

MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:
K. R. PODDAR

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

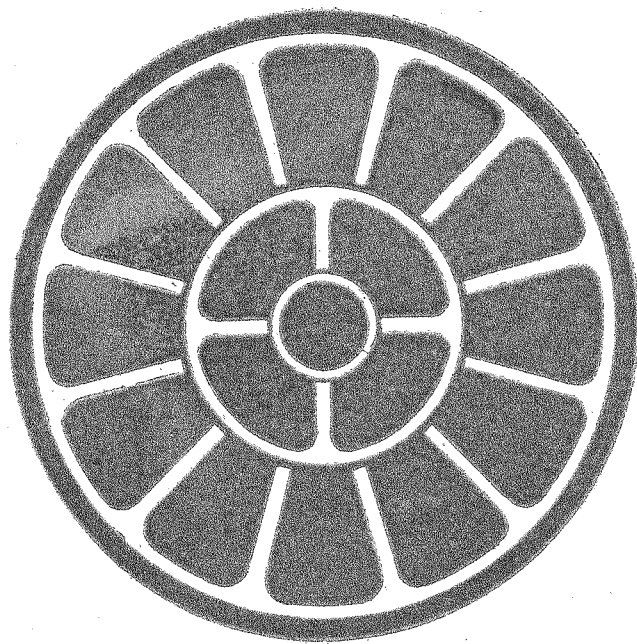
Editor:
K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

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THE SPIRITUAL FLAG OF INDIA

(THE 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 Maheshwari, 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 revelation—emblem 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.

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THE WORK THAT IS SRI AUROBINDO'S

MOTHER INDIA celebrates with the present issue its second Anniversary. February 21 is the day selected for the celebration because it is the birthday of the Mother who is the radiant guiding spirit of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, that centre of Integral Yoga where the true Indian consciousness—the consciousness of the Divine and the Eternal—is sought 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.

OVERMIND AND SUPERMIND

The work that is Sri Aurobindo's is a unique earth-transformation.

Above the mind there are several levels of conscious 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 up to the present governed our 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 *formateurs*, all those creative powers and deities to whom men 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 Supramental 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 not 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 possibilities, 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. Rising 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, each thing will carry in itself a truth which will manifest 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 Supermind 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 Supermind is established and rules here, then alone the Supreme Will may be said to have authentically manifested. At the same time, we must steer 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 replaced 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

THE WORK THAT IS SRI AUROBINDO'S

Continued from previous page

in the material universe. In the mind-world we can move forward and backward at our own will and pleasure. The moment you think of a person you are with him; and no matter how near you may be to somebody you can still be away if your thoughts are occupied with somebody else. 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, distance 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 must remember that you are in the space and time of the vital 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 must bear in mind this their power 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 with a gigantic tiger which made the night very wretched for him. I told him to banish all fear and walk straight up to the beast and stare it in the face, calling of course for assistance if necessary. He did so and lo, the tiger suddenly dwindled into an insignificant cat!

You have no idea of the almost magical effect of staring fearlessly into the eyes of a vital being. Even on earth, if you deal in 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 tremour 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 when you catch its gaze as it keeps swaying 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 unafraid.

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 greeds. As long as one is preoccupied with them, there can be no lasting progress. A way out of the round must be discovered. Take, as an instance, that commonest of 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 such that you are perfectly indifferent towards food. If food is given you, you eat it; if not, it does not worry you in the least; above all, you do not keep thinking about food. And the thinking must not be negative, either. To be absorbed in devising methods and means of abstinence as the sannyasis do is to be almost as preoccupied with food as to be absorbed in dreaming of it greedily. Have an attitude of indifference towards it: that is the main thing. Get the idea of food out of your consciousness, do not attach the slightest importance to it.

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 is to be lifted above all greed. You will have no hankering, no worry, no feverish desire. . . And you will feel also 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 not for the best so long as you are in the ordinary consciousness. You may be misled into utterly wrong channels when you are not in the right state of consciousness. But once you are poised in the psychic and have made your self-offering to the Divine, all that happens will happen for the best, for everything will be, however disguised, a definite divine response to you.

Indeed the very act of genuine self-giving is its own immediate reward—it brings with it such happiness, such confidence, such security as nothing else can give. But till the self-giving is firmly psychic there will be disturbances, the interval of dark moments between bright ones. It is only the psychic that keeps on progressing in an unbroken line, its movement a continuous ascension. All other movements are broken and discontinuous. And it is not till the psychic is felt as yourself that you can be an individual even; for it is the true self in you. Before the true self

is known, you are a public place, not a being. There are so many clashing forces working in you: hence, if you wish to make real progress, know your own being which is in constant union with the Divine and then alone will transformation be possible. All the other parts of your nature are ignorant; the mind, for instance, commits often the mistake of thinking that every brilliant idea is also a luminous idea. It can with equal vigour trump up arguments for and against God: it has no infallible sense of the truth. The vital is generally impressed by any show of power and is willing to see in it the Godlike. It is only the psychic which has the just discrimination: it is directly aware of the supreme Presence, it infallibly distinguishes between the divine and the undivine. If you have even for a moment contacted it, you will carry with you a conviction about the Divine which nothing will shake.

How, you question me, are we to know our true being? Ask for it, aspire after it, want it as you want nothing else. Most of you here are influenced by it, but it should be more than an influence, you should be able to feel identified with it. All urge for perfection comes from it, but you are unaware of the source, you are not collaborating with it knowingly, you are not in identification with its light. Do not think I refer to the emotional part of you when I speak of the psychic. Emotion belongs to the higher vital, not to the pure psychic. The psychic is a steady flame that burns in you, soaring towards the Divine and carrying with it a sense of strength which would break down all oppositions. When you get identified with it you have the feeling of the divine truth—then you cannot help feeling also that the whole world is ignorantly walking on its head with its feet in the air!

You must learn to unite what you call your individual self with your true psychic individuality. Your present individuality is a very mixed thing, a series of changes which yet preserves a certain continuity, a certain sameness or identity of vibration in the midst of all flux. It is nearly like a river which is never the same and yet has a certain definiteness and persistence of its own. Your normal self is merely a shadow of your true individuality which you will realise only when this normal individual which is differently poised at different times, now in the mental, then in the vital, at other times in the physical, gets into contact with the psychic and feels it as its real being. Then you will be one, nothing will shake or disrupt you, you will make steady and lasting progress and be above such petty things as greed for food.

VICTORY OVER FALSEHOOD

The lords of Falsehood hold, at present, almost complete sway over poor humanity. Not only the lower life-energy, the lower vital being, but also the whole mind of man accepts them. Countless are the ways in which they are worshipped, for they are most subtle in their cunning and seek their ends in variously seductive disguises. The result is that men cling to their falsehood as if it were a treasure, cherishing it more than even the most beautiful things of life. Apprehensive of its safety, they take care to bury it deep down in themselves; but unless they take it out and surrender it to the Divine they will never find true happiness.

Indeed the very act of bringing it out and showing it to the Light would be itself a momentous conversion and pave the way to the final Victory. For the laying bare of each falsehood is in itself a victory—each acknowledgment of error is the demolition of one of the lords of Darkness. It may be an acknowledgment to oneself, provided it is absolutely honest and is no subtle regret apt to be forgotten the next moment and without the strength to make an unbreakable resolution not to repeat the mistake. Or it may be the acknowledgment to the Divine embodied in the Guru. As a result of direct personal confession to the Guru, your resolution remains no more your own, because, if you are sincere, the Divine's fiat goes forth in your favour. To give you an idea of what this means I shall relate an experience of mine when in Pondicherry I first met Sri Aurobindo. I was in deep concentration, seeing things in the Supermind, things that were to be but were somehow not 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 Supramental had touched the earth and was beginning to get realised! This was the first 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 come in all sincerity, saying, "This falsehood I want to get rid of," and the answer which you get is "Yes."

"SUCCESSFUL FUTURE"

Do you know what the flower which we have called "Successful Future" signifies when given to you? It signifies the hope—nay, even the promise—that you shall participate in the descent of the Supramental world. For that descent will be the successful consummation of our work, a descent of which the full glory has not been yet or else the whole face of life would have been different. By slow degrees the Supramental is exerting its influence, now one part of the being and now another feels the clasp or the touch of its divinity; but when it comes down in all its self-existent power a supreme radical change will seize the whole nature.

Continued opposite

LIGHTS ON YOGA

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

The Mother's Consciousness

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 on 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 Change and the Divine realisation; 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 another and opposite or quite different side, 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.

10-9-1931.

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 were to act otherwise, then all would be done by miracle or magic, no sadhana would be needed, no way beaten 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 having 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 step by step. 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 is a sadhana to be done, there is a resistance to be 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 in the Light of that Wisdom justifiable. Then the decisive power acts of itself and does what it has to do.

4-10-1936.

The Call of Spirituality

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 above the dualities and what is most needed for it is a true upward aspiration.

13-10-1935.

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

12-1-31

Spiritual Help in Illness

Q. If, after the Mother or you start working spiritually on somebody reported to be ill but personally unknown, some wrong information is given about his or her identity, does the help sent miss its mark?

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

10-6-35

Other Worlds

The bhuvārloka is not part of the material universe—it is the vital world that goes by that name. Dyuloka—mind-world; bhuvārloka—vital world, bhūrloka—material world. Swarloka is the highest region of the dyuloka, but it came to be regarded as identical with it.

As for the other question, there is no reason to suppose that there is no life in any part of the material cosmic system except earth. No doubt the suns and nebulae cannot harbour terrestrial life because there is not the necessary basis, but wherever there is a formed world, life can exist. It used formerly to be supposed that life could not exist except in conditions identical with the earth's, but it is now being discovered that even man and the animals can adapt themselves to atmospheric conditions deficient in oxygen such as exist in the stratosphere—this proves that all depends on adaptation. There are animals that can exist only in the sea, yet sea-animals have become amphibious or turned into land animals—so mammals on earth can by habit of adaptation live only in a certain range of atmosphere and need oxygen but they could adapt themselves to other conditions, it is a law of habit of Nature, not a law of inevitable necessity of Nature. It is therefore quite possible for life to exist in other planets in our and other systems, though the beings there may not be quite like earthly humanity or life quite the same.

10-9-1937.

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—reflection, emotion and 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 presentiments, they get them in the heart in the 'sense-mind'. That is why in the Upanishads it is called the 'sixth sense'.

The term 'Manas' belongs to the ordinary psychology applied to the surface-consciousness. In our yoga, we adopt a different classification based on the yogic experience."

Q: What is Chitta?

A: "Chitta is the basic stuff of consciousness according to the old phraseology. It is that which is behind all the movements of the being here. It is again different from Chit, which is the Higher Consciousness."

Q: How does one still the conceptual activity of the Manas?

A: "The real conceptual activity belongs rather to the Buddhi—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: Does not knowledge in yoga come by itself?

A: "Yes. The knowledge comes of itself from within by the touch of the Divine. Reading can be only 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 THAT IS SRI AUROBINDO'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 brook no resistance, doubts and difficulties will not torture you any 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 materialise for them in spite of all the obstacles set in its way by unregenerate human nature!*

* Part of this last talk appeared first in the Sri Aurobindo Circle Annual, 5th Number.

