholly infra-rational and no man is wholly super-rational. A man is neither a brute nor a God. In him the brute and the God live side by side and they act together. It is not possible for a man or a group of men to belong solely and entirely to one of the three stages. Ever in the mind of the barbarian, there is some conception of religion, some idea of this world and a hereafter. That idea will possibly appear vague to us, but it cannot be denied that the barbarian thinks, that he can distinguish right from wrong, that he has a social life of some kind. There were primitive men even before these barbarians, who were almost entirely guided by their instincts. There is ample evidence that man had it long before. General degeneration, as well as these people's sense of conduct and some idea of religion however crude. Pure rational intelligence and pure spirituality can remain in the minds of very few people. But, with progress, their number goes on increasing, that is why a progressive life. The man of our age may be characterised as rational or spiritual age. The example of the first was Greece, of the last India.

Greece was dominated by the thinker and the philosopher; India was dominated by God-lovers and godly persons. In both countries the dominant class influenced society and the state. Man was being slowly attracted by higher ideas, but had not yet realised the secret behind them. But progress did not stop here. In India, the influence of the few saints and mystics blossomed out in the Upanishadic age. In old Greece the thoughts of a handful of philosophers developed into the flow of knowledge of the Sophist age. This kind of blossoming out can lift a few people very high, but the masses after the first flush of ardour, humility weakened in any civilised country, these wild tribes rushed not yet ripe for all round progress, the awakening of reason must be more general. But there are dangers ahead. Intelligence does not wake up in all nations at the same time; where it wakes up, the people becomes cultivated and civilized—as in Egypt, Assyria, India, Peru and China in the East, and in Greece and Rome in the West. But these civilised countries were surrounded on all sides by rude sturdy barbarians, wandering tribes of the desert or the mountain. As soon as the central authority weakened in any civilized country, these wild tribes rushed in from all sides and put an end to all order and progress. This happened again and again in history, before physical science put tremendously effective weapons in the hands of the big empires, weapons too powerful for the barbarians to tackle. As soon as an old empire passes away, new hands of the wild tribes, Nature resumed her work of evolution with the new conquerors and developed new methods and new civilisations. Many instances of this may be cited. In Europe, there was a gap between the Chinese and the barbarians; between Charlemagne in Asia, the wild Scythians adopted the Buddhist culture and established an empire with Tseta as the Capital and the descendants of Timur founded the imperial throne at Delhi. Intelligent and cultured passed away and new ones took their place. Human progress was maintained. A like fate overtook many old religions. A generation of self-seeking priests set about multiplying meaningless rites and ceremonies in order to shake people off from the mind of the old conventions. The people swallowed what they said because they knew no better. Thereafter arose reformers and preachers from time to time and preached a simple cult of devotion, often proclaiming along with it the equality of all men before God. A period of reforms began. The general degeneration continued, but till a light descended from above and ushered in an age of Reason.

In the next chapters, "The curve of the Rational Age" and "The End of the Curve of Reason," Sri Aurobindo traces the growth of man's intellect and character. The modern age is characterised as an attempt to discover a secure basis for a rational system of society. It has resolved itself into an uninterrupted series of radical progressions. At every stage the root principle of society is question. Human social democracy has so far merely happened, with the original thinker puts forward a central principle; it is seized upon by the general mind becomes, as it were, a social gospel; then it is put up in practice, deforming the former principle and taking it out of the intellectual and emotional life. The principle can rise to his original level, but it does not become force. Its very novelty is attraction enough for a time. But after a while tinkering begins; still even then no one thinks of questioning the general principle. But a time arrives when disillusioned reason proclaims that the old system was no satisfactory and repudiates the old conveniences. The result is a revolt and a move to a fresh radical progression. This process will continue till reason is satisfied. But can reason ever really be satisfied without relapsing into a "sleep of tradition" or rising to a spiritual age of mankind? Sri Aurobindo indicates three successive stages of political progress. The first, individualistic and increasingly democratic, with liberty for its principle; the second, socialist, culminating perhaps in a governmental communism, with equality and the common ownership of the material produce of human labour as its principles; and the third, anarchistic, with human solidarity in place of the class solidarity of the first, with fraternity and no government for its principle. "Till the third stage has its trial, it is Force that in the last resort governs."

It is individualism following up a period of conventions that has opened the door to the individual. There is a wave of individualism even before the establishment of reason, but their method was not logical, it was based on insight and intuition. They sought to understand life by symbols, types and institutions. This method is, however, not acceptable to the reasonist. The reasonist does not accept the idea that the ideas we have are facts, or that the facts we have are ideas. He does not accept the hypothesis, that to prevent ideas from becoming mere abstractions, the rationalist has constantly to compare them with facts. He also seeks to classify life's facts by the idea and bring them within his grasp. He is always testing both sides and facts to see if they tally. If they do not or if he observes new facts, he calls in new ideas. He is ever ready to change his ideas, for he has to take into account all existing facts as well as all probable facts, all realised truths as well as all conceived truths. He must apply critical reasoning, in order to see whether the idea is going to apply the test? It cannot be the intellect of a dominant class, for the acceptance of their decision would only increase their power and prestige. It cannot be the intellect of a few thinkers, for if the mass of people are infra-rational they will very soon turn the opinion of the wise man into a rigid convention. Therefore the reasonist of all, and alone, must decide things for the community. Thus does the principle of individualistic democracy come in. A benevolent ruling class governing by consent, it is the idea of democracy. It is the idea that each man should be free to live his own life and shape his own destiny provided he accord the same freedom to every other man. In all matters concerning the community, the decision of the whole is binding and final. A practical way has to be devised for finding out the opinion of the whole community. It is also essential that the individual should have sufficient intelligence to understand any question that comes up and that he should be able to comprehend what others have to say on the question. In practice, however, these ideas do not work as they should for three reasons—first, because the masses having lived by the instinct so long are unable to come to a rational conclusion; secondly, because the reasonist does not use his reason to disprove its own ideas, to doubt its views on others; lastly, because he does not use his freedom to adjust his life harmoniously with the life of others; it is more a spirit of rivalry and competition than of friendly co-operation which is the spirit of democratic ideas. The barrier is the common life of all classes and parties. And the conflict generally results in the victory, not of the fittest spiritually and intellectually, but rather of the most fortunate and vitally successful. This is a very different thing from the ideal that man set to realise.

What, then, should be done? Since it is education that opens man's intelligence, let us spread education far and wide. But first we have to agree with what this education is to be. In order to learn to observe events, understand their import and then come to a conclusion,—we should teach him to consider things calmly, and then let the community have the benefit of his thought and his decision. Above all, we should develop his character, teach him to cherish his ribs that the time has come for a realistic change. Man may for a time live by tradition, but his reason will never accept tradition or convention or institution merely because it is old or universally respected. Its very nature is to test everything by the rational intellect. Now, whose is the intellect that is going to apply the test? It cannot be the intellect of a dominant class, for the acceptance of their decision would only increase their power and prestige. It cannot be the intellect of a few thinkers, for if the mass of people are infra-rational they will very soon turn the opinion of the wise man into a rigid convention. Therefore the reasonist of all, and alone, must decide things for the community. Thus does the principle of individualistic democracy come in. A benevolent ruling class governing by consent, it is the idea of democracy. It is the idea that each man should be free to live his own life and shape his own destiny provided he accord the same freedom to every other man. In all matters concerning the community, the decision of the whole is binding and final. A practical way has to be devised for finding out the opinion of the whole community. It is also essential that the individual should have sufficient intelligence to understand any question that comes up and that he should be able to comprehend what others have to say on the question. In practice, however, these ideas do not work as they should for three reasons—first, because the masses having lived by the instinct so long are unable to come to a rational conclusion; secondly, because the reasonist does not use his reason to disprove its own ideas, to doubt its views on others; lastly, because he does not use his freedom to adjust his life harmoniously with the life of others; it is more a spirit of rivalry and competition than that of friendly co-operation which is the spirit of democratic ideas. The barrier is the common life of all classes and parties. And the conflict generally results in the victory, not of the fittest spiritually and intellectually, but rather of the most fortunate and vitally successful. This is a very different thing from the ideal that man set to realise.
democracy that exists today. It is a society where “a huge organised
competitive system and a frantically rapid and one-sided development of
industrialism,” is the rule.

As a result of these “initial bankruptcies of the rational age”, the
mind of man naturally turned towards socialism, which promised him
equality. Sri Aurobindo explains how socialism has had no better luck
than the institution of democracy in solving the problem of man’s group
life. Socialism had an initial disadvantage in having been born in a revolt of
the Workers against the Bourgeoisie and the Capitalists. Its struggle has
taken the form of a class war. What it wants to do cannot be done on the
basis of individual liberty, for that has been broken down. Socialism, therefore,
must dispense with the democratic basis and formulate perfect social
equality as its foundation. This equality cannot be secured if there is
any personal interest not to propagate; therefore, this right must go.
Who, then, is to hold property, who is to administer it? The community
as a whole, obviously. Thenceforth the individual exists only as a member
of the community. He belongs to it entirely—he himself, his property, his
labour, everything. His individual reason will decide nothing, everything
will be decided by collective reason, not only for society, but also for the
individual, who vanishes as an independent unit. Of course, there has
been a good deal of compromise in practice. In some countries of north
Europe, on the basis of reforms, practical socialism has compromised between
individual freedom and right regulation of the communal life,” and
this attempt has met with some success. The hesitancy of socialism, its
uneasy peace between two opposing principles, has to a large extent
been responsible for the success of “the more vigorous and ruthlessly
logical forces of Communism and Fascism.” It should be noted, however,
that the claim to equality does not follow necessarily from the collectivist
idea. Just as the individual who enjoys liberty, so is it the individual
who demands for himself equality with all others. When society insists
on equality, it is “the individual multiplied claiming it for himself and all
who are of his own grade.” However that may be, the extreme form
of socialism has crushed all difference between man and man. In fact, there
is no room in that socialism for the individual at all. It is always
the State, and nothing but the State. Can man be happy in such a regime?
The Nazi claimed that every man in the Reich was happy, he had never
been so happy in any other arrangement of society. But it is obvious
that it was the happiness of the unthinking man. We do not think it
likely that the individual would, in the long run, take this crushing out
of his existence lying down. Probably the next confiscation would decide
the matter finally. In the meantime we can take it as sub judice. We
quote just a few lines to indicate how Sri Aurobindo characterizes the two extreme forms of totalitarianism.

