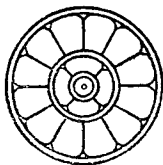


MOTHER INDIA

JUBILEE NUMBER : FEBRUARY 21, 1958

THE COMPLETION OF THE MOTHER'S EIGHTIETH YEAR

Price : Re. 1.



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.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. X

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

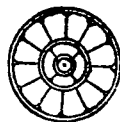
	<i>Page</i>
SRI AUROBINDO ON THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY An Unpublished Letter	
A BIRTHDAY MEDITATION BY THE MOTHER	.. 1
THE MOTHER—SOME GENERAL TRUTHS AND PERSONAL FACTS	.. 2
	.. <i>K. D. Sethna</i>
SRI AUROBINDO ON THE MOTHER Three Unpublished Letters	.. 12
WORK IN THE ASHRAM Some Unpublished Words of the Mother	.. 14
AIDS TO THE ASPIRANT Letters of Sri Aurobindo	.. 15
THE PROBLEM OF THE PAST Translated from the Bengali of Sri Aurobindo	.. 17
	.. <i>Niranjan</i>
HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US Reminiscences of Various People in Contact with the Mother Reported by	.. 23
	... <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>
THE LITERARY GENIUS OF THE MOTHER	.. 29
	.. <i>Sreekrishna Prasad</i>
AN EXPERIENCE	.. 40
	.. <i>Vatsā</i>
THUS SANG MY SOUL Poems to the Mother	.. 41
	.. <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>
NEW ROADS—Book Six: The Convocation of the Gods	.. 45
	.. <i>Norman Dowsett</i>
NO LONGER LIKE FRAIL MOTHS (Poem)	.. 47
	.. <i>Margaret Forbes</i>

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
GOLDEN PURUSHA (Poem) .. "Aspiration"	.. 48
SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA	
Some Questions and Answers .. M. P. Pandit	.. 49
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM	
A VISITOR'S VIEW .. Shiv Kumar	.. 53
THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND' .. JugalKishore Mukherjee..	55
KATHA UPANISHAD — A Commentary .. Babhru	.. 60

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS ON <i>The Life Divine</i> 69
THE DREAM .. Godfrey	.. 72
CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER .. Syed Mehdi Imam	.. 75
A CHILD'S DESIRE (Poem) .. Jyoti Kumari	.. 76
A CHILD'S GOD (Storyette) .. Mridu Bhashini Devi	.. 77
A DAY OF REDEDICATION AND SELF-GIVING .. "Shankh"	.. 79



SRI AUROBINDO ON THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

(An Unpublished Letter)

Q. Two days back I had felt a vast working all around, preparing us to receive the great thing expected to descend on 21st February. What is then meant by the obscurity felt by me now? How should I prepare myself for the descent intended for the Mother's birthday?

Let the descent come when it can, 20th or 22nd or any other day of the month or year. On the 21st only offer yourself to the Divine Mother and consecrate everything.

17-2-1936

A BIRTHDAY MEDITATION BY THE MOTHER

EACH day, each moment, must be an occasion for a new and completer consecration; and not one of those enthusiastic and trepidant consecrations, over-active, full of the illusion of the work, but a profound and silent consecration which need not be apparent, but which penetrates and transfigures every action. Our mind, solitary and at peace, must rest always in Thee, and from this pure summit it must have the exact perception of realities, of the sole and eternal Reality, behind unstable and fugitive appearances.

O Lord, my heart is purified from trouble and anguish; it is firm and calm, and it sees Thee in everything; and whatever the outer actions, whatever the circumstances the future has in store for us, I know that Thou alone livest, that Thou alone art real in Thy immutable permanence, and it is in Thee that we live.

May there be peace upon all the earth.

February 21, 1914

THE MOTHER

SOME GENERAL TRUTHS AND PERSONAL FACTS

THE One whom we call the Supreme is the utter Unmanifest. The creative Conscious Force of the Supreme is the Divine Mother in Her transcendent poise, *Aditi*, holding the Truths that have to be manifested out of the absolute Mystery. Through the transcendent Mother and by Her creativity the whole universe has taken birth. And when the Supreme manifests in the world His own personal being, He does it also through Her transcendence. In Her universal aspect She is *Mahāśakti*. All the Gods and Goddesses are of Her making—they are but powers that express Her.

There are many powers of the universal Mother which are not yet made manifest to us, and many universes too which are still in the Unmanifest and which the Divine Mother can create. What has been created is just one system of possibilities out of the innumerable that She and the Supreme can realise.

Time and again this Divine Creatrix takes a direct hand in the workings of the world. Through individual forms she manifests some ray of herself : being Supernature, the truth of all that Nature here strives to express, she makes one aspect or another of her light be born in all the ages of history and, when the hour is ripe, even a full individual embodiment can come forth.

It is such an embodiment, amidst a world of human beings, that Sri Aurobindo set before us when he charged with the care of his Ashram the radiant personality whom he called the Mother and into whose shaping hands he asked us to put ourselves as children.

On February 21 she completes her eightieth year. It would be the extreme of ineptitude to say she is eighty years old. Timeless is she not only in her inmost being but also in all the expressions of it in her outermost activity. Few of her disciples are up in the morning as early as she, and few turn to repose as late. It is hardly four or five years ago that she used to be on her feet, without a moment's respite, from five in the morning to nearly two in the afternoon—meeting people, ministering to their spiritual needs, considering their physical requirements, attending to the reports of numerous departments, giving flowers charged with the soul's secrets, making those secrets breathe out more sweetly with that flower of flowers, her smile. In the evening again, from four she would be active, with a little recreation

by way of tennis for an hour and then with a large amount of re-creation of lost joy or clouded light in the thousand disciples who would move past her for a couple of hours to receive from her hands a nut or a sweet through which their very bodies could absorb grace. Even today, her manifold activity is of one who is ever young, and at the day's end there is none who leaves the Ashram Playground with a fresher face and a brisker step.

Watching her, day after day, we realise that more than mere words are what she once spoke on old age. She said, in effect : "The coming of old age is due to two suggestions. First, the general collective suggestion—people telling you that you are getting old and can't do one thing or another. There is also the individual suggestion which keeps repeating, 'I am getting old, I mustn't attempt this or that.' The truth is quite different. Before thirty, the energy goes out in a spendthrift way because of the play of impulses. After thirty, there is a settling down and one is expected to have a plenitude of energy. At fifty, blossoming begins. At eighty, one becomes capable of full production."

Marvellously full indeed is the Mother's productiveness, for it is rich with the power of a consciousness more than human. Even at the age of five she was aware that she did not belong to this world, that she did not have a merely human consciousness. Her Yoga may be said to have begun in that early period. Her parents had a small chair, with a little back, made for her—she would sit in it and meditate. She used to see a column of light above her head. As her brain was yet a child's and therefore insufficiently developed, she could not make out what it was, however much she tried. But the general sense of a high and vast mission accompanied always that experience.

Neither of her parents knew anything about this or who she was. And she did not tell them anything. On rare occasions, at a little later period, she tried to give some hint, but they failed to understand ; nor, if they had caught its meaning, would they have believed her. Her mother was a positivist and materialist, in keeping with the tendency of those days, and wanted her and her brother to be ideal children according to her own notions. As for her father, he did not care one way or the other : he was a businessman.

All during her girlhood she was conscious of a more than human force behind her and often entering her body and working there in a supernormal way. This force she knew to be her own secret being. A few instances of its working may be given. She was about seven. There was a boy of nearly thirteen, a bully who always used to mock at girls, saying that they were good for nothing. One day she asked him, "Will you shut up ?" He kept mocking. Suddenly she took hold of him, lifted him up from the ground and threw him down with a thump though she was so much smaller than he. The force

that had come down into her and made her tremendously strong was recognised by her later in life as Mahakali.

Another instance. She had gone to play in a forest near Fontainebleau. She was climbing a steep hill, when her foot slipped and she began to fall down. The road below was strewn with sharp black stones. As she was falling, she felt somebody supporting her in a lap, as it were, and slowly bringing her down. When she reached the ground she was standing safely on her two feet, to the glad astonishment of all her companions.

In her sixteenth year she joined a Studio to learn painting. It was one of the biggest studios in Paris. She happened to be the youngest there. All the other people used to talk and quarrel among themselves, but she never took part in these things—she was always grave and busy with her work. They called her the Sphinx. Whenever they had any trouble or wrangle, they would come to her to settle their affairs. She could read their thoughts and, as she replied more often to their thoughts than to their words, they felt very uncomfortable. She would also make her decisions without the least fear, even if the authorities were concerned. Once a girl who had been appointed monitrice of the Studio got into the bad books of the elderly lady who was the Head of the place. This lady wanted to send away the monitrice. So the Sphinx was sought out by the young for help. She felt sympathy for the girl, knowing how poor she was and that if she left the place it would be the end of her painting career. The Head of the Studio had now to confront a determined little champion. Sensible pleading was first tried, but when it fell on deaf ears the champion took another line. With a bit of anger she caught the elderly woman's hand and held it in a firm grip as if the very bones would be crushed. It was soon agreed that the monitrice would be allowed to stay on. Mahakali had been at work again.

The Sphinx of the Studio was also the same serious self at home. She rarely smiled or laughed. And for this, once when she was about twenty, she got a scolding from her mother. She simply replied that she had to bear all the sorrows of the world. Her mother thought she had gone crazy. On another occasion she was scolded by her for not listening to what she was ordered to do. Then she answered that no earthly power could command her obedience.

Before this, she had already arrived at a fairly precise idea of her mission. Between the ages of eleven and twelve, a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to her not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him, of realising Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a life divine. And during her body's sleep occult instructions were given to her by several teachers, some of whom she met afterwards on the physical plane. Later on, as the inner and outer development

proceeded, a psychic and spiritual relation with one of these beings became more and more clear and frequent and, although she knew little of the Indian philosophies and religions at that time, she was led to call him Krishna and henceforth she was aware that it was with him, whom she knew she would meet some day, that the divine work was to be done. Being a painter she made a psychically impressionist sketch of him and waited for it to spring to life some day for even her physical eyes.

Some years she spent in Algeria, learning the higher occultism from a Polish adept, Théon by name, and his still more profoundly experienced French wife. Under them she would put her physical body into a trance and awake progressively in her subtle sheaths : putting to sleep the subtle sheath next to the physical, she would grow aware in the one on a deeper level : she thus climbed the whole grade of what occultists have charted out as supra-physical planes, and became acquainted with their laws and powers and operations, so that she might place all available means at the disposal of her spiritual ideal. On more than one occasion, so complete was her withdrawal from the body that the latter lay in a condition of temporary death. But the release, which could have absorbed her in the Divine Existence for good and plunged the embodied being into its Supreme Origin, was refused by her. She saw the world in its long travail and returned to the body by sheer force, a painful process when the connecting link between the subtle and the gross has been snapped.

In 1910 she came to hear of Sri Aurobindo who had settled in Pondicherry a year earlier. From then onwards her one desire was to visit India, the land which she had always cherished as her true mother country. And in 1914 the joy of seeing India was granted her—and the very heart of that joy was the meeting with Sri Aurobindo. But even before she caught sight of him she knew the touch of his presence at Pondicherry. For, as the boat bearing her drew closer to the shore of Pondicherry, she had the occult experience of a great light shining from some centre in the town. In the town itself, she was more intensely aware of the light. Soon she was face to face with its centre. And when she saw Sri Aurobindo she recognised the original of her visionary sketch. This was enough to convince her fully that her place and her work were near him in India.

Here we may remark that the whole truth about the choice of residence in India is not told when we have noted this meeting with Sri Aurobindo. The whole truth is compassed only when we realise why Sri Aurobindo himself, who had a wide Western education in England and wrote creatively in English and could have easily made his mark in Europe in whose culture he had been steeped, took India for his field, not only politically but also culturally and

spiritually, assimilated the whole genius of this country and made it the central fount of his own future. India holds within her a supreme potentiality of spiritual response and development because of an extraordinary history of soul-culture : a vibrant psychological atmosphere is there, breathing life and vigour into all formations of the soul and rendering possible new evolutions of the Spirit's power. That is why Sri Aurobindo came an Indian and went to the West to bring the West to India for a novel world-wide synthesis of spiritual aspiration; that is also why the Mother came from the West but with the eternal Indian within her, the born God-seeker and God-realiser, and joined forces with Sri Aurobindo to complete by her Indianised West his Westernised India, so that all mankind might grow to supermanhood with secret sustenance drawn from the soil where the wonderful seed of Avatarhood had often been sown.

The Mother saw the all-consummating Avatar in Sri Aurobindo, and Sri Aurobindo saw in her the Shakti that would make his Yoga an organised starting-point of a new chapter of earth's history. In the meeting on March 29, 1914, the true relationship between her and him, which she later expressed in a pithy sentence, must have flashed into awareness : "Without him, I exist not; without me, he is unmanifest."

But the master-means of manifestation, no less than the One who was to be manifested, was directly approached only on that day. Before meeting Sri Aurobindo the Mother used to find for her various spiritual experiences and realisations a poise for life-work by giving them a mould with the enlightened mind. All kinds of powerful ideas she had for world-upliftment—ideas artistic, social, religious. At sight of Sri Aurobindo she aspired for a total cessation of all mental moulds. She did not speak a word nor did he: she just sat at his feet and closed her eyes, keeping her mind open to him. After a while there came, from above, an infinite silence and settled in her mind. Everything was gone, all those fine and great ideas vanished and there was only a vacant imperturbable waiting for what was beyond mind. For days and days she carefully guarded her absolute silence and then slowly the Truth began to flow down from above. The Truth alone grew the substance of consciousness. No mental activity was left. And since that day in 1914 she has never lived in the mind. Ideas get formed not on a mental initiative but in response to the Truth and in order to make the Truth mentally comprehensible and in order to transmit some experience of the Truth to the ordinary world.

Sri Aurobindo had known in 1908 the cessation of all mental activity in an utter Nirvana which became the basis on which the dynamic and creative side of his Yoga proceeded. Although he experienced this cessation six years before the Mother, both of them soon found on comparing notes

that they had worked essentially on the same lines of an integral development, seeking to gather together all the movements of the spiritual life and carry them to a new goal. Only, a question that had haunted her from humanity's past had remained unanswered till she met Sri Aurobindo : Must always the attempt to establish a Kingdom of Heaven on earth fall tragically short of fruition ? When she put the question to Sri Aurobindo he looked tranquilly at her and said, "This time it will not be so."

The secret of averting failure was what he called the Supermind, the Divine's own self-dynamism that had never before been brought into action in the world—the Supermind not only reached in its free and sovereign height but also carried down from there into Matter's depths to release in them its own hidden counterpart which is the buried source of all evolutionary striving towards divinity.

In those first few months of the Mother's stay in India, the mission of which she had been aware since childhood grew increasingly clear. She has hinted of this in the entry dated June 26, 1914, of her *Prayers and Meditations* :

"O Lord, grant that we may rise above the ordinary forms of manifestation, so that Thou mayst find the instruments necessary for Thy new manifestation.

"Let us not lose sight of the goal ; grant that we may be always in union with Thy force, the force which the earth does not yet know and which Thou hast given us the mission to reveal to her."

An idea of the intensity with which the Mother gave herself, from 1914 onwards, to her work for the world can be faintly formed if we remember what Sri Aurobindo remarked later to a disciple. He said that he never knew what spiritual self-surrender could be until she threw her whole being at his feet.

It was in 1914 too that she experienced an identification of even her most outer consciousness with the Universal Mother. She has written about this in her *Prayers and Meditations*. She has described there two successive identifications. Of course, she had known, long before, that she was the Mother: only the complete identification took place now, after coming to India. This was but natural, since no other country has felt and known the universal aspect so intensely.

Her diary which comprises the *Prayers and Meditations* was started two years earlier. Every day at 5 a.m. she used to sit down to meditate near her window with a Kashmiri shawl wrapped round her. The meditation being over, she would note down her thoughts and experiences ; but they were meant only for herself and she always used to lock up her diary. In 1916 she stopped writing, but on her final arrival at Pondicherry in 1918 she took it up again. Later, it was only occasionally that she wrote. What she wrote covered

five big volumes. The first to see them was Sri Aurobindo and it was he who asked her to get them published as they were sure to be of immense help to others and would at the same time show what the physical consciousness is capable of achieving. So she made a selection and got it printed. She had the rest burnt in a boiler which is still in use at the Ashram.

The utter absence of self-attachment which is in this act impresses us in all the acts of the Mother. She never seems to think of her own ends or comfort or satisfaction. Up to a few years ago she did not even have a regular bed to rest in. There was hardly even any privacy. Then some disciples pleaded with her to let them build a room of her own. Her constant gesture is to give and give, and there is even no regret if the giving seems to bear no palpable fruit. Nor does her vision admit failure. Once she indicated how Sri Aurobindo and she worked. She said that even when they saw that a disciple was acting under wrong forces or was about to revolt and leave the Ashram they would not envisage a dark end for him but set the delicate balance so that the other side, the spiritually receptive part, may not go down. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo do not see things in small blocks of time and space: a boundless vista is ever in their eyes. And even beyond time and space their sense of being extends. Vividly does one of her disciples remember what she spoke apropos her own paintings. Himself an amateur with the brush, he was acutely concerned about the almost thoughtless scatter of her best work over many countries. She mentioned a decade in which she had done her finest painting and said that most of the pieces had been given away to various people at different times and in different places. The disciple said : "Should we not do something to collect them again ?" The Mother calmly replied : "Why ? Is it so important ?" "Surely, such masterpieces deserve to be found and kept safely. You had taken so much pains over them." "It does not matter." "But, Mother, don't you think there will be a loss if they are not preserved ?" Then the Mother, with eyes far away yet full of tenderness for the agitated disciple, said in a quiet half-whisper : "You know, we live in eternity."

Suddenly the disciple woke up to the truth of the Mother's being. "Of course, of course," he broke out, realising how often, seeing her walk our little ways, we forget the ineffable Plenitude that is she behind and beyond her dealings with us, the Plenitude which yet takes on itself the difficulties and limitations that are ours, so that passing through them she may be the exemplar of not only a divine victory but also a human fulfilment.

