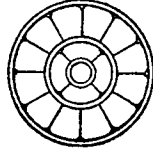


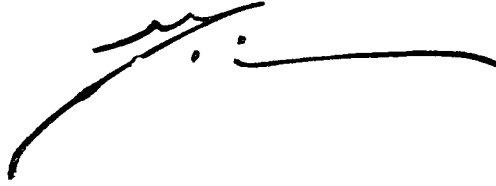
MOTHER INDIA

JANUARY 1958

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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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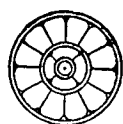
"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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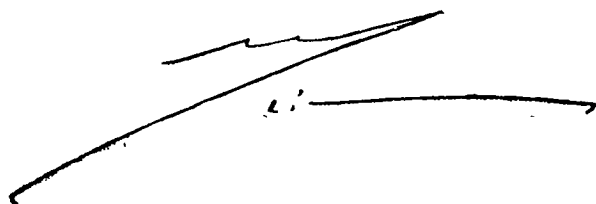
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1958

O Nature, Material Mother,
thou hast said that thou
wilt collaborate and there
is no limit to the splendour
of this collaboration



THE MOTHER ANSWERS QUESTIONS*

Does the economic condition of a man become stable with the betterment of his consciousness ?

If “betterment of consciousness” means an increased, enlarged consciousness, a better organisation of it, then as a result there should naturally be a greater control of outward things (including the “economic condition”). But also naturally when one has a “better consciousness” one is less preoccupied with such things as one’s economic condition.

*

How is one to know what the Divine’s Work is and how is one to work with the Divine ?

You have only to unite and identify yourself with the Divine.

*

When one is caught in an illness, how should one pray to the Mother ?

Cure me, O Mother !

*

Somebody has said, “Sex is of the mind. The act is no problem. Sex is a problem to us because we are not sufficiently creative.”

Is not sex a thing not only of the mind but also of the vital being and the physical ? What is it essentially and intrinsically ? And how is the attraction between the sexes to be completely erased from the being ?

Sex seems rather to be more of the body. It is only when you pass from the lower to the higher hemisphere that you can completely erase the thing. Sex belongs to Nature in her lower working and as long as you belong to that Nature, her working will be there automatically in you.

*

* Our readers are invited to send us questions on sadhana or on spiritual matters in general. (Editor)

THE MOTHER ANSWERS QUESTIONS

2

Sri Aurobindo says that some time after death the vital and mental sheaths dissolve, leaving the soul free to retire to the psychic world before it takes up new sheaths. What becomes of the Karma and of the impressions— Samskaras—on the old sheaths? Do they also dissolve without producing any result, good or bad, which they should according to the Theory of Karma? Also, what becomes of the vital and mental beings after the dissolution of the vital and mental sheaths?

The outer form only dissolves, unless that too is made conscious and is organised round the divine centre. But the true mental, the true vital and even the true subtle physical persist : it is that which keeps all the impressions received in earthly life and builds the chain of Karma.

AIDS TO THE ASPIRANT

(Some Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo)

THERE is only one thing needed to make anyone fit for the Mother's grace—it is a perfect sincerity and a truthful openness to the Mother in all the being.
(February 2, 1934)

*

If you are afraid of the Mother's scoldings, how will you progress? Those who want to progress quickly, welcome even the blows of Mahakali, because that pushes them more rapidly on the way.
(September 28, 1933)

*

The most important thing is to be turned inwardly towards the Mother and to her alone. To avoid too many outward contacts is necessary only in order to help in this—but it is not necessary nor desirable to avoid all contacts with people. What is necessary is to reject these contacts with the right inner consciousness, not throwing yourself out—treating them as things of the surface—not getting attached to them or absorbed by them in any way.
(October 28, 1933)

*

The experience is correct. Everything is prepared above, then worked out through the inner being till the results are accomplished and perfected in the outer personality. Therefore the sadhak ought not to allow himself to be alarmed, upset or grieved or made despondent by any apparent difficulties of the moment. He must know that all has been prepared above and calmly and confidently watch and assist its workings out here.
(November 16, 1933)

*

AIDS TO THE ASPIRANT

You ought not to allow the physical illnesses to interfere with your sadhana or affect your mind—these illnesses are nothing compared with what many others have had to pass through—you have some constipation, headaches, rheumatic pains, that ought not to be so difficult to bear. You have to separate yourself from the body-consciousness and not allow yourself to be overpowered by it.

Throw aside the weakness. The Mother's help is there—keep yourself quiet and calm and face the difficulties with the courage a sadhak must have when seeking the Divine. (November 22, 1933)

*

As for your question, it is a sentimental part of the vital nature that quarrels with people and refuses to speak to them and it is the same part in a reaction against that mood that wants to speak and get the relation. So long as there is either of these movements, the other also is possible. It is only when you get rid of this sentimentalism and turn all your purified feelings towards the Divine, that these fluctuations disappear and a calm good-will to all takes their place. (November 24, 1933)

*

Nothing done in the past or present can prevent the psychic from coming forward if there is the true will to get rid of these things and live in the psychic and spiritual consciousness. (December 13, 1933)

*

It is not enough to have that equality and silence and freedom only when you are in communion with the sky and sea. It is at all times that you must be able to receive it from above—then there will be a true foundation of the sadhana. (February, 5, 1934)

SRI AUROBINDO RELICS ENSHRINEMENT AT DELHI

ADDRESS

BY

DR. C. D. DESHMUKH

5th December 1957

It is with a deep sense of humility and a consciousness of many shortcomings that I enter upon the solemn and exalted duty that has been entrusted to me, the installation of the relics. My acquaintance with the early life and work of Sri Aurobindo dates from my school days when, under the inspiration of a serious and patriotic teacher, I learnt to appreciate and revere the endeavours of Sri Aurobindo to stimulate the thoughts of his countrymen towards the realization of complete independence near the end of the first decade of this century. With his writings on the culture of India and the spiritual life I cannot claim to have any deep familiarity, and it was not till about three years ago that, accompanied by my wife, Shrimati Durgabai Deshmukh, I had the good fortune to visit the Pondicherry Ashram—alas, after the attainment of Samadhi by Sri Aurobindo. We paid our homage to his Samadhi and were privileged to pay our deep respects to the Mother, and through her kindness were enabled to obtain some idea of the aims and purposes of the Ashram and the main features of the life of the Ashram.

We returned greatly impressed and stimulated and decided to take an early opportunity of revisiting the Ashram. Illness and other difficulties interfered with our plans and it was not till last October that we were able to visit the Ashram again and drink in once more its unique atmosphere. It was here that the Mother conveyed her wish to me that I should preside over the installation of the relics in Delhi on the 5th December, the date on which Sri Aurobindo attained his Samadhi in 1950. I agreed, although aware of my relative unworthiness for this responsible assignment, because I felt that I might at least to some extent be instrumental by so doing in spreading a realization of the significance of the message of Sri Aurobindo.

Centres where Sri Aurobindo's work has been studied are in existence in many parts of the world and the centre for this work has existed in Delhi since 1949, but it was only last year that a regular branch of the Pondicherry Ashram was opened in Delhi and, as part of it, a school pursuing the ideal

of integral education was started. I believe that this may be regarded as a new phase in the dissemination of the message of Sri Aurobindo and that it is the hope of the Mother and the residents of the Pondicherry Ashram that similar regular branches of the Ashram will in due course be multiplied so that the essential purpose of the Ashram might be attained in a steadily widening field in this world.

There is a misapprehension, which has been unconsciously fostered by the quiet work that goes on at the Pondicherry Ashram, that the Sadhaka who is endeavouring to follow Sri Aurobindo's teachings is indifferent to whether humanity may benefit from his efforts or not. The installation of this Samadhi is the loving answer removing any such misapprehension. Its installation has been undertaken only after an appropriate preparation which has been judged to be adequate by the Mother. Sri Aurobindo taught that humanity is not the highest Godhead, that God is more than humanity, but that in humanity too we have to find and serve Him. He held that the erring race of human beings dreams always of perfecting their environment by the machinery of government and society; but that it is only by the perfecting of the soul within that the outer environment can be perfected. He deprecated the all-too-ready desire of man to "help others" and insisted that the Sadhaka must do and speak himself the right thing from his inner poise and leave the help to come to others from the Divine.

Dr. Indra Sen wrote to me a few days ago that the Mother felt happy that I had agreed to preside over this installation of the relics of Sri Aurobindo because she felt that I had the necessary sincerity and integrity that was required of any one who sympathized with the cause of the dissemination of Sri Aurobindo's teachings. In the observations that I shall make in the short time that is available to me I shall endeavour not to disappoint those who have appointed me for this solemn ceremony.

The Pondicherry Ashram has placed at my disposal a fairly full collection of books and literature relating to the life and teachings of Sri Aurobindo. So many devoted and competent men, blessed with spiritual insight and a capacity for philosophic thought and expression, have written about the life and teachings of Sri Aurobindo that nothing that I could say here could lay claim to originality, and if I were to make acknowledgements they would be too numerous to be accommodated within the scope of this short address.

I feel it necessary that I should introduce my remarks with a short sketch of the life and teachings of Sri Aurobindo, gleaned from all the writings that I have just referred to.

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on the 15th of August 1872, a date which, by a coincidence which must have some significance, marked the be-

ginning of the independence of India, an ideal for which Sri Aurobindo struggled hard until he retired from politics in 1910. Sri Aurobindo's early education was purely English, in the course of which he received a thorough grounding in Greek and Latin and laid the foundation for his scholarship in the Classics, besides developing love for English and French literature and for history. During this period he also picked up a good knowledge of Italian and German and his poetic temperament led him to compose poems in English. At Cambridge in 1889 he won all the prizes in King's College in one year for Greek and Latin proficiency, passed the first part of the classical Tripos examination in the first class, but did not take the second part. In the following year he passed the open competition for the Indian Civil Service examination but manoeuvred to fail in the riding test because by that time he was animated by a burning sense of patriotism. The next three years saw him as a rebel against the moderate politics of the Indian leaders of the time and he even attempted the organisation of a secret society for overthrowing the foreign rule in India. An introduction to the Gaikwar of Baroda by James Cotton, brother of that great friend of India, Sir Henry Cotton, secured Aurobindo a promising position in the Baroda State Service.

