THE MIND AND SPIRIT OF OUR AGE: DILIP KUMAR ROY’S INTERVIEWS WITH FIVE WORLD-FIGURES

By "LIBRA"

Among the Great—a book of conversations packed with pleasure and instruction, a book that is in the short compass of 367 pages and at a trifling expense a most fascinating guide to the mind and spirit of our age as manifested in five outstanding personalities! And the fact that it is such a guide is due in no small measure to the author himself: for, as a side-effect, the mind and spirit of Dilip Kumar Roy; for it is his own eager search for truth and beauty and goodness that has taken him to the very centre of each great man interviewed, and has done this across various paths so that the word of wisdom when it comes out through the light on a multiplicity of interests, trends, movements, aspects of life. Dilip Kumar Roy himself emerges as an extremely interesting type, many-sided, acutely modern and at the same time deeply rooted in rich traditions, deeply Indian but no less widely international for that. While being a revelation of the core of Romain Rolland, Mahatma Gandhi, Bertrand Russell, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, his book is also a subtle disclosure of his own being—a kind of indirect mental autobiography written with the aid of five world-figures.

I said "five", but though that is the number of great ones conversed with, there are also fact notable personalities represented. For, the author has added to his already glittering treasury by getting Surveysali Radhakrishnan to contribute a nine-naged introduction which gives us a general survey of the field of character and thought covered by the book as well as a glimpse of his own attitude and position. Except for two or three phrases in the third paragraph, with a rather exasperative and aggressive native ring as if all the individuals here were equally rish of the ultimate vision, the introduction is balanced and felicitous. To secure it was no mean part of the inspiration which led Roy beyond the interviews to some extraordinary things and even include the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita. Aurobindo’s, nearly seventy pages of literary criticizes, philosophical discussion, mystic knowledge, socio-political analysis, marked by insight, energy and humour.

Romain Rolland

The order in which the interviews are arranged is not without meaning. Born a musician, Roy begins with Romain Rolland the literary artist who made musical experience his special study. And many utterances that go to the heart of music in particular and art in general are here recorded. Several striking judgments are also passed on the methods of Indian and European music. In fact, a few flaws of extremism notwithstanding, a more discerning and far-reaching piece of declaration of faith by a great artist who is also a great humanist and idealist would be hard to find anywhere in literature. This is high praise, yet on the whole deserved. The true Rolland stands here, revealed all the more by Roy’s sensitive and accurate description of his look and manner; and there is so much clearness of deep thought in the midst of warmth of deep feeling that these conversations of his and the half a dozen letters supplementing them can be regarded as the best rejoinder to those who try to make him out a mushy and gushy thinker. One does not know what to quote out of the beautiful abundance. I particularly liked the discussion about an artist’s duty to society and to himself. Rolland says that an artist cannot be impervious to the misery and injustice around him, he should do his bit towards removing them, but never at the sacrifice of his own métier. No job can be done efficiently if it is not fitted for: besides, to help humanity need not always be social-reformist. “Do you think,” asks Rolland, “that the creative endeavours of art can’t and don’t prove a daily succour in our sorrow? A poem of Beethoven is certainly worth half a dozen reforms... the first and paramount duty of the artist and the intellectual is to be true to his inner call and urge—sleeplessly: he must above all keep the lamp burning in the shrine of inner perceptions— and must create wherever his daemon prompts him. This done, his surplus time and energy he may devote to the betterment of social conditions, as Goethe used to. He served society, but only during all in his creative vocation.” A man’s duty is not done if he thinks only of his contemporaries—his nearest friends to take count of his duties to the Eternal Man who, emerging out of the lowest animality, has climbed obstinately through centuries towards the light. And what constitutes the rancor for the liberation of this Eternal Man in bondage is his conquest of the Spirit. All the efforts of the savant, the thinker and the artist compact for this heroic campaign (campaign in the sense of battling against odds; whoever among them repudiates this obligation—were it even for the sake of alternation—betrays his ultimate mission).”

Lest it should be thought that Rolland gives a carte blanche to egoism on the artist’s part, we must note that for him the true artist is he who never lies on a bed of roses. Rolland agrees with what Tolstoy wrote in a letter to him: “The vindication of the truly artistic vocation lies in the trials and tribulations cheerfully suffered and nobly accepted.” But he does not go the whole way with Tolstoy’s theory or art. Here a mark of his is worth dwelling upon a point Mahatma Gandhi, the next subject of his book, attempts to drive home. Gandhi wants art to be always universal in appeal, to reach the masses and never to need any specialization, a certain high level of culture, for its appreciation. Rolland is certain that against pretentious high-browism, against panditism putting on airs, but he cannot for all his passionate admiration of Gandhi share Gandhi’s Tolstoyan view that art’s supremacy lies in its being not above the heads of peasants. Such a criterion is too rigid, for the artist cannot always keep his art free from the receptivity of peasants—and his being above common heads does not annul his interest and, with humanity and his contribution to progress. “Humanity,” says Rolland, “is always on the march. The intellectual elite are its vanguard, its pioneers, paving the way along which the whole humanity shall pass. But we must beware not to be wrong to represent the elite as separated from the rank and file because the latter lags behind. And he would be an indifferent leader of the people who would constrain its vanguard to march with the bulk of the army.”

Mahatma Gandhi

The interviews with Gandhi (the last in an ominous atmosphere on the eve of the shots that rang round the world) are no whitt inferior as a document of personality, though their mental value is not as high. They appropriately follow on the heels of that with Rolland because next to being a natural artist Roy was a lover of India when he set out on his life’s odyssey. In the minds of many people during the twenties and thirties Gandhi was a symbol of India, and our author’s sympathy with him came all the easier for the latter’s keen enjoyment of music. The Mahatma is shown as holding that India’s music is of the very essence, and it is frequently that he asks Roy to sing to him. About painting, however, he is quite cool—and on all art that strikes him as not the heart’s immediate outlet but as going in frequently for complex values he is rather adverse. But what constitutes the worth of his presence in the book is not his attitude towards art: the man of action, the man of ethical askesis—that is the real Gandhi. While speaking even of music he brings us face to face with this substance of himself. “How well I remember,” he says in one place, “the joy and comfort that music used to give me in the airline—for a while even, to sing to the famous hymn, Lead Kindly Light! And how it acted as a healing balm invariably.” The heroic “experiment with truth” stands out here, while the mention of Lead Kindly Light! confirms the trait which his predilection for devotional songs from among the wealth of Indian music
The Mind and Spirit of two puts forward in the interviews time and again: his religious fervour.

But though his religious fervour is considerable and his life shorn of evil hungers by a strong-willed self-discipline, he is as little the mystic as mathematics is the poet. Just as the philosopher-intellect's impartial, moodless questing is absent in him, the direct intuition or the contemplative—leading to Mahatmashood in the original sense of union with the Infinite—Is—is also not his. But that scarcely implies that he would be a sacrificially, satiety-free mystic. He was wise enough to know both because he was straight and strong and because he had a childlike simplicity combined with a twinking pockish humour. Not to know Gandhi's daughter is not to know him at all. Roy supplies us in four and a half pages of disciplined and logical essay a concise, clear, and helpful introduction to Gandhi. He contends that his scientific intellect stands against what Rolland terms the world's vanguard a moving limitation. There will, perhaps, be some to doubt if there is actually a limitation here and then there will be a convincing sentence pronounced on a part of Rollandian Tagore and Aurobindo's distinction. Gandhi dogmatically declares: "I maintain that the profoundest utterance of man in every great philosophy or religion as in every great art must appeal equally to all. I cannot for the life of me see a mark in any specialization which must mean nothing to the vast multitude. Its only tangible effect to be that it gives a swelled head to a few and sows aversion and contempt wherever there should be sympathy and understanding."

Bertrand Russell

I cannot help feeling that to apply this strictures to even a part of Rollandian Tagore and Aurobindoism is really not to understand their depths—and take apparent and outwardly at face value in him of the Idealist and of the Other as the only one, the sole true one. A non-understanding no less of a part of these aims and, into the bargain, that of Ghandhism itself is Bertrand Russell's "lingual crystalline thought."

He is the exemplar, in Roy's own life, of the doubting critical outward-shining mentality the latter developed during his tour in Europe. A mentality not to be brushed aside, for there is a lot of stale and cackling superstition, a lot of stilling emotional hot air, which the Russellian mind has disdained. But disdained from disgust is a very mild destroyer; he has several good things to offer—a sane and frank attitude towards sex, for instance. He is particularly acid about the Roman Catholic Church's ban on birth-control and divorce. He regrets also Gandhi's sympathy with such a ban just as he regrets the belief Gandhi shares, with many great men, in the soul and God. He offers us science as a mighty improver of the human mind by rendering it impervious to religious "irrationalism" and by improving the racial stock through sterilization. He denounces the purely mental, unfeeling, indistinct gender, birth-control. It is to be supposed that the racial stock might be improved by the means Russell advocates, but his stern censure of religious experience is rather indiscriminate. He can see nothing sacred in mysticism: when Roy speaks of mystics preaching lofty principles for their inflated place and ecstasies, he retorts: "I believe it is ecstasies as data of definite experiences, but when they imply vision of the highest reality I cannot accept them as principles. They speak of are he and they are the results of these mystical illuminations. As a matter of fact such ecstasies render the mystics distinctly self-centred and selfish. Through such transports they become more and more subjective and get more and more lost to lead a healthy life of varied activities and lose interest in things for themselves. Consequently they tend to become more and more similar to the joys of the voluptuary or the drunkard."

