

MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:
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FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

Editor:
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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

MAY 5, 1951

VOL. 3 NO. 6: ANNAS 4

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THE ALL-INDIA CONVENTION FOR SRI AUROBINDO'S UNIVERSITY CENTRE

April 24 is one of those dates that are history at its most significant. It used to be, when Sri Aurobindo was in the body, a *darshan* day on which hundreds from all parts of the world gathered before him and his spiritual associate the Mother. And it was chosen to be a *darshan* day because it marked the coming of the Mother to Pondicherry for permanent stay by the side of Sri Aurobindo. It is still a *darshan* day—the disciples and the admirers trooping through Sri Aurobindo's room and then receiving the Mother's benedictory smile. But a further significance has been added to it this year by the Convention which met on the Ashram grounds to deliberate on concerted measures for establishing an International University Centre as the fittest memorial of the Master.

Brilliant figures from diverse walks of life—men with a forward vision from every province of India as well as from abroad—collected on this occasion before the Mother and started the proceedings in a *pandal* on the margin of the majestic waters that beat upon Pondicherry and whose many voices mingled with the various speeches of the distinguished delegates. Most suggestively charged with profundity came the sea's splendid bass to accompany the words spoken by the Mother in opening the Convention. She said:

"Sri Aurobindo is present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the University Centre which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the élite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life.

"In his name I open to-day this Convention meeting here with the purpose of realising one of his most cherished ideals."

These were words with which the Mother put into intelligible sound the very power of Sri Aurobindo, and as she uttered them her whole body seemed a glowing door through which the ideal future drew close to us and her face wore the look of one who was but working to transfer to the visible and the material a mighty structure of Spirit-substance that stood for ever in a hidden world of harmonious Truth. Her message was like a *mantra* vibrantly moving to capture in earth-terms what the inner eye had caught of some symbol-habitation of that luminous universality that is Sri Aurobindo.

Luminous universality—this is precisely the essence of the proposed University. International and integral is the education aimed at—a wide sweep missing nothing of the world's manifoldness, a force fanning out to gather everything into a pattern that combines and unifies all. But there is more here than the fruitful co-ordination of all the faculties and activities of man the seeker of knowledge. It is not the mere mind that is intended to be ultimately the co-ordinator. The mere mind is obviously no luminous agency: it is bright in patches and dark in patches, with the entire general upshot of the interplay of bright and dark an eager yet baffled grey. The universality which the new centre of learning is meant to manifest is, in its final form, the world-expression of a supreme Shakti of which the mind is a diminished figure. Sri Aurobindo it is who has projected the idea of this centre of learning, and Sri Aurobindo is fundamentally the Master of an all-round spiritual realisation leading the intellectual and the nation-builder in him. This must not be mistaken to be a movement of narrow revivalism, of obscurantist religiosity. Sri Aurobindo does not stand for any of the sectarian creeds—he does not stand for even a new sect or creed—he brings the illumination of what he has termed the Supermind, the Truth behind man's evolutionary endeavour, the complete perfection which man's mental, vital and physical aspirations travail, directly or indirectly, to bring forth here and now. And the Supermind he stands for will not be a dogma hammered into people's heads. It will be the unfolding as of a golden flower within them in response to an almost

invisible touch, a flower whose aroma will suffuse the whole consciousness and permeate all branches of knowledge and automatically reveal the wisdom that man's common knowledge mostly blurs.

A spontaneous acceptance of an influence from beyond the ordinary range of experience came into play during the entire proceedings of the Convention which began with a number of songs by the inimitable Dilip Kumar Roy. From the start the President, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, who was proposed to the chair by Mr. K. C. Dutt and seconded by Mr. S. N. Jauhar, struck the right note. He spoke not only with genuine appreciation of the personality of Sri Aurobindo but also with a reverent instinct of the Mother's status. There was a most admirable fund of good will in him to serve the presence of Sri Aurobindo that seemed to shape the ends of the Convention, and so both in the words that came from him and in the way he conducted the proceedings he took care that those ends were as little rough-hewn as possible and that everything should be plastic in the hands of the secret Shaper. Speaking under the great picture of Sri Aurobindo that hung at the back of the dais, he brought to his famous oratory a keen sense of the unique momentousness of the occasion. "I am sure," he said, concluding his address on the first day, "the proposed University will symbolise the world's urge for a new spiritual rebirth; it will stand out as an oasis amidst the barren tracts that breed jealousies, suspicions and party conflicts." In the course of his speech on the second day he expressed the satisfaction which he felt after seeing the Ashram in its many aspects of activity and development, and made the memorable declaration: "The work that is about to be undertaken is a mighty one. No doubt, there will be support throughout the world. Let us not minimise the difficulties and complexities of the task. We propose to work this University for imparting training to men and women in accordance with the highest standards for the purpose of participating in the great task of reconstruction of humanity. Institutions of this type are bound to fail unless we can gather men and women who will not only feel on the lines that Sri Aurobindo lived, but also act upon them. This place has already within its resources such men and women who will be able to undertake this gigantic responsibility. It is our hope that men and women from all parts of the world will be attracted by the ideal which this institution will represent. We need not pay attention to the quantitative aspect of the problem, because we have many Universities where thousands of students pass out and we do not want to see any replica of such institutions . . . The policy of our Government should be to encourage experiments of the type being made here so that the work may be carried on without hindrance or difficulty. . . We have not the least doubt that as long as the Mother is here this institution will grow from strength to strength and will be the pride not only of India but of the entire civilised world."

Mr. Nolini Kanta Gupta, Secretary of the Ashram, made two short statements, one on the first and the other on the second day. A simple directness was his, which yet held deep riches of meaning. He mentioned that the University Centre which was sought to be formed was nothing less than the founding of a new mankind upon earth. And he added: "The promise has been given that the thing can be done and will be done. And She is in our midst who will make good the promise." The plain but vision-packed sentences went home to the mind of the audience, for there was behind them a mind quick with the Master's and the Mother's presence and trained by long discipleship to be brief not by the skimming of a subject but by a concentrated glimpse of the heart of a situation. The same direct though sparing touch was felt by the hearers on the next day when Mr. Gupta thanked the President for his extreme affableness and also all the others from far and near who too, he hoped, would come again to spend a few days now and then in the midst of the Ashram. These words were no stock formula of civility—they continued the sense he had

THE ALL-INDIA CONVENTION—Continued from page 1

given of the creative future ahead when he had said: "We are now at the end of our deliberations—a happy and successful end, you will admit, which, however, is the beginning of a still happier and greater end."

After Mr. Gupta's statement on the first day a number of messages showing how wide-spread was the interest in the novel venture of Sri Aurobindo's genius and of the Mother's creativity were read out by Mr. M. P. Pandit. They were headed by a few pregnant sentences from the well-known thinker, littérateur, ex-diplomat and present professor of Spanish Studies at Oxford, Senor Salvador de Madariaga: "Unable to attend your Convention, I send you my best wishes for its success. The analytical age is coming to its close. It fulfilled its purpose. But now something else is needed. The age of synthesis is about to begin. And how could it begin if no high centre of perspective were provided for all the parts to fall in into harmony?"

The messages hailed from various representative men, among them being Hon. Mr. K. M. Munshi, Hon. Mr. Kanungo, Hon. Mr. M. Bhaktavatsalam, Raja Maharaj Singh, Dr. Amarnath Jha, Dr. D. R. Bhattacharya (Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University), Prof. P. S. Naidu (Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, Allahabad University), Dr. K. C. Vardachari, (Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, Venkateshwara Institute, Tirupati), Dr. R. K. Yajnik (Director of Education, Saurashtra), Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, Mr. K. G. Mashruwala, Mr. N. V. Rajkumar, Kaka Kalelkar and Mr. Radhakrishna Bajaj. There were messages also from Malaya, East Africa, France and the American Academy for Asian Studies (San Francisco).

After the reading was over, Mr. S. R. Albless who had been entrusted with the responsibility of giving a broad sketch of the new University's character from several standpoints—architectural, organisational, academic, psychological and philosophical—rose to address the Convention.* He brought to his task a thorough comprehension of the Aurobindonian ideal and explained how an inevitable expression of it would be the International University. The genuine philosophical intellect was here, at the same time profound and lucid, ranging over a wide field with an effortless force, making not only a mental picture of the University spring up in its significant spaciousness but also the complex unity of it shine out in the living lines of its detailed functioning. With phrases clear in thought not by a facile command of the surface but by a constant perception of truths that alone can really illuminate things from within and above them, he satisfied the eager curiosity of the audience to have, as it were, a subjective as well as an objective blue-print of this vast scheme of Sri Aurobindo's, which would make the East and the West join their lights in a boundless day of the Spirit's self-revelation. He pointed out that Sri Aurobindo's education in England led him "to recognise the value of the social and political ideals of the West and the importance of science and technics and the organisation of man's physical existence; but he saw too their basic insufficiency—their incapacity to solve the fundamental problems of existence and create for men a better life." The extraordinary nature of the Aurobindonian vision as expounded in the Master's own books was underlined by Mr. Albless in words carrying a fine intellectual edge throughout their inwardly inspired eloquence: "A complete philosophy of life created out of direct and immediate knowledge of the Divine Reality in all its aspects, a philosophy that gives a real solution for the problems of human existence and reveals God's purpose in the world and the destiny of man in the universe, is definitely a great contribution to the world of thought and culture—a world which in spite of its scientific and materialistic progress is ignorant of ends and purposes. This University will be instrumental in disseminating the ideas expounded by these treatises as well as in making them dynamic in the life of men."

At the conclusion of Mr. Albless's address a booklet published by the Ashram and entitled *Sri Aurobindo University Centre, Pondicherry* was

* The full text of the Address is published on page 3 of the present issue.

distributed to the delegates. It contained a small-scale reproduction of the actual architectural plans as well as an outline of the educational project, with apt quotations from Sri Aurobindo giving his ideas on education and with striking extracts from an article by the Mother which had appeared in the *Ashram's Bulletin of Physical Education* (November, 1950) under the caption: *The Science of Living*.

Then several other delegates and organisers gave their speeches. On the first day Professor S. Maitra of Calcutta University and Dr. Tan Yun Shan, Founder-Director of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, voiced their happy response to the call of the great idea let loose by Sri Aurobindo. The day's proceedings closed with a pointed speech by Mr. Keshavdev Poddar, the dynamic Secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Circle of Bombay and one of the moving spirits of the all-India interest in the Convention. What he said breathed the very attitude to which, on the organisational side, the Convention owed its exceptional success. He asked whether this Convention was going to be one of those events which for all their *éclat* prove to be nothing more than a hum of words and a series of dramatic gestures, or, on the contrary, the meaningful overture of a sustained harmony of action which would not rest until it called into being the actual University with the help of increasing funds and of more and more educational workers. There was no doubt in his mind that the enthusiasm and the understanding which marked all the participants in the gathering before him could lead to a really practical and fruitful development of the thoughts and purposes born on the occasion. His appeal was for loyal and unremitting service of the Aurobindonian ideal.