SAVITRI

By SRI AUROBINDO

BOOK VII: THE BOOK OF YOGA

Canto 1: The Joy of Union, the Ordeal of the Foreknowledge of Death and the Heart's Grief

(The text below—describing how Savitri, after taking Satyavan for husband in spite of the doom hanging over him of death within a year, begins life with him in the forest-abode of his parents—was recently revised by Sri Aurobindo, but some final touches remained to be given.—EDITOR)

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 towards 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 this balance can reverse
 And make the soul the artist of its fate.
 This is the mystic truth our ignorance hides:
 Doom is a passage for our inborn force,
 Our ordeal is 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,
 Had chosen and on her strength's unbending road
 Forced to its issue the long cosmic curve.
 Once more she sat behind loud hastening hooves;
 A speed of armoured squadrons and a voice
 Far-heard 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-maned,
 Led to the Shalwa marches' 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 waking into 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 soon or a pale memory
 The fountain's plash in the wide stone-bound pool,
 The thoughtful noontide's brooding solemn trance,
 The colonnade's dream grey in the quiet eve,
 The slow moonrise gliding in front of Night.
 Left far behind were now the faces known,
 The happy silken babble on laughter's lips
 And the close-clinging clasp of intimate hands
 And adoration'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 beast,—
 The ascetic's exile in the dim-souled huge
 Inhuman forest far from cheerful sound
 Of man's blithe converse and his crowded days.
 In a broad eve with one red eye of cloud
 Through a narrow opening, a green flowered cleft
 Out of the stare of sky and soil they came
 Into a mighty home of emerald dusk.
 There onward led by a faint brooding path
 Which toiled through the shadow of enormous trunks
 And under arches misers of sunshine,
 They saw low thatched roofs of a hermitage
 Huddled beneath a patch of azure hue
 In a sunlit clearing that seemed the outbreak
 Of a glad smile in the forest's monstrous 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 mightiness.
 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 sorrowful 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 breaks with idle hands her supreme works,
 They parted from her with pain-fraught 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 splendour 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 chrysopraxe 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 nuptial 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 an earthly heaven
 And fate and grief fled from that fiery hour.
 But soon now failed the summer's ardent breath
 And throngs of blue-black clouds crept through the sky
 And rain fled sobbing over the dripping leaves
 And Storm became the forest's titan voice.
 Then listening to the thunder's fatal crash
 And the fugitive pattering footsteps of the showers
 And the long unsatisfied panting of the wind
 And sorrow muttering in the sound-vexed 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 insufficient days between:
 A dire expectancy knocked at her breast;
 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
 It rose at morn 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 gulfs arose.
 Remembrance was a poignant pang, she felt
 Each day a golden leaf torn cruelly out
 From her too slender book of love and joy.
 Thus swaying in strong gusts of happiness,
 And swimming in foreboding's sombre waves,
 And feeding sorrow and terror with her heart,—
 For now they sat among her bosom's guests
 Or in her inner chamber paced apart,—
 Her eyes stared blind into the future's night.
 Out of her separate self she looked and saw,
 Moving amid the unconscious faces loved,
 In mind a stranger though in heart so near,
 The ignorant smiling world go happily by
 Upon its way towards an unknown doom
 And wondered at the careless lives of men.
 As if in different worlds they walked, though close,
 They confident of the returning sun,
 They wrapped in little hourly hopes and tasks,—
 She in her dreadful knowledge was alone.
 The rich and happy secrecy that once
 Enshrined her as if in a silver bower
 Apart in a bright nest of thoughts and dreams
 Made room for tragic hours of solitude
 And lonely grief that none could share or know,
 A body seeing the end too soon of joy
 And the fragile happiness of its mortal love.
 Her quiet visage still and sweet and calm,
 Her graceful daily acts were now a mask;
 In vain she looked upon her depths to find
 A ground of stillness and the spirit's peace.
 Still veiled from her was the silent Being within
 Who sees life's drama pass with unmoved eyes,
 Supports the sorrow of the mind and heart
 And bears in human breasts the world and fate.
 A glimpse or flasher came, the Presence was hid.
 Only her violent heart and passionate will
 Were pushed in front to meet the immutable doom;
 Defenceless, nude, bound to her human lot
 They had no means to act, no way to save.
 These she controlled, nothing was shown outside:
 She was still to them the child they knew and loved;
 The sorrowing woman they saw not within;
 No change was in her beautiful motions seen:
 A worshipped empress all once vied to serve,
 She made herself the diligent serf of all,
 Nor spared the labour of broom and jar and well,
 Or close gentle tending or to heap the fire
 Of altar and kitchen, no slight task allowed
 To others that her woman's strength might do.
 In all her acts a strange divinity shone:
 Into a simplest movement she could bring
 A oneness with earth's glowing robe of light,
 A lifting up of common acts by love.
 All-love was hers and its one heavenly cord,
 Bound all to all with her as golden tie.
 But when her grief to the surface pressed too close,
 These things, once gracious adjuncts of her joy,
 Seemed meaningless to her, a gleaming shell,
 Or were a round mechanical and void,
 Her body's actions shared not by her will.
 Always behind this strange divided life
 Her spirit like a sea of living fire
 Possessed her lover and to his body clung,
 One locked embrace to guard its threatened mate.
 All night she woke through the slow silent hours
 Brooding on the treasure of his bosom and face.
 Hung o'er the sleep-bound beauty of his brow
 Or laid her burning cheek upon his feet.
 Waking at morn her lips endlessly clung to his
 Unwilling ever to separate again,
 Or lose that honeyed drain of lingering joy,
 Unwilling to loose his body from her breast,
 The warm inadequate signs that love must use.
 Intolerant of the poverty of Time
 Her passion catching at the fugitive hours

Willed the expense of centuries in one day
 Of prodigal love and the surf of ecstasy;
 Or else she strove even in mortal time
 To build a little room for timelessness
 By the deep union of two human lives,
 Her soul secluded shut into his soul.
 After all was given she demanded still;
 Even by his strong embrace unsatisfied,
 She longed to cry, "O tender Satyavan,
 O lover of my soul, give more, give more
 Of love while yet thou canst, to her thou lovest.
 Imprint thyself for every nerve to keep
 That thrills to thee the message of my heart.
 For soon we part and who shall know how long
 Before the great wheel in its monstrous round
 Restore us to each other and our love?"
 Too well she loved to speak a fateful word
 And lay her burden on his happy head;
 She pressed the outsurging 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 hewing wood
 And hunting food in the wild sylvan 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 beating 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, seizing his 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 woe
 Concentrating in her a tortured world.
 Thus in the silent chamber of her soul
 Cloistering her love to live with secret grief
 She dwelt like a dumb priest with hidden gods
 Unappeased by the wordless 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 rend 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 it filled 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 measureless in 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 paused upon the brink of change.
 No more the storms sailed with stupendous wings
 And thunder strode 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 RISHABHCHAND

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 divine beauty of her form, imparted the divine rhythm to her movements and the divine fire to her will?

Those who know her or have only read her *Prayers and Meditations* will at once reply in a chorus: Love is the truth and essence of the Mother's life and love the nuclear force of her personality. In the *Chandi* (a portion of the *Markandeya Purana*), the Divine Mother has been hymned under her diverse aspects of Consciousness, Intelligence, Power, Peace, Beauty, Forgiveness, Kindness etc., but the most primal and puissant, the most graceful and rapturous aspect of love—one wonders why—has been left unmentioned. Love is the first, highest and completest 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 incarnate in 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 breaking asunder all our bonds, liberates us into our essential purity and perfection.

As we contemplate this living Love, this blazing embodiment of dynamic divine Grace and Beatitude, 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-fire, 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 really unanalysable 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 Amitabha Buddha, across the ocean of life, to those afflicted souls who pant 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 cross of human life and labour in the darkness of the material world, so that even here, on these very shores, in the very midst 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 Gethsemane, so that Gethsemane itself may be transformed into Heaven. It is a Grace that has come down not only to liberate, but to rehabilitate man, to reinstate him in his divine heritage of luminous freedom and immortal, creative bliss, even here, even in this world of ignorance and suffering. If we overlook or forget 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 either concentrate exclusively on her transcendent divinity and ignore or misjudge her humanity, or dote only upon her sweet humanity and ignore her transfiguring 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 27th August, 1914:

"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 bliss of the divine Love or even for its transporting thrills 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 human nature. It is not possible for us to gauge this Love nor conceive 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 have been labouring in the Subconscious and the Inconscious 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 incalculable possibilities, but also of the selfless labours of the greatest of our benefactors 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 the methods they employ are inscrutable to our mind. We, who go by material performance and surface results, acclaim a scientist 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; but for those who work in union with the Master of our existence and 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.

"How great is Thy power, O Lord of all existence, 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 dulllest pebble, illumine the blackest consciousness!

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

"At these blessed hours all earth sings 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 waves of the sea billow with love, the smile of children tells of the infinite and the souls of men appear in their eyes.

"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..."

The Mother knew early in life that the divine Vibhuti, the divine Powers and Personalities of the spiritual-mental planes, even of the Overmind, would not be capable of conquering the resistance of Matter and dispelling the darkness of Inconscience. That was why 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 single, selfless aspiration.

"O my divine Master, my love aspires 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 mayst be the will acting through this fragile and transient instrument.

"O my 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 powerful and victorious.

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

THE BRAZIER OF LOVE

Continued from opposite page

and the battle she had to wage against the the grim forces of Inconscience 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 inconscience", "the seat of oblivion and a supreme obscurity." 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 inconscience.*"? 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 plungest me, O Lord, into the most opaque 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 has been labouring since, in resolute silence and endless patience, for the spiritual freedom and perfection of mankind.

Among the mystics 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 fulfilment 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 unreserved 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, bright and steady, in the congealed darkness and bleak blasts of the Inconscient. It did not, besides, incarnate any specific Will of the Divine to a New Manifestation or a New Creation. It was not charged with a world-mission or called upon to a supreme holocaust. The Mother's "Radha's Prayer" reveals the same psychic texture, an identical integrality of self-offering, but with a remarkable difference. Her love is the supernal self-Force of the Divine, redemptive and creative; it bears in itself the world-transforming fiat of the Absolute.

The four aspects of the Mother² of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in

his book, *The Mother*, "have stood in front in her guidance of this universe and in her dealings with the terrestrial play," but they do not exhaust her—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 with so much prominence in the evolution of the earth-spirit. There are among them Presences indispensable for the supramental realisation,—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 alone can heal the gulf 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 secrecies 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 realisation 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 Beatitude." 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, constituted by her, directed by her and offered to her own unmanifest, undifferentiated Eternity. What words will describe the mystery and marvel of that silent Unknowable?

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 remains our sole, 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 boons and the receiver 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."³ 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. Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati.

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
And 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

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME

BY DILIP KUMAR ROY

(Continued from previous issue)

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 for me to be dismissed as an airy nothing and too nondescript to be grappled with by my pre-yogic mentality, acclimatised to a world of ponderables. For this it is necessary to go back a little even at the risk of becoming frankly autobiographical.

I was born in one of the most aristocratic Brahmin families of Bengal. My father's mother could, I have been told, trace a direct and verifiable descent from the saintly Adwait Goswami, one of Sri Chaitanya's chief helpers and loyal intimates. My father's father, Diwan Kartikeya 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 him a munificent reward which he declined because, he said, he could not possibly accept a reward for having done 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 blatantly testified to his apostasy by saying that he could not believe in a good Sentinel watching over this incorrigible universe, but also wrote openly about his admiration of the *mlechcha* (unclean) English and his partiality for their culture *in toto*—so much so that he began to drink regularly, though moderately, to attest the utter sincerity of his admiration of their cultured ways. (Later he gave up drink in a day for good when he saw the Young Prince drinking too much, following his example). He was a man of such uncompromising honesty that he was willing to face public obloquy, if not ostracism (for it was difficult to ostracise a princely Prime Minister of a noble Prince, whose ancestors had made history) rather than disavow his reasoned convictions. In my boyhood days I used to hear a great deal, 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 agnosticism had cast, in the eighties, an ineffaceable influence on his precocious son's avid, adolescent mind. His stay in England only deepened this trend he had imbibed 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, ostracised by his relations. Nothing daunted, the rebel committed another and an irrevocable indiscretion thus practically burning his boats: he married my mother, the eldest daughter of a widow who had married a second time! Having now little more to lose and even less to fear, he went on squibbing our Hindu piety and formalism in his comic songs and satirical poems which won quick and lasting fame. I was then still in my teens.

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 nothing against the Gita itself but he simply could not help going all out for those who lived an unclean life and yet made a fetish 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 laughter (I give here a translation of only eight lines from his celebrated lampoon):

If I humbug the world to the top of my bent.

Steal, swindle, blaspheme or perjure,

'Twill all be absolved by dint of the Gita,

All ills of the flesh she can cure.

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

Let's live with her name on our lips!

Glory to thee, O Gita, my angel,

Whose magic nought else can eclipse,

But even when I did enjoy such irresistible songs I could not go all the way with him in decrying religious ardour, having already at thirteen come under the influence of two direct disciples of Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa: Swami Brahmananda, the founder of Ramkrishna Mission, and "Sri Ma" the famous chronicler of the Avatar. I cannot here possibly enlarge any more on my father's great though somewhat enigmatic personality—since he composed some of the greatest hymns

in the Bengali language (to Krishna, Shiva, Kali, Ganga, Sri Chaitanya, etc.) which he sang often with tears of ecstasy in his 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 deeper spiritual forces 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 successfully westernised and completely insulated from India's ancient spiritual influences by 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 effectually inseminated by the doctrines of Western materialism, can never find any true sustenance at the fount of agnosticism 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 satirized the degenerate ritualism of superstitious Hindus (I translate again):

O cling, my brothers, to this our faith,

Like leeches stick to your station,

No others can a like harbour be

Nor pledge such swift 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 Puri and thrive.

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 no matter how high the stakes may prove.

Apropos, 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 finds Hindu culture so foreign, even bizarre, 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 Panditji's views on religion):

"I do not take the same view 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 outworn 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 Dickinson dubs 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 ideal. 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, when one felt helpless against the army of 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 colony, in comparative seclusion under conditions which might prove more stringent than I could bear. Suppose I did not agree with the *sadhakas*? Suppose my Guru asked me to abide by rules I found impossible? Suppose I found it cramping—the monotony of the same task-round repeated day after day, year in and year out? All sorts of speculations seethed in my brain like irrepressible bubbles till, finally, I decided that we moderns, could not possibly find spiritual fulfilment through such a cheap escapist device, a device, besides, that had been tried in antiquity and found wanting.