To redress the apparent lopsidedness a statement of this kind held in Russell, Roy opines that it is just a conversational emphasis and that Russell does not really leave the boons of mysticism out of the picture. I am afraid they are left out; for to admit, as Russell does, that equal in value to the scientific pursuit of knowledge are the creation and enjoyment of beauty and other non-intellectual human activities seems to give a place to the non-intellectual sides of us, not to afford a locus standi to religion and mysticism. No true concession is made even by the fine declaration: "The organized life of the community is necessary, but it is necessary as a mechanism, not something to be valued on its own account. What is of most value in human life is more analogous to what all the great religious teachers have spoken of." For, what Russell has in mind, as he says, is the "relations and Sciences pretend of the equanimity and companionship, the radiance and healing atmosphere which they of the mystics speak of but which, according to him, are attainable without mysticism and should be so obtained rather than in conjunction with an erroneous belief in the salvation of his philosophy. To quote, "I have in mind the true mystical experience of any type it would be absurd to imply that Buddha's supreme equanimity and companionhip are possible without his ego-anulling and desire-destroying Nirvana or Ramakrishna's intensely realistic transfigured life with his alleviation of all the sufferings of humanity." Roy's defence of Tagore against his philosophical critic is vivid, true and scathing. He remarks that these "ecstasies, Tagore declares that the personal and the social are more vividly real to the feminine nature, the masculine is inclined more towards impersonality and is in its dealing with the world more utilitarian than humanly understanding and understanding different individuals. The feminine, manifest itself in the deeper spiritual field: man quests for freedom, a rising above earth and embodiment, a flight to the Absolute, whereas woman does not feel earth to be a bondage and she cannot give up the validity and worth of spiritual experience must not blind us to the noble, acute, healthy sagacity he is shown by Roy to be commanding in many respects on the outer tangible plane.

Before I pass to the author's fruitful contact with Tagore, I must pass a moment to comment on Radhakrishnan's introduction to a recent apropos Russell. While appreciating the latter's unzuilled courage and humanitarian concern, Radhakrishnan applies a fine intuitive touchstone to what he regards as his most important — the suppression of the Spiritual Divine: “Russell does not acknowledge that the human individual who can sit in judgment on the universe, who has the intelligence to know that his life is but a brief episode in the history of all life, is the conscious agent of a group. This is no waste and want of the world is not a mere phenomenon among phenomena, an object among objects." I dare say a sceptical and analytic intellect like Russell could give a riposte to this subtle thrust—but the riposte would be in a struggle and yearning to break forth and spread the gospel of the whole being with its many dimensions, its in-dwelling magnitudes and overbrooding mysteries. A semi-poetic logic is here, far more satisfying and convincing than any pronouncement of that merely intellectual argumentation to which there can be no end.
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In a letter to his author about the demand for the Divine as a concrete certainty, quite as necessary as any physical sensation or admitted property of the human senses: ‘Certainly, the Divine must be such a certainty not only as concrete but more concrete than anything sensed by eye or ear or touch in the world of Matter; but it is a certainty not of mental thought but of spiritual experience, of the Divine nature of the world, which seems to be escaping the sex-limits and holding every sort of potentiality and commanding the power of a varied function. In essence this pressure is not upon the senses, nor upon the external world, but on the soul of man, in the inner world, to see man and woman in relation to each other and in the way their natures manifest commonly on the mental, vital, physical levels. What we often forget is that the two are expressions ultimately of a soul, a spiritual self, and that their destiny is decided in the same way in relation to the spiritual content of the world as to the single Godhead they have to evolve side by side and co-operatively on earth. Transcendent of the sex-differentiations and of the physical-vital-mental formula is the more-than-human nature they bring as their basic concern for the light of that nature, their God-shaped development. This would appear to lie in a large equality of status and function, with yet a subtle variety of tone and mould and gesture and interaction in that nature’s投身。

Even as things are in the present stage of our evolution, Tagore seems to slip from the right track when, touching upon the deeper spiritual field to which we have access, he says that the wife of Buddha could not have witnessed a相见 and he himself, because he was a Buddha himself. This Nirvana may not generally be suited in its outward aspects for a spiritual and a life that sense she cannot leave her mate and seek the Infinite; yet without violating her subsistence she can surely pass beyond her human attachments and be a personal Being, a seer, while with an infinite exceeding earth, does not in the least disdain it. In the realm of spirituality, she is not only Buddha as a type: there is also Mirabai. And the two types are not strictly distributed between the sexes. Tagore himself of the Goddess’ perspective, about her disposition and her work, a woman Mirabai was the man Chaitanya, and Buddhist had nuns as well as monks. Incline as it frequently may in one of the other directions, the psyche in either sex is two-sided.

Sri Aurobindo

This fact gives us a clue to what may be termed the complete spiritual aim for us—inner liberation from earth and from embodiment together with the development of the human consciousness in which in the infinite consciousness of Infinite together with ascension to the personal God and incarnation of His powers and purposes in our total nature. That would imply a consummation of life that is truly valuable and creative in Rolland, Gandhi, Tagore and also Russell wherever the light is dimly shining. Whether we are talking of other-worldliness is concerned, no less than the bringing of a value and creativity beyond any of their achievements or their dreams. And it is just because of discerning such a synthesis of the essential best in them and at the same time an integrity and harmony vastly superior to what they offer that Dilip Kumar Roy reaches his goal at the feet of Sri Aurobindo the Yogi of the dynamic divinisation of the human, the Yogi who was a thinker, a poet, a seer and a revolutionary action. Naturally the interviews with which the book closes becomes its climax, providing the cream of its significance. Here the profound feelings and desires of the author are laid before us, his life’s various movements, his spiritual change that opens his heart and mind to Sri Aurobindo and in return Sri Aurobindo pours the rich stream of his illumination, buoying him up, turning him towards the secrets of the Supreme, sweeping around him and into him the expansive, the subtle, the spiritual truth he had written that he was not in the least discouraged by the steady trend from bad to worse in the world-situation since it was temporary and he knew and had experienced hundreds of times that behind the blackest darkness there lay for one who was a divine seer or prophet, a brighter day.”

"There was something in his tone and look which stirred a chord deep down in me. I hesitated for a little and then hazarded the question, just to have the answer from his lips, was it? I do not know. All I know is that something irresistible had stirred up in me."

"Is your real work this invocation of the Supramental?"

"Yes,' he replied, very simply 'I have come for that.'

"And I was laughing with him, arguing with him, examining his point of view... because he had given me the right by calling me ‘a friend and a son,’ in his infinite compassion!” The remembrance of Arjuna in the Gita recurred to me, inevitably.

"If I addressed thee as a human mate "

And laughed with thee—failing to apprehend "Thine infinite greatness, sharing with thee my seat Or couch—by right of love as thy friend For all such errors of reverence Thy forgiveness I implore in penitence.

What are we to think? An Avatar’s presence invades us—and with a healing touch promising to establish a realisation. Sri Aurobindo’s mission from on high is to call down the Supramental and establish a radical and revolutionary spiritual change on earth, not only will the prevailing chaos and corruption terminate in the near future but also the termination will be aided by the very intervention of Divine to help accelerate spiritual progress and to sharpen the word from the material scene. That departure cannot have been by any compulsion: it must have been of free choice, a strategic sacrifice of his own body to help in some occult way his work of integral earth-transformative.

Dilip Kumar Roy could not have come to a close with a subtle touch. A uniquely large and far seeing, just and careful and profound consciousness which is an undeflatable “secret splendour” behind its human face is the Sri Aurobindo that emerges from Roy’s delineation. Remark after acute and satisfying remark—with an indefinable authority of

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The ESSENCE of the PROBLEM of COMMUNISM

By A. L. CHAPMAN CRALC

The sheer originality of Communism as an effective force in the world is still not understood by its opponents. Until one realizes that here is a sort of new revelation to mankind, a sharp and sharp cleavage from the unfolding course of the human spirit as it has progressed to date, the problem that faces the civilized world will simply not be understood; or, much worse, it will be misunderstood.

The marvellous phenomenon of Communist Communism by which a man has written about it—Marx, Lenin or anyone else. Its origins are far too deep in the human spirit for intellectualizing or academics to apply. Brains equipped with words will prove anything, therefore they can prove nothing.

In discipline becomes defence, hate is love, and war is peace, under suitable technical correction.