Those who spoke on the second day made also a deep impression. Dr. Bernard Phillips (Chairman of the Philosophy Department of Delaware University, U.S.A.), Mr. Justice Bhagwati (Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University), Mr. Hemendra Prasad Ghose (one of India's veteran journalists, a colleague of Sri Aurobindo's on the latter's famous journal during his political days, *Bandemataram*), Dr. Kalidas Nag (renowned for his varied cultural activities in India and abroad), Mr. Justice B. N. Rai of Patna, Mr. Chatterjee (Editor of *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta), Mr. Suren Mohan Ghose, Dr. Vaidyanathaswami—all these in one way or another expressed their awareness of the stupendous character of the work on whose threshold they had met.

Before the day's programme terminated with these speeches and Mr. Gupta's words of thanks, Dr. Mookherjee had moved a set of resolutions which were unanimously adopted. The unanimity was a most notable phenomenon in view of the diversity of minds collected under the President. And it was due mainly to the admiration evoked in one and all by the inspired organisation and the fine living out of ideals that they had witnessed in the Ashram. The scheme of development which the proposed University stood for struck them as having been already initiated in the Ashram, and even the first academic phases of the new education was in evidence in the classes conducted there. And, more than any existing formulation in terms of Ashram-life, what carried all minds and hearts together was their sense of the Mother's greatness, the confidence somehow born in them that she who had taken up the grand responsibility of Sri Aurobindo's International University Centre would give perfect shape to it and make it grow to its fullest dimensions.

Indeed, in the truest connotation of the phrase, she is the *Alma Mater* of the integral education planned by Sri Aurobindo. From her gracious and creative personality flows the inspiration of a Golden Age to come, a Golden Age that Sri Aurobindo prophesied and promised and for whose advent he laboured and gave his life, entrusting the luminous power of its multifoliate life-expression to her who was his associate and co-worker and behind whom his deathless presence remains for ever—the radiant Mother of man's new-birth into complete supermanhood.

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CENTRE—Continued from opposite page

stages of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's spiritual work, this event is a step just prior to the final transformation. The Light brought down by Sri Aurobindo has now to spread out and infiltrate into all the subconscious layers of human life before a fuller descent of the Supermind can be made possible. It is the work of spreading this Light into the lower stratas of the earth that Sri Aurobindo is doing at present; it is absolutely necessary to purify to a large extent these nether regions and establish control over the adverse forces that operate there before the complete descent can take place and make the transformation of the entire being possible, for it is in these inconscient regions of terrestrial existence that the roots of all human limitations, difficulties and suffering lie. Sri Aurobindo thus carries on the work—though now out of his material body—which he started forty years ago.

Now, the Supramental Light has not only to penetrate, as it descends, the subconscious and inconscient layers of man's being, but has to grip his mind, life and body as well, with the object of transforming them. The body has to become a pliant and obedient instrument of the Divine Will, the life-being has to become a pure and perfect channel of the Divine Force, the soul has to contain and irradiate the Divine Bliss, and the mind has to manifest the Divine Truth. But before it can do so, it has to undergo a modification—the rational mind has to be transformed into the "mind of light", and then gradually into the "gnostic mind". In this work of

the transformation of man's being, especially his mental being, this University, which under the Mother's direction and guidance will impart Sri Aurobindo's teachings and spread his influence, has to play a major part.

Therefore, this educational Centre will not be like the Memorials that are usually erected to perpetuate the memory of someone who has passed away from the world, but will be a field of action for a being who is still in the earth atmosphere and powerfully influencing it. Has not the Mother, who is in constant union with him, said in her message: "Lord, this morning thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action. In unmistakable terms Thou hast promised that all of Thyself would remain here and not leave the earth atmosphere until earth is transformed."

Consequently, the real significance of this Centre is that it will serve as a link between the spiritual nucleus formed at Pondicherry and the outside world, and become one of the vehicles through which the Aurobindonian Light will manifest—a Light which is none other than that of the Divine Truth. After taking into consideration all these facts it will be safe to predict that this University will reflect the intellectual and spiritual greatness of the Rishi in whose honour it is going to be created, and under the illumined guidance of the Mother become the most unique educational Centre of all times.

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CENTRE

ITS CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE

BY S. R. ALBLESS

Here, published for the first time, is the full text of the Address delivered by Mr. Albless to the delegates attending the All-India Convention for the University Centre to be established in Pondicherry as a memorial to Sri Aurobindo.

Before we start the discussion on the University I would like to thank Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and all those who have so kindly come here for the Convention.

We shall first try to see what is the general character of this University, and then its real significance. You all know that the education given will be based primarily on Sri Aurobindo's own teachings and that it will be entirely free. I would like to add that this is in accordance with Sri Aurobindo's own wishes. One of the interesting features of this University will be that the students coming from different parts of the world will be taught in their own languages. Letters from France, America, England, Germany, Egypt, Africa, Japan and other places, both from students and teachers, have already been received, asking for permission to come and join the new University.

Boys and girls of all ages will be admitted, from the Kindergarten to the Graduate classes. As can be seen from the architectural plans given here, provision has been made to give instruction in all departments of knowledge. This is in keeping with Sri Aurobindo's catholic outlook on life and his integral spiritual vision. The building shown on the plans is the central block of the University; it is only one of a group of buildings which will be erected later as the number of students increases. For the present, only this block is going to be constructed; other structures will be built later around it. "Hostel Type" residential buildings will be also erected for the students and teachers; as far as possible, people belonging to the same country and having the same nationality will be grouped together—there will be an American Section, a French Section, an English Section and a German Section; this arrangement will help the foreigners to feel more at home and have a social life of their own within the larger framework of the communal life of the University Centre. Another interesting feature of this educational scheme is a large Library with a Public Hall to seat two thousand to two thousand five hundred people. All these buildings will be so grouped around the central block as to form parts of an organic whole. Needless to say, all the most modern methods will be used for lighting, ventilation and acoustical treatment, as well as for the structural work, and the latest type of equipment will be provided.

On the ground floor about 750 boys and girls will be accommodated—300 Juniors and the rest Seniors. Classes for Domestic Science, Handicrafts and Music are kept on the ground floor. Three Language classes, a Reading Room, a Common Room for senior students, and a Teachers' Room are also located here. A fully equipped Laboratory, with classes in Physics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences, and Mathematics next to it, occupies almost a whole wing of the building on this floor.

Accommodation for 700 to 750 students is provided on the first floor, where the three important Sections, the Philosophy and Yoga Section, the Literature Section, and the Art Section are placed. A big Studio with north lighting, and classes for Drawing, Painting, Modelling, Architecture and Engineering comprise the Art Section. Next to a Hall for debates, lantern-lectures and elocution competitions, Literature classes are placed—Poetry, Philosophical Prose, Essays and Belles Letters. In the central portion of the building between the open spaces, the Mother's classes, elementary and advanced classes in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, classes in Psychology, Logic, Social and Political Philosophy, and those in Comparative Philosophy, Religion and Mysticism are located. The remaining wing has classes in Metaphysics, Ethics and Axiology, Culturology and Anthropology, and History and the Philosophy of History. This is, of course, a tentative arrangement as the plans prepared are still in the preliminary stage. A few changes may have to be made in the final drawings, but the general arrangement of the rooms will not be radically altered. From the Kindergarten to the Graduate classes regular academic education will be given to the students; the higher teaching and yogic knowledge will be imparted only to the post-graduate students—those who have an aspiration to practise the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, and who are selected for their aptitude and yogic capacity. This brings us to the next question: what will be the nature of this higher teaching; in the field of knowledge, what does this University have to offer which the most modern educational centres of Europe and America are not in a position to? This is a question which will come into the minds of many, especially those who are not familiar with Sri Aurobindo's teachings.

It can be said at the outset that Sri Aurobindo classifies knowledge into two categories: the lower knowledge and the higher knowledge. The first is the indirect knowledge—knowledge of apparent phenomena of existence. Its approach is external, through the intellect; it examines the surfaces of things. The other is knowledge gained through spiritual means, through direct experience and realisation; it seeks to understand truths of existence from within, in their inner source and reality. Actually these

are two sides of the same seeking. All knowledge through whatever way it is pursued, is ultimately the knowledge of the One Reality, the Divine Being, either attained directly through union with Him or gained indirectly through Nature and its workings.

According to Sri Aurobindo science, art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, the knowledge of man and his past, action itself, are means by which man attains knowledge of the works of God through Nature and through life. At first he concerns himself with the externalities of life and the forms of Nature, and tries to fathom their secrets through scientific means; but when he learns to go deeper within himself and awakens to the inner reality of his being, and begins to correlate it with God, he understands that all his previous efforts were imperfect groupings which ultimately led to the Divine, in whose Being alone can the absolutes of knowledge, beauty and goodness have their existence. Consequently, the students joining this University will be candidates for both the lower and the higher knowledge, their aspiration, will, and yogic capacity determining the limit of their psycho-spiritual development. The student who will reach a higher level of being and possess a more enlightened consciousness than the average man, will attain the lower as well as the higher knowledge—in the words of Sri Aurobindo: "The lower knowledge has been the step from which he has risen to the higher: the higher illumines for him the lower and makes it part of itself, even if only its lower fringe and most external radiation."

Now the last question is, what is the exact significance of this University—its intellectual, cultural and spiritual significance. First we shall see its intellectual and cultural significance.

Educated in England when the current philosophy of life was positivistic and materialistic, Sri Aurobindo grew to recognise the value of the great social and political ideals of the West and the importance of science and technics and the organisation of man's physical existence; but he saw too their basic insufficiency—their incapacity to solve the fundamental problems of existence and create for men a better life. He first imbibed from Western culture its finest elements and then turned towards the spiritual treasures of his own country. After attaining the realisations described in her ancient scriptures, he ascended the ladder of Being to the gnostic heights of the Spirit to have his great realisation of the Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness of the Divine—the sovran Light and Power that alone can radically transform and divinise human life in its entirety.

The benefits of this realisation he gave to the world by creating a complete philosophy of life, a new spiritual world-view, in his five major works, *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Human Cycle*, and *The Ideal of Human Unity*. The intellectual and cultural value of these metaphysical, psychological, spiritual-ethical, and socio-political treatises is not difficult to assess. A complete philosophy of life created out of direct and immediate knowledge of the Divine Reality in all its aspects, a philosophy that gives a real solution for the problems of human existence and reveals God's purpose in the world and the destiny of man in the universe, is definitely a great contribution to the world of thought and culture—a world which in spite of its great scientific and materialistic progress is ignorant of ends and purposes. This University will be instrumental in disseminating the ideas expounded in these treatises as well as in making them dynamic in the life of men. As Sri Aurobindo's appeal is very wide and his idealistic and spiritual outlook on life attracts seekers from almost every country in the world, it is expected that this educational Centre will gradually evolve into a world Culture Centre.

But what is of even greater importance is its spiritual significance in the Aurobindonian scheme of things; this cannot be understood without knowing its relation to Sri Aurobindo's work in the world and the goal he set before himself—the complete manifestation of the Divine Truth, Power and Bliss in earth-existence, resulting in the divinisation of man and the creation of human unity on a basis of spiritual oneness.