An open reminder of the truth of her being came most emphatically in 1926 when Sri Aurobindo put the Ashram in her charge. To be precise, there was on November 24 of that year a descent of what Sri Aurobindo terms

Overmind, the highest dynamic divine consciousness that had been realised so far in the world : he brought it down into the very material being, thus carrying one step forward the work done by the previous Avatar Sri Krishna who had brought down its influence into earth-life. With the descent of this consciousness in Sri Aurobindo the ground was prepared for the future descent of the Supermind, the integral Truth-Consciousness of the Divine in which lies the secret power of a complete transformation of earth-existence, even to the very cells of the body. When the Overmind was brought down, Sri Aurobindo summoned all those who were staying near him and told them that the time had come for him to withdraw into seclusion for concentrated work towards the Supermind's descent and that henceforth the Mother would be in the forefront, his Shakti and their Guru.

The nine or ten months after the Overmind's descent were a history of spectacular spiritual events. All who were present have testified that miracles were the order of the day. What can be called miracles happen every day even now in the Ashram—wherever a great spiritual Force is at work the miraculous is inevitable—but many such events occur without any *éclat* and often wear even the appearance of natural phenomena. Those which were common occurrences in those ten months were most strikingly miraculous and, if they had continued, a new religion could have been established with the whole world's eyes focussed in wonder on Pondicherry. But the spectacular period terminated with an incident of profound significance. The Mother received one day what she has called the Word of Creation. Just as the God Brahma is said to have brought forth the world with his Word of Creation, the fiat of a new world that could be marvellously built lay ready with the Mother. A superhuman world was on the verge of being materialised.

With this power the Mother went to Sri Aurobindo's room and told him : "I have got the Word of Creation." Sri Aurobindo sat silent for a while and then said : "This Creation is from the Overmind. And we do not want that. We have to build the Supermind's world." The Mother went back to her own room. She concentrated intensely for two hours and at the end of them she had completely dissolved the whole new Creation that had been on the brink of precipitation on earth. The greatest power in any hands during human history was set aside as if it were a trifle—and all because Sri Aurobindo had said that nothing short of the highest divine Truth was the ideal of manifestation for him and her. Miraculously grand though the manifestation would have been of the Overmind deities, it would not have been an utter transformation of life and would have stood in the way of a still greater glory. The very grandeur of it would have filled the aspiring gaze of mankind and checked it from straining for anything beyond it—at least for millennia.

With that unparalleled act of obedience and surrender by the Mother at one gesture from Sri Aurobindo the long laborious period of gradual preparation for the Supermind's world started—on the one hand the drawing down of the supreme Truth-Consciousness from above and on the other the digging into what Sri Aurobindo designates as the Inconscient, the apparent origin of evolution on earth, the seeming negation of the Divine within which the integral Divinity has to be manifested, converting all the painful terms of the Ignorance into the terms of Knowledge and Bliss.

Twelve years after the descent of the Overmind into the physical being of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the greater aim seemed on the point of achievement. The Mother remarked some time ago : "In 1938 I used to see the Supermind descending into Sri Aurobindo. What could not be done at that time was to fix it here." The fixing took place in circumstances mind-bafflingly dramatic. Twelve more years elapsed, and then Sri Aurobindo gave up his body, went through what appeared to be a disease with a fatal ending but what, in consideration of the extraordinary concomitants of that illness and that death, can only be regarded as a supreme strategic sacrifice. Sri Aurobindo, in view of the lack of preparedness in the world to receive and hold the descending Supermind, gathered as it were the whole force of mortal fate into his semi-divinised body and in the act of giving up this body exhausted that force in essence and principle and drew down to earth and fixed there the supramental Light. He took a drastic short cut towards a goal which otherwise would have taken decades to approach. As soon as he withdrew from his physical envelope the supramental Light made its permanent base in the Mother's body, beginning with the brain-mind.

Since then a deeper and deeper digging-in by the Light has continued. In reaction against the invasion by the Truth-Consciousness the powers of the Ignorance have attempted a desperate obstruction again and again. But Sri Aurobindo's sacrifice had already delivered the first of the finishing strokes to them. And with the Supramental Manifestation on February 29, 1956, when the Consciousness and Power of the Supermind became part of the earth's atmosphere, as it were—a power subtly yet directly at work on a universal scale in the midst of the old forces—the complete victory was assured, whose ultimate outer sign will be what the Mother called in her New Year Message of 1957 "the glorified body" which can conquer all Evil.

The process of the "glorified body" goes on—visible to a few whose sight, piercing through the outer eyes' blindness, can catch the descended *kāraṇa śarīra*, the causal sheath, at work within the Mother, a white glory into which the outer substance is gradually absorbed or, rather, which slowly projects itself into that substance and transforms it. The Light plays about in the limbs,

THE MOTHER—SOME GENERAL TRUTHS AND PERSONAL FACTS

coming forward, drawing back, now a soft beauty enshrined in the flesh, now a great power possessing bone and tissue till one beholds no longer the familiar shape we adore but a perfect Goddess suffusing it and for a while blotting it from the gaze. But not rapidly enough can the supramental sheath exteriorise itself, for the Mother stands in no immune isolation, she takes hundreds of imperfect consciousnesses into herself, works out their defects, repairs in her own body the constant damage which this comprehensive compassion inevitably brings : her aim is to carry the world with her and to prepare it for the full manifestation which it would scarcely be able to bear if she sought her own perfection to the neglect of humanity's cry for inner help and divinity's call to live for a collective triumph instead of for an individual achievement.

A farther step towards the conquest of all Evil is disclosed in the Message of January 1, this year, in which she speaks of the consent of material Nature to the demand for transformation. Nature has always been rejected by spiritual seekers and left to her own devices of slow circuitous development and aeonic travail with ill-lit forces. Nature, by being thrown back on herself, has avenged the rejection by obstructing with those forces the occasional pull on her for collaboration by seekers of the Spirit. The Mother's mission is to take Nature into herself, for indeed she is in essence all that is here in the very stone of material existence : a saviour love is hers that shirks nothing, uplifts everything and makes even dust divine without annulling it, since even dust has its counterpart in the Supreme and a destiny of fulfilment here and now.

Eighty years has the saviour love been the earth's companion. A blessed day is February 21 in its reminder to us of the long labour and of the fateful moment which saw its beginning. May our hearts be in tune with that moment and be reborn from the sweetness and strength of this day that is luminous with the Spirit's own sun—the Mother's face.

K. D. SETHNA

SRI AUROBINDO ON THE MOTHER

(*Three Unpublished Letters*)

(1)

Q : I felt sullen today because of the idea that many people here are given frequent chances of seeing the Mother and having interviews with her while I am given very little opportunity of coming near to her. Some people even see the Mother daily but I can see her only after much effort and even then it seems as if the Mother permitted it grudgingly.

A : It is the inner nearness that matters. The idea of the mind—quite natural, of course—that the outer closeness is the sign of the relation or a special favour or the means of rapid progress is not borne out by experience. There are some who see the Mother daily and are very little advanced from what they were years ago—there were others who got worse because it fostered the vital demand in them—on the other hand there are some quite close to the Mother and forward on the path and cherished by her who come to her only very occasionally—and I could instance one case in which there is an interview only once a year, yet there is no one who has made more rapid progress or in whom the love relation has grown to a greater intensity and fervour. In all these things it is best to have an entire confidence in the Mother and the light that guides her.

10-12-1933

(2)

Q : I find it very difficult to remove the wrong feeling about the Mother's smile or about her seeing some sadhaks—especially the Europeans—more often than others. It is easy to keep the mind clear with the right understanding about these things, yet why does the wrong feeling of partiality persist so strongly ?

A : But why indulge a feeling which has not truth or good sense or reason at its back ? This accusation of partiality rests first on feelings of egoistic vital demand, jealousy etc. which are no doubt fairly universal in human nature as it is, but not the more respectable for that. It supports itself on a crude idea of "equality" of treatment which in practice comes to this that everyone should be treated in just the same way, which is about as impossible a thing as could be demanded in this world and would make all action and

all direction of either work or sadhana impossible. The Mother extends her divine love and protection to all, but the form she gives to her action must vary with the different nature and need of each, the demands of the work, the necessities of their sadhana. The idea about the Europeans is quite wrong—since with the exception of X and Y all those who see most of the Mother or are given special positions of confidence are Indians. If one starts comparisons each has something which another has not. And to have that something does not prevent complaints of being worse treated than others. These feelings therefore are merely the product of the restless discontent of the vital and there is nothing to be done with them except to send them away whenever they come as useless disturbers of happiness and progress.

27-12-1933

Q : Some people in the Ashram get interviews with the Mother very often while others hardly get any. It looks almost like the high pay of top officials in a government—the inequalities in this matter are very evident !

A : It is not a government and an interview is not pay. If it comes to a question of demand and supply or of interviews as a right and privilege, no sadhak would be satisfied with 3 or with 300. There would be complaints, laments and revolts just as they are now. People would soon find some other ground for accusing the Mother of partiality and injustice (the people who get the most interviews are generally those who revolt the most, though there are exceptions). It is precisely this taking of the spiritual life as if it were a "government" or a court or a school (with places and marks and rewards and punishments) or a hostel or a mixture of all these and some other human institutions that has been the bane of this Ashram. If it is to be a Government with the Mother as President dealing out privileges, handshakes, pay, and what not on a principle of democratic equality or any other principle, then her only course would be to abdicate.

The number of interviews has nothing to do, by the way, with smallness or bigness of people, however the size may be reckoned. There are spiritually big people who get no interviews and spiritually small ones who get them. The same would turn out to be the fact on any principle of smallness or bigness.

The only place where a satisfactory equality of treatment is possible—satisfactory to the human mind and vital—would be I think Nirvana or the Nihil of Shunyavadins.

10-4-1935

WORK IN THE ASHRAM

(*Some Unpublished Words of the Mother*)

FORMERLY I used to keep control over everything. Nothing would be done without my first knowing and approving of it. Afterwards I adopted a different mode of acting. I withdrew from all the details and kept myself at a distance, watching things from above, as it were, and sending the right inspiration to each worker in his own field.

This change was necessary for the worker's spiritual development. He has to become aware of my influence inwardly. But he can receive it only if all the workers collaborate. Without collaboration the right inspiration will not be effective. The action from above has a wide sweep : it covers all the departments and is one harmonious whole. If walls are set up in the field of work, dividing and breaking it up, the work can never be according to the spiritual Will.

So bear this in mind : no collaboration, no right working.

I-12-1957

AIDS TO THE ASPIRANT

(Some Letters of Sri Aurobindo)

Now that you are here, try to enter into the higher ways of the sadhana. Withdraw from the vital and its demands and desires, make the inner heart and the psychic being your centre and seek union with the Mother's consciousness through self-giving and surrender.

(August 22, 1935)

*

This like other visions is a symbolic vision. The black beast is a tamasic power in the physical mind which is trying to attack people and stand in the way of the sadhana by bringing confusion and inertia.

Put your faith in the Divine Shakti, set your mind at rest and let the Mother's Force work.

(August 26, 1933)

*

This realm (whose centre is between the eyebrows) is the realm of inner thought, will, vision—the motor-car indicates a rapid progress in this part of the consciousness. The motor-car is a symbolic image, these images do not refer to anything physical.

These things take place in the inner mind or inner vital and usually there is a truth behind them, but the form in which they come into the mind may be imperfect—i.e. the meaning may be something not perfectly revealed in the words.

(September 18, 1933)

*

The Om is the symbol of the Cosmic Divine with the Mother as the manifesting Power. It is the descent of that consciousness that is indicated—it came into the mind, psychic and higher vital and these parts are to be a temple for the Divine in this consciousness,—these being already open,—for the lower part of the being is not yet ready. It is of course in the inner being that the seed, as it were, of these possibilities is put in these experiences.

(September 30, 1933)

*

It is in answer to your aspiration that the Mahakali force descended—the serpent is the Energy from above working in the vital answering to the Serpent Kundalini which rises from below. The white fire is the fire of aspiration, the red fire is the fire of renunciation and tapasya, the blue fire is the fire of spirituality and spiritual knowledge which purifies and dispels the Ignorance.

(November 5, 1933)

*

The small room is your body or your small individual personality and the light of the Sachchidananda consciousness is being poured on you. These (experiences) prepare you for union with that divine and infinite consciousness. All that can be seen with closed eyes can be seen with open eyes also ; it is sufficient that the inner sight should extend to the subtle physical consciousness for that to happen.

(November 18, 1933)

*

The lake is the being in its individual consciousness, the sea is the same being with a universalised consciousness which can hold the universe and its cosmic forces in itself—the one (individual) merges into the other (the universal). The boat is the formation of the Mother's consciousness in you in which you are preparing to sail in this sea.

(December 8, 1933)

*

The higher consciousness in any of its levels is seen usually as a sky or ether, but when felt through the vital it is often perceived as a sea.

(December 29, 1933)

*

The Mother when she works in the supra-physical levels goes out in a different emanation to each sadhak.

(December 11, 1933)

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THE PROBLEM OF THE PAST

SRI AUROBINDO

*(Translated from the original in the Bengali weekly "Dharma" 1910,
edited by Sri Aurobindo)*

COMPLETE domination of the educated class in India by Europe for nearly a century deprived the Indians of the Aryan enlightenment and the Aryan nature. They became impotent and developed a predilection for inactivity and dependence on others. That tamasic feeling is now going. It would be helpful to discuss the reasons for its appearance. In the eighteenth century, tamasic ignorance and rajasic impulsiveness enveloped the whole of India. Thousands of men of strong asuric character, selfish, irresponsible, inimical to the country, took birth in India and prepared favourable conditions for her eventual bondage. At that hour, the English merchants came to her from the distant British Isles to fulfil a deep intention of the Divine. India, prostrate under a load of sins, passed into the hands of the foreigners. The world still looks with wonder at the miracle. In the absence of any other satisfactory explanation, everyone is extolling to the skies the virtues of the English. In fact, the English have many qualities, otherwise they would not have become the greatest triumphant nation in the world. But those who say that the inferiority of the Indians and the superiority of the English, the vices of the Indians and the virtues of the English are the only reasons for this miracle, though not entirely wrong, still give rise to a few false ideas in the minds of people. Let us therefore carry out a penetrating investigation on the subject in order to arrive at the correct conclusion.

The conquest of India by the English is an unparalleled achievement in the history of the world. If this immense country were inhabited by a nation, weak and ignorant, inapt and uncivilised, then such a statement could not have been made. On the contrary, India is the native country of the Rajputs, the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Pathans, the Moguls and others. The Bengalis with their quick intelligence, the thinkers from South India, the politician Brahmmins from Maharashtra are children of Mother India. A capable statesman like Nana Farnavis, a general adept in the science of war like Madhaji Scindhia and mighty geniuses and kingdom-builders like Hyder Ali and Ranjit

Singh could be found in every province at the time of the British conquest. In the eighteenth century, the Indians were not inferior to any other nation in power, courage or intelligence. India of the eighteenth century was the temple of Saraswati, the treasury of Lakshmi and the playground for Shakti. Yet the country which the mighty Muslims, constantly growing in power, took hundreds of years to conquer with the greatest difficulty and could never rule over in perfect security, that very country in the course of fifty years willingly admitted the sovereignty of a handful of English merchants and within a century went into an inert sleep under the shadow of their paramount empire. You might say, it was the result of the want of unity. We admit that the lack of unity is truly one of the principal reasons of our misfortune but then there was never any unity in India even in the past. There was no unity in the age of the Mahabharata nor in the time of Chandragupta or Asoka. There was no unity during the period of the Muslim conquest of India or in the eighteenth century. The lack of unity could not be the exclusive reason for such a miracle to happen. If you say that the virtues of the English are the reason then I would ask those who know the history of that period whether they would venture to say that the English merchants of that epoch were superior to the Indians either in virtue or in merit. It is difficult to suppress laughter when we hear someone talking of the great qualities of those devils, cruel and powerful, selfish and avaricious,—Clive, Warren Hastings and others, English merchants and robbers who by plundering and conquering India, have given to the world not only examples of incomparable bravery, labour and pride but also examples of unsurpassable wickedness. Courage, labour and pride are virtues of the Asuras, their good points. Clive and other Englishmen also possessed them. But their vices were in no way less than the vices of the Indians. Therefore the virtues of the English did not accomplish this miracle.

The English and the Indians both were equally Asuras. It was not a battle between the Gods and the Asuras but a fight of the Asura against the Asura. What was the sublime quality of the Occidental Asura which crowned with success his power, courage and intelligence? And what was the fatal defect of the Indian Asura which nullified his power, courage and intelligence? The answer is, in the first place, that though the Indians were equal to the English in all qualities they did not have any national feeling whereas the English possessed it to the full. From this it must not be hastily concluded that the English were patriotic, and that it was patriotism which inspired them to build up successfully a vast empire in India. Patriotism and national consciousness are two different qualities. The patriot lives in a rapture of service to the motherland; he perceives her everywhere, looks upon her as a godhead

and to her offers all work done as a sacrifice for the good of the country; his own interest merges in the interest of the country. The English of the eighteenth century did not have this feeling as it cannot abide permanently in the heart of any Occidental materialist nation. The English did not come to India for the good of their country. They came here to do business, to make money for themselves. Not out of love for their country did they conquer or pillage India but they conquered it mainly in their own interest. However, without being patriots, they had the national feeling; the pride that "Our country is the best, the traditions and customs, religion, character, morality, strength, courage, intelligence, opinion and work of our nation are inimitably perfect, unattainable by others;" the belief that "The good of my country is my good, the glory of my country is my glory, the prosperity of my fellow countrymen is my prosperity; instead of seeking only personal ends, I shall advance at the same time the interest of my nation; it is the duty of every one in the country to fight for her honour, glory, and prosperity; it is the religion of the hero, if need be, to die bravely in that fight;" this sense of duty exhibits the main characteristic of the national consciousness. Patriotism is in its nature sattwic, whereas the national consciousness is rajasic. One who can lose his ego in the ego of the country is the ideal patriot; one who aggrandises the ego of the country, all the while maintaining intact his own ego is a nationally conscious individual. The Indians of that epoch were wanting in national consciousness. We do not mean to say that they never cared for the good of their nation, but if there was the least conflict between their personal interest and that of the country, they often sacrificed the good of the country to achieve their own. According to us, the lack of national consciousness was a more fatal defect than the lack of unity. If full national consciousness spread everywhere in the country, then unity could be realised even in this land afflicted with division. Mere verbal repetition, "We want unity, We want unity!" is not sufficient. This is the principal reason of the conquest of India by the British. The Asuras fought against the Asuras; but the nationally conscious and unified Asuras defeated the Asuras equal to them in all other qualities but disunited and devoid of national consciousness. According to the Divine law, one who is strong and efficient wins the wrestling contest; one who is fast and enduring arrives first at the destination. High moral qualities or merits alone cannot make one win a race or wrestling bout; the necessary strength is indispensable. Thus even a wicked and Asuric nation, conscious of itself, is able to found an empire, while for want of national consciousness a virtuous people possessing many high moral qualities loses its independence, and eventually forfeiting its noble character and good qualities falls into decadence.