The techniques of Communism go vastly beyond anything yet found to be acceptable to the significant powers of civilised human thought for the sake of life. Like the first wild-fire spread of a great new religion Communist is sweeping its way round the globe, and those who don't like it must understand its mystique—as well as its technique—and unless they are to be destroyed by it. It can do things hitherto considered impossible for any system of thought or politics. It makes corrupt men incorruptible, honest men dishonest, sane men mad, and weak men strong. It is a madness, an abnormal experience, a dreadful hallucination, a nectar worth a life's sacrifice, or a vile and soul-corrupting drug—all according to how one reacts to it from the core of one's being.

The fulfilment of its power is the power that the end justifies the means. First comes the pseudo-mystical conversion to the revelation of Master Truth. Then comes the passion of the conviction of evil and ultimately of the whole world. When the first stage has been reached the second is inevitable—statement please note, for once it letters nothing will quench this passion for conquest; only power in direct opposition will check it until it comes to violent and passionate ends.

For the non-Communist all this is strange, new, revolting, and contrary to human instincts. He cannot believe it; he only finds himself able to treat Communism as if it were an extension or a department of something already known and understood. He tries to deal with it by the rules of reason, and according to its own data of human comprehension and rightness. He is incapable of seeing that here is something that stands completely apart from the old values he has built into his own heart, and mind, and conscience, and he is forced to argue with arguments based upon codes of Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan, Buddhist ethics—all the same is to wave an olive-branch in the face of a tiger.

There are two fundamentals to practical Communism, which is the only sort our political and economic academies are only for children, professional pundit, and playboys of the mind. The first is the conversion of the individual either by self-experience or by force, the second is the destruction of all opposing thought and life wherever it is to be found. There is enormous simplicity in Communism and it is based on its complete exclusion of compromise. In turn, it is the vast simplicity of it that gives it its power over certain types of mind, as well as over impoverished bodies and souls.

The other two great revolutions and passions for example, Christianity when it swept round the civilised world in the great ages of its efflorescence. The illustration is particularly interesting because of the contracts offered by the two systems: Christianity is devoted to things of the individual soul, which it places superior to any potentiality of the body; and Communism is devoted to things of the communal body, in which it makes the highest among the individual, while both denies and.abors the very idea of Soul. These are the essential truths that the individual will interpret, though systems of various stages may necessitate the purely temporary use of compromising expedients for both systems. To say that one is the very antithesis of the other is scientifically correct; they are mutually exclusive and are directed to opposite poles of excellence. They must inevitably and forever be in opposition.

When this is grasped there will arise the possibility of understanding how to deal with Communism. When it is deeply realised that rationality and ethics have no simple impact on Communism then one will adopt the only course that remains and take up the weapons of might and main. This does not necessarily mean that war must ensue; indeed, war is only certain to come about if the arming is weak or incomplete. If Communism confronts a world armed to the teeth and willing to fight it to destruction and death, there will positively be a possibility of war and a certain—what should they launch an attack?—the Atlantic Powers will throw into the configuration all they have in order to suppress and destroy the enemy of their spiritual culture, there will be no attack. But to try to check by way of empty talk is to say that this is a world war, or world peace. Weakened means war; strength means peace. Sacrifice to the point of being willing to lay down everything including life itself, for the preservation of the inner peace of the souls of men and nations is required of democracy.

This is neither an unfulfilled nor a particularly pessimistic statement. Communism is a passion, without reason as passions are, 'but drawing its life from sources outside the mind'. The way to quell a passion is to let it wear itself out; if the principles of the great religions of the world are right—and they all point in the same direction—Communism will inevitably burn itself out provided it can now be contained and localised. Democracy must bank upon the final emergence to supreme power of thehuman soul, even behind the Iron Curtain: if men do have souls and if they contain each a spark from God they will finally assert themselves against that blind unscrupulous world of the powers—The Body and the State. But the area of fire must be contained and this can only be done by erecting barriers against it. Hence the quick and vital necessity for the civilised nations of the world to arm, and probably the glaring eyes of the dark gods are probing the possibilities of attack.

One fatal error is to think of or treat Communists as if they were merely bad, degraded, or mistaken Democrats—in lieu of a better word for Communists. They are a complete type of human being and have their own scales of values, and their own particular hierarchies of virtues. These are often the precise opposites of the values or virtues which go by the same names in the democratic calendar: right and left, and so on. These are all fundamental differences. Certain values are "true" for Communists, though true and untrue are reversible terms in the two systems. There are, of course, corrupt Communists as by their own codes—there are bribe-takers and slobbish officials—but these are minor delinquencies in their evaluation; compared with other crimes which exist for them with strange names indicating lack of subservience—voluntary or involuntary—of minds, bodies, and souls to the State. There are more capital crimes in the codes of Communism than in the laws of the democratic and their discipline is murderous and their power is over man. But the supreme blasphemy and uttermost darkness of crime in the Cari

The future for the triumph of the human soul on this planet is dark without, but bright within. In the glorious Sanskrit epic of the Bhagavad-Gita the Hindu deity, Krishna, bids the desponding human soul, Arjuna, to seize his weapons and fight his enemies. These are the very same enemies that we confront to-day, the armies of blind materialism which are seeking to destroy the Light-seeking Arjuna and his nation. In stimulating him to battle Krishna says that Arjuna's enemies are as already dead, for he, Krishna, the immortal guide, friend, and lover of humanity, has ordained their destruction in the interests of the survival of the divine human spirit. There is only one outcome of the fight of the human soul against the armies of blind materialism, it must and will triumph. But Krishna's exhortation is summed up in his own words—freely rendered:

"With Me as your shield,
And with your trust fixed in God,
Arise and resolve to fight.
Think not of the future,
Abandon selfish egoism,
And be free from anxiety!"

So Arjuna fought, and with his armies he utterly vanquished his foes in that crucial battle of Kurukshetra described before the dawn of our history. In this same ever-recurring battle we can conquer to-day—luckily even without fighting— if we are willing to throw all we have into arming our resolution to fight.

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ultimate truth—cruis out for quotation; but there is no space here to do full justice to the travesties and to the letters packed between them. One gets absolutely fascinated by a man who is so much at home in a hundred matters—bringing to each a penetrating word. Among the letters, those treating of poetic values, Frank Harris and Shaw, Anatole France, Romaine Rolland, and, perhaps, with Hitler are perhaps the finest. If not anything else, Among the Great is worth buying for these discourses.

Joy is nothing but generous in his gifts to the reading public. Besides these epistolary masterpieces and the precious documents from Rolland elsewhere, he has included in the book beautiful English renderings of the many Bengali or Hindi songs he had sung to his friends. And the Aurobindoian letters he has interspersed with certain pages of correspond-

ence by an English friend of his, Ronald Nixon, erstwhile professor of philosophy at Lucknow, at present practising Yoga in America under the name of Krishna Prem. Those pages are apt not only because Sr Aurobindo, comments on Krishna Prem's ideas but also because it was through the finger of this Indian that Dhiranand Sehgal and Dilip Kumar Roy the Westernised Indian first turned his eyes towards Srt Aurobindo who is the perfect synthesis of East and West. And they are excellent; writing, too. It is impossible to thank enough our wanderer—among great men for the epistles he has collected for us. But let us not forget that he is no mere collector: himself a creative artist with a sensitive style, the greatnesses in whose midst he has moved are—with the exception of Srt Aurobindo who gets clean out of the cadre of merely human greatness—far from quite overshadowing his own presence and stature.

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The lastgaunt level to be discussed wa3 the of the Intuitive Mind. Before proceeding further to the next in the hierarchy, the Overmind, it will be necessary to dwell a little longer on this third level. In the process of philosophy there seems to be some confusion regarding the exact meaning of the term intuition and its relation to reason; all kinds of infra-normal, paranormal and super-normal intuitions and communications are arbitrarily classified as intuitions without the least effort to find out what level of consciousness from which they have come into the surface-mind. Often intuition is called "irrational", as if the non-rational must necessarily be irrational. The irrational is that which contradicts or offends the reason, but many an intuition has been known to illuminate and define the reason—often it has been known to come at the commencement of a rational process and supply a suitable working hypothesis, or at its current stage without the concrete conclusion. The rational conclusion is not the highest type of consciousness man is capable of possessing; it is only a particular mode of consciousness on a certain level of organised existence, the mental-physical-physical. But this does not imply that intuition should never contradict reason, for a truth received directly into the mind from even a supranormal source—a truth which does not depend for its reality on sense-perception, nor a truth arrived at by the rubricate of faculty—may seem to contradict the reason on this level, but on a higher level this same truth will find its justification when seen in a larger vision that can apprehend the universal totality and the intrinsic relation between individual existents and their right meaning and significance in the cosmic whole. Therefore it is not philosophically acceptable to designate intuition as irrational. A knowledge of levels of Being other than the normal reveals that intuitions can come from all sources—from infra-normal, paranormal as well as supranormal levels.8 An intuition cannot be so called irrational if it comes from the sub-biological, a region of consciousness. The fact that intuitions come out of the Pure Mind and that of the Ideal Mind, nor if it comes from the superconscient realms over the mind which find their luminous summit in the Supermind. The truth-value, and consequently the knowledge-valor of a particular intuition will depend upon the height of the plane from which it comes.