The most difficult and important part of this work has already been done by him. His intense yogic action on terrestrial life he brought to a success by a cataclysmic manoeuvre which entailed the deliberate discarding of his most material sheath. By sacrificing his body, he attained for the earth in a short period an evolutionary gain which it would have taken her centuries to attain in the normal course of events. He brought down the essential nucleus of the Supramental Light into the deepest layers of the earth-consciousness. The condition of his body, which remained aglow and intact for four and a half days, was symptomatic of this spiritual victory. The very cells of his body were charged with a high concentration of Supramental Light, making it quite clear that even the most material part of a human being can pass through a modification and hold the highest Divine Light. Therefore, in the series of events which mark the various

Continued on opposite page

SAVITRI

By SRI AUROBINDO

BOOK VII: THE BOOK OF YOGA

Canto 2: The Parable of the Search for the Soul

The text below—describing the gradual resolution emerging in Savitri to combat with her soul's love and light the too early death to which Satyavan, her husband, is doomed and, through that death, the fate of mortal man's groping and precarious life on earth—was recently revised by Sri Aurobindo, but some final touches remained to be given.—EDITOR.

The Parable of the Search for the Soul.
As in the vigilance of the sleepless night
Through the slow heavy-footed silent hours,
Repressing in her bosom its load of grief,
She sat staring at the dumb tread of Time
And the approach of ever-nearing Fate,
A summons from her being's summit came,
A sound, a call that broke the seals of Night.
Above her brows where will and knowledge meet
A mighty Voice invaded mortal space.
It seemed to come from inaccessible heights
And yet was intimate with all the world
And knew the meaning of the steps of Time
And saw eternal destiny's changeless scene
Filling the far prospect of the cosmic gaze.
As the Voice touched, her body became a stark
And rigid golden statue of motionless trance,
A stone of God lit by an amethyst soul.
Around her body's stillness all grew still:
Her heart listened to its slow measured beats,
Her mind renouncing thought heard and was mute:
"Why camest thou to this dumb deathbound earth,
This ignorant life beneath indifferent skies
Tied like a sacrifice on the altar of Time,
O spirit, O immortal energy,
If 'twas to nurse grief in a helpless heart
Or with hard tearless eyes awake thy doom?
Arise, O Soul, and vanquish Time and Death."
But Savitri's heart replied in the dim night:
"My strength is taken from me and given to Death,
Why should I lift my hands to the shut heavens
Or struggle with mute inevitable Fate
Or hope in vain to uplift an ignorant race
Who hug their lot and mock the saviour Light
And see in Mind Wisdom's sole tabernacle,
In its harsh peak and its inconscient base
A rock of safety and an anchor of sleep?
Is there a God whom any cry can move?
He sits in peace and leaves the mortal's strength
Impotent against his calm omnipotent Law
And Inconscience and the almighty hands of Death.
What need have I, what need has Satyavan
To avoid the black meshed net, the dismal door,
Or call a mightier Light into life's closed room,
A greater Law into man's little world?
Why should I strive with earth's unyielding laws
Or stave off death's inevitable hour?
This surely is best to pactise with my fate
And follow close behind my lover's steps
And pass through night from twilight to the sun
Across the tenebrous river that divides
The adjoining parishes of earth and heaven.
Then could we lie inarmed breast upon breast,
Untroubled by thought, untroubled by our hearts,
Forgetting man and life and time and its hours,
Forgetting eternity's call, forgetting God."
The Voice replied: "Is this enough, O spirit?
And what shall thy soul say when it wakes and knows
The work was left undone for which it came?
Or is this all for thy being born on earth
Charged with a mandate from eternity?
A listener to the voices of the years,
A follower of the footprints of the gods,
To pass and leave unchanged the old dusty laws?
Shall there be no new tables, no new Word,
No greater light come down upon the earth
Delivering her from her unconsciousness,
Man's spirit from unalterable fate?
Cam'st thou not down to open the doors of Fate,
The iron doors that seemed for ever closed,
And lead man to truth's wide and golden road
That runs through finite things to eternity?
Is this then the report that I must make,

My head bowed with shame before the Eternal's seat,—
His power he kindled in thy body has failed,
His labourer returns, her task undone?"
Then Savitri's heart fell mute, it spoke no word.
But holding back her troubled rebel heart,
Abrupt, erect and strong, calm like a hill,
Surmounting the seas of mortal ignorance,
Its peak immutable above mind's air,
A Power within her answered the still Voice:
"I am thy portion here charged with thy work,
As thou myself seated for ever above,
Speak to my depths, O great and deathless Voice,
Command, for I am here to do thy will."
The Voice replied: "Remember why thou cam'st:
Find out thy soul, recover thy hid self,
In silence seek God's meaning in thy depths,
Then mortal nature change to the divine.
Open God's door, enter into his trance.
Cast Thought from thee, that nimble ape of Light:
In his tremendous hush stilling thy brain
His vast Truth wake within and know and see.
Cast from thee sense that veils thy spirit's sight:
In the enormous emptiness of thy mind
Thou shalt see the Eternal's body in the world,
Know him in every voice heard by thy soul:
In the world's contacts meet his single touch;
All things shall fold thee into his embrace.
Conquer thy heart's throbs, let thy heart beat in God:
Thy nature shall be the engine of his works,
Thy voice shall house the mightiness of his Word:
Then shalt thou harbour my force and conquer Death."
Then Savitri by her doomed husband sat,
Still rigid in her golden motionless pose,
A statue of the fire of the inner sun.
In the black night the wrath of storm swept by,
The thunder crashed above her, the rain hissed,
Its million footsteps pattered on the roof.
Impassive mid the movement and the cry,
Witness of the thoughts of mind, the moods of life,
She looked into herself and sought for her soul.

A dream disclosed to her the cosmic past,
The crypt-seed and the mystic origins,
The shadowy beginnings of world-fate:
A lamp of symbol lighting hidden truth
Imaged to her the world's significance.
In the indeterminate formlessness of Self
Creation took its first mysterious steps,
It made the body's shape a house of soul
And Matter learned to think and person grew;
She saw space peopled with the seeds of life
And saw the human creature born in Time.
At first appeared a dim half-neutral tide
Of being emerging out of infinite Nought:
A consciousness looked at the inconscient Vast
And pleasure and pain stirred in the insensible Void.
All was the deed of a blind World-Energy:
Unconscious of her own exploits she worked,
Shaping a universe out of the Inane.
In fragmentary beings she grew aware:
A chaos of little sensibilities
Gathered round a small ego's pinpoint head;
In it a sentient creature found its poise,
It moved and lived a breathing, thinking whole.
On a dim ocean of subconscious life
A formless surface consciousness awoke:
A stream of thoughts and feelings came and went,
A foam of memories hardened and became
A bright crust of habitual sense and thought,
A seat of living personality
And recurrent habits mimicked permanence.
Mind nascent laboured out a mutable form,
It built a mobile house on shifting sands,
A floating isle upon a bottomless sea.

SAVITRI—Continued from page 3

A conscious being was by this labour made;
It looked around it on its difficult field
In the green wonderful and perilous earth;
It hoped in a brief body to survive,
Relying on Matter's false eternity.
It felt a godhead in its fragile house;
It saw blue heavens, dreamed immortality.

A conscious soul in the Inconscient's world
Hidden behind our thoughts and hopes and dreams,
An indifferent Master signing Nature's acts
Leaves the viceregent mind a seeming king.
In his floating house upon the sea of Time
This regent sits at work and never rests:
He is a puppet of the dance of Time;
He is driven by the hours, the moment's call
Compels him with the thronging of life's need
And the babel of the voices of the world.
This mind no silence knows nor dreamless sleep,
In the incessant circling of its steps
Thoughts tread for ever through the listening brain;
It toils like a machine and cannot stop.
Into the body's many-storeyed rooms
Endless crowd down the dream-god's messages.
All is a hundred-toned murmur and babble and stir,
There is a tireless running to and fro,
A haste of movement and a ceaseless cry
The hurried servant senses answer apace,
To every knock upon the outer doors
Bring in life's visitors, report each call,
Admit the thousand queries and the calls
And the messages of communicating minds
And the heavy business of unnumbered lives
And all the thousandfold commerce of the world.
Even in the tracts of sleep is scant repose;
He mocks life's steps in strange subconscious dreams,
He strays in a sublime realm of symbol scenes,
His night with thin-air visions and dim forms
He packs or peoples with slight drifting shapes
And only a moment spends in silent self.
Adventuring into infinite mind-space
He unfolds his wings of thought in inner air
Or travelling in imagination's car
Crosses the globe, journeys beneath the stars,
To subtle worlds takes his ethereal course,
Visits the gods on life's miraculous peaks,
Communicates with Heaven, tampers with Hell.
This is the little surface of man's life.
He is this and he is all the universe:
He scales the Unseen, his depths dare the Abyss;
A whole mysterious world is locked within.
Unknown to himself lives a hidden king
Behind rich tapestries in great secret rooms;
An epicure of the spirit's unseen joys,
He lives on the sweet honey of solitude:
A nameless god in an unapproachable fane,
In the secret adytum of his inmost soul
He guards the being's covered mysteries
Beneath the threshold behind shadowy gates
Or shut in vast cellars of inconscient sleep.
The immaculate Divine All-Wonderful
Casts into the argent purity of his soul
His splendour and his greatness and the light
Of self-creation in Time's infinity
As into a sublimely mirroring glass.
Man in the world's life works out the dreams of God.
But all is there, even God's opposites;
He is a little front of Nature's works,
A thinking outline of a cryptic Force.
All she reveals in him that is in her,
Her glories walk in him and her darknesses.
Man's house of life holds not the gods alone;
There are occult Shadows, there are tenebrous Powers,
Inhabitants of life's ominous nether rooms,
A shadowy world's stupendous denizens.
A careless guardian of his nature's powers,
Man harbours dangerous forces in his house.
The Titan and the Fury and the Djinn
Lie bound in the subconscious's cavern pit
And the Beast grovels in his antre den:
Dire mutterings rise and murmur in their drowse.
Insurgent sometimes raises its huge head
The mystery of dark and fallen worlds,