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And yet where and how else could one translate in daily life one's ideal of one-pointed *sadhana* (self-discipline), so indispensable to a spiritual aspirant after the all-transfiguring experience? The world, as I saw it, if not actually hostile, was certainly indifferent, to all spiritual endeavour which could only attain fruition after an arduous effort at self-purification under the wise and beneficent guidance of a Godlike Master. But the strange thing was that while I yearned for guidance I also dreaded the conditions under which alone it could become fruitful in the actual field of action, Yoga. I clearly saw that this would never do, and yet—to have to live cabined and cribbed, jostling against the same people day after day, having to do work maybe that might go against my very grain and taking orders from one I would not be able to approach, even to talk to—no, I shuddered at the bleak prospect...

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

I had come 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 phantom, as my realist reason called it derisively. 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 all but unapproachable. For Sri Aurobindo in those days used to be very strict: he saw none. Only the Mother had access to him and brought the disciples his messages and instructions from time to time. In those days, in 1928, he did not even write letters except occasionally. (It was only after 1930, I think, that his correspondence began to assume serious proportions, and grew month after month as the number of *sadhakas* 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 acquiesced in receding to the background but welcomed it. Only the disciples knew her and appreciated her importance, outsiders or prospective initiates like myself were mostly left guessing. I can well remember my first impressions in 1928; 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 where she could only be bowed to perfunctorily? It was much later that I came to realise—slowly, through deep tussles 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 that she could possibly mean to us, *sadhakas*, what Sri Aurobindo's 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-ingrained notion that a woman could never be a spiritual Guru except at one remove 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 comic pretentiousness of my masculine vanity. But one cannot very well claim to be at the start what one can only aspire to become—and that only after long wrestles with one's foolish ego with its raw notions about the world and things—and so I need not. I hope, be too repentant about my green inexperience which fathered my masculine self-superiority.

But it is one 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 sleeplessly 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 forcefully before I met her—that the very act of consciousness was in a way a 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 automatically the right medicines! But that is another story. I must strive in this chapter to portray the Ashram life as I saw it and came to love more and more in spite of myself till my attitude almost coincided with Krishnaprem's who wrote to Mother, years later: "How deeply I feel the privilege you gave me in allowing me to share freely in 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."

I saw and talked to Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1924. I have given a faithful record of my conversations with him in my *Among the Great*. I have described there the magnetic pull I felt directly I came in contact with his radiant personality. But I did not adequately describe something else: he induced in me often enough a peace and bliss that did "pass all understanding". I remember how I simply sat alone in silent causeless ecstasy for hours and hours, especially after a contact with him however fleeting. To think that even a momentary glimpse of him, after standing in a long weary cue, could father such spells of the most marvellous bliss! It was years ago but I can even today recapture my first experience of the kind as if it happened only yesterday! I may as well say something about it in a few words though I wonder if that is at all possible.

Let me own at the outset that I have never visioned anything out of the common while or after seeing him or even talking with him—as has happened with many another. And how often have I bitterly regretted that he did not (as I put it to him ignorantly then) grant me so much as a glimpse of a miracle star or a flash of light or some form of ether and flame, as fell to the lot of so many and so frequently! I could almost see my fat self-esteem melt away under my nose as, time and time again, they came—these who were not even disciples—and recounted to me in thrilled voices, what they had seen! Could I, after such repeated discomfitures, help bearing him a grudge as it were for having conjured up nothing for me to glimpse as I contemplated his marvellous face of calm and light! Nothing of the sort I had looked forward to ever happened, I saw nothing in full consciousness, then or afterwards, which I could sing hallelujah to in a triumphant accent. Nay, I was no authentic mystic, I said to myself with a sigh, not even a clairvoyant, woe is me!

But mystic or not, I did feel something, sometimes, which might have been acclaimed by me as equally startling if not miraculous had not my preconceptions led me to focus my expectation on something entirely different—something I missed and therefore regretted, regretted and therefore repined, repined and therefore blamed myself, till at the end of the logical sequence I decided with a pang in my heart that I was a fellow too matter-of-fact by temperament to be declared passport-worthy to the Treasurer of the apocalyptic thrills of Yoga.

But something did come through—something at least as unforgettable as what my Guru humorously dubbed "yogic miracles". What happened was that I felt that wherever I looked dripped bliss—sheer, unqualified, flawless bliss and what amazed me was that I could not trace its genesis in any shape or form. And once it was so intense and unwaning, this ubiquitous bliss, that I could not help feeling a little intrigued in the midst of my causeless rapture and asked myself how I would describe it if a friend were to drop in and cross-examine me as to its exact nature. A curious question formulated itself instantly (I was sitting intoxicated on the beach alone): "What is it that a human being loves most in life?" The answer burgeoned at once, equally from nowhere, voiced by my heart in ecstasy: "Air and light". And startled, as though my heart had suddenly developed a tongue, I heard it say to my imaginary cross-examiner in a voice deep with intoxication: "Well, what I feel is something that can enable me not to miss even light and air supposing somebody kept me in a dark underground dungeon for the rest of my life."

A strange question and a strange answer! And what is perhaps stranger still is that the experience was repeated several times in my Ashram life though it did not last as long as it did when it possessed me for the first time: for full two days and a half.

But miraculous though it may sound to believers, hard-baked rationalists are unlikely to be impressed by this response which culminated so often in ecstasy. But as Gurudev has shown us by his life how to live up to the supreme teaching of the *Karmayoga* of the Gita: "You have right to works but not to fruits thereof," so without taking cognizance of the rational explanations of omniscient psychoanalysts who would explain it all away by word-spinning—like auto-suggestion, wish-fulfilment, hypertrophy of human or religious sensitiveness and what not—I would just recapitulate here a vivid experience I had on the 15th of November 1928 in Lucknow: in other words, the previous call whose cumulative effect invoked the subsequent response. Those who have never experienced "a call", as mystics put it, may not find it convincing, but those who know something about spiritual verities will not, I am sure, find my description uninteresting in spite of the inadequacy of my penmanship. I only regret that I will have to put it briefly because to tell it as I should would require too much space. Let this much, of apology suffice as a prelude to what I may well call a miracle, in that it led me to decide in five minutes on a step which changed the whole course of my life. It happened like this.

When I left Sri Aurobindo in 1924—as I have described in my *Among the Great*—he did, in effect, reject me calling my seeking a mere "mental" one. I was indeed cut to the quick but I simply had to wait till I might develop in me the strength I then lacked to cut the Gordian knot, to exploit a vivid if a well-worn metaphor.

But, as it happened with me, I did not find that mere waiting helped; rather it increased my deep reluctance to take refuge in him unconditionally. Besides, I had felt anything but at my ease in the silent atmosphere in and about the Ashram. I was still too social and merry a freelance to relish the prospect of capitulating overnight to the grim

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CHAPTER V

THE ASHRAM: THE TRIALS

Justiciary of Yoga, as I often put it in my carefree irreverence. I knew indeed that I was a seeker, but a seeker still vowed to Reason as his conscience-keeper. The motto of the great Paul Valérie still rang in my ears: "*Bacon dirait que cet intellect est un idol. J'y consens, mais je n'en ai trouve de meilleur.*"*

At the same time, my father's mysticism recurred to me: the devotional songs he had composed towards the end of his life I often sang now in a moved voice and with a deeping nostalgia (I translate here the closing lines of one of these):

My day is done... a truce to chaffering...

My debts are paid... I hear footfalls of Night...

World-weary now, to thee, O Mother, I cling:

Grant me thy lap when the dark dissolves in white.

My grandfather also: had he not turned eventually from agosticism to God-reliance? Had he not said on his death-bed that he did not want to be consoled, since the One who had provided for him so well in this world would surely take equal care of him in the next!

But unlike them I was in a peculiar position, a dilemma: on the one hand I was called to cut away from my moorings here and now, while on the other, I had not yet won anything which I might hold on to; so I hesitated and suffered till in the end I blurted it out to a friend who has since departed this life. He gave me a quizzical smile and said: "I will buy a ticket for you tomorrow; make straight for your Guru's Ashram where you belong. Surrender all you have and are to him."

"It's all very well to suggest remedies", I demurred ruefully. "But are you sure of the diagnosis?"

Being a medical man he smiled appreciatively. Then he looked straight at me and asked: "What is the trouble?"

"I wish I knew", I answered bitterly. "I only know that I am suffering in deep darkness. My Guru has not given me anything tangible yet. Surely you don't expect me to give up everything for nothing?"

His face fell.

"Dilip," he said, after a pause, "you have been weighed and found wanting. You are bargaining with the Divine! *Quid pro quo?*† This is not the spirit which moved those who staked their all in the past for the All-in-all. I was mistaken in you."

It went home... The whole night I could not sleep: I was bargaining!... bargaining!... bargaining... I felt small in my own eyes... And yet I could not take the plunge.

The next morning I sat down to meditate. I prayed to Gurudev as never before. Suddenly, when I found the pain in my heart unbearable, something happened. I cannot explain what it was but I felt that this time it was *he* who came to me.

I got up and took the next available train—in twenty minutes—to Bombay *en route* for Pondicherry after despatching him a telegram.

* * * * *

Mother told me, on November 22nd, that I had had a psychic opening and so I had *heard*.

* * * * *

But I have done it—a dramatic indiscretion—even though I can truthfully claim that I have not been guilty of any overstatement. My watchful and reticent friend Krishnaprem will doubtless take me to task again. But since I have let the dramatist in me have a free hand I shall be indulgent and let the footlights remain yet awhile. After all I am an artist by necessity and the artist must harbour an actor—till at least he die to art to be reborn to Yoga—an enemy within the gates, I concede, but still dear to the artist if not to the Yogi.

* Bacon would say, this intellect is an idol. I agree, but I have yet to find a better one.

† Something for something.

Dream?

If dream it 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.

So, Mother, come to me as I lie
Asleep and touch with thy finger of light;
The darkness sealing close the eye
Shall be illumined with thy sight.

Then like a mirror I shall hold
Thy beauty in my slumbering heart;
The wings of infinity shall unfold
Thy Presence and sunward shall depart.

All I have dreamt in my wonder-sleep
Shall fill my waking hours with its glow,
A rainbow tint on a sky-deep,
A lustrous rhythm in life's river-flow.

If dream it 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.

NIRODBARAN

Achieved

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.

No genius had I, nor knowledge nor gifts,

Yet the pearl of pearls I won.

Beauty nor grace was mine—with love

I earned His union.

Elusive is He, but I too was sly:

He loaned to me His name.

I invested it till I grew in wealth

And paid what He would claim.

By my eyelids veiled now stay He must

In my orbs, everlastingly:

No hostile world can rob my treasure

Nor death Him sunder from me.

For aeons had Mira cried in vain

Till in Him she found her nest:

And His name is Krishna whom she bought

With her life His love has blest.

Translated from INDIRA MALHOTRA'S Hindi *Mira-bhajan*
"Govind lino mol" by DILIP KUMAR ROY.

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I cannot, to this day, bring myself to use such words without a strange feeling of guilt—as though I was simply mouthing clichés. This in itself would not perhaps be so culpable but my critical scepticism has by no means stopped there. For I have never yet been quite able to give others the same credit for sincerity as I claim for my own diffidence whenever I find them sky-rocketing confidently in purple words of the type referred to. I may have used such words myself in my less guarded moments—one cannot always successfully watch over oneself however vigilant one may be—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 askance at some of my dear friends and colleagues it was never prompted by malice but sheer inability to sympathise with their temperament,—and that also because I have seen the harm slogans do when one is not on one's guard: they lull one too often, alas, with the pathetic delusion that quoting wisdom is nearly as good as growing into it. (Sri Aurobindo wrote to me once: "Perhaps X had come to believe it himself—that he had become a superman—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 Gurudev's disapproval of my admiration for the Russellian type of rationalism. For example when he wrote to me soon after I came to the Ashram:*

"Dilip, 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 lack of understanding on my part. What is the meaning of his 'taking interest in external things for their own sakes'? And what is an 'introvert'? Both these problems baffle me.

"The word 'introvert' has come into existence only recently and sounds like a companion of 'pervert'. Literally it means one who is turned inwards. The Upanishad speaks of the doors of the senses that are turned outwards absorbing man in external things ('for their own sakes', I suppose?) and of the rare man among a million who turns his vision inwards and sees the self. Is that man an introvert? And is Russell's ideal man 'interested in externals for their own sakes'—a Ramaswami, the chef, or Joseph, the chauffeur, for instance—*homo externalis Russellius*, an extrovert? Or is an introvert one who has an inner life stronger than his external one—the poet, the musician, the artist? Was Beethoven in his deafness bringing out music from within an introvert? Or does it mean one who measures external things by an inner standard and is interested in them not 'for their own sakes' but for their value to the soul's self-development, its psychic, religious, ethical or other self-expression? Are Tolstoy and Gandhi examples of introverts? Or, in another field—Goethe? Or does it mean one who cares for external things only as they touch his own mind or else concern his ego? But that I suppose would include 999,999 men out of every million.