From the political point of view this explains best how India was conquered. But there is a greater truth hidden behind it. We have already mentioned that tamasic ignorance and rajasic impulse had become very predominant in India. This state precedes a downfall. Concentration on the rajasic quality increases the rajasic power; but pure rajas soon changes into tamas. Arrogant and disorderly rajasic endeavour soon gets tired and exhausted and finally degenerates into impotence, dejection and inactivity. The rajasic power can become durable if it is turned towards sattwa. In the absence of the sattwic nature, at least a sattwic ideal is indispensable; that ideal imparts order and a steady strength to the rajasic power. The English always cherished these two great sattwic ideals, order and liberty, which have made them great and victorious in the world. In the nineteenth century this nation was seized by the desire to do good to others and, thanks to it, England rose to the summit of national grandeur. Moreover, the insatiable thirst for knowledge, which drove the Europeans to make hundreds of scientific discoveries, and people by the hundred to lay down their lives willingly in order to gain even a drop of knowledge, that strong sattwic yearning for knowledge was active among the English. It was this sattwic power from which the English drew their strength; their supremacy, courage and force are diminishing, and fear, discontent and lack of self-confidence are on the increase because the sattwic power is waning. The rajasic power having lost its sattwic aim is sliding into tamas; on the other hand, the Indians were a great sattwic nation. It was because of this sattwic power that they became incomparable in knowledge, courage and in spite of their disunity were able to resist and throw back foreign attacks for a thousand years. Then began the increase of rajas and the decrease of sattwa. At the time of the Muslim advent, the wide-spread knowledge had already begun to shrink and the Rajputs who were predominantly rajasic occupied the throne of India. Northern India was in the grip of wars and internal quarrels and, owing to a decadence of Buddhism, Bengal was overcast with tamas. Spirituality sought refuge in South India and by the grace of that sattwic power South India was able to retain her freedom for a long time. Yearning for knowledge, progress of knowledge slowly declined; instead, erudition was more and more honoured and glorified; spiritual knowledge, development of yogic power and inner realisation were mostly replaced by tamasic religious worship and observance of rajasic ceremonies to gain worldly ends; when the cult of the four great orders of society disappeared, people began to attach more importance to outward customs and actions. Such an extinction of the national dharma had brought about the death of Greece, Rome, Egypt and Assyria; but the Aryan race who held the ancient religion was saved by the rejuvenating flow of heavenly nectar which gushed from time to time from

the ancient source. Shankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramdas and Tukaram brought back to life a moribund India by sprinkling her with that divine nectar. However, the current of rajas and tamas was so strong that, by its pull, even the best were altered into the worst; common people began to justify their tamasic nature with the knowledge given by Shankara; the cult of love revealed by Chaitanya became a cover for extreme tamasic inactivity : the Marathas who were taught by Ramdas, forgot their Maharastrian dharma, wasted the power in selfish pursuits and internal conflicts and destroyed the kingdom founded by Shivaji and Bajirao. In the eighteenth century this current attained its maximum force. Society and religion were confined within narrow limits as ordained by a few modern lawgivers; the pomp of outward rites and ceremonies came to be designated as religion; with the Aryan knowledge vanishing and the Aryan character dying, the ancient religion abandoned society and took shelter in the forest-life of the Sannyasi and in the heart of the devotee. India was then enveloped in the thickest darkness of tamas, yet a stupendous rajasic impulse under the cloak of an outward religion relentlessly pursued vile and selfish ends, bringing ruin to the nation and the country. Power was not lacking in the country, but, owing to the eclipse of the Aryan dharma and of sattwa, that power, unable to defend itself, brought about its own destruction. Finally, the Asuric power of India vanquished by the Asuric power of Britain became shackled and lifeless. India plunged into an inert sleep of tamas. Obscurity, unwillingness, ignorance, inaction, loss of self-confidence, sacrifice of self-respect, love of slavery, emulation of foreigners and adoption of their religion, dejection, self-depreciation, pettiness, indolence etc. all these are characteristic qualities of the tamas. Which of these was lacking in nineteenth-century India ? Each and every endeavour of that century, because of the predominance of these qualities, bore everywhere the seal of the tamasic force.

When God roused India, in the first flush of her awakening the flaming power of the national consciousness began to flow swiftly in the veins of the nation. At the same time, a maddening emotion of patriotism enraptured the youth. We are not Europeans, we are Asiatics. We are Indians, we are Aryans. We have gained the national consciousness but unless it is steeped in patriotism, our national consciousness cannot blossom. Adoration of the Mother must be the foundation of that patriotism. The day "Bande Mataram", the song of Bankimchandra, crossed the barrier of the outer senses and knocked at the heart, on that day patriotism was born in our heart; on that day the Mother's image was enshrined in our heart. The country is Mother, the country is Divine, —this sublime precept which forms a part of the Upanishadic teachings is the seed of the national rising. As the "jiva" is a part of the Divine, as the power

MOTHER INDIA

of the "jiva" is also a part of the Divine power, so also the seventy million Bengalis, the collectivity of three hundred million Indians are parts of all-pervading Vasudeva; in the same manner, Mother India, adorned with many hands and powers, shelter of these three hundred millions, embodiment of Shakti, is a force of the Divine Mother, the Goddess, the very body of the universal Mahakali. Excitement, passion, clamour, insult, oppression and torture endured during these five years in order to awaken the love for the Mother and establish Her image in the heart and mind of the nation were decreed by the Divine. That work is over. What next ?

Next, the ancient power of the Aryans has to be resurrected. First, the Aryan character and Aryan education must reappear ; secondly, the yogic power has to be developed again ; lastly, that yearning for knowledge, that capacity for work worthy of an Aryan must be utilised in order to assemble necessary material for the new age ; the mad passion worked up during these last five years has to be harnessed and directed towards the accomplishment of the Mother's work. Young men all over the country, who are seeking a path and looking for work, let them get over the passion and find out a means of acquiring power. The sublime work that has to be accomplished cannot be achieved by passion alone ; strength is necessary. The Force that can be acquired from the teachings of your ancestors can do the impossible. That Force is preparing to descend into your body. That Force is the Mother Herself. Learn to surrender to Her. The Mother by making you her instrument will accomplish the work so swiftly, so powerfully that the world will be astounded. All your efforts will come to nothing without that Force. The image of the Mother is enshrined in your heart, you have learnt to serve and adore the Mother ; now surrender to the Mother within you. There is no other way to accomplish the work.

NIRANJAN

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

Reminiscences of Various People in Contact with the Mother

"YES, I WAS THERE"

I RECEIVED a letter from my sister in California informing me that my mother was to undergo a series of operations. My mother had not written to me for fear of making me worried, living, as I was, three thousand miles away in Pondicherry.

My sister who had not cared to know anything about the Mother and whose Christian unitarian religion would never let her believe in her divinity, wrote to me in a tone of challenge, "Now tell that person in Pondicherry about whom you have so often been writing to us to do something in this critical period of our mother's operations."

I went to the Mother that evening and told her that I had received an urgent letter from my mother in the United States informing me that within four or five days she was to have a series of operations and that she wanted the Mother's help.

The Mother did not do anything more than nod her head.

When about fifteen days had passed, I received a letter from my mother that she had been successfully operated on. "But", wrote she, "something wonderful happened, very difficult to put into words."

"After the operations, when the effect of the anaesthetic was gone and the pain became intolerable, suddenly, in the Boston Hospital itself, I felt the presence of somebody surrounding and enveloping me. I can't explain it. I can't put it in words. The pain left me completely and I had a wonderfully deep and peaceful sleep. I am now having a surprisingly rapid recovery.

"I want to ask you but one thing. Could that presence, could it be the Mother of Pondicherry?"

The day I received the letter I went to the Mother and told her the whole thing. In reply, with her wonderful smile, she uttered only these four words : "Yes, I was there."

A TRAIN DISASTER

When I finally came to the Ashram, we were three or four persons who travelled together from Calcutta to Pondicherry.

As we reached Bhuvaneshwar, I felt some fear and a kind of uneasiness but there was no evident cause for it.

I started to concentrate on the Mother. I saw her during my concentration and felt a sudden jolt in the train, though, as I learnt from my friends when I opened my eyes, nothing had actually happened.

The rain now started falling heavily. Not more than fifteen minutes had elapsed when with a huge jerk the train went off the rails. All the bogies fell on one side, broken and smashed. Many people were crushed, many were pent up inside the compartments, crying for help. The heavy rains made matters worse. It was all a horrible wreckage and jumble.

Later a train came from Madras to fetch us. All of us bound for Pondicherry were unhurt as if by a miracle.

On reaching Pondicherry, I went straight to the Mother who was then in the Playground. I had already sent her a telegram intimating to her about the train disaster. As I saw her and was having her blessings, I asked her, "How is it that we all were saved. We were not even a little injured."

"Don't ask me this question. Simply express your gratitude to the Divine," she told me with an intimate smile.

"YOUR PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED"

I was in the service of the West Bengal Government. But to make both ends meet, I had a side-business which I used to carry on in off-duty hours.

I had a partner, certain irregularities of whom made the business fail. A case was filed against us in the court. The situation was that I must pay a certain sum of money by a fixed date, or the court would go into action and we had to go to its sessions on each summons.

I was in a fix, for it was not then financially possible for me to pay the amount. I wrote to the Mother for her blessings so that I might be able to get over my difficulty more easily. She sent me her blessings.

Though the case, which was to be taken up two days after, was postponed, no solution was yet visible.

It was a December night, shivering cold. I lay in my bed, uncomfortable and tossing. I got up and thought, "Let me call the Mother." I meditated for a time and went to sleep.

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

Suddenly my sleep broke and I saw a white figure. It was the Mother. She was in a gorgeous dress and beaming with light. Her presence filled the room with a soothing shine and my being with a deep bliss. She was so clear, so vivid, with distinct features, that it was certainly not a dream, nor a vision but something more than all that. It was the Mother who was herself there face to face with me. I was fully awake, sitting up in my bed when she spoke : "Your problem will be solved." The next moment she disappeared.

Then I pulled my blanket over me and again went to sleep. During the day I went to my work as usual and got a letter from my father reproaching me for not having written to him about my difficulty. A friend of mine had disclosed to him the whole story. So my father wrote to me that he was sending the necessary money immediately to have the case against me withdrawn.

NO NEED TO BE AFRAID

It was in 1936 that at the age of 28, I came to Pondicherry for the first time. I did not know much of Yoga nor about Sri Aurobindo and nothing about the Mother. I had not read any of their books.

On my arrival, I was taken to the Mother. It was in the room near the staircase, where she used to give collective meditation to the sadhaks. As the light was dim, I could not see her face distinctly. I can only remember her white figure in half-lit silence when we sat in concentrated hush.

I was put up in an Ashram house, then called the "Artists' House", where now the three-storeyed steelless cement marvel of architecture, the Golconde, stands.

At night I was alone in that house and, to be honest, I was afraid of ghosts. I felt a little frightened in that dumb and gaping loneliness.

After a short sleep, I got up and suddenly saw the Mother sitting in the chair opposite my bed. Then I dozed off. Again I got up after a time and saw her standing outside my mosquito-net, as if in the air, but with a face as clear as before. Once more I dropped into sleep to be roused a third time by her presence which seemed to grow more and more concrete. I felt a great happiness poured into me.

When I went to the Mother in the morning, she caught my hand and said, "You were afraid last night ? There are no evil spirits here. I have driven away all of them from here. There is no need to be afraid."

This was a most fortunate day for me. It changed the entire future course of my life.

MOTHER INDIA

THE HEALER OF BODY AND SOUL

The years before the late forties of this century were years of comparative asceticism, strict discipline and intense inward-drawn spiritual sadhana. It was not easy to be admitted to the Ashram, so much so that in the twenties and thirties even permission to visit the Ashram and have Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother was strictly limited and one was not permitted to visit the Ashram premises and participate in any Ashram work outright. Indeed, the young ones were admitted only as rare and exceptional cases.

In 1937, a youth of 22 came to Pondicherry in mysterious circumstances. It was about 10-30 or so in the morning. He met the Secretary who sent him to me. The Mother had given instructions that anybody who visited the Ashram from my part of the country should be directed to me for the necessary help.

The condition of the boy was like that of a runaway. No good clothes, no bedding, no money even for food. He had somehow reached Pondicherry. The strange thing above all was, as he told me, that he had come for the purpose of staying in the Ashram permanently. This was a thing for which, during those days, nobody easily dared to make a request.

The boy had come to me at the hour when daily I used to go see the Mother. I met the Mother and told her about him and his intentions. She said that she would see the boy when she came out for the Terrace Darshan. She instructed me to stand the boy by my side.

After she had seen the boy, she told me when I next saw her that he could stay here. It was a surprise for me and many others. She also said that I could take him to the Dining Room and that she would arrange for his work and that I should keep him in one of the houses which I had rented out for the convenience of visitors.

The boy was happy. He was given work in the Ashram Bakery and then in the Press.

It was only after some days had passed that he told me how he had happened to come to Pondicherry.

"My mother died in my early childhood", thus he began narrating his life-story, "and my stepmother, who was my auntie, brought me up. Her treatment of me was in no way an exception to the proverbial treatment by stepmothers. I had a hard life. Somehow I felt an urge to take up the spiritual life. I left my house without knowing where to go. I came to B, a town some hundred miles away, to a sadhu's ashram. I decided to stay there. They accepted me.

"That very day I had a dream in which I was told that I should go to Sri Aurobindo. I spoke of it to my Guru. He at once agreed ; he encouraged

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

me by saying that that seemed to be the place for me. But I did not know anybody in Pondicherry nor was I very eager to come, so I did not pursue the idea. But again I had the same dream. The Guru pressed me to go to Pondicherry and actually arranged for my ticket and gave me some money for the essential needs. Well, here I am !”

A few days after, the boy fell sick. His condition was such that the Ashram doctors could not do anything. He was advised to be taken to the Government Hospital for treatment. He was X-Rayed, but no treatment was of any avail. No progress could be made. So all the doctors decided that he should go away from here if he was to survive. The climatic conditions of Pondicherry did not suit him.

They took the Mother's sanction. One of the doctors told me that the patient must leave Pondicherry that very night.

I informed the boy accordingly and I could see from his face how worried he was. But he did not express himself. Where could he go in such a state of health ? He had already left home and he did not want to go there and he did not know of any other place where he could go. And, as I was told that the Mother had already decided about his departure on the advice of the doctors, there was to be no more questioning, and on my part I could not dare to approach the Mother on this point and avert his going, even if I knew that the condition of the boy was pitiable.

In the evening at about six, the boy and myself went to the seaside for a stroll. There he wept out his heart to me. After his pitiful lamentations he told me, “All right, I shall go if the Mother has so decided. I shall go in spite of my condition. It must be the best thing for me. But one thing I want to know. Please ask the Mother: “Is it really *she* who wants to send me away? If it is not she, and if it is only because of my sickness that I am asked to go, I will not go. I will remain here, I will die here.”

He knew that I used to go to see the Mother late in the evening, before the time the train would leave the station. So he requested me that I should at least get it confirmed whether it was the Mother who had decided that he should leave.

After a little hesitation I agreed.

“No, I don't want him to go,” said the Mother emphatically, as I related to her the whole story, “I don't want him to go. I merely agreed to his going. The doctors came and reported to me about him. They said that he must go from here if there is to be any chance of his surviving. But I am not sending him away. I don't want him to go.”

“Then he must not go,” I replied. “If you have not decided on his going, why should he go at all ? He does not want to go from here. He says, ‘If

MOTHER INDIA

I have to die, why not die at the Mother's feet rather than go away from her protection. Whatever happens I do not want to leave the Ashram'."

"Then let him stay," said the Mother, "but one thing he must do. He must forever forget that he is sick. He should not think that he is sick. He must give up the thought with a strong resolution."

He was waiting for the last word before his departure to the station. When I saw him from a little distance, I shouted that the Mother did not want him to go, she was not sending him away. He beamed with joy as if new life had entered into him.

I explained to him what the Mother had told me. He was prepared for anything and everything. "Yes, I *will* forget and remember no more," said he as I stressed upon him that he should forget all about his sickness. "But," he added in a firm gathered voice, "but, please do not ask me, whenever you meet, about my health: 'How are you?' 'What is your condition now?', 'Are you now improved in your health?' etc."

He was now in revived spirits. His behaviour was such that not only did he follow the Mother's words literally, but responded in full faith to her intention and the force behind her words.

The next morning I told the Mother about it. "Then it is all right," she replied.

In about eighteen days' time, not only was he perfectly cured, but his health improved beyond belief. He was not to be easily recognised. He had received and assimilated the Mother's curative force to his full benefit.

The Ashram doctor, who had treated him and failed, asked me :

"Is it the same boy ? I saw him yesterday. Has he not already left ? He looked like him, but I could not recognise him."

Then I told him of what had brought about his cure.

(To be continued)

Compiled and reported by
HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE LITERARY GENIUS OF THE MOTHER*

THE Mother's writings and conversations are originally in French. In order to appraise fully her literary genius, it is necessary to know the French language well. As, however, I know little of it at present, my observations here are based upon the English translation of her works and words.