If reason realises its own limitations and opens itself to the influx of a light greater than itself—a light which is basically and intrinsically not alien to itself but is its Ultimate—it can find its fulfilment; it can then become an obedient instrument of this greater light and act as an intermediary between it and the life of man. Mind is a delegate of the Supermind, its subordinate power and it is therefore not extraneous to it; as we have already seen, there is a gnostic gradation from Mind to Supermind. Consequently, when writing about the relation between reason and intuition, Sri Aurobindo makes statements according to the nature of the intuition under discussion. He advocates a strict intellectual vigilance when the intuition is infrarational, but a quiet receptiveness in the being when it descends from the higher ranges. He writes: "... there are seeming intuitions on all levels of the being which are communications rather than intuitions, and these have a very various provenance, value and character. The infra-rational 'mystic', so styled—for to be a true mystic it is not sufficient to reject reason and rely on sources of thought or action of which one has no understanding—is often inspired by such communications on the vital level from a dark and dangerous source. In these communications we are driven to rely mainly on the reason and are disposed even to control the suggestions of the intuition—or the preconceptions of the subject—by our own observing and discriminating intelligence; for we feel in our intellectual part that we cannot otherwise be sure what is the true thing and what the mixed or adulterated article or false substitute." But he immediately adds: "... the largely discount for us the utility of the intuition: for the reason is not in this field a reliable arbiter, since its methods are different, tentative, uncertain, an intellectual seeking . . . An intuition passed in judicial review by the reason ceases to be an intuition and can out of the reason only the reason for which there is no inner source of direct certitude."

But it must be stressed that as long as the mind receives only occasional flashes, which it calls intuitions, from a supranormal source, a difficulty will reveal itself. The solution lies in a conscious liaison of the mind with the superconscient plane to which Intuition is a native power. On that level the truth which is caught by the mind on a lower level is often entirely pure and unmixed; or it is only translated by the mind, but when reference is made to a higher plane, or by making the mind receptive to the descent of light from that plane, here the reason must play only a passive role; it should be content to observe and record the intuitions, judgments and discursions of the light contacted. Only when the mind passes through a modification by the action of the higher power and is changed into what Sri Aurobindo calls "the mind of light" does it act in knowledge; till then, even though it receives intuitions, it still has its station in the world of Ignorance; the mind of light gets poised in the Knowledge.

It is necessary to state here again that the reader must not be supposed to take any strayed intuitions start coming into the mind he will have to surrender his intellect and depend solely on these occasional flashes of light for acquiring knowledge. These flashes are only a beginning of the descent of the higher power of illumination, and as long as they are spasmodic, the intellect will be undoubtedly needed for the organisation of knowledge. But these flashes will gradually become a continuous stream of light till finally the ability to know directly the inner truth of things as well as their cosmic significance and relation becomes natural to it. This is the new modification the mental consciousness has to pass through—the transformation of the rational mind to the enlightened mind, or rather, "the mind of light". There is nothing dubious in all this, as the average mind may be led to think—a mind which does not have a true conception of what an intuition really is, and the difference between one intuition and another. The psychological process described here is a fact of experience whose validity can be ascertained by following a mental-spiritual discipline. Whatever difficulty there is in understanding the action of intuition on reason disappears as soon as one recogises that there are various degrees of manifested and those higher than the rational will naturally reveal knowledge which is more speciotic, luminous and comprehensive than that gained through the instrumentaion of the reason.

Once this transformation takes place the mind acquires a direct intuitive power. Sri Aurobindo writes: "Intuition has a fourfold power. A power of revelatory truth-seeking, a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, a power of truth-touch or immediate seizing of significance, which is akin to the ordinary nature of its intervention in our mental intelligence, a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth—these are fourfold powers of intuition. Intuition can therefore perform all the action of reason including the function of logical intelligence, which is to work out the right relation of ideas and the right relation of intuition and ideas, with steps that do not fail or failer."

This should clear the difficulty raised by Professor Langley in his book, Sri Aurobindo: Indian Poet, Philosopher and Mystic. He remarks: "In many eloquent passages such as these Sri Aurobindo pours out the richness of his inner personal yet great and universal experience. In them he is describing a level of spiritual insight which I have not attained. But it appears to me that at times, when showing how such insight is 'superior to any mental cognition', he suggests that, when man has attained this experience, it is possible for him to dispense with purely intellectual procedure in his search for truth... In one passage he writes: 'Intuition can perform all the action of reason—including the function of logical intelligence, which is to work out the right relation of ideas and the right relation of intuition and ideas, with steps that do not fail or failer.' At other times, however, Aurobindo's view seems to be that for man the employment of ordinary logical procedure must remain necessary to enable him to master the problems of his material existence, but that he requires knowledge of a different order for his self-realisation and guidance; and that such knowledge as purely intellectual and scientific enquiry provides is the product of coordinate mental activity, which should be used under the guidance and control of insight provided by the higher experience. At times Aurobindo goes further and insists on the need for submitting spiritual intuition to critical examination by impartial human reason, so as to eliminate the possibility of illusory interpretation. The idea expressed in the last sentence is not quite accurate, for at Sri Aurobindo finds no necessity for submitting spiritual intuition to critical examination by the reason, provided the intuition is really spiritual, that is, if it has a gnostic content, and if it is in the inner—coming from the new kind of consciousness which is not a blend of the whole nature-personality is formed—or if the intuition

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8 These levels have already been discussed in detail in the previous issues—issues of 14th and 28th October, 1959.

* My Italic.
The place and importance of money in the creative economy of life cannot be overestimated. Without it nothing can be achieved in the manifest and hidden form, the formation and growth of a society; or the promotion of its culture and civilization and commerce and industry or the stimulation and progress of scientific research and discovery,—in the great undertakings, in the works of destruction as much as in those of construction. The one in which it holds sway (but only as a means) is money. Even the ascetic, who studiously avoids all contact with material things, has power to depend upon the money of others for the sustenance of his body and the dissemination of his teachings, if he has any. If we turn from the ascetics to the great religious institutions, in the hope of discovering in their culture, were sufficiently rich to expand and organise the activities of their individual genius, and any period of decline in the life of a nation has been invariably associated with either a growing poverty or a reckless waste of wealth. Let us take the case of India. When she was great in the realms of the Spirit, when the higher Light moulded and guided the manifold expressions of her expanding life, she was great also in material opulence,—her plenty was the envy of the world. Poverty, famine, drought were regarded as temporal visitations, and not as a mark of spiritual purity and integrity and the ruling head. But when the decline set in, corruption too set in, a multiform corruption, which drained the fabulous wealth, by a steady process, and paved the way for the predatory incursions and ruthless exploitation of foreigners. And yet the opulence India possessed even in the sunset glow of her ancient greatness struck the foreigners dumb with amazement and fired the cupidities of unscrupulous adventurers. When the decline was complete and India lay prostrate in the dust, her destitution too was complete,—she had become pure white. The land that had flowed with milk and honey and sparkled with diamonds and rubies, became a land of half-starved and half-clad men grovelling in filth and ignorance and deicide. It may be argued that money is the source of much evil, but so are all forces in the world. One never thinks of eschewing fire because it burns or water because it drowns. It is the use to which a force is put that determines its character. Thus, the use of spiritual power, a clumsy compromise, a chimerical compromise, with the forces he detests and dreads, and yet cannot altogether avoid. A dynamic spirituality, which aims at a divine conquest of the world and all its forces and movements, cannot permit itself the retreat and acquiescence of a retrograde movement in which all elements which oppose its progress but which, once conquered and converted, would substantially contribute to its creative fullness. If the whole of human life is organized snow on the basis of divine consciousness, if all its energies are to be marshalled and mobilised for the revelation of the splendours of the Divine on earth, the money-power has to be utilised with a distaste-controlled and a perfect knowledge of its potentialities. If spirituality fights, the money-power, its material self-expression is bound to be so what it has almost always been, poor and half-sordid or squalid. Much of the eversion of the modern mind to spirituality is due to the latter's uncooperative expression in life, its lack of control over material things. There is this temporary and only temporary attitude toward it. This weakness—for, it is nothing short of that—has to be cured and replaced by a masterful dealing with the money-power for the organisation of a rich and powerfully creative material life in the world.

What is Money?

