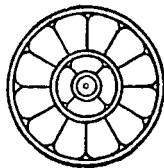


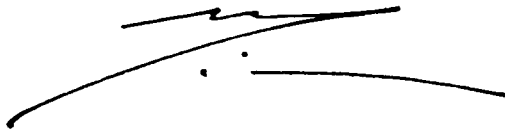
MOTHER INDIA

JULY 1960

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



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XII

No. 6

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

PEACE of mind must be acquired not through favourable circumstances but through inner transformation.

18-3-1960

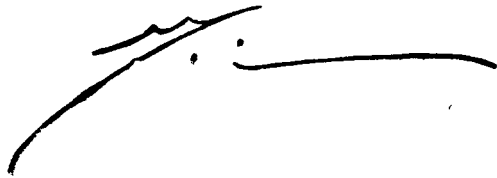
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*

Q. Somebody wants to visit Sri Aurobindo's room again and sit there to meditate for some time.

A. What are his qualifications and titles to such a great privilege ?

Visiting again is all right. People can come to Sri Aurobindo's room. But to be allowed to sit and meditate there, one must have done much for Sri Aurobindo.



11-6-1960

ABOUT SOME TRADITIONAL PROHIBITIONS

WHY give so much importance to these material workings of the body ? It is better to feel quite free from them and to let them go their own blind way without bothering about it, until we have the necessary force and knowledge to interfere in their obscurity and compel them to change and to become the true expression of the Supreme Light and Consciousness.

THE MOTHER

APROPOS DE CERTAINES INTERDICTIONS TRADITIONNELLES

Pourquoi donner tant d'importance à ces fonctionnements matériels du corps ? Il vaut mieux se sentir tout à fait indépendant d'eux et les laisser aller selon leur loi propre, sans se tracasser à leur sujet, jusqu'à ce que nous ayons la connaissance et la force nécessaires pour intervenir dans leur obscurité et les contraindre à changer et à devenir la vraie expression de la lumière et de la conscience suprêmes.

LA MÈRE

SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

(This is the concluding portion of the article published last month in this series.)

IV

OPINION AND COMMENTS

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

It is not surprising that with these ideas the *Bengalee* should deprecate the call for continued courage and self-sacrifice which has been made by Sriyut Aurobindo Ghose in his speech at Jhalakati, for to that speech the article is a controversial answer. The cry for expediency resolves itself into an argument for individual prudence on the part of the leaders. "It seems to us to be a fatal idea that for the progress of the nation individuals are not necessary or that particular individuals are not more necessary than other individuals." And the writer asks whether an organ is justified in cutting itself off for the sake of the organism, and immediately answers his own question partially by saying, yes, when the interests of the organism require it.

The metaphor is a false one; for the individual is not an organ, he is simply an atom, and atoms not only can be replaced but are daily replaced, and the replacement is necessary for the continued life of the organism. In times of stress or revolution the replacement is more rapid, that is all. Whatever the importance of particular individuals,—and the importance of men like S. J. Aswini Kumar Dutta or S. J. Krishna Kumar Mitra¹ is not denied by any man in his senses and was not denied but dwelt upon by the speaker at Jhalakati,—they are not necessary, in the sense that God does not depend upon them for the execution of His purposes. Our contemporary does not expressly deny God's existence or His omnipotence or His providence, and if he accepts

¹ These were two of the well-known leaders of social and political thought in the early years of the century in Bengal. The first had revolutionised teaching methods in his college at Barisal and was one of the most popular leaders of East Bengal; the other, an uncle of Sri Aurobindo, had been instrumental in calling the nation to a boycott of British goods as a protest against the scheme of Partition. (Ed.)

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them he is debarred from insisting that God cannot save India without S. Surendra Nath Banerji or S. Aswini Kumar Dutta, that He is unable to remove them and find other instruments or that their deportation or disappearance will defer the fulfilment of His purposes to future centuries.

THE FATALISM OF ACTION

Our contemporary does however seem to doubt these qualities in the Ruler of all. He holds it to be a fatal doctrine "that we are none of us necessary, that everything that is happening or can happen is for the best, that God is seeking His fulfilment in inscrutable ways, that He will Himself lead the country when our prominent men are removed from the arena." This, he says, is fatalism, and by flinging the word fatalism at Sriji Aurobindo, he thinks he has damned his position.

The word fatalism means usually a resigned passivity, and certainly any leader who preached such a gospel would be injuring the country. That would be indeed a fatal doctrine. But our contemporary admits that it is a fatalism of action and not of inaction he is censuring, he blames the speaker for advocating too much action and not too little. All that the "fatalism" censured means is a firm faith in the love and wisdom of God and a belief based on past experience that as it is His purpose to raise up India, therefore everything that happens or can happen just now will tend to the fulfilment of His purpose. In other words, there is now an upward tendency in the nation with an immense force behind it and, in such conditions, it is part of human experience that the force makes use of every event to assist the progress of the tendency until its contribution to human development is fulfilled. That is the idea of the *kāla* or the *Zeitgeist* working, and put religiously, it means that God being Supreme Wisdom uses everything for His supreme purposes and out of evil cometh good. This is true of our private life as every man of spiritual insight can testify; he can name and estimate the particular good which has come out of every apparent evil in his life. The same truth applies to the life of the nation.

GOD'S WAYS

When it is said that God's ways are inscrutable, it is simply meant that man's reason, on which the *Bengalee* lays so much stress, is not always sufficient to estimate at the time the object He has in a particular dispensation of calamity or defeat. It seems to be nothing but calamity and defeat and it is only afterwards that the light of reason looking backwards is able by the illumination of subsequent events to understand His doings. Therefore we must have faith and

an invincible faith or else the calamities will be too great for our courage and endurance.

Is this a false doctrine or a fatal doctrine ? Will the country be injured by it or helped by it ? Srijiut Aurobindo never said that God would step in to fill the place of Srijiut Aswini Dutt or others removed from the arena. His position was that God has been driving on the movement from the beginning and was always the leader when they were with us and remains the leader when they are taken from us.

ADEQUATE VALUE

The *Bengalee* insists however that individual life is quite as sacred *for its own purposes* as national life for its higher purposes, that the nation must get *adequate value* for each sacrifice that the individuals make, and that great men must protect themselves from danger because their removal at a critical moment may mean incalculable injury. We deny that individual life is as sacred as national life; the smaller cannot be so sacred as the greater, self cannot be so sacred as others, and to say that it is quite as sacred for its own purposes is to deify selfishness. Our lives are useful only in proportion as they help others by example or action or tend to fulfil God in man. It is not true that my ease is sacred, my safety is sacred, or my self-interest is sacred. This if anything is a "fatal doctrine".

We do not deny that sacrifice cannot be an end to itself; no one is so foolish as to advance any such proposition. But when the *Bengalee* argues that the individual must demand adequate value for every sacrifice he makes on the national altar, it shows a complete inability to appreciate the nature of sacrifice and the laws of politics. If we had acted in this Baniya¹ spirit, we should never have got beyond the point at which we stood four years ago.

It is by unhesitating, whole-hearted and princely sacrifices that nations effect their liberty. It has always been so in the past and the laws of nature have not altered and will not alter to suit the calculating prudence of individuals. A great man is valuable to the nation and he should guard himself but only so far as he can do so without demoralising his followers, ceasing from the battle or abdicating his right to leadership. He should never forget that he leads and the nation looks up to him as a fountain of steadfastness, unselfish service and courage. Expediency means national expediency, not individual expediency. Even so it must be the larger expediency which makes great sacrifices and faces

¹ mercantile (Ed.)

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great risks to secure great ends. Statesmanship is not summed up in the words prudence and caution, it has a place for strength and courage.

EXPEDIENCY AND NATIONALISM

We have met the arguments of the *Bengalee* at some length because we hold the teaching in this article to be perilous in its tendencies. There is plenty of selfishness, prudence, hesitating calculation in the country, plenty of fear and demoralisation in the older generation. There is no need to take thought and labour for increasing it. Steadfastness, courage, a calm and high spirit are what we now need, wisdom to plan and act, not prudence to abstain from action. Nationalism tempered by expediency is like the French despotism tempered by epigrams. The epigrams undermined the despotism, the expediency is likely to undermine and in some quarters is visibly undermining the Nationalism. More "incalculable injury" is likely to be done by teaching of this kind at this juncture than by the removal of any great man, however prominent and inspiring his greatness.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE VISION OF THE WORLD SPIRIT

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Niranjan from the Bengali Essay in "Dharma O Jatiyata")

THE WORLD FORM IN THE GITA

OUR honourable friend Bipin Chandra Pal speaking about the Vision of the World Spirit by Arjuna in an article entitled "Bandemataram" has written that the vision of the World Spirit described in the eleventh chapter of the Gita is entirely fictitious, that it is purely and simply poetic imagination. We are obliged to refute this statement. The vision of the World Spirit is a very necessary element of the Gita. Sri Krishna dispersed the doubt and the hesitation that rose in the mind of Arjuna with logic and words pregnant with knowledge. But the foundation of the knowledge derived from logic and good counsel is not solid. It is only when the knowledge is realised that it becomes firmly established. For this reason, invisibly impelled by the Divine within, Arjuna expressed his desire to see the World Spirit. Once he had this vision of the World Spirit, his doubt vanished forever. His mind then became cleansed and purified, worthy to receive the supreme secret of the Gita. The knowledge described in the Gita prior to the vision of the World Spirit is the external form of knowledge useful to any spiritual seeker. But the knowledge unfolded after the vision is the most hidden Truth, the supreme secret, the eternal precept. If we characterise the description of the vision as a poetical metaphor, then the truth, the depth and solemnity of the Gita are destroyed and the most profound instructions obtained by Yoga are reduced to a few philosophical views and a collection of poetical fancies. The vision of the World Spirit is neither a fiction nor a poetical metaphor but truth; it is not even a supernatural truth. The universe being included in Nature, the World Form cannot be a supernatural phenomenon. The World Spirit is a truth of the causal world, and the forms of the causal world are visible to the eye of Yoga. Arjuna endowed with the eye of Yoga saw the form of the Universal Spirit in the causal world.