It is significant that the only medium which the Mother has so far chosen for her literary expression is prose. Whether it is her *Words of Long Ago* or her recent talks and conversations or her *Prayers and Meditations*, or the few playlets she has written for staging on the occasion of the anniversary of the International University Centre, it is always the form of prose through which she has expressed her literary genius. And another significant thing about her literature is that its principal and characteristic mode of communication is the conversation, the talk. Even her book *Prayers and Meditations* is in form a series of conversations which she used to hold from day to day, for some years, with the Divine or her own inmost being. Moreover, a sensitive reader has the invariable feeling here that the writer is establishing a direct conversational contact with him in order to put him in touch, step by step, with the Divine as well as his own psychic being, his soul. And we shall discover that in her playlets also, which are outwardly concerned with certain characters and their situations and actions, the general pervasive tone is so naturally intimate and close to the audience or the reader that one does not get from them the impression of the usual kind of dramatist who keeps himself detached and aloof and watches life and people mostly as a kind of spectacle or show. On the contrary, here the writer's point of view as well as preference can be clearly perceived and her distinctive voice unmistakably heard with all the living power, warmth and sweetness of a graciously radiant presence.

One may explain both these aspects of the Mother's literary expression by saying that her literature is of a piece with her true earthly role which is, one may hazard to say, essentially that of a creator and builder and organiser of a new Consciousness and life here. It is true, as Sri Aurobindo said, that in her Consciousness the Mother is identified with all aspects of the Divine but he also said that "she is working here in the body to bring down something

* The present essay is a summary of the paper sent to the All-India Seminar on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, organised by the Sri Aurobindo Pathmandir, Calcutta, on the 21st February this year.

not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here." And we shall see that her literary expression is just a part—one may say, an integral part—of this work of wholesale transformation of human nature and life. It is never an end in itself and not intended just to give an artistic shape and beauty to her spiritual experiences, profound and new and vast and dynamic as they are. Thus the one thing that we have to keep clear in our mind is that it is not at all for the satisfaction of any mere literary or aesthetic impulse in her that she brings into play her artistic sensibility. It is, on the contrary, a part and parcel of her dynamic role in life itself. It may be, then, safely inferred that such a literary sensibility can find its best and most effective expression largely through the medium of prose which, as compared with poetry, is chiefly concerned with the practical and dynamic side of life, our day-to-day problems and businesses. Also, prose is meant for all, even the commonest man in the street, and addresses itself directly in a language which can be readily understood by the majority. It need not surprise us, therefore, if the Mother's literary expression invariably takes on the mode of a direct, intimate conversation with humanity as a whole. She as the Divine Shakti has not only to work upon us but work with us and so it is quite natural for her to come down from her heights and speak to us on our own level, in terms which we can easily understand and assimilate. And it is through this technique of warm and intimate association and conversation with us that she makes her literature a means of raising us to the heights she has kept in store for us. This fact may also be explained a bit differently. Her chief task here is to bridge the vast gulf which seems to exist between the transcendent Supreme Reality above and the worlds of Ignorance and Inconscience below. It is only thus that the movements of ascent and descent can be fruitfully combined and the reign of the Supermind firmly and progressively established upon earth. Naturally, for this, as far as her outward relations with people are concerned, she has to depend mostly upon the mode of personal, direct communication. We feel when we read or listen to her words that it is the very embodiment of the Supreme Being who is addressing us; it is the Divine Shakti incarnate who is communicating, through the medium of words and talks, the light and power of wisdom and truth to us.

Hers being the practical dynamic role in life, it follows, that she cannot afford, if she means business, as they say, to write with the leisurely sweep and comprehensiveness and patience and sonority and picturesqueness and polish of a poet-philosopher like Sri Aurobindo, nor has she the need to speak, as though from some public platform, with the powerfully ringing and resonant voice of a prophetic orator. Her style of writing as well as her voice, on the contrary, is always calm and quiet, intimate and homely and direct. It is just

like the Mother talking to her own children. Almost a classic example of the basic difference in the style of writing between Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is to be found in the message which each gave to America in August 1949. The substance of the messages of both is the same but what a marked difference in the expression ! The Mother seems to summarise, as it were, the whole of Sri Aurobindo's message running into a length of more than 1,000 words that look on diverse sides, lay bare subtle shade on shade, gather them all together and come to a powerful *grand finale*. The Mother has just thirty-three words, and her tone, too, is quite obviously and immediately direct as well as pointed when she writes : "Stop thinking that you are of the West and others of the East. All human beings are of the same divine origin and meant to manifest upon earth the unity of this origin." This is, indeed, typical of her style of writing : precise and concise, direct and dynamic. But even when she is not so extremely precise and concise as here and appears to be talking a little at ease with a view to making herself understood as fully as possible, her basic style of ideal précis-writing remains unchanged. The following is, one may say, a typical specimen of her mode of expression :

"When a child is full of enthusiasm, never throw cold water upon his enthusiasm, never tell him : 'You know, life is not like that!' On the contrary, you should always encourage him, tell him : 'Yes, at present things are not always like that, they appear ugly, but behind the appearance, there is a beauty than seeks to realise itself. That you must love, that you must draw to you, that must be the object of your dreams and your ambitions.'

"If that were done from childhood, there would be much less difficulty than what would be if one were to undo, undo all the bad work done by a bad education, undo that flat vulgar commonsense which is the reason why one expects nothing good from life, and why it appears dull and irksome and why all hopes and all so-called illusory dreams of beauty are contradicted."

(*Bulletin of Physical Education*, Nov. 1957, p. 105)

Or this paragraph where she is explaining "transformation" : —

"We want an integral transformation, the transformation of the body and all its activities. But there is a first step, absolutely indispensable, which has to be completed before anything else can be undertaken; it is the transformation of the consciousness. The starting-point, it goes without saying, is the aspiration towards this transformation and the will to realise it, without that nothing can be done. But if to the aspiration is added an inner opening, a kind of receptivity, then one can enter at a bound into this transformed consciousness and remain there. This change of consciousness is abrupt, so to say;

when it happens, it happens all on a sudden, although the preparation for it might have been slow and long. I am not speaking of a simple change in the mental outlook, but a change of the consciousness itself. It is a complete and absolute change, a revolution in the basic poise; it is somewhat like turning a ball inside out. In the changed consciousness everything appears not only new and different, but almost the reverse of what it looked to the ordinary consciousness. In the ordinary consciousness you move slowly, through successive experiments, from ignorance to some far-off and even doubtful knowledge. In the transformed consciousness, you start from knowledge, and proceed from knowledge to knowledge. Yet it is only a beginning, for the external consciousness, the different planes and parts of the external and active being are transformed only slowly and gradually as the result of an inner transformation."

(Bulletin of Physical Education, August 1950 p. 9)

Though the first passage is a piece of talk and the second presumably a piece of writing, yet there is the same direct, intimate, simple, lucid, brief and precise and colloquial phrasing and tone in both; the same quiet persuasive flow of a style which is natural, spontaneous, living, assured : in brief, psychic in its essential expression. If we look into the matter well, we shall see that the psychic being is the deeper reason why all her prose style is so very natural, simple, direct and precise. In conformity to the psychic mode of education which she advocates and herself follows, it is directly to the psychic part of us and not the vital and mental, that she would like to address herself. And this naturally makes a lot of difference to her specific mode of communication. The psychic does not need a long, elaborate explanation or argument for its understanding, as our mind often does. Nor does it need the pressure of emotional fervour, a stimulant, like our vital. Its approach is quiet, straight, immediate, and assured. It feels the power of conviction and certitude with the minimum of utterance. Even when, therefore, the Mother has something profound and complex to convey to us, as for example in the passage on transformation above, she is always lucid and brief and immediately effective and convincing in her expression.

And yet there is also always a dignity, a stateliness, a chasteness and purity, a restraint coupled with an urgent intensity and earnestness behind her words. Her sentences and paragraphs do not have the usual looseness of structure of colloquial speech, nor do they have the too free or rambling movement of literary gossip or chit-chat. They are supple, no doubt, as they should be, and flexible, but also firm, well-knit and compact; they are balanced and symmetrical; and what is more, they have a developing, dynamic movement; they

have the very accent of truth in them, and we all along feel that her talks and writings are not at all a matter of conscious literary expression, that is, of verbal skill and technique, of putting the right words in the right places. It looks as if whatever the subject in hand—it may be the supramental light and force or transformation or integral education or diet or illness or dreams or games—it is from some fountainhead of Truth itself, some secret source of Light and Life and Bliss that her words flow to us, drop by drop, and not only enlighten us by their simple luminosity but also purify and regenerate us by their dynamically bracing waters of transformation. Indeed, this may be one of the chief reasons why the Mother can combine with such sovereign ease and suppleness all the severe beauties of precision and concision, balance and harmony, intensity and restraint, lucidity and profundity of classical prose with the homeliness and intimacy, the seemingly unliterary plainness of colloquial speech. Therein lie the chief beauty and power of her prose style.

And yet who can deny that she is much more than a writer of intimate, elegant prose ? Indeed, she is too good and unmistakable a poet to be missed—a poet, however, who never lets go his hold on little earth. Let us just take a look at the inscription which she wrote for the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo :

“To Thee who hast been the material envelope of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget even for a moment all we owe to Thee.”

This is, quite obviously, not mere prose, howsoever lucidly, pithily and elegantly it is written. It is all poetry, truly speaking. The very rhythmic movement and cadence of the phrases and clauses are poetic, not to speak of the restrained wealth of emotional adoration and gratitude which it breathes in every word of it. The repetitions of such simple phrases as “to Thee,” “before Thee”, “so much” and of the single stately, almost overwhelming word “all” are each charged with unusual poetic beauty and power. And, what is more, like a great artist endowed with the powers of both classical and romantic imagination she gives us in such a short space, with the minimum number and a simple arrangement of words, the whole biography of Sri Aurobindo. And the artistry strikes us as all the more finished here when we perceive that quite naturally and spontaneously the inscription begins and ends with one and the same phrase “to Thee”, thus completing a whole cyclic movement of not merely emotional but psychic expression, round the single figure of Sri Aurobindo.

Then again what is popularly known as *Radha's Prayer* by the Mother immediately reads like a poem of unusual beauty and power of devotion and utter consecration, though apparently it has the form and structure of prose.

It is, however, the Mother's *Prayers and Meditations* which is full of her poetic gifts. We have, here, at one end of the scale poetic prose of the following individual-cosmic rhythmic movement :

"My heart has fallen asleep, down to the very depths of my being.

"The whole earth is in a stir and agitation of perpetual change; all life enjoys and suffers, endeavours, struggles, conquers, is destroyed and formed again.

"My heart has fallen asleep, down to the very depths of my being.

"In all these innumerable and manifold elements, I am the Will that moves, the Thought that acts, the Force that realises, the Matter that is put in motion.

"My heart has fallen asleep, down to the very depths of my being.

"No more personal limits, no more any individual action, no more any separatist concentration creating conflict; nothing but a single and infinite Oneness.

"My heart has fallen asleep, down to the very depths of my being."

(April 10, 1917)

Essentially, it is all poetry and yet no ordinary lyrical utterance, for it carries the whole sublime weight and power and majesty, reminiscent of the Upanishadic chant, of an integral, divine vision of things, of the earth that "enjoys and suffers", and of "the Will that moves, the Thought that acts, the Force that realises, the Matter that is put in motion", and finally of "a single and infinite Oneness".

At the other end of the scale we have the poetic prose of perturbation combined with an intense pathos, as we find from the prayer dated November 29, 1913 : —

"Why all this noise, all this movement, this vain and hollow agitation; why this whirlwind sweeping men away like a swarm of flies caught in a storm ? How sad is the spectacle of all this energy wasted, all these efforts lost. When will they cease from dancing like puppets at the end of threads held they know not by whom or by what ? When will they take the time to sit and draw inwards, to collect themselves and open that inner door which hides from them Thy priceless treasures, Thy infinite boons ?..."

And in between the two ends of the rhythmic scale we may enjoy this little gem of pure poetry, mysticism and philosophy sweetly and intimately and chasteningly rolled into one :—

“Like a flame that burns in silence, like a perfume that rises straight upward without wavering, my love goes to Thee; and like the child who does not reason and has no care, I trust myself to Thee that Thy will may be done, that Thy Light may manifest, Thy Peace radiate, Thy Love cover the world. When Thou wilt I shall be in Thee, Thyself, and there shall be no more any distinction; I await that blessed hour without impatience of any kind, letting myself flow irresistibly toward it as a peaceful stream flows toward the boundless ocean.”
(December 7, 1912)

And if we seek an “epic in a paragraph”, there is no better specimen than the following :—

“There is a Power which no government can command, a Happiness which no earthly success can give, a Light which no wisdom can possess, a Knowledge which no philosophy, no science can acquire, a Beatitude of which no satisfaction of desire can give the enjoyment, a thirst for Love which no human relation can quench, a Peace which can be found nowhere, not even in death.

“It is the Power, the Happiness, the Light, the Knowledge, the Beatitude, the Love and the Peace which come to us from the Divine Grace.”

(October 28, 1928)

It is rather difficult for a sensitive reader to pick and choose from the *Prayers and Meditations*. The whole book is charged in every line with poetic beauty and power; and one feels like saying : Here is God’s plenty, indeed !

It has been said—and Sri Aurobindo himself confirmed it—that “her Prayers are meant to show us—the aspiring psychic—how to pray to the Divine.” And one may infer from it, therefore, that the book has been written entirely from a general, impersonal divine level only. But what sensitive reader can help feeling and perceiving that much of the inner, the true spiritual biography of the Mother, is, nevertheless, recorded here ? And one of the most interesting things which strike one is the decisive psychological change of consciousness as also the gradually steady knowledge of her true mission in the present physical incarnation, which came to her as realisation after realisation, vision after vision became almost habitual with her. True, this knowledge was indelibly though subconsciously stamped upon her consciousness even when she was a child of about the age of thirteen, as it is clear from her diary dated the 22nd February

1914. Nevertheless, it took her some time to realise this knowledge fully and it is in the later prayers and meditations of the book that we get a complete and unmistakable idea of it—even with some poignancy and intensity of feeling. The following is a typical specimen of the kind :—

“Now, O Lord, things have changed. The time of rest and preparation is over. Thou hast willed that from a passive and contemplative, I become an active and realising servant; Thou hast willed that the joyful acceptance be transformed into a joyful combat, that in a constant and heroic effort against all that in the world opposes the accomplishment of Thy law in its purest and highest present expression, I recover the same peaceful and immutable poise which one possesses in a surrender to Thy law as it is working itself out at the moment, that is to say, without entering into a direct struggle with all that is opposed to it, drawing the best out of every circumstance and acting by contagion, example and slow infusion...” (January 7, 1915)

Even then it was not without some moments and experiences of intense spiritual anguish and emptiness, spread over three years or so, that she came to feel utterly and confidently sure of her divinely ordained role in the world, as is evident from the prayers dated March 3, 4, 7, of 1915; June 7, December 5, 7, 8, 12, 20, 21, 25, 26, 30 of 1916; September 24, September 15, and November 25 of 1917. Apart from the spiritual value and significance of these passages, the sheer literary, particularly the poetic, beauties and intensities of them are deeply moving and memorable. And, indeed, we almost heave a sigh of spiritual relief when we find her writing on October 10, 1918 :

“O My beloved Lord, what a sweetness to think that it is for Thee and Thee alone that I act ! At Thy service I am; it is Thou who decidest, ordainest and puttest in motion, directest and accomplishest the action. What peace, what tranquillity, what supreme felicity are given to me when I sense and perceive it...

“My father has smiled at me and taken me in his powerful arms. What is then that I could fear ? I have melted into Him and it is He who acts and lives in this body which He has Himself formed for His manifestation”.

Indeed, the ordeal of struggles and conflicts still continues. But the struggle, the combat has now become joyful; it has even become “one of Thy precious messengers,” “one among the forms of Thy action, one of the best means for bringing back to light some elements of the work which might otherwise have been “forgotten”, and “it carries with it a sense of amplitude, of complexity, of power.”

The *Prayers and Meditations* is, thus, not merely a collection of prayers and meditations or even a book of general, impersonal spiritual knowledge and realisations. It is a deeply moving human document with this difference that here all moves and flows and grows from the psychic of the writer to the psychic of the reader.

As we have seen above, the Mother's literary genius expresses itself naturally in the forms of talk and familiar, elegant exposition as well as prayer and meditation. We shall now see that it also finds expression through three other prose forms, namely, the essay, the one-act play and literary criticism.

It is chiefly from *Words of Long Ago* that we get some idea of the Mother as an essayist. Some of the articles written for the *Bulletin of Physical Education* are also like essays. Taking a bird's eye view of these writings we find that the charm of the personality—the hallmark of a true essayist—is undoubtedly in them, with this distinction that here we certainly do not come across that kind of external *i.e.* physico-vital and mental personality which the Western, notably the Romantic and modern, essayists have so charmingly and readably specialised in. For the Mother, on the contrary, it is almost impossible to divest herself of the universal or the vast impersonal divine consciousness which is naturally born and so richly developed in her. Then again we cannot help observing that although the impress and presence of the distinctive personality of the Mother is felt in all her essays, yet it is not for the purpose of self-expression but Self-revelation, Truth-revelation that she writes about one's role in life, disinterested work, the Path of Later On, the Virtues, the Power of Words, Mastery over One's Thought, Transformation, Integral Education etc. Here we shall discover that it is the matter, the subject, of the essays which is most important and draws our attention first and last. And yet such is the Mother's skill in the art of the essay that nearly all the accepted virtues of a good, great essay—*e.g.* lucidity, simplicity and economy of expression, natural, orderly evolution of thought, interspersed now and then with anecdotes, the polish, urbanity, and graceful spontaneity and fluency of a limpid, pure style, the originality and freshness of attitudes, observations and symbolical images and illustrations wherever used, the wealth of wisdom and depth of understanding embracing the whole gamut of human life and its ultimate destiny—are present quite in plenty in the bulk of her essays.

The output of the Mother's one-act plays is so far extremely small. It consists of only three in number and even of these, one, namely *The Great Secret*, is not a play proper and is written in collaboration with four other writers. Yet, in spite of this meagre dramatic output, it is really remarkable to observe that she is a consummate master of the art of the one-act play.