Disqualified for the Indian Civil Service, Sri Aurobindo, who had mastered Greek, Latin, English and French and had acquired sufficient knowledge of German and Italian felt that he was de-nationalised by his culture and foreign tastes and tendencies, but his wide learning enabled him to have a glimpse of the real condition of his country which he was one day destined to re-nationalise.

The thirteen years, from 1893 to 1905, filled Sri Aurobindo's life with varied service experience, including teaching. They were also years of much literary activity and considerable self-culture. Much of the poetry afterwards published from Pondicherry was written at this time. It was at Baroda that he made up for his deficiency in Oriental and Indian languages, especially Marathi and Gujarati, the two official languages of the State. He also learnt Bengali, mostly by himself.

Among Sri Aurobindo's intimate friends at Baroda was Madhavrao Jadhav with whom he lived for most of the time he was there. It was here that he came to be acquainted with spiritual work, through the sayings of Ramakrishna and the writings and speeches of Vivekananda, for whom he developed an immense admiration. He took little interest in Philosophy and Metaphysics although one of his Cambridge friends, K.G.Deshpande, who was a sadhaka, asked him to take to the practice of Yoga, an idea which he dismissed, as it seemed to him a retreat from life.

It was while in Baroda that Sri Aurobindo began to take stock of the

educational conditions and political situation in India and started contributing anonymously, at the instance of his friend, K.G.Deshpande, to the *Indu Prakash* a series of outspoken articles under the challenging caption "New Lamps for Old". In these articles he gave vent to his dissatisfaction at the manner in which the Indian National Congress, then about ten years old, was conducting its activities. These bold articles made a sensation in political circles and scared Mahadev Govind Ranade and other leaders of the time, at whose instance Sri Aurobindo was requested to moderate his tone. A greater part of the last years of his Baroda Service was spent by Aurobindo in behind-the-scenes political activity. The outbreak of the agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 finally led him to resign from the Baroda Service, and he openly joined the political movement. In 1906 he came to Calcutta as the Principal of the newly founded National College. This was, as it proved to be, a turning point in his career.

In Calcutta Sri Aurobindo plunged himself heart and soul into the movement to annul the partition of Bengal and to liberate his country. Along with the Bengali-Maratha journalist, Sakham Ganesh Deuskar, author of the *Desh Katha* and Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, Editor of the *Sandhya*, Sri Aurobindo started a programme with the object of attaining Swaraj through boycott and swadeshi. To him Swaraj meant complete independence and not merely self-government within the British Empire. Along with Bipin Chandra Pal, Chittaranjan Das, Aswini Kumar Dutta and Rabindranath Tagore, he held out before the country a constructive programme of nationalism which was animated by the supreme mantra of *Bandemataram* as depicted by Bankim Chandra Chatterji in *Ananda Math*.

Soon Sri Aurobindo found himself at the head of the progressive nationalists in Bengal. He was the real power behind the *Bandemataram*, the journal of the Nationalist Party, which in a short time became the spear-head of the nationalist movement in Bengal. It was through this journal that Sri Aurobindo pointed out the hollowness of the Morley-Minto reforms and enunciated the idea of passive resistance as an instrument of political action.

Sri Aurobindo did not rule out violence in all circumstances and was acquainted with the working of certain secret societies in Western and Eastern India. Of these societies the *Yugantar* group in Bengal became closely associated with his activities, and in August 1907 Aurobindo was actually taken into police custody for having published certain articles in the *Bandemataram*, which were previously published in the society's journal, the *Yugantar*. The strength of character and courage shown by him in course of this case won him universal applause. It was on this occasion that India's poet, Rabindranath Tagore, wrote his well-known poem beginning with the words:

MOTHER INDIA

Aurobindo, Rabindr, laho Namaskar...

(Rabindranath, O Aurobindo, bows to thee,
O Friend, my country's Friend, O Voice incarnate, free,
Of India's soul !)

Nationalist politics brought Aurobindo into close touch with other All-India progressive leaders, the most notable of whom was Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The two together vehemently opposed the moderate policy of the Congress led by Surendra Nath Bannerji, Phirozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and others. Matters came to a head at the famous Surat Congress of 1907. The Maratha and the Bengali succeeded in exposing the real character of moderate politics, and at the end of the Congress session Aurobindo found himself, almost against his will, in the centre of the limelight of all-India leadership with "Lal, Bal and Pal," i.e. Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal.

On his way back from Surat, Aurobindo paid a visit to Baroda, where he met Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, who had come from Gwalior to Baroda to give him some guidance in Yoga. Yogi Lele advised Aurobindo to strive to make his mind a sheet of white paper in order that he might receive a piece of divine calligraphy so that the divine could take possession of it and direct its future operations. The seed sown by Lele fell on a most fertile soil. Aurobindo resigned himself entirely into God's hands. He had lost his identity as an individual and was to become Sri Aurobindo, the son and servant of God. His nationalism was no longer to be a merely political programme. It became a religion which had come from God. Spiritualised politics was henceforth to characterise the thought and activities of Aurobindo. His themes were the same old themes, nationalism, swadeshi, self-help, arbitration, the ethics of suffering, unselfish service and the necessity for reviving all that was good in our religion.

He galvanised Bengal into a blaze of spirited and high-souled endeavour and anticipated Mahatma Gandhi's methods of political action, notably passive resistance, in many fields. He realised the necessity of organizing village samitis and of carrying the gospel of Swaraj to the villages and through them to the masses.

This work was, however, destined to be cut short. On May 5, 1908, he was arrested and confined in a secluded cell of Alipore Jail where he was permitted by the authorities to have books. He began reading and re-reading the Gita and saw the emanation of God around him. The Alipore trial of Aurobindo Ghose brought Chittaranjan Das into prominence as a leading lawyer of the

time and Chittaranjan's peroration in the final argument contained a prophetic statement. The prisoner before the court, he declared, was not an ordinary man. "Long after he is dead and gone he will be looked upon as the poet of Patriotism, as the prophet of Nationalism and the lover of Humanity ...His words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across the distant seas and lands...The man is not only standing before the Bar of this Court but before the Bar of the High Court of history." After a long and protracted trial, the British Judge, accepting the verdict of the two assessors, declared Aurobindo "not guilty".

Through his jail life Aurobindo acquired the power to peep into infinity. Emancipated in his mind and in his soul, Sri Aurobindo was now completely free, although his friends in all parts of India were deported. Lokmanya Tilak was a prisoner in Mandalay, others were undergoing imprisonment without trial in various other places, but Aurobindo hurled himself once more into the divine endeavour. "Our object, our claim is that we shall not perish as a nation, but live as a nation and for this the people must be prepared for any suffering, for without suffering there can be no growth." This period saw Aurobindo's writings in the *Karmayogin* where he expounded the Upanishads and the teachings of the Gita and wrote essays for the regeneration of the country. He laid stress on the necessity of the practice of *brahmacharya* which sought to raise up the physical and the spiritual. "Brahmacharya is the starting point but Yoga is the means to the finality of fulfilment." Nor was his idea of Hinduism parochial. "We will sacrifice no ancient form to an unreasoning love of change. We will keep none which the national spirit desires to replace by one that is a still better and clearer expression of the underlying soul of the nation." Sri Aurobindo's nationalism is a nationalism for enriching and extending life, not for diminishing or destroying it. The *Karmayogin* should perfect his own instrument and leave it in the hands of God. Only the man who has gone through the austerity and discipline of Yoga and has communed with the Divine is an irresistible leader against whom no human tendency can stand.

Reports spread that the Government wanted to deport him, and so, only ten months after his release from Alipore Jail, Aurobindo decided to go into a prison of his own fashioning. In February 1910 he left Calcutta for the neighbouring French territory of Chandernagar and in April 1910 he reached Pondicherry, where he could seek a more secluded spot for continuing his spiritual work, and there he soon completely surrendered himself to Yoga.

The political leader was destined to be a saint. "I came to Pondicherry" he said, "because I had been directed by the Voice to pursue my Yoga here." A new chapter in the spiritual history of India was about to open.

At Pondicherry, in the beginning, Aurobindo lived a life of retirement with only four or five companions. This was a period of silent Yoga. Soon he decided to run a philosophical journal from Pondicherry. The *Arya*, as the journal was called, was published for nearly seven years, from 1915 to 1921. About this time Aurobindo received at Pondicherry a remarkable French couple, Paul Richard and the lady who is now known as the Mother. The *Arya* had now a French edition which had, however, to be discontinued on account of World War I. These journals were philosophical treatises which had as their ideals man's unity and man's transcendence to supermanhood. Among the many invaluable articles were the chapters of Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* and *Essays on the Gita*.

The Life Divine, the *magnum opus* of Sri Aurobindo, contains the broad outlines of his teaching. Sri Aurobindo knew that the life divine can and must be realised on earth. Man, he said, should transcend his human limitations and grow into fulfilment and the rich splendour of the divine. He should achieve an earthly immortality and even his terrestrial life should assume a divine character. The book deals with what the goal of man is and how and whether he may hope to reach it. Aurobindo showed the strength and weakness of the human mind as the power which interprets the truth of universal existence for the practical uses of a certain order of things, but not the power which knows and guides that existence and therefore not the power that created or manifested it. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, "Reason was the helper, reason is the bar". When, as a result of the next evolutionary jump the mind pierces through the lid of ignorance and touches the plane of Supramental Consciousness, man will have passed beyond "knowings", he will have acquired super-conscious knowledge.