"What are external things? Russell is a mathematician. Are mathematical formulae external things even though they exist here only in the World-mind and the mind of Man? If not, is Russell, as Mathematician, an introvert? Again, Yajnavalkya says that one loves the wife not for the sake of the wife, but for the self's sake, and so with other objects of interest and desire—whether the self be the inner self or the ego. In yoga it is the valuing of external things in the terms of the desire of the ego that is discouraged—their only value is their value in the manifestation of the Divine. Who desires external things 'for their own sakes' and not for some value to the conscious being? Even Cheloo, the day-labourer, is not interested in a two-anna piece for its own sake, but for some vital satisfaction it can bring him; even with the hoarding miser it is the same—it is his vital being's passion for possession that he satisfies, and that is something not external but

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

internal, part of his inner make-up, the unseen personality that moves inside behind the veil of the body.

"What is then meant by Russell's 'for their own sakes'? If you enlighten me on these points, I may still make an effort to comment on his *mahavakya* (great dictum).

"More important is his wonderful phrase about the 'emptiness within'! On that at least I hope to make a comment one day or another."

The above letter meant much to me even though I could not accept to be so easily knocked out—after the very first blow. I wrote back to him quoting from a book of Lytton Strachey about some idols in a potter's shop. "One fine morning," I wrote, "the potter discovered, to his utter amazement, that the lesser idols had all been hurled to the ground and blown to smithereens by the bigger which alone grimly survived. But in this case, Guru, you have not achieved nearly as complete a victory since one at least has escaped annihilation: Bertrand Russell. And he still survives because unlike many far-famed Yogis he talks sense (and not childish rubbish) when adjudicating on the place of mind in life or of marriage in human relationship. Fortunately for us, Guru, you happen to be an exception among the Yogis but all the same let me humbly submit it as a possibility that maybe you can hold your own against men of Russell's calibre not so much because of your spiritual stature as because of your massive mind, intellectual clarity, and unimpeachable character. So I hope you will please allow me to doubt if you could have duelled even with Russell in his own den and in the end bearded him had you been a spiritual giant but a mental dwarf. So I venture to suggest that you are doing a grave injustice to your own human equipment—your erudition, character, mental perspicacity etc. which have stood you here in good stead". Also I made bold to point out to him how much he had in common with the great philosopher and thinker, his butt, quoting among other things from the latter's famous and inspiring 'Free Man's Worship': "To every man comes, sooner or later, the great renunciation... by death, by illness, by poverty, or by the voice of duty, we must learn, each of us, that the world was not made for us, and that, however beautiful may be the things we crave, Fate may nevertheless forbid them. It is part of courage, when misfortune comes, to bear without repining the ruin of our hope, to turn away our thoughts from vain regrets. This degree of submission to Power is not only just and right: it is the very gate of wisdom".

And I went on to add:

"You must bear with me, Guru, if I quote something again from Russell—not for your benefit but mine, you see, I feel guilty, because I have not stressed so far, as I should have, that there is a deeper side—of vision—to his nature. So I have translated into Bengali verse a fairly long passage from his 'Free Man's Worship' which will speak for itself".

Here is the passage:

"In the spectacle of Death, in the endurance of intolerable pain, and in the irrevocableness of a vanished past, there is a sacredness, an overpowering awe, a feeling of vastness, the depth, the inexhaustible mystery of existence, in which, as by some strange marriage of pain, the sufferer is bound to the world by bonds of sorrow. In these moments of insight, we lose all eagerness of temporary desire, all struggling and striving for petty ends, all care for little trivial things that, to a superficial view, make up the common life of day by day; we see, surrounding the narrow raft illumined by the flickering light of human comradeship, the dark ocean on whose waves we toss for a brief hour. From the great night without, a chill blast breaks in upon our refuge; all the loneliness of humanity amid hostile forces is concentrated upon the individual soul, which must struggle alone, with what of courage it can command, against the whole weight of a universe that cares nothing for its hopes and fears. Victory, in this struggle with the powers of darkness, is the true baptism into the glorious company of heroes, the true initiation into the overmastering beauty of human existence."

Continued overleaf

By Day or Night

Thou camest not by day or night:
My yearning heart's deep agony
Grew tensed into a flame of light
That burnt me inly, silently...

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

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

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

God's World

How shall the witness mind's tranquillity
Catch the extravagant happiness of God's world?
To reach one goal He flings a million paths
Laughing with sheer love of the limitless,
Wandering for centuries in secret glory,
Then striking home a single light of lights!
Marvellous the pattern of His prodigal power,
But vainly the philosopher will brood
This sable serpent flecked with sudden stars:
Coil after coil 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 depths beyond
Knows through the magic measures of his tune
Our world is the overflow of an infinite wine
Self-tasted in the mystery-drunken heart.

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME

Continued from previous page

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 concerned only with his opinions and there too only with those opinions which touch upon my province—that of spiritual Truth. In all religions, the most narrow and stupid even, and in all non-religions also, there are great minds, great men, fine characters. I know little about Russell, but I never dreamed of disputing the greatness of Lenin, for instance, merely because he was an atheist—nobody would, unless he were an imbecile. But the greatness of Lenin does not debar me from refusing assent to the credal dogmas of Bolshevism, 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 ideas of Russell about spiritual experience, of which he knows nothing, 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 height 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 autosuggestion or hallucination:

"No, it was neither optical illusion nor hallucination nor coincidence (chromatic) nor auto-suggestion nor any of the other ponderous and vacant polysyllables by which physical science tries to explain away or rather avoid explaining the (scientifically) inexplicable. In these matters the Scientist is always doing what he is always blaming the layman for doing when the latter lays down the law on things about which he is profoundly ignorant without investigation or experiment, without ascertained knowledge simply by evolving a theory or an *a priori* idea out of his own mind and plastering it as a label on the unexplained phenomena."

And when he went on to add, incidentally having a fling at the Russellian outlook:

"As for what showed itself to you, it was not a mere curious phenomenon, not even merely symbolic colour, but things that 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 in contact, 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 environing influence.

"Develop this power of that inner sense and all that it brings you. These first seeings are only an outer fringe—behind 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."

Lastly, he wrote in a post-script: "I remember when I 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 repeat what I have said before—though your physical mind does not yet believe—that these experiences show at once that your inner being is a Yogi capable of trance, ecstasy, intensest 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. When there 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 *homo Russellius* outside, and you are not that—only a little *Russellicatus* on the surface)—can prevent final success in the Yoga. But the tussle between 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 Ineffable. 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 gave way entirely to the inner Yogi, he would find that what he lost or thought he was losing would be repaid a hundred-fold—though he would get it 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 myself which might justify his high hopes of me as a prospective Yogi. Nay, he would even come down to my level to convince my scepticism, and sometimes with the driest light of intellectual argument to be able to outmanoeuvre me with my 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 attendants) actually ran full tilt into him whenever his daemon 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 *sadhana* was in the early stages, namely, to speak something experienced was to stop it. It is the reason why many Yogis 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 warmly, 'take care, you mustn't eat my fish.' Well, fathers may not, but Gurus?"

"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 Messrs. Hostile Forces who do that—the *dasyus* 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?"

Pat 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 endeavour?"

To be continued

Presence

(After December 5, 1950)

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 echos from hill to hill—
'Tis the cry of His Flute as the sunlight breaks
In the heart with a sacred thrill.

There's a Love sunk deep in the Night—
Aquiver the darkness, the clod,
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 wronging,
It invades like the perfume of many flowers—
As a kiss in the heart that is longing.

NORMAN DOWSETT

MY LAST "DARSHAN" OF SRI AUROBINDO

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 because the Mother had filled our minds with evergrowing thought of Immortality and every thought of death, even the least suggestion 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 the Truth and getting transformed the 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 cling to the Highest Truth and the purest Intuition. How then could we think of death and that too in connection with our sweet Master who was always to us like a shadowless Sun?

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 Darshan day? Then we had sports, and stage plays on the 1st and the 2nd December and a cinema show on 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 and the sports and physical exercises were imposing and the music and dances before Sri Aurobindo's Murti 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 ashram celebration appeared quite tiny in comparison. Sri Aurobindo had never seen a moving picture and I wished that he saw this one. 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? He will surely do so if you ask." Sri Aurobindo looked at me and heard what I had to say and turned his face to the left and there to my great surprise I saw Sardar Patel sitting by his cot. Sri Aurobindo just soared above taking Sardar Patel also with him! Then I suddenly remembered that Sardar Patel was not well and had been shifted to Bombay! I wondered if he would get the experience in his illness (in which his mind was sure to be open and free from work) and if he would after it take fully to Sri Aurobindo. I felt somewhat inquisitive about the matter and thinking that Sri Aurobindo had taken him to a very high plane of God-consciousness I fell asleep. I had a sound sleep that night and woke up very late—about 7-30 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 inmate 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 newspapers and politics and I remember I said to myself "There is a sensational news about some sad event". The boy once more told me "Sri Aurobindo died at 1-30 last night." I thought he wanted to say that Sardar Patel died and called him Sri Aurobindo by mistake. So I asked again 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 and stayed as long as I could in the bathroom trying to understand what had happened before starting for the last Darshan of our great Master! "Can he too die"? How can it be true, the mind went on asking again and again and every fibre of the being seemed against this thought. I dressed up and came out on the street. I found the streets in front of the ashram full of people. Thousands 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 sad and deeply 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 reached 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 town people in the courtyard. I had 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 garlands though it was so early. The queue moved forward slowly and in about ten or fifteen minutes we reached the staircase. It had such a quiet peace and a solemn and spiritual atmosphere! I don't think any place on earth 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 that had settled there. I felt the Mother's Presence there and thought she was seeing all those who came up. 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 always but now they appeared big and so grand. At the sight of them I felt my condition changing and I got an impulse of rushing up to them and embracing Him. Slowly and solemnly the queue moved forward till I found myself in Sri Aurobindo's own room by the side of his cot. He seemed so peaceful and happy and the flesh shone with a new lustre which I had failed to see at the Darshan time on 24th November. Why could I not see it before? I wondered. Perhaps at darshan times my mind used to be in an introspective state and I watched my own condition and was eager to grab the experience I would get. At times it soared above and I did not see the details! 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 lest 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 and upward soaring trance just then or when he passed into Samadhi. I am sure he remained in a trance those two days. As I gazed on him the thought came to me that if Sri Aurobindo had wished to charm anybody on earth and met and talked with him no one would have been able to resist it. The Beauty would have utterly overpowered him for it was a thing unknown to the earth. No one would ever have been able to resist the attraction of it. What powers and what great secrets had he not been keeping 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 his deep concentration of so many years. I felt that all his acts were done only 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 all that she has given us. How well she hides her secrets! 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 from where it came—rose up 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. Strange to say, this sight brought 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 death-bed. The world has lost such a great reader and writer. It has lost such a great knowledge too! This reminded me of a couplet of Hali which he wrote on Ghalib after his death.

Uski batain jo ji ko yad aayain
Kishi batoon se dil ko behlain
Logo kuch pooch ne ko aaye hain
Ehlay miot janaza thairain.

(When we remember his actions, by whose actions are we to console and soothe our hearts? The people have come to ask some questions. O funeral bearers, stop the funeral!)

He has left no peer behind him and his place can be filled by nobody. The papers have called him the prophet of the modern age and the true Son of India and so on but in fact he was its God. He has worked in India for exactly half a century and left the 2nd half of it for the world to assimilate and understand what he has brought down, written and achieved. He chose the last century of the 2nd thousandth year to come to earth and to manifest God's glory there. Indeed we would have felt deserted had the Mother not been there who has all the Knowledge and Power in Her that the world can need and who stays behind to complete His great mission.

We had the opportunity of a 2nd Darshan that very day. All the day long the public was allowed to go and the queue kept on moving continuously. In the evening it was closed to the public and the disciples had one more chance to go up and have the Darshan. This time I went up along with the other disciples of the ashram. This time I looked carefully to see the signs of life in him. Again it seemed to me that he was alive—not only alive but

Continued on next page

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 touch 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 illumine 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 dramas 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 baldly, 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 hiding wretchedly behind locked doors 'for fear of the Jews.' Peter had let down his Master in the hour of his 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 alone. Each in the silence and emptiness of his own heart must have wondered if Jesus had spoken the truth; if God had not, after all, mismanaged matters. How were they to know he had 'overcome the sharpness of death', that he, too, had not bowed to the blind and inscrutable forces of creation?