Some of the high-lights of these playlets may be briefly summarised as the significant selection and disposition of the various characters who are not so many individualities or "characters" in the conventionally dramatic sense, but individualised types and specimens of the conscious and cultured section of humanity, the simple but sublime beauty and power of their dialogues, the quiet but swiftly developing movements of the dramatic action, the calmly reached *dénouement*, the artist's manipulation of the various scenes and situations, the comparative bareness and economy of the scenic settings, particularly in *Towards the Future* and the *Great Secret*, the utter absence of any spectacular show and loud dramatics, and above all, the exquisitely classical artistry of the total integral movement of the play as a whole rather than the over-stressing of any one particular scene or character or any other dramatic constituent. These works are, no doubt, all written with a spiritual purpose and a conscious message which is either to hold out to the awakened psychic of humanity the promise of the "transformation, the divinisation of the physical being which will change the world into a blessed land all made of harmony and light and peace and beauty" or to reveal to the crisis-caught, death-fearing scientist, artist, statesman, athlete, industrialist and man of letters today the prospect of "salvation" and "New Life" through the miraculous intervention of the Grace or to flash out with perfect assurance and certitude the "marvellous splendour" and "magic light" of the "New Life" reached and realised at the highest possible peak of the arduous and perilous ascent to the Truth. But what is wonderful from the literary point of view is to see how the supreme dramatic artist that the Mother is can weave, with such sovereign ease and simplicity, all these occult truths and visions in the rather severe classical mould and movement of such a small light structure as the one-act play.

Finally, we find that like most creative artists the Mother is also a first-rate critic. Of course, as in her other things, so here too, her approach to art and literature is fundamentally spiritual, but as her very conception of spirituality embraces all life and the whole integrated reality of human nature and consciousness, down to the very physical, so her attitude to art and literature is uniquely large and comprehensive. According to her, art and beauty are co-existent with all human life, activity and interest. The following piece of her talk embodies her view of art and literature very well :

"...art should be the expression of the Divine in life and through life. In everything, everywhere, in all relations truth must be brought out in its all-embracing rhythm and every movement of life should be an expression of beauty and harmony. Skill is not art, talent is not art. Art is a living harmony and beauty that must be expressed in all the movements of existence. This

THE LITERARY GENIUS OF THE MOTHER

manifestation of beauty and harmony is part of the Divine realisation upon earth, perhaps its greatest part.

“For from the supramental point of view beauty and harmony are as important as any other expression of the Divine. But they should not be isolated, set up apart from all other relations, taken out from the ensemble; they should be one with the expression of life as a whole...

“True art is a whole and an ensemble; it is one and of one piece with life. You see something of this intimate wholeness in ancient Greece and ancient Egypt ...It is like that in Japan, or at least it was so till the other day before the invasion of a utilitarian and practical modernism. A Japanese house is a wonderful artistic whole; always the right thing is there in the right place, nothing wrongly set, nothing too much, nothing too little....In India, too, painting and sculpture and architecture were an integral beauty, one single movement of adoration of the Divine.” (*Words of the Mother*, 1st series)

Similarly her definition of Imagination as “the capacity to project oneself out of realised things towards things realisable and pull them in by the very power of projection” and as the power of “the way to realisation”, or of poetry as the “sensuality of the mind” which, however, she does not at all mean in any pejorative or moral sense, or of inspiration as a condition in which one is “in relation with a thing belonging to a domain superior to the normal human consciousness”, is all lit up with the pregnant luminosity of Truth itself. It would do much good to the sincere artists and critics of today if they pondered over and followed these profound observations of the Mother. These are no less than a beacon light to the awakened artist and critic of our time.

What has been said here about some of the aspects of the literary genius of the Mother is necessarily just an introduction which may stimulate some truly competent minds to bring out a fuller work on the subject. It would be, however, quite enough for us for the present to understand that although the Mother’s literary creation is essentially that of a practical-minded maker and reorganiser of a new spiritual consciousness and life here on earth, yet the creator of all this, life as well as literature, is a great soul, the very embodiment of the Divine Shakti. As such, to study and appreciate her literature is to come into a still closer and more living contact with something of the inexhaustible Divine Truth itself. Hers, like Sri Aurobindo’s, is truly a literature of the Divine, by the Divine and for the Divine secretly but surely and creatively present in all of us.

SHREE KRISHNA PRASAD

AN EXPERIENCE

SOMETHING great and wonderful !

Wherever I turn I sense Something great and wonderful. It is beyond me to express it. Yet it is there pressing in the air. A sight of the Mother, a thought, a mention of the Name,—and there is a thrill of pregnant wonder. It is great when she comes on the Balcony at dawn. An image from the ancient Puranas comes floating down the years of my infancy. Lo, here are gathered the Devas, here the celestial beings sound their tabors and fill the heavens with their hail.

I feel the Breath of the Divine Force and it is luminous. It is all around me. But I know not how to enter into it. Yet the sense of it is around and I am all wonder and adoration. I pause from time to time to listen to it. It is the sole movement in an absolute hush.

Tears well up in streams. But there is no sorrow, no joy. There is only wonder, deep wonder.

She builds a New World.

VATSA

THUS SANG MY SOUL
*(These Eighty Flame-Flutterings
offered to
THE MOTHER
in commemoration of HER EIGHTIETH YEAR)*

I. Dedication

I. TO THEE

O QUEEN of souls
 Who down our doles,
 Our hearts of agony
 And tortures blazing,
With Thy saviour-levin
 Untiring drive
 Thy golden way,
 Now guarding, now chasing,
 Ever through night and day,
 Creatures in death alive
 That chasm-caught frozen lie,
To heave them seven-
 Skies-high
 To immortality,
O Hunter Heaven !

MOTHER INDIA

2. O MOTHER !

Whose mind is light to know Thee ?
Whose eyes are bright to view Thee ?
Whose heart is white to feel Thee ?
We conjecture but to veil Thee.

Our pride and falsehood seal Thee,
Thy Love and Grace reveal Thee,
To our closed selves they free Thee
So that our souls may see Thee.

O Mother of rapturous graces,
To Thee our prayers and praises,
Whose Love concealed or naked
Owns all, devout or wicked.

O shear our bonds, relations,
And lift our thoughts and passions
From their low false indulgence
To Thy pure wide effulgence.

O make our souls free, noble ;
Our limited gaze global,
Our high hearts full of valour
Bravers of fault and failure.

Our failings can be various
Our hidden wills nefarious,
Yet Thy Sun-charged compassion
Can cause life's gold-mutation.

Grant us Thy Love and Service,
Straighten what cliff or curve is
Turning our path to reach Thee.
Child-hearts one-voiced beseech Thee.

THUS SANG MY SOUL

*II. The Earth-Cry and
The Advent of The Mother*

3. WORLD OF MISERY

Tangible I saw before my eyes,
A world in deeps of agony,
Stuck in the honey-mire of life,
Crawling serpentine in misery.

Since yore it has sighed and longed and groped,
Aeons of grief it stores within,
Its echoes still rise in smoking surge
From deep-sunk memories' lost din.

Its hushed cries still in ether float,
Its trembling prayerful hands cupped still,
In violent crave for joy's release,
Call for love's grace, for pity appeal...

Columns I saw of breathing bliss,
Bathed in silvery gleams of light,
With high-point colours of courage and hope
Awaiting advent of a sheen sun-bright.

"Hail this courage, brighten this hope,
O Mother of Love, O Mother of Grace,
Slaughter all pain with Thy laughter and love,"
In unison the whole earth prays.

MÖTHER INDIA

4. DARK POWERS ON WORLD'S FRONT

Dark powers converging on world's front I see,
Digging their permanent base around its soil,
With the mystic magic of Thy Grace, O foil
Their diabolical conspiracy.

For aeons they have wielded reign on earth
And hindered Thy gold-sheer embodiment,
Now when Thy Love burns on the world, self-sent,
When Thy Compassion has now bodied forth,

And Thou, the Power Supreme of God, hast come
And pitched Thy Sun-Light's tent in Matter's base,
O let this promised new-born godly race
Become Thy eternal Love's eternal home.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

NEW ROADS

BOOK SIX

THE CONVOCATION OF THE GODS

Surya

BETWEEN two hemispheres of Light and Darkness,
Between the aspiring ignorance of the earth
And the high Compassion leaning down to man
Was born the golden suture of the Dawn.
Between the pinnacles of shining Truth,
The planes of Being, Consciousness and Bliss
And the lower realms of Matter, Life and Mind,
There, which once was void became a bridge
Upon which Mind could stand with certitude.
There, where once a Silence reigned supreme
Was heard the Prelude of the Voice of God :
And in the heart a Presence softly dawned
Still clothed in the wonder of the transcendent stars.
Om, was the sound of His Voice in the hum of the heavens;
Om, was the Anthem of life in the throb of the sea;
Om, was the song of a bird on the breast of the morning;
Om, was the echo returned by the blue of the sky;
Om, was the thrill in the heart from His Love unbounded;
Om, was the indrawn breath of the moment of bliss;
Om, was the sigh of all gratitude rising to heaven;
Om, was His Being, sweet in the vibrant air.
Slowly the Presence became the Cause and the Purpose,
Gently His Voice pervaded the Courts of Time;
Slowly His meaning mingled with sunlight and shadow,
Lifted the heart to a comprehending bliss,
Opened the mind to a Silence vast and compelling
In which all past and future dawns were seen
As inner and outer global states of Being

MOTHER INDIA

Measured by fields of Light and planes of Perfection.
Rapture-held in dawns of infinite longing,
The ancient Past returned to a new beginning
As into this movement again and again He descended :
Deep into Matter He plunged as into an ocean
Dark with the magic of the vast Unknown.
Till last He came, born to a global aspiring,
Born to the dire necessity of an age
When man, still held in Nature's firm embrace,
Yearned to climb New Roadways to the stars.
He came when the world was a field for new becomings,
When life was astir with a conscious force of mind
And mind, once purified, found errant wings
To soar beyond the limits of the earth.
He came with the universal Might of The Mother
Holding the future destiny of the years
Between the Ishwara and the living Shakti
That His own Golden Truth might here be born,
His Diamond Light set in Her ruby Brightness,
Her Nature hold His Spirit in Her arms
To stir the Bliss of Immortality.
So here in the Depths the Seed was sown of His Greatness,
Blossomed in Nature as grew the desert rose :
Struggled with life in the midst of its manacled madness,
Fought to subdue the energies of the world,
Suffered, endured, laboured with Time and with Nature,
Willed, attempted all, prepared and achieved
That man might know his destiny is the stars,
That Truth and Beauty, Love and perfect Bliss
Are Roadways leading to the Land of Light :
The far transcendent Call of Sun to earth,
To manifest in man His sole Delight :
The Golden Roadways to the City of God.

NORMAN DOWSETT

NO LONGER LIKE FRAIL MOTHS

No longer like frail moths
Beating our hearts out blindly
Against the great Lamp of Truth
We have found entry now
And take our veritable place
Of high control, training our instruments
To that rare atmosphere,
And for feats undreamed
Draw inexhaustible breath.
No grim imprisoning orthodoxies
Chain us down who hear
Diamond bright messages flashed
From Centre to receiving point,
Actual, translatable, potent in joy.

Even you, oh moth-like bodies,
Fear no more ! For is not
Manifestation all a flutter of wings ?
Vibrations, colours, sounds,
Rhythm of relations, light-streams in Light,
Chords of inseparable loves, deathless affinities ?
And our aspiring, scorched, tormented images shall still
Quiver into birth of forms
Noble and beautiful, not yet within our ken,
To be enticed into a new plasticity.
Flare-paths of hatred flicker and expire
As the slow all-revealing Beam of Unity
Dawns on our opening sight and in its magic spaces
Mirrors the Truth we are.

MARGARET FORBES

GOLDEN PURUSHA

LIGHT intense, luminous Image,
Figure of peace immense,
Beauty immaculate,
Swings in the lotus flame.

The descent of light and rain orange-coloured,
River stainless of moon-delight,
Mighty roaring waterfall shining bright,
Have made the earth translucent and sublime.

In the ocean the golden lotus floats.
Sun has transformed Night's robe.
Fate has surrendered to Timeless Truth.
Earth is bright above and below.

With a sense of immortality
He breathes in the fresh air,
Absorbed in love of the All-Adorable,
And moves with a gait of joy—
The Golden Purusha in the human shape.

“ASPIRATION”

SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(We have before us a list of objections raised by a reviewer¹ on certain points in the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. Though they are made while appraising a book about the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo and not after a study of the original writings of the Master, we propose to meet the objections as they are typical of an academic approach to a dynamic subject touching the roots of life.)

Q : The conception of Double Soul in this Philosophy is wrong as it is contrary to the tenets of Advaita which does not recognise any difference between Paramatman and jivatman, let alone countenance a division in the atman of man. If, as Sri Aurobindo asserts along with the Upanishads, all is Brahman including Matter, 'sarvam khalu idam brahma,' how comes this duality in the human soul ?

*A : Sri Aurobindo's distinction between the desire-soul and the true soul corresponds to a very practical truth in the constitution of the being of man in evolution. The soul, the true soul, is a spark from the Divine and it is there in the inmost depths of the being. Of that, man is not normally aware. What he is aware of as the centre and what functions as the main fulcrum of his personality is the formation around the centralising agent of his ego, formed and kept going and growing by the driving force of Desire. It is this head of desire that ordinarily governs the movement of the body, life and mind. It is only when one turns from the normally extrovert direction of life and looks inwards that one begins to get conscious of the real soul which is seated in the depths of the heart-cavern, *hṛd guhā*, supporting from behind one's entire life-movement.*

It is obvious that this living centre of the Spirit in the individual cannot be the same as the 'soul' on the surface being, what is in fact a contrivance—an important one though—in the mechanism of Nature in its process of centralisation and motivation of the diverse forces and energies with which the evolving being is endowed. True, this entity of desire-ego derives from the soul in the sense that it owes its existence and depends ultimately on the support or sanc-

¹ *Kesari* January 5, 1958.

tion extended by the soul even as do the other parts of the being, viz., the physical, the vital and the mental. But it is a temporary formation of Nature whereas the soul within is an eternal portion of the Divine.

It is to be noted that the soul is not what is termed Atman in the Upanishads and other scriptures. The atman, the self of the individual, jivatman, does not enter into evolution but stands above and presides over it. What enters and participates in the evolutionary movement is a delegate from the jivatman, a representative portion, what we call the soul which is a developing entity supporting, from within, the evolutionary career of the individual in the triple formulation of mind, life and body, and itself growing into a personality assimilating the essence of the experiences gathered during each life-period. Till this soul acquires a definite individuation and power and moves from behind the veil to a position of direction and control, as it is intended to do, it is the outer formation, the pseudo-soul, that acts as the monitor and guiding agent. It functions and continues as long as it has this purpose to serve. It dwindles and drops away as the real soul develops and takes its rightful place as the leader of the evolution.

It will be thus seen that there is no question of any division in the Atman. The Atman is always sole and entire, aloof from these dynamics of manifestation. But the manifestation is not the less real or less divine for that reason. The movement is as much divine as the status, since both are poises of the One; the Many that constitute the manifestation are as much the Reality as the One that releases them into movement out of itself. *Sarvam khalu idam Brahma*, indeed all is Brahman, Brahman in essence, and all shall be realised as Brahman in pervasion once the perceiving intelligence recognises the purely temporary and local character of the many formations of Nature and their consequences, in her evolutionary labour towards the plenary revelation of the Godhead in this oceanic Existence.¹

Q : In believing that when a sufficiently large number of persons attain to a high spiritual state, there will commence the reign of God on earth, the very Vaikuntha here, Sri Aurobindo accepts the Christian dogma of the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth. But such an eventuality is impossible. For, if it were to come about, all would melt into Brahman and the world would go into a pralaya. Besides, it would be against the cosmic purpose and process of variation.

A : There is a world of difference between the Christian conception of the Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth and Sri Aurobindo's vision of the Divine

¹ Sri Aurobindo has given a very lucid exposition of the subject in the pages of *The Life Divine*. There is also a Section in the *Letters* (First series) pointedly dealing with this topic.

Life on earth. The former anticipates a change in the nature of the world as a result of an intense moral purification, religious emotion and the elevation of man to the purer heights of the *sattwic* mind from the turbidities and densities of the lower levels of consciousness. But the latter holds that no radical change in the life of humanity is possible unless the centre of consciousness is lifted clean above the Mind and its dualities, and a still higher Consciousness, a supreme Power of Knowledge-Will, is set operating on Earth. It follows that the solution to the cosmic problem does not lie in any number of individual liberations into the spirit—there have been quite a number of them so far—but it lies in the descent of this New Dynamis above the Mind, the Supermind.

The Perfection that is envisaged as a result of the established reign of the supramental Power on earth is in the full revelation of the Glory of God, the free outflowing of the Divine powers of Knowledge, Will, Harmony and Joy here in the universe, under the conditions of the Earth manifestation. It is not a transcription or repetition of the perfect world of Mahas as it is on its own plane; Sri Aurobindo has pointed out that there would be no purpose at all in simply repeating the same type of creation elsewhere. Vaikuntha on earth means much more than Vaikuntha in its original station above. All the ordered Truths and potencies in the supramental Gnosis shall stand worked out and manifested on this scene of unfolding evolution, it is Vaikuntha arriving at its own fulfilment in what initially seemed its opposite.

There is thus no room for fear that this variegated Creation shall have to dissolve into the featureless unity of Brahman. On the contrary the multiplicity in manifestation will acquire its just value and express the manifold Splendour of the One in all its fullness.

Q : Sri Aurobindo has stated that Sri Rama's consciousness was a highly developed human kind whereas Sri Krishna's was divine. It follows he does not consider Sri Rama an Avatar.