Students of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy regard as its most original and valuable part his book *The Life Divine*, with the description contained in it of the nature and evolutionary status of the Supermind, also termed variously "Real-Idea, Rita-chit, Vijnana or Truth-Consciousness." By seizing the full significance of the Supermind and linking it up with the rest of the available body of knowledge, Sri Aurobindo has been able to give us a convincing, synthetic and integral view of omnipresent reality. The life divine holds out the prospect of the gradual uprearing of this evolutionary base of a life spiritual and supramental, the Supermind.

Sri Aurobindo's teachings do not aim at the development of any particular religion or to amalgamate the older religions or to found a new religion, for any of these things would lead away from his central purpose. The one aim of his Yoga is an inner self-government by which one who follows it can in time discover the one Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the

mental, that is the spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature. "There must be a total and sincere surrender; there must be an exclusive self-opening to the Divine Power : there must be a constant and integral choice of the truth that is descending."

The Yoga Ashram at Pondicherry is, in fact, a unique spiritual laboratory. It is a dynamic phase of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. All the Sadhakas are one in the Mother ; all meditate in the presence of the Mother. The Ashram is but the rough sketch of the Promised Land.

The paramount thing in Aurobindo's Yoga is to keep steady the flame of aspiration, to entrust the whole inner and outer life to the Mother and leave the rest in her hands. Sincerity and humility, freedom from desire, control or elimination of the vital movements, *japa* and concentration, all help to achieve the supreme and decisive act of *atmasamarpana* for a Sadhaka.

Sri Aurobindo's message, broadcast from the All-India Radio on the eve of Independence Day in 1947, laid stress on the necessity of unity and emphasised the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia. Asia has risen, said he. There India has her part to play in forming a world union for a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. A total spiritual direction given to the whole life and whole nature can lead humanity beyond itself.

The educational activities of the Ashram at Pondicherry are remarkable. They have sprung from the idea of the Ashram, which means the house or home of a Teacher or Master who lodges those who come to him for the teaching and practice. Its basis is spiritual. Its aim is to give an integral education to the whole man, intellectual, spiritual and physical.

Sri Aurobindo attained his *siddhi*, or perfection or self-realization, on the 24th November, 1926. He passed away on the 5th December, 1950. Soon after the passing of the Master-seer the vision of the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre was introduced to the world by the Mother. Sri Aurobindo had conceived the idea of developing at Pondicherry an International University Centre with personnel from all over the world. It was considered that the most fitting memorial to his name would be to found this University which would give concrete expression to the fact that his work continues with unabated vigour.

The Sri Aurobindo International University Centre at Pondicherry aims at that supramental education which will result, not merely in a progressively developing formation of the human nature and increasing growth of its latent faculties, but a transformation of the nature itself, transformation of the being in its entirety, a new ascent of the species above and beyond man towards Superman, leading in the end to the appearance of the divine race upon earth.

Sri Aurobindo did not limit the field of his activity to any particular sphere

of the world but included the entire humanity, even going beyond it. The Integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo declared in 1921, is not for ourselves alone but for humanity, and indeed it is not so much for the sake of humanity as it is first, and last, and all the time for the sake of the Divine. The Mother has explained the idea further in the following words :—

“It is not the welfare of humanity that we seek but the manifestation of the Divine. We are here to work out the divine Will, more truly to be worked upon by the divine Will, so that we may be its instruments for the progressive incorporation of the Supreme and the establishment of His reign upon earth”.

A European philosopher has recently spoken of the real ends of the world's religious systems in a way which has some relevance for us. We may note his salient points :

(1) All Indian religions teach us that it is possible to realise the immortality of human souls without direct recourse to the grace of Godhead. For three thousand years the Hindus and Buddhists have believed in this, have practised it, and have regarded as the supreme bliss the realization of the deep eternal unity of the human soul. This is in sharp contrast with other theologies which broadly postulate the absolute corruption of human nature consequent upon the “Fall of Man”, and man's total inability to help himself. It is, however, a question for consideration what is to be aimed at after the attainment of the identity of the soul with the cosmic soul ; for in a sense, whatever satisfaction it may yield to the individual, it is individual satisfaction and therefore something that can be characterised as a higher selfishness. This was the dilemma that faced Buddhism, since on the one hand it claimed that the soul's highest goal was “Nirvana”, that is to say, the extinction of the empirical ego and the realisation of the eternal soul or self, and on the other hand, it practically demanded a complete giving of self in the service of others, even unto death. It was by way of a solution of this dilemma that the later forms of Buddhism introduced the idea of *Bodhisattvas*, that is to say, the saintly beings who postponed their Nirvana in order to enable others to reach the same blessed state. The same idea is repeated in the later religion of Christianity.

(2) There was in Buddhism no clear picture of what Nirvana consisted of. Indeed the release from time and space could easily be so void of content as to be called emptiness. There may be rest in emptiness and peace but no further significance from the point of view of human society. In Hinduism this dilemma was overcome by the conception of man's ultimate goal being to be like the Godhead but not to be merged into the Godhead. In the Bhagawat Gita the contemplation of God simply as our eternal exemplar leads

us to the realisation of our own immortality. According to the Gita, the mere contemplation of God will bring God into action again even if the contemplative concerned does not actually believe in His existence. But the integration of the personality around the immortal soul is the first step. Thereafter God himself draws the soul towards Himself. The choice is His. Students of Comparative Religion, however, point out that even in this conception there is something lacking, and that is the conception of God as transcendent righteousness, as a result of the free will which has been granted to man. Here the ultimate responsibility rests with man for mundane affairs. He is in this world for a purpose and it is to do good and combat evil. This was the teaching of Zoroaster who was a prophet and spoke to God face to face. According to Zoroaster's faith and the Jewish faith, body and soul were not separate and both contemplated bodily resurrection for man. That would be a new heaven and a new earth.

(3) In view of the destruction that demonstrably overcomes the body and in view of all that science has taught mankind, it seems more reasonable to assume that while the body is destined ultimately to fall into decay, the soul can be immortal. Whether the soul united to God assumes the form of a resurrected body does not seem in truth to matter very much. Whether the body disintegrates on account of original sin or because of some more complex cosmic purpose does not seem to be a matter of great importance. On the whole, the most satisfying belief seems to be that of Hinduism, diagnosing the human condition as being an unnatural union between the eternal soul and a perishable body.

The teaching of Sri Aurobindo carries the world's spiritual thought further: "To fulfil God in life is man's manhood". "All life is only a lavish and manifold opportunity given us to discover, realise and express the Divine."... "God speaks to the heart, when the brain cannot understand him."... "After all, the best way to make humanity progress is to move on oneself."... "Each man belongs not only to the common humanity but to the Infinite in himself and is therefore unique."... "The divine perfection is always there above us ; but for man to become divine in consciousness and act and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life is what is meant by spirituality." "Spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul because it is itself fulfilled by freedom."... "The meeting of man and God must always mean a penetration and entry of the Divine into the human and a self-immersion of man in the Divinity."

Those who accept and practise to the extent they can the teachings of Sri Aurobindo believe that, although his terrestrial body has attained its rest, his spirit lives and guides. These relics of the great seer are symbolic of that

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eternal immanence which will help and guide those that concentrate on their Yoga in these sanctified surroundings. They will assist the sincerity of the sadhakas and promote their attainment of the ultimate integrity—the climb to divine supermanhood that will usher in, when sufficiently widespread, the radiant new world which must be the intent of the Supreme Consciousness and Power above the universe. Let me give this *dénouement* in the words of Sri Aurobindo himself :

“Man is a transitional being ; he is not final. For in man and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees that climb to a divine supermanhood. There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring but troubled and limited mundane existence.

“We mean by man mind imprisoned in a living body. But mind is not the highest possible power of consciousness ; for mind is not in possession of Truth, but only its ignorant seeker. Beyond mind is a supramental or gnostic power of consciousness that is in eternal possession of Truth. This supermind is at its source the dynamic consciousness, in its nature at once and inseparably infinite wisdom and infinite will of the divine Knower and Creator. Supermind is superman ; a gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and triumphant evolutionary step to be reached by earthly nature.

“The step from man to superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth’s evolution. It is inevitable because it is at once the intention of the inner Spirit and the logic of Nature’s process.

“If earth calls and the Supreme answers, the hour can be even now for that immense and glorious transformation.”

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

(Continued from the last issue)

VIII. SMOKE-RINGS AND THE OUROBOROS

IN the ultimate analysis, man has only one means to discovery, and that is to find *likenesses* between things. "To him, two trees are like two shouts and two parents, and on this likeness he has built all mathematics. A lizard is like a bat and like a man, and on such likenesses he has built the theory of evolution and all biology. A gas behaves like a jostle of billiard balls, and on this and on kindred likenesses rests much of our atomic picture of matter."¹ This indeed is man's creative gift, to find or make a likeness where none was seen before. Thus a display of smoke-rings in a friend's laboratory led the famous physicist Lord Kelvin to suggest in 1887 that if the atoms of matter are constituted of vortex rings in a perfect fluid, then the conservation of matter can be immediately explained, and the mutual interaction of atoms can be illustrated.

And lo, and wonder, even 'visions' in the technical sense of the term have sometimes aided the scientists to discover this 'likeness' and thus to give a decisive push to their respective sciences. The most well-known instance in this category is, of course, Kekulé, the father of organic chemistry. His ideas were born in a series of visions. Kekulé relates that he fell into a reverie upon a London omnibus, late one night, "and lo, the atoms were gambolling before my eyes !...I saw how, frequently, two smaller atoms united to form a pair; how a larger one embraced two smaller ones; how still larger ones kept hold of three or even four of the smaller; whilst the whole kept whirling in a giddy dance. I saw how the larger ones formed a chain, dragging the smaller ones after them....This was the origin of the Theory of Molecular Structure."² And, as, every college student knows, this theory of organic molecular structure for open-chain aliphatic compounds is based upon two simple postulates : the quadrivalency of carbon atoms and the capacity of carbon atoms to link together.