The dread visages of the adversary Kings.
The dreadful powers held down within his depths
Become his masters or his ministers;
Enormous they invade his bodily house,
Can act in his acts, infest his thought and life.
A monstrous mystery lurking in life's deeps,
Inferno surges into the human air
And touches all with a perverting breath.
Grey forces like a thin miasma creep
Stealing through chinks in his closed mansion's doors,
Discolouring the walls of upper mind
In which he lives his fair and specious life
And leave behind a stench of sin and death:
Not only rise in him perverse drifts of thought
And formidable formless influences
But there come presences and awful shapes:
Tremendous forms and faces mount dim steps
And stare at times into his living-rooms:
Or called up for a moment's passionate work
Lay a dire custom's claim upon his heart:
Aroused from sleep, they can be bound no more.
Afflicting the daylight and alarming night,
Invading at will his outer tenement
The stark gloom's grisly dire inhabitants
Mounting into God's light all light perturb.
All they have touched or seen they make their own,
In Nature's basement lodge, mind's passages fill,
Disrupt thought's links and musing sequences,
Break through the soul's stillness with a noise and cry
Or they call the inhabitants of the abyss,
Invite the instincts to forbidden joys,
A laughter wake of dread demoniac mirth
And with nether riot and revel shake life's floor.
Impotent to quell his terrible prisoners
Appalled the householder helpless sits above,
Taken from him his house is his no more.
He is bound and forced, a victim of the play,
Or, allured, joys in the mad and mighty din.
His nature's dangerous forces have arisen
And hold at will a rebel's holiday.
Aroused from the darkness where they crouched in the depths,
Prisoned from the sight, they can be held no more;
His nature's impulses are now his lords.
Once quelled or wearing specious names and vests
Infernal elements, demon powers are there.
Man's lower nature hides these awful guests.
Their vast contagion grips sometimes man's world.
An awful insurgence overpowers man's soul.
In house and house the huge uprising grows;
Hell's companies are loosed to do their work,
Into the earth-ways they break out from all doors,
Invade with blood-lust and the will to slay
And fill with horror and carnage God's fair world.
Death and his hunters stop a victim earth;
The terrible Angel smites at every door:
An awful laughter mocks at the world's pain
And massacre and torture grin at Heaven:
All is the prey of the destroying force;
Creation rocks and tremble top and base.
This evil Nature housed in human hearts
A foreign inhabitant, a dangerous guest:
The soul that harbours it it can dislodge,
Expel the householder, possess the house.
An opposite potency contradicting God,
A momentary Evil's almightiness
Has straddled the straight path of Nature's acts.
It imitates the Godhead it denies,
Puts on his figure and assumes his face.
A Manichian creator and destroyer,
This can abolish man, annul his world.
But there is a guardian power, there are Hands that save,
Calm eyes divine regard the human scene.

All the world's possibilities in man
Are waiting as the tree waits in its seed:
His past lives in him; it drives his future's pace;
His present's acts fashion his coming fate.
The unborn gods hide in his house of Life.
The daemons of the unknown overshadow his mind
Casting their dreams into live moulds of thought,
The moulds in which his mind builds out its world.
His mind creates around him its universe.
All that has been renews in him its birth,

SAVITRI—Continued from page 5

All that can be is figured in his soul.
 Issuing in deeds it scores on the roads of the world,
 Obscure to the interpreting reason's guess,
 Lines of the secret purpose of the gods.
 In strange directions runs the intricate plan;
 Held back from human foresight is their end.
 And the far intention of some ordering Will
 Or the order of life's arbitrary Chance
 Finds out its settled poise and fated hour.
 Our surface watched in vain by reason's gaze,
 Invaded by the impromptus of the unseen,
 Helpless records the accidents of Time,
 The involuntary turns and leaps of life.
 Only a little of us foresees its steps,
 Only a little has will and purposed pace.
 A vast subliminal is man's measureless part.
 The dim subconscious is his cavern base.
 Abolished vainly in the walks of Time
 Our past lives still in our unconscious selves
 And by the weight of its hidden influences
 Is shaped our future's self-discovery.
 Thus all is an inevitable chain
 And yet a series seems of accidents.
 The unremembering hours repeat the old acts,
 Our dead past round our future's ankles clings
 And drags back the new nature's glorious stride,
 Or from its buried corpse old ghosts arise,
 Old thoughts, old longings, dead passions live again,
 Recur in sleep or move the waking man
 To words that force the barrier of the lips,
 To deeds that suddenly start and o'erleap
 His head of reason and his guardian will.
 An old self lurks in the new self we are;
 Hardly we escape from what we once had been:
 In the dim gleam of habit's passages,
 In the subconscious's darkling corridors
 All things are carried by the porter nerves
 And nothing checked by subterranean mind,
 Unstudied by the guardians of the doors,
 And passed by a blind instinctive memory,
 The old gang dismissed, old cancelled passports serve,
 Nothing is wholly dead that once had lived.
 In dim tunnels of the world's being and in ours
 The old rejected nature still survives;
 The corpses of its slain thoughts raise their heads
 And visit mind's nocturnal walks in sleep,
 Its stifled impulses breathe and move and rise;
 All keeps a phantom immortality.
 Irresistible are Nature's sequences:
 The seeds of sins renounced sprout from hid soil;
 The evil cast from our hearts once more we face.
 Our dead selves come to slay our living soul.
 A portion of us lives in present Time,
 A secret mass in dim inconscience gropes;
 Out of the inconscient and subliminal
 Arisen, we live in mind's uncertain light
 And strive to know and master a dubious world
 Whose purpose and meaning are hidden from our sight.
 Above us dwells a superconscient god
 Hidden in the mystery of his own light:
 Around us is a vast of ignorance
 Lit by the uncertain ray of human mind,
 Below us sleeps the Inconscient dark and mute.
 But this is only Matter's first self-view,
 A scale and series in the Ignorance.
 This is not all we are or all our world.
 Our greater self of knowledge waits for us,
 A supreme light in the truth-conscious Vast:
 It sees from summits beyond thinking mind,
 It moves in a splendid air transcending life.
 It shall descend and make earth's life divine.
 Truth made the world, not a blind Nature-Force.
 For here are not our large diviner heights;
 Our summits in the superconscient's blaze
 Are glorious with the very face of God:
 There is our aspect of eternity,
 There is the figure of the god we are,
 His young unaging look on deathless things,
 His joy in our escape from death and Time,
 His immortality and light and bliss.
 Our larger being sits behind cryptic walls:
 There are greatnesses hidden in our unseen parts

That wait their hour to step into life's front:
 We feel an aid from deep indwelling Gods:
 One speaks within, Light comes to us from above.
 Our soul from its mysterious chamber acts;
 Its influence pressing on our heart and mind
 Pushes them to exceed their mortal selves.
 It seeks for Good and Beauty and for God;
 We see beyond self's walls our limitless self,
 We gaze through our world's glass at half-seeing vasts,
 We hunt for the Truth behind apparent things.
 Our inner Mind dwells in a larger light,
 Its brightness looks at us through hidden doors;
 Our members luminous grow and Wisdom's face
 Appears in the doorway of the mystic ward:
 When she enters into our house of outward sense,
 Then we look up and see, above, her sun.
 A mighty life-self with its inner powers
 Supports the dwarfish modicum we call life;
 It can graft upon our crawl two puissant wings.
 Our body's subtle self is throned within
 In its viewless palace of veridical dreams
 That are bright shadows of the thoughts of God.
 In the prone obscure beginnings of the race
 The human grew in the bowed apelike man.
 He stood erect, a Godlike form and force
 And a soul's thoughts looked out from earthborn eyes;
 Man stood erect, he wore the thinker's brow:
 He looked at heaven and saw his comrade stars;
 A vision came of beauty and greater birth
 Slowly emerging from the heart's chapel of light
 And moved in a white lucent air of dreams.
 He saw his being's unrealised vastnesses,
 He aspired and housed the nascent demi-god.
 Out of the dim recesses of the self
 The occult seeker into the open came:
 He heard the far and touched the intangible,
 He gazed into the future and the unseen;
 He used the powers earth-instruments cannot use,
 A pastime made of the impossible;
 He caught up fragments of the Omniscient's thought,
 He scattered formulas of omnipotence.
 Thus man in his little house made of earth's dust
 Grew towards an unseen heaven of thought and dream
 Looking into the vast vistas of his mind
 On a small globe dotting infinity.
 At last climbing a long and narrow stair
 He stood alone on a high roof of things
 And saw the light of a spiritual sun.
 Aspiring he transcends his earthly self;
 He stands in the largeness of his soul new-born
 Redeemed from encirclement by mortal things
 And moves in a pure free spiritual realm
 As in the rare breath of a stratosphere.
 A lost end of far lines of divinity,
 He mounts by a frail thread to his high source;
 He reaches his fount of immortality,
 He calls the Godhead into his mortal life.
 All this the spirit concealed had done in her:
 A portion of the mighty Mother came
 Into her as into its own human part:
 Amid the cosmic workings of the Gods
 It marked her the centre of a wide-drawn scheme,
 Dreamed in the passion of her far-seeing spirit
 To mould humanity into God's own shape
 And lead this great blind struggling world into light
 Or a new world discover or create.
 Earth must transform herself and equal Heaven
 Or Heaven descend into earth's mortal state.
 But for such vast spiritual change to be,
 Out of the mystic cavern in man's heart
 The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil
 And step into common nature's crowded rooms
 And stand uncovered in that nature's front
 And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life.
 Obedient to a high command she sat:
 Time, life and death were passing incidents
 Obstructing with their transient view her sight,
 Her sight that must break through and liberate the god.
 Imprisoned in the visionless mortal man.
 The inferior nature born into ignorance
 Still took too large a place, it veiled her self
 And must be pushed aside to find her soul.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

FOUR UNPUBLISHED TALKS

THE REIGN OF CHANCE

People often speak of the play of Chance in the world. But what is to be understood by the term "Chance"? Chance can only be the opposite of Order and Harmony. There is only one true harmony and that is the Supramental—the reign of Truth, the expression of the Divine Law. In the Supermind, therefore, Chance has no place. But in the lower Nature the supreme Truth is obscured: hence there is an absence of that divine unity of purpose and action which alone can constitute Order. Lacking this unity, the domain of the lower Nature is governed by what we may call Chance—that is to say, it is a field in which various conflicting forces intermix, having no single definite aim. Whatever arises out of such a rushing together of forces is a result of confusion, dissonance and falsehood—a product of Chance. Chance is not merely a conception to cover our ignorance of the causes at work; it is a description of the uncertain *mêlée* of the lower Nature which lacks the calm one-pointedness of the Divine Truth.

The world has forgotten its divine origin and become an arena of egoistic energies; but it is still possible for it to open to the Truth, call it down by its aspiration and bring about a change in the whirl of Chance. What men regard as a mechanical sequence of events, owing to their own mental associations and experiences and generalisations, is really manipulated by subtle agencies each of which tries to get its own will done. The world has got so subjected to these undivine agencies that the victory of the Truth cannot be accomplished except by fighting for it. The world has no right to it: it has to gain it by disowning the falsehood and the perversion, an important part of which is the facile notion that, since all things owe their final origin to the Divine, all their immediate activities also proceed directly from it. The fact is that here in the lower Nature the Divine is veiled by a cosmic Ignorance and what takes shape does not proceed directly from the Divine Knowledge.

That everything is equally the will of God is a very convenient suggestion of the hostile influences which would have the creation stick as tightly as possible to the disorder and ugliness to which it has been reduced. So what is to be done? you ask. Well, call down the Light, open yourselves to the power of Transformation. Innumerable times the divine peace has been given to you and as often you have lost it—because something in you refuses to surrender its petty egoistic routine. If you are not always vigilant, your nature will return to its old unregenerate habits even after it has been filled with the descending Truth. It is the struggle between the old and the new that forms the crux of the Yoga; but if you are bent on being faithful to the supreme Law and Order revealed to you, the parts of your being belonging to the reign of Chance will be, however slowly, converted and divinised.