A : It does not follow at all. For, in the first place, what is an Avatar ? An Avatar is a special Descent of the Divine in the world with a special purpose: to help the progress of Creation in its evolutionary endeavour. Whenever the central Consciousness in evolving Nature has to take a decisive turn at crucial junctures in its upward ascent, it needs a special help, a lift and an energising higher than is normal to it at that stage. The Descent, *avataraṇa*, is precisely of such a Higher Power embodied in a form and consciousness answering to the demand of the hour. Thus in the Indian tradition, there is a divine manifestation at each stage of transition from one form of life to another

MOTHER INDIA

— from the sea animal to the amphibious animal, to the land animal, to the half-man and so on. Even after the appearance of man, crossings have been effected from grade to grade of humanity, from level to level of consciousness in man. At each junction the Godhead at work manifests the consciousness and force required to precipitate the jump, *saltus*. There is a purposive self-limitation and only so much of the Super-nature is brought into play as is called for. Thus Sri Rama appeared on the scene of earth history at a time when man had to be helped to rise out of the dominion of the vital ego and its impulses (*Rākṣasa*), the restless sway of the animal mind (*Vānara*) and take his place on the station of the sattwic mind, the consciousness that is pliant and open to the light and reign of reason, civilised order and warmth of emotion and idealism. Sri Rama embodied this consciousness, new to earth till then, strove and succeeded in breaking the hold of the exaggerated vital ego and the animal or physical sense-mentality and establishing the sattwic order of life. That was the purpose of his Avatarhood and he fulfilled it victoriously just as earlier Avatars with still lesser formulations of Consciousness succeeded before and subsequent Manifestations with higher embodiments have done their work thereafter.

M. P. PANDIT

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

A Visitor's View

WHAT makes this Ashram an extraordinary institution ? Is it the more than hundred acres of land where agriculture, poultry farming, cottage industries, automobile engineering, house-construction, carpentry and smithy work etc., are being successfully carried on ? Is it the large buildings where many departments are being skilfully run ? Is it the fine collection of books (about 40,000) in the central library or the big stage and the modern auditorium or the comprehensive equipment for physical development (all out-door and indoor games, olympics, swimming, etc.) ? No, it is the spirit moving behind these all and behind the living machinery of human bodies, that is the magnet for me and for anybody who tries to seek the cause of the huge organization called the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Compassion, love, truth, service, devotion and surrender, the Divine virtues which yogis learn after great sacrifices and arduous practices and which are the gradual stages on the way of seeking Reality—people here learn them while working in mutual co-operation, for the sake of their loving Mother.

I cannot think of a finer service a human being can do for God. Vivekananda once said when his heart was hurt at seeing the poor living standard of the Indian people, "The only God to be served is the human soul in the human body." The Mother provides here a novel education to about 500 students and everything free (boarding, lodging, etc.) to many Ashramites who wholly depend upon her for their physical, mental and psychic needs. The education is complete not only in the physical, mental and moral sense, but also in the psychic or soul sense which is greatly missing in most of the present educational centres of India. Our ancient culture is more than a way of earthly living : it is born of the spiritual attainments by our ancestors.

Here, I have not found a teaching of mere conventional morality to anybody. Moral Education pervades here by the strong waves of Spirituality flowing from the Mother. Oh, it is thrilling to see the "blessing-ceremony" or the "balcony darshan" by the Mother in the morning. Most people bless only with words, some give blessings with the heart, but there are very few who can give their own selves through blessings. It is only the Mother of the Ashram who sacrifices her all to her children, and floods them with the golden sweetness of her divine love.

MOTHER INDIA

On the balcony, some 15 feet high, she stands smiling and throws her gaze on all, missing absolutely none. For a moment she looks in front, most probably at all Nature, about which she has written : "O Nature, Material Mother, thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate and there is no limit to the splendour of this collaboration." Then she raises her eyes and, for a moment, one feels that she raises her centre of consciousness from mind to supermind. There she is rapt in Heavenly bliss. Her eyes are closed for a time; eventually they reopen for a parting look to all who are standing below. Thus the day starts with the blessings of the Mother. Then many go to the Samadhī of Sri Aurobindo and do silent intense pranam.

The meditation on the playground in the evening is another miracle where hundreds of people—from the children of five to the aged ones of above seventy—sit together in deep hush fifteen or thirty minutes. Here we get a glimpse of our ancient science of diving deep into the Spirit.

During the day, a rhythmic inner and outer movement goes on, between the morning's vision and the evening's reverie.

The Mother's name on every lip and her image in every heart are the key-note of all this success.

SHIV KUMAR

THE 'SEEING SOUL' AND THE 'SEEKING MIND'

(Continued from the last issue)

IX. A WONDER, AND YET NO WONDER

Impatient of enigma and the unknown,
Intolerant of the lawless and unique,
Imposing reflection on the march of Force,
Imposing clarity on the Unfathomable,
She strove to reduce to rules the mystic world.¹

Science in the process of progressive acquisition of knowledge proceeds from the known to the unknown : and what is this 'known' if not something that either through old familiarity or by constant usage loses its abstract character and assumes the status of a quasi-concrete form almost visualisable by the mind's eye ? Thus, in science, when we say that we can explain a process, we mean that we have mapped it in the *likeness* of another process which we know to be at work. "We say that a metal crystal stretches because the layers slide over one another like cards in a pack, and then that some polyester yarns stretch and harden like a metal crystal. That is, we take from the world round us a few models of structure and process (the particle, the wave, and so on), and when we research into nature, we try to fit her with these models." And whenever a man of science succeeds in this attempt, he exclaims as did once Stevinus in 1605 while offering an "extremely ingenious demonstration of the properties of the inclined plane" : *wonder en is gheen wonder* ! (A wonder, and yet no wonder !)—such was indeed the motto he placed about the diagram in the frontispiece of his book.

And if the attempt fails ? Even then, first of all, he stubbornly sticks to his old concept and theory-structure; for "in the reception of new knowledge, what comes in to be received is judged in the light of past knowledge and fitted into the structure; if it cannot properly fit, it is either dovetailed in anyhow or rejected : but the existing knowledge and its structures or standards may not be applicable to the new object or new field of knowledge, the

¹ *Savitri*, B. II, c. 10.

fitting may be a misfitting or the rejection may be an erroneous response.”¹ Thus is created an undignified conservatism taking its source in a mis-emphasised sense of visualisation, and the history of science abounds in a large number of instances which justify Tennyson’s line : “Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point.” The Aristotelian *horror vacui*, the semi-Aristotelian *resistenza del vacuo*, the case history of the last days of the phlogiston theory, Priestley’s stubborn refusal to accept the consequences of his own discoveries, the initial cool reception to Galileo’s discoveries and in our own days to the theory of Relativity, are only a few amongst these striking examples. Thus it is that Huyghens, in a letter addressed to Leibniz, dubbed as ‘absurd’ Newton’s newly-propounded theory of Gravitation; thus again did Glauber die in poverty, leaving it on record that “by all that ever I writ I never gained one half-penny”. And who can forget the memorable words of Max Planck, the founder of the Quantum Theory? Exasperated by the grimness of the battle he had to wage against his detractors, this master-physicist remarked :

“The great scientific ideas do not conquer the world through the adhesion of their opponents who might be expected to be gradually convinced of the truth of these ideas and thus to adopt them. It is always a very rare phenomenon to see a Saul becoming a Paul. What happens is that the opponents of the new idea die in their time and pass away, and the rising generation is brought up in its atmosphere. He who possesses the youth possesses the future.”²

While tracing the origin of this scientific conservatism, the American chemist Gilbert N. Lewis uses a style of speech which brings home forcefully the point about ‘picturability’ that I have been endeavouring to make. What he says in fact is this : “Sometimes the scientist engaged in painting the picture of nature achieves by a few bold and happy strokes of the brush an effect so lifelike and beautiful that we are tempted to exclaim, ‘Do not touch it again, it is perfect !’ But this is nothing but one of those illusions, like the *ignis fatuus* of the mechanistic philosophers, which blind our eyes to many interesting traits that should otherwise tempt the scientific explorer.”³

But Science, if not the scientist, moves ever onward, and cannot “stand at gaze, like Joshua’s moon in Ajalon”. Thus it is that in the domain of physics the notion of explanation has undergone a ceaseless evolution. Physics of mechanical models was replaced in time by that of elastic media to be followed

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 549.

² Max Planck, *Initiations à la Physique*.

³ Gilbert N. Lewis, *The Anatomy of Science*, p. 195.

in its turn by physics of fields of forces ; and in our days 'explanation' has vanished altogether : the function of a modern theory is never to 'explain' but rather to offer the possibility of prevision ; prognosis is the key-word of present-day science. In this evolving march of science, in this effort to relate the unknown to the known, the man of science has replaced one 'visualisation' by another, and that too by a third, and the process ever continues. We propose to devote the next section to a summary study of this operation. Afterwards we shall proceed to Philosophy and a few other allied fields.

X. IN THE DAEDALIAN LABYRINTH

On the huge bare walls of human nescience
Written round Nature's deep dumb hieroglyphs
She pens in clear demotic characters
The vast encyclopaedia of her thoughts ;
An algebra of her mathematics' signs,
Her numbers and unerring formulas
She builds to clinch her summary of things.³

We have mentioned above that in the field of science explanation meant the reduction of the unknown to the category of the already known ; but, in the infancy of modern science, the immediately seizable physical structure was the only model known. Thus to the early scientists Nature's processes seemed to assume the appearance of an intricate clock-work mechanism. Starting with Leonardo da Vinci, and afterwards with Galileo, Mercenne and Roberval, explanation was thus equated to the power of machine construction. In all seriousness Mercenne declared that he would know what a gnat is only when he would be able to construct a 'machine-animal' which would fly like the insect !

This crude visualisation was of course discarded in time. In the spirit of the 19th century, the century of 'determinism' and the 'mechanistic philosophy' of nature, the scientists generally believed that all natural phenomena without exception could be ultimately reduced to the motion of particles and bodies under the constant interaction of forces, and the ideal description of a phenomenon would be to conceive a mechanical model of it. Thus the famous physicist Lord Kelvin declared : "Meseems that the true meaning of the question : do we understand a particular subject in physics or not? boils down to this : can we conceive a corresponding mechanical model ? I for myself

¹ *Savitri*, p. 285

am never satisfied until I can construct a mechanical model of the object I study. If I can construct one, I understand it; if not, I do not understand it."

This second type of visualisation, too, could not persist for long. It inevitably met its doom when the New Physics was developed in this our 20th century. It was characteristic of the classical physics that not only were phenomena observed on a scale comparable to the size of our own bodies—"physics of medium-sized bodies" as some scientists prefer to call it—but mostly they were discussed and described according to a conceptual scheme of very much the same scale. But in modern micro-physics, although "the observations must necessarily continue to be made with apparatus big enough for our hands to manipulate and our eyes to see, the purpose of the experiments is to supply details about a conceptual scheme disposed on such a fine scale as to be incapable of direct visual observation. It is a scheme which can be pictured only in the mind's eye, using linear magnifications in thought which range from one hundred million to one up to about one million million to one."

And in this delicate process, what is there to guide the physicist? It is indeed a subtle form of visualisation: I refer to 'analogy' both physical and mathematical. The scientist uses this analogy in three different forms. Let us discuss them in turn.

In its first form as used by the scientists, analogy is nothing but metaphor brought in to elucidate a difficult question. Although its demonstrative function is not of a high order (cf. "*Comparaison n'est pas raison*"), it serves indeed two important purposes: (a) to help in the comprehension of a difficult and complex notion in the light of a known simple one and, if the resemblance is well founded, (b) to assist in the discovery of new unexpected properties of the thing considered. Olbers' paradox in astronomy and different models including that of the Abbé Lemaître proposed to solve it, Bohr's model of the planetary atom are instances in this category.

The second form of analogy universally used by the scientists is the well known figure of speech 'metonymy' in its extended sense: here, cause is considered for the effect, the effect for the cause, the content for the container and *vice versa*; in a word, an unobservable is sought to be known through its links of intrinsic dependence on an observable. Physicists call this process 'observation through causality'; it is the usual procedure for the study of micro-physical entities like electrons, protons, neutrons, etc. Observation of such entities consists in the perception of the macro-physical phenomena that may be interpreted through mathematical analysis as effects of micro-physical objects. Examples are legion in number; to wit only a few amongst them: scintillations in a spinthariscopes, condensation track in a Wilson cloud chamber, activation of the Geiger counter, cathode ray oscilloscope, the study of the

serial order of the spectral lines leading to the determination of the energy levels of the atom.

The third form of analogy is very subtle indeed, but it is at the same time marvellously potent in giving an "insight" into physical phenomena : I am of course referring to mathematical analysis that has played such a great role in the construction of modern science. Indeed, what distinguishes man from all other creatures is that he seeks to anticipate the future, not merely by responding to the present but by understanding it. And, through this interpretation of events, he has evolved a characteristic method, "the method of *fore-sight* based on insight." And this insight is indeed immensely attained through the systematic use of the mathematical apparatus. A famous scientist is reputed to have remarked at the end of his life : "My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts." But how are the general laws ground at all ? It is no doubt through the mediatory power of analogies, and, as Henri Poincaré aptly declared : "Who has taught us to recognise those veritable and truly profound analogies which our reason divines but our eyes cannot see ? It is the mathematical spirit that disdains matter to adore the pure form."¹ For the true purpose of all mathematical analysis is to shift our gaze from the thing or event to its structure, and the mathematician has to blossom out into a real artist, — these are again Poincaré's words,— "to help us to see and discern our way in the Daedalian labyrinth that confronts us".

Innumerable are the instances in which mathematics has broken the cryptogram of nature, to provide us with an undreamt-of insight and that, too, sometimes through the amazingly simple procedure of changing the language of expression or of using a new set of symbols. This fact is too well-known to be recounted here. Poincaré himself has given a number of classical examples, and before we pass on to the treatment of Philosophy and Mysticism, we are tempted to close this section with his pithy saying : "He who sees best, has indeed risen most".²

(to be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ Henri Poincaré, *La Valeur de la Science*, p. 143.

² *Ibid.*, p. 144.

KATHA UPANISHAD

A Commentary

(Continued from the last issue)

I. i. 6 *

IT was a plane of consciousness inaccessible to any ordinary human being into which Nachiketas had entered. Like Sāvitrī, in that other legend, he had come face to face with Death. He has expressed in almost a sort of soliloquy what he has inwardly felt, in the preceeding stanza, and then in his still deeper inner withdrawal he finds Yama, the Lord of Death and universal Law, standing in front of him and addressing him. The dialogue takes place in utter solitude, where Nachiketas is alone and facing the tremendous god. It is not that this god has come to his world, but that he himself has entered into the world of Yama, which is a world of Death; all around him is the domain of Death. He is well aware of it, but Yama sees that he is in trance and is concentrated on the idea of Death to the exclusion of all that he had left behind and all that belonged to his normal consciousness of the triple lower planes of Nature. So he awakens him in his trance towards this, for it is not enough that the soul should come to know of the higher Truths of the universal Law in the state of samadhi; for such a knowledge would remain confined to that higher trance state and would not become the property of the waking state of Nachiketas. Look back, *anupaśya*, rings the command, to all that you have left behind, — the physical, the vital and the mental levels, for it is on these earlier levels that the grip of Death and Law is the strongest. In fact it is the proper field of Yama; below it is the Inconscience, above it the superconscient levels of Immortality. Just as there are planes of consciousness before, which you have left, so also are there planes in front of you towards which you have to move. 'Turn towards them and see those other levels,' *pratipaśya tathāpare*; 'for then alone can you have a full knowledge of the universal Law.' To remain limited within only the normal level of consciousness is to dwell in partial truth, to remain in superficial knowledge; and in that case one would

* *anupaśya yathā pūrve pratipaśya tathā' pare,*
śasyamiva martyaḥ pacyate śasyamiva-ājayate punaḥ.

feel that the law of Death is the only truth; one would believe that as Death is universal there is no possibility of going beyond it. It is only when one realises that there are other fields below and above, which are not under the sway of Death, that one begins to understand the great evolutionary goal held out before the progressing soul, viz., Immortality.

And Death is only a preparatory movement arising from the same Immortality; for it makes the soul ready for the attainment of Immortality. It is only because the soul is to be prepared for this that he is constantly made to undergo the series of deaths and births. Like ears of corn is the mortal made ripe, *pacyate*, prepared, that is to say, gradually and progressively. The Sanskrit root *pac* has got various shades of meanings, each closely connected with the others, but still psychologically getting subtler and subtler. It means in its most outward and gross sense, to cook; then, to digest, as in the case of food eaten; next, to assimilate; and last, to ripen, to prepare, to grow, to bear result. It is in this last profoundly psychological sense that the seer of the Katha Upanishad uses this word. It is in this very sense that the Gita uses it in the stanza *aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā...pacāmyannam caturvidham*. For in both these scriptures it is the same evolutionary cycle that is being considered. The passage in the Gita speaks of the fourfold state of Matter—earthy, watery, fiery and airy—*prthvī, apah, tejas* or *agni* and *vāyu*—which is being prepared or made ready by the universal Divine Will, Agni Vaiśvānara. In the stanza preceeding this one, the Gita has already given two earlier stages of evolution, viz., the first one of Matter and the second one in which life manifests out of inorganic Matter (*bhūta*) in the form of plants; *gām aviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmyahamojasā, puṣṇāmi cauśadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakāḥ*, 'entering the Earth I uphold the five elemental states of inorganic Matter by my luminous strength (*ojasā*); and becoming the principle of Delight (*soma*) full of the sap of life, I nourish the store-houses of vital heat (*ośadhīḥ*).'

The Gita seems to make a distinction between *bhūtam* and *annam* and that distinction looks very much the same as the modern scientific distinction between inorganic and organic Matter. If this is correct, we can see that the Gita is clearly referring to the evolutionary movement in the above two stanzas and in the third stanza that follows these two, viz., *sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtīr jñānam apohanam ca*, we have reference to the farther evolutionary stages, viz., the mental and the spiritual. We shall have to refer to this passage from the Gita once again a little later on, when we shall be dealing with Vaiśvānara in the next mantra of the Upanishad. The generally accepted sense of the stanza from the Gita, viz., that the Divine seated in the stomach as the intestinal or gastric fire digests the four kinds of food, is utterly puerile. The Gita has obviously far greater and profounder meaning to convey than this. Vaiśvānara,

as we shall see later on, is the universal Fire or the Divine Will operating in the universe and consequently also in the individuals, directing the course of evolution from the fourfold Matter to the level of organic life. It is this assimilation of Matter by the Life-energy, this ripening and growth of physical substance into living substance, that is expressed by the word *pacāmi*. In a similar sense do we find the same word used in the Śwetāśvatara Upanishad V. 5 *uach svabhāvam pacati viśva-yoniḥ pācyāṅsca sarvān pariṇāmayed yaḥ*.