“In Russia the Marxist system of socialism has been turned into a gospel. Originally a rationalistic system worked out by a logical thinker... it has been transformed by the Russian mind into something like a social religion.” “In Fascist countries the swing away from Rationalism is marked and open, a surface vital subjectivism has taken its place... The essential features are the same in Russia and the Fascist countries.” “There is the seizure of the life of the community by a dominant individual leader... heed of a small active minority, the Nazi Fascist or Communist party.” Of the democratic trinity the first two—liberty and equality—have proved unsustainable in practice. But the third, brotherhood, may be tried next. What Sri Aurobindo says at the end of Chapter XIX is this: “The terrible compression now exercised... having fulfilled its immediate aim may relax and give way in calmer times
to a greater plasticity which will restore to the human mind or soul a
more natural line of progress, a freer field for their self-expanding impulse.”

The collectivist ideal may be attractive at first sight. The right organisation of society on a basis of equality ought to lead to satisfactory
results. If we consider efficiency, the power for production, power for
attack and defence, the highly centralised State may show greater success
than any other form of the organised State. It may well catch the fancy
of people for some time, but when they get to use the benefits enjoyed
by them they begin to look upon them as a matter of right and start
questioning whether they get enough for the freedom they have surrendered
to the State. This stage of discontent may start the spirit of individualism,
which the individual is ignored by socialist thought. But the inner being
cannot be hoodwinked for long. Sooner or later it is bound to assert itself.

Now, let us see how far anarchy, founded on brotherhood can help
man along towards his goal. Individualistic democracy laid too much stress
on the egotism of the vital and mental man, and socialism was
necessary to correct this mistake and bring forward the principle
of essential oneness. But it swung round to the other extreme, overstepped
the collective ego and sought to sacrifice the individual at the altar of
the group. Anarchism lays emphasis on brotherhood and declares all government
by man to be an evil. There is a gross violent form of anarchism to
which we need not pay any attention here. But philosophic anarchism
is gaining strength every day. The human mind is turning towards
a free and equal fraternity. The thinker of this school believes that all
States are artificial, all men are born naturally the same in
man. But as long as man needs rigid laws and a controlling authority,
there can be no anarchism. As man proceeds towards his goal, an inner
force leaves the phase of outside control. When he arrives at the summit of
his climb, there will be no need for State control. Man to man will be
a brother and all will live in peace and amity. Some say that this is an
unattainable ideal. But why should we admit that there is a limit to man’s
upward trend, why should man stop at the rational state? We are
assured that a faculty higher than his reason is bound to develop and
transform his whole life. But in the meantime we are not to sit idle;
we should by our rational effort climb higher and higher towards
the hill-top. Philosophic anarchism depends on two ideas—respect for one
another’s freedom and brotherhood of man. The first is based on reason.
But more regard for the rights of others is not enough. “I shall not
interfere with others” is a negative attitude, which cannot solve our
difficulty. What is needed is a positive policy, brotherhood, a readiness
to co-operate actively. But how to bring about this state without
use of force? For, if there is an appeal to force, total confusion might
ensue, destroying society altogether or there might come a retrogression
to a rigid socialism. The brotherhood that anarchism calls for is not
a rational state. It must be ushered in by a subtle faculty higher than
reason. Spiritual anarchism seems to be an intermediate panacea for
our ills. But its form is as yet vague. About some of its aspects we should
be on our guard. It seems to lay stress on asceticism and to belittle entire
life. We who follow Sri Aurobindo are not to think of destroying our vital
force; we seek to destroy nothing, but to divinise every part of ourselves.
Our ultimate end is to go up to the spiritual and supra-rational plane, spiritual anarchism seems to give us a glimpse of the bright existence
of that plane. Regarding the necessity of this spiritual transformation we
have no doubt whatsoever. But we must know what conditions must be

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**Cry of the Bird**

Mother, Mother, lift your wings!
Life stirs and I am awake
And I have eyes to see
You have shown me the light
Through your wings of night
And I would rise on the wind and break
Through the stars O suddenly!

Mother, Mother, lift your wings!
It is very dark by this feathered breast
And though it is warm and dear,
O I would fly
Through the great broad sky
With the long shadow of earth for nest—
Mother, where are you then?

Mother, Mother, lift your wings!
The voice of the dawn is calling me
And I am feeling strong:
I would chase the night
With the dawn’s own light
And dance with the upmost sea
With a wild joy for song.

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**Save One Snowed Summit**

Whereas from lofty station of today,
We turnning glimpse the landscape of the past,
Slowly it is revealed, and mankind’s vast
Progress may there be witnessed in display.

The nations, merging one in see, expand
Into the dimness, with the mist concealing
The valleys, but above the mountains stand,
Their sharp, or fair, or gaudy peaks revealing.

Beyond the heights of some we cannot peer,
Whilst others dwarf their neighbours, rising clear
As guides and landmarks to a many more.

Turning again, we look at Future Time,
Into the dimness of the State. This stage of discontent may not come very soon, but come it will, that is certain. The real “I” of man is his spirit and this spirit of the individual is ignored by socialist thought. But the inner being cannot be hoodwinked for long. Sooner or later it is bound to assert itself.

ELEANOR MONTGOMERY

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**TERENCE HEYWOOD**
fulfilled before it can come about and we must understand the nature of the advent and progress of the spiritual age. Sri Aurobindo has gone over Man's history in the last three in the last three in the last three chapters of the book.

Two complementary powers govern our normal life, both individual and social. They are— an implicit central will and a modifying power coming from the idea in mind. Thus the urge of the life force gets a conscious form and a conscious movement from the mind. Right at the bottom of the climb the direction comes from an automatic and instinctive urge. Higher up, on the mental plane a feeling of discontent and fatality led some men to talk of regulating life according to Nature, to put an end to the whole business, to have a clear idea of his mental life in the vague stages of evolution from the unconscious beginning to his present plane of rational intelligence. If man is not satisfied with the limitations of his mental state, he has to push forward to the supra-rational plane and not step down to the vital. The true supreme being is not a vital “auric” being but a supramental God. When Nietzsche says, “We have to become ourselves” or “We have to exceed ourselves,” it seems a perfectly sound teaching; but the question is, what is our true self? Again and again Sri Aurobindo replied that it is our spirit, our soul. When we speak of the superman we do not mean anything abnormal, anything repugnant to our normal manhood. But normal manhood itself is not a thing fixed and rigid. In man’s progress regarding the superman, Sri Aurobindo says, “the object of a true supermanhood is not to ascend and dominate for its own sake but precisely the opening of our normal humanity to something new beyond itself that is yet its own destined perfection.” Imagination is not a thing to be regretted; it is a door to self-exceeding. Man at his highest is a half-god who has risen up out of the animal Nature, he has started out to be the whole god.” Man seems to us to be a double nature—an animal nature, and along with it a semi-divine nature. The aim of the animal part is to increase vital possession and enjoyment; the aim of the other part is “also to grow, possess and enjoy, but first to possess intellectually” by the powers of the mind, and secondly to learn to possess and enjoy not so much vitally and physically, to grow not so much in the outward life as in the true, the good and the beautiful. A new power of existence, a new soul-power has arisen in man and he has to evolve this being to the end of evolving his entire life in its mould. This is the true law of his being and he has failed to satisfy it. Consequently the transformation of his life into the Supreme Truth, Good and Beauty is yet far off. Indeed rational man has so far failed to arrive at any decisive turning-point in his progress. The root cause of this failure is that man’s implicit central will still resides in his vital, he has not been able to lift it to a higher plane. The higher life is still a thing superimposed on our normal existence—an intruder. The two elements have not been developed, but without the vital, it has not been possible to redeem the life. The vital has now to be regained, made perpetually easy, uncomfortable and ineffectual by each other, somewhat like an ill-assorted wife and husband. “Man’s failure to solve the difficulty of his double nature is largely at the root of his unhappiness. Individuals have their own peculiarities of development and of expression of this imperfection, that the true reason is not to be - reached by the mind. Life will never submit entirely to the external, to the moral or aesthetic, phylical or scientific. Life may be represented for a while, but it is bound to assert itself again. So much so that at times the intellect, giving up all efforts to subdue the vital, enters its service in despair. Some such thing happened in the recent Materialistic Age. Man directed his intelligence to the study of Life and Matter, acknowledged that his mind was only an instrument of the other principles and employed knowledge to bring about their expansion and efficiency. As a result of this, civilization nations busied themselves in a plottish extension of commerce and a grand expansion of factories and armaments. For the indispensable purifying of humanity has come to an end with its terrible orgy of destruction from 1914 to 1918, there was no normal life for man. It was “Kili, Kili” everywhere. Fatigue came but no change of heart, the conditions passed practically in preparing for a new war; no doubt there was a certain amount of lip-talk but no one believed it. The next world-war arrived in a more ghastly form than the first. Now, at least, there is an awakening come? The U. N. O. is just now at work trying to tackle a very dangerous situation. The threatened storm may blow over. But real success will depend not on clever manoeuvring, but on our invoking the Highest Truth to our aid. In Sri Aurobindo’s words, “We have then to return to the pursuit of an ancient secret . . . the ideal of the Kingdom of God; the Secret of the reign of the Spirit over Mind, Life and Body.” He attributes the survival of the older Asiatic nations to the fact that they never quite lost hold of this secret. But survival merely to grovel in the dust is no real living, Asia must stir herself. She did not fail in worldly life because she followed a spiritual ideal; she failed because she did not follow it sufficiently, because she did not learn to make it the master of life. To rest is perpetual, we must seek to rise and grow, where the Spirit calls. At the present juncture tinking is not likely to be helpful. Humanity must try whole-heartedly to rise to a law “that is now abnormal to it until its whole life has been elevated into spirituality.” Our centre of living has to be a higher centre of consciousness. The central will implicit in life must be the spiritual will. Therein lies the secret of divine transformation. Hitherto our efforts have been half-hearted under the guidance of our rational mind. To achieve success we must transcend its limitations. Man cannot attain perfection by pursuing the round of his physical life, nor can he find it in the wider rounds of his mental life, his perfection lies in the manifestation of his ever-perfect spirit. Sri Aurobindo’s words are explicit: “Man’s road to spiritual supermanhood will open when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect . . . are no longer sufficient for him and that to . . . set free this greater Light within shall be henceforward his prevailing occupation.” A transformation of this kind from the vital and mental to the spiritual order of life must be achieved in one or many individuals before it can seize effectively the community. The mind of the community grasps things unconsciously at first, or in a confused manner. It is, therefore, only through the individual that the group can arrive at a clear knowledge and formulation. It can, of course, be urged that what emerges in the individual must have existed already in the universal Mind, but he is an indispensable instrument. It is in him, therefore, that all the new changes are first clearly effective power. The mass follows but in a very confused fashion. Otherwise mankind would have made a more rapid progress. For a spiritual change, therefore, two conditions have to be fulfilled. There must be one or more individuals of supreme consciousness, having the power and the desire to communicate their ideas and their power to the mass. And there must be a group mind capable of receiving and assimilating that idea and its power. This combination has not yet happened but is sure to do some important thing. So far, some partial and important change, that has been effected but the decisive change, which alone can re-create man in a diviner image, has not yet been accomplished. (To be continued)
A CRITIQUE OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

By R. SWARUP

A small portion of this article has already been distributed by NPS: we are publishing the full text for the first time. Mr. R. Swarup is the author of "Russian Imperialism: How to Stop It?", and the organiser and Secretary of the Democratic Research Service on behalf of which he has issued the following statement:

"That the need is urgent to-day for preserving the values of democracy and that India, threatened by totalitarian subversion from within and the possibility of attack from without, must wake up to the defence of her national independence and her way of life, are the sentiments which have inspired the establishment in Bombay of the Democratic Research Service, a non-partisan, non-profit organisation.