ASPIRATION IN THE PHYSICAL

Have you ever watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants simply struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying a hundred possible ways just to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the light. Plants have more of it in their physical being than men. Their whole life is a worship of light. Light is of course the material symbol of the Divine, and the sun represents under material conditions the supreme Consciousness. The plants have felt it quite distinctly in their own simple blind way. Their aspiration is intense, if you know the trick of becoming aware of it. On the plane of Matter they are the most open to the divine influence—I can transmit a state of consciousness more easily to a flower than to a man: it is very receptive, though it does not know how to formulate its experience to itself because it lacks a mind. But the pure psychic consciousness is native to it.

THE URGE TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION

The force which, when absorbed in the Ignorance, takes the form of the Life-energy's endless desires is the same which, in its pure form, constitutes the push, the dynamis towards transformation. Consequently, you must at the same time beware of indulging freely in desires, thinking them to be needs which must be satisfied, and of rejecting the vital force as positively evil. What you should do is to throw the doors of your being wide open to the Divine. The moment you hide anything, you step straight into the Falsehood. The least concealment on your part pulls you immediately down into unconsciousness. If you want to be fully conscious, be always in front of the Truth—completely open yourself and try your utmost to let it see deep inside you, into every corner of your being. That alone will bring into you light and consciousness and all that is most true.

Be absolutely modest—that is to say, know the distance between what you are and what is to be, not allowing the crude physical mentality to think that it knows when it does not, that it can judge when it cannot. Modesty implies the giving up of yourself to the Divine whole-heartedly,

to ask for Its help and by submitting win the freedom and absence of responsibility which imparts to the mind utter quietness. Not otherwise can you hope to attain the union with the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Will. Of course it depends on the path by which you approach the Divine whether the union with the Consciousness comes first or that with the Will. If you go deep within, the former will naturally precede, whereas if you take a standpoint in the universal movement the latter is likely to get realised first; but it is not quite possible to make a cut-and-dried generalisation because the sadhana is a flexible and fluid affair and also because the Divine Consciousness and Will are very closely connected with each other, being two aspects of one single existence.

Take note, however, that the merely external similarity of your thought or action to those of one who embodies the Divine does not prove that this union has been achieved. All such proofs are superficial, for the real union means a thorough change, a total reversal of your normal consciousness. You cannot have it in your mind or in your ordinary state of awareness. You must get clean out of that—then and not till then can you be unified with the Divine Consciousness. Once the union is really experienced the very idea of proving it by the similarity of your thought and action with your Guru's will make you laugh. People living in the same house for years together or coming in daily intimate contact with one another develop a sort of common mind—they think and act alike. But you cannot claim to be like the Divine by such merely mental contact; you must consent to have your consciousness entirely reversed! The genuine sign of the union is that your consciousness has the same quality, the same way of working as the Divine's and proceeds from the same supramental source of Knowledge. That you sometimes happen to act in the external field as the Divine appears to act may be nothing save coincidence, and to demonstrate the union by such comparisons is trying to prove a great thing by a very small one. The true test is the direct experience of the Divine Consciousness in whatever you do. It is an unmistakable test, because it changes your being from head to foot.

Evidently, you cannot at once be fixed in the Divine Consciousness; but even before it settles in you, you can have now and then the experience of it. The Divine Consciousness will come and go, but while the union lasts you will be as if somebody else! The whole universe will wear a new face and your self as well as your perception and vision of things will be metamorphosed. So long as you lack the experience you are inclined to look out for proofs: proofs and results are secondary—what the union fundamentally means is that in your consciousness you know more than a human being. It is all to the good if, owing to your acquiring a pure, calm and receptive mind, you manage to think and act in accordance with the Guru's intentions. But you must not mistake a step on the way for the final goal. For the chief difference between the positive union and mental receptivity is that the Guru has to formulate what he or she wants you to carry out and put the formula into your pure and calm mind, whereas in the case of the actual union there is no need to formulate at all. The necessary truth-consciousness is just put into you and the rest automatically works out, because the Guru's own self is then in you.

I dare say it is all rather difficult for you to imagine, the experience being well nigh indescribable. It is, however, less difficult to imagine the union of the will with the Divine Will; for you can imagine a Will which is effective without struggle and victoriously manifests everywhere. And if your will tends to unite with it, then there is something approaching a union. That is to say, you begin to lose your separate egoistic will and your being thirsts naturally to fulfil the Divine's behest and, without knowing even what the supreme Will is, wills exactly what the Divine wishes. But this means an unquestioning acceptance of the Higher Guidance. The energy in you which is deformed into vital desire but which is originally the urge towards realisation must join with the Divine Will, so that all your power of volition mixes with it as a drop of water with the sea. No more then its own weaknesses and failings, but ever more the supreme quality of the Divine in whatever action, small or great, is chosen—Omnipotence.

CONVERSION OF THE VITAL

It is very important that the Life-force, the Vital being, should agree to change: it must learn to accept conversion. The Vital is not in itself anything to be decried: in fact, all energy, dynamism and push comes from it—without it you may be calm and wise and detached, but you will be absolutely immobile and inactive. The body would be inert, just like a stone, without the force infused into it by the Vital. If the Vital is left out, you would be able to realise nothing. But like a spirited horse it is liable to be refractory, and therefore requires good control. You have to keep your reins tight and your whip ready in order to keep the powerful beast in check. Of course, once the Vital has consented to be transformed there is no need either of the tight reins or the ready whip: you proceed smoothly towards the goal, leaping lightly over each obstacle in the way. Otherwise, the Vital will either stumble over the barriers or fight shy of jumping them.

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“MIRACLE”

AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

By “Libra”

The Indian mind and the non-Indian have many points in common, but there is also a marked difference. The difference can perhaps be best brought to light by referring to the word “miracle.” The non-Indian world is always prone to be startled by supernatural events: the mouth gapes, the eyes bulge out and the hands shoot up. The unexpected has happened! The impossible has taken place! The Unknown has drawn aside its veil! In short, a miracle has occurred. The true Indian world has no such surprises. Magic and mystery are part and parcel of its life; the supernatural is not a sudden incursion from “nowhere” but just a visit from the other parts of the same building which we ourselves occupy. The mouth does not gape; it whispers greetings. The eyes do not bulge out; they give a look of recognition. The hands do not shoot up; they join in a quiet *namaskar*. In short, no miracle has occurred but just what one would expect since everything is Brahman. “That old man with a stick; that green bird hopping about—these too are Brahman,” says the Upanishad. What is there to be surprised at if the old man suddenly threw away his stick and strode like a youngster or the green bird brought a message from Vishnu?

The presence of the so-called supernatural became so familiar, so immediate, so basic indeed that at a certain period of India’s history the natural began to seem a miracle, an inexplicable wonder. How did the eternal One become the Many of Time? This question worried the Indian mind. And the answer was: Maya. The unexpected and the impossible are the teeming universe. Matter and not Spirit is the starting fact. This world of ours is a sudden incursion from “nowhere”, its myriad maze a puzzling imposition on the smooth simplicity of the Beyond. An undivine miracle was seen instead of a divine one.

This extreme is a perversion, but it serves to emphasise India’s sense of the naturalness of the Eternal. Not even in the most religious eras, the most religious countries, of Europe has that naturalness been felt so universally. Individuals have known it. “When the sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire, something like a guinea?” said a practical-minded

friend to Blake. And the poet replied: “Oh no, I see an immeasurable company of the heavenly host crying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’ to the Lord God Almighty.” Here there is no line between Nature and Supernature. St. Francis, calling the sun his brother and the moon his sister and all things one family of God, catches a spark of the Gita’s *Vasudeva sarvam*, “All is the Divine.” Many sentences of the German mystic Eckhart and some discourses of Lady Julian of Norwich are strangely reminiscent of the talks between master and disciple in the Upanishads. Individuals in Europe, therefore, can be said to have the Indian spirit. But the general mind tends to be different. Europe has much to give us; and there are plenty of indispensable values that have got submerged in India and have to return *via* the West. What it lacks on the whole is what is most native to us—the sense of continuity between man and God, between the world and the All-Wonderful.

This sense is born of India’s intense pantheism. Not that India is pantheistic and nothing else. Indeed it is impossible to stop with the pantheistic vision. For, in that vision everything is equally the substance of God: all the distinctions we draw between true and false, high and low, beautiful and ugly, happy and miserable, vanish and nothing is left save a shining tissue of the infinite Spirit. Glorious is such a vision, but even to reach it one has to pick and choose among the dualities, one has to reject lust and greed and attachment, one has to practise purity and peace. In other words, to attain the essentially distinctionless Divine, one has to distinguish between values. The dividing line between the spiritual and the unspiritual brings in a God who at the same time is the universe and other than the universe, a transcendental Being who validates distinctions, supports the evolutionary movement and takes sides in the perilous drama of life without essentially ceasing to be both sides! Yes, without ceasing to be pantheos: this is important, this is what the non-Indian mind often forgets and what the Indian always remembers. By its remembrance, the Indian mind gets steeped in God’s presence and not only feels most vividly the possibility of getting divinised but entertains the largest charity towards even that which it rejects and endeavours to outgrow.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER —Continued from page 1

It is no use thinking that all would have been well if there had been no hurdles at all: they are a part of the game and if they are not faced and jumped in this life on earth you will have to surmount a hundred times greater ones on other planes and in other lives. The best thing is to make up your mind once for all and train your Vital to run the race here while you are in the body and, if possible, win it. You are sure to win provided your physical mind reforms itself and helps the Vital to change, instead of playing the rôle of a robber who holds down his victim while his accomplice makes a haul of the victim’s property...

The condition of the being after death depends very much on whether the Vital has been converted here or not. If one is only a medley of unorganised impulses, then at death, when the consciousness withdraws into the background, the different personalities in one fall apart, rushing hither and thither to seek their own suitable environments. One part may enter into another man who has an affinity for it, another may enter an animal, while that which has been alive to the divine Presence may remain attached to the central psychic being. But if one is fully organised and converted into a single individual bent on reaching the goal of evolution, then one will be conscious after death and preserve a continuity.

As to rebirth, it must be confessed that no rule holds for all cases. Some people get reborn almost immediately—it most often happens with parents that a part of them gets assimilated into their children if the latter are very much attached to them. Here I may cite the instance of my own mother who told me after her mother’s death that daily she felt as if she were becoming like her deceased parent, thinking as she used to do, feeling in her way and so on. Some people, however, take centuries and even thousands of years to get reincarnated. They wait for the necessary conditions to mature which would provide them with a suitable milieu. If one is yogically conscious he can actually prepare the next body of his birth. Before the body is born he shapes and moulds it, so that it is he who is the true maker of it while the parents of the new child are only the adventitious, purely physical agents.