Thus what our Upanishadic seer wants to convey to us by *śasyamiva martyaḥ pacyate śasyam ivājayate punaḥ*, is that the mortal is being prepared for immortality by constant dying and rebirth; for death and birth are only processes of evolution. Just as the ears of corn die after yielding their fruit, so also the physical body dies after providing the experiences to the soul. And just as new ears of corn come up the next year, so does the soul take birth in a new body for further experiences. These ears of corn are what are called *ōsadhi*-s as distinguished from trees, creepers etc. which are called *vanaspati*-s. The former are annuals, whereas the latter are perennials. The word *ōsadhi* literally means a treasure or store-house of heat or warmth and this warmth or heat comes out of the fire of life which remains concealed in the earth-principle.¹

There are two fundamental elements necessary for the manifestation and sustenance of life and other higher evolutionary principles in Matter. These two are symbolically mentioned in the ancient Vedic literature as agni and soma, the element of heat and the opposite element of sap or rasa or water. In the evolutionary symbolism agni is the ascending movement of the evolutionary force and soma the descending movement of the Divine Delight either in the course of involution which is prior to the commencement of evolution or during the evolution itself as its supporting or complementary movement. Agni as the

¹ It is interesting to note in this connection what Kenneth Walker says in his book *Diagnosis of Man* (1948), p. 240 :

"In *A New Model of the Universe* P.D. Ouspensky states that a grain of corn was a very important symbol in the ancient Mysteries of Egypt and of Greece.

"In the Eleusinian Mysteries every candidate for initiation carried in a particular procession a grain of wheat in a tiny earthenware bowl. The secret that was revealed to a man at the initiation was contained in the idea that man could die simply as a grain, or could rise again into some other life. This was the principal idea of the Mysteries, which was expressed by many different symbols."

"Christ and Buddha made use of the same symbol, saying that a grain must be cast into the ground, and as a grain must die, in order that a shoot should live. Christ's words were misunderstood by many who followed him and for the idea of regeneration in *this* life was substituted that of regeneration in some future life beyond the grave. But this was not the meaning originally attached to the idea of regeneration, or transmutation. Christ's talk with Nicodemus shows clearly that when he spoke of the necessity of a man being born again before he could enter the Kingdom of Heaven, he was not referring to some future existence, but to this life."

ascending evolutionary force is the Divine Will and Soma as the descending element is the Divine Delight. Chit-Shakti takes the form of Life-force and gives the impulsion to the evolutionary movement; ānanda is the basic support and ultimate purpose of the same. Sat, the third principle in Sachchidananda is the background on which this evolutionary universe manifests itself and has its being.

I. i. 7*

Agni and Soma, the Divine Will and the Divine Delight, the principle of fire and force and the principle of gentleness and joy, go to form the universe. And it is these two principles which are being referred to in the seventh stanza by the words Vaiśvānara and udaka respectively.

When Yama drew the attention of Nachiketas to the ultimate goal of life by saying that the mortal was being prepared, by the cycle of constant birth and death, for the ultimate evolutionary end, viz., the attainment of Immortality, Nachiketas has now begun to understand the profundity of that truth. He has begun to see the divine purpose behind the manifestation of the world and also the process and the plan by which the Divine fulfils that purpose. In the traditional interpretation of this Upanishad this seventh stanza is supposed to have been spoken by the attendants of Yama. But looking to the whole drift of the passage it does not seem likely that the great seer of the Upanishad would bring in such an irrelevant thing as that. If we bear in mind that Nachiketas had contacted Yama in his subliminal trance (and he could not have done so in the ordinary waking mentality), we can at once see that the whole of the Upanishad, apart from the first few preliminary verses, is a colloquy between only him and Yama; and Yama's attendants are utterly out of place in such a context. This stanza is spoken by Nachiketas in reply to what Yama had told him in the previous stanza.

It is the Divine Will that sustains and directs each and every activity in the whole universe. But still that is not the whole of the Divine Will. The Divine is not only the manifested world, as the Pantheists would believe, but much more than that; He is the Transcendent, He is the Supracosmic and that is his fundamental or essential aspect. It is only when 'He goes abroad', *sa paryagāt*, when He projects himself into manifestation that the universe can come into being; he is only an atithi, a Guest in the created universe. It is

**Vaiśvānarah praviśati atithīr brāhmaṇo grhān, tasyastām śāntim kurvanti hara varvaśvato-dakam.*

the aspect of Will that the Divine utilises in order to create the universe; it is the Divine Will or Force that enters the three houses, *grhān*, the triple levels of Matter and Life and Mind in evolutionary Nature. This Guest is Fire, the universal Force, Vaiśvānara. Nara, in the Veda, means Force or Power, whether human or divine. Nara or *nṛ* is both a man as well as a god. Even in the later Purāṇic mythology the eternal Twins, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, represent the human aspiring for the Divine and the Divine leaning down towards the human and moving on the waters of Existence.¹ Vaiśvānara is thus the divine Force of Will which moves concealed in the universal manifestation.

When this Divine Will or Force is viewed in its aspect of manifested self moving abroad in the physical universe, it is known as Viśva or even Vaiśvānara. This aspect of the Divine Will is alluded to in the Māṇḍukya Upanishad and also in the stanza of the Gītā which we have already noted. It is this Vaiśvānara who, dwelling in all material forms, deha, brings about the manifestation of life out of the fourfold elemental Matter, *pacāmi annam caturvidham*.

The word vaiśvānara has also yet another subtle meaning; it is Fire, no doubt, for he is called agni vaiśvānara, but he is also anala (an-ala) and is so called because whatever is thrown into it is never sufficient or enough for him. He consumes everything, he wants a complete surrender; but he consumes only in order to raise it higher in the form of his flames; the greater the offering, the higher his flames would mount and the purer would be the oblation rendered. For he is both *pāvaka* as well as *pacāka*, the purifier as well as the bringer of results; he is the messenger stationed between the high gods and men, in order to bring the messages of the former to the latter and to carry the call and the invocation and the offerings of the latter to the former. He is agni, the forward moving Force; all that is progressive, all that is not stagnant is under his domain; he is the leader and the mover in front, *netā, agrani*, he is placed in front, puro-hita. But still he is concealed, his paths of movement are dark and shrouded in the veil of inscrutability, '*kṛṣṇa-vartman*. He is called *Vaiśvānara* because he is the leader of all energies, *viśva nara*; he is called Agni because he moves upwards.

On the physical plane Agni Vaiśvānara is the elemental fire dwelling in

¹ The Manu-Smṛiti gives us this profound meaning of the word *Nārāyaṇa* thus *āpo nārā itī proktā āpo vai naraśūnavah, tā yadasyāyanam pūrvam tena nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ* (I. 10), which means that the Cosmic Waters are called *Nārās*, for they are the offsprings of Nara, the divine Power. These waters are the first or primary foundation, or support for movement, of the Divine and that is why he is known as *Nārāyaṇa*.

The other Puranic story of *Viṣṇu* or *Nārāyaṇa* sleeping upon the waters of Universal Existence after Pralaya or Deluge, reclining on the coils of the Serpent of Eternity or Seed-Remains, *ananta* or *śeṣa nāga*, is based upon the same symbolism.

all things; in the vital plane he is the fire of Life sustaining all forms of life-manifestations; on the mental and psychological level he is the fire of Aspiration dwelling in the hearts of men. As this last he leads men towards the Divine; he lifts the human consciousness towards the yet unattained spiritual levels. He dwells in his three mansions in the lower Nature, *grhān*, but he has other higher dwellings too. For, although he has come here to stay, he does not originally belong to these lower triple worlds; he has come down from his highest home, *param dhāma*, where he is native. *Brāhmaṇa* means belonging or pertaining to the supreme Brahman, and this Brahman is Sach-chid-ānanda, where there are this Agni's three highest births, which are true and desirable. Even when he comes here in this lower Nature his tendency is to rise higher always. And when he thus rises up he brooks no obstructions, he burns his way through the dense jungles, the growths of the earth, both physical and psychological.

But the action of Vaiśvānara is not only cosmic, it is also individual; for by his entry into the whole universe he enters in each individual too, *agnir yathaiko bhuvana praviṣṭo, rūpam rūpam praturūpo babhūva*. He is not only a vast and formless Guest in the universal 'Nature's inn,' he is also the Guest who takes the individual's form. Whoever becomes conscious within himself of this fire of aspiration, provides a dwelling-place for the Divine Will to act consciously therefrom for the furtherance of the Divine Plan.

This Fire is the Guest. But then, who is the host ? The lower Prakriti is the inn in which the divine Guest, the adorable Guest has taken his lodgings; *atithir namasyaḥ*. And this lower Prakriti is the domain of death, the kingdom of Yama, the universal Law. And it is this Yama who must play the host. The inner Fire of Aspiration, of Godward-moving flame has been kindled; for Nachiketas himself is that Fire, as we shall see later on, and is now knocking at the doors of Yama's houses, of the universal Law's original homes, seeking not only to enter into them as his Guest, but ultimately to become their 'inner Sovereign'. Thus, there is a double guesthood; in the first, the Divine Will comes down from above and takes its dwelling in the three lower levels of Prakriti, and in the second, the same Divine Will assuming the form of Nachiketas, the evolving Fire, goes above from the lower Prakriti into the higher planes of existence and consciousness, which are the native heights of Yama, the Lord of the universal Law. The first is the involutionary or descending movement and the second is the evolutionary or ascending movement.

But it is the same Fire who becomes the Guest in both these cases; first, he as Vaiśvānara is the Guest of Yama in the latter's houses in the lower Prakriti, and afterwards, he as both Vaiśvānara and Nachiketas, becomes the Guest of the same Yama in the higher homes of the latter.

And when once this fire is awakened, everything will be consumed by its

tapas, by its askesis, unless it is appeased, unless, that is to say, it is allowed a free unhampered movement in the waters of existence, over which Yama is till now the Lord. This fire must be fed with proper fuel, this guest must be welcomed and honoured; *tasyaitām śāntim kurvanti*. And when we say 'appeased' we should not think that he is enraged and that his wrath is to be pacified. It is not out of fear of his wrath that offerings are to be given to him, On the contrary, he is the beloved guest, *priyo atithih*, of the Rig Veda, and whatever is given to him is a mark of affection for him. It is not appeasement that is demanded but peace, *śānti*,—peace arising out of the fulfilment of the purpose for which he has become a guest in this universe. It is the supreme peace, *parā śānti*, of the Gītā, and that can be attained or given only by the attainment of the supreme Delight of Immortality. The human soul, Nachiketas, himself is that great Guest, that divine Fire and it is he who demands of Yama this peace, this Delight, this Immortality. Although this demand is still not articulated by Nachiketas in clear metaphysical language, which he does later on, it is symbolically mentioned by him in unmistakable terms to Yama in this verse.

Agni is fire and it always burns upwards. Udaka is water, rasa or soma, and it flows downwards. The one cannot exist without the other, for they are the twin principles that sustain the universe, *agnīḥ mātmaṁ jagat*. Although fire is the creative principle, it is not by itself sufficient to uphold the created things. It is also the principle or element that burns or consumes the created things. If fire or heat were the only element the world could not have come into existence. Agni supplies the heat, the warmth, the light, the dynamic principle of life to things; but to sustain that heat and life, to control and regulate them, another element is essential; and that element is soma.

Even on the physical plane the creation and sustenance of plant and animal life depends on these two elements ; the solar heat and the atmospheric moisture are both equally necessary for life. It is said in the Manu-Smṛiti (III 76) that whatever oblation is cast into fire goes to the sun, from sun come down the rains, from rains food and food creatures. A similar cycle is mentioned in the Gita (III.14) which states that on food depend the creatures, on rains depends food, and on the cosmic sacrifice depend the rains. Both these cycles show that heat and water, agni and soma, are necessary for the sustenance of the creation. The sun is responsible for the evaporation of water on the earth and the formation of clouds and dew and this water is responsible for the manifestation and maintenance of life on the earth.

The Gītā also mentions in the first of the three stanzas (XV. 13-15) we have already noted in connection with the evolutionary movement that it is the Divine who, after having entered the earth, upholds the physical elements

with his luminous energy, ojas, and becoming soma, full of the sap, nourishes or sustains the various forms of plant-life, which are the store-houses of heat. Here the words *ojas* and *oṣa* signify the action of the fiery principle and the word soma signifies that of the principle of delight. The manifestation of plant-life on earth is dependent on these two fundamental elements, of which agni is the creative element and soma the sustaining one.

If this combined action of agni and soma is so essential on the physical plane, it is equally and perhaps more so on the subtler psychological and spiritual levels. On these latter levels agni and soma become or are the chit-tapas and ānanda, Consciousness-askesis and Delight, respectively. Wherever there is tapas or askesis, there must come down as a response to it ānanda or delight. In fact, all the hard labour in the world, whether voluntary or involuntary, has as its objective this delight and the fulfilment can come only by the attainment of that delight. In fact, the fire of life needs this fuel of delight in order to maintain its flame and if that is denied to it, it will consume itself and die out.

Nachiketas was doing tapasyā ; he himself was the symbolic Fire who had lifted his flames towards and right into the world of Yama and if Yama gave him no response his tapasyā would go in vain ; his objective would remain unfulfilled and his flame of askesis unappeased. Therefore he asks Yama to bring water, *udakam*, the fulfilling delight of Immortality, *amṛtam*. And in this connection the epithet used by him to address Yama is extremely significant ; he calls him *Vaivasvata*, which means the son or offspring of *Vivasvat*, the luminous sun. Nachiketas is the evolutionary Fire rising from level to level of the lower Prakriti with the objective of ascending into the Supramental, which is beyond all the planes so far reached by man. The human soul wants to reach that level because that alone can bring fulfilment to his evolutionary endeavour ; below that level everything is under the sway of mortality, above it all is Immortality. And this Immortality is Delight, *amṛtam*. It is native to the Supramental plane, and if it is to be experienced and enjoyed here on the lower levels, it can be done only by bringing it down on this earth from that world of the Sun, *Vivasvat*. But this earth is under the sway of Death, of Yama. It is he who ordains all things on earth, for he is appointed to that task by the Divine. This universal Law is the offspring of the supramental Freedom ; this ordainer of pain and suffering and death is himself born of that illimitable vastness and liberation and bliss of the supramental Sun. He is the connecting link between this mortality and that Immortality, and, as such, his native world is located between the Prakriti of matter, life and mind below and the Sun-world of the Supramental above. There he dwells in the luminous world of *Dakṣiṇā* or divine Discernment, in

the companionship of Pūṣaṇ the Watcher of the Path leading towards the supreme worlds of the Sun. As a matter of fact, both Yama and Pūṣaṇ are the joint Guardians of the Path taking the human soul towards Immortality. It was Yama who had first discovered this path for men, *yamo no gātum prathamam viveda* (Rig Veda X. 14.2). It is the path of divine Discernment, and if the discoverer of it is Yama, the guide pointing out the place to be reached is Pūṣaṇ. The Isha Upanishad says that the golden lid covering the face of the Sun is to be opened by Pūṣaṇ and later on the same Upanishad alludes to the united movement of Pūṣaṇ and Yama (*hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyāpihitam mukham ;...pūṣannekarṣe yama sūrya...vyūha raśmīn samūha tejaḥ...*).

Yama keeps an eye on all those who travel along that Path in order to go into the Beyond and he is also the Guide leading them there, *pareyivāmsam...vaivaśvatam saṅgamanam janānām* (Rig Veda X. 14. 1). And in this work of keeping a watch over this great Path he is helped by his two dogs, the offsprings of the famous hound Saramā, the divine Intuition; they are the four-eyed guardians of the Path with their eyes fixed on the gods and with their wide movement they lead the human souls towards the Vision of the Sun and the Supreme Felicity; *sārameyau śvānau...caturakṣau pathi-rakṣi nṛ-cakṣasau...urū-ṇasau...tāvasmabhyam dṛṣaye sūryāya...dātām...bhadram.* (Rig Veda X. 14. 10, 11, 12.)

The heat of tapas which Nachiketas had undergone has evoked a response from the higher worlds of the Sun and he calls upon Yama to become the bringer of that response. 'Bring, O Son of Vivasvat,' he says, 'the waters,' from those worlds beyond. This is his legitimate demand. And Yama is the right person, for he is the mediator between these lower worlds and those higher ones. He is the Law, but he is also the bringer of the Grace, the Delight for one who has risen to such a height as to become capable of overpassing the Law.

We may note here in passing that the interpretation usually given of this stanza, based on its superficial meaning that a guest who has come to one's house must be honoured and his fatigue relieved by offering him water to drink and to wash his feet and face with, is once again utterly puerile, just like that of the stanza of the Gita noted a little before.

BABHRU

(To be continued)

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", paragraph 3)

Q: I have a question going back to the very first sentence of the Chapter: "A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence." From the point of view of form, is man superior to the other animals?

I believe that this is easy enough to find out. Sri Aurobindo speaks of the form capable of manifesting the Spirit. The characteristic of the manifestation of the Spirit is Consciousness, the understanding of things and finally the mastery of them. It is evident that, from the viewpoint of aesthetics and of the purely physical appearance, one can find some animal forms no less beautiful and perhaps even more beautiful than the human in its present state of decadence. There have been ages when certain human races seemed more beautiful and more harmonious, but, as a mode of the Spirit's expression, its superiority leaves not the shadow of a doubt, for, the very fact that man stands upright is symbolic of the capacity to look at things from high above. One dominates what one sees instead of being always nose-to-the-ground. Evidently we can say that the birds fly, but it is difficult to make these wings a means of intellectual self-expression. We don't expect to see birds writing or painting or producing music. They do make music, but with their throats, not with hands. Our upright position is very symbolic. If you try to walk on all fours, you will see that such a position, with eyes and nose necessarily turned towards earth, does not give the impression that you are seeing things on even the same plane, much less from above. The whole construction of the human body is a construction to express a mental life. The proportion of the brain, for example, the structure of the human head, that of the arms and hands, everything, from the viewpoint of expressing the Spirit, is indisputably superior and seems to have been exclusively conceived and fashioned with an eye to intellectual expression.