"The Democratic Research Service will devote itself to the task of disseminating information to the press, educationists and the public in general. The various media through which the Service hopes to function will include books and pamphlets, newsletters, press hand-outs, discussion and study groups. The Service has already published three pamphlets: Mr. S. R. Mohan Das's "Communist Activity in India"; Mr. Nguyen Duy Than's "My Four Years in the Viet Minh"; Mr. Philip Sprat's 'The Communist Peace Appeal'.

"The task of collecting and making available the information that is essential for public education on the face can only be performed if the fullest co-operation can be obtained from all those who are consistent democrats is available. An appeal is therefore made to those who are in agreement with Mr. R. Swarup, Secretary of the Democratic Research Service, at Maneckjee Wadia Buildings, Bell Lane, Fort, Bombay."

What is our foreign policy? It is difficult to be very exact about it, but, summarised fairly, its premises are: that the world is divided between two power-blocs; that they are equally good and equally bad—more bad than good; that with very little to choose between the two, we do not choose at all but maintain an attitude of moral superiority and neutrality between them; that when we do have to choose, we do so without any specific power-bloc and consider each happening and action on its individual merits or demerits.

This, in short, is our foreign policy—an independent foreign policy. We may fail to live up to it on certain occasions and make a mistaken application in isolated cases, but that is another matter. Further it is believed that this policy, if correctly pursued, will help peace within the means and scope India has of influencing international events.

There is a lot that could be said about this policy, for there are elements in it which are good. Even when one differs from it, one should consider it sympathetically. For one thing, it is well-intentioned and badly conceived when, on certain important points, it is worse than useless, and are mistaken, as we believe. Further it should be remembered that we are newcomers in the field of international politics and, with no past to guide us, we have to feel our way, grope and blunder till we can see more clearly and become sure of our steps.

Besides, we live in a situation where we are called upon to forget a good deal and learn a good deal and both processes are painful. All this would change, it is hoped, in time.

The Theory Of Two Power Blocs

After all this is conceded, it must be admitted that this policy is sterile and suicidal. While it is right in its aspirations, it is wrong in its reading of the world. No wonder our programme of action based on incorrect understanding of the world should lead to wasted efforts.

The whole fallacy arises from the way we have characterised the world. We have divided the world into two power blocs, one represented by Russia, the other by America, both morally of one piece, with very little to choose between them.

Now, this characterisation of the world is false. Russia represents imperialism, the totalitarian destruction of the individual, the subservience of ethics to expediency in conduct. America represents international cooperation, freedom and sanctity of the individual. To India, possessing the kind of values she does, Russia and America cannot be the same. It appears so far-minded to place them at per that we are led somewhat hastily to this view. There is so much misunderstanding round this question and so much depends on a correct answer to it that it is worth while to go into it somewhat fully.

What Russia Stands For

It is sad but true that when the old imperialism was almost dead, a new imperialism should be threatening the world. This imperialism is more ruthless, more thorough than anything ever known before. It is equipped with powerful propagandists, a theoretical apparatus which confuses masses of minds. Before its self-righteousness, the "White-man's burden" of the old imperialism is in crude rationalisation, indeed a guilty conscience. It is attacking, advancing, unending, claiming with the conviction that what it is doing is History itself.

* This imperialism is not satisfied with orthodox political and economic exploitation of others; it stands for the total subjugation of entire humanity under a single idea and one central direction starting from Moscow. It stands for the "Dictatorship of Industry", a monopolistic rule supported by a monopolistic economy. It stands for destroying the economic independence of the small man in order to complete the destruction of his political independence. As Lenin says: "It will be necessary under the dictatorship of the proletariat to re-educate millions of peasants and small masters, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, to subordinate all these to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership— in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of dictatorship of the proletariat—and re-educate proletariat ourselves who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke."

This imperialism stands for relativity of morals in conduct and violence as a method of social engineering. This has naturally led to regimentation, slave labour, secret police, speed-up, purges, progressive pauperisation, controlled thought, abolition of trade-union rights.

To us these practices are abhorrent and alien, but in the interest of world peace we should have kept this dislike to ourselves if Russia had limited these enormities to her own territory. But she is trying to force them on other countries as well, with the help of local Communists, the Red Army, tactics of sabotage, division and insurrection. The domestic ruthlessness of the thirties has exploded into an orgy of foreign aggression in the forties. This aggression which is inherent in her system is confirmed by empirical facts. In East Europe alone, she has conquered ten countries and subjugated 100,000,000 people. In Asia, she started civil wars and armed insurrection in Burma and Indo-China to destroy their freedom because she could not hope to use it for her own purpose. In Malaya and Indochina, the genuinely nationalist movement has been deflected from its straight path by Communist agents through a process of infiltration. In India, a campaign of terrorism, derailment, sabotage, strikes was unleashed, but thanks to timely action it has been prevented from worsening into the disaster of a Civil War. In Korea, Russia has passed on from the method of "Push" to that of overt aggression. All this speaks loudly for the fact that Russian ambitions are world-wide and include our own country as well.

The Communist leaders have not tried to hide this fact. Indeed, they have openly declared their intention on more than one occasion. This aggression is written in every important Communist document. Lenin said—

"We live not only in a state but in a system of states, and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with the imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. In the end either one or the other will conquer. And until that end comes, a series of most terrible collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states is inevitable."

The Communist International declares—

"To overthrow the international bourgeoisie and create an International Republic, all means will be used, including force of arms".

Three Stages

The above task of world conquest is set in different stages. According to Stalin, these stages are three. The FIRST stage is liquidation of the landlords and capitalists. The SECOND stage is liquidation of the peasants and handicraftsmen, or what Stalin calls "abolition of classes". This period includes also intensive industrialisation and militarisation based, in the language of communist leaders, on "the colonial exploitation" of the "countrieside". Then comes the THIRD stage for world conquest after intensive preliminary preparation, or in Stalin's words "to arm the revolution, to organize the army of the revolution against the foreign enemy."

The idea is to use an industrialised and militarised Russia as a "base" for further conquests.

This is Soviet Russia, and this is her threat to the freedom of every--

(Continued overleaf)
country in the world, a role for which she is ideologically, mentally and militarily prepared, which is inherent in her internal political-economic system and which is empirically confirmed by post-war history. This is a threat to the borders and frontiers of every country, and any realistic foreign policy must be based on the recognition of this dominant danger of the age.

Let us now turn to America and see if she is of the same moral fibre as Russia is.

What America Stands For

Our old distrust of "white" peoples clings to America as well, though, in part at least, she always supported our freedom movement. Part of this distrust is, of course, the fact that we ourselves are not free from one bloc—racist and we suffer from a sort of inverted racism. Besides, the old distrust is not the only thing. There is a vast campaign being carried on just now against her by vested interests who knows that America alone has got the necessary material resources to check her foreign ambitions. So she has turned all her guns towards America. Lenin said Communism could win when those "hostile to us have sufficiently weakened themselves—themselves within, to divide those whom she has decided to enslave and conquer. America spends millions of roubles in selling division, doubts, hatred and suspicion among its friends in this campaign, there are no allies, no foul language which she would spare. Now Lenin himself said: "We can and must write in a language which sounds among the masses hate, revolution, scorn and the like towards those of a different opinion."

The distrust and disavowal of America among many is based on the assertion that Americans have a Negro problem, that they are super-imperialists, that they are super-imperialists. Let us see how much weight there is in these charges.

It is no use denying the Negro problem in America and no one is more conscious of it than the Americans themselves. But let us see what this problem is like and how far it has been solved. In 1919, there were 76 cases of lynching, in 1945 only one. Between 1887-96, there were 1053 cases of lynching; between 1937-46, the figure had fallen to only 6. We do not say that lynching, however frequent, is not bad, but we maintain that in order to introduce a correction of perspective in a country which has recently an enormous communal massacre.

Further, it is true that "whites" as a class are better off than the non-whites, but even the latter are ten times richer than we are. For example, even in the South where the conditions are the worst, a Negro farmer family has on an average 69 acres of land to cultivate with about $3000 worth of land and buildings on every farm. The Negroes have their own retail stores, hotels, theatres, banks, their own newspapers, clubs, churches. Literacy is universal. In the worst depression days of the thirties, the Negro Community was spending $1,200,000 for gasoline, or more than 613,000,000 gallons a day. It is nonsense to speak of American capitalism as a thing which is needed in every country, whatever its colour. The money available for investment from all these profits was less than $7 billion. Even out of those $7 billion, a large part of it went to Negroes. We also note that of the various forms by which are sold to the world, half a billion of this goes to this class.

These are the facts about America's "poor-hallied capitalism" which is made much of in our country among which are called the "Leftists" with their minds formed on current slogans. The truth is that America is an economic society with a high level of prosperity for even the lowest with the result that whatever over-capitalisation there is at the top loses much of its sting and relevance to a comfortable well-off people.

The third charge is imperialism. Now, in point of fact, 95% of the total American wealth is produced, exchanged, distributed within the country and the rest of the world can alone contain, if it does, any element of imperialist exploitation, but it would hardly explain the enormous 95% wealth of this country on the solid foundation of which its prosperity is built.

Even that 5% represents exchange of goods, and now in the post-war period mostly gifts. Today, every American, whatever his class, is making a free gift of more than Rs. 150 a year to the recovery of the European world. If we call this imperialism, as some of the political intellectuals do (and also some of the economists who think that economics you can doubt but not their politics), then what should we call the booty and pillage which some of the countries have been recently practising? Such semantic confusions can only pay those who have their iron imperialistic exploitation to hide.

Those who explain this free giving by implying the gross motives to the giver are generally people who are either incapable of any generous conduct themselves—so they do not understand it when they find it in others—or they are people with whom it is an intellectual fashion to explain everything higher in terms of the lower—or they are people who have the Communist axe to grind.

In the light of these facts, it is being either intellectually obtuse or cynically dishonest or both to place America on a par with Russia. America is a vital democracy, Russia is a ruthlessly absolute dictatorship. America is a land of plenty, liberty, free elections, free speech, humane treatment, an army, an air force, a navy, a navy, a land of general poverty, forced labour, speed-up, purges, controlled inflation, black markets, and organized governmental crassly in the words of Morgan Phillips, the Secretary of War, in a recent speech to the American administration is far more "Progressive" than most of the radical governments of Europe.