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THE FORM AND THE FORMLESS

The worshippers of the formless Brahman without qualities dismiss any statement about its qualities and form as being only metaphors and similes. The worshippers of the formless Brahman with qualities deny its lack of attributes by explaining the Shastras in a different way and dismiss any statement about its form as being only metaphors and similes. The worshippers of the Brahman with form and attributes are up in arms against both of them. We hold all the three views to be narrow, incomplete and born of ignorance. For, those who have realised the formless Brahman and the Brahman with form, how can they hold one view to be true and discard the other as being false and imaginary, and thus abrogate the ultimate evidence of knowledge and confine the infinite Brahman within the finite ? It is true that if we deny the formlessness and the lack of attributes of the Brahman we belittle God. But it is equally true that if we deny the qualities and the form of the Brahman we belittle Him again. God is the Master, the Creator and the Lord. He cannot be tied down to any form; as He is not limited by His form, so also He is not limited by His formlessness. God is all-powerful. If we feign to catch Him in the net of the laws of the physical Nature or of Time and Space and then tell Him, "Though you are infinite, we shall not allow you to be finite, try as you may, you will not succeed, you are bound with our irrefutable logic and arguments like Ferdinand with Prospero's magic. What could be more ludicrous, impertinent or ignorant ? God is bound neither by His form nor by His formlessness; He reveals Himself in a form to the seeker. God is there in His fulness in that form, yet at the same time pervades the whole universe. For God is beyond time and space, unattainable by any argument, time and space are His toys. He is playing with all beings caught in His net of time and space. But we shall never be able to catch Him in that net. Every time we try to achieve this impossibility with logic and philosophical argument, the Jester eludes the net and stands smiling in front of us, behind us, near us and far from us, spreads out his World Form, and the Form beyond the universe, defeating the intellect. He who says, "I know Him", knows nothing. He who says, "I know Him yet I do not know Him," has true knowledge.

THE WORLD FORM

The vision of the World Form is very necessary for an adorer of Shakti, a Karmayogi or one who is missioned to do a specific work as an instrument of the Mover of instruments. He might receive the divine mandate even before he has the vision of the World Spirit but as long as he does not have the vision

THE VISION OF THE WORLD SPIRIT

the mandate is not fully endorsed; it has been registered but not yet authorised. Until that moment, it is a period of training and preparation for his work. Only when he has the vision of the World Spirit does the real work begin. This vision comes to the sadhaks in different ways according to their nature and their sadhana. In the vision of Kali as the World Spirit, the sadhak perceives a feminine form of incomparable beauty pervading the universe, one yet in multitudinous bodies; her jet black hair spread out like a compact darkness covers the entire sky; the lustre of her scimitar dripping with blood dances everywhere dazzling the eyes; the continuous peal of her dreadful laughter resounds, smashing and crushing world after world in the universe. These words are not simply poetical imagination or a futile attempt to describe a supernatural experience in inadequate human terms. This is self-revelation of Kali; it is the true form of our Mother, the true and simple description without any exaggeration of what has been seen by the eye of Yoga. Arjuna did not have the vision of the World Form of Kali; he had the vision of the World Spirit as Time the Destroyer. It amounts to the same thing. He saw it with his eye of Yoga and not in a trance insensible to the outer consciousness. Rishi Vyasa has described, without any exaggeration, exactly what Arjuna has seen. It is not a dream or imagination but truth, the living truth.

THE FORM OF THE CAUSAL WORLD

Three different states of the Self are mentioned in the Scriptures : Prajna, the spirit of the secret superconscient omnipotence whose place is in perfect slumber; Taijasa, the Inhabitant in Luminous Mind, the spirit of the subtle and internal whose place is in dream; Virat, the spirit of the gross and external whose place is in wakefulness. Each status of the spirit is a world in itself : the causal world is in perfect slumber; the subtle and internal world in dream-state and the physical world in wakefulness. Whatever is decided in the causal world is reflected in the subtle world beyond our time and space and partially enacted in the physical world according to the laws of the physical world. Sri Krishna told Arjuna, "The sons of Dhritarastra are already slain by me," yet there they were on the battlefield, standing in front of him, alive and engaged in fighting. The words of the Godhead are neither a false statement nor a metaphor. He has already slain them in the causal world, otherwise it is impossible to slay them in this world. Our real life is in the causal world; only a shadow of it falls on the physical world. But the laws, time and space, name and form are different on the causal plane. The World Spirit is a form of the causal world which became visible in the physical world to the eye of Yoga.

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THE EYE OF YOGA

What is the eye of Yoga ? It is not imagination or poetical symbolism. Three different powers of perception are obtained by Yoga : the subtle vision, the direct spiritual awareness and the eye of Yoga. With the subtle vision we see mental images in dream or in wakefulness. By the direct spiritual awareness we see in trance the images and symbolical figures of the names and forms belonging to the subtle and the causal worlds reflected in our inner mental sky. With the eye of Yoga we perceive the names and forms of the causal world, in trance as well as with our physical eyes. If anything invisible to the physical eye becomes visible to it then it must be understood as an effect of the eye of Yoga. Arjuna saw the World Spirit in the causal world in waking state with the eye of Yoga and was delivered from doubt. The vision of the World Spirit, though not a truth perceptible to the senses of the physical world, is greater than any physical truth—it is not a fiction or an illusion, neither is it a poetical symbol.

THE SEER-VISION OF INDIA

INDIA needs life-energy, a fully developed vigorous life. Show her its source. Point to her no more the way of aversion to life that will damp this life-energy. For centuries India has trod the opposite path. Repeating to themselves the teaching, 'Whom can you call your wife...?', Indians have abandoned everything, home and wealth, and come out in bare loin cloth right into the street. This ideal is nothing new to India. And what has she gained by pursuing this ideal? Not Immortality but Death, not trance but extinction. Who can transcend life by evading it? Who can have the glimpse of the Supreme Being by ignoring his Shakti? Who can touch the Feet of Narayan by putting aside Lakshmi?

India was freeing herself from the charm of renunciation. It was her presiding deity who was bringing her to life by the touch of her golden magic wand. India opened her eyes to see that out of an inexplicable spell of infatuation she was sinking from darkness to more darkness; and in the meanwhile how far the human race had advanced in knowledge and glory—her own prosperity contributing to the prosperity of all the rest, while she herself had continued to be poorer and weaker!

With the vision of this new dawn there began to awaken in her the memory of age-old achievements, of an initiation of the remote past that had lain buried in oblivion, the eternal cult of her soul.

Once more India has begun to march on the path of the spiritual law founded by the seers of the Vedas, the glory of which has been lucidly described by the immortal pens of Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa, the Law that aimed at the flowering of life and the acquisition of the limitless earthly wealth. Why then to-day do we cast aside this resuscitating elixir of life, taking it for an intoxicating wine of enjoyment? Are the things of enjoyment so abominable? Are enjoyments solely for beasts? Are there no enjoyments worthy of the gods? Is it necessary that an artist should abstain from his taste for art, simply because a gourmand deserves to be condemned for his addiction to the taste of his food? At times man turns out to be a demon; would you on that account cast a slur on the martial prowess of Parashurama, the son of Bhrgu? You are a sensualist, who have become impotent, and does it become you to find fault with Pururavas for kidnapping Urvashi, the nymph of Heaven?

The clear injunction of the scripture runs :

MOTHER INDIA

“Fight to have fame, marry to have children.”

Fulfil yourself with all varieties of wealth and power and enjoy the opulence of life. This is, indeed, the ideal of your social life. So long as you are in the field of action make use of your limbs to the best of their capacity. Leave no shrinking, no poverty, no littleness anywhere. He alone has the right to enjoy much, who has the capacity to renounce much. But one has to store up much before one can afford to spend. Here is the ideal of the great Raghus, as described by Kalidasa :

“...In their youth they embrace the life of the world, in the evening of their life they retire into seclusion in the forest and in the end they give up their bodies in communion with the Divine.”