According to Sri Aurobindo, "Money is the visible sign of a universal force, and this force in its manifestation on earth works on the vital and physical planes and is indispensable for the fullness of the outer life. In its origin and its true action it belongs to the Divine. But like other powers of the Divine, it is delegated here, and in the ignorance of the lower nature can be usurped by the ego or held by Asuric influence and perverted to their purpose. This is, indeed, one of the three forces—power, wealth, sex—that have the strongest attraction for the human ego and the Asuras and are most generally misused and misused by those who retain them. The seekers or keepers of wealth are more often possessed rather than possessors; few escape entirely a certain degree of influence stamped on it by its long seizure and perversion by the Asuras." 1

We learn from the above quotation that money is a universal force and is derived, like every other force, from the Divine; but, equally, like every other force, it is appropriated by the hungry darkness and is used, more often than not, to serve and satisfy their own ends. It is indispensable to the fullness of the outer life, and if the Life and the Divine are our objective on earth, a divine use of money is an imperative desideratum. The question of its use is to be considered in the light of the condition of man, which in the light of man's condition and fearful of man's nature. Usually the result of an illusorium philosophy or a timid, amanu, spiritual spirituality, neither of which is in consonance with the comprehensiveness and unlimited openness of the Divine ideal. In Hindutva the very conception of the Divine, Bhagavan, is a fundamental condition of man which include omni-opulence, samasr, saksargya. The Divine is not only the naked Spirit of the ascetics, without features and contents and all petty and individual ties of the signs of the world and the sole Master and Ruler of all creatures. If the same Birth in the world, it is not a splendour and magnificence, where have they come from, if not from the

1 "The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo.

Divine? Is Matter from the Divine? What material wealth is also from Him; only, as says Sri Aurobindo, it is unaided by the material world, for the uses of the ego or "held by Asuric influences and perverted for their purpose." It has to be wrested from the hands of the Asuras and used for the service of the Divine in the world. The ancient ideal of divine plenty and plenitude, the Divine Wealth, was to be lived again, if spirituality has to shed her timidity and narrowness and rise to its full stature of an all-conquering might and revealing a new and fuller potential in the creation of a harmonious and progressive life of luminous knowledge, power, love and joy, the material means indispensable to it is money.

The Present Possessors of Money

Most of the present possessors of money are not, really speaking, possessors at all, but possesses. They are slaves of their money and are directly controlled and used by the forces of the vital world, which in consequence of sorts of desires and cravings. What do men mostly spend for? Evidently for the satisfaction of their desires. Usually their desires are "connected with the sex impulses," but very often too they yield to "the desire for fame and consideration, the desire for food or any other that is on the higher plane". And if it is allowed to drown water when these latter appetites clamor for their egotistic satisfaction; and this levishness is not only justified, but admired as large-hearted magnanimity. Society praises that self-regarding use of money and transmits an effective tradition of it to future generations. If a super-idealistic nature impugns this use, it does so on altruistic or humanistic grounds, and advocates the spending of money for the service of humanity or all sentient creation.

Now, let us try to understand the rightness or wrongness of such uses of money by an analysis of the motives that lie behind them. It is a commonplace of psychology that man is a multi-personality—there are many parts and personalities in him, having different, often divergent, desires and propensities, and moved by diverse forces. There are the physical personality, the vital personality, the mental personality and the psychic; and there are besides, many sub-personalities within these main personalities. These personalities hardly agree with one another. The mental personality, for instance, seeks the Divine and knackers for a life of spiritual freedom and bliss, the vital opposes it with its instinctual desires and blind attachments. In the vital personality itself there may be a part touched by the light and responsive to a higher call, and another, obscure and perverse, wallowing in turbrid sense-pleasures. The physical personality may often itself oppressed by the mental or the vital and suffering the consequences of a constant, unavailing revolt. It is these different personalities that are responsible for the reasons of our actions and the actions themselves. And if we go a little behind these surface personalities—we leave out the soul or the psyche for the moment, for in most men it is not on the surface, but veiled deep within—we discover that most of them have affinity with or a habitual clinging to the beings and forces of the subtler worlds and it is these forces and beings that influence or impel their movements to their own advantage. Men are as puppets by the subtle forces of the world. Because they are ignorant of their true self, the secret, eternal reality of their existence, because their beings are divided against themselves, their nature a cockpit of contending and chaotic elements, they fall an easy prey to the forces of ignorance.

Here an example will make my point clearer. Let us suppose that a rich man conceives the idea of spending a lakh of rupees for the celebration of his son's marriage. He may have imbibed the idea from the society to which he belongs, or conceived it independently of all social customs.

Infiltrates into the being from the plane of the Pure Mind or the Ideal Mind. But Sri Aurobindo finds this necessary when, as we have seen, the intuition comes from the infradark and turbid zones. When Professor Langley writes that according to Sri Aurobindo the employment of the ordinary consciousness cannot be expected to enable the man to master the problems of his material existence, he is not wrong—that is, of course, if the higher knowledge comes only in flashes; for the essence of the intuition requires the spastic intuition be a continuous stream of knowledge. But his statement is not correct when at another place he writes: "Intellectual activity is necessary to clarify the foundations and the nature of the spiritual force." Admitting such conclusions as genuine, human reason has a right to demand on what sure and well-ordered truths, or that, or the other. In addition, the intellect has the further right to examine critically the nature of spiritual experience itself. Any such experience, Aurobindo points out, may well be affected with erorr from influence of the imagination, or of the emotions, or even of the senses and nerves. Or
and traditions, as the result of an impulse arising in or invading him. "The Power of Money," says the Mother, "that present under two influences, or in the hands of the forces and beings of the vital world." Therefore the rich man submits automatically to the organised influence of the vital forces operating in his society, or succumbs unwares to their fresh assault upon him. In any case it is not the decision of his true self that he follows, but the imperative direction of the enemies of his true self; and it is not really he, but those forces that profit by and enjoy the result of the enormous expenditure. The pleasure derived from the spending of the huge and infinite power is, as it were, the vital pleasure which obscures his consciousness, inflates his pride and egoism and retards, if it does not, indeed, impede, his spiritual evolution. "It is not that those rich men who are more or less active in their own vital forces are averse to spend; their avarice is awake only when the vital desires and impulses are not touched. For, when it is to gratify some desire that they call their own, they spend readily; but when they are called to share their ease and the benefits of their wealth with others, then they find it hard to part with their money. The vital power controlling money is like a guardian who keeps his wealth in a big safe always tightly closed. Each time the people who are in his group are asked to part with their money, they put all sorts of obstacles in their way, and if you threaten them to open their purses even a very little way; but if a vital impulse arises in them with its demands, the guardian is happy to open wide the coffer and money flows out freely. It is only when we consider this tight hold of the vital forces on the money-power, in the light of the Mother's words, that we appreciate the justice of the severe stricture of the Christ upon the rich that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The Christ saw the grip of the vital forces on the money-power; he saw that it was not only a burning loathing of money, but a divine solicitude for the delivery of men from the dark influence of the hostile powers that inspired the stricture. It can be safely asserted that in nine cases out of ten the use we make of money is an illuminating and unspiritual use, which degrades us and justifies the acetic's ban on money. Not only do we lose much of the money we use, but we lose into the bargain the precious opportunities offered to us for using it for the service of the Divine to whom it really belongs. "All wealth belongs to the Divine, and those who hold it are trustees, not possessors. It is with them to-day; to-morrow it may be elsewhere. All depends on the way they discharge their trust while it is with them; in what spirit, with what consciousness in their use of it, to what purpose?"

The Conquest of the Money-Power

No dynamic spirituality which aims at the regeneration of man and the regeneration of human society, can afford but a ban on money, for that will mean leaving the money-power in the hands of the vital forces, on the one hand, and, on the other, allowing its action in the material world to be paralyzed by poverty. Like other powers, it has to be reconciled for the Divine and used divinely for the divine purpose and service of the Divine. The Mother says to the supreme Creative Force, alone has it to be offered; for, it belongs to Her and has been created for the purpose of Her work in the material world. The personal and avowed, or the secret, or the shadow use of money is the first step, or the act of the Mother. Make no demand but accept what you receive from her and use it for the purposes for which it is given to you. Be entirely selfless, entirely scrupulous, exact, careful in detail, a good trustee; always consider yourself her possessions and not your own. This, on the other hand, what you receive for her, lay religiously before her; turn nothing to your own or anybody else's purpose."

It will not be an unnecessary repetition to state here that the acts of altruism or philanthropy are not, as they are commonly supposed to be, selfless and disinterested. We do them, because the ego in us takes a positive delight in them—a self-regarding delight, full of pride and complacency. The perception that we have been given the material life and its powers and resources not for the egoistic satisfaction of our desires and cravings, but even our mental ideas and psychic activities, are but the handmaidens of the material life. The Mother says to the supreme Creative Force, alone has it to be offered; for, it belongs to Her and has been created for the purpose of Her work in the material world. The personal and avowed, or the secret, or the shadow use of money is the first step, or the act of the Mother. Make no demand but accept what you receive from her and use it for the purposes for which it is given to you. Be entirely selfless, entirely scrupulous, exact, careful in detail, a good trustee; always consider yourself her possessions and not your own. This, on the other hand, what you receive for her, lay religiously before her; turn nothing to your own or anybody else's purpose."