We have discussed this point at length because Russia has been busy spreading division and distrust among those who should be comrades in a common struggle against a common danger that is threatening our revolution and our deepest values to-day. If by unfounded suspicion and vituperation, democratic forces are divided, the cause of freedom and national self-existence of every free country including our own will suffer.

There is Only One Bloc

The two power bloc approach is, in our view, a false approach. If it is so popular and commands so many adherents, it is because it is amathematical and so simplifying. It appeals to our sense of geometry and balance. The fact is, that in the world of today, there is only one bloc—Russian bloc. The rest of the countries are free countries, free to agree or disagree, free to build a united defensive front in the face of Russia's threat and preparedness to subjugate the world and, also, free not to build up this united defence and be swallowed up one by one.

There is not a single instance when, on any important issue, the democratic countries have not voted independently and differently in the UN. The indigenous nationalistic leaders must be liquidated and replaced by local Communists. Even the local Communist agents must be killed off for nationalist deviations, and replaced by those imported from Russia, who had served their time in the MVD. To illustrate, Kostov, the local Communist leader of Bulgaria, was replaced by the ruthless version of the Russian dictator and replaced by Cherveno who had worked many years in the Soviet Secret Service. That Russia directly intervened was beyond doubt when the Bulgarian Communist Party sent their greetings to Stalin on the latter's birthday: "Only thanks to your wise and timely instructions, highly esteemed Comrade Stalin, we managed to uncover the cowardly hidden enemies of our Republic, to uncover the agents of imperialist Powers, and to cleanse ourselves of them. Only your deep penetrating eye could see in time the criminal spy gang of Kostov. On this, your 70th birthday, we send you our deepest greetings that you helped us to render harmless the Kostov gang."
facts we still call the Democracies a bloc led by America and Britain in the same sense in which the Communist countries are a bloc led by Russia, it entails a kind of inescapable discrimination. It means that we do not insist on differences where differences exist and we only care for tidy, world-view-compatible, schematic constructs of our own imagination. Policies based on this simplified and inaccurate characterization of the world can only lead to mischief. Not to know our enemies in action is to ask for our own undoing. Because of our wrong reading of the world, we have pursued wrong policies. It weakened the Democracies, when the Democracies should be strengthened.

Coming to the next important aspect of our foreign policy, it is claimed that we must not antagonize our neighbor, in action, with any "power-bloc" and in judging every individual issue on its own merits.

Well, strictly speaking, in the Communist plan of action, there is no isolation as an isolated act such as. It is always a link in the chain, a development in a drawn-out plan of subjugating the world with the subordinate co-operation of local Communist agents.

We are not, of course, the only people who have taken this position. Several countries including America and the Labour Government of England pursued this policy long before we came on the scene. They had passed through very bitter experience before the necessary correction came. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania were annexed, and this was followed by the rape of Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Poland, Czechoslovakia. Each one of these acts happened individually while the basic motive-spirit was the same. But each time the general basic motive-spirit was neglected, and the world said it would consider each set individually. Thanks to this world-wide programme of slander and vituperation against those who by their power, prestige and determination to be free help free countries to remain free stood in the way of Russian expansion.

It is indispensable for India to develop a historical memory. She too must learn to anticipate the danger that Russia is coming in. She must realize that Russia is a concern as far as America is concerned, there are no isolated facts. It is all a blue-print, an x-year plan of world subjugation. Not to know this is not to know the A.B.C. of Communism, the expansive drive of Russian totalitarianism. Indo-China, Malaya, Burma, they are all links in the chain. The next link in India itself, as Mr. M. R. Masani pointed out in his speech in the Karachi debate in the Parliament last August. Lenin himself has said: "The shortest way from Paris to Peking is through Peking, Tokyo and Calcutta." We must look the danger in the face and plan ahead. We must give up living intellectually from moment to moment.

An Independent Foreign Policy

We should have an independent Foreign Policy: nobody can contest this fact. But we must guard against what this independence tends to fall into—that just to assert this independence, we defer, delay, stand aloof when into—honour, national interest demand that we should agree and evolve some common lines of defensive alignment against Communist aggression. Let us remember that the threat of Communism is not only external but also internal; and consequently it can never be met by local action alone. Let us remember that the countries which have joined the United Nations Front are not only interested in their foreign policy than we are. To suggest that England, France, Russia, Canada, Australia are free in their foreign affairs, at least to the extent we are, because they are members of this Front is not to think at all. Let us remember that this measure of unity with the so-called " Anglo-American bloc", but a measure of self-defence, a measure indispensable continued national self-defence, that to take this measure is not to compromise our non-involvement but to promote its meaning and continuity. Freedom does not necessarily mean freedom to stand aloof if we choose to, but also freedom to defend together and build together if we have to.

Today, undoubtably, we have freedom and independence, though the way we sometimes choose to assert them may be unfortunate. To show that we are independent, we must do it where we are not only recognized by Switzerland but also by the world. We have made it a point to agree and disagree with them alternately! But just imagine America being eliminated and Russia alone being in the Asian field. Will we have in that event even that freedom left? The Russian Army was marching over our land the next day; or we shall be added to the Russian Empire through the action of her local Communist agents. And we would not be able to do anything, for we should be friendless, and the aggressor would be able to force us to our knees.

Something like this happened in Korea. The U.S. Defence Department declared their lack of interest in Korea and, once this isolationist attitude became known, the invasion of South Korea followed. It can happen to South East Asia, to our own territory as well. If that section of opinion in America which preaches concentration on Europe and isolation with regard to Asia succeeds, supported by our own isolationism here, Russian armies will have a free hand in this continent.

Any realistic foreign policy must be related to these new facts in world affairs, to the new techniques of conquest and new forms of exploitation. There is a tendency, which still prevails in certain circles, to base our policy on old concepts, old experience of things, on memories of old struggles and quarrels. Many men seem to think that colonialism is the only evil and there can be nothing worse than that. Further, they seem to think that the only colonialism is the kind of colonialism that we have suffered in the East. This tends to close their eyes to a new form of colonialism, a new evil infinitely worse than any colonialism could be. Only, we have not got used to these new facts. Our eyes have not got used to seeing them and our minds to evaluate them. No wonder mistakes are made in our foreign quarters. But there is no justification for these mistakes to continue.

While we are essentially fighting for our own freedom and defence, this defence is closely bound up with the defence of the kind of world in which the continued defence of our freedom is automatically assured.

The struggle that is being waged today is not only about the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., though they are parties to this struggle as we all are, whether we like it or not. It is a deeper struggle, a struggle between forces of freedom, democracy, equal co-operation, economic advance through mutual aid and self-defence; one hand and force of darkness, slavery, fascism and progressive pauperization on the other. What we become tomorrow will depend on the outcome of this struggle, and the outcome of this struggle will depend on what we do and where we stand with regard to these basic issues to-day.

Basis for a Policy

We are faced with a situation in which we have been called upon to forget old quarrels and focus our attention on this new challenge. It is suggested the time has come when we must give up our peculiarly unrealistic and barren policy and base it on the recognition of the following solid facts:

1. that our freedom is at stake;
2. that this is a danger which we share with many free nations of the world;
3. that in the face of this global danger, a global strategy is needed;
4. that in order to make this global strategy effective, powerful, and organic, it should be based on local strength and regional security.

Not only do we stand for the defence of freedom and democracy in India and in the world, we also stand for redescribing some old wrongs. We stand for the liberation of dependent countries, the economic advance of undeveloped areas, free communication between people of different countries. For achieving these positive values, we should base our conduct in international affairs on the following:

1. Support to the cause of genuinely nationalistic movements of old colonies.
2. Support to the nationalist struggle of the newly conquered countries in East Europe.
3. Refusal to accord recognition to governments which capture power by abolishing Parliaments and maintain power by disfranchising all opposition. In cases where we are forced to accord diplomatic recognition to such governments owing to world circumstances, we should never place them morally in a par with governments based on free elections, unimpeached elections.
4. Peace in the world is possible so long as the peoples of the free world cannot speak directly and freely beyond the Iron Curtain, and vice versa. This is the most important single obstacle to peace.

5. Economic development in undeveloped countries must be related to the needs and resources of these countries and not to the interest of the rich European countries which are so directly concerned.
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

JEAN BAROIS by ROGER MARTIN DU GARD: (The Bodley Head, London 12/6).

Considering the nature of the vast majority of the novels that come daily out of the presses, it is not surprising that novels are looked upon as merely so pleasant good night reading for the idle time. And then there come out a few—a very few—which stir the deepest feelings or awaken the profoundest thoughts of the readers. Some of the most difficult questions of life and thought are behind the stories in such books.

In fact, facing the difficulty is the characteristic of the great writer while the easy way and the easy solution are the characteristics of the weak writer. To put it in a simple way: the great writer, who finds that good and evil are mixed together, the good man is not able to see the right things, and in spite of the best intentions the worst things are said or done. It is in the pictures of these things in such a manner that the proper values of actions, words and characters are finally seen through the mistaken founding. That great writing is revealed.

In Jean Barois the eternal human need of Faith is the basic idea behind the story. The failure of Reason and what is called modern science on the faith of an excellent man, and how he reacts to it are presented with such truth and vigour that the reader finds the story as attractive as any exciting book: it is indeed so exhilarating a combination that a moral and religious question is made so absorbingly interesting throughout the long novel. The serious thought, the close analysis of the motives and the emotions, the penetrating conversation, the consistent high tone everywhere, and the skill of making even the slightest thing have an attraction of its own are indeed the distinguishing marks of this author who won the Nobel Prize for The Thérèse.

Du Gard’s novel is written in the form of a drama: the scene where some people meet is described, and then their conversation is given. The whole story is thus presented through the conversation of the characters at suitable places, the only addition by the author being some observations about the appearance and dress of the characters. At the beginning of the novel itself the tension which is to develop in the course of the story is suggested. Jean whose mother had died of tuberculosis is showing a disposition that way, and his grandmother tries to save him by a pilgrimage to Lourdes, while his father, who is a Doctor, looks advance at spiritual help and advises practical means. He tells his son: “Pray with all your might, Jean, but never forget that the course of treatment I am going to prescribe comes first, and everything else—yes, even prayers—are of secondary importance.” The Doctor tries to stir up the well-to-live of the boy by insisting on the joy of being alive: “Not merely to stay alive, but go on loving what you love. Look, a thimble tree, that golden light, that dusky sky, the church tower. Look! This is life.” Jean nippages to pull there his last show, but he shows himself early the sceptical nature he had inherited from his father. He discusses religious questions with others, but faith does not come to him easy. Still he is troubled as he is kept busy with his studies of science and medicine, and then he falls in love with the daughter of his governess, whom he soon marries. His wife and her mother are devout religious people, but their influence does not cure him of his sceptical disposition. On the other hand his scientific studies influence him. How that happens is described by a friend of his: “How exciting it is, one’s first contact with a scientific method! It comes like a revelation and breaks on you like a great wave, sweeping you off your feet... All those familiar things you took for granted—it is as if you were seeing them now for the first time. You analyse them, test them. And from that there’s no escape; you can’t stop analysing.”