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

On the first day of the week something so tremendous 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 recognise him. Then, that evening, when the disciples were assembled together, Jesus appeared in their midst bringing with him so ineffable a beatitude 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 Nathanael 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—our hearts go out to Thomas, 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 wrestles in the breast of every individual, and faith flinches because something happens we had not visualised happening in that particular way, and we have to learn once more, 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 really—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 nodi is at last bundled up and cast into the supramental status. As he saw and assured us,

A seed shall be sown 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 shading off, by the accretion of infinitesimal alterations. Species changes into species by a sudden overhaul, a quick somersault. We hazarded the theory, and scientists too cannot find any other way to explain the gaps in 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 insigni-

ficance 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 temporary and necessary dismantling of parts in order to fill them with a new substance and reshuffle and reorganise them, re-create and re-integrate them. It is the process of a literal transubstantiation, the process a faint replica 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 surmises from the result. Much more remains occult in the case of the change in dynamic consciousness and life-force involved in the changing of material elements. And the life divine is based upon such an occult process. He alone can see who has eyes, the blind knows not: *Pashyanti-akshnwan ne vichetat andhah*, says the Vedic Rishi.

MY LAST 'DARSHAN' OF SRI AUROBINDO

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 some vision I saw which made me think 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 magnificent trance. 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 so 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 system 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 take generations to understand. For the world his writings are enough 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 front, 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 or force—even Heaven itself is a conditioned existence with close parallels to earth, to judge by religious treatment of that state. The whole attack upon the ignorance, misery, and general unsubstantiality of human life is through the external manipulation of phenomena, to use again Sri Aurobindo's phrase.

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 effective 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 conception of a non-personal or super-personal spiritual or Divine principle, whose Will it is that forms, re-forms and informs the phenomenal 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 "himself" there with the Divine principle of life, simply could not find general lodgment in even 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 his widest, greatest, and noblest phases Sri Aurobindo's soaring spirit is virtually an unknown quantity to the West at the present time. Even in the sympathetic obituary 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 us? The West is in turmoil and bitter labour over its own fate and destiny; its notions and theories of its own existence are being shaken, tested, and unravelled out by the iron weapons of the age-old adversaries—the Body versus the Soul, the Kauravas against the Pandavas. The days when the ballot-box could be rattled in the face of events to exorcise the need for dire 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 pregnant circumstance as hangs over the whole 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 centuries for a 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 for 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, its direction, its sciences, and its beliefs very quickly—indeed, with almost bewildering rapidity. The enormous energy, as well as the commonsense and tough flexibility under strain, of the Westerner has saved his civilisation before; if now his qualities were to be utilised within an extension of his general consciousness, through the intervention of the Time-Spirit, what marvels might not be accomplished? If, for instance, the supreme commonsenseness and practicability of the Aurobindonian gospel and way of attainment were to get a grip of the Western world, the combination of spiritual enlightenment, material power, 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 Pandavas would be re-enacted once more in the human cycle, and by Krishna's help another vista of life fulfilment opened up to Arjuna and the race of man.

Let the present spiritual obtuseness 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. Maheswari working with Mahakali, to give Mahasaraswati—the essential spirit of the West—her true place in the scheme of things, and to enable Mahalakshmi to give joy and loveliness 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 the 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 this great spiritual leader whom the world has now lost. Much as I would like to do so, it would 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 expounding Sri Aurobindo's teaching and its importance for the religious life of—present and future—humanity. Permit me therefore to say just a few words as a Jew.

Sri Aurobindo's message about the arising of a new humanity touches the heart of Jewry brought up in an atmosphere of Messianic hopes. In my opinion Sri Aurobindo's guiding principle is actually almost identical with Jewish Messianic hope: the Man of today is considered a transitional being, a tool, which God has destined to prepare the way towards a new, re-born humanity; this new humanity will arise in the course of a spiritual transformation that will bring the kingdom of heaven down upon the earth.

Three times a day in our Aleynu-prayer, which terminates every service in our synagogues, we Jews pray for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Says the prophet Joel: "and it shall come to pass afterward, 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 handmaids in those will I pour out my spirit".

We find the same message of a new humanity in Jeremiah (24, 7; 31, 33; 32, 39), Ezekiel (11, 19; 36, 26; 39, 29), Isaiah (32, 15; 44, 3), Zechariah (17, 10), and throughout the book of Daniel.

But in the course of the last generation our Messianic hope and message has become colourless and trite; often it has even been misinterpreted 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 *Satyayuga* 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 realisation of God in ourselves and the world and remoulding of life by that realisation."

Here our Messianic hope forms the very core of a philosophy which does not acquiesce 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, greatness, power and prosperity—though these too she must not neglect—and certainly not like others to acquire domination over other peoples, 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 civilisation; the rise of a new, greater, brighter, and nobler life for mankind the realisation of which would be outwardly expressed by an international unity of peoples; the gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and her means of spiritualising the life of the whole race; and finally, a new step in evolution which, by uplifting consciousness to a higher level, would provide a basis for solving the many problems of existence which have perplexed and vexed humanity ever since men began to think and to dream of individual perfection and an ideal society.

Today, in humbleness and humility, I re-read this message, and although conscious of the fundamental difference in numbers and in political weight, I felt again that this message has been given by a great spiritual leader of mankind not only to Free India, but also to Free Israel.

Sincerely yours,

(Sd.) HUGO BERGMANN.

AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CENTRE

By "Synergist"

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 sanction 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 put away as an Unknowable 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 easily seen that though 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 glib answer: "To serve humanity," he answers back: "And what is humanity created for?" He wants to act—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 his own being nor of the nature of the universe nor of his Divine Source. He is utterly ignorant of ends and purposes. This is the plight in which the thinking man finds himself today; there is turmoil and conflict in his individual life and anarchy and chaos in his collective existence. The machinery of civilisation he has created by reason and 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 his reason, instead of seeking the highest truths, has been ministering to his desires and hankerings.

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'être* 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 *dharma*, a law of life based upon a direct knowledge of the Divine Reality—a Spiritual Ethic; a philosophy that can teach him to raise himself up from a lower status of being and consciousness 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 right relation to his fellow-beings, and even 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 illumination of a very high order is also needed. As the author has pointed out in his *World Crisis and India*: With Kant 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 revelatory and creative, and this can only become possible if the metaphysic 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 truths 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 idealistic and spiritual 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 philosophy of life with the intellect their only aid, a God-inspired seer-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 began in his journal *Arya* in 1914, a "transvaluation of values" on the basis of the highest integral spiritual experience. 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 metaphysics, ethics, psychology 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 reinterpreted 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 fulfilment.

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 sound antidote to the pseudo-scientific psychology, psychiatry, and educational art of the West. Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine* and other Yoga-treatises are among the most important works of our time in philosophy, 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 *Arya*:

"The main idea which has governed our writing, was imposed on us by the very conditions of the problem. All philosophy is concerned with the relations between two things, the fundamental truth of existence and the forms in which existence presents itself to our experience. The deepest experience shows that the fundamental truth is truth of the Spirit; the other is the truth of life, truth of form and shaping force and living idea and action... Our view is that the antinomy created between them 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 its basis, 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 its 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 the mental and physical life; to develop the most profound and vital methods of psychological self-discipline and self-development so 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; and to seek for the means and motives by which his external life, his society and his institutions may remould themselves progressively in 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 think and generalise and try to penetrate behind the apparent fact, for that is the imperative law of his awakened consciousness; man 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 fundamental truth of things, religion is the attempt to make the truth dynamic in the soul of man. They are essential to each other; a religion that is not the expression of philosophic truth, degenerates into superstition and obscurantism, and a philosophy which does not dynamise itself with the religious spirit is a barren light, for it cannot get itself practised. But again neither of these get 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

AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CENTRE

Continued from previous page

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 synthetical 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 illumined vision, a God-attained spiritual figure worshipped by people of all sects and creeds, is indeed a World-teacher—one who can give the men 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

*This work is now published in book form for the first time, simultaneously in India and the U.S.A., under the title *The Human Cycle*.

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—men of all faiths and nationalities find the light they have been seeking in him. This once again goes to prove that whenever there is a genuine manifestation of the Divine Light men with awakened souls 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 his 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 fulfils 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.

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".

SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

By C. C. DUTT

(Continued from previous issue)

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 intellect controlled his activities. At the third stage, the spiritual and suprarational, 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 may exist in the individual and in the world at one and the same time. No man is wholly infra-rational and no man is wholly supra-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, nor does it appear to be intended by Providence that a man or a group of men should belong solely and entirely to one of the three stages. Even 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 to show that even these people had some organised life, some code 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 people can arrive at a predominantly 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 as yet realised the secret behind them. But progress did not stop here. In India, the influence of the few saints and mystics blossomed out into the Upanishadic age. In old Greece the thoughts of a handful of philosophers developed into the flood 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 begin to go down and slowly plunge into an era of blind ignorance. Things are 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 cultured and civilised—as in Egypt, Assyria, India, Persia 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 passed into the 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, the Franks adopted the Christian culture and built up a strong empire under Charlemagne. In Asia, the wild Scythians adopted the Buddhist culture and established an empire with Taxila as the Capital and the descendants of Timur founded the imperial throne at Delhi. Old decayed cultures 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 shackle people's minds with blind 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 release ensued but it did not last. General degeneration continued 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 corporate life. The modern age may be 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 questioned. What actually happens is more or less this: An 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 rapidly into practice, dethroning the former principle and taking its place as the basis of communal life. A new social organisation comes into 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 central principle. But a time arrives when dissatisfied reason proclaims that the new social system was no satisfying change, it was only a mass of new conventions. 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 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, socialistic, culminating perhaps in a governmental communism, with equality and the State for its principle; the third, anarchistic in the highest sense, 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 upon a period of conventions that has opened the door to rational thought. There were thinkers on social life 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 reasoning mind, for it recognises only one symbol, the idea. 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 all conceived as well as ideal truths to life. That is why the age of Reason is the age of Progress.

When the old method of mentalising life has outlived its usefulness, when its symbols, types and institutions have become useless, then the time has come for a drastic 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 is infra-rational they will very soon turn the opinion of the wise man into a rigid convention. Therefore the reason of each and all, alone, must decide things for the community. Thus does the principle of individualistic democracy come in. A benevolent ruling class governing with the consent of the governed is not democracy. What is wanted is that each man should be free to live his own life and shape his own destiny provided he accords 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 individual does not use his reason to come to an agreement but only to foist his 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 governs his conduct. The democratic ideal may lead at first to the exploitation of the ignorant many by the clever few. But the principle of liberty, once it is proclaimed, cannot be called back. The less fortunate masses will not long acquiesce in "pseudo-democratic falsehood." They are bound to strike back. This will naturally perpetrate a strife between 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 out to realise.

What, then, should be done? Since it is education that opens out man's intelligence, let us spread education far and wide. But first we have to agree as to what this education is. Obviously, we should teach man 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 rights and, at the same time, not forget his duty to the community. With this training man may be fit for a democratic state. But unluckily this education is seldom given. Disappointed people have begun to say, education is useless, democracy is an illusion, what we had before was the best. But this is not true; education and freedom have done a lot for humanity. For the first time in history we find that man is erect, active and living. All this will not go in vain. The ordinary man has learnt to think, to apply reason to his life and work. He is anxious to be able to pronounce which of several theories is acceptable to him. He has not yet secured equality in education and equal opportunity of life, but there is greater equalisation today than there was before. But supposing man acquired full equality, what will happen? In his semi-infra-rational state, man strove for power, recompense and enjoyment. Under primitive conditions, these things were secured to him. But, now, it is wealth alone which can give him these and there is no equality of wealth in the kind of

SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT —Continued from previous page.

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 democratic individualism 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 Bourgeois and the Capitalist. 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 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 or inherited right to property; 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, "a temporising reformist, 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 poise 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 ideal. Just as it is the individual who demands liberty, so it is 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 flat 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 animal. 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 conflagration 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 characterises 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... head of a small active minority, the Nazi Fascist or Communist party." Of the democratic trinity the first two—liberty and equality—have proved unattainable in practice. 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 used to 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 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 socialistic 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 anarchism, founded on brotherhood can help man along towards his goal. Individualistic democracy laid too much stress on the egoism 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, overstressed 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 State government, all social regimentation crushes down the natural good 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 law takes the place 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 intellect? We are assured that a faculty higher than his reason is bound to descend 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 mere 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 necessary is a positive feeling of love, 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 immediate 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 early 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

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!.....Do you hear?

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 sun-sail through the upmost sea
With a wild joy for song.