But he who wants to practise austerity in the full bloom of youth and wants to discard the body through a spiritual discipline hardly knows what youth exactly is or what is the real value of austerity or what is Yoga, the spiritual discipline. His rejection of the body counts for nothing.

We are speaking here not of individuals but of men in general. The Buddha renounced his wife, child and the duties of a prince and became a mendicant. Shankaracharya took up Sannyasa in his early life. But that is no reason why all with no exception should follow in the footsteps of the Buddha and Shankara as if their choice were the sole ideal of human life. It is only when we feel an inner urge to renounce life, we may do so, in whatever circumstances we may be; but does it follow from this that everybody without exception in a society should renounce life and practise austerity from birth to death ? The social ideal is quite different from the ideal of the recluse. No doubt, it must be also admitted that there is a link between the two. When one has carried out all social obligations, then one can resort to the life of a hermit. But to turn the entire social life into the life of the recluse is, in the Gita's phrase, a mingling of two sets of duties. India has but too well seen the consequence; the experiment needs no repetition.

No doubt, the Indian social system prescribed, in another way, a very strict disciplining of life, known as *Brahmacharya*—celebrate studentship—prior to the duties of the world in taking up married life as a householder in the fullness of youth. But the connotation of the term was quite different from what we seem to understand by it today. *Brahmacharya* did not consist merely in some codes or mechanical rules for external life. Its aim was not to diminish or annihilate the life-energy and the creative power, but to build up the very basis or core of the thing and lay a stable foundation of life-energy and creative

THE SEER-VISION OF INDIA

power. Its secret aim was to unite men with the gods, earth with Heaven, life with truth beyond life. As a result of which, Immortality shall flow over into earthly eldorados.

Behind India's desire for worldly things and even behind her life of renunciation there was this Aryan feeling. That is why her life of action and her life of enjoyment could not degenerate into a mere animal life. Her life of sacrifice never reduced itself to vain self-mortification. It is not easy for us of today to comprehend the nature of this Aryan attitude. Consequently we lack in boldness of action and enjoyment, and in the delight of self-sacrifice. We forget that religion or spiritual discipline is conditioned by circumstances. We impose the life of renunciation upon everybody, young and old, irrespective of caste and creed in all spheres of life—social, political, economic and spiritual. This is the sole cause why we are so incapable, short-lived, prematurely old, as a nation. We are incurring a continuous loss in our life on earth and beyond.

We were making progress in the line of Western civilisation and culture and considered it a new awakening. Later on, in order to free ourselves from the grip of the West we were turning towards ancient Indian culture, a unique but almost forgotten achievement of the Rishis (Seers)—but a faked shadow, an image of the same ancient culture has made its appearance in Europe and it has been out to delude and confuse us. The teaching of the Buddha is a side-current of the genius of India, and that of Christ can be regarded as an offshoot of the former. Again, Tolstoy's teaching is derived from Christianity. To-day we want to follow in the footsteps of Tolstoy. The creed of Gandhiji is the full-fledged and concrete form of Tolstoy's message.

Anyone feeling an inner and sincere urge to follow this is at liberty to do so. Nobody has the right to oppose him. If your inner soul longs for renunciation, then in no time renounce the world. It is a matter of your own spiritual practice. But there are many other ways of spiritual practice and different categories of realisations. Don't consider your path to be the sole and supreme.

Above all, don't try to impose it on the public and social institutions as well as the general mass of the country.

Don't preach to the man who can hardly procure one meal a day that eating is an animal quality which should be shunned. Don't teach the man who finds it difficult to have a loin cloth that clothes and ornaments are but useless foppery. Don't ask the man who has not even the courage to lift up his arm that he should turn his left cheek when slapped on the right. The man who does not know even the alphabet should not be told that real knowledge cannot be acquired by reading books. Don't give spiritual instructions to him who is melted by devotion at the mere sight of a *sādhu* with matted hair and a mendicant's water pot in hand. Don't tell the man, who fails to differentiate

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between the artistic temple of Bhuvaneshwar and the building of a jute mill, between the frescoes of Ajanta and the pictures drawn by Ravi Varma, that the best art lies in bareness.

“Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone.”

Isha Upanishad (Sri Aurobindo's translation)

O You, super-wise, if you venture to lead others along your own path, the result will be that of a blind man leading the blind. The Aryan outlook did not attach sole importance either to the life of action or to that of withdrawal and inaction. The harmonised union of these two ways has been the unique treasure of India since the days of yore. Revive that ancient culture if you have the power to do so and be a help to the renaissance, the new birth of India.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali)

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE ENGLISH MUSE

(Continued from the June issue)

A WORD about Empsonianism. First I purpose to give an example of the Empsonian stuff in poetry. I quote in full a poem 'Empsonium', by Richard Keller, that appeared in *The London Magazine* in the October issue of 1959.

EMPSONIUM

This ars poetica will lightly sit
On tersely riming fridays choc-a-block
With symbolled dicks of concentrated wit.
The summer salts provide a learned shock,
Eject old schools, accommodate the new.
The chosen downs catch droppings from the flock.

So it goes on. The monkey puzzle grew,
The apes in cloistered anguish learned to scrawl
Diverting teasers. When lily trumpets blew,
They had their wits about them, that is all.

The poet, in order to make it a real Empsonium has given copious notes which are far too long to be given in full but they do throw such a variegated light that the poem, a trifle murky, turns into a sort of many-splendoured thing. I give a part of the notes.

NOTES

"*Ars poetica*...The poetic theory will sit lightly on the practice because it refers mainly to technique. *Tersely riming* : a play on 'terza rima'. *Fridays* : poetic conceits are represented here by fish (fish are slippery and elusive). Like images in the unconscious mind, many of the rarer varieties live at a considerable depth and are startling when brought up to the light of day. Also there is a popular belief that fish as food is good for the brain). 'Fridays' are poems because they are by tradition fish days. They are also fry-days : the poems, small

and neat, are apparently designed to accommodate little fish. *Symbolled dicks* : the poems are, in fact, stuffed with whales—complex symbols like Moby Dick. In Cockney usage, dicks are ‘big fancy words’. *Fri...choc-a-block* : Fry’s chocolate-block, the Chocolate Sandwich, has more than one layer of chocolate, as the Empsonian conceit has more than one layer of meaning.

“The first stanza bears a second interpretation. With a slight alteration in spelling, *ars* becomes the occupier of a Chair. Its academic status (or sessus ?) entitles it to the Latin ‘poetica’. It will be present, if only through its influence, at literary gatherings on a certain day of the week (‘So-and-so’s Fridays’). These are also fry-days for disciples and imitators, the tersely riming small-fry. Dicks are clever-dicks and detectives, because of the kind of ingenuity required in construing an Empsonian poem. Symbolled becomes ‘cymballed’ : equipped with (tinkling) cymbals.”

The comments on the phrase “summer salts”, making an amplification of it, is even more mystifying and we can no longer say with Heraclitus that ‘dry light is best’ because for an age which sees more beauty in the grotesque and bizarre the fogs and mists are more revealing than the broad daylight.

I will now give a sample of Empson’s approach to poems and single lines. Here is Empson at his best. Shakespeare’s famous line : ‘Bare ruin’d choirs where late the sweet birds sang’, is elaborated in this way. The comparison becomes rich, “because ruined monastery choirs are places in which to sing, because they involve sitting in a row, because they are made of wood; are carved into knots and so forth, because they used to be surrounded by sheltering building crystallised out of the likeness of a forest, and coloured with stained glass and painting like flowers and leaves, because they are now abandoned by all but the grey walls coloured like the skies of winter, because the cold and Narcissistic charm suggested by choir boys suits well with Shakespeare’s feeling for the object of the Sonnets, and for various sociological and historical reasons (‘for oh, the hobby-horse is forgot’ and the Puritans have cut down the Maypoles) which it would be hard now to trace out in their proportions; these reasons and many more relating the simile to its place in the Sonnet, must all combine to give the line its beauty, and there is a sort of ambiguity in not knowing which of them to hold most clearly in mind”. This is well done but far too overdone and well for the reader that the critic is unable ‘to trace out in their proportions’ the ‘various sociological and historical reasons’, for otherwise not only the rest of the Sonnet but the whole Sonnet sequence would have frightened off even the most painstaking lover of *ars poetica*. This recalls to my mind the strange case of Caleb Diplock who bequeathed half a million for ‘charitable or benevolent objects’. The word ‘or’ caused the judges of

different courts to pronounce 70,000 words of collective wisdom and poor Mr. Diplock's will was held invalid. The Chinese rightly observed that when a piece of paper is blown into a law-court, it may take a team of oxen to drag it out again. Fortunately for us Sri Aurobindo did not fasten his pen on such a project when he set out to write *The Future Poetry* in the *Arya*, for then all the other works would have been elbowed out and it would have been more difficult to disentangle his vision of the future of poetry than to pick a needle in a haystack. Sri Aurobindo's aim was merely to trace out the large lines followed by the English Muse and on the basis of that to project his vision into the new age of spiritual poetry of which he himself is the full-bodied voice. But I am anticipating. For the present the issue before us is whether a foreigner can command the English language with a perfect sense of the rich overtones of the words and images that he is using.