I must here remark in passing that there is a common misconception about rebirth. People believe that it is they who get reincarnated, yet this is a palpable error though it is true that parts of their beings get amalgamated with others and so act through new bodies. As a whole they do not get reborn because of the simple fact that what they evidently mean by their self is not a real individualised entity but their exterior personality, the personality composed of the outward name and form. Hence it is wrong to say that A gets reborn as B: A is a personality organically distinct from B and cannot be said to have reincarnated as B. You would be right only if you say that the same line of consciousness uses both A and B as the instruments of its manifestation. For, what does remain constant is the psychic being which is not the outward personality at all, but something deep within, something which is not the exterior name and form.

You have asked me if all men retain their identity after the dissolution of the body. Well, it depends. The ordinary mass of mankind are so closely identified with their bodies that practically nothing of them survives when the physical disintegrates. Not that absolutely nothing survives—the vital and mental stuff always remains but it is not identical with the physical personality. What remains has not the clear impress of their exterior personality because the latter was content to remain a jumble of impulses and desires, a temporary organic unity constituted by the cohesion and co-ordination of bodily functions, and when these functions cease the pseudo-unity of them also naturally comes to an end. Only if there has been a mental discipline imposed on the different parts and they have been made to subserve a common mental ideal, there can be some sort of genuine individuality which retains the memory of its earthly life and so survives consciously. The true artist, the genuine philosopher, the authentic idealist and such developed persons who have organised, individualised and to a certain extent converted their Vital being can be said to survive, because they have brought into their exterior consciousness some shadow of the psychic entity which is immortal by its very nature and whose aim is progressively to build up the being around the central Divine Will.

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

CHAPTER VIII GURU THE TRANSFORMER

As this realisation deepened not merely in abstract, impeccable theory, but in hard, stark reality, I felt more and more aghast at my own lower nature till, in my darkest crises, I decided again and again that I could not possibly be declared eligible by the One who had, I complained, unreasonably dragged me to such a path. But then why had he, I asked Gurudev, since He at least had known all along how unfit I was though I myself did not—naturally, being ignorant of my basic impure nature! I bitterly complained at such moments and the more restive I grew, the more convinced I became that I was unfit for Yoga and therefore should leave instantly.

But there they were, Mother and Gurudev with the balm of their encouragement and lastly the assurance of their forgiveness.

"You need not think that anything can alter our attitude towards you", Gurudev wrote on one such occasion. "That which is extended to you is not a vital human love which can be altered by external things: it remains and persistently we shall try to help you up and lead you towards the Light where in the union of the soul and the heart you will recognise the Friend and the Mother".

On another occasion I wrote to him that I was daily realising more and more the difficulty of changing my lower nature, which must have been the reason of my obstinate gloom. I sent him a poem praying that it might be given to me to see his love as divine in its nature.

"I only see", I wrote in the end, "that it is not quite human in the sense that it is stationed beyond the ails of the earth though perhaps purer for that very reason".

As I wrote this it recurred to me that, unlike some ascetics, he did not want to stay remote from the earth. So I wrote again: "I confess I cannot quite see you felicitating yourself on having achieved such a purity at the price you have paid, and yet I cannot deny that you are too far away from our earth to be regarded as a kinsman to us, realist earthlings. What, however, baffles me still more is that you should go on representing Heaven as a neighbour of earth. You assert therefore that not only can the love divine be grafted on this our undivine earth but be made to grow native to its soil. I find that beyond our human comprehension since I only find this Divine Love of yours as something to swear by, not something to lean on. But as I do not claim that my findings are right, I shall wait till I have some 'clarification' on this point, to use a political word in the spiritual field, which I trust will be pardonable. Also I send you a poem in which I have tried to show a better side to my nature. I wonder if it will sound convincing since it expresses something which runs counter to my present mood of pessimism. But then may I defend myself that my poems express something more than my present moods in that they voice an aspiration even though it may sound alien to these moods? My aspiration here—or shall I say prayer?—is for strength and will to strength, that it may be given to me to plod on when the shadows fall. For one can be optimistic enough while the going is easy, but it is only when the darkness holds you in its relentless clutch that your faith in and loyalty to the Light is really tested—*comme il faut*—when one passes through a desert or a wilderness".

To that he wrote back:

"I objected in a former letter not to aspiration but to a demand to make peace or joy or Ananda a condition for following the Yoga. And it is undesirable because, if you do so then the vital takes a lead, then unrest, despondency, unhappiness, can always come, since these things are the very nature of the vital—the vital can never remain constantly in joy and peace, for it needs their opposites in order to have the sense of the drama of life. And yet when unrest and unhappiness come, the vital at once cries: 'I am not given my due, what is the use of my doing Yoga?' Or else, it makes a gospel of its unhappiness and says that the path to fulfilment must be a tragic road through the desert. And yet, it is precisely this preponderance of the vital in us that makes the necessity of passing through the desert. If the psychic were always there in the front, the desert would be no longer a desert and the wilderness would blossom with roses". And he went on to add:

"I think the best thing I can write to you in the circumstances is to recommend to you Nolini's aphorism, 'Depression need not be depressing; rather it should be made a jumping-board for the leap to a higher poise'. The rule in Yoga is not to let the depression depress you, to stand back from it, observe its cause and remove the cause; for the cause is always in oneself, perhaps a vital defect somewhere, a wrong movement indulged or a petty desire causing a recoil, sometimes by its satisfaction, sometimes by its disappointment.

"If the Mother and I want you to progress and to accept the divine love we give you, it is for your own sake and precisely because in that love there is constant peace and joy and adoration and causeless sorrow of this kind will disappear altogether. Our love is there for you and has always been there. I cannot believe that you will reject it. For God's sake throw aside these misunderstandings and these movements, recover your true self and face out firmly, with the Mother's help and mine, the difficulties of the Yoga.

"Your poem entitled 'In Darkness' is a very moving one, delicate, true and beautiful in every line."

On another occasion, however, I was not so brave, when I discovered, to my utter humiliation, that it was not that I *could* not change but that I *would* not. "This," I wrote to him, "makes me feel convinced that I am a misfit here, that I was, as Tagore said to me once, an artist first and last—not a Yogi. But the trouble is, Guru, that though I loved art passionately once upon a time, I failed to find it completely absorbing. Besides, I believed sincerely that if I wanted the Divine He would make it possible for me to climb up to him however hard and steep the path: in other words, he would make me change. But I don't find that He is at all responsive or even that He would have me persevere here. So perhaps it would be wiser for me to leave such a hopeless endeavour and try something more practicable if not equally satisfying. But then I don't find the conditions around very satisfying either; so why not permit me to try something else—say courting prison patriotically as Subhash and Jawaharlal are doing. For you must admit this at least that I am not very receptive to your helping Force and that shows (does it not?) that I am essentially unfit for your Yoga which aims at making us non-human.

"Besides", I wrote in a sudden revulsion from self-pity (to turn to the old Mr. Ego, the die-hard again!), "You will have to concede, Guru, that I did not come here an utter failure, frustrated by life, a useless flotsam stranded by tides of circumstances on the reefs of Yoga. I was wanted by a great many, admired by a good many and am wanted still by so many. I had money, gifts, health and a social standing and then I could have founded a Musical Academy and developed my own new style of music and flowered into a poet too—not altogether a wretched life you will admit—", and so I ranted on in my impetuous folly and concluded thus: "Why then did your supramental Divine unroot me from my native soil if He wanted only to disqualify me finally as a Yogi?" But he did not give me a rating or pull me down to pieces. He descended to my level and answered my charges one by one with the deep understanding and superhuman patience of which he alone was capable.

"Dilip," he wrote, "even if things were as bad as you say, I don't see how going away would help you in the least—(it would certainly not make you non-human): some have tried before—this device of progress by departure but it has never succeeded, they have had to come back and face their difficulty. Your other suggestion (of courting prison patriotically) is even more irrational: what you propose would not happen and the only result would be hard labour or detention which would be both unpleasant and unprofitable to you and useless to the country. Why do you always come back to this notion of going away or entertain it at all? It is quite meaningless from any rational point of view; it only encourages the adverse Force which wants to take you away from the path, to return to the attack, and it prevents the speedy conversion of that dissatisfied part of your vital which is always kicking against the pricks—the pricks of your soul and of your spiritual destiny. However sad the prospect may seem to this dissatisfied vital fragment, your destiny is to be a Yogi and the sooner it reconciles itself to the prospect the better for it and for all the other personalities in you. Your alleged or inferred unfitness is a delusion, an imagination of the vital part; it doesn't exist. If persistence of difficulties be a proof of unfitness, then there is nobody in this Ashram who is fit for the Yoga. We would all have to pack up our belongings or give them away and start either to get back to the ordinary world or *en route* for the Himalayas.

"You describe the rich human egoistic life you might have lived and you say 'not altogether a wretched life, you will admit'. On paper it sounds even very glowing and satisfactory, as you describe it. But there is no real or final satisfaction in it, except for those who are too common or trivial to seek anything else, and even they are not really satisfied or happy, and in the end, it tires and palls. Sorrow and illness, clash and strife, disappointment, disillusionment and all kinds of human suffering come and beat its glow to pieces and then decay and death. That is the vital egoistic life as man has found it throughout the ages, and yet it is that which this part of your vital regrets? How do you fail to see when you lay so much stress on the desirability of a merely human consciousness, that suffering is its badge? When the vital resists the change from the human into the divine consciousness, what it is defending is its right to sorrow and suffering and all the rest of it, varied and relieved no doubt by some vital and mental pleasures and satisfactions, but very partially relieved by them and only for a time. In your own case, it was already beginning to pall on you and that was why you turned from it. No doubt, there were the joys of the intellect and of artistic creation, but a man cannot be an artist alone; there is the outer, quite human, lower vital part and, in all but a few, it is the most clamorous and insistent part. But what was dissatisfied in you? It was the soul within, first of all, and through it the higher mind and the higher vital. Why then find fault with the Divine for misleading you when it turned you to the Yoga or brought you here? It was simply answering to the demand of your own inner being and the higher parts of your nature. If you have so much difficulty and become restless, it is because you are still divided and something in your lower vital still regrets what it has lost, or, as a price for its adhesion or a compensation—price to be *immediately* paid down to it—asks for something similar and equivalent in the spiritual life. It refuses to believe that

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there is a greater compensation, a larger vital life waiting for it, something positive in which there shall not be the old inadequacy and unrest and final dissatisfaction. The foolishness is not in the Divine guidance, but in the irrational and obstinate resistance of this confused and obscure part of you to the demand, made not only by this Yoga, but by all Yoga—to the necessary conditions for the satisfaction of the aspiration of your own soul and higher nature."

Then after giving a summary review of the past Yogas which would be too long to quote* he pointed out the foolish inconsistencies of the human vital and wrote: "I know that this is the natural inconsistency of the human vital mind wanting two incompatible things together; but that is why it is necessary to transform the human and put something a little more luminous in its place."