ELEANOR MONTGOMERY

Save One Snowed Summit

Whenas from lofty station of today,
We turning 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 one, expand
Into the dimness, with the mists 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 on Future Time,
A land of shapeful mists, with nothing sure,
Save one snowed summit that we all must climb.

TERENCE HEYWOOD

SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT—Continued from previous page.

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 these points fully 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 orientation and a conscious method 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 futility led some men to talk of regulating life according to Nature, to put an end to all our ills. The most notable attempt in this direction was that of Nietzsche. His conception of the vital superman suffered from this great defect that it failed to grasp the true law of man's being. Deep down in his nature man is a spiritual being. It is his spirit which, seated in the "lotus" of his heart, has led him through the various 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 superman is not a vital "asuric" being but a supramental God-man. 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 has 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. It is only a stage in man's progress. Regarding the superman, Sri Aurobindo says, "the object of a true supermanhood is not exceeding and domination for its own sake but precisely the opening of our normal humanity to something now beyond itself that is yet its own destined perfection." Imperfection 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 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 is bound to force his whole being to obey it and to reshape 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 live together but without any understanding, "made perpetually uneasy, 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 attempted compromise and come to a working arrangement by an impoverishment of their vital and physical life. But Sri Aurobindo is emphatic that this sort of make-shift is not transformation. The transformation that is required cannot be brought about by the mind. Life will never submit entirely to the dictates of the intellect be they moral or aesthetic, philosophic or scientific. Life may be repressed 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 intellect wholly to the study of Life and Matter, acknowledged that his mind was only an instrument of the other two principles and employed knowledge to bring about their expansion and efficiency. As a result of this, civilized nations busied themselves in a plethoric extension of commerce and a gigantic expansion of factories and armaments. For the indispensable purging of humanity had to come with its terrible orgy of destruction from 1914 to 1918, there was no normal life for man. It was "Kill, Kill" everywhere. Fatigue came but no change of heart, the next two decades 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, has 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 how to make it the master of life. To rest is perilous, we must follow to the end, when the Spirit calls. At the present juncture tinkering 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 got to be lifted up to a higher 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 it and become supramental. 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 be 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 pervading 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 subconsciously 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 great changes find their first clear 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 able to develop and re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit and to communicate their idea and its 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 day. So far, some progress, here and there, some important change, 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)

To Sri Aurobindo

O great and vast ocean of all Oneness—
Supreme light on the bosom of the earth,
Whose heart cradles the multitudinous worlds
Of flame stillnesses and rapture-wing-beats,
Mooned seas of somnolent wilderness,
Bright and playful waves of the life-surge
And dark depths of the spiritless nought—
Thou who art the pinnacle of summit-trance,
A peak beyond the reach of eagle-mind,
And who art the sapphire radiance of the gods
And the august lord of golden power,
Canst thou be a vassal of fate's iron rule
And be blotted out by death's puny veil?
Who has the might that can curb thy diamond-will
To conquer the serpents from the bottomless base,
To remove the dark mask of oblivion
From the heart of an ever-yearning clay?
O timeless unfathomed mystery of the peak,
King of the illimitable Absolute,
Descend, awake and change the face of the dust!

ROMEN

To the Supreme Consciousness

O shoreless, waveless, bottomless Sea!
What ship can plough Thy waters dread?
O airless, solid, limitless Space!
On Thy still face what wing can spread?

O depthless, ceaseless, leadlike Sleep!
What human dream can break Thy spell?
O trunkless, branchless, leafless Tree!
What fruit is Thine, past heaven and hell?

No mortal yet came back unscathed
Who had assailed Thee, O Unknown!
O Gorgon consciousness! whose eye
Turned not at once into a stone

On seeing Thee? A silence stark,
A granite stillness penetrates
Into the soul of him who dares
The almighty abysm of Thy gates.

RAJANIKANT MODY

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 Thanh's 'My Four Years with the Viet Minh'; Mr. Philip Spratt's 'The Communist Peace Appeal'.

"The task of collecting and making available the information that is essential for public education on the value of democracy and the threats with which it is faced can only be performed if the fullest co-operation of all those who are consistent democrats is available. An appeal is therefore made to those who are in agreement with the objectives of the Service to get in touch with Mr. R. Swarup, Secretary of the Democratic Research Service, at Manekjee 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 choose without alignment with 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 sound. Even when one differs from it, one should consider it sympathetically. For one thing, it is well-intentioned and nobly conceived even when, on certain important points, it is woefully misinformed and sadly 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 surer 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 a 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 co-operation, 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 fair-minded to place them at par 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 propaganda, a theoretical apparatus which confuses many minds. Before its self-righteousness, the "White-man's burden" of the old imperialism is a crude rationalisation, indeed a guilty conscience. It is attacking, advancing, annexing, enslaving 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 the Party" based on "Dictatorship of Industry", a monolithic rule supported by a monolithic 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 proletarians themselves 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 pauperization, 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 Indonesia to destroy their freedom because she could not hope to use it for her own purpose. In Malaya and Indo-China, the genuinely nationalist movement has been deflected from its straight path by Cominform agents through a process of infiltration. In India, a campaign of terrorism, derailment, sabotage, strikes was also 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 sabotage 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, those 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 industrialization and militarization based, in the language of communist leaders, on the "colonial exploitation" of the "countryside". Then comes the THIRD stage standing for world conquest after intensive preliminary preparation, or in Stalin's words: "to arm the revolution, to organise the army of the revolution against the foreign enemy". The idea is to use an industrialised and militarised Russia as a "base" for further conquest.

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

(Continued overleaf)

A CRITIQUE OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

(Continued from previous page)

country in the world, a role for which she is ideologically, mentally and militarily prepared, which is inherent in her internal politico-economic system and which is empirically confirmed by post-war history. This is a threat to the values 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 point of fact, she always supported our freedom movement. Part of this distrust is, of course, the fact that we ourselves are not free from colour prejudice and we suffer from a sort of inverted racialism. Besides, the old distrust is not the only thing. There is a vast campaign being carried on just now against her by vested interests. Russia 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 in a struggle which is beyond their strength." Russia's technique is to divide those whom she has decided to enslave and conquer. So she spends millions of roubles in selling division, doubts, hatred and suspicion among them. In this campaign, there are no lies, no foul language which she would spare. Had not Lenin himself said: "We can and must write in a language which sows among the masses hate, revulsion, scorn and the like towards those of a different opinion"?

The distrust and disavowal of America among many is based on the accusation that Americans have a Negro problem, that they are super-capitalists, 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 1035 cases of lynching; between 1937-46, the figure had fallen to only 42. We do not say that lynching, however infrequent, is not bad, but we mention this fact in order to introduce a correction of perspective in a country which has recently emerged from a communal mass 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 60 acres of land to cultivate with about \$1300 worth of land and buildings on every farm. The Negroes have their own retail stores, hotels, theatres, banks, insurance houses, colleges, clubs. Literacy is universal. In the worst depression days of the thirties, the Negro community was spending \$1,200,000 for gasoline, or more than 631,000,000 gallons. (*The Negro Handbook*, 1942). We do not have comparative Indian figures at hand, but we think these figures would compare favourably with the total consumption of the whole of India.

Again, it is alleged that America is a land of super-capitalism with all the sinister associations the word has gathered round itself. Well, let us look at facts again. Firstly, American capitalism is the kind of capitalism that has given to practically all its workers a car, a flat, a radio, a refrigerator, a telephone and overfeeding. Secondly, what goes to the capitalists proper is only a very small percentage of the total national income. For example, in 1947, the total national income of America was \$202 billion. Out of this, \$127½ billion went to wage earners and salaried groups; \$39 billion went to independent workers like peasants, professional people, shop keepers. The total money that went to Corporate Business (which includes all big business) was only about \$18 billion after the taxes were paid. Most of these profits went to making capital for further investment—investment which is needed in every country, whatever its colour. The money available for distribution as dividends from these profits was less than \$7 billion. Even out of those \$7 billion, a half went to people earning less than \$5000 a year. So only about \$3 billion went to what could be called capitalists—though not all of them are capitalists proper. If we place a proper capitalist at \$100,000 a year, then in 1946 for which figures are available, only 59 crores or about half a billion of these profits went to this class!

These are the facts about America's "pot-bellied capitalism" which is made much of in our country among what are called the "Leftists" with their minds formed on current slogans. The truth is that America is an equalitarian society with a high level of prosperity for even the lowest with the result that whatever wealth-concentration 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 itself. The remaining 5%, which represents her total economic contact with the rest of the world can alone contain, if it does, any element of imperialistic exploitation, but it would hardly explain the enormous 95%

wealth of this country on the solid foundation of which her prosperity is built.

Even that 5% represents exchange of goods, and now in the post-war period mostly gifts. Today, every American, whatever his age or sex, 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 whose 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 confusion can only pay those who have their iron imperialistic exploitation to hide.

Those who explain this free giving by imputing the grossest 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 ruthless dictatorship. America is a land of plenty, liberty, free elections, free speech, humane treatment; Russia is a land of general poverty, forced labour, speed-up, purges, controlled thought, inequality and organised governmental cruelty. In the words of Morgan Phillips, the Secretary of the British Labour Party, 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 civilization 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 mathematically so simplifying. It appeals to our sense of geometry and balance. The fact is that, in the world of to-day, there is only one bloc—the 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. Even the Commonwealth countries, a far closer group than the rest, voted together only 101 times out of 429. In 328 cases they differed and consequently voted differently. On the other hand, there is not a single instance when, however trifling the matter, the Soviet satellites could vote differently from Russia. Secondly, the non-Russianized countries have their own different economic systems, their own different forms of government, their own leaders. Many times these are not the systems and forms and leaders which the American government would prefer—they are either too reactionary or too radical for America's taste. Yet they prosper. On the other hand, this is unthinkable about Russia's satellite countries. Their economic and political patterns must slavishly copy the Russian pattern. They must sell to Russia at cheap prices and buy from her at high prices. The indigenous nationalist 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 have served their time in the MVD. To illustrate, Kostov, the local Communist leader of Bulgaria, was removed at the direct intervention of the Russian dictator and replaced by Chervenko who had worked for many years in the Soviet Secret Service. That Russia directly intervened was proved beyond doubt when the Bulgarian Communist Party sent their greetings to Stalin on the latter's birthday in these words: "Only thanks to your wise and timely instructions, highly esteemed Comrade Stalin, we managed to uncover the cowardly hidden enemies of our Republic, to unmask the agents of imperialist Powers, and to cleanse ourselves of them. Only your deeply penetrating eye could see in time the criminal spy gang of Kostov. On this, your 70th birthday, we send you our deepest gratitude that you helped us to render harmless the Kostov gang."

A False Analysis

If in spite of these facts which stare us in the face, we still insist on calling the Democracies a bloc in the same sense in which the Communist countries form a bloc, it only means we are not particularly scrupulous about facts. If in spite of the fact that unlike the Fascist-Communist countries, democracies can disagree among themselves, vote differently, think differently, have different political economic systems, Capitalism, Socialism, Syndicalism and Fair Dealism, recognise different sets of leaders, differ, abuse and slander Truman and Attlee and yet prosper, if in spite of all these

A CRITIQUE OF INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

(Continued from opposite page)

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 only means we lack discrimination. It means we do not care for differences where differences exist and we only care for tidy, worse-than-useless, schematic constructs of our own imagination. Policies based on this simplified and inadequate characterisation of the world can only lead to mischief. Not to know our friends from our enemies is suicidal. Because of a wrong reading of the world, we have pursued wrong policies. It weakens the Democracies, when the Democracies should be strengthened.

Coming to the next important aspect of our foreign policy, it is claimed that it does not consist in inaction, but in our refusal to align ourselves 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 individual issue, no isolated act as such. 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 to pass through very bitter experience before the necessary correction came. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania were annexed, and this was followed by the rape of Albania, Bulgaria, Roumania, Poland, Czechoslovakia. Each one of these acts happened individually while the basic motive-spring was the same. But each time the general basic motive-spirit was neglected, and the world said it would consider each act individually. Thanks to this policy which neither learns from the past nor anticipates the future, it was found that the Russian dictators had subjugated 100 million people in East Europe alone.