It is obvious that as regards force, suppleness, agility, man is not the most gifted animal, but for expressing the Spirit there is no other that can be compared

to him. He is altogether constructed for that. We may want to add to this possibility the other things which seem to have been justly sacrificed,—but also just on account of his capacity to express the mental life man is capable of developing in himself faculties which are latent. Man has the power to educate himself, his body can be developed, educated. He can increase certain faculties. You cannot imagine an animal, even those we admire most, being capable, for example, of physical, purely physical education,—I am not speaking of going to school and learning things, but of a systematic development of the muscles,—the animal is born and it profits by what it has, it develops itself according to its own law, it does not educate itself, except in a way quite rudimentary; its field is extremely limited, while by a normal and systematic development man can set right his defects and his inferiorities. He is certainly, in an organised manner, the first progressive animal who can augment his capacities, his possibilities, increase his faculties and acquire things that he does not automatically have. There is no animal that can do this.

Under man's influence, some animals learn things that they don't spontaneously do, but it is always under man's influence. If man had not been there, the dog or the horse would certainly never have learnt to do what they have in contact with man. Consequently, it is plain that the physical human form is the form most appropriate for expressing the Spirit. It may appear to us insufficient, but rightly we feel that we are capable of getting from our bodies a performance impossible for us to achieve automatically without an educative will. And it is with this possibility of expressing intelligence, observation, understanding and deduction, all the mental qualities, that man has little by little learnt to comprehend the laws of Nature and has attempted not only to comprehend them but also to master them. If we compare what he is to a superior being who lives in the Truth and whom we wish to become, evidently we can speak in a pejorative strain of the actual man and complain of his imperfection, but if we put ourselves in the place of the animals who were immediately before him in evolution, it must be recognised that he is endowed with possibilities and with powers which the others are altogether incapable of manifesting. The very fact that he has ambition, desire, will to know the laws of Nature and to control them to the point of being able to adapt them to his needs and in a certain measure change them, is something which is impossible, unthinkable for an animal.

Perhaps you will say that I am not in the habit of speaking of man in a very amiable fashion, but it is because he on his part has the habit of thinking of himself in a too complimentary way.

If we compare man to the other productions of Nature, he is incontestably at the top of the ladder.

THE MOTHER'S TALK ON *The Life Divine*

Q. Then the question arises: is it the descent of consciousness that develops the form or the development of form that forces the superior consciousness to descend?

There would have been no universe without the descent of Consciousness. Where would your universe begin and by what ?

Q. In the case of man, is it the animal man who made the Mind descend or the descent of the Mind that... ?

You can say : is it something in the intermediate being or in the higher ape which by aspiration has made the Mind descend ? But the aspiration itself is the result of a previous descent.

It is quite evident that nothing can manifest which is not previously contained in what exists. You cannot make something come out of nothing. You can make what is already there emerge, manifest, express itself, develop, but if there were nothing, nothing would ever come out. All progress, all perfecting, is the result of an inner effort of something which is present and which seeks to manifest; one may say, in an absolute manner, that the principle is first and the expression afterwards. If there were not an eternal principle, a supreme Reality—one may give it all the names one likes—there would never be any universe, because something cannot come out of nothing.

There has been a whole period of mental development when people have very seriously tried to prove that it is the perfecting of matter that has made the Spirit take birth, but this cannot stand. The least of your activities, all that you do, is evident proof that, even on a very small scale, you begin by thinking before acting. A life which is not the result of a conscious will would be a life completely incoherent. I wish to say that if Nature were not a conscious force, a conscious will having a conscious aim, nothing could ever get organised. It is enough to observe a little, even in the smallest field of observation which is given us in an individual life, to be altogether convinced of this.

One could say that the mastery over fire is the symbolic sign of human superiority. Wherever man is, there fire is lighted.

The two human things which are distinctly superior to animal activities are the faculty of writing and the possibility of an articulate language. And these are so clearly superior that all animals sufficiently developed are extremely sensible of articulate language—it fascinates them. If you speak to a savage animal in a very clear way, a manner very well modulated, well articulated, it is at once attracted, truly fascinated,—I do not speak of those who have lived near man, but simply of those who have never come across man before. Immediately they hear, they feel the superior power which expresses itself.

November 13, 1957.

K. D. S.

THE DREAM

It was one of those dreams that are so full of the sense of reality, that, when one wakes, one has the vivid sense that something special has occurred, that an important experience has been undergone, and there is the automatic attempt to recapitulate in as much detail as possible that dream-experience.

In my dream it seemed that I was on a journey and I found myself walking along a pleasant pathway that wound onwards and upwards on the side of some wooded hill. The air was clear and pure, a cheerful sun shone, there was the singing of many birds, and for the most part, as I strode along, I was conscious of a buoyant and lightsome gladness. But occasionally the trees skirting the path would meet overhead, blocking out the sunlight, and so deep was the gloomy darkness, it was with difficulty I could see where to put my feet. There were even moments when I sank to my knees in a strange and baffled helplessness, and all around me was nothing but the dark and silent emptiness.

Yet soon I would perceive a glint or glimmer of distant light and I would spring happily to my feet and race along until I came once more into the clear sunlight and the cheerful merriment of singing birds.

And ever the way went onwards and upwards.

Unexpectedly I came to a little clearing like a small plateau, and there seated on a platform of stone was the silent figure of a man. He sat in a cross-legged posture, his back and head rigid in a straight line, his eyes closed in deep meditation. Cautiously I approached him.

He was of middle-age, but his body was lean and muscular and youthful. His hair was untrimmed and fell in luxuriant tresses about his shoulders, his bearded face wore an expression of a fixed and beatific repose. Yet also there was something stern and austere about his aspect, as if to suggest that whatever realization he had attained had been won at the cost of an unrelenting renunciation.

Somehow he became aware of my presence. He opened his eyes and with a faint smile beckoned me to sit before him. His passionless eyes looked a little strange to me at first and then I perceived in them a fathomless benignity which gave me confidence. He began to speak and his voice was like the deep booming of the waves on the seashore.

"What is it you are seeking, my son?" he said.

I felt timid, not knowing how to frame a reply without sounding pre-

tentious and egoistic; so, after a moment, he replied in my stead :

"You want Knowledge, Devotion and Power. You want the high and wonderful Truth. You want the bliss of the Eternal, do you not ?"

"Yes," I said, my voice no more than a whisper.

"You want a great deal. Now, tell me, what do you propose to give in return ?"

I felt embarrassed.

"I have nothing to give", I faltered.

"Indeed you have. You have something which no-one else has, and which none can give in your place, something you prize and cherish and nurse and defend, something which of all things is most dear and real to you, and that is your self, your little self. That, my son, is what you can give."

There was a moment's silence. He had taken his eyes from my face and he seemed to look into some far beyond ; the austere countenance was now full of a gentle compassion.

"Come with me," he said, and extended his hand.

He led me towards the edge of the plateau and there a vast and deep valley opened out before us. I saw with amazement that the floor of the valley was teeming with people, millions upon millions, looking so very much like countless swarms of insects, black and huddled and seething together in masses. The incessant hum of their mingled voices rose up to us like some unholy babel, confused and inconsequential. My reactions were mixed; I felt both sympathy and scorn for those little struggling creatures so far below us. He who stood beside me—and who could read my heart—quietly spoke :

"Why scorn ? Do you imagine that if you regard yourself in any way as 'exceptional' you can ever love or serve the One who dwells in all ? Do you think that by scorning others you can rid yourself of vainglory and stupid self-esteem ? Do you think that by puerile egoistic 'distinction' you can arrive on the sure ground of Knowledge ? No ; you would but float on a bubble of Ignorance. And do you think that because I have permitted you the boon of this vision it is something accruing to you by right ? The Divine bestows his gifts where he wills, my son. With humility will come gratitude and devotion, but pride must surely bring your own downfall."

His words were like rapier thrusts, but I knew their truth. He had turned his gaze to the teeming multitudes and I saw in his face such a deep compassion that it was almost an anguish. "These," he said gently, "are my children..." In reverence, I was about to kneel before him, but he forbade me.

"No. But keep a firm guard upon your heart. The way is long and you have scarcely begun."

MOTHER INDIA

He pointed down into the depths and then to where the small foothills rose on either side of the valley; and, faintly at first, then more clearly I could see one or two tiny figures detach themselves from the mass and with difficulty climb those lower slopes. They looked isolated and infinitely courageous, and I felt a strong bond of sympathy and kinship with those struggling few. Others there were who would climb a little out of the morass (only to sink back again and be lost to sight. "All must one day come," said my companion.

He directed my gaze to another part of the valley where there was a particular "swarm" which seemed a little separated from the rest, but which appeared to go round and round in never-changing circles.

"And those are the mental and sentimental philosophers, who know the Way but care not to tread it. They call metaphysical understanding 'Knowledge' and a shining phrase is dearer to their hearts than God. But look, even there, there are a few who become undeceived." And I again saw a few figures isolate themselves from the others and climb towards the hills.

And there were other groups or swarms where the same process was repeated, and I watched with interest how from the Religions a few would break away and begin the long climb.

I turned towards my Companion, but he said no more. Only a silent blessing seemed to flow from him into myself and I felt a communion of Peace and understanding. And presently I woke, glad and serene in that secure atmosphere of peace.

I woke in time to go to the place in the street below the Balcony, where I might gaze upon another Face, different yet the same, the Face of the Eternal, She who comes in human guise to save the world.

GODFREY

CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

THE fundamental experience of every seeker of Integral Yoga is in the contact with the Mother. Without contact, there is neither the commencement, development nor completion of the Yoga. The nature of this contact cannot be revealed in words which veil, or be expressed by ideas which cover; for the contact is subtle, varied and, in fullness, incomprehensible. Contact with the Mother is established through REALISATION by some or all parts of our being, physical, vital, mental, or spiritual. The true contact is in all the planes of being—a touch, wide and comprehensive, simultaneous or successive in accordance with the advance of the Yoga. The richness, which the seeker brings by the sincerity of his approach and the profundity of his spirit and which he surrenders to the Supreme, ensures the breadth and depth of the contact.

Broadly, the contact with the Mother is outer, inner, or a blend of both, concluding in the mystic union with the Divine in which contact is dissolved by identification with the Supreme in all its aspects individual, universal and transcendental.

The first contact of the seeker is by the outer being. The physical Presence of the Mother seems at this stage all-important. Where physical changes have to be established, the Mother's physical Presence may even be imperative. The Mother's handling of this demand is subtle and complex. Her Force is directed and tempered by the need as well as the progress of the individual. The outer contact with the Mother may be encouraged, discouraged, or abolished in accordance with the situation. With progress, an inner realisation is conveyed by multiple experiences that the outer Presence of the Mother is not her Essential Presence. Her bodily Presence changes. The physical Mother is but one specialised play of the Cosmic Presence. The seeker, wrought upon by the secret operations of the Mother's Force in hours waking or asleep, experiences a reversal of consciousness. He yearns for a wider Reality beyond the physical. He drops the insistent call for the outer contact.

In the second stage, impelled by deeper forces of the ascending aspiration, he makes a new demand for a crucial and ampler contact with the Inner Presence of the Mother. This is a voicing of the Inner Being, when the outer has been hushed by the occult action of the Mother. It is the prelude to the birth of a new consciousness. To the subtler call the Mother makes a subtler response.

MOTHER INDIA

She takes up the work of integration in all parts of our being, physical, vital, mental, and spiritual. The touch is upon secret places of body, mind and life, in remote corners where the normal consciousness has no access. The process is not perceived, but the result is assured in the fruition of another level of consciousness.

In the third stage, the outer and the inner contacts blend into an integrated whole where the outer is a support of the inner and the inner a complement of the outer. The outer and inner Presence of the Mother are held in one integrated Light.

In the fourth stage, contact outer, inner or a blend of both are all transcended. It is the demand not for contact but for dissolution of contact. It is the cry, not of the outer or inner being, but of the soul which stands behind the veils for actual integration in all parts with the Supreme. The Mother's response to this call is wholly different. It is the call for the wider reaches of life, the call for supramentalisation of mind, life and body. This evokes all the Cosmic Forces of the Mother. This is her work in the widest silence and deepest secrecies of the Cosmic planes.

With the perfection of this stage—the mystical union with the Divine—the distinction between outer and inner contact ceases. There are new values for the new consciousness. The outer and inner blend into one movement of the Divine working in the seeker as an individual centre of an Infinite manifestation.

SYED MEHDI IMAM

A CHILD'S DESIRE

O sweet Mother divine,
For Thee my eyes now pine.
With me Thou playest hide
And seek, Mother, do guide
My thoughts and sow in me
The seed of devotion-tree.
In me shall dwell no gloom,
I will be Thy light and bloom.
Today I bow to Thee,
Peaceful and pure to be.

JYOTI KUMARI

A CHILD'S GOD

(A Storyette)

GULU has completed his fourth year and stepped into the fifth. He has been introduced to the alphabet. Gulu's father says, "Well, Gulu, I shall now put you in the primary school of the pedagogue Aghore."

Gulu's joy knows no bounds. Now he will go to school with the satchel under his arm.

Gulu is very intelligent. He speaks sixteen to the dozen. He is very fond of stories. He often teases his grandmother to tell him stories. He listens to her words and wonders. The story of Prahlad appeals to him most. He says to his grandmother, "Tell me only the story of Prahlad. I don't want to hear any other story." Gulu listens to the story of Prahlad with implicit faith and bears it in mind *in toto*. Gulu says, "How cruel is the father of Prahlad, grandmother ! What tortures has he inflicted on Prahlad ! But nobody can slay him whose helper is God."

One day it occurs to Gulu to find out God. He thinks : as God is worshipped by men with flowers, He must be hiding in the rose in the garden. Gulu reflects : once he is able to discover God then he will so befriend Him that He will not be able to desert him any more.

Gulu spends the day in the garden. He shakes the plants in his search for God. But he meets Him nowhere. At last he returns home disappointed.

One day Gulu asks his mother, "I search for God so much, still why do I not find Him, mother ?"

"Gulu, God is fond of playing. So He plays hide and seek with us. He is an expert Player. He hides Himself in such a way that even the great saints and sages fail to find Him."

"Who then can discover Him, mother ?"

"Nobody can find Him unless He reveals Himself. Still He stays with each and every one and protects all as He did Prahlad. He hides Himself in your heart too."

"In the core of my heart ! Believe me, mother, when I search for Him in the garden it seems someone responds from within my heart."

"It is this Indweller that is God. Adore Him, learn to love Him as you love me. He is there not only in your heart but in all hearts. Learn to love all, then He will be pleased to reveal Himself to you, be sure."

MOTHER INDIA

Gulu's mind is set at rest by the words of his mother. He cherishes the hope that some day or other God will come to him.

Gulu visits his maternal uncle's house along with his mother. And he returns home on the eve of the pujas. The train is packed with passengers. There is no sufficient room. Gulu is not sorry for that. He peeps out of the window to muse over the scenery. His uncle says, "Don't bend forward like that, you may fall down, Gulu."

"How can I fall ? I have caught hold of the door."

Suddenly somehow the door opens out. Unable to check himself Gulu falls down below. Anon people inside the compartment raise cries of horror and lamentation. Gulu's mother is about to jump from the train under the spell of insanity. Some one holds her back.

It is night-time. Nothing is visible in the dark. The train is running at top speed. Owing to the excitement no one thinks of pulling the chain. Alerted by the confused noise, passengers of the next compartment pull the chain. Forthwith the motion of the train is arrested.

The train goes backward. Nobody hopes to see Gulu alive. After covering some distance someone is visible on a bridge. Gulu's mother cries out, "Behold, my Gulu is there."

The train stops. Gulu's mother rushes up to him and takes him in her arms. She asks, "Have you got hurt, Gulu ?"

"How can I be hurt, mother ? The moment I fell down, my uncle jumped and took me in his arms."

With a surprised voice the mother says, "Your uncle did not come down. He was there inside."

"Do not tell a lie, mother. All this time my uncle held me on his lap. As you all drew near he put me down and went that way. You may look for him."

A thrill passes through the whole body of Gulu's mother. She says, "Gulu, your God saved you in the form of your uncle." At the words of his mother Gulu is beside himself with wonder.

MRIDU BHASHINI DEVI

(Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali)

A DAY OF REDEDICATION AND SELF-GIVING

THE waters of deathless Life have been flowing down the zigzagged slopes of our mortality for many decades from the heavens of light and love, with an intensity perhaps never before witnessed by any group of men in the history of mankind.

An unique ideal, the longed-for sun of immortality, has been the beacon-light of the endeavour of a little representative world that has sought and sought and persevered through years for the one supreme event.

Promises have been made and fulfilled and are being fulfilled. God has always stood by men of faith and fortitude.

And promises shall be fulfilled for them who fulfil their promises and the conditions of the realisation.

The hour is come for those who do not blind themselves by appearances, for they have known that God is not only fulfiller, saviour and lover but a mysterious player who loves, saves and fulfils in His own unthinkable way.

Love Him for thou art inseparable from Him and follow Him through all the curves and crossings of the unknown and the uncalculated if thou wouldst see and be His whole divinity.

Look not back nor to sides nor with the eyes not given by Him, for thereby thou shalt look not at Him but at the shadow of his play and the delusion of thy own eyes. Beware lest the shadow and the delusion tempt thee away from Him.

Let Him see through thee what He wants thee to see.

Let not doubt turn thee from Him and lure thy faith away, for doubt is the greatest, long-enduring and last chance of the dark Past whose representatives linger and hang on secretly to greet thee at each corner of thy path waiting to tempt thee to their old prison-caves of the zone of Twilight where the rays of the Future seldom break through.

Men of faith the Divine greets at each corner of their enlightened journey in His various forms and garbs and reveals to them the mystery of His play.

So be thou among those who endure and wait, for those who stand firm and rely shall find fulfilment.

If men could only know how to participate in the affairs of God and let Him have His way, if only they could know how to wait and watch upon the

MOTHER INDIA

wonders of His Work, the mystery of His Play, they would deceive themselves less and suffer less their own ignorance.

Count not on fate and time that is, but on the way and will of the Divine that are to be, on the hour of God that outflows unto thee each moment.

Let the year of fulfilment be not thy year that is dead but the year that God wisheth thee to ring in, the year whose first golden glow greets thee in smiling invitation. Be the hero who welcomes whatever be His mode of gathering His children closer under the sky-cover of His Grace and Love.

“SHANKH”

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