¹ Jacob Bronowski, *Science as Foresight*.

² John Read, *Chemistry*, p. 179.

But what about the so-called aromatic compounds : benzene and its great array of associates ? They could not be brought into line with Kekulé's original structural conception of 1858. Then, in 1865, the flash of insight came to him at Ghent where he was the professor of chemistry. Let him himself describe this remarkable experience :

"I was sitting, writing at my textbook; but the work did not progress; my thoughts were elsewhere. I turned my chair to the fire and dozed. Again the atoms were gambolling before my eyes. This time the smaller groups kept modestly in the background. My mental eye, rendered more accurate by repeated visions of the kind, could now distinguish larger structures, of manifold conformation, long rows, sometimes more closely fitted together; all twining and twisting in snakelike motion. But look! What was that? One of the snakes had seized hold of its tail, and the form whirled mockingly before my eyes. As if by a flash of lightning I awoke; and this time also I spent the rest of the night in working out the consequences of the hypothesis."¹

"So rose", writes Professor John Read, "from this vision of the Ouroboros ('tail-eater') serpent of ancient Egypt and Greece, a symbol 'half as old as time', the conception of the 'benzene ring', or closed chain, of six carbon atoms: a fundamental idea which has been hailed as the crowning achievement of the doctrine of the linking of carbon atoms."

Such is then the role played even by that rare phenomenon, 'visions', in moulding the development of science. And what about its younger brother 'Imagination' along with her

..... shining squads
That venture into undiscovered scenes
Where all the marvels lurk none yet has known.²

Indeed, this 'luminous angel' has played an equally capital role both in the formation of a logico-empirical attitude and in the forward march of scientific discoveries. For "our mental imagination.. is the resort or device or refuge of a limited capacity of knowledge, a limited capacity of effective action. Mind supplements these deficiencies by its power of imagination: it uses it to extract from things obvious and visible the things that are not obvious and visible; it undertakes to create its own figures of the possible and the impossible; it erects illusory actuals or draws figures or a conjectured or constructed truth of things that are not true to our outer experience."³

¹ John Read, *Chemistry*, p. 183.

² *Savitri*, Book II, Canto 10

³ *The Life Divine*, (Am. Ed.), p. 390.

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

Thus in the beginning of science, animism, theology and science—all were mixed up blissfully together. Thales, the first historical figure of Greek science, stated, "All things are full of gods". Empedocles conceived of the forces of attraction and repulsion as instances of love and hate. In modern times Kepler thought of the planets as guided in their orbits by angels.

The modern scientist is more cautious. Although he, too, uses a figurative language to bring out the meaning of his theories, he seeks consciously to keep the distinction clear in his mind's eye—but not always with a total success. The history of science bristles with a great number of pseudo-argumentations and pseudo-philosophies, and this has been so only because what was at first meant to be no more than an analogy was later on given the status of identity. Thus when W.K.Clifford in his *Mathematical Papers* first suggested that material particles might be regarded as humps in space, like "little hills on a surface which is on the average flat", he was merely trying to bring us as near as possible to visualizing the modern gravitational theory. In biology and some other allied branches of science this 'picturability' is often a part and parcel of the nomenclature used. But in using these concepts and formulations, people are often unwittingly tempted, because of this very picturability, "to choose a linguistic expression which, although very picturable, nevertheless does not, strictly speaking, agree at all with the logical foundations of empirical science. That is so, for example, when it is said that in the development of an organism a structural plan is 'realized', the development 'deviates from the structural plan', or that it 'follows the structural plan', or 'is governed by it'. The dubiousness of this mode of expression becomes still clearer when we speak in comparative morphology of the 'metamorphosis of homogeneous organs', or a 'transformation of shoots into thorns', or of a 'transformation of the various biting mouth parts of one insect into the corresponding differently formed sucking mouth parts of another'."¹

And this ambiguity of linguistic expression, this metaphorising in the formation of nomenclature are often offered as a so-called explanation of facts of a particular domain in terms of those of another. This shows in a remarkable manner one of the negative consequences of the urge to visualise in the field of science. One step down and we encounter another form of this same self-styled explanation. I am of course referring to the process of 'naming' and to its inevitable associations. Whenever a new phenomenon impinges insistently on the observing consciousness of the man of science but baffles all immediate explanation, the scientist is very often tempted to dub it a respectable designation. A subsequent constant handling of this designation

¹ Felix Mainx, *Foundation of Biology*, pp. 14-15.

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confers on it almost a visual thing-ness (*'désignation chosiste'*, as the French philosopher would like to say),—and this in spite of Henri Poincaré's warning: "this is not to solve the difficulty but only to baptize it." The great mathematician refers on another occasion to the unfortunate association of the word 'Heat': "The unknown person who first happened to coin the word *heat* has condemned in that very process many a future generation to errors. For heat has been subsequently considered to be a substance simply because it was designated by a grammatical substantive, and it was thus believed to be indestructible."¹

But were we not talking of the positive role of imagination in science? How many people, indeed, may have been educated in the field of scientific imagination by Jonathan Swift in olden days and by Jules Verne in our present era! To quote from Otto Neurath: "A long series of imaginative analyses started with the animated statue imagined by Condillac...Helmholtz and others imagined two-dimensional beings on a sphere discussing geometrical problems. About the middle of the 19th century Fechner and others fancied dreamlands of different kinds: three-dimensional beings of different ages were produced by cutting off slices from a four-dimensional sausage;...two-dimensional beings who, traversing a hull, observe a retardation region, an indifference region, and an acceleration region of a geometrically homogeneous world.... Poincaré's problem of similar worlds (our world reduced or enlarged in size) was also analysed imaginatively about the middle of the 19th century by Ebert who fancied also a trip throughout the universe quicker than light, in accordance with certain thoughts of Humboldt and Babbage."²

Let us now shift our attention to the field of scientific explanation and theory construction; here, too, the same phenomenon greets our eyes: 'visualisation' in one form or another dominating the arena, and the consequences being as elsewhere both positive and negative.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ Henri Poincaré, *La Valeur de la Science*, p. 141.

² Otto Neurath in *Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, pp. 11-12.

KATHA UPANISHAD

(A Commentary)

(Continued from the last issue)

I. i. 3*

WHEN faith took possession of the young soul, Nachiketas, he began to ponder over the fundamental requisite of spirituality, viz., self-giving. When there is a strong aspiration some sort of incomplete self-giving automatically comes in its wake, and the aspirant for the time being feels satisfied that he has given himself and all he has, *sarva-vedasam*, to the Divine. And it is also true that in the tremendous enthusiasm that always accompanies the first turning of the soul towards the Divine, the surrender or self-giving is very strong. But, as time passes, it begins to wane and unless the aspiration to surrender is renewed and re-fed every moment the whole movement of self-giving peters out. When we get some spiritual experience or realisation we are apt to become self-satisfied and live in the memory of that experience or realisation after it is gone, instead of trying to get higher and wider ones. And it is the curse of the lower Nature led by the mental intellect that it always gloats over the past experiences and then stagnates. Knowledge gained by such experiences becomes crustified and perhaps even fossilised and loses most of its power and beauty. 'When knowledge is fresh in us it is invincible; when it is old, it loses its virtue. This is because God moves always forward.'² Even the higher inspiration, *śravas*, becomes a thing that is hackneyed and worthless, unless we try to climb higher every moment. 'Higher, always higher! Let us never be satisfied with what is accomplished, let us not stop at any realisation, let us march always, without stopping, energetically, towards a more and more complete realisation, towards an ever higher and more total consciousness.... The victory of yesterday must be only a stepping stone to the victory of tomorrow, and the power of the morrow a weakness in comparison with the effectivity to come.'³

* *pitodakā jagdha-trṇā dugdha-dohā nirindriyāḥ, anandā nāma te lokāstān sa gachchhati ta dadat*

² Sri Aurobindo.

³ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother.*

This is the line along which the pondering of Nachiketas moves. His symbolic father, Vājaśravasa—the plenitude of the higher inspirational knowledge—has given birth to him, the human soul, but still that knowledge alone is not sufficient to lead him to the fulfilment of his eternal craving for the Supreme. That higher inspirational knowledge has shown the soul the way by strong illuminations, but after a time these illuminations (cows, in the symbolic way of the Upanishadic expression,) lose their worth; in their own times they had ‘drunk their water, eaten their grass, yielded their milk,’ they were plump and vigorous, but now they had become ‘worn out’, their organs, their force or power exhausted; what was the good of ‘giving such cows as *dakṣiṇā*’, knowledge that has served its purpose in the past but is now no longer true or adequate? For God moves always forward and the soul too. If we continue to remain in such outdated knowledge, our fate will be that we shall go to ‘the worlds of undelight’, *ananandāḥ lokāḥ*, for the newness and freshness of such knowledge is gone and with it its charm and joy. What Newton and Galileo had discovered, to take an instance from the worldly knowledge, was certainly wonderful and gratifying in their own times, but what has become to it in this age of Einstein and Planck? All knowledge, whether worldly or spiritual, would go the same way, unless it is constantly lifted up to a higher level, so as to make it form part of a greater and more elevated synthesis. Nothing essential from the past is to be rejected, but at the same time everything is to be widened and made more illumined by the light of a greater and greater dawning, *vyuchchhantī jīvam udīrayantī, uṣā mṛtam kamchana bodhayantī*.¹

This Dawn is closely associated with Dakshina and, in fact, in certain places in the Rig Veda the latter is identified with the former. The higher illuminations are the cows and it is not enough to get them; they have to be led, to be marshalled, to be directed. On the plane of their origin these illuminations of divine Discernment are very bright and definite and irresistibly true in their action, but when they come down into the lower planes of Nature on which man dwells they lose their force and sharpness. But all the same the soul must try to bring them down and enrich them by the lower existence too; otherwise the lower Nature and being would remain dark, while the highest peaks of consciousness receive their glow. All this is conveyed by the phrase *dakṣiṇāsu nīyamānāsu*, that is, as the higher illuminations were being led or marshalled or brought down and fixed in the various parts of the being. In the process of doing so, they lost their original force and plenitude of light. And the young, newly awakened soul, Nachiketas, saw that unless even the

¹ ‘Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead.’ *Rig Veda* I. 113. 8 (Tr. by Sri Aurobindo).

lower Nature is held towards the descending Light it was idle to expect to bring about its luminous conversion. The surrender to the Divine had come on the highest summits of his spirit, but the lower triple being was still enveloped in its darkness and incapacity.