I must pause here and point out that during those early years of our *sadhana* we often expressed our misgivings about his "thesis of the Supramental", as we called it. I often wrote to him (half in jest, no doubt, but the other half clung impenitently to its scepticism) that the Supramental seemed too good to be true. Once I wrote to him what Chadwick remarked casually about the Supramental: "Sri Aurobindo takes one's breath away, Dilip! Will it, can it really happen?" I often conveyed to Gurudev such tit-bits to draw him out if I could, and as I generally succeeded, I grew bolder and went the length of equating the Supramental with something grim and withering like a ruthless Dictator out to do good but with a devastating velocity, riding roughshod over all our cherished ideals of a sweet and liberal living and perhaps making us despise this beautiful earth as an utterly unsuitable place for its Kingdom of thunder and lightning.

He must have smiled indulgently when he commented on my flings and, coming down to my level, ran full tilt into me:

"It is curious that you admit your ignorance of what the supramental can be, and yet in these moods you not only pronounce categorically what it is like, but reject emphatically my experience about it as of no practical validity or not valid for anybody but myself! I have not insisted, I have answered only casually because I am not asking you *now* to be non-human and divine much less to be supramental; but as you are always returning to this point when you have these attacks and making it the pivot—or at least a main support—of your depression, I am obliged to answer. The Supramental is not grand, aloof, cold and austere; it is not something opposed to or inconsistent with a full vital and physical manifestation; on the contrary, it carries in it the only possibility of the full fullness of the vital force and the physical life on earth. It is because it is so, because it was so revealed to me and for no other reason that I have followed after it and persevered till I came into contact with it and was able to draw down some power of it and its influence. I am concerned with the earth and not with worlds beyond for their own sake; it is a terrestrial realisation that I seek and not a flight to distant summits. All other Yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental Yoga alone regards it as a thing created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment of the life and the body for its object. The Supramental is simply the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter. One has indeed to rise to high summits to reach it, but the more one rises, the more one can one bring down below. No doubt, life and body have not to remain the ignorant, imperfect, impotent things they are now; but why should a change to fuller life-power, fuller body-power be considered something aloof, cold and undesirable? The utmost *ananda* the body and life are now capable of is a brief excitement of the vital mind or the nerves or the cells which is limited, imperfect and soon passes; with the supramental change all the cells, nerves, vital forces, embodied mental forces can become filled with a thousandfold *Ananda*, capable of an intensity of bliss which passes description and which need not fade away. How aloof, repellent and undesirable! The supramental love means an intense unity of soul with soul, mind with mind, life with life, and an entire flooding of the body-consciousness with the physical experience of oneness, the presence of the Beloved in every part, in every cell of the body. Is that too something aloof and grand, but undesirable? With the supramental change, the very thing on which you insist, the possibility of the free physical meeting of the embodied Divine with the *sadhak* without conflict of forces and without undesirable reaction becomes possible, assured and free. That too is, I suppose, something aloof and undesirable? I could go on—for pages, but this is enough for the moment."

Which brings me right into the heart of the problem of transformation of our nature into what it aspires to be and yet refuses to accept when it has, perforce, to put its shoulder to the wheel! It acts in this anomalous way because it is driven by diverse forces warring in its own self for mastery, because it has, in a word, wheels within wheels. But here I will have to revert to my past to be intelligible—the more as I myself found it not a little difficult to understand what was expected of us as well as what they, our guides, were up against in their *sadhana*.

When one puts it in words simply, as an abstract thesis, it sounds indeed feasible and laudable enough to be attempted. Has it not been claimed by all the great seers, mystics and prophets down the ages that

our intellect can be a help only if it agrees to serve the spirit—that it is a good orderly but a bad commandant? Or to put it in the deeper accent of the great Seer:

*The intellect is not all; a guide within
Awaits our question; He it was informed
The reason, He surpasses; and unformed
Presages of His mightiness begin.**

True Yogis have unanimously claimed, however, that these "presages" cannot become clear messages—far less helping torches which slay the darkness that makes us grope so pitifully on our way—unless and until either the mind be stilled or reason taught its place in the scheme of things. I had once an interesting talk with Sri Ramdas in his Ashram. He related to me the following:

He was then living on the top of a hill, in a thatched hut when one evening an intellectual friend sought him out. He had a great many questions seething in his mind, he said, to which he must find satisfactory answers. Ramdas was scarcely stiff since he had never been overfond of the mentality which loves to cross-examine from the dais all witnesses who stand in the dock deposing for the Divine. So he put off the discussion somehow and retired for the night. But as the ghost had only been ward off for the nonce, not laid, he had to appeal to his one Extricator, Ram. To his amazement, in the dead of night Ram Himself formulated questions and answered them back, point by point, of which he kept a record. Next morning these to his intellectual friend who found it little less than incredible; the very questions he wanted to ask had been answered by Ram, the questions so far he had not even hinted at to Ramdas.

These questions with the answers are given by Ramdas in his book, *At the Feet of God*. I shall quote a few from the sheaf:

Question: What is the result of self-surrender?

Answer: Everlasting bliss.

Question: How?

Answer: When the human will is given up for the Divine Will, all the responsibility of the instrument, the devotee, ceases and the consciousness of the individual ego is merged in the Divine consciousness. Then all his actions, thoughts and words emanate from the Divine source, leaving him entirely free from all doubts, desires and bonds.

Question: O Mother,how is it you allow your child's mind to wander?

Answer: All, all is myself, O child! Wherever your mind wanders, it wanders in me and rests in me. You cannot reason why it is so; but it is the one great Truth. You cannot comprehend it, but you can realise it.

Question: Why should Ramdas not comprehend it?

Answer: Because it is a thing beyond understanding, beyond the range of intellect.

Question: Then explain, O Mother, why should there be an intellect at all and what are its functions?

Answer: *The intellect exists only to help you know that you do not know anything.*

I have intentionally laboured this point as I found it desperately hard to have to accept in practice, if not in theory, the mystic's position that the intellect could help us best by exposing its untenable pretensions. My own upbringing had been—as that of most of my "educated friends" as I called them—an intellectual one, in the main, I do not mean that I could go with them all along the line or even that I grew up, like them, under the aegis of just one human faculty, intellect, and no other. (I would never have turned to Yoga had I regarded it as an infallible guide to the ultimate wisdom). But I do mean that I had come to accept that reason had, in the last resort, the right to judge of the validity or otherwise of what we call things of the spirit. Sri Aurobindo, in unison with the other great gnostics, repudiated this claim out of hand, which made me suffer in practice even though I had from the start acquiesced, in theory, in their non-conformist aloofness from the church of the Intellect. I did not fully understand why I made such a to-do when I had to translate in practice what I had admitted so willingly in theory, till one day, when I asked Mother, she told me with her smile of sympathy, that those who live in the intellect cherish their intellectual preconceptions as they cherish their limbs, so that a blow on their darling ideas about right and wrong make them wince as a blow on their limbs. The mystery became clear to me then in a flash; but even then I did not find her treatment as acceptable as her diagnosis. Time and again did I resolve for instance, not to cling too warmly to an idea. I told myself peremptorily that I was vowed to jettison the dead loads of such false ballasts, but in vain: whenever it came to the pinch, I felt a pang and my heart bled at the thought that I would have to part company with my intellectual ideas even when I knew they were not helpful beacons but phantom glimmers. At such times I used to be steeped in gloom and there flashed my old monitor doubt; keen as a spear, it stabbed me with reproach for having forced its dear Lord, mind, to pay such an exorbitant tax to idolatry. I wrote to Gurudev innumerable letters asking him how to wheedle this sceptic into believing when it only ached to probe, weigh and, lastly, doubt. He wrote a long letter† on doubt in which he opened his indictment of doubt with:

* The whole letter has been published in "Letters of Sri Aurobindo", 2nd series, in Section XI, entitled "Difficulties of Transformation".

† Quoted from Sri Aurobindo's long poem "In the Moonlight".
Published in full in the author's "Among the Great" (American edition pp. 245-50).

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"I have started writing about doubt, but even in doing so I am afflicted by the 'doubt' whether any amount of writing or of anything else can persuade the eternal doubt in man which is the penalty of his native ignorance. In the first place, to write adequately would mean anything from sixty to six hundred pages, but not even six thousand pages would convince Doubt."

But the long letter gave me at best a consolation, not comfort and the prospect appeared far from cheering, for even he seemed to leave it at what amounted, in the last analysis, to an exhortation to change. Yes, I must change, I agreed sadly, and throw clean overboard the compass of the intellect. His stinging sarcasm at the end of his letter hit the target.

"I would ask one simple question of those who would make the intellectual mind the standard and judge of spiritual experience. Is the Divine something less than Mind or is it something greater? Is mental consciousness with its groping enquiry, endless argument, unquenchable doubt, stiff and unplastic logic something superior or even equal to the Divine Consciousness or is it something inferior in its action and status? If it is greater, then there is no reason to seek after the Divine. If it is equal, then spiritual experience is quite superfluous. But if it is inferior, how can it challenge, judge, make the Divine stand as an accused or a witness before its tribunal, summon it to appear as a candidate for admission before a Board of Examiners or pin it like an insect under its examining microscope?"

I have said that his exhortation gave me only consolation not comfort because although I had accepted from the start the mystic's position that the Divine was not to be sounded with the mental plummet, I could not say, with an equal honesty, that till a superior plummet came within my reach, I would gladly do without what equipment I had. I had indeed found our mental ideas and intellectual conceptions to be inadequate direction-posts in that they did not lead their votaries where they had promised to. But had I not also expected that I would have such apocalyptic visions of Truth as would make their little lights pale into insignificance? But, alas, this did not happen in the spectacular manner I had imagined! The result: I moped and brooded, asked and doubted, complained and whimpered till at last I arraigned the Divine for not playing the game, for leaving me, in fact, in a worse lurch than his predecessor, Intellect, the false prophet, and therefore the only remedy left to Dilip was to blame the whole thing on the Guru.

I have put it somewhat crudely, but I do not think I have given a false picture of the quandary in which we—or at least a good many of us—found ourselves.

But of course this is by no means the whole story. If it were it would not be worth the ink it is written with. On the positive side we gained a good deal not only in terms of joy and peace and a day-to-day assurance that we were being cared for by and through the Guides we had accepted, but also in terms of those imponderable and yet concretely assessable dividends of faith and strength out of the investment of even our somewhat crude obedience and inchoate loyalty. How crude and unsatisfactory was our self-giving we came to realise more and more as days passed, and the shock this gave us can only be experienced, never described. But one feature of this gradual realisation I may well refer to, as a spokesman again of the rest, namely, that even when in my moments of depression I underrated the spiritual value of the dividends that accrued to us, I became progressively conscious of the utter inadequacy of my total investments. What was it after all that I had invested, I came to ask myself in my sober moments. A will undermined with vacillations; a faith riddled with doubts; a pledge to obedience with all sorts of safety valves to let out the fumes of reluctance; an undertaking of loyalty so flawed as to desert its post again and again even though there was no hope of relief in the offing—and lastly, a love that bargained all along and balked at surrender of its self-will knowing full well—to quote A. E.'s memorable lines—that

*We must rise or we must fall,
Love can know no middle way:
If the great life do not call
There is sadness and decay.*

Yet, how often have I looked before and after and pined for what might have been had I not myself "fled from the boons of infinity as though I feared them!"*

I do not of course want to convey that here there was no difference between one *sadhaka* and another. For although I confess I was constitutionally incapable of aligning myself with those who would take everything on trust, I could not doubt but that there were among us a good many whose attitude was more balanced, whose faith better grounded and insight into Yogic happenings appreciably deeper than mine. I was indeed critical but not purblind or unfair and so was profoundly impressed by many an individual instance of admirable loyalty, sincerity, truthfulness, candour and, above all, hard ungrudging work undertaken with the sole purpose of pleasing our Gurus. I could see that they had accepted such dull routine of day to day work as earnest novitiates in the *nishkama karma* (disinterested works) of the Gita. Years later when Sri Krishnaprem visited our Ashram he was much struck by the practical shape given to the ideal of "work as worship" as well as by the willingness with which our *sadhakas* generally accepted the work allotted to them even when the

same round of dull hard work through wheeling years could hardly continue to afford them any real pleasure. "I know you will not want me to write of what are called *impressions*," he wrote to Mother, "but I cannot refrain from mentioning the feeling that rose in me when I heard some *sadhakas* who had come to Dilip's room introduced quite simply as *a son of the Mother*".