The fact is that a language is used at many levels. There is the language of the lower classes; there is the language of the upper classes. In the same country the language used by the rural population is sometimes so different from the language used by the urban population that the city folk cannot understand what the country folk are talking and yet either language is rich in its own way. The nautical phrases have their own racy flavour. But as, Sir C. M. Bowra pointed out, it does not take much time for an alert reader to enter into the finer shades of meanings of words when he meets them again and again in literature. It is the men of letters who not only mint new words and phrases but invest the already current words with a new wealth of meaning and suggestion. When the modern poet Robert Frost gives the title, 'Out, Out', to his poem on the death of a boy who was operating a buzz-saw, who will be able to fathom the significance of the phrase 'Out, out', the Englishman or the man be he an Indian or any other foreigner who has thrilled to the unforgettable magnificence of the last scene in *Macbeth*? When T. S. Eliot, viewing the spectacle of hordes of people rushing down London Bridge without any sense of a higher meaning in life, says—

I had not thought death had undone so many—

for whom have the words a richer world of meaning, the common Englishman or all those who have read and re-read and on each reading found new revelations in the epic of Dante? I give the translation of the context of these words, by Dorothy Sayers :

So I beheld, and lo ! an ensign borne
Whirling, that span and ran, as in disdain
Of any rest; and there the folk forlorn

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Rushed after it, in such an endless train,
It never would have entered in my head
There were so many here whom death had slain.

How much depth have those two simple words *facilis descensus* acquired after Virgil's use of them ! Today the phrase stands as the symbol of the gravitational pull of the base and ugly in human life and the other phrase, *hoc opus, hic labor est*, has become the symbol of the uphill journey to heaven after the lapse into the temptations of the lower life.¹ Seen from this point of view an educated Indian enjoys much more the beauty of words used by writers and poets than an ordinary Englishman. It is true that at times Indians misuse some English idioms and they grate on the linguistic sensibilities of the English people but even then on the whole their language is far more correct and chaste than that of ordinary English people who use 'see'd' for 'saw' and 'them' for 'these'. Comparisons are odorous but Dogberries and Bottoms and Mrs. Malaprops with their gift of the gab reached a pineapple of perfection scarcely attained by Indians.

Now I will give the opinion of George Sampson in his *Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*. About Toru Dutt he writes, "In Torulata Dutt, however, we meet a different order of intellect. The daughter of Govind Chandra Dutt, who himself wrote tasteful English verse...she was in close contact with English or Continental culture throughout most of a short life. In her English translations...she came as near success as the difference between the exotic warmth of native impulse and the cooler medium of an alien language would allow. She died in 1877 at the age of 21, before her abundant promise could be fulfilled."

About Sarojini Naidu he writes, "Sarojini Naidu made a more definite contribution to English poetry...Her ardent literary temperament was fired by the poetic spirit of the Nineties and she began writing verses that are entirely English in matter and form, but was advised to turn to her native land for themes...In general her work is more remarkable for its command of English than for any revelation of India. Manmohan Ghose is the most remarkable of Indian poets who wrote in English. ...So completely did he catch the note of his place and time that a reader of his *Love Songs and Elegies* and *Songs of Love*

¹ C. E. Montague in his book, *A Writer's Notes on his Trade*, remarks: "a word may well have about it the glamorous prestige of high adventures in great company. Think of all the plain word dust calls to mind. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was. Dust hath closed Helen's eyes. All follow this and come to dust. The way to dusty death. So, to the lover of words, each word may be not a precious stone only, but one that has shone in Solomon's temple or in Cleopatra's hair."

and Death would readily take them as the work of an English poet trained in the classical tradition...That he left no deeply memorable contribution to English literature is a defect that he shares with the numerous accomplished poets of his age."

The case of the Chinese novelist Han Suyin is even more striking. She started learning English after the age of ten and studied in a Chinese University. England she visited much later—after she had lost her husband. I give below the two comments on her famous novel *A Many-splendoured Thing*. This is how it has been reviewed by the *Sunday Times*, London : "With her unfaltering honesty, fine balance and astonishing feel for the English language she has written an outstanding love-story...she handles an eternal theme with power, insight, and unfailing artistry." Alan Melville on the B.B.C. observed, "This is one of the loveliest books I've read for a long time."

As Sir Francis Watson has told us in a broadcast, even W. B. Yeats who was hypercritical in this matter made an exception and remarked about Sri Aurobindo that he was the only Indian who could write creatively in English.

Perhaps I am only breaking a bumblebee on a wheel and critics full of what Richard Church would call 'mugwumpery and chicane' will not budge an inch for all this mass of evidence against their unshakable convictions. My next article will try to show how sensitively, acutely and profoundly Sri Aurobindo appraised the work of poets in the English language, and I shall leave such carping critics with the words of Dogberry, 'for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats'.

(To be continued)

RAVINDRA KHANNA

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

ASHRAM FESTIVALS (*Continued*)

THE ALLIED VICTORY AND ITS CONSEQUENCE

TILL 1945 the events connected directly with the Ashram were the only ones to be observed and celebrated here. No event of the outer world had been ever before made the occasion of a festival.

Sri Aurobindo had sensed long ago that Red China would one day swallow up Tibet and that she would prove a menace to India. During the Second World War he saw that the Nazi domination of the world would set the clock of evolution back by hundreds of years and that the Japanese incursion into India, if successful, would mean the seating of a new blood-sucking power on her chest, which it would be difficult to shake off. These would be disasters far more serious than the then decaying and spent authority of the British. Hence he declared the War to be the Mother's War, despite the Ashram principle not to dabble in politics. In a letter to a disciple dated the 29th July 1942 he said, "...I affirm again to you most strongly that this is the Mother's War. ...It is a struggle for an Ideal that has to establish itself on earth in the life of humanity, for a Truth that has yet to realise itself fully and against a darkness and falsehood that are trying to overwhelm the earth and mankind in the immediate future...."

In those days a short summary of the hourly progress of the Allies used to be read out to him and posted on the Notice Board for all Ashramites.

He used his spiritual powers to influence the course of events and watched the reactions in the outer field of what was done in the subtle world.¹ The precise role played by him in that world in order to achieve the victory of the Allied Powers is not a matter of common knowledge nor are the details of his work ever likely to see the light of day.

All that we know is that the whole Ashram would be swept by a wave of quiet joy whenever news of Allied progress appeared on the Board. And when at long last the news of the final victory came, we celebrated it as the victory of the cause of the Light. This was the first time that the Ashram openly

¹ It will be interesting to recall here what Sir Winston Churchill said, "I feel an unseen hand guiding me."

celebrated an event of the outer world. The Secretary of the Ashram declared, "By and by we shall celebrate the Independence of India," which actually came off in a couple of years.

We celebrated that event on the 15th August 1947, which saw the realisation of the dream with which Sri Aurobindo had begun the battle of his political life. Sri Aurobindo was invited to give a message on this great occasion, and this is how it began :

"August 15th is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But it has a significance not only for us, but for Asia and the whole world; for it signifies the entry into the comity of nations of a new power with untold potentialities which has a great part to play in determining the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity. To me personally it must naturally be gratifying that this date which was notable only for me because it was my own birthday celebrated annually by those who have accepted my gospel of life, should have acquired this vast significance. As a mystic, I take this identification, not as a coincidence or fortuitous accident, but as a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began my life...."

The Mother says that this Message of Sri Aurobindo needs to be read and re-read and its significance explained to millions of his compatriots.

It was on this occasion that the Mother for the first time had her own flag flying over the balcony, which Sri Aurobindo called the Spiritual Flag of United India. Flags and festoons were also put up in the courtyard of the Ashram with the Mother's symbol printed on them. Two thousand visitors joined the eight hundred Ashramites that day to celebrate the occasion. This was the largest gathering during the life-time of Sri Aurobindo.

The next festival of importance was celebrated on the 1st November 1954 when after 280 years of French rule the French Settlements in India were transferred *de facto* to the Indian Union. The manner in which the transfer was effected is an event unparalleled in history and well worth imitation by other powers which still hold sway over parts of India. On this occasion the Mother distributed the Spiritual Flag printed on paper, and stated : "Its square form, its colour and every detail of its design have a symbolic meaning."¹ On the reverse of the sheet were printed the following words of Sri Aurobindo :

"A free and united India will be there and the Mother will gather around

¹ *Bulletin*, Feb. 1955, p. 130.

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her her sons and weld them into a single national strength in the life of a great and united people.”

It is of interest to note what is said in the Bulletin about this Flag: “This flag was originally intended to be only the flag of the J.S.A.S.A.¹ but later, on the day when India’s liberation was celebrated here (on 15th August 1947), it was found that it expressed also the spiritual mission of the whole of India. It is, therefore, to us the symbolic flag of a resurgent, united and victorious India raising itself out of the torpor of centuries and having cast off the shackles of enslavement and passed through all the pangs of a new birth, to emerge once more as a great and united nation leading the world and its humanity to the highest ideals of the spirit.”²

One of the Mother’s momentous declarations was on the *de facto* merger :

“I want to mark this day by the expression of a long cherished wish; that of becoming an Indian citizen. From the first time I came to India—in 1914—I felt that India is my true country, the country of my soul and spirit. I had decided to realise this wish as soon as India would be free. But I had to wait still longer because of my heavy responsibilities for the Ashram here in Pondicherry. Now the time has come when I can declare myself.