A "Particular" Case and "General" War

It is said of the penguins that when a hunter shoots any one of them, the rest raise their heads, watch and go about again minding their own business till each is taken by turn. Perhaps, they too consider each case on its individual merit, consequently not considering it worth while taking any precautionary measure or collective action. For some time, the world was reduced to this position. When one of the non-Communist countries of the world fell a prey to Russia either owing to the Red Army or the Russian fifth-column, the rest of the world watched unconcerned saying that it was an "isolated" case to be considered on its own merits! Many argued that since it was an isolated case, it need not occur again; that if Russia was allowed to get away with it, it might relax the tension; that this "particular" issue, in any case, should not be allowed to invoke a "general" war. Every time a new country was added to the Russian empire, it was a "particular" case which should not invoke a "general" war. The net result was that the area of freedom went on contracting, the ambitions of the dictators sharpening and the chances of World War increasing. Fortunately, all this changed, at least so far as America and Britain were concerned, the countries which alone could contain Russia. Russia and her satellites became angry and thus began the world-wide programme of slander and vituperation against those who by their power, prestige and determination to be free and 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. She must realise that so far as Russia 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 is India itself, as Mr. M. R. Masani pointed out in his speech in the Korea debate in the Parliament last August. Lenin himself has said: "The shortest way from Moscow to Paris leads 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 differ, defy, stand aloof when reason, honour, national interest demand that we should agree and evolve some concerted programme of defensive action against Communist aggression. Let us remember that the threat of Communism is not only local, but also international; and consequently it can never be met by local action alone. Let us remember that the countries which have joined the united Democratic Front are not less free and independent in their foreign policy than we are. To suggest that England, France, Australia, Canada are not 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 united action is not alignment with the so-called "Anglo-American bloc", but a measure of self-defence, a measure indispensable for continued national self-existence, that to take this measure is not to compromise our newly-won freedom but to promote its meaning and continuity. Freedom does not merely mean freedom to stand aloof if we choose

to, but also freedom to defend together and build together if we have to.

Today, undoubtedly, we have freedom and independence, though the way we sometimes choose to assert them may be unfortunate. To show that we are independent of what we call the two Power Blocs, 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 would be 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 all-powerful.

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 country 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, even 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 certain 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 primarily between 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-dependence on one hand and forces 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 in order to fight new dangers. 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 redressing 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 nationalist 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 disallowing 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 on a par with governments based on free, unimpeded elections.
4. Peace in the world is impossible so long as the peoples of the free world cannot speak directly and freely to the people 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 areas. While we in these areas can advance largely on the basis of our own efforts and sacrifices, we look to industrially developed nations to give such marginal, catalytic help as is necessary. We on our part must educate our people to regard this step, if taken, as a friendly one which should be welcomed.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

A DEEP-ACTING NOVEL

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 printing presses it is not surprising that novels are looked upon as merely some pleasant gossip just to pass some idle time. But now 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 form, the low grade writer always makes the good man think the right thoughts and do the right things while the high grade writer often makes the good man think the wrong thoughts and do the wrong things. The tragedy and mystery of life lie in the fact that frequently in this world we find that good and evil are mixed together; the good man is not able to see the right way, and in spite of the best intentions the worst things are said or done. It is in the picturing of these things in such a manner that the proper values of actions, words and characters are finally seen through the mistaken floundering, that great writing is revealed.

In *Jean Barois* the eternal human need of Faith is the basic idea behind the story. The assault 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 epic fight. It is indeed astonishing how 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 Thibaults*.

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 scenes, 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 askance 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'm going to prescribe comes first; everything else—yes, even prayer—is of secondary importance." The Doctor tries to stir up the will-to-live of the boy by insisting on the joy of being alive: "Not merely to stay alive, but to go on loving what you love. Look at those trees, that golden light, that blue sky, the church tower. Look! To live, Jean." Jean manages to pull through. But he shows very 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 not much troubled as he is kept busy with his studies of science and medicine, and then he falls in love with the daughter of his godmother 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 much. How that happens is described by a friend of his: "How exciting it is, one's first contact with the 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 day there's no escape; you can't stop analysing."

So Jean analysed 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 notorious Dreyfus affair developed. Jean and his friends supported Dreyfus, and after much hard work they were able to have him released. But after that great achievement Jean began to notice that the idealism of his party was waning. New ideas began to come to the fore. Jean and his friends began to be considered back numbers. 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

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 before the public who are daily wanting new things. Particularly is this craze 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 won renown in the old and the new worlds and in *The Writer's Situation* we see the story writer turn critic. The 12 articles which she wrote during the years 1939 to 1949 are all brought together, and the subjects vary from "the Form of the Novel" and "Paris" to "Creditors of France" (which is the last but one article). Storm Jameson is no ordinary writer as the title of her book suggests and she discusses the writer's situation with as much insight as Francis Vivian does in his book *Creative Technique in Fiction* (a Hutchinson publication). The questions that Storm Jameson recommends writers to ask themselves are the usual ones 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 fiction?" So few writers ask these vital questions, interested as they are in the bread-and-butter problem which they keep in the fore. There are writers who go so far as to take to Politics and debase 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 so indifferently that one is averse 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 Macniece and Somerset Maugham have stepped out of their sanctum to ask whether the Novel has come to a standstill or whether 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" shows, 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 philosophy. 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 novelists who like to call things by their proper names and speak unflinchingly through characters who are not slow to see the past as "an unbroken force" responsible for a great deal of suffering and hardship that the old people have to suffer today. The article "The Crisis of the Spirit" is allied to the article "Between the Wars"; for it is during 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 Margin: 1939." Readers as much as writers will learn much from the book and appreciate the tendency 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.

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 that can be satisfied only by faith and supernatural means. Following his daughter's entry into the convent Jean and Cecile were re-united. Later Jean dies with the consolations of religion. But then his will written some years earlier is discovered, and in that he declares 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. And as in life also there is a certain truthfulness in the picture. Jean's atheism is utterly sincere. He holds materialistic views valuing reason above 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 consoled and made peaceful not by reason or by his friends who held to reason, but by spiritual words and rites 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.

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 determined rationalist and a staunch lover of peace and liberty, a thoroughgoing individualist 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 free-thinkers who, at the beginning of the 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 mathematical career—and we must not forget that 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, education and 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 original philosopher, in the full sense of the word (and he would be the first to agree), being too much of the down-to-earth rationalist to venture into higher spheres where logic is of small avail. (An interesting coincidence we might note is that both Sri Aurobindo and Bertrand Russell entered Cambridge in the same year, being both 18 years of age,—though they went 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 and metaphysics. This accounts, among 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-seeking. Unfortunately it had been left to the theologians to define in vague nebulous terms the sphere and region 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 possessed) 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 serious 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. What he says springs from his 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 *en masse*, at least in its present state, of producing a condition of harmony and concerted action. In fact the greater the pressure towards world unity, the greater is the need for enlightened leaders to bring about that unity. Thus in modern dictatorships we see how easy 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 at present under the direct domination of these adverse powers, 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 philosophic discipline and study, Russell lays the blame for the present ignorance and blindness of the masses on the gross misuse and distortion of philosophy by the world power-seekers. It is clear to see how even the most seemingly innocuous philosophy has lent itself to justify the most atrocious misdeeds and perversities. 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 Hegel). Russell believes that a more enlightened educational system incorporating a broad and liberal study of the philosophies would go 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 bent, if not on a total self-destruction, of his species, at least on greatly diminishing his numbers on earth. Elaborating on this theme of the function and place of philosophy as a possible corrective directing men's thought and action, he advocates a closer rap-

prochement of philosophy with science. In this way philosophy will not only be more reliable and truthful, but it will also be brought into a practical relationship with the needs of humanity and would get a firmer root and utilitarian purpose in life, rather than be inextricably wrapped up 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 dynamic philosophy. We must observe that science deals primarily 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 lies above and is largely masked in the lower Nature. And, further, while science absorbs itself more and more in extra-personal values the more will the inner link with God be 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 philosophic thought which enables one to steer a somewhat midway course between authoritative dogma on the one hand and scepticism on the other. This mid-line philosophy in the sphere of practical world affairs gives rise to the application of a liberal democracy as the most accommodating system for supplying the maximum liberty and equality to men's lives. But unfortunately such empirical philosophy, in its nature indeterminate, does not help us to construct a positive foundation of belief. Rather it tends to be negative—even nihilistic and destructive as modern thought shows—rather than affirmative and constructional. Even when we have finished rationalising and analysing the motives of our action in accordance with the empirical method, we are still left with the colossal 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 essays, for example, after Russell has made all his wide-sweeping and often indiscriminate attacks on false beliefs and superstitions rampant in human relations, only one or two straws remain to give us a clue indicating the course present events are really taking. These, however, are valuable pointers, the danger-signals which we must take 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 despotic 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 habitation would inevitably ensue; which would of course be a backward step to the condition of a more primitive society. If man, 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. Unfortunately the means suggested by Russell of establishing a world government in face of a radically divided world hold out 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 adequately with the turbulent chaotic state of the present-day world. In itself a liberal democracy is too loosely knitted and lacks the cohesive force necessary to hold diverse groupings together. Furthermore it demands a degree of individual preparedness of 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 disruption unless it were 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 people are cognisant of the common goal of human endeavour,* and the particular rôle each section of humanity has to play in the common effort, how can even the basis of world government be laid? Up to now it has only been under the pressure of some immanent danger or catastrophe that men of diverse races and opinions have been moved to come together and work with some common goal in view. Once the danger has passed, the old order of conflicting aims has again presented itself. Above, or rather within the sphere of individual freedom and diversity, there must also be the consciousness of the collective effort. Liberal democracy gives individual freedom but unfortunately it has paid little attention to the right aim of man. And where liberalism (from which modern democracy sprang) has left an indecisive blank Communism has been only too ready to supply its spuriously definite aim. And here again democracy is apt to forget (until a crisis causes it to change its tactics) that humanity *en masse* is loth to move in unison unless there is the spur to goad it on—some centralised power, though in a more elevated form than that which has appeared in the past under the name of authority, dogmatism, despotism or dictatorship.

Continued overleaf

* 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 dull daylight 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 whole 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 threnody,
 Their dirge to day; an orthophonic sky,
 Blue-deepening around the illumining 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, constricting ring of solar light
 Revealed a blinding cauldron, 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-tryst
 And splayed 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 blotted 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 lapis lazuli.
 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 unfathomable heart's well
 The sun—great hidden ray of virgin fire,
 Immune white ultimate of earth-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 forthwith promised immortality.

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

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

And roused, the white-fired 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 direst 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, incognisant 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 this 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 hesitancy. 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 blotted 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 Heights. 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 MODY

(Continued from previous issue)

Now we come to a group of images which might have been inspired by the World-War.

*A cowed 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.(72)*

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 evil air,
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-flare showing all the ground
A swift intuitive discernment shone.(73)*

The following image is more fully developed:

*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 his 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 slain Light
Cherished the putrid corpses of dead truths,
Hailed twisted forms as things free, new and true,
Beauty from ugliness and evil drank,
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 and mystic, 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 poets headed by T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and others on one side and Sri Aurobindo on the other. Those English poets as well as Sri Aurobindo use modern images and still what a difference! Not that the former use ineffective images; far from it: an image, such as,

*When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon the table,*

suggests much more than what it bears upon its face; and we cannot say that such images are ineffective or insipid. But all the same our soul and even our deeper aesthetic sense always remain dissatisfied, always feel that something is wrong somewhere in these kinds of images. At any rate, we never feel that we are reading some soul-uplifting poetry when we peruse the works of those modernist authors. The images that are inspired in their minds have got their source somewhere no doubt in the deeper layers of our consciousness, but they are the layers that had better be left untapped rather than be made the fountains of our poetic inspirations. For they are not the sublime domains of Saraswati, the Goddess-Muse of real divine poetry. On the other hand, Sri Aurobindo's images are equally modern, sometimes even too modern, but at the same time they are not fed by the underworld beings inhabiting our subconscious. Their food is the ambrosia of the gods, their drink the nectar dripping from the Superconscious.

But it would be a mistake to call Sri Aurobindo modern even as it would be incorrect to call him ancient either. For he is beyond Time: he accepts whatever is good from the past equally as whatever is good in the present. But pre-eminently he is a poet of the future. The poetry he has given in Savitri, especially in the cantos dealing with Aswapaty's Yoga and his travelling in the other worlds, is as yet unfathomable for the average human mind of today. The knowledge he has utilised as the basis of that poetry is 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 throughout 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 gushing 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 spirit dreamed in the crude cosmic whirl,
Mind flowed unknowing in the sap 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 nurse to wisdom's occult sun,
Myth suckled knowledge with her lustrous milk;
The infant passed from dim to radiant 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-power
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.