The Proper Use of Money

Once money has been won from the hands of the vital forces whom it serves, it has to be diverted into the developing channels of the divine work. As the animal, man becomes the divine after the inner conquest and the supreme Creative Force, alone has it to be offered; for, it belongs to Her and has been created for the purpose of Her work in the material world. The personal and avowed, or the secret, or the shadow use of money is the first step, or the act of the Mother. Make no demand but accept what you receive from her and use it for the purposes for which it is given to you. Be entirely selfless, entirely scrupulous, exact, careful in detail, a good trustee; always consider yourself her possessions and not your own. This, on the other hand, what you receive for her, lay religiously before her; turn nothing to your own or anybody else's purpose."

The Words of the Mother.

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The Words of the Mother.
SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME
By DILIP KUMAR ROY

CHAPTER VI
THE ASHRAM: SOME DISCIPLES

I have decided, not without hesitation, to write now about a few of the disciples I came to know in the Ashram who made on me an impression for a twofold reason: first because of their native aptitudes and secondly because of the characteristic manner in which each of them reacted to Godman's personality and guidance. I have undertaken to attempt this in order to correct some wrong stress I may have unwittingly given while paying homage to one who has been the most unforgettable character I have ever come to know in my life. This I say apart from the deep debt of gratitude I owe as much in my life to the teachers I have had for having come down in his compassion to one who was so utterly incapable of making any return for what he received from such a donor for more than two decades. By 'wrong stress' I imply the overemphasis I must have put on my own angle of view because, when all is said, to each spectator his own vision must, insensibly, seem more important if not more trustworthy and real than that of all others put together. Do what one will, a man cannot break the shell of his ego which separates him from the others. But even then, so long as he honestly tries, amend partly "the observer's error"—if I may borrow a scientific phrase—by comparing his own appraiseament with that of some others.

To make my meaning clear I will begin straightaway with an instance in point.

There was a young lady whom I met in the Ashram in 1928 who interested me because I was told that she had had some remarkable occult experiences. I was also told that she had a certain charm about her which was very much to the taste of the Godman. One day, in her company, I was on my way to the ashram's integral Yoga, as she put it smilingly.

"I picked up my ears at once. This was just what I had been aching for! "God is!"—said to myself.

"And then?" I inquired.

"What then?" she laughed. "I came here. But I was puzzled when Mother first asked me to open myself. But how am I to open myself? I asked her, 'Is there a door in my heart?' And she said 'yes'—"and so on. Of course I did open: wasn't she an adept? How I admired her! And the result was that one day, while meditating, she saw a strange vision, namely that she was wholly separate from her body, roaming about in space. (This identical experience was related to me once more by an old sakhya a few years later) And she was staggered!

I was thrilled. For this was the experience I had heard so much about of the inner being showing itself distinct and separate from the physical. An experience worth having in those days when consciousness is so embarrassingly dismissed by scientific materialism as a function of the body. One would then see without the eyes and know of things happening beyond one's horizon, things that could, besides, be verified, as was done by her many times.

Yes, I was deeply impressed!

But, she left a few years later. I must be cautious and say no more, only hint that she had to go because she could not (or would not, shall I say) stay. I learnt, incidentally, that it was not enough to have such "experiences" however startlingly. One must aspire only for the most startling of all experiences: the change of nature without which no abiding change of consciousness could be achieved.

But, unhappily for me, she induced in me an expectation that gave me no end of trouble. For I started meditating for hours but, alas, not even the shadow of such an experience as much as peeped on the threshold of my expectancy! And I was told by others that this was because I failed to "open myself", which decided many who said that I might be a good poet and musician but a bad yogi. So I wrote to Sri Aurobindo in despair that I could not have any experiences because I could not "open" the closed doors of my inner being as so many pointed out. I also wrote to him what someone else had told me—about there being a division in me—that is why I was where I was (whatever it might mean) and I took it to me as a sure sign of self-contradiction in me which must have been the cause of the lack of response. In the end I wrote, crestfallen, that probably this self-contradiction or division was an index to consciousness intact and irremediable. To which he wrote back with his usual smiling kindness and patience:

"The peculiarity you note—of self-contradiction in yourself—is universal—it is one part of the being which believes and speaks the right and beautiful things; it is another which doubts and says the opposite. I got completely convinced one day from a goes in which for several weeks he writes wise and perfect things about the sadhana—suddenly without transition, he drops into his physical mind and peevishly and complainingly says, well, there is nothing wrong with all that wisdom and nothing uninteresting when he does that—he is simply giving voice to two parts of his nature. Nobody can understand himself or human nature if he does not perceive the multi-personality of the human being. To get all parts into harmony, that is the difficult thing.

"As for the lack of response, well, can't you see that you are in the ancient tradition? Read the lives of the saints—you will find them all (perhaps not all, but at least some) about doing you don't want to do no response and getting frightened tumults and agonies and desperations until the response came. Many people here who can't say that they haven't been disappointed also are disappointed do just the same—the it does not depend on experiences. For no one should try to do anything anybody, misted procedure to do something, and then feel a little disappointment, feeling of your never having had a very concrete response does not mean that you will never have it and that fits of despair at having arrived nowhere do not happen that one who never arrives..."

I come now to a dear friend of mine about whom it is a joy to write. I warn the reader, however, that I lay no claim to be above bias. A saying of the great Goethe always raised an echo in my mind: "Aufrecht zu sein kann ich versprechen, unparteiseitig zu sein, aber nicht." I do not mean I like, consciously, to say things in a friend's favour which my judgment is reluctant to sanction. But I do mean that when one is very fond of a person one becomes, willingly, a little more vividly responsive to his qualities than can be fully approved by those who are uninfluenced by such a strong predilection. Naturally, one could here too—as in everything else—go on arguing till doomsday the pros and cons whether one is more likely to be nearer the truth than a cold critical appraiseament. I feel no urge to swell the inconclusive babel of such a debate. So I will only repeat what Tagore told me once, singing, with a sort of shameless lament, the charm of his brand of the 'mystic:

"I really long to praise, Dilip! Sometimes it even goes on me like hunger, and if it can't, alas! Many there are of whom I feel speaking appreciatively. But as I rush on, my critical intellect protests against and I then have to weigh my words. The result—a sorry tribune which makes it difficult for me to repress a regret, to obviate which I have to keep silent rather than do out an inadequate measure and stay honest."

May this apology suffice: Amen!

A friend who impressed me so deeply in the early years of my Ashram life was K. D. Sethna who has since become famous both as a poet and a priest of high—or shall I say spiritual—journalism. I can clearly recapture with my mind's eye his delicate sensitive face which first attracted me with its fine crop of Christ-like whiskers which he discarded subsequently, to the universal regret of his friends and admirers. For we did admire it without pressing the 'resemblance' any further. And let me add, with a sigh, that those who have never seen him with his whiskers will never be able to appreciate our sigh over its merciless eradication. And then his eyes: how they radiated a keen though not unkind glint of intelligence! For he was nothing if not sympathetic and enthusiastic. Fortunate was the man who drew the line when expressing his sympathy in favour of this or that person.

Which brings me to his alert common sense. I have been told that Sri Aurobindo once said, in joke, that the Divine wanted the aspirants to consider many things which they generally did surrender with alacrity which was not exacted: common sense. Sethna was not one of these. His common sense was never an absentee in his talks and adjudications which seemed remarkable to me as he talked in a clairvoyant and verdicts readiness engendered. I remember once (I think he had matured further) his dispute with Krishnaprem in my living-room. How I envied his dialectical intelligence! And Krishnaprem not only admired his mental robustness in a frail physique but enjoyed to the full breaking a lance with him. But he had to go all out to hold his own against Sethna, which is saying much. Yet, Sethna was nothing if not keenly intelligent on top of being sensible. It was refreshing to talk with him and stimulating to differ from him, since even when one differed from his point of view one could not help looking at things from a new angle as it were. In a word his talks were always suggestive. But to come now to something more important.

One meets clever people often, and highly intelligent people, too, now and then. But seldom does one meet an intelligence which aspires to be repleted at the fount of a deeper wisdom. Intelligence in itself is indeed admirable and note but a fool will deny its unquestionable usefulness. What is it not an often suspected, for less admitted, is that intelligence is a mediator not a creator. It can help in giving expression to something which it receives from something—call it aspiration, knowledge, what is it.

I am afraid many (especially "the intellectuals") will take umbrage at this—what they will call—disagreement of the intellect. But alas, one cannot both eat one's cake and have it: one cannot glimpse something without what that glimpse comes and yet mind ever at leisure oneself is impoverished. That is why most intelligent people fight shy of mystic wisdom. They are not wrong in daring this, for the savour of the higher joys is not simply creative, but destructive also, by its very nature against the very idea of the ego.