“But, in accordance with Sri Aurobindo’s ideal, my purpose is to show that truth lies in union rather than in division. To reject one nationality in order to obtain another is not an ideal solution. So I hope I shall be allowed to adopt a double nationality, that is to say, to remain French while I become an Indian.

“I am French by birth and early education, I am Indian by choice and predilection. In my consciousness there is no antagonism between the two; on the contrary, they combine very well and complete one another. I know also that I can be of service to both equally, for my only aim in life is to give a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo’s great teaching and in his teaching he reveals that all the nations are essentially one and meant to express the Divine unity upon earth through an organised and harmonious diversity.”

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MOTHER’S BIRTHDAY

As Sri Aurobindo had passed away before entering the 80th year of his physical existence, we eagerly awaited the 21st February 1957 when the

¹ Jeunesse Sportive de l’Ashram de Sri Aurobindo.

² *Bulletin*, April 1949.

Mother should enter the 80th year of hers. As usual, a week before that date she distributed to every sadhika a white sari with her Symbol embroidered in silk at the border. Ever since the time when there were only 30 sadhikas in the Ashram the Mother has been distributing saris to them. This practice has continued without a break and, although the number of sadhikas has been steadily swelling, the necessary number of saris has been offered by various devotees of the Mother. Formerly, saris used to be given only to such sadhikas as were permanently resident in the Ashram. Now, even those who pay an occasional visit for a Darshan are given this privilege.

Once (in 1956) she took out over 500 saris of her own, enriched by her own consciousness by having been previously worn by herself, and she distributed them to the sadhikas. This year (Feb. 1960) she distributed 600 saris with golden borders on the occasion of her birthday, supplied by one of her devotees from Hyderabad. Young girls receive frocks stitched in the Ashram itself, while sadhaks receive handkerchiefs, napkins or *gāmchhās* before each darshan. In addition, everyone participating in the grand mass drill at the Sportsground on the 21st February 1957 was given a special white uniform.

The same afternoon the Mother opened the long-awaited swimming pool which has added to the splendour of the Sportsground. Nothing is done in a haphazard way in the Ashram ; neither labour nor expense is spared and every possible effort is made to bring the beauty of perfection into everything touched by the Mother. The water in the swimming pool is always kept fresh and sparkling. Not a speck of algae can be detected there at any time of the year. The water, taken from two artesian wells, is first treated with alum and after being filtered through two sand-gravel beds, is again treated with copper sulphate and chlorine before it goes into the pool, where it is aerated so as to give it its beautiful sparkle. After the Mother had opened the swimming pool, she watched some aquatic exercises, including swimming, diving and life-saving.

The next item on the Mother's programme for the day was a visit to the newly-opened theatre to see a pantomime-play. It was called "The Dawn and the Dragon" and produced by the staff and the students of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

As already stated, prior to 1956 we had no permanent stage and the programme of the Anniversary of the Centre had to be performed at the Playground in the open. The heavy December rains of South India often cast a wet blanket on the enthusiasm of the performers and marred their whole programme. A thought flashed across the mind of one of our organisers : "We must anyhow have a permanent covered stage before the Mother steps into the 80th year of her life." And the same thought echoed in the minds

of many others : "We must do our mite as an expression of gratitude to the Mother for all that she has done for us." Fortunately a plot of land was available near the sea, with a large courtyard and a godown containing a considerable quantity of scrap iron. The property was going cheap, but the times were hard for the Ashram : it was as if a test to our sincerity were imposed upon us at that critical moment. The organiser was, however, inspired from within to write to a friend in Africa, who had dedicated his life to the Mother's service. Double the required amount was collected, the plot purchased, thorough repairs made and a fully equipped stage erected.

It was in this courtyard that the March Past was held and the salute taken by the Mother on the 21st February 1958 when she completed eighty years. A grand Flower Show was organized. Thousands of pots with ferns and flowers displayed a variety of colours and were lit up later in the evening. A tank full of white lotuses added to the charm of the Flower Show.

The celebrations were spread over two days. On the 20th the Mother read out a message specially prepared for the All India Radio. To add to our joy, she was treated to a performance by dancers from all the four traditional schools of Indian dancing, *viz.* Bharat Natyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Manipuri. The serpent dance of the exponents of Bharat Natyam held us spellbound while the Kathakali mudras of Gopinath were wonderful.

On the next day, the 21st, the Mother distributed the following message :
 "To celebrate the birth of a transitory body can satisfy some faithful feelings.

To celebrate the manifestation of the eternal consciousness can be done at every moment of the universal history, but to celebrate the advent of a new world, the Supramental world, is a marvellous and exceptional privilege."

Note that this message comes almost exactly midway between the Golden Days of 1956 and 1960.

The Golden Book, depicting various aspects of the Mother's activities, bound in white velvety leather with the Mother's symbol embossed in real gold, was presented to the Mother by one of her disciples on behalf of the Pathamandir, Calcutta. It was valued at Rs. 100/- a copy, and the purchasers received their copies direct from the Mother's hands with their names and her Blessings superscribed in her own handwriting.

A special cake, two feet high, weighing about sixty lb., with almond icing, prepared in the Mother's Kitchen, was carried to her by two men. She cut it with a long stainless steel knife made in the Ashram and distributed the slices to all those who were present around her. All sadhaks who went for their meals to the Dining Room received a gold-coloured sweet prepared by the Honesty Society. In the evening at the Theatre, refreshments in specially

designed card-board boxes covered with silver paper were distributed to all present. Cold drinks were also served in the Green House, which formed a part of the Flower Show. This was followed by a Garba dance and the dance-drama of Chandī, both of which were performed magnificently by our Ashram dancers. The Mother's personal presence at every function throughout the two days made the celebrations memorable.

This 80th anniversary of the Mother's Birthday was celebrated in all our Centres. The Pathamandir of Calcutta appointed a special committee for the purpose and the activities were spread over three days, the 21st to the 23rd February 1958. Shri Narendra Singh Singhi, a zamindar from Ajimganj, who has never been to Pondicherry was good enough to lend his spacious lawn and garden at Ballygunge, Calcutta, which was the venue of the celebrations. The Mother's flag, bearing her symbol, was hoisted in the morning by the Mayor of Calcutta. The Mother herself gives the spiritual significance of her symbol as follows :

"The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness. The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother. The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her work."

Likewise, she has given the spiritual significance of Sri Aurobindo's symbol as follows :

"The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The junction of both—the central square—is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme—the lotus.

The water—inside the square—represents the multiplicity, the creation."¹

We may here permit ourselves a short digression about the growth and importance of the Mother's symbol. It made its first appearance in 1928 on the cover of Sri Aurobindo's *The Mother*. On the 15th August 1947, the Independence Day, the Mother distributed its printed copies with pins to be attached to our dresses. A year later a Gujarati disciple of the Mother showed her the symbol embroidered in silk on cloth attached to a piece of card-board, 1½

¹ This water reminds us of *Apas* in mantra 4 of Isha Upanishad and Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the word "the seven Cosmic principles and their activities, three inferior, the physical, vital and mental, four superior, the divine Truth, the divine Bliss, the divine Will and Consciousness, and the divine Being."

inches square. The Mother approved of it and 800 such squares were distributed at the Playground with the name of each member of the J.S.A.S.A. written in red ink on the back of it. Since then it has become the official emblem of the J.S.A.S.A. and every member wears it during ceremonial March Pasts.

School children are seen using it embroidered on their shirts. The Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education has prepared for itself a symbol based on the amalgamation of these two symbols.

On the 21st February 1951 a sadhak from Hyderabad offered 800 symbols in gilt metal, round in shape, which the Mother distributed to the members of the various groups. The same year on the 15th August he offered 2000 metal replicas of Sri Aurobindo's symbol which the Mother distributed to every Ashramite and visitor. The supply of these metal symbols is still kept up and about 1000 metal pieces of the Mother's symbol and a similar number of the Master's are distributed every year free of charge to anyone who asks for them. Gold locket, broaches and rings with the Mother's symbol are also much used by individuals. Like a golden sun it shines in the heart of India's Map which is on the wall of the Playground. It is here that the Mother used to stand and take salute during the evening March Past. A picture of the Map can be seen on the cover of *Mother India*.