*Occult behind this grosser Nature's walls,
A gossamer marriage-hall of Mind with Form
Is hidden by a tapestry of dreams.(81)
A carnival of beauty crowds 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.(82)*

And here is another one:

Power laid its head upon the breasts of Bliss.(83)

And yet another,

She has lured the Eternal into the arms of Time.(84)

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 Reality...*

*The magnificent wrappings of her secrecy
That fold her desirable body out of sight.*

*In her green wildernesses and lurking depths,
In her thickets of joy where danger clasps delight,
He glimpsed the hidden wings of her songster hopes
A glimmer of blue and gold and scarlet fire.*

*In the sleepy splendour of her noons he saw,
A perpetual repetition through the hours,
Thought's dance of dragon-flies on mystery's stream*

POETIC IMAGERY IN "SAVITRI"—Continued from previous page

*That skim but never test its murmur's race,
And heard the laughter of her rose desires
Running as if to escape from longed-for hands.(85)*

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 with a sole and perilous bound
The high black wall that hides superconscience,
She broke in with inspired speech for scythe
And plundered the Unknowable's vast estate.(86)*

The following is a very peculiar figure:

*His body glimmered like a skyey shell;
His gates to the world were swept with seas of light.
His earth, dowered with celestial competence,
Harboured a power that needed now no more
To cross the closed customs-line of mind and flesh
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 speaks to its gulfs.(89)*

Then, there is a somewhat similar image emphasising the vanity and futility of human happiness:

*Here even the highest rapture Time can give
Is a mimicry of ungrasped beatitudes,
A mutilated statue of ecstasy,*

*Or a simulacrum of enforced delight
In the seraglios 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 become so boring to us or have lost 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 strove
In indolent and amicable debate,
Inarmed, disputing with laughter who should rule.(91)*

*An insect hedonism fluttered and crawled
And basked in the sunlit Nature's surface thrills,
And dragon raptures, python agonies
Crawled in the marsh and mire 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 skim but never test its murmur'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 clasps 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 deft Intelligence
Half-poised on equal wings of thought and doubt
Toiled ceaselessly twixt being's 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 nest alarmed
Her violent spirit soared at Satyavan.(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
Wind-maned through our pastures, on my seeing mood
Cast shapes of swiftness.(98)*

This image of a horse applied to life reminds us of the same image frequently used in the Veda. The next two images are both applied to the Desire-Mind of man. Sri Aurobindo also calls it, "A hunchback rider of the red Wild-Ass, A rash Intelligence ... lion-maned."

*A huge chameleon gold and blue and red
Turning to black and grey and lurid brown,
Hungry it stared from a mottled bough of life
To snap up insect joys, its favourite food,
The dingy sustenance of a sumptuous frame
Nursing the splendid passion of its hues.(99)*

What an apt and splendid image it is for the Desire-Mind wearing a thousand shapes and taking numberless names! The next one too is very appropriate:

*A snake of flame with a dark cloud for tail,
Followed by a dream-brood of glittering thoughts,
A lifted head with many-tinged flickering crests,
It licked at knowledge with a smoky tongue.(100)*

If this Desire-Mind is a chameleon and a snake, "pigmy thought" which is a "rivetter of Life to habit's grooves" is a watch-dog of the spirit's house; while human Reason is a bullock (as we have already seen in the image 71). We give here the image of the watch-dog in full:

*Or in an ancient Night's dim environs
It dozes on a little courtyard's stones
And barks at every unfamiliar light
As at a foe who would break up its home,
A watch-dog of the spirit's sense-railed house
Against intruders from the Invisible,
Nourished on scraps of life and Matter's bones
In its kennel of objective certitude.(101)*

This is an image marvellously conceived and superbly executed in its details. Reason is not simply a bullock dragging knowledge-bales, but is comparable to another animal as well:

*By the power of sense and the idea and word
She ferrets out Nature's process, substance, cause.(102)*

The image of horses is suggested in another place, where the subject is Life:

... She has stabled her dreams in Matter's Courts.(103)

And another image from horse-racing is this:

Our minds are starters in the race to God.(104)

(To be continued)

(72) II.8. P. 204. (72A) II.7. P. 188. (72B) Ibid. P. 192. (73) I.3. P. 36. (74) II.10. P. 236. (75) Ibid. P. 221. (76) II.7. P. 186. (77) I.3. P. 39. (78) II.1. P. 93. (79) II.10. P. 221. (80) II.1. P. 92. (81) II.2. P. 95. (82) II.2. P. 96. (83) II.3. P. 113. (84) II.6. P. 162. (86) Ibid. P. 172-174. (86) I.3. P. 37. (87) II.9. P. 215. (89) I.4. P. 44. (90) I.5. P. 71. (91) V.1. P. 1. (92) II.4. P. 129. (93) II.6. P. 174. (94) Ibid. P. 173. (95) II.10. P. 220. (96) VII.1. P. 7. (97) III.4. P. 314. (98) V.3. P. 16. (99) II.10. P. 225. (100) Ibid. P. 226. (101) Ibid. P. 225. (102) Ibid. P. 228. (103) II.8. P. 112. (104) II.5. P. 154.

Sun the Person...

(One of the poems written when the poet lay dying of incurable cancer)

Sun the Person is leaning down;
His rustle of Godhead's on my skin;
It takes my pain
To use, I suppose,
To colour a Rose,
To kill a man.
Within, within
The hands are working; the lips whistle
Into my mouth the pomp of his purple
Golden magnificent Breath...
As He does, I look down at my death.

JOYCE CHADWICK

A Comment: "In this moving snatch of a poem which submits the ailing body to the Supreme Spirit's will as if to a master surgeon, every line speaks sensitive inner perception. The poet-soul feels, intimately and concretely, the golden Presence that is at work from above, holding the processes of the evolving world together, turning each individual travail to significant purpose in the whole, making and breaking forms with a single movement that carries earthly life towards some life divine. The last line is splendid in gesture. There are three acts of awareness in it, culminating from the import of the four preceding verses. First, a simple yet sublime sense of the body being sacrificed, as it were, in the service of a luminous inner remoulding. Then, a heroic spiritual contempt of the common destiny of frail flesh—somewhat as in the terrible words which a disciple of Vivekananda heard from the latter's lips in a dream after his passing: 'I have spat out my body.' Finally, a rising up of the human self towards Sun the Person, a radiant superiority achieved in a communion with the golden Presence overhead by the poet-soul's getting rapt into His sovereign and ever-creative afflatus which is the conquest of all mortality." (K.D.S.)

To a Poet on Poetry

Some Personal Notes to Joyce Chadwick

By K. D. Sethna

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 crystallised into self-realisation at the same moment that the poetry achieves true intensity. So, whatever right things I say about your work come without much effort at 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 your poetry I read with a distinct articulation of its rhythm.

“Vague tears”—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 indecipherable and hence unutterable element in all poetic stir, especially of the spiritual kind—the element that is not mere ambiguity, much less obscurity, 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 thin or unresolved significance in spiritual poetry results, I believe, either when the expression has not reached the crystallising point or when the mind essaying beyond itself, beyond the thought-plane of surface-clarity, catches the substance of the Spirit without the sound of it which gives warmth and living motion, or else when the mind seizes the sound and misses the substance so that what does duty for substance is still ideas in their own surface-play, however intricate and ingenious, with only the rhythm of the words echoing the eternal harmonies. Poetry of the second and third types can be quite authentic, 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 unmentalised.

The term “unmentalised” 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 unformulated significance? Even the cloudiest Shelley, even the mistiest early-Yeats have emergent meanings.” Well, I should say that to equate significance with mentalisation is a mistake. Significance has its birth in the highest archetypes: 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 mentalisation—at least not apart from the Beyond-mind’s own light. Mentalisation occurs not when meaning is 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 my 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 haven’t been impatient. Now let me return to ourselves. The recent poems of yours, out of which you have quoted, have, as usual, their origination from the fiery centre of the experience they embody. But you are not likely to make much of an impact on the general type of modern critic. Neither am I. Even a gifted poet of “inwardness”, a versatile art-interpreter, like James Cousins is ill at ease with my *Adventure of the Apocalypse*. He has done me the honour of giving me a whole column of Madras’s most prominent paper, the *Hindu*, and also the honour of judging me with reference to John of Patmos. But I am told that “revelation is not the achievement of personal adventure” and that “if the book is to survive in the English-speaking world... it will have to look to English into which the Revelation of St. John the Divine was translated... and envy its definition of vision, its dignity of utterance, its simplicity and freedom from verbal peculiarity.”* Quoting some lines from St. John and some from my book, Cousins points out “the melodious dignity of the one and the verbal stiffness and inflation of the other.” He adds that one of the disconcerting elements of my “Apocalypse” is the abuse of alliteration. “Perhaps the worst example,” he writes, “of alliteration gone crazy is in the poem entitled *The Blind Bellow*, the title itself being what politeness would call a paradox, and plain honesty would dub something else. The poet got not only a single bee in his bonnet, but a hive of them. Harken:

*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 doom burying in the brute
A god’s soul, but the bellow never ends...
Beast of immortal beauty that is blocked*

* Joyce Chadwick’s comment in her reply to my letter: “How but by the path of personal adventure can revelation be achieved? I cannot believe that John of Patmos would agree that his revelation was anything but a personal adventure. True, the apocalypse and the adventurer go together into supra-personal regions—but there is still what must be called a ‘person’ recording. And how completely odd it would be for a contemporary writer to describe such a setting out and arrival in the Jacobean language of the translators of St. John!”

*From bursting back into beatitude
By a dense body built of gross desire...
Horns of a crescent on a black bull’s head!*

Another grumble that the English purist may make against the author is the misuse of words. In the bellowing poem he uses the noun ‘oblivion’ as a verb. Elsewhere he writes ‘vigilling’ which is a verb that has no authority in English. He does the same in ‘pyramidding’. ‘Immense’, an adjective, is used as a noun. And there are many more liberties with the language; but finis must be put to technical complaints 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.”

Cousins’ 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 using adverb as adjective—

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

In the dark backward and abysm of time.
But Cousins’ insensitiveness to the sound-significance 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 28. And this recurrence of the letter “b” in the poem is not alliteration gone crazy but the sounding of a basic 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 light 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-head locked within 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 ever but which goes 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 symbolised 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 it your poem would lose both its depth and climax. And is it 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 we can’t say it is white—snow is 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 artist can communicate the varied force of the Divine’s Nature and 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 of unobstructive transparency by which he tries 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 us 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 from getting drowned 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 proud pawings and spirited snortings. And I am looking forward to mounting the bronco of Vernon Watkins and seeing what unexpected inner realisations his tempestuous and colourful poetry will jolt my brain into.

Muir’s *Labyrinth* will also 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 exalting. Muir’s verse has no such wooden formalism as once provoked Roy Campbell’s wrath, still there seems to be something in the quotations that makes me remember that South African poet’s outburst:

*You praise the firm restraint 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)

To a Poet on 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-isle,
While down below the little ships went by,
Toy multitudes swarmed in the harbours, shepherds drove
Their tiny flocks to the pastures, marriage feasts
Went on below, small birthdays and holidays,
Ploughing and harvesting and life and death,
And all permissible, all acceptable,
Clear and secure as in a limpid dream.
But they, the gods, as large and bright as clouds,
Conversed above the sound in tranquil voices
High in the sky above the untroubled sea;
And their eternal dialogue was peace
Where all these things were woven; and this our life
Was as a chord deep in the dialogue,
As easy utterance of harmonious words,
Spontaneous syllables 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
Unwanted and unsummoned; 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 say, or at a time when time is ripe.
Then he will come, Christ the uncrucified,
Christ the dis-crucified, his death undone,
His agony unmade, his cross dismantled—
Glad to be so—and the tormented wood
Will cure its hurt and grow into a tree...*

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

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 desolations and resolves them. Muir took up an academical 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 great spiritual poet. A general spiritual effect may very well be produced if with a sincere skillfulness one infuses into a sufficient amount of fair versification what is an abiding tenour of one's inner being. But great poetry flowing from within goes further than a general effect in which quantity 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 permanent inner experience.

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 emotion distilling life's tragedy or splendour or mystery. Only Wilfred Gibson seems to have failed to catch up his vision and emotion in the revealing word and the thrilling rhythm. 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 greater possibilities: what is wrong is his too facile treatment. The last three lines have some quality of suggestion but he does 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 moonlit 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 moonlit blind" suggests the veil of happy innocence and dream-enchanted 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 Tennyson just as perhaps the two preceding ones are good Tennyson.

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 poignance 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 ultimates:

*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 precipitate thought, and black marks on white paper
Englobe the luminous being of dead men.*

In poetic power this is surpassed only by those three lines of Clifford Dymont's that have a scriptural exaltation as well:

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

Dymont 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 plover is riding the bucking wind
And the clouds race.*

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

Howard Sergeant too has a splendour of utterance at his command—

*If I, oblivious of the dog-eared rose,
impose my rubric on the rising sun...
it is not only that you're clamped behind
my mind, a roothold 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-point 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 may 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 gleaming edge. But I can't say 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 and distance: the poem is two-dimensional, one can move with pleasure along it but not much into it, the third dimension which takes one far 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 function 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 recognise very well what they are feeling. Robin Atthill 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 shrillness smothered up in froth of blossoming.*

Hugo Manning has a delightful magic touch that reaches a wonderful intensity in the lovely phrase holding a terrible meaning—

*Above the wicked 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, deserves encouragement to the utmost—it serves a high and rare cause, with both taste and enthusiasm.

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