Those who are not born with an exceptional intelligence are somewhat
SRAUROBINDO CAME TO ME —Continued from opposite page

fortunate as they have no axe to grind in favour of the status quo estab-
lished and jealously guarded by the intellect. But those who have once
tasted of intellectual joys find it a little hard to relinquish what they
have grown to love. That is why I admired Sethna more than I admired
many of my colleagues, and regarded him as a monomaniac creature
much to the annoyance of Sri Aurobindo. For when somebody once claimed that he was an advanced
sadhaka and men like Sethna were mere poets he wrote: "Why X's claim to be an advanced
sadhaka and what is the sense of it? It resolves itself into an attempt to
regale the superior consciousness of others which is not justified so long
as there is the egoism and the need of assertion, accompanied as it
always is by a weakness and turbid imperfections which belies the claim
of having a superior consciousness to the "inadvanced sadhaka." It is
time that the atmosphere begins to clear these ideas.

This is not irrelevant. For Sethna impressed me the more because
he not only never made such claim to having reached "a superior conscious-
ness" but he had the uncommon wisdom of common sense to see that one
should not make any attempt at asserting one's superior consciousness,
intellectual egoism being what it is—unacceptable to one's mental
preconceptions. That is why he often helped me by bowing to Sri Auro-
bindo's verdicts even though he too, like me, wanted first to understand
with the mind as far as one could achieve it.

Luckily for him, he had an advantage over many another who came
to the Ashram with a deep religious aspiration (preconception) and could
thus pour his heart's worship, unalloyed at the altar of our Master. This
I may not speak of, though it was a part of its implications. I myself
cannot compare Sri Aurobindo with some of his predecessors whom I need
not name. But Sethna could—and with an honest conviction. It was this
honesty married to an intellectual self-criticism that drew me to him more
and more. For I had lived with some sadhus who talked with dis-
respect about past poets and seers. I did not venture to compare,
possibly because I could not at the time feel quite the same degree of
enthusiasm for the sadhus as for Sethna. Here I have to admit that he
scored over me in his garbhasikhi. But what I found personally
rather charming of him was that he never flaunted the initial advantage
he had in coming to Sri Aurobindo with a clean heart-tablet with no
other holy figure etched on it—which was assuredly one of the reasons why he
received so much from Gurudev especially in insight into mystical poetry.
I do not know personally of any living critic who has read Sri Aurobindo's
poetry so thoroughly and acquired such a deep grasp of both its poetical
beauty and Gurudev's philosophy, inasmuch as he can be regarded as
a specialist in those two capacities. (I say 'living critic' because Chadwick
has, alas, departed this life—about whose outstanding poetical gift
and sadhana I will have a good deal to say presently.)

Sethna also became to me a bridge and a peer who continued all along to be a recipient of Sri Aurobindo's
letters on poetry. I was fond of his poems too but as my knowledge of
English verse was rather poor at the time, I could not sufficiently appre-
ciate his technique. Still I loved some of his poems even in those days—
neary twenty years— and translated them, which knits us together in a
closer bond. One such poem which was singled out for special praise by
Gurudev was entitled This Errant Life which I must quote to bring out the
side of my personal acquaintance with Sri Aurobindo's poetry:

This Errant life is dear although it dies;
And human lips are sweet though they but sing
Of things we尚 our joy and yours are wondrous yet, although an unseemly thing.

Sky-lighted Bliss untouched by earthiness!
I fear to soar lest tender bonds decrease.
Thou dost reveal thyself to outflow.

Ismurti language, lean down from above,
Temper the unsaid light so thought can trace,
Suffice my mood with a familiar glow.

For 'tis with words of clay I supplicate;
Speak to me heart to heart words intimate,
And all thy formless glory turn to love

And wouldst thou live into a human face?

When I read James Longing Bengali translation, he wrote, commenting:

"Aana's" lines are not easily translatable, lest of all Bengali. There
is then in them a union or rather fusion of high severity of speech with exalta-
tion of love. This is a very difficult经验 to preserve in English which it is almost impos-
sible to transfer boldly without loss into another language. There is no
word in excess, none that could have been added or changed without spoiling the
expression, every word just the right revealatory one—no colour, no orna-
ment, no empty words, no flow-glow, no simile, no metaphor, no idea
which have been fused inseparably into the substance of the thought
and feeling—the thought perfectly developed, not idea added to idea at the
will of the fancy, but perfectly interrelated and linked together like the limbs
of a well-roomed body. It has the full perfection and nothing of nothing
that is transferable. You have taken his last line and put in a lotus-face
and made divine love bloom in it—a pretty image, but how far from the
glossy impassioned severity of phrase: "And wouldst thou live into a human
face?" 

I shall pass by the constant and ready help plus encouragement which
Sethna has given me all along in my poetic aspirations in English as that
will be going beyond the immediate and urgent aim of this humblehumage
to one under whoseegis our little colony endeavoured to follow, as best
we could, the ideal that had drawn us together. I will refrain, for the same
reason, from enumerating his other rare qualities such as his sheer love of
poetry or innate generosity which prompted him to take an interest in
poetry. But I might as well tell the leader of our little coterie almost as
naturally as water finds its own level. One day, without telling him, I sent
to A. E. a few of his poems along with some extracts from Sri Aurobindo's
poetry which moved us to deep admiration, extracts such as (I quote here
from a then diary of mine):

"All art worth the name must go beyond the visible, must reveal, must
show us something that is hidden.

"So poetry arrives at the indication of infinite meanings beyond the
finite intellectual meaning the word carries."

"Poetical speech is the spiritual excitement of a rhythmic voyage
of self-discovery among the magic islands of form and name in these inner
and outer worlds."

"The aim of poetry, as of all true art, is neither a photographic or other-
wise realistic imitation of Nature, nor a romantic furbishing and painting
out of Nature, nor a dubious improvement of Nature, nor an imaginative
manifestation in the mind which is hidden from ours but not, on many planes of her creation, of
which she conceals from us, but is ready, when rightly approached, to
reveal." And so on.

I asked his permission to publish my translations of some of his lovely
poems like "Waking, Krishna, etc.

I enclosed also a poem on silence written by a friend, a poem which I
could not find in his collected works as I preferred expression in verse.
He sent me his kind reply written in his own hand (that is, not a typed
letter) in which he signed himself A. E. (his pen-name) and not George
Russell.

The letter was from Dublin and was dated January 6, 1922:

"Dear Dilip Roy,

"Your letter has come at a time when I am too troubled in mind to
write, as I would like, about the poems you send me. Yes, you have
persuaded me to translate the other two poems. But you must
think the extracts from Sri Aurobindo very fine, and the verses
you sent of Mr. Sethna have a genuine poetic quality. There are
many fine lines, like

"The song-impetuous mind.'

"The Eternal Glory is a wanderer
Hungry for lips of clay.'

"Many such lines show a feeling for rhythm which is remarkable since
the poet is not writing in his native but a learned language. I refer
to this because the only advice one writer can give to another rightly is
techical criticism. The craft of any art, painting, music, poetry, sculpture, is con-
stantly growing and much can be learned by the school. But the imperfection
cannot be passed on from one to another. So I confine myself to a technical
criticism.

"You, like many Indians, are so familiar with your great traditions that it
is natural for you to deal with them and even to urge on the spiritual more than
European writers do. The danger of this when writing poetry is that there
is a tendency to use or rather overuse great words like 'immortality',
'unanimity', 'mechanical', 'luminous'. But you have good ideas which inspire you, you are led to use words of that nature because of
a kinship with the infinity of the spirit. But in the art of verse if one uses these words overmuch they tend to lose their power just as in painting
in which only the primary colours would weary the eye.

"I would ask Mr. Sethna to try to reserve the use of such great words
as a painter keeps his high light, for the sun and moon or radiant water
and the rest of his canvass is in low tones. So the light appears radiant
by contrast. English is a great language but it has very few words relating
to spiritual ideas. For example the word Karma in Sanskrit embodies a
philosophy. There is no word in English embodying the same idea. There
are many words in Sanskrit with meanings which have no counterpart in
English: Dhyana, Suhshini, Vrinda, etc., and I am sure the languages
which the Hindus speak today must be richer in words fitted for spiritual
expression than English, in which there are few luminous words that
can be used when there is a spiritual emotion to be expressed. I
found this difficulty myself of finding a vocabulary though English is the
language I heard from my cradle.

"I hope Sethna will forgive my saying all this. I do so because I find a
talent in the verses you send and do not wish him to do without such
blessing as a fellow-craftsman can help to give.

"Will you tell your philosopher friend who praises silence that with the
poet the silence cannot be for ever? He sings and then keeps silent until
the song is imprinted on the brain and the brain is full of certain
feeling; what he gets, or nothing more will be poured into his cup. The secret
of this is that through the free giver the song flows freely and whoever
contemplates in himself, in him it is contained. That is indeed the Divine
Silence, but we do not come to that by being neglected."

Sethna sent some impressions of this letter to Gurudev who wrote back:

If you send your poems to five different poets, you are likely to get five
disparately discordant and discordant estimates of them. A poet likes only the

"Sethna was given by Gurudev the name of "Anil Khan" which means "The Clear
Ray." I have reverted to his original name as he is better known outside as
K. D. Sethna."
poetry that appeals to his own temperament or taste, the rest he condemns or ignores. (My own case is different because I have made in criticism a practice of appreciating everything that can be appreciated as a catholic critic. In the field of poetry, besides, seldom gets its right judgement from contemporary critics even.