So Jean analyzed the tenets of his faith and in the growing tide of materialistic reasoning that rose high in France of the last decades of the nineteenth century his religion got submerged. He conformed to the religious practices of his wife for some time, but later he felt it a hypocrisy to do so. His name began to be prominent among the free thinkers, and finally their religious differences led to the separation of Jean and his wife, Cecile. Then he gave himself up whole heartedly to the work of the free thinkers, and started a journal for the purpose. It was at that time the natural thing to do, and he was loved. His friends supported Dreyfus, and after much hard work they were able to have his release, after that great achievement Jean began to notice that the idealism of his party was wasting. New ideas began to come to the fore and Jean’s friends were left behind. As a great change in values also was apparent in the atmosphere. Jean was disturbed.

In the meantime his daughter had grown up, and according to arrangement she came to live with him. She had decided to enter a convent. Her conversation and habits of life made Jean feel that a human being cannot live on reason alone, and that there are certain needs of the human spirit which can be satisfied only by faith and supernatural means. Following his daughter’s entry into the convent Jean and Cecile were united. Later Jean dies with the consolations of religion. But then his wife will have written some years earlier is discovered, and in that be declared himself an atheist.

So, what is the meaning of the story? It leaves the question to some extent open, just as it is in life itself—of the average unenlightened man. As to Jean, also there is a certain truthfulness in the picture. Jean’s atheism is unashamedly sincere. He is not questioning the truth; he is coming to the conviction that the great value beyond everything else. But in the end life’s experiences make him realize that the human spirit needs a Reality greater than reason to fall back upon. In his last days he was consol and made peaceful not by reason or by his friends who held to reason, but by spiritual comfort and the company of the priest Levy. The interesting way in which all this is pictured, the analysis of the struggles in the minds of the various characters, the refined, intellectual and cultural atmosphere of the whole story—all these make Jean Barois one of the most remarkable novels of modern times.

P. L. STEPHEN.

VITAL QUESTIONS OF LITERATURE

THE WRITER’S SITUATION by STORM JAMESON: (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London 10/6)

In an age that is full of characters and situations, writers are daily competing with one another for the rich things of life which they can bring to the writer’s press and which are daily wanting new things. Particularly is this the case for new things felt in this century because the old things of life, including religion and orthodoxy are being done away with for the thrills that third-rate writers seem to afford them. As a story writer Margaret Storm Jameson has been renowned in the old and new worlds and her book The Writer’s Situation we see the story writer turn critic. The 12 articles which she wrote during the years 1938 to 1949 are all brought together, and the critics vary from “The Form of the Novel” and “Paris” to “Creditors of France” (which is the last but one article). Storm Jameson recommends writers to ask themselves the usual questions that need to be asked by all writers if they are to be significant. “What am I? Why do I write? Wherefrom should I collate materials for my work? What was the idea behind the novel?” So few writers ask these vital questions, interested as they are in the bread-and-butter problem which they keep in the form. There are others who go so far as to take to Politics and debate their writings by allegiance to parties that forsake them the moment they come into power. A writer needs no party or patronage to bring out his best but the introspection that will make him see himself as he needs to be seen. The writer needs to tell people about their destiny, otherwise he is no writer, clever though he may be.

The articles “The Form of the Novel” and “The Novelist Today: 1949” will be read by all novelists and novel readers to see how far the novel today is a success or a failure. There is far too much of novel writing as there is far too much of poetry writing and they are written as indifferently that one is worse to reading even good novels when they come one’s way. The clichés and situations in a novel are so mechanical that Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice and Somerset Maugham have stepped out of their sanction to ask whether the writer has come to a point of intellectual or whether the masterpieces like War and Peace, Sons and Lovers, and A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man are possible today. Poets have come to the forefront and, as the article “W.H. Auden: The Poet of Angst!” states, Auden will not be forgotten for his elimination of all prosaic elements in his poetry, an elimination which makes it so difficult for readers to understand and appreciate him. According to Storm Jameson, Auden misfires as a poet because of a lack of fusion between his poetry and his prose. This can be said of most poets today, but most poets are young and Auden is not yet 45. The article “A Welsh Writer” shows Storm Jameson’s appreciation of Kate Roberts who, though not a wellknown novelist, is great enough to be appreciated by most on such a level that he can and should speak unflinchingly through characters who are not so slow to see the past as “an unbroken force” responsible for a great deal of suffering and oppression, and who can write in a way that can push away the stress of war that writers ask themselves searching questions. This brings us back to “The Responsibilities of a Writer” which boils down to “The Writer’s Situation” and “Writing in the Margins 1938.” Readers as much as writers will learn much from the book and appreciate the demand here as in Montague, Bennett and Maugham to comment illuminatingly on the writer’s trade and thus help the founts of literature to keep alive.

W. E. HOOKENS.
REFLECTIONS ON BERTRAND RUSSELL'S "UNPOPULAR ESSAYS" BY NATHANIEL PEARSON

Bertrand Russell has always been regarded somewhat as an iconoclast among his contemporaries, and something of an enigma to the younger generation. A committed and lifelong pacifist, ardent advocate of peace and liberty, a thoroughly individualistic and independent thinker, he remains almost the last link with an age that is rapidly passing into history. He was one of the growing band of freethinkers who, at the beginning of the 20th century, broke out of their purely academic shell, and applied their knowledge more to the problems of the world and the needs of humanity as a whole. Not content with a brilliant mastery of the analytical philosophy, Russell was one of the pioneers in elucidating Einstein's Theory of Relativity and explaining the underlying principles in a comprehensible way for the English-speaking world—he later branched out into the wider field of philosophy, and thence took sociology, morality, modern political science in his stride, finally broadening the horizon of contemporary thought with historical surveys of those ideas and beliefs that have most vitally influenced mankind or at least the western half of it. His abandonment of an inherited title (as Earl Russell) after the First World War, and his long sojourn in America, were but stages in his growing independent outlook, and in his emergence as a world thinker, particularly championing the western way of thought and pattern of life. It must be admitted, however, that he cannot be called an American. His is the full sensibility of the European and the world view first to agree), being too much of the down-to-earth rationalist to venture into higher spheres where logic is of smallavail. (An interesting coincidence we might note is that both Sri Aurobindo and Bertrand Russell entered Cambridge in the same year, 1895, and both 18 years later, being sent to different Colleges, Sri Aurobindo to study Classics and Bertrand Russell Mathematics).

Philosophy, World Events and Science

It has always seemed a pity that a thinker of Russell's wide calibre had limited himself solely to the Western sphere of thought, and ignored the vast field of Indian philosophy, the spiritualism and mysticism that the Western world has been slow to appreciate. This accounts for many other things; for his scepticism of the existence of the soul, on which Western thought has always been narrowly dogmatic rather than open and free. In his time, the danger that lay to the theologians was the inability of certain sectors of the human mind to define in vague nebulous terms the sphere and reality of the soul. Little wonder that Russell rejects this current version as untenable. He is frank enough, however, to admit that he has not the insight (as for instance his friend and contemporary Dr. A. N. Whitehead to some degree possesses) to enable him to delve very far below the surface of things. Hence his main attention and energy have been directed towards a broad survey of the currents and development of Western culture, rather than towards probing into the hidden springs and source of man's endeavours. Within this limited scope of inquiry, however, he has some valuable things to say, especially on the subject of present-day world events and tendencies.

Although this new volume of essays is apparently written in a light-hearted vein—often ironic though never cynical—there is a certain note and purport behind them. Most of them were written for the popular press and audience (some were public lectures) during the last few years. When they were written, he had the wide experience of the world and western thought in particular, and is consequently of deep concern to the world at this very moment. The major fault one has to find is that he does not go far enough in a positive direction. He thoroughly criticises and exposes the many weaknesses—superstitions, false beliefs, etc.—which humanity has consistently displayed throughout its history. From this we gather that there is little hope of humanity wakening, at least in its present state, of producing a condition of harmony and concerted action. In fact the greater the confusion of the whole world, the greater is the need for enlightened leaders to bring about that unity. Thus in modern dictatorships we see how, if it has become for the evil forces, taking advantage of widespread ignorance, to take root in and sway whole masses of humanity. Over half the world is suffering from disease and ignorance, and the rest of the world is living under the threatening shadow of their widening hold on man.

Having himself developed a clarity of thought and incisive power of analysis through philosophical discipline and study, Russell lays the blame for the present ignorance and blindness of the masses on the gross and distorting philosophy by which the world power-seekers. It is clear to see how even the most seemingly innocuous philosophy has lent itself to justify the system of military intervention. Two outstanding examples are the philosophies of Plato and Hegel, which have been largely utilised to justify the spread of such "ideologies" as totalitarianism (a crude exaggeration of Plato's "Republic") and Communism (through Marx's assimilation of St. Paul's gospel). This has led to the more enlightened educational system incorporating a broad and liberal study of the philosophies of man and far towards preventing the mass absorption of spurious doctrines. Like many other observers of current affairs, Russell is inclined to agree that man in his present frame of mind is back on a total self-destruction of his species, at least on greaty diminishing his numbers on earth. Elaborating on his theme of the function and place of philosophy as a possible corrective directing man's thought and action, he advocates a closer raproachment of philosophy with science. In this way philosophy will not only be more reliable and truthful, but it will also be brought into a practicable relation to human needs. He sees the practical and utilitarian purpose in life, rather than be necessarily wrapped in as it is at present in airy thought-structures and ideations. But although this is a necessary step it is scarcely a half-way move towards a complete departure from the present situation. Indeed, he finds that the analytic philosophy, that is, the preoccupation with the lower levels of cosmic and universal phenomena, and cannot through its present one-track methods admit the Reality of God, whose pure Nature is ever present and is largely masked in the lower Nature. And, further, while science absorbs itself entirely in the empirical and exterminates the inner link with God he squeezed out. And a soulless universe as the increasing product of an unbalanced scientific development is a dead world as far as men's progress and enlightenment are concerned.