I.i.4*

That is why he asks his father, "Me, O my father, to whom wilt thou give ?" He repeats this question three times, and each time it is a different question ; the first time it refers to the physical being, the second time to the vital being and the third time to the mental being. In the lower Nature the soul or Purusha assumes this triple form of *annamaya puruṣa*, *prāṇamaya puruṣa* and *manomaya puruṣa*, each according to the corresponding level of Prakriti. This was the way in which the aspiration to surrender the triple lower self is formulated and referred to the higher self of descending inspiration, Vājaśravasa or the coming Supreme Light, Gautama, the father, *tata*, of the aspiring human soul. Symbolically, the father and the son are not different and separated from each other as the corresponding human ones are, for they are only states of our own higher and inner beings respectively. The questions are put by the not yet fully developed inner soul to its own higher self which has become extended or spread out, *tata*, throughout the lower being, although the lower has only now become conscious of it. 'The father himself becomes the son',² says an ancient Brāhmaṇa text ; and the Bible too states, 'I and my Father are one.' The unusual word used by Nachiketas to address his Father, *tata*, and not the familiar *tāta*, brings out this deeper significance, from its root *tan* which has the meaning of extension.

The reply that comes from the higher self of inspiration is cryptic and a little riddling to the human soul, "I give thee to Death." But it ceases to be mysterious when we understand how the lower triple worlds of matter, life and mind are under the domination of death and also of the divine Law which Yama, the Lord of Death, symbolises. Vājaśravasa represents the descending or involutionary movement of the spirit, whereas Nachiketas represents the evolutionary movement of the soul ; the Self involves itself in the Inconscience which is the field of rigid laws of which death is the most representative and prominent instance. Whatever comes out of this Inconscience bears this original stamp of Mrityu or Death, for it is all-pervasive in the lower Prakriti.

* *sa hovācha pitaram tata kasmai mām dāsyasīti, dvitīyam tṛtīyam tam hovācha mrtyave tvā dadāmihi.*

² *pitā vai putra-nāmāsi.*

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Nachiketas is not only the individual human soul in Ignorance but is also this universal soul which has involved itself in the Inconscience as Vājaśravasa and is gradually manifesting himself here in the world in the tardy process of evolution. His first such manifestation is in the form of Matter where the domination of Ignorance and Death is most complete. Consciousness has not at all come to the surface and has not been able to organise itself there in any way. Only it acts out of the depths where it has lodged itself. The material field in which it acts is called in Sanskrit *mṛt* or *mṛttikā*, whereas he who is the Lord over it is called *mṛtyu* or Death. Nachiketas is here the *annamaya puruṣa*.

The next stage in the evolution of this universal Nachiketas is reached when the principle of Life begins to manifest and organise itself in this death-field of Matter : the manifestation of Life is a decisive step taken by the soul in his evolutionary adventure, for Life is a challenge flung by him at the Lord of Death and the iron Law that pervades the whole earth. What Life acquires, however, is only a partial victory over Death ; for a short period it can bear the siege of its formidable adversary and after that it succumbs to him. For on the level of Life, even though the building up of individuality has gone a fairly long way, there is not as yet moulded any sufficiently conscious individuality, which alone can experience and enjoy the Immortality which is the ultimate goal of the evolutionary endeavour. It is, therefore, towards this preoccupation that the attention of Nachiketas should turn. For, although he has become the universal and individual *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, he is still under the sway of Death and Ignorance.

The third level is reached when Mind manifests in living Matter and with it the self-aware or partly self-aware individual becomes able to feel the limitations imposed by the rigid chains of the universal Law. Here Nachiketas becomes the universal and individual *manomaya puruṣa*. Although he has become aware of the limitations under which he is labouring and also of the need to become free from them, he does not as yet know the method by which he can do so, nor has he any means of finding it out himself. The only thing he can do is to question his own self of Aspiration and higher Inspiration. And that is the very thing he does by asking the triple question.

There is also another implication underlying this question, which can be grasped when we go deeper into it. What Vājaśravasa had given away in the All-Sacrifice was only a gift on the side of Prakṛiti, that is, all his belongings, all that he had become. But this self-giving is not entirely complete, until there is also a corresponding self-giving on the side of Puruṣa. Nachiketas, who is none other than Vājaśravasa in the evolutionary movement, understands this subtle point and draws the latter's attention to it. 'To

whom wilt thou give the soul?' he asks and the reply is 'To the universal Law that pervades the whole field of the triple lower Prakriti.'

This question and this answer are obviously not like those as between two human individuals on the surface plane of mental consciousness. Nachiketas' inner consciousness is the field in which this event takes place. And on receiving the answer he withdraws still deeper, for he has to carry out what his father has said. He must go to the region of Death, Yamaloka, in order to be able to understand the mystic working of the universal Law. An ordinary human being knows nothing about Death until he gives up the physical body and actually accosts Death. But Nachiketas is not an ordinary human being. He knows the methods of Yoga by which one can reach the original world of Yama even while alive in the physical body. These methods now he puts into practice.

I. i. 5.*

The Upanishad does not tell us how Nachiketas manages to reach the abode of Yama, but we get some distant hint about it in this stanza and in the ninth. This stanza, however, deals with the same topic which is suggested by the preceeding verse, viz. the three realms of the lower Prakriti and the state of the evolving soul on each of them. Nachiketas, in his Yogic withdrawal inwards in the subliminal, identifies himself with the cosmic Soul-status proper to each of the three planes, physical, vital and mental, and in doing so he comes to know about the path that Evolution has chalked out till now in this world of manifestation.

First he identifies himself with the physical Soul of the universe, who is the primary manifestation of the Cosmic Spirit out of the Inconscient. Matter and its myriads of manifested forms are the first creations of the apparently blind and unconscious evolutionary Force. Although Life and Mind and Spirit do not seem to be present in these first creations of Matter, it is only because they dwell submerged in its depths. As a matter of fact, it is the Power of the Spirit itself, *devātmaśaktiḥ*, which takes up the form of the evolutionary Force and pushes up all the diverse material creations out of the Inconscience. And wherever there is Power, there is bound to be the wielder of that Power ; whatever is the nature and constitution of the Power, will also be the stuff and character of the wielder. In this first stage of the evolution this Power is physical and the soul too is physical. And that is why Nachiketas says, *bahū-*

(* *bahūnām emi prathamam bahūnām emi madhyamam,
kim svid yamasya kartavyam yan mayā dya karisyati*)

nām emi prathamah, which means that in the case of many, *i.e.* the myriad manifestations of physical substance like metals and minerals, I, as the soul, am of the primary type, viz., physical.

Then, as Nachiketas' consciousness goes deeper into the subliminal, leaving the plane of the subtle physical, he enters the plane of the subliminal vital and comes to identify himself with the universal vital Soul. Life-Force is the second or middle manifestation out of the Inconscience. On this level of manifestation Prakriti as the Shakti of the Spirit is vital and so also the Soul or Purusha himself. Nachiketas expresses this realisation of identity with the universal vital Soul, in the second quarter of the stanza, *bahūnām emi madhyamah*, among many, *i.e.* formations of the Life-force, I am the middle, *i.e.*, the Life-Soul.

But in these two stages of evolution the soul has not become sufficiently conscious on the surface ; most of the actions there are carried out by the universal will in Nature without the conscious cooperation of the Purusha. It is only when the evolution reaches the third stage and manifests the principle of conscious mentality that the possibility arises of the termination of the blind mechanical rule of universal Law, and it is only when the fully self-conscious human soul becomes the leader of the evolution that Nature admits him to share her secrets as her partner and confidant. On this third and so far last stage Nachiketas withdraws still deeper within so as to reach the subliminal mental and, identifying himself with the soul there, becomes the mental being.

It is at this stage that he becomes aware of the universal sway of Yama. But at the same time he also becomes conscious of the purpose of this universal Law, the divine intention behind its apparent inexorability and iron rigidity. It is only such a soul who has become aware of the farther evolutionary steps that can become an instrument in the hands of the Divine cosmic Law, for once the soul becomes conscious on the surface, only by his conscious cooperation and sanction can Prakriti effect further steps towards the ultimate fulfilment of the purpose of the Divine in the universal manifestation. "There is something that Yama means to do," *kim svid yamasya kartavyam*. The cosmic Law is not the principle of blind mechanical Necessity nor is it the [working out of Chance or even Caprice, but contains within itself the entire intelligence and purposiveness of All-Wisdom. The aspect of *niyati* or determinism in Nature is only a mask behind which the utter Freedom of the Spirit is quietly unfolding itself. But it needs a sufficiently developed individual through whom alone as its centre it can reach its crowning fulfilment in manifestation. Such a centre is provided by Nachiketas. He has become conscious of what the Divine wants to do by enforcing the universal Law. There is some specific and definite purpose, *kim svid kartavyam*, for the fulfilment

of which the divine Law acts and that purpose is to lead the conscious human soul towards the ultimate Freedom and Immortality of the Spirit. The mortal is to be carried towards Immortality, by wading through the ocean of Death, *avidyayā mr̥tyum tīrtvā*. For Death is only a passage leading towards Immortality.