In the evening, Shri R. R. Diwakar, in his Presidential Address, said : "...I am here to offer my greetings to the Great Mother on the occasion of her 80th birthday. I am here also to share with you all the supreme joy of celebrating the birthday of one who in her life has devoted all her energies to the fulfilment of the dream not only of a few human beings, not only of humanity, but the dream probably of the whole universe, to rise to a higher consciousness leading to divinity. But Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have given to humanity a great call to rise above this stage over mental development. If we continue to be in this stage, it is impossible for us to outgrow the evils of this stage of development. It will be like the physical body which is eternally getting ill, getting medicines, getting cured for the time being, but never being fully healthy and immune from disease. We must aspire to be born with bodies which can never be ill. What we require to-day is not merely a healing balm here and there, not merely a small flickering flash of light for a time and then again lapse into darkness, but we want a *gyoti* which burns in our heart for ever like the inner light which Buddha called *Atmadip*."²

The Presidential Address was followed by an International Cultural Programme : Readings from American Poets, a Scene from *Hamlet*, a Chinese Dance (performed by the children of a Chinese School in Calcutta), Molière's

¹ Shri Diwakar paid a second visit to the Ashram in June this year.

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Le médecin malgré lui, Goethe's *Faust* and Hans Carossa's *The Old Fountain* and some songs under the auspices of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, Calcutta. The Day's programme ended up with a dance by Sm. Chandralekha, who sometimes visits this Ashram.

This International cultural programme is of particular interest to us in view of Sri Aurobindo's words : "If individual man by a part of himself belongs to the nation, by another he exceeds it and belongs to humanity. And even there is a part of him, the greatest, which is not limited by humanity ; he belongs by it to God and to the world of all beings and to the godheads of the future."

The next two days, the 22nd and 23rd February, were mainly utilised by an All India Convention in which Dr. D.C. Varadachari and others participated. There were also physical culture demonstrations by Shri Monotosh Roy and songs by Shri Pankaj Kumar Mullick, Sm. Manju Gupta and others.

(To be continued)

NARAYANPRASAD

(Translated by J.N. Welingkar from the Hindi)

IN THE RAIN

THE pregnant clouds
Can no more hold
The burden of
Rain. Behold
Silver shafts
Of rain rush down
From the sky
Half-pink, half-gold.

I am still....
And still the trees.
Still this lawn,
That lane. The breeze
Holds the earth
In a clasp of chill :
Silent stands
The distant hill !

Silent yet
All alone
In anxious thrill
The moments moan.
Silent my
Mind and soul,
Silent my
Garden-knoll !

From leaf to leaf
A laughter grows :
A laughing song !
The sharp breeze blows
From leaf to leaf,
And shakes the wood
Within my heart—
My solitude !

In my heart
A wood, a tree,
A bird, a nest :
Incessantly
My heart now weeps
And weep my eyes,
Weeps the bird
And weep the skies !

The pregnant clouds
Can no more hold
The burden of
Rain. Behold
Torrents run
Silent, swift—
Reach the earth's
Pink and gold !

PRITHWINDRA

SWEET HANDS

SWEET hands that rest upon the rail
At morning darshan time,
Sweet hands that blessing touch my head
At happy birthday time.

Sweet hands that move expressively
Imparting education,
Sweet hands that lie reposefully
During meditation.

Sweet hands that beckon to Her own,
Though they be far apart,
Sweet hands that ever gently knock
Upon the secret heart.

Sweet hands that hold some little flower
That a disciple's given,
Sweet hands whose touch can heal the pain
And shower the grace of heaven.

Sweet hands that give, and give, and give,
That never ask nor take,
Sweet hands that work devotedly
For God, and for our sake.

GODFREY

NEW ROADS

BOOK X

II

THE heights are there—
established now
a bridge, from sky to the sod :

A golden air
now cools the brow
of these mortal peaks of God !

But the fields below,
the valley floor,
still hide the guilt of birth ;

The Seed must grow,
the Flame outpour
its gold upon the earth !

After all these years
are we still assailed
by doubt, despair, and desolation ?

Do we cling to old fears
freshly nailed
to the living cross of a new creation ?

Our fears
from ignorance are born
and by a mixture made ;

Through years
of strife our lives outworn
before the Game is played.

NEW ROADS

Purity,
in life alone
can widen consciousness—

Purity,
a temporal throne
in Time and Spaciousness,

Life, the base
must wider be,
a vessel for the soul ;

Life, the grace
of purity,
if Mind would reach the Goal.

What is the goal
but widening 'rings'
of manifesting Bliss ?

What is the soul
but Spirit's wings
aspiring to that Kiss ?

Man learns anew
that finite being
strives to Infinity :

Man yearns for, too,
the delight of 'seeing'
Time in Eternity.

A brave new Wonder
fills the earth
with supramental Light—

A cosmic Thunder
thrills new birth
with the Joy of the Infinite.

Yet man looks back
to years gone by,
to death and wild despair;

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His senses lack
the tears that cry
upon the desert air;

And drab appearance
seems more real
to the fabulated past—

A blind adherence,
a mute appeal
before the die is cast.

The foundations shook—
a voice cried out
to the upward climbing 'few' :

"No backward look !
No turn about !—
You are the chosen, you

"Who dare to venture on
through the incubus of Night,
Voyagers of Destiny ,

"Sons of Demogorgon !
Sons of Delight
and Immortality !"

NORMAN DOWSETT

THUS SANG MY SOUL

VII. MOTHERING THE BOND OF LOVE : PRAYERS AND PRAISES

(Continued)

(27)

O NEVER MAY I SEPARATE FROM THEE !

O NEVER may I separate from Thee!
May each breath-movement and thought-vision be
Fused unto Thy Love's lasting unity,

And each life-stir each moment be employed
To move to Thy Light that's everywhere deployed,
On wings of rapt delight filling world's void.

In ignorant ways when I towards Thee bend,
Mother, unto my feebleness extend
Thy hand of Love whereon my soul may pend.

Fate can betray this birth : to accomplish my
Complete identity with Thee, may I
Be born life after life, eternally,

So that Thy Grace-born power may ever rule
Over a pliant and love-perfect tool
To work out Thy sole Will, O Wonderful !

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THOUGHTS

If after writing 10,000,000 I knock off the digit 1 from it what remains is 0,000,000. Even so if after writing the account of my life I leave out all that the one Mother Power has done for me, what remains is the long line of 0,000,000.

Besides, if I add 1 to 10,000,000 I add almost nothing. Even so if I add the account of my efforts to that of the Mother Power's work I only change 10,000,000 into 10,000,001.

*

*

Corn grows in the field. But the field is not the owner of the corn. It is the farmer who is its owner.

Even so,

spiritual opulence emerges in the sadhak. But this opulence does not belong to the sadhak. It belongs to God.

*

*

Standing here on the level ground, today, I resolve : I will ascend as a pilgrim the unimaginably high Light-covered peaks of the mountain of Self-realisation.

And I will worship with flowers of devotion the presiding deity of each summit and from there ascend higher and higher.

But I shall feel content only when I reach the highest peak. Or, to be still more precise, only when after returning to the plain braced with the blessings of the Deity of that peak I shall carry the whole plain itself up for the Darshan of the Light-covered height of heights.

GIRDHARLAL

(From the Gujarati of the author's "Uparāma")

A CIRCLE OF SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

A REVIEW-ARTICLE

I

THE Sixteenth Number of *Sri Aurobindo Circle* 1960 (priced Rs. 4) has been out for a couple of months. The Annual is a veritable treasury, both from the spiritual and the literary points of view.

The Mother's three cryptic answers along with the questions in connection with the Supramental Manifestation and "The New Birth" are indeed revealing. She emphasises that the new supramental substance that has been accepted by Nature within the movemet of her world-action will help decisively in the realisation of 'a new birth into the spiritual life'. The Mother also fixes the date of birth of the "new world" as half an hour after the supramental manifestation on 29-2-1956.

The Annual contains Sri Aurobindo's penetrating letters on various aspects of Yogic sadhana—literary and artistic capacity ; contacts with the visitors ; egoism ; seeking for the Divine ; two consciousnesses ; the lingering old and the growing new ; two ways of offering ; relations between man and woman ; exteriorisation of the vital body ; the cheerful Europeans and the gloomy and morose Indians, etc.

The Mother said in the May issue of *Mother India* that the world is a unity, it is one, it has always been one, only we have to become "conscious" of this unity. The same truth we find expressed by Sri Aurobindo in a compiled article in the Annual, "The New Society", wherein he says, "Vain will be the mechanical construction of unity, if unity is not in the heart of the race." Freedom and unity, these are the two great words of the divine Truth that "have forced themselves insistently on our minds through the crash of the ruin and the breath of the tempest and are now the leading words of the hoped-for reconstructions."

Man and Society—the pair seem to be so much interrelated that the latter without the former is inconceivable and the former without the latter looks purposeless. They must progress together, otherwise progress would neither be stable nor have much meaning. Freedom is the true condition of growth,

freedom in terms of each one's soul-consciousness which is the real determinant of progress. Like the individual, the society has an organic growth, like the former the latter too has its soul, mind and body, although less distinct and bounded and in a more fluid and flexible state; and, on the physical plane, as Herbert Spencer, the pioneer of Evolutionism, says, the social organism is diffused throughout the whole aggregate, unlike the individual organism which is centralised in the nervous system.