The Empirical Method and Democratic Liberalism

The logical consequence of the introduction of the scientific outlook gives, as Russell points out, a fundamental basis of empiricism to philosophical thought which enables one to steer a somewhat midway course between authoritarian dogma on the one hand and scepticism on the other. This method of philosophy in its nature indeterminate, does not have to construct a blueprint of an age, a society, a man. Rather it tends to be negative—even nihilistic and destructive as modern thought shows—rather than affirmative and constructive. Even when we have finished reading and analysing the motives of our action in accordance with the empirical method, we are still left with the ethical problem of creating a unifying harmony, a concerted whole in which all the inconsistencies that our intellect has thus led us to expose can be reconciled. Here in these United Nations, for example, after Russell has made all his wide-sweeping and often indiscriminate attacks on faith beliefs and superstitions, he is left with the task of holding together the various relations, only one or two straws remain to give us a clue indicating the course present events are really taking. These, however, are valuable and necessary in the light of the account of and follow, if we are to reap the full significance of Russell's observations.

In the first place we are forced to agree when he states that either a world government must come into being—however despite it may be at first—as the fundamental basis of world peace and order. Or—and we must face the grim alternative—war or a series of wars will so reduce mankind in power and numbers, that some sort of scattered, though peaceful habitations, would be inevitably enough; which would be a backward step to the condition of a more primitive society. If so, or a large section of mankind, loses the power of ascending higher in the scale of evolution, then obviously widespread degeneration is the natural alternative. Unhappily the means suggested by Russell for establishing a world government in face of a radically divided world hold little hope of attaining that end by mutual agreement. Democratic liberalism, which he strongly favours, though it served its purpose in more stable times, cannot grapple successfully with the turbulent spirit of the present-day world. In itself a liberal democracy is too loosely knit to hold together the necessary necessary to hold diverse groupings together. Furthermore it demands a degree of individual preparedness for which the present world is obviously not possessed. The very freedom which it bestows on individual expression—though certainly an accompaniment of the accomplished ideal of world unity rather than a ready-made solution—would, when introduced prematurely, bring about its own destruction unless it was founded on some stronger and more dynamic development. Moreover, the primary aim must not merely be a unity of effort, but above all a unity of purpose. For it is precisely through the lack of this latter that the present efforts of the United Nations are proving to be so inconclusive. Unless the leaders or representatives of the several nations can exalt their own nation, thefatherland, to those above all that a nation has ever been only ready to supply its spurious definitive aim. And here Russell is apt to forget (until a crisis causes it to change its tactics) that humanity en masse is both to move in union unless there is the spur to good it can—nothing is ever possible, though, that which has appeared in the past under the name of authority, dogmaism, despotism or dictatorship.

Continued on page 2

*See Sri Aurobindo's "Ideal of Human Unity".
MOON-MOTHER OF DAWN

Cloud among clouds—as if a vagrant wind
Could blow the dim white disc away, rescind
The very being of the moon. Long
The full daybreak drowned her fire, smothered the song
Of the moon in sleep. Earth saw her witness-soul
As through a murky sea, a humbled whole,
And knew the living blindness of the bat.
The wide wide waking world was wrong side out!

But day was doomed. Already fingers of night
Up-stealing slowly through the softening light,
Were seen to sound a silent throning dirge;
Their dirge to day; an orthophonic sky,
Blue-deepening around the illuminating eye
Of night sustained in knowing harmony
The tone-containing seeing lullaby.
That crooned the phoenix-secret: day must die!

As of a sudden shot or distant shock,
A soundless signal from some cosmic clock,
The bland diffusion of the dissolving day
Was telescoped in one encircling ray:
One red, consummating ring of solar light
Revealed a blinding casablanca, fever-bright,
As sinking, the elevated heart of earth
Began to pay the age-old price of birth.
Great arterial streams of fiery mist
Gushed to keep an earthly shadow-tryzty
And spayed the wide western sky with scarlet flame...
Then turned, a wild and raging beast grown tame.

Out of the heavy mist the fire was gone
When earth's cradle rocked and blasted out the sun.
Under a residue of molten gold
A waiting prisoner was there paroled:
The night was rising in the eastern sky,
A deep and flawless lapia laniu.
Supernatural quiet bathed the air
And settled on the silent earth so fair

A benediction kiss, a long caress,
A wave of wonder full of loveliness—
An emanation that bequeathed the dew,
Assuaging sleep, allowing life anew.

Triumphant on the tidal wave of night
The moon had found her secret source of light
And like a deeply burnished master shell
Enclosed within her unfeasible heart's well
The sun—great hidden ray of virgin fire,
Immune white ultimate of earth's desire—
Then poured upon that dense black diamond earth
White lotus-flame, the miracle of birth
Above the waters of the night.

Child
Of the sacrificial sun and melting moon,
A progeny most infinitely wild,
The lily-light held dominion for a noon.
Indeed, it was as if a single breath
Of this white fire had power to banish death
And faces everywhere that turned to see
Were fortified with promised immortality.

Phosphor-seas and rivers danced delight:
In one mighty world-paradise rite
They rose from out the dumb deep-cumbered night
And spangled silent sanctuaries with a bright
And quick-confirming, single, mica-mirored
Glimpse...

As Time stood still and heard the toll
Of Doom: the sentence of the Age of Coal...

And roused, the white-fored Lily-Waters roared
The coming of the Reign of Golden Light,
The dawning of the Day of Diamond Sight.

ELEANOR MONTGOMERY

REFLECTIONS ON BERTRAND RUSSELL'S "UNPOPULAR ESSAYS"

Continued from previous page

Human Values and a Higher Order

Without the two prerequisites of enlightened leadership and unity of purpose, however, the machinery of organisation—political, economic and educational—which Russell indicates as necessary for the working of world unity, though admirable in itself, cannot feasibly be geared to the present disrupted condition of the world. It is clear that the increase and spread of evil—the rising tide of the forces of darkness which we see all around—is itself the supreme test of humanity's ultimate intention, the direction and goal man intends to take. It is in fact the supreme spur and challenge to man to defend the higher values, or rather God-willed values, which form the bridge between man and God, and which alone can save him from the dire adversity. But unfortunately for the bulk of mankind these "higher values" are so vaguely indeterminate and even conflicting without the clear and decisive knowledge, that man lacks the one-pointed determination to bring about a strong concerted action. And, moreover, without the power of that higher knowledge, he is compelled to muster but material forces to his aid, cognizant of higher powers beyond. The result is that so far his efforts are mainly negative and ineffective to resist the evil and overpower it. In his uncertainty and indecision conflicting issues and blundering efforts are inevitable, and the forces of evil are naturally taking full advantage of this, and are even gathering strength and unity at the expense of man's humanity. At the moment, the leaders of humanity and the masses behind them are intent only on saving the human order—on securing the predominance of man on earth, fondly believing that peace and security will automatically grow under the reign of an ingrained egoism.

But obviously the whole forces of evil have not been raised against humanity at this critical juncture merely to save and preserve human values. There is a higher issue at stake which is clearly that of surpassing humanity—of establishing a divine order on earth. If humanity is unwilling—as it at present shows itself—to make the ultimate sacrifice of all that the ego has built around itself in the name of humanitarianism (but which really represent man-willed values), and openly accept the divine order, then it will surely bring on its own elimination or diminution of power over the surface of the earth. It is a fact that the nearer the divine truth of transformation approaches human consciousness the more strongly does humanity react in a direction opposing this necessary change. And it is this inherent resistance that would almost certainly bring about a violent break or cataclysm, such as has only been forced on the world at critical periods in its evolutionary travail—as the biblical accounts of the Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah indicate. But in this present case, man by his own cunning and wilfulness would bring it to pass.

So much for the mass of humanity, but what of the individual? Would he be blasted out in the event of such cataclysm? The more one reflects on this contingency the more one is forced to conclude that it is only through the actual development of soul-personality, that one can play one's complete and rightful part in the terrestrial transformation. For this latter must necessarily be based on the consolidation of soul-power within the earth-nature, in which the individual soul-being becomes firmly rooted to earth even while retaining its native connection with the Heavens. On this fundamental connection the transformation of earth is assured, whatever the fate of Homo sapiens.

Such then is the conflicting pattern of events that Russell's essays compel us to consider, not as distant possibilities but as pressing and immediate probabilities. And since the bare unadorned facts are never popularly acceptable, these essays are very aptly termed "unpopular".
POETIC IMAGERY IN "SAVITRI"
BY RAJANIKANT MOBY

(Continued from previous issue)

Now we come to a group of images which might have been inspired by the World-War. A cooled fifth-columnist is now thought’s guide; His subtle defeatist murmur slays the faith And, lodged in the breast or whispering from outside, A lying inspiration fell and dark; A new order substitutes for the divine.(78)
The following image is found in the Canto on Aswapaty’s Descent Into Night: There all could enter but none stay for long. It was a no-man’s land of ill omen, A crowded neighbourhood without one home, A borderland between the world and hell.(72A)
The next one also is from the same Canto, and is clearly taken from war-conditions:
So might one fall on the Eternal’s road Forfeiting the spirit’s lonely chance in Time And no news of him reach the waiting gods, Marked “missing” in the register of souls, His name the index of a failing hope, The position of a dead remembered star.(72B)
Another image is that of flares:
And like a sky-fire showing all the ground A scintillant disconcertment aloft.(73)
The following image is from a directly religious context:
As far as its self-winged airplanes could fly, Visiting the future in great brilliant raids, It reconnoitred vistas of dream-fate.(74)
This image refers to the "high-winged Life-Thought" which is above the human Mind and Reason and overshadows them. The next image is a mixed one:
A specialist of logic’s hard machine Imposed its rigid artifice on the soul; An aide of the inventor intellect, It cut Truth into manageable bits,
That each might have a ration of thought-food.(75)
This image of food is found once before in Book II, Canto 7, but in a quite different context and as forming part of another bigger image:
Progress became a purveyor of Death, A world that clung to the law of a glistening Light Cherished the putrid corpses of dead truths, Hailed twisted forms as things free, new and true, Beauty from ugliness and evil dreams;
Feeling themselves guests at a banquet of the gods Tasted corruption like a high-spiced food.(76)
The images derived from business, trade, mathematics, language, law and even modern warfare show how even the most modern things can become, in the hands of a great poet, most beautiful and at the same time apt figures in a poetry dealing with little known spiritual and mystic topics. And here lies also the difference between that group of modern English poetry headed by T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and others on one side and Sri Aurobindo on the other. Those English poets used as the basis of their poetry the Yogic knowledge which has as yet not become the common possession of human consciousness. That poetry will be appreciated better when, some time in future, humanity—or at least a part of it—has received glimpses of those invisible yet very real occult worlds.
But let us return once again to our subject from this little digression. So far we have on the whole seen the images that are so much liked by the modern mind. But there are perhaps an equal number of other images given by Sri Aurobindo, which are conventional and found used through-out the length and breadth of the literature of the world. But in Sri Aurobindo’s hands they cease to be conventional or stereotyped; they are infused by him with a new breath and a new spirit. We shall consider here only some of them, for they are literally hundreds, perhaps even thousands.
The well-known image of the mother suckling her child is used by Sri Aurobindo in various places; but in each use of it, there is a unique force and significance growing forth from it:
The calm indulgence and maternal breasts Of Wisdom suckling the child-laughter of Chance.(77)
The amazing originality in the application of this image needs no comment. A page dreamed in the cosmic ether mind Drowned unknowing in the sea of life And Matter’s breasts suckled the divine Idea.(78)
This is still more daring than the above. And here is a third instance, which is quite different from the above two:
A bright error fringed the mystery-altar’s frieze; Darkness grew near to wisdom’s occult sun, Myth suckled knowledge with her bittersweet milk;
The infant peered from the dimly developed breasts.(79)