And last though by no means the least, I must stress here one thing which I fear outsiders often lose sight of when they pronounce adverse judgments on our *sadhana*. For even when I admit with humble remorse that many of us including myself did not fulfil some of the conditions without which no real transformation of our nature might begin, I cannot admit the right of anyone to pronounce on the fitness or unfitness of us individually or collectively until he actually faces up to what we were struggling against. Tagore once said to me: "Scientists, technicians, philosophers and skilled workers of many vocations, Dilip, are more fortunate than us, artists, in that Messrs. Everybody and Know-all will not dare brand their work off-hand with stigma but just look, how quick they are in deciding whether our works of art are to be passed or damned". Years later when I met him I reminded him of his remark and added: "But sir, you ought to have classed us, Yogis too, with you."

He understood and smiled.

"But then," he said, "they don't see you as they see us. So how can they judge?"

"By dismissing out of hand what they don't see as non-existent".

And how he laughed!

But I did not say this in mere jest. For I have seen the critics actually pontificating volubly about what we were doing and what we were leaving undone. I will give just one instance.

An English friend of mine came to visit me; a writer. He did not belong to that blatant type which, as Aldous Huxley puts it, came to India also, first, to air his superiority and lastly, to have a good time. My friend was in his own way a thoughtful man and had a certain respect for India's wisdom. But although not quite self-complacent by nature, he had come to take it for granted that the Western outlook on life was both healthier and sounder than that of "the Oriental quietists", as he dubbed us, derogatively. I took him round the Ashram and he appreciated much of what he saw. Nevertheless he was fully persuaded that we had no wish to "act on life". "And how on earth then is life in the world going to be changed?" he asked me, with almost a challenge in his voice.

I made what reply I could to deprecate his imputation that we were just a society of "earth-averse quietists", but in vain. Neither did I see how I was to bring home to his somewhat rigid mind that much of his criticism could not be valid for the simple reason that he did not realise what we were up against: the inertia of the ego harnessed to the rebelliousness of the self-will. Still I endeavoured to explain to him, as best I could, why I had to recoil from the call of the world of clamorous and personal ambition. I quoted for his benefit a message of Gurudev: "The liberated man has no personal hopes; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions; he receives what the Divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none; what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment; what goes from him he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control; they are free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things." But neither my ardour nor my arguments availed: he proved quite opaque. In fact he did remind me of Madame de Staël who, to quote from Schiller's letter to Goethe: "insists on explaining everything, understanding everything, measuring everything. She admits of no darkness, nothing incommensurable: where her torch throws no light there nothing can exist.... She does not prize what is false but does not always perceive what is true!" That is why my English friend could never understand the Indian mind and condemned *vairagya* as "the sickly spawn of a morbid distaste for the world".

Luckily for me, Chadwick happened to be on the spot, so I brought the two together. I shall never forget that great encounter, the memorable "tug-of-war" that followed when "a Greek met a Greek". Were space at my disposal I would have loved to depict the whole duologue. But I must not omit the dramatic *dénouement*.

I shall call my critical good friend by the name of Mr. Pontiff.

Mr. Pontiff: I know, Mr. Chadwick, that your master has attracted a number of men and women of merit and mark. But that is just the reason why we expect them to do something.

Chadwick: But we are doing something.

Mr. Pontiff: I will ask you a simple question: What on earth are you doing?

Chadwick (smiling): Surely Mr. Pontiff, you, as a man of the world, cannot be unaware that a question may often be simple but not its answer.

Mr. Pontiff: I know that. But still?

Chadwick: Supposing I said: each of us here has to come to grips with his ego?

Mr. Pontiff: And when he wins?

Chadwick: The Kingdom of Heaven begins—for him, at all events.

Mr. Pontiff: But for the rest of us?

Chadwick (smiling): Why not wait and see, like Mr. Asquith?

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* Quoted from Mother's "Prayers and Meditations" in which she says: "To turn towards Thee, live in Thee and for Thee... is to breathe infinity..." And yet "Why do men flee from these boons, as though they feared them?"

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME—Continued from page 11

Mr. Pontiff (looking at him intently): Don't you think we have—long enough?

Chadwick: Is that a charge framed against us, the quietists, as you put it?

Mr. Pontiff: Well, partly. But look here, Mr. Chadwick. Let's be frank and not go on fencing to no purpose. I have not come all this way just to pick holes in your Majesty's way of doing things. I admire him because he believes in our terrestrial evolution. But after all you must admit that in spite of our recurring failures and grievous stumblings it's we, the activists of the West, who dominate the world, and not the passive contemplatives of the East. These can at best point out to us some of our wrong moves and mistakes which outsiders often can, like the bystanders who watch a game of chess. Don't misunderstand me. I would be the last person to say that the East has no wisdom to impart to us. But then they must become a little dynamic and come out to give it and not stay immured in their ivory towers of peace and meditation and self-conquest. The world moves forward regulated by the law of give and take: if you have nothing to give you are as good as lost if not dead to the rest. For when all is said and done, the world your Master wants to create can only come into being when its best spirits work for all under the broad light of the sun—and not in the impenetrable darkness of a cloistered seclusion.

Chadwick (after a pause): You have put your case rather ably, Mr. Pontiff, I will freely allow. But let me also ask you a simple question in my turn. You firmly believe, don't you? that the world can be only bettered if and when its best spirits work outside on a common platform and not, like the ruminant Easterners, in peaceful Ashrams?

Mr. Pontiff: That's right.

Chadwick: You claim also, do you not? that the best spirits of the West have not made the mistake of the East, in that they have so far worked outside on the common platform of activism—at any rate since the advent of science and industrialism?

Mr. Pontiff: (nods).

Chadwick: Well then, answer my question as man to man: is the Western civilization rising on the upward curve or falling on the downward?

Mr. Pontiff (startled): You mean—

Chadwick: You know perfectly well what I mean. Why do you come to the East to sound her wisdom if all is essentially well with the West and its outlook on life? So please answer me: do you still really believe that the rose of the Western civilization can possibly come into flowering till we find out how to settle our score once for all with the deadly canker that is eating into its core?

Mr. Pontiff: And suppose I asked you—what is that canker?

Chadwick (smiling): Suppose I told you it's made up of diverse "isms" presided over by your frantic itch to rush about doing something convincing when you are far from convinced either about the rightness of your vision or about the correctness of your method. Yes, I do claim one has to win the right vision first before one can find a clue to the right action.

Mr. Pontiff (with lowered head): I apologise...because...

Chadwick: Because—?

Mr. Pontiff (after a hesitant pause): I begin to understand.

* * *

I have intentionally given the duologue a dramatic turn but it is not all invention: they did joust at each other with animation as well as sincerity and the substance of the debate, as I have given it, is authentic.

I can still remember how impressed I was when Chadwick drove Mr. Pontiff to the wall and how the latter admitted his defeat like a sportsman and apologised. (After his departure Chadwick told me with his characteristic British irony how queer was modern Europe's outlook on the fundamental impulse which led a man to seek the Extra-cosmic Divine before one could understand or get reconciled to the din and discord of our earthly life, the impulse which had made him write his beautiful invocation to the Mother:

On this dark spirit-main

Rise as a full-orbed moon,

Transform the murk of pain

To fleckless silver boon.

Out from a planet's gloom

All aspects call to Thee,—

Life in our stirless tomb,

Light on our darkened sea.

I sent a full account of it to Gurudev at the time, and a smile of irony must have hovered round his lips when he commented on the scene which I had reconstructed from memory:

"The view of the world of which Pontiff possibly spoke (he may have meant something more superficial and trivial) cannot come from the mind, still less from the vital expecting something from life as it is. For life as it is has nothing to give except to those who are satisfied with surface pleasure." Then agreeing with Chadwick's view he went on to add: "The inner view can come only from a change of consciousness which sees the deeper inner life behind appearances and it is that change of consciousness which was developing in you because you were drawing back from the vital view of things—the *vairagya* was only an outward and negative sign of that withdrawal".

Naturally I did not expect Mr. Pontiff to understand all this, any more than I expected him to understand what Gurudev wrote to me in another letter explaining how far he could undersign what was dubbed *vairagya* and where he drew the line.

"I have objected in the past to *vairagya* of the ascetic and the *tamasic* kind," he wrote. "The *vairagya* of one who has tasted the world's gifts or prizes but found them insufficient or tasteless and turns away towards a higher ideal, or the *vairagya* of one who has done his part in life's battles but seen that something greater is demanded of the soul, is perfectly helpful and a good gate to the Yoga... By ascetic *vairagya* I mean that which denies life and world altogether and wants to disappear into the Indefinable—I object to it because my object is to bring the Divine into life. But if one is satisfied with life as it is, then there is no reason to seek to bring the Divine into life. So *vairagya* in the sense of dissatisfaction with life as it is is perfectly admissible and in a certain sense indispensable for my Yoga."

I do not know whether Mr. Pontiff will ever chance upon my estimate of his utilitarian pragmatism. But in case he does and decides (as is not unlikely) that I have failed to understand him as much as he failed to see my point of view, I would only say this in self-defence that I have railed at him not as an individual but as a type of that mentality which judges even of occult things from a surface-view. If I may use a hackneyed proverb to make out my point, I will hazard that not only is it true that none but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches but also that one cannot claim to have stepped into the Yogic shoes till one keeps them on even when they make one bleed for nothing less can bring home to one the deep maladjustment between one's self-will and the Divine Will, a maladjustment that twisted even some gods into rebels, as the sages say.

To be continued

Sri Aurobindo

A flicker of the eye-lid,
And I knew that the world was mine,
O, the longing of the ages
Was fulfilled in a smile.

Now I see no more that flicker,
Nor that imperceptible smile,
But the air vibrates and whispers:
"I am here, still here."

The world's a whirl and a dance,
Where garments are worn and cast away,
How shall God wear a human garb
Forever and a day!

O, bring me the gold of the rising sun,
And the blue of the great wide sky,
For him I shall weave a raiment bright
From the Eternal's nascent Ray.

"ALASTOR".