The soul of a society is more like a 'group-soul' than like a wholesome spark as in the individual; it is a secret representative or portion-power of the universal consciousness, represented in the society by a distinctive psychic or spiritual character. It is an amalgam or aggregate of the individual souls. In nature, the individuals are the local centres and limbs of that consciousness and in essential being soul-centres of the Self-Existent with independent individual and transcendent truths which they must realise for self-fulfilment and self-perfection. The individual and the social are not, says Sri Aurobindo, "separate, opposite or really conflicting lines of tendency, but the same impulse of the one common existence, companion movements separating only to return upon each other in a richer and larger unity and mutual consequence."

Sri Aurobindo does not lend himself to one particular theory of the origin of society, but proceeds from the psychological standpoint of mutual interdependence of man and the mass. Although society is an organic growth, it has always existed, it is not a man-made contract dispensable at will but an expression of an indispensable need of Nature and the very condition of growth and perfection.

Kishor Gandhi's article ably elaborates these views of Sri Aurobindo on the individual and society and the origin of society as part of the Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, gathered and expounded for the first time in a series of articles, with appropriate quotations.

The individual always seeks spontaneous and harmonious relationship with his fellowmen as well as with other existences when on the right road of natural growth. When the unbalancing factors of excess and weakness come into play, the harmony is disturbed and the complications and problems arise. This relationship in modern times has become so acute that man is now, says Bernard Notcutt, "constantly (and unsuccessfully) striving to reconcile tendencies towards aggression and yielding; excessive demands on others, and fears of never getting anything; fantasies of boundless power, and feelings of utter helplessness."

Jugal Kishore Mukherji, in his probing article, tries to present Sri Aurobindo's solution to these problems after examining "their true nature and inner significance". He examines the two opposing trends—individualistic and

collectivistic—and the exclusive stresses on one or the other, with varying degrees; on one side where the emphasis is primarily on the individual and on the other where, to quote Lenin, he is nothing more than “a multitude of one million divided by one million”. But here is the reconciling vision of Sri Aurobindo, “The perfection of human life must involve the elaboration of an as yet unaccomplished harmony between the two poles of our existence, the individual and the social aggregate. The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual; the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of social aggregate to which he belongs and eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of a united humanity...”.

The problem of relations between individual and individual is not to be found in an “imposed unanimity of mind and life”, by a “rationalised piecing together” but by a “harmonising knowledge” gained by a study of the true metaphysical significance of the two basic trends of man, cooperation and conflict, down to the “sub-atomic” level of existence, for, says the writer, “the problem is essentially an evolutionary problem linked to the very march of world-existence.”

He says, “To understand fully the real import of these two urges, we have to place them against an evolutionary perspective; and to judge adequately the problems of human relations, we have to call in as a witness the whole panorama of life.” Thus he goes on to examine the different stages of the problem, the ‘Evolutionary Problem’, ‘Meaning of World-Existence’, ‘The Ascent of Life’, with a clarity and comprehensiveness of thought that is characteristic of him and ends his article with the culminating ‘Message of Divine Humanism’, which seeks “to transfer the roots of our relations from the mind, life and body to a greater consciousness above the mind”. He quotes Sri Aurobindo : “It is a spiritual, a greater than the rational enlightenment that can alone illumine the vital nature of man and impose harmony on its self-seekings, antagonisms and discords. A deeper brotherhood, a yet unfounded law of love is the only sure foundation possible for a perfect social evolution, no other can replace it. But this brotherhood and love will not proceed by the vital instincts or the reason....Nor will it found itself in the natural heart of man where there are plenty of other passions to combat it. It is in the soul that it must find its roots.” And “if this is not the solution, then there is no solution, if this is not the way, then there is no way for the human kind.” “Sri Aurobindo is not content with offering this message,” concludes the writer, “...he has chalked out ways and means by following which every individual man of our age can realise in his own life and in his communal living the marvellous possibilities that already lie latent in him,—of course, if he chooses

to do so and prepares to pay the necessary price in patience, perseverance, but, above all, in sincerity."

2

It is only in the sincerity of man's efforts that growth and harmony of life are to be found. If he has to adjust himself to the complex conditions of life he must grow on all the levels of existence, not only the level of body and mind to keep the human race going, but also on more subtle levels of consciousness. Man's growth has to be not only subconscious and biological, but semi-conscious and mental, and above all conscious and psychological as well as super-conscious and spiritual.

Nolini Kanta Gupta, in this article *Human Destiny*, refers to the observations of the anthropologists that a baby monkey's face is much nearer to the human face than to its own form when adult and grown up; also that "a new species grows not out of a mature, fully developed, that is to say, specialised type but out of an earlier somewhat immature, undeveloped, non-specialised type." Development and culture, it seems, have contributed to a kind of effeminacy making man less strong to face the hardships and hazards of life and nature. But, the author points out, that is not because of cultural growth but because of one-tracked growth which has been the growth of the artisan, the growth of *homo fabrilis*. The human growth to civilisation has been secured by man's use of tools, from tools of stone to tools of iron; now it is identified with the use and power of the machine. This growth has also been matched by a certain growth of consciousness, although merely on the level of mind and intellect, a growth of *homo intellectualis*. And if man has to keep up his 'durable youthfulness' by which he has till now been 'capable of facing catastrophic changes and himself undergoing such changes,' he must 'step back and look for a new connotation of his consciousness in order to go forward and continue to exist. At this critical turn of human history, "Man has to choose his destiny—either the Capitol or the Tarpeian Rock, as is in the classical phrase. Either he becomes a new man with a new consciousness or he goes down into inconscience and is no more man."

This growth has to be nourished by newer and more conscious sources of energy so that its freshness and 'durable youthfulness' is kept up. The cosmic growth, observes Ninian Smart, in his contribution *The Transcendence of Doctrine*, is 'like a growing plant' and 'by no means symmetrical in respect of past and future. There is an evolution and transcendence. But these have to be viewed not in terms biological and mechanical but in terms of consciousness, terms of inner experience. To some, experience 'is compounded

of feelings, perceptions and the like which would not involve any thought of contact with the divine Reality'. But an experience of transcendence must be of a Reality which is beyond the common ken, that is why it is considered either non-existent and meaningless or clouded from vision. The divine Being in its self-revelation is not 'democratic, nor is He responsible for our ignorance.' "If the divine Reality is genuinely transcendent," says Smart, "then it cannot be grasped within the phenomenal world. Yet on the other hand, the divine Being, in order to reveal Himself, must burst in upon the world of experience. And thus the divine Being must both hide Himself and reveal Himself at the same time. And yet there is a tension here, and a law of diminishing returns : the more commonplace the higher insight becomes, the less divine does God appear." This is resolved through the infrequent revelation of God. According to the other tension, "the experiences of the Transcendent in their highest forms cannot be like other and commonplace experiences." God does not reveal himself to all because there are differences of degree.

Smart then goes on to prove the relative value of worship and religious ritual which goes on broadening with transcendence. These are the base and the starting point of transcendence. The Reality is not only ultimate and utterly ineffable but also phenomenal; and both are genuine. Nearing the end of his article he concludes : "...just as we have recognized that genuine transcendence of speech or ceremonial is dialectical, and relies upon some inner truth or insight contained already in the words or rites transcended, so too the genuine transcendence of the divine Reality involves the thought that the cosmos which He or It transcends is itself genuine."

H.P. Sullivan takes up the problem of Reality and Illusion in his long article (to be continued) and goes on to examine the reality and unreality of the phenomenal world as dealt with in Indian Philosophy. The purpose of the article may thus be put in the words of the writer himself : "It is the purpose of the present discussion to set forth, systematically and analytically, Shankara's doctrine of Maya as it is expounded in his *Bhashya* on the *Brahma Sutras*; then to consider in the light of our presentation of Shankara two significant modern interpretations—those of K.C. Bhattacharya and S. Radhakrishnan—of the advaitic meaning of Maya; and finally to present both Sri Aurobindo's critique of Shankara's teachings in respect of the illusoriness of phenomenal existence and his own doctrine of 'Divine Maya'.

This world of phenomena, although considered by many as mere *maya* or unreal, as unreal as the illusion of a snake in a rope, is yet hard enough to be a palpable and endless field of strife and suffering, full of energy and dynamism, a field of bright and dark natures and life-forces, and cannot be too summarily dismissed or rejected however free we become in spirit.

MOTHER INDIA

Śri Aurobindo's Romantic Comedy *The Viziers of Bassora* depicts the conflict of these natures : "...every good kindly man is like the moon and carries a halo, while a chill cloud moves with dark and malignant natures. When we are near them, we feel it." These natures we find pictured in the wild youths (Nurreddene and Fareed), the old Viziers (Ibn Sawy and Almuene) and the rulers (Haroun and Alzayni).

M.V. Seetaraman's exposition of this drama of life is richly woven with its tense moments of love and hate, luxury and loot and its varied strange mixture of hypocrisy, wastefulness and hilarity, treachery and royalty, enjoyment and kindness and nobility, revenge, meanness and love and charity, and other human emotions and sentiments with their absorbing ebb and tide. The exposition is written with confident and able grasp of the theme of the Drama which presents to us a picture of the Arabian life of love and luxury of the Middle Ages. His analysis that "the deepest sentiment of the play is concentrated in a song and makes the drama quite Shakespearean" is particularly noteworthy. A few lines from the Drama may be relished by the readers :

.....it was with myself
I was angry, but the coward in me turned
On you to avenge its pain.