It was the awareness of this great Truth that was awakened in Nachiketas by the faith that stirred within the depths of his being and this faith in its turn was engendered by the *śravas* or higher Inspiration that came to him. He now knows that in the apparently chance utterance of his father about his being given over to Death, there was a momentous import. In fact, it was the turning point in Nachiketas' life ; he goes inwards instead of outwards in quest of the answer that mankind eternally seeks for its legitimate questionings about the purpose of life and death, about the universal manifestation, about other states of consciousness and existence possible and attainable by the soul, about the after-death conditions of the soul, about the ultimate nature of the supreme Reality. A single word of Vājaśravasa acts as a leverage and creates a tremendous detonation in the consciousness of Nachiketas.

Now Nachiketas has become aware that he is standing right in front of the gates of the Mystery of the Beyond, but he is also well equipped with spiritual qualities needed to meet any unforeseen spiritual situation that may arise in this his exceptional adventure. And it is at the gates of the Mystery that he becomes endowed with inner self-confidence ; he knows that the Mystery facing him is not hostile to him but, on the contrary, favourably inclined to him, wanting to use him as an instrument, *yan mayā'dya kariṣyati*, for the revelation it wanted to give to mankind. The veil shrouding the Beyond was lifted that day for Nachiketas and he stepped right into it without hesitation or fear.

(To be continued)

BABHRU

BOOK IN THE BALANCE

Lord Mahavira—His Life & Doctrines : by *Puranchand Samsookha*. Published by Jain Swetambar Terapanthi Mahasabha, 3 Portuguese Church Street, Calcutta 1 : Second Edition, pages 108; price Rs. 2/-

THIS handy book on Mahavira gives in brief a simple account of his life and teachings. It will indeed be found useful by those who seek authentic information on this great figure who is generally considered a contemporary of Buddha.

Jainism can be described as a religion of non-violence carried to its extreme and in most respects similar to Buddhism. Like many other Indian religions Jainism holds the human birth very precious and difficult to attain. There are innumerable Jivas: gods, men, beings of hell, birds, beasts, insects, vegetation. "Earth, stones etc., all kinds of water, all kinds of fire, all kinds of air, and all kinds of trees etc. in their natural states, are Jivas embodied in earth, water, fire, air and vegetation."

On the last round of the cycle of endless births and deaths, creatures are born as human beings and will be reborn again and again till they get liberation through the conscious process of attainment of true knowledge and the perfect development of their souls. Those who commit sins enter into hell after their death and have to undergo "unimaginable sufferings". Karma is the result of attachment and all attachment to and desire for sense-objects brings suffering to man. This suffering can only cease when the cause of Karma, *i.e.* attachment and desire, are destroyed.

Jainism is silent about the origin of the soul's bondage to material objects. The author says: "In its essential nature, the soul being pure, transparent, conscious and incorporeal, logically it cannot be bound by corporeal and unconscious particles, but from times immemorial it has undergone this bondage by forms of karmic Matter. It is a bondage mysterious and timeless." When one links this statement with another statement that the perfected state of soul is Nirvana and that liberation is the goal of life, it means that in Jainism there is no ultimate significance of the world except that it is a field of bondage from times immemorial and the only way out of this bondage is Nirvana, "from where there is no return to the agony of mortal existence," and in which one remains for ever "on the crest of the Loka" of "termless beatitude" and "unconditioned existence".

The principal aim of Jainism is the attainment of the freedom of the soul by its perfect evolution. Jainism thus falls short of Sri Aurobindo's phi-

losophy where "All life is Yoga" and the aim is the perfect development of life in a perfected world and a divine life on earth and not only the attainment of some heavenly Loka of beatitude. For Sri Aurobindo, evolution is not only the soul's outflowing into a greater and greater conscious state of existence but the "descent" of the superconscious states of existence into the material world to transform it into a world of perfect harmony of God-life.

The Jain ethics consists of five great vows : 1) non-violence, 2) truthfulness or total abstention from falsehood, 3) non-stealing or disclaiming everything not got with the full goodwill of the owner, 4) Brahmacharya, which means absolute continence, and 5) freedom from all craving for worldly possessions. It enjoins ten virtues : forgiveness, humility, candour, non-covetousness, poverty, truthfulness, self-restraint, austerities, inner and outer purity, and chastity. It also prescribes other rules of self-discipline. It can thus be said to provide a sound basis of morality, as an aid towards an ultimate spiritual aim of life rather than the one pursued by the worldly men considering the material life of sense-objects the be-all and end-all of living. Apart from these ten virtues, the above-mentioned five great vows are the first rules of conduct of most Indian Yogas. Out of the eight-fold means of Patanjali's Yoga, *asthanga*, the first stage of Yogic effort, *yama* prescribes these very five rules.

The list of Gandharas and of the Tirthankaras in the sixth and seventh chapters gives us information about their place of birth and about that of their Nirvana, and, with regard to the former, a very brief account too of their life-span etc. It does not much help us to form an idea of their proper role as guiding lights during their life-time.

The first few chapters on the life of Mahavira are indeed instructive and inspiring and explain in a simple language his life and spiritual mission. We are also told about the political, economic and religious conditions of India at that time, when the Indian society was taking a new downward curve of cultural growth, rather when it was passing through a period of cultural degradation after the Mahabharata war. We understand from the book that economically the country was far advanced, "democracy was also in existence" and there were "democratic kingdoms" too. Whether we can use such expressions is doubtful, but one thing is historical that there existed successful republics and confederacies at that time.

On the whole the book makes easy reading and can be recommended to anyone who wishes for knowledge in a nutshell about Jainism and about Mahavira, his life, mission, philosophy and ethics for the monks as well as for the householders.

The printing is praiseworthy, and the design on the cover—a facsimile of an old design taken from a Jaina manuscript—enhances the beauty of the book.

The parables given at the end of the book are a pleasing feature, but quite a number of them have such an air of unnaturalness that they seem to be meant to precipitate one to some fore-conceived moral without caring for the story to be made interesting and natural.

Some of the sayings of Mahavira are worth recalling and may be read with special interest in relation to similar sayings by other men of wisdom:

"Men are attached to sense-objects, that is to say, to sound, form, taste, smell and touch, and to attraction and repulsion; that is why they lose all sense of good and evil." "Those who are addicted to sense enjoyments do violence to the creatures of earth, to the creatures of air, to the creatures of fire, to the jivas of the vegetable kingdom and to 'trasa' or mobile beings. Such violence brings evil to them and is an obstacle to true knowledge." *Mahavira*

"That man whose mind is solely attached to the objects of sense, him death drags with it as an impetuous torrent sweeps away a slumbering village."

Dhammapada

"Attach thyself to the meaning of things and not to their forms. The meaning is the essential, the form is only an encumbrance." *Faridud-din-Attar*

"Eye and ear are poor witnesses for man, if his inner life has not been made fine."

Herachitus

"The wise do not linger in the thicket of the senses, the wise heed not the honeyed voices of the illusion."

The Book of Golden Percepts

"The foolish follow after outward desire and they enter into the snare of death..."

Katha Upanishad

"So long as we are attached to the form, we shall be unable to appreciate the substance, we shall have no notion of the causes the knowledge of which is the true knowing."

Antoine the Healer

*

"Many men become ascetics and take recourse to begging, live in a state of nakedness, practise severe austerities like fasting...indulge in tall talk about Moksha or spiritual freedom, but can one get any true knowledge from them either about this life or the next?"

Mahavira

"Let your words correspond with your actions and your actions with your words."

Confucius

"Ordinary men pronounce a sackful of discourses on religion, but do not put a grain into practice, while the sage speaks little, but his whole life is religion put into action."

Ramakrishna

"To conform one's conduct to one's talk is an eminent virtue; attain to that virtue..."

Li Ki

"Let your existence, not your words be your preaching"

Amiel

*

"It is desire alone that is the root of the suffering of the whole world including even the gods. The spiritual seeker, who gives up his attachment to it, is delivered from all suffering, physical and mental." *Mahavira*

"For him whom thirst (desire) overcomes in this world, ... his sufferings increase like the *birana* grass growing around."

Dhammapada

"Abandoning without exception all desires born of the will, controlling by the mind the senses in all directions, a man should gradually cease from mental action by the force of an understanding held in the grasp of a constant will; he should fix his mind in the self and think of nothing at all, and whenever the restless and mobile mentality ranges forth he should draw it back from whatever direction it takes and bring it again under control in the self alone; for when the mind has thus been quieted, there comes to him the highest peace."

Bhagavad Gita

*

"You should control yourself, for it is, indeed, your self that is intractable. One who controls one's self becomes happy both in this life and in the next." "Fight with your own self. Of what use is fighting with others? Conquer your self by your self and enjoy infinite happiness."

Mahavira

"Be master of thy soul, O seeker of the eternal truths, if thou wouldst attain the goal."

The Book of Golden Precepts

"The sage who has made himself master of himself, rends his bonds and breaks his chains."

Udanavarga

"The wise man should rein in intently the (uncontrolled) mental action like a chariot drawn by untrained horses."

Swetaśawatara Upanishad

"Stimulate thyself, direct thyself; thus protected by thyself and full of clear-seeing thou shalt live always happy."

Dhammapada

*

"The self is the creator of happiness and suffering, and also their destroyer. It is the self that is one's friend or foe, according as it is engaged in doing good or evil."

Mahavira

"Confidence in help from outside brings with it distress. Only self confidence gives force and joy."

Fo-tho-hing-tsang-king

"One should lift oneself up by one's own efforts and should not degrade oneself; for one's own self is one's friend and one's own self is one's enemy."-
"One's own self is the friend of that soul by whom the lower self has been conquered; on the other hand, the very self of him who has not conquered his lower self behaves inimically like one's enemy."

The Gita.