"Nothing can be more futile than for a poet to write in expectation of contemporary fame or praise; however agreeable that may be, if it comes; but poetry is a work of art which matters not a damn whether temporary fame and very great poets have been neglected in their time. A poet has to go on his way, trying to gather hints from what people say or do to make his own work finer and deeper by the spirit of things; the old type of prize, and the hope of fame which matters not at all in the life of a poet."

He added something to the next a pointed question (which will be readily inferred from his reply) and he wrote to him again:

"Your letter suggested a more critical attitude on A. E.'s part than his actual appreciation warrants. His appreciation is, on the contrary, sufficiently warm; a genuine poetic quality and 'many fine lines'—he could not be expected to say more. The two quotations he makes certainly deserve the praise he gives them and they are moreover of the kind, A. E. and Yeats also would naturally like. But your poem, This Everlast Life, selected for special praise, has no striking expressions, like these standing out from the rest, just as in a Greek statue there would be no single feature standing out in a special beauty (eyes, lips, head or hands) but the whole has a harmonious, unified effect; it is made up of a sum of equal parts, more as the perfect charm of a statue of Praxiteles. This,—apart from the idea and feeling which goes psychically and emotionally much deeper than the idea in the lines quoted by A. E. which are poetically striking but have not the same quality—then this is the sort of thing which the mind and vital strongly but the other goes home into the soul...

His remarks about 'immensity' etc. are very interesting to me; for these, as it were, are the muses to me. I have often liked the thought that the mind, which is constantly recurring at short intervals in my poetry when I express not spiritual, but spiritual experience, I knew perfectly well that this would be objected to as bad technique or an inadmissible technique; but this seems to me a reasonable form of a convention of a past order which cannot apply to a new poetry dealing with spiritual things. A new art of words written from a new consciousness demands a new technique. A. E. himself admits that this rule makes a great difficulty because these 'high light' words are few in the English language. His solution may do well enough where the realization which they represent are mental ones or intuitions occurring on the sums of the consciousness, rare 'highlights' over the low tones of ordinary natural or occult phenomena (ordinary, of course, to the poet, not the average man); there his solution would violate the truth of the words would not misrepresent the balance of harmony of its actual tones. But what of one who lives in an atmosphere of these high lights—in a consciousness natural or occult phenomena (ordinary, of course, to the poet, not the average man); there his solution would violate the truth of the words would not misrepresent the balance of harmony of its actual tones. But what of one who lives in an atmosphere of these high lights—in a consciousness natural or occult phenomena (ordinary, of course, to the poet, not the average man); there his solution would violate the truth of the words would not misrepresent the balance of harmony of its actual tones. But what of one who lives in an atmosphere of these high lights—in a consciousness natural or occult phenomena (ordinary, of course, to the poet, not the average man); there his solution would violate the truth of the words would not misrepresent the balance of harmony of its actual tones. But what of one who lives in an atmosphere of these high lights—in a consciousness natural or occult phenomena (ordinary, of course, to the poet, not the average man); there his solution would violate the truth of the words would not misrepresent the balance of harmony of its actual tones. But what of one who lives in an atmosphere of these high lights—in a consciousness natural or occult phenomena (ordinary, of course, to the poet, not the average man); there his solution would violate the truth of the words would not misrepresent the balance of harmony of its actual tones. But what of one who lives in an atmosphere of these high lights—in a consciousness..."

And then in another letter:

"What you say may be correct (that our oriental luxury in poetry makes it impossible for Westerners), but on the other hand it is possible that the mind of the future will be more international than it is now. In that case the expression of various temperaments in English poetry will have a chance.

"If our aim is not success and personal fame but to arrive at the expression of spiritual truth and experience of all kinds in poetry, the English tongue is the most widespread and is capable of profound tones of mystic expression which make it admirably fitted for the purpose; if it could be used for the highest spiritual expression, that is worth trying..."

And then in another letter:

"The idea that Indians cannot succeed in English poetry is very much in the air just now but it cannot be taken as absolutely valid... At present many are turning to India for its resources, for its health, for its spirituality, but the eye is directed only towards yoga and philosophy, not to the poetical expression of it. When the full day comes, however, it may well be that this too will become apparent to observant Indians who are at once a spirit and a true poet and able to write in English as if in his mother-tongue (that is a different matter altogether) would have his full chance. Many barriers are breaking; moreover, both in Farsi and Urdu there are examples of foreigners who have taken their place as prose-writers or poets.

I have been at some pains here to labour this point because I feel it necessary to combat the unhelpful attitude of those who cannot create yet believe that every Indian is a poet just because he is at once a spirit and a true poet and able to write in English as if in his mother-tongue (that is a different matter altogether) would have his full chance. Many barriers are breaking; moreover, both in Farsi and Urdu there are examples of foreigners who have taken their place as prose-writers or poets.

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"quoted" from his book, "The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo." Published by Sri Aurobindo Circle, Hyderabad, there have been a few commentaries or articles on Sri Aurobindo's work, like K. Rajaiah on Gitanjali, Specimen Latika Ghosh, Srijanakshatram Modi, Srijanakshatram Modi, Srijanakshatram Modi, Srijanakshatram Modi, Srijanakshatram Modi."

THE AMATEUR IN SCIENCE

By I. BRONOWSKI

In 1943 the allied troops in the Parthenon met the deadly enemy of the whole campaign; and this enemy was not the Japanese, nor the scrub-typus. Scrub-typus is a fever which is carried by the scrub in order to transmit it to you; it is not necessary to go behind the scrub and attack the miles themselves. The real enemy, the true Chiron, is Asia therefore asked to have sent out to him legions to fight the disease-carrying nites. The greatest authority went, though he had a little trouble in persuading some of the nites to let him go. For Charles Radford, the great authority, was not a professional at all, but an amateur who studied nites in his spare time, but earned his living as a worker in the British Post Office.

This story has two morals. First, it reminds us that whether our problems are those of war or of peace, victory depends on a scientific understanding of them. A nation is no different in suffering and disease is handicapped in all its tasks, and this even in warfare. The well-being of the world or the well-being of a nation depends on the health of its individual men, women, and children. It is a paradox that poverty and disease help to make a nation noble and strong is always wrong. Nothing could be more wrong to defeat the Japanese as a mistaken interpretation of understanding. To the medical profession, disease, disease, disease, disease, is not the idea of the idea. At the other extreme of famous amateurs, consider the little English girl Mary Anning, a carpenter's daughter of no education who at the age of twelve in the year 1811 discovered the first ichthyosaurus. For the next twenty years or so she went on finding the skeletons of prehistoric creatures of such remarkable kinds which had been lying there for more than fifty million years waiting for some such talented spotter to recognize them. Almost all our modern knowledge of the age of the dinosaurs, the great lizards, is based on the sharp eye and the keen recognition of untaught Mary Anning.

These examples show us the amateur's strength. To him science is not an accepted body of doctrine, an idea which, as Franklin records, "was laughed at by the connois-seurs". Unlike the English radical friend Joseph Priestley was an amateur who approached the chemistry of his day with the same agnostic spirit which he brought to all established doctrine. His profound and influential body of knowledge by showing that burning depends on the presence of oxygen, which he discovered. On this amateur work of Priestley the French professional chemist Lavoisier was able to rebuild the whole science of chemistry in roughly its present form.

The great German poet Goethe spent time on several sciences. Where he would not where fresh ground, his work was remarkable: he founded the science of morphology as the study of living forms, and was a pioneer in the idea of evolution. And at the other extreme of famous amateurs, consider the little English girl Mary Anning, a carpenter's daughter of no education who at the age of twelve in the year 1811 discovered the first ichthyosaurus. For the next twenty years or so she went on finding the skeletons of prehistoric creatures of such remarkable kinds which had been lying there for more than fifty million years waiting for some such talented spotter to recognize them. Almost all our modern knowledge of the age of the dinosaurs, the great lizards, is based on the sharp eye and the keen recognition of untaught Mary Anning. The effect of these examples is to show us the amateur's strength. To him science is not an accepted body of doctrine, an idea which, as Franklin records, "was laughed at by the connois-seurs". Unlike the English radical friend Joseph Priestley was an amateur who approached the chemistry of his day with the same agnostic spirit which he brought to all established doctrine. His profound and influential body of knowledge by showing that burning depends on the presence of oxygen, which he discovered. On this amateur work of Priestley the French professional chemist Lavoisier was able to rebuild the whole science of chemistry in roughly its present form.

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Two Spirals

Liquid spirals spinning,
One black, one white,
Spinning, spiraling upward
Through supernatural Night.

This: My central Liquid,
My Age-old RIGHT,
Spinning, spiraling upward,
Tapering white.

And that, ah that, was othe-
Black and bright,
Spinning, spiraling upward
Through blacker NIGHT.

My choice was destined always,
Yet choose I could—
And did! And moved with the spiraling,
Liquid, black blood.

ELEANOR MONTGOMERY