From the mother-child relation we shall pass on to images drawn from other human relations. But before doing that, here is a curious image drawn from midwifery. It is curious because one least expects a figure could be drawn from the profession of a midwife; and it is curious because of its strange application:
Caught in a blind stone-grip Force worked its plan And made in sleep this huge mechanical world, That Matter might grow conscious of its soul And like a busy midwife the life-pause Deliver the zero carrier of the All.(80)
Now we turn our attention to images based on other human relations, especially love, marriage etc. It would appear queer that such figures should be woven into a poetry that is purely spiritual; for it is usually supposed that spirituality is something that should remain above all such human relations, especially marriage and love between the opposite sexes. But we shall see that it is never the vital or grossly sexual love that is pictured in the images. Love has got many aspects and spirituality cannot reject such love in toto. In Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga and Yogic spirituality everything that can be transformed into spiritual values is accepted and only that which cannot be so transformed is to be dropped. There are many things in love between the opposite sexes which can be so spiritualized and raised towards the Divine that they cease to be what they were and get transformed; all such things are taken up, without the least care for the conventional notions of what spirituality should be.
Oculum behind this grosser Nature’s veil, A possemer marriage-hall of Mind with Form Is hidden by a tapestry of dreams, A curtain of beauty crowns the heights In that magic kingdom of ideal sight. In its antechambers of splendid privacy Matter and soul in conscious union meet Like lovers in a lonely secret place In the clasp of a passion not yet unfortunate They join their strength and sweetness and delight And here is another:
Power led in her head upon the breasts of Bliss And yet another:
She has lured the Eternal into the arms of Time And the following is a wonderful picture:
As if sitting near an open window’s gap, He read by lightning-flash on crowding flash Chapters of her metaphysical romance Of the soul’s search for lost Rapture… The magnificent wrappings of her secrecy That hold her desirable body out of sight.
In her green wilderseens and lurking depths, In her thickets of joy where danger elapse delight, He glimpsed the hidden wrings of her singer hopes A glimmer of blue and gold and scarlet fire.
In the sleepy splendour of her noon he saw, A pentecostal repetition through the hours, Thought’s dance of dragon-flies on mystery’s stream.
POETIC IMAGERY IN "SAVITRI"

That skin but never test its marin's race,
And heard the laughter of her rose desires
Running as if across forever lengthened-for-hands.

Not only such human relations like love and marriage, but even the criminal side of human nature, such as is displayed by plunderers and smugglers, becomes the source of beautiful images for the Spirit's poetry. In the following lines the image is applied to Inspiration that comes from the higher planes of our being:

Overleaping unto a sole and perilous bound
The high black wall that hides supercognition,
She broke in with inspired speech for secyta
And plundered the Unconquerable's vast estate.(86)

The following is a very peculiar figure:

His body glittered like a skye shell;
His bones to the world were sweet with seas of light.
His earth, doubted with celestial competence,
Harboured a power that needed now so more
To cross the closed custom-made line of mind and flash
And smuggle godhead into humanity.(87)

Here is one image drawn from a social gathering where guests are invited:

In moments when the inner lamps are lit
And the life's cherished guests are left outside
Our spirit sits alone and yearned for its rice.(88)

Then, there is a somewhat similar image emphasizing the vanity and futil-

Here even the highest rapture Time can give
Is a mimicry of ungrasped beatitudes,
A mutability of the earth, 
... 
Or a simulacrum of enforced delight
In the seragios of ignorance.(90)

Now we come to images drawn from Nature. Animals, birds, trees, ocean, sky, moon, etc. are all taken by Sri Aurobindo and woven into images of lovely form and hue. Nature is usually the source from which almost all the poets draw their inspiration, but in Sri Aurobindo she occupies a place quite unique and breaks through all the conventional figures that have been handed down to us or have their significance because of over-use. In his hands the field of Nature becomes as it were a virgin piece of land ploughed for the first time and yielding a wonderful harvest,

A highland world of free and green delight
Where spring and summer lay together and strowe
In indolent and amiable debate,
Inarmed, disputing with laughter who should rule.(91)

As an insect kedonam fluttered and crawled
And basked in the indistinct Nature's sun, 
And dragon raptures, python omages
Crawled in the morass and licked the sun.(92)

This is a wonderful series of figures drawn from insect and animal life in Nature. Here we may remind ourselves of another image from the same world, already quoted.

Thought's dance of dragon-flies on mystery's stream
That skin but never test its mariner's race.(93)

Images drawn from bird-life are also equally fresh and beautiful. One we have cited in a long passage:

In her thickets of joy where danger claps delight,
He glimpsed the hidden wings of her songster hopes.(94)

The following is the image of a bird tired of remaining on the wing ceaselessly:

A prototypal dek Intelligence
Half-poised on equal wings of thought and doubt
Toiled ceaselessly twixt being his hidden ends.(95)

These are strange wings indeed for any bird. The next one is applied to the spirit of Savitri following Satyavan's soul:

Then flaming from her body's next alarmed
Her violent spirit soared at Satyavan's(96)

And finally, there is a gorgeous image from bird-life:

Delight shall sleep in the cloud-net of her hair
And in her body as on his homing tree
Immortal Love shall beat his glorious wings.(97)

Then there are images drawn from animal-life.

The neighing pride of rapid life that roams
Wild-maneed through our pastures, on my seeing mood
Cast shapes of acuteness.(98)

This image of a horse applied to life reminds us of the same image frequ-

Then those two images are both applied to the Desire-Mind of man. Sri Aurobindo also calls it, "A bunchhback rider of the red Wild-Ass, A rash Intelligence ... limn-maneed."
It is very generous of you to commend me for what you call critical insight. But in the case of your poetry the insight, if any, is instinctive rather than critical. I seem to enter spontaneously into your meaning and your music and into what is one with them, the deep You crystallized into self-realization at some moment that the poetry achieves true intensity. So, whatever right things I say about your work come with the experience and the criticism: they just well up—as naturally as I am a little ashamed to confess this, being "English" in this matter) the vague tears when the best of you shine in me. The exact articulation of my criticism is far from being "vague terms"—a double intention can be read in the phrase. First, the deep quietness within the strong emotion, that always marks the genuine poetic stir, whether in writer or reader. Second, the elusive and intangible healing and other unnameable elements in all poetic artistry, especially in the spiritual of the kind—the element that is not mere ambiguity, much less ocularity, but a concrete mystery which is vague only because it is inexhaustible and bottomless and not because it is tenuous or tenebrous.

The impression of this unravenged significance in spiritual poetry results, I believe, either when the expression has not reached the crystallizing point or when the mind essaying beyond itself, beyond the thought-plane of surface, catches the substance of the Spirit without the sound of it which gives harmony and life, as when the earliest from the sound and misses the substance so that what does duty for substance is still ideas in their own surface-play, however intricate and ingeniously, with only the rhythms the words echoing the eternal harmonies.

Poetry of the second and third types can be quite substantial, but it falls short in the mystical sense. And that is why poets who want their work to be a direct activity of their life as mystics must aspire to get the Beyond-mind immediate and unenveloped.

The term "unnaturalized" will perhaps be challenged. I may be asked: "Is the poem of the Beyond-mind to be without thought? If so, there can be no significant formulation in it. But can any poem exist with unmodified significance? Even the closest, Shelley, even the nearest early year's have emerged meanings." Well, I should say that esurate significance with mentalization is a mistake. Significance has its birth in the human heart, the psyche wherever there is a bringing forth of the Supreme spirit's potentialities into a cosmos, significance is in action. The primal creative consciousness of God is the original seat of significance. But there is no mentalization—at least not apart from the Beyond-mind's own light. Matter and spirit are not mean formulated, fixedly or fluidly, but when the Beyond-mind's superbly symbolic constellations are given imaginative-guess-names like Charles's, Wain or the Hunter or the Seven Sisters.

Am I wandering on and on and shooting off at tangents? Perhaps each para. of your letter has been a side-track from some fancied point in the road of its predecessor. But I have let myself go—and I hope you have been impatient. Now let me return to ourselves. The recent poems of yours, out of which you have come, have, as usual, their origin and their early years have emerged meanings. Well, I should say that esurate significance with mentalization is a mistake. Significance has its birth in the human heart, the psyche wherever there is a bringing forth of the Supreme spirit's potentialities into a cosmos, significance is in action. The primal creative consciousness of God is the original seat of significance. But there is no mentalization—at least not apart from the Beyond-mind's own light. Matter and spirit are not mean formulated, fixedly or fluidly, but when the Beyond-mind's superbly symbolic constellations are given imaginative-guess-names like Charles's, Wain or the Hunter or the Seven Sisters.

O The blind bellow in the pit of sleep... The burning heart is beating ecstasy's rhythm Yet the broad tongue is a grey bitterness... Eternal seems the darkness down the brate A god's soul, but the bellow never ends... Beast of immortal beauty that is blocked

From bursting back into beeceide By a dense body built of gross desire... Horns of a crecent on a black bull's head! Another grumble that the English purist may make against the author is the misuse of words. In the belloving poem he uses the noun 'oblivion' as a verb. Elsewhere he writes 'vigiling' which is a verb that has no authority in English. He does the same in 'pyramidizing'. 'Immense,' an adjective, is used as a noun. And there are many more liberties with the language; but these must be put to one side lest I beg the point about the expression of what is a unique confession, not of faith but of assurance that, in a less involved and more melodious and simple form, would carry much of the mind of India to the world.

Cousin's penchant for what he calls "less involved and more melodious and simple form" is obviously a personal limitation he cannot help. His purist strictures are too pernickety to merit a serious reply: he has clean forgotten his Shakespeare who is not afraid of being guilty of even such a "misuse of words" as "adjuncts of joy.

Blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure— or as substantive—

In the dark backward and abysm of time. But Cousin's inveterate use of the体会到的 to the insignificant in The Blind Bellow is surely distressing. The alliteration he refers to is not as crudely frequent as he suggests: in varying degrees it is present only in 13 lines out of 38. And this recurrence of the letter "b" in the poem is not alliteration gone crazy but in a note which helps to bring out the life-throb of the occult subliminal reality I am trying to express. A fierce uncontrollable strength which has behind it a soul shut in from the limits of realisation of its own inner divinity—an explosive animal energy which for all its unceasing utterance fails yet to give vent to the god-headed in and striving to get free and reach the heavenly height from which it has fallen—a wild elemental force in which the Spiritual Self seems submerged for the moment but which going struggling without end to draw it up and break it forth into consciousness—all this is best suggested with the help of the letter "b" that is pronounced by first closing and then parting the lips, and the suggestion is all the more apt when the strength and energy and force I speak of is symbolized by a creature whose name and whose cry begin with this letter.

I can quite imagine a critic falling foul of your "Colourless Fire." He might say you are letting your fancy for the strange and the mysterious run away with you. But I love your phrase. Without your poet would lose both its depth and climax. And it is so unnatural after all to talk of a fire that is colourless! What, I may ask, is the colour of pure water or pure diamond? Surely it is white. We can call it as white, the moon is white, pearls are white, but here is no colour at all! A certain luminous transparency that can be assigned no shade found on the artist's palette is here. Through "white, red, apricot, grey, rose, amethyst, pure blue" the poet can force of the Divine Nature and Animal becoming, but it is only through the "Colourless Fire" that he can convey the force of the Divine's sheer Self and utter Being. And this "Colourless Fire" is not in the matter of his paintings so much as in the mood in which they are created, the mood which is "time with no trace of his own." In painting to identify himself with the perfect purity of the existential Ground of all coloured things. We may also say that this "Colourless Fire" is not so much in what is actually painted on the canvas as in what the painting suggests beyond its figurations—the "Yonder to all ends", the Eternity that teases out of thought, the Ultimate Truth without which all Beauty would be mere Maya, the supporting freedom of the Absolute that alone makes flawless patterns a fulfilling release of rapture.

I had better check myself in getting too close in my own profundity! Let me touch on some remaining points in your letter. Like you I am a hierophant of horses, and my heart leaps at the words in which you utter your loving vision of them. I have not ridden for many years now, but my imagination is still full of proof and all the staccato notes. And I am looking forward to mounting the bronco of Vernon Watkins and seeing what unexpected inner realisation his tempestuous and colourful poetry will jolt my brain into.

Muir's Labyrinthis also will be very welcome. Two or three reviews of it, with copious extracts, have come my way, but when they praised I did not feel quite convinced, for the quotations they gave had fine feeling and perfect finish yet nothing very penetrating or startling. Muir's verse has no such wooden formalism as once provoked Roy Campbell's wrath, still there seems to be something in the quotations in that makes me remember that Southern African poet's outburst:

"You praise the fire that bares the fangs with which they write," I'm one with you, of course ;
They use the snaffle and the curb all right,
But where's the bloody horse?"

(Continued overleaf)
Poetry—Continued from previous page

Yes, it is always the horse that makes poetry—provided he does not throw the rider. I am glad you did not stop with the first excerpt you have made from Muir:

It is a world perhaps; but there’s another.
For once in a dream or trance I saw the Gods
Each sitting on the top of his mountain-side,
While down below the little ships went by,
Toys multitudes swarmed in harbours, shepherds drove
Their tiny flocks to the pastures, marriage feasts
 Went on, and all the holidays and birthdays
Beguiling and haranguing and life and death,
And all permissible, all acceptable,
Clear and secure as in a limpid dream.
But the gods, as large and cold and still as clouds,
Conversed over the sound in tranquil voices
High in the sky above the unrestored sea;
And the eternal dialogue was peace
Where all these things were screened and this our life
Was as a chord deep in the dialogue,
As easy utterance of harmonious words,
Spontaneous exclamations bodying forth a world.

This is not bad at all and has certainly a consciousness of “heights”, but the peace inspiring it is not perhaps conveyed intensely enough. There is true intensity, however, in the lines about the “happy Christ”:

But he will come again, it is said, though not without taxes and weariness, for all things.
Beasts of the field, and woods, and rocks and seas,
And all mankind from end to end of the earth
Will call him with one voice. In our own time,
Some day, or at a time when rings
Then will he come, Christ the unenraged.
Christ the discrowned, his death undone,
His agony unmade, his cross demilitarized—
Glad to be so—and the tormented wood
Will cure its hurt and grow into a tree...

Muir has that same originality and directed power he will justify your high estimate of him and prove to be part of the Aurobindonian age, age, age.

One more remark, here, apropos your estimate: “I think it is the best thing that has come out of Europe for years… poetry which gathers up all Europe’s totalitarian dissolutions and resolves them.” Muir took up an academic appointment in Prague after the war, but is safely back. All Prague under communism (after being under Nazism) is in this work, but the answer to Prague is also there.” I am prepared to admit this, even to see a consistent genuinely spiritual drift in Muir’s work, and yet I may not be enthusiastic about his poetry. A poet may have the art of creating a sustained sense of higher values, a mood in which one breathes a finer atmosphere than earth’s, filled with a stable serene sunshine. But this need not prove him a good spiritual poet. A general spiritual effect may very well be produced if with a sincere skillfulness one infuses into a sufficient amount of fair verification what is an abiding tenor of one’s inner being. But great poetry flowing from within goes far beyond as general effect. Quality comes in some degree or other to the rescue of quality: the quality itself is a supreme presence and luminously suggests in every single moment the permanentness.

I have been reading the second issue of the magazine Poetry with some pleasure, as you anticipated. It is clear that there is a lot of talent brought together here—almost every poem has felicitous phrases or lines that are more than mere beautiful word-spinning, phrases or lines of genuine poetic vision outward-turned or inward-directed, and of genuine poetic emotive dictating life’s tragedy or splendour or mystery. Only Wilfred Gibson seems to have failed to catch up his vision and emotion in the revealing wail and the thrilling sound. Alexander A. Buist’s Room 1000 is also disappointing, yet I must admit its language to be alive and taut though its substance is meagre. Gibson’s substance has more possibilities: what is wrong is his too facile treatment. The last three lines have some quality of suppleness, but do not appear to have realised the magic he could get out of the seeing and the feeling that are there, and so the final intensity is absent. The lines are:

At the small upper window, where behind
The snow-white mooselit blind
His young love in untroubled slumber lay.

The little window high up suggests beauty at its peak and in its pride as well as beauty in its rarity and delicacy—the phrase “behind the snow-white mooselit blind” suggests the veil of happy innocence and dream-enchanting unawareness behind which youthful beauty lives in the midst of a world of sudden doom (the word “blind” doing double duty in a very effective way)—but the concluding line strikes me as weak and sentimental, a bit of bad TENNENJUN just as perhaps the two preceding ones are good TENNENJUN.

From the other poets I pick out the following lines as specially notable. Out of Kathleen Raine’s lament, the first and the last stanzas, perhaps also the second, and the two lines:

The hurrying dust
Has never a face,
are well done—there is a subtle poignancy in them. Almost the whole of Gerald Bullett’s poem is sensitively phrased, but the opening five verses have a moving nobility that sends the mind seeking for ultimate:
The fife does not suffer nor the drums have visions;
Clockwork falters, but not with melancholy.
It is strange how the chemistry of flesh and blood
Can blacken thought, and blacken words on white paper
Englobe the luminous being of dead men.

In poetic this is surpassed only by those three lines of Clifford Dyment’s that have a scriptural exaltation as well.

Not in the spirit only, which is the left eye,
Not in the body only, which is the left eye,
But in the full view is the holy vision.

Dyment has a striking success in also the phrase about the “ruined abbey”:

Dyment has a striking success in also the phrase about the “ruined abbey”:

For centuries
Nature was roofed and the flying mind
Flung back by vaulting and hammer beam.

I admire too the force with which he follows up his mention of the “holy vision” with the lines:

And I see it affirmed here in the ruined abbey,
In the walls like a shaft opening to the sky
Where the plow is riding the bucking wind
And the clouds race.

Looking also at things in the very first part of his poem, I am inclined to say that the poet has the most energy and vehemence of intellect in the whole lot, but he should avoid the risk of the intellect being content with strongly knit argumentative prose making interesting points: he should always have the wind and the wave in his thought and their elemental inseparabilities.

Howard Sengal has a splendid outburst of utterance at his command—

If I, oblivious of the dog-eared rose,
Impose my rubric on the rising sun...

I am not only that you’ve clamped bad
Wind and mind, a roosthold in the hopeless rock...

Shod in the moment’s whiteness walks all time...

But I am not sure that he brings his conceptions to the focus or that his poem as a whole attains the harmonious unitary effect that is the final sign and one of the highest marks of true artistic creation.

And I say that he is still too much under the intoxication of words. This intoxication is essential to poetry but it has its proper place only beside a steadiness and accuracy of inner motives. To put it otherwise: the word-intoxication should be not in the surface mind where sound and sense can fall apart but in the deep mind where they are a single spontaneous entity.

Talking of the whole-effect of a poem, I should mention that perhaps your Felled Hornbeams and the pieces by Kathleen Raine, Gerald Bullett and Hugo Manning are the sole examples of it in the right manner—that is, the manner which sustains the poetic perception and expression with a precise cleanliness. I cannot judge that your poem is one of your best. It has your usual packed and concise felicity wedded to a genuine spiritual excitement, yet there is perhaps insufficient depth to thrive; the poem is two-dimensional, one can move with pleasure along it but not much into the third dimension, but which is not within is not enough revealed. A happy dazzlement it gives us—without really showing what is at the heart of the light that leaps upon us. The sun is here, catching up all things into one strange life, but it does not fully serve the language attributed to it by Shelley—

I am the eye with which the universe
Beholds itself, and knows itself divine.

Excellent impressionism of the mystic mind, I should say—but not thorough expressionism. Not that the poem fails: quite the contrary, and I don’t blame it for failing in what it never set out to do. All I am saying is that it is fine but not great.

My letter is getting too long. I shall just compliment Gilbert Phelps on his delicate yet probing fingers. Though as yet they don’t seem altogether to recognize very well what they are feeling. Robin Asthill has a sensitive fancy—only the language and the rhythm tend to be a little lax, not perhaps in individual lines so much as in paragraph-units. K.A.W. has two admirable lines—

The tearing, intolerable tight press of slow sap swelling up...

The piercing rinsleness shuddered up in froth of blossoming.

Hugo Manning has a delightful magic touch that reaches a wonderful intensity in the lovely lines of his blinding—the poem is two-dimenion—

Above the veiled drum announcing
Assassination of doves.

The book-reviews are interesting and mostly adequate, but some are far too brief. I suppose the briefness cannot be helped. Poetry is a magazine which, all things considered, is doing very well in the utmost—it serves a high and rare cause, with both taste and enthusiasm.
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