*

MOTHER INDIA

This is the right path: to serve the guru (preceptor) or the man of mature wisdom... *Mahavira*

“Obey them that guide you and submit yourselves; for they watch over your souls.” *Hebrews XIII*

“Take the instruction which is given you by your Master and put out of your view the human weaknesses of the teacher.” *Ramakrishna*

“They who have the knowledge and see the truths of things shall instruct thee in the knowledge.” *The Gita*

“There is no salvation without the Guru.” “The Truth is found by the Guru’s Grace.” *Sikh Scriptures*

“I see the Guru and God standing in front of me. On whose feet should I bow down first ? Infinitely blessed is the Guru, who has made me see God.” *Guru Govind Singh*

To Guru divine I sacrifice
Myself a hundred times each day,
Who can transfigure in a trice
To angels men of common clay.

If hundreds of moons bedeck the sky
And thousands of suns burn blazingly,
Without the Guru, with such light,
The world remains deadlocked in night.

Says Nanak, who remembers not
The Guru’s Grace wide-wakingly,
He is like couch-grass in a plot,
Glowing and green, of sesame;
Like couch-grass, desolate, alone,
He lives untended, cared by none.
Though shoots of couch-grass fill the earth,
No more than ash is all its worth.

Guru Nanak

“If thou remain in isolation, thou shalt never be able to travel the path of the spirit; a guide is needed. Go not alone by thyself, enter not as a blind man into that ocean...” *Farid-ud-din-Attar*

“None is wise enough to guide himself alone.” *Imitation of Christ*

“Seek for a guide to lead you to the gates of knowledge where shines the brilliant light that is pure of all darkness.” *Dhammapada*

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT ?

Some Criticisms and Suggestions

14

WE are at the last stage of our inquiry. The Puranic chronology has been shown to find support from all available historical sources. Only a small number of difficulties remain. If they can be solved, the case for the identification of Sandrocottus with Chandragupta I will be complete. If they can be proved indecisive either way, the case will not be fully established but still demonstrated as eminently probable and superior to the one for the identification with Chandragupta Maurya.

The first difficulty is the Gupta Era fixed by Fleet as starting the line of the imperial Guptas in the year running from 319-320 A.D. The basis of Fleet's calculation is said to be Alberuni's statement that the Gupta Era started 241 years after the Saka Era of 78 A.D. Its main confirmations are believed to come from four sources. The first is connected with the inscriptions and coins of certain Indian rulers, which become chronologically intelligible only if the Gupta Era mentioned by them or the unspecified era used by them is assumed to be Fleet's Gupta Era starting in 320 A.D. The second confirmation is connected with Ceylonese history. The Chinese writer Wang-Hiuen-t'se, who is calculated to have lived in the middle of the seventh century A.D., says that the king of Chen-tzen (Ceylon) named Chi-mi-kia-po-mo (Sri Meghavarna) offered presents to the Indian king San-meu-to-lo-kiu-to (Samudragupta). The reign of Meghavarna is considered to have covered the years 352-379 A.D.¹ As Chandragupta II, the son of Samudragupta, became, according to Fleet's Era, king in 376 or 380 A.D., Meghavarna's reign coincides with at least part of Samudragupta's, just as it should. The third confirmation is connected with the extinguishment of the Saka power founded in Western India by Chashtana. It is an established fact that this extinguishment was due to Chandragupta II who issued his silver coins in imitation of those of the Satraps. Now, in terms of the Gupta Era the reign of Chandragupta II² falls between the year 56 or 60

¹ *The Classical Age*, p. 11.

² *The Classical Age*, p. 18.

and the year 93 or 95 : on the basis of 320 A.D. as the beginning of this Era his reign is between 376 or 380 and 413 or 415 A.D. The last date of the Western Satraps is between 310 and 319 of an unspecified era; but, if we take this Era to be of 78 A.D., we get the last date as between $78+310=388$ and $78+319=397$ A.D. —a date within the reign of Chandragupta II *à la* Fleet. The fourth confirmation is connected with the Mandasor inscription of Kumaragupta and Bandhuvarman dated Malava Era 493. On the assumption that the Era of the Imperial Guptas is from 320 A.D., the reign of Kumaragupta I¹ can be placed in 415-455 A.D. And on the assumption that the Malava Era is the same as the Era of 57 B.C., attributed to the traditional king Vikramaditya of the Malava province whose capital was Ujjain, the year 493 added to 57 B.C. gives us 436 A.D.—a date fitting into that reign-period.

An answer to the arguments for Fleet's Era may be made on the following lines. To begin with, it is inaccurate to say that Alberuni supplies the basis. No doubt, the Saka Era he has in mind is of 78 A.D., but about the Guptas his exact words² are : "As regards the Gupta-Kāla, people say that the Guptas were wicked powerful people, and that when they ceased to exist this date was used as the epoch of an era. It seems that Valabha was the last of them, because the epoch of the Guptas falls, like that of the Valabha era, 241 years later than the Śaka-Kāla." Evidently Alberuni implies that the Gupta Era was started when the Gupta dynasty came to an end and it was started not in celebration of it but in relief on liberation from it. Every impartial reader has to admit this, as does Sircar³ who is a believer in Fleet's epoch : "According to a late tradition recorded by Alberuni the Gupta era (320 A.D.) whose epoch was 241 years later than that of the Saka era (78 A.D.) started when the Gupta emperors ceased to exist." Of course we can try to make out that Alberuni handed down a capital confusion and say, as Sircar does in continuation : "The legend which is palpably absurd seems to stand on the fact that the word *kāla* not only indicates an 'era', but also 'death' or 'destruction'." But all this is ingenuity for which neither Alberuni nor his informants provide the least ground and to dub a thing "palpably absurd" does not argue it out of existence. And is it even exceptional to begin an era at the end of a dynasty or of a person's life ? A persistent Jain tradition⁴ considers the era of 57 B.C. as marking the death of Vikramaditya, and several inscriptions do the same.⁵ Even more persistently

¹ *The Classical Age*, p. 23

² Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, II, p. 7.

³ *Vikrama Volume*, p. 565.

⁴ *Journal of the University of Nagpur*, Dec. 1940, pp. 52-53.

⁵ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIX, Appendix, No. 109 ; Vol. XX, No. 383 ; Vol. XX, No. 455 ; *Inscriptions of Kathiawad*, *New Indian Antiquary*, June 1940, p. 112 ; *Bhāratīya-Prāchīna-Līpī-Māla*, p. 170.

the era of 78 A.D. has been looked upon as marking the end of the Sakas or of a Saka king. We may quote from Satya Shrava's book *The Sakas in India*¹ :

“One of the names of the Śaka era was *Śaka-nṛpa-kālātīta-samvatsara* or the era at the expiry of the time of the Saka king or kings. Some scholars have translated the phrase as the expired year of the time of the Saka kings.’ But there are many clear cases, where this interpretation cannot hold good.

1. “The following inscription² of 743 *Śaka-nṛpa-kālātīta* year uses the words *atīta* and again *atītesu* :

शकनृपकालतीतसंवत्सर-शतेषु सप्तसु त्रिचत्वारिंशदधिकेषु अतोतेषु वैशाखपूर्णिमास्या ।

2. Somadeva Sūri, a Jain author, writing his *Yaśas-Tilaka-Campu* in Saka 881, writes in the colophon of this work :

शकनृपकालातीत-सर शतेष्वष्टस्वेकाशीत्यधिकेषु गतेषु ।

i.e., in the year 881, expired of the *Śaka-nṛpa-kālātīta* era.

3. Again in an inscription³ of Saka 930 the date is expressed as :

शकनृपकालातीत-संवत्सर-शतेषु नवषु त्रिरादधिकेषु गतेषु १३० प्रवर्त्तमान सौम्यसंवत्सरे

“In numbers 1, 2 and 3, if the first *atīta* means the expired year, as scholars would like to have it, the following *atītaṣu* or *gateṣu* will be quite redundant. Therefore, the word *atīta* should be joined with *Śaka-nṛpa-kālā* and not *Samvatsara*. It will mean *Śaka-nṛpa-kālamatītya*, i.e., at the expiry of the time of the Saka kings. The correctness of this interpretation of the above term is supported by Pānini also. According to him the word *atīta* here forms a compound with *Śaka-nṛpa-kālā* as under the sutra II.1,24 the words *kāntāram* and *atīta* form the compound *kāntarātīta*.⁴ This indicates that the name of the era had the same significance behind it as expressed above by so many authors.

“This idea is further supported by as late a work as *Mitākṣarā* (circa 1100 A.D.), a commentary on the law code by Yājñavalkya. Yājñavalkya writes that all grants of a king should have the time specified in them. On the word time or *kālā*, the *Mitākṣara* explains⁵ that it should be done in the

¹ Pp. 44-47

² *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXI, p. 144.

³ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol VII, Appendix, No. 150, p. 27.

⁴ See also *Sarasvatī-Kanthabharana*, III.2.34.

⁵ I.320.

following two ways, *i. e.*, in the form of *Śakanṛpa-atīta* and of *Sanhvatasara* (60 years' Jovian cycle). Prof. D.C.Sircar translates this passage as 'the expired year of the Śaka kings and the (regnal) year.'¹ This translation is not warranted by the words of *Mitākṣara*. The words can only convey the meaning 'at the expiry of the Śaka king or kings'. Dr. Sircar seems to have translated it according to the general impression."

Satya Shrava points out that, while a number of ancient authorities agree that the Saka Era of 78 A.D. started with the extermination of the Sakas and not with their advent and while a few instances are non-committal, there is only one solitary example (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VII, Appendix, p.2 No.3) where the reference is to the coronation of a Śaka King. "It appears", remarks Shrava, "that the writer of this inscription of Śaka year 500 has confused the tradition of an earlier Śaka era...and has used the phrase 'the era of the coronation of a Śaka king', with the year of the current Śaka era."

In the light of what is written above, a Gupta Era beginning with the expiry of the Imperial Guptas cannot be deemed a freak whose very idea is "palpably absurd". Even were it a freak, it could not be arbitrarily disbelieved: history is not always governed by laws warranted as sensible or normal by a History Professor.

If Alberuni is taken at his word instead of forced to suit preconceptions, the beginning of the Gupta dynasty can never coincide with Fleet's epoch: it must be placed several centuries before 320 A.D. And the conclusion is inevitable that the date 320 A.D., based on Alberuni, cannot imply any existence of the Imperial Guptas in the centuries following it but leaves the Puranic chronology of these kings perfectly possible. What it implies for this chronology is that up to 320 A.D. the Imperial Guptas continued from the reign of Chandragupta I beginning soon after Alexander's departure from India and constituting 324 B.C. as the probable Puranic Gupta Era—a period of about 644 years.

This is an unusually long period but not absolutely exceptional: the Barhadrathas are given by the Puranas more than 1000 years and the Andhras had a period of over four centuries. And it is not at all improbable that a family should blaze forth for two or three centuries and then continue less eminently for the same number of years. In fact, even on Fleet's epoch we have to admit the rule of the Guptas, in some form or other and with whatever breaks in their course, for nearly 900 years. The Imperial Guptas are said to have ruled from 320 A.D. to 569² A.D. After them the kings called the Later Guptas

¹ *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Lahore, p. 53.

² *The Classical Age*, p. 44.

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ruled, over a kingdom varying in extent, up to about 750 A.D.¹ Still after them we have the rulers of whom Raychaudhuri² writes: "Petty Gupta dynasties, apparently connected with the Imperial Line, ruled in the Kanarese district during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries A.D., and are frequently mentioned in inscriptions." The statement, therefore, that the Imperial Guptas continued from c. 324 B.C. to 320 A.D. is nothing in itself objectionable.

When we take into consideration the Later Guptas and the petty Gupta dynasties our Gupta period increases yet further; but when a family has several branches or when several families bear the same clan-name a length of even 1500 years, not necessarily unbroken so far as fame or territorial extent is concerned, need not be ruled out. The Gupta-clan is admittedly ancient. Majumdar³ tells us: "Names of officials ending in Gupta and queens of the Gupta clan or family are mentioned in old records, particularly of the Śuṅga and the Śātavāhana period." The Sungas preceded the Imperial Guptas by at least 400 years. So even current historical opinion talks of the Guptas as existing for over thirteen centuries. It accords also a remarkable longevity to the Mauryas whom it places first on the Indian throne in c. 324 B.C.. Raychaudhuri⁴ notes: "Petty Maurya kings continued to rule in Western India as well as Magadha long after the extinction of the Imperial line. King Dhavala of the Maurya dynasty is referred to in the Kanaswa inscription of A.D. 738. Prof. Bhandarkar identifies him with Dhavalappadeva, the overlord of Dhanika mentioned in the Dabok (Mewar) inscription of A.D. 725. Maurya chiefs of the Konkan and Khāndesh are referred to in the early Chalukya and Jādava epigraphs. A Maurya Prince of Magadha named Pūrṇavarman is mentioned by Hiuen Tsang." There is no need to raise the eyebrows at the conclusions about the Guptas from the Puranic chronology and to twist the testimony of Alberuni instead of accepting it straightforwardly.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *The Classical Age*, p. 128.

² *The Political History of Ancient India*, p. 412.

³ *The Classical Age*, p. 2.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 240.

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

(On Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, Book II, Part 2, Chapter XXIII, "Man and the Evolution", paragraphs 3 and 4.)

Q. What exactly is meant here?

If you take the earth's history, all the forms of life have appeared one after another, following a general scheme, a general programme, with each time a new perfection added and a greater consciousness. Take only the animal forms—the point will be easier to understand, they are the last before man. Each animal form that has appeared had in its ensemble—I shan't say in all the details—a greater perfection than all preceding ones, and the culmination of the ascending march has been the human form which is at the moment the form most capable of manifesting consciousness : that is to say, the human form, at the maximum of its possibilities, is capable of more consciousness than all the preceding animal forms. This is one mode of evolution of Nature. And it is heredity that assures the progress in the midst of the same species. Sri Aurobindo has told us at the beginning of the book that Nature follows an ascending progression to manifest more and more the Divine Consciousness which is contained within all forms. Thus each new form produced by Nature is capable of expressing more completely the Spirit which it contains.

But if there were only one mode of evolution, by heredity, the individual would not progress. Indeed, a form comes, develops, reaches its peak and is followed by another form—some others do not disappear but the individual does not progress. When the ape or man will have arrived at the maximum of his possibility, when a human individual will be the best type of humanity, this will be the end. The individual will not be able to progress further. He is the human species, he will remain the human species, as long as a new

species does not make its appearance. Hence, from the point of view of terrestrial history, there is progress, since each species represents a progress in comparison to the species preceding it, but from the individual point of view there is no progress. The individual is born, follows his development and dies. To assure the individual's progress it is necessary to find another means, since heredity suffices only to assure the progress of the species.

Now, within the individual, contained within each form, is an organisation of consciousness which is nearer to and more directly under the influence of the inner Divine Presence, and this part of the individual which is under the divine influence, this sort of concentration of inner energy, has a life independent of the physical form, it is what we commonly call the soul or the psychic being, and, as it is organised around the divine centre, it belongs to the divine quality which is immortal, eternal. The outer body falls and this being remains through each experience lived in each life. There is a progress from life to life and it is the same individual who progresses. This movement of progress by reincarnation completes the other movement by heredity, in the sense that it is not only a species which is in progress over other species, it is the individual who passes through all the progress of the species and can continue to advance even when the species have reached the summit of their possibilities and rest stationary or disappear as the case may be, because they cannot go further, while the individual, having a life independent of the purely material form, can pass from one form to another and continue indefinitely his progress. There is a double self-completing movement made, and that is why each individual has the possibility of reaching the maximum of realisation, the complete identification with his divine origin, independently of the form to which he momentarily belongs.

There are people—there have been such, and such are still there, I believe—who claim to remember their previous lives and recount to you very detailed stories of what happened to them when they were dogs or when they were elephants or when they were apes. I will not broach a discussion of this subject, but it is to illustrate to you the fact that before being man one may have been ape ; perhaps one has not the power to remember, this is another affair, but certainly this inner divine spark has passed through successive forms in order to arrive at being more and more conscious of itself, and if it is proved that one can remember the form which one had before becoming a psychic being such as is contained within the human form, well, one can very well remember having climbed trees and eaten coconuts and even played all sorts of jokes on passers-by underneath.

We shall see perhaps later that a certain state of inner organisation is needed for the psychic being to be able to remember in the way the mental

being has memories, but in any case the fact is established that it is this double evolutionary movement, self-intersecting and self-completing, that gives the maximum possibilities of realisation to the divine light which is within each being. That is to say, in each outer body of yours you belong to the animal species on the way to becoming a supramental species, you are not that as yet, but inwardly you have a psychic being which has already lived in many, in innumerable species before, and which has an experience of thousands of years in the depths of your being, and which will still continue while your human body will remain human until it decomposes.

We shall see later if this psychic being has the possibility of transforming the body and of itself creating an intermediate species between the animal and the superman, but at the moment it is an immortal soul which becomes more and more conscious of itself in a body of the human species.

Q. In Nature we often see the disappearance of a species altogether. What is the reason for it?

Probably Nature has thought that it was not successful. She precipitates herself into action with an abundance and a total lack of the sense of economy. She attempts all she can, in all manners possible, with all sorts of inventions which are evidently very remarkable, but it is sometimes a road without issue and if she continued on that road instead of progressing she would obviously reach things absolutely unacceptable. Nature throws forth its creative spirit with an abundance which does not calculate, and when the combination is no great success, well, she simply suppresses it ; this does not impede her. For here there is an abundance which has no limit, she does not deny herself any kind of experience. It is only if the experience has a chance of leading somewhere that she continues it.

There have certainly been intermediate species or parallel forms between the ape and man, we think we have found traces of them. But these species have disappeared. Then, if we like to speculate, we can ask ourselves whether the species which is now going to come and which will serve as intermediary between the human animal and the superman will persist, or whether it will be considered uninteresting and be suppressed,—we shall speak of this the next time we meet.

It is all simply the action of an abundance without limits. Nature has enough knowledge and consciousness to act like someone who has an inexhaustible and incalculable quantity of elements and she mixes them, separates them again, reshapes them, unmakes them again...it is a huge cauldron, one churns its contents and gets out of it something ; it does not serve, one flings it back inside,

THE MOTHER'S TALKS TO THE ASHRAM CHILDREN

one takes up something else. Imagine yourself to that dimension...let us take only the earth, then you will understand, a form or two forms or a hundred, for Nature they have no sort of importance, she has thousands of them and thousands of thousands...and then years, a hundred years, a thousand years, a million years, they too have no kind of importance, there is all eternity before her.

It is just when we look at things in the human dimension, in space and time, that this appears considerable, but for Nature it is nothing, it is simply an amusement. One may like it more or less, but after all it is an amusement.

It is quite evident that this amuses her and that she is no hurry. If you tell her to skip the stages and to finish such and such a part of her work, the answer is always the same : "But why do so, why ? It does not amuse you ?"

October 30, 1957

(K. D. S.)

BE HAPPY

I saw the flower happy and gay,
And saw thy face divine,
From thee came forth a golden ray
And bathed my sacred shrine.

A way is there to the inmost soul
Of every entity.
I labour to reach my cherished goal :
The cosmic unity.

At the centre of the human heart,
Is a bud of crimson red,
To everyone it seeks to impart
Perfumes divinely bred.

I like to sit on the verdant lawn
When the peaceful morning star
To happy souls is closely drawn,
Though shining from afar.

The flowers sing : "We love you so !
Now come and give a kiss ;
Our scented hearts with pride will glow
And open in heavenly bliss."

They offer me their tender lips,
Their joyous smile they give ;
My thirst is appeased with honeyed sips ;
In a blissful land I live.

I yield to Earth's abiding charms,
And sleep in Love's embrace ;
Consoled am I in the mighty arms
Of her sweet eternal Grace.

SAILEN