.....One fine, pure seeming falsehood,
Admitted, opens door to all his naked
And leprous family; in, in, they throng
And brood the house quite full.

We sin our pleasant sins and then refrain
And think that God's deceived. He waits His time
And when we walk the clean and polished road
He trips us with the mire our shoes yet keep,
The pleasant mud we walked before.

About the spoiled boy :

.....God's great stamp
And heavenly image on his mint's defaced,
Rubbed out, and only the brute metal left
Which never shall find currency again
Among his angels.

3

K.D Sethna continues his English translations from Mallarmé, almost line to line, literal in idea, at times in word and even in rhyme. They are full

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of freshness and vigour, the choice of words is as suggestive and powerful as in the original French. A few specimens will be enjoyable. The poet takes the gift of a poem of his own after night-long labour to his wife :

O nursing mother with babe and cold pure feet,
A horrible birth wilt thou with kindness greet
And by thy voice of viol and harp give rest
And make thy faded finger coax the breast
Whence flows in sibylline whiteness woman bare
For lips made hungry by virgin azure air ?

In one poem we have Salome's laments for the unpossessable virginity without warmth :

The horror of virginity I love;
I'll dwell mid fears my locks breathe when they move;
So, curled in my couch at eve, inviolate
Reptile, I'd feel in my flesh' useless fate
The scintillating freeze of your pale light,
O you that die to yourself in chastity's glow,
White night of clotted ice and cruel snow !...

In another poem, with John the Baptist as the speaker, there is the untranscendable virginity, 'chastity fierce', of the eternal Cold :

Let the head, drunk with bare
Fastings, be firm to chase
With haggard leap in the air
Its own pure gaze

Up where the Cold with no end
Rules that this chastity fierce
You never shall transcend,
O glaciers !

The symbolism of metaphysical poetry is sometimes so mystical as to become obscure and ununderstandable unless one has got accustomed to its strange style of presentation. Mallarmé's *Cantique de Saint Jean* appears among his best poems, but it goes home to the reader only when he has some experience of the inner energies, 'darknesses' or 'lights', that move within the being of man, as also the process of their movements.

Metaphysical symbolism may be said to be mental or mystic. The latter may be further divided into intuitive and occult. But there are all the variations and combinations. The symbolism of Mallarmé's above-quoted poem may be said to be occult and inner-mental.

Shreekrishna Prasad enumerates eleven characteristics of the Metaphysical School of poets beginning with John Donne. The gist of these is that poetry issues from an amalgam of mental and emotional planes; imagination and passion are there, but they are more or less mental and dialectic; the theme is secular as well as religious; the style is strange and witty, and more so the imagery which is 'often deliberately fantastic'.

The following lines of Donne represent an experience of imagination :

What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none due slacken, none can die.

But here is imagination haunted by the above-mind touch :

One short sleepe past, we wake eternally.

"The popularity of Donne in modern times is," says the writer in his article *The Metaphysical Poets : A Revaluation* (continued from the previous Number), "both a boon and a danger. In order to profit by the intellectual and technical properties of his poetry, its profusion of wit and conceits and paradoxes, its thought-spinning and dialectical gyrations, one must be properly and intelligently aware of the limitations of the kind of intellectual, analytical poetry which Donne and his associates wrote. One must be able to see them in the proper perspective, both imaginative and historical....The cult of intellect and reasoning or wit and paradox is not all in poetry. It is but a poor and, when followed fanatically, a dangerous cult....It will be good, therefore, if the modernist English poets of today carefully try to recapture the Spenserian or Shakespearean or Miltonic spirit once again, modifying it, of course, to suit the life and taste of the 20th century." He pleads for the appreciation of the best mystic poets like Blake, Traherne, Vaughan, Hopkins, A.E., Coventry Patmore, Edward Carpenter, and points out: "Mystic poetry is not just religious poetry or poetry dominated by some religious, theological beliefs and symbols. It is spiritual poetry in the truest and best sense of the term." To quote Sri Aurobindo, there must be "the stress of soul-vision behind the word", for "the true creator, the true hearer is the soul".

One might say that Kamalakanto's *To the Red Lotus* is the Lotus's Radiance

(Kamalakanto) responding to the Lotus Flame of the Divine Consciousness in fine words :

“.....thou hast sprung from the slime
.....From the days of yore
Thou hast been Beauty's self incarnadine !
The strength and the calm of self-giving are thine.
Thou, a glorious seal of the Supreme,
With thy beauty and grace this earth redeem.”

And fine too is Kishor Gandhi's reply to an English critic who considers Sri Aurobindo as a poet a 'failure'. To say that 'No alien can use the words of another language with the associative richness required by poetry' is to hit straight at the idea of an international language and the much-spoken-of claim and recognition of English to be actually or potentially so. And above all to deny the status of a poet—not to speak of a pioneer poet of high spiritual and mantric quality and the sun of the future poetic noons—is not only to be myopic but also to be hetromyopic.

Kishor Gandhi says that Sri Aurobindo as a master of the English language was not only handling it “as the medium of expression of his poetic vision and inspiration”, “not merely using English within its present capacities, but was all along trying to mould it to an ever higher perfection so as to make it a fit instrument for the greater needs of the future poetry, of which he not only saw the promise and traced out the tentative lines of unfoldment, but also gave ample demonstration in his own achievement, especially in the great epic *Savitri*.... That he succeeded in this endeavour to the extent of making the English tongue subtle, supple and rich enough to be an apt medium of the utterance of the mantra, not only in rare lines as hitherto in English literature, but in vast stretches of glowing outbursts of spiritual inspiration and vision, is a feat which should fill the forward-looking and receptive mind with wonder and amazement. If it fails to do so it is only a sign of the incomprehension of an over-cautious conservatism which looks upon even the truly creative and fruitful departures from the present limits with suspicion and antipathy.”

The author puts his reply rather more squarely in this way : “Your contention that Sri Aurobindo is not a poet at all could therefore only mean that he was entirely void of poetic inspiration ! A proposition like this, if you really mean to advance it, is so utterly stupefying that one would hardly think it worthwhile to give any consideration to it. For what could one say to a person who self-confidently asserts that the sun has no light or the ocean no water !

Perhaps I could only point out that if your verdict is true then not only all those—and they are not all his disciples or Indians, they include some competent English minds too—who rank him as a great poet and count his *Savitri* among the world's greatest poems or even the greatest of all, are wholly deluded, but he himself was suffering all his life from a complete self-delusion, for he maintained that he was a poet first and always and became a philosophic seer and thinker only after he took to Yoga."

And if English would not be reoriented by the dynamic potentials of the high inspiration that can be welled out of high and deep spiritual realms by Yoga and Tantric Sadhana within the land of spirituality, India, for the 'expression of spiritual truth and experience', poetic or otherwise, as says Sri Aurobindo, then we ourselves negate the future of English to be 'capable of profound turns of mystic expression which make it admirably fitted for...the highest spiritual expression.'

4

A sincere seeking can lead man to contact and survey the spiritual and mystic worlds, not only to be inspired by their higher truth and will of action, but to effect, as M.P. Pandit puts it in his article *Our Yoga and the Tantra*, 'the graduation of animal-man into god-man'. This is what the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Tantra, which is one form of (universal) Kundalini Yoga, seek to achieve. As Sri Aurobindo says "All Life is Yoga", so is Kundalini Yoga not only one line of Yoga as practised in the individuals, but also a universal Yoga as practised in Nature's evolutionary process by the awakening of the dormant energies and centres of consciousness which lie coiled in the universal Kundalini.

Although it is Tantra which has been mainly occupied with the Kundalini Yoga which has for its first aim and predominant preoccupation the awakening of what Sir John Woodroff terms the 'Serpent Power', the coiled Shakti dormant at the base of the spinal cord (*Mūlādhār*), the Kundalini can be aroused by many other methods than the Tantra and made to join in its ascending action of liberation, purification and mastery its Lord of Universal Power. The union of Shiva-Shakti effects in its wake a descent and a downpour of the illumining and immortalising nectar, first on the thousand-petalled lotus at the apex and then below on the other subtle centres of various faculties spread throughout the body, although the main centres are seven—including one above the body—situated in the *Shushumna*, subtly running through the spinal column. The main motive of this Yoga is the development of hidden faculties and capacities through a continuous and almost endless downflow of energy in the

being from the occult planes, whether of the Spirit or of Life-Force. Here we also gain not only powers and mastery of forces but liberation as well, the indispensable basis of which is thorough purification and egolessness. Kundalini Yoga at its highest aims at immortality. Here it is more an individual effort than an evolutionary striving for the collective gain which is the whole urge and central point in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. Apart from the differences in approach and method enumerated by the learned writer, the salient difference between the two Yogas, as hinted by him, is that the movement in the former even though connected with the universal forces is essentially individual, in the latter it is part of a universal achievement, a collective change—immortality not in stray individuals, but accepted by physical Nature as part of her spontaneous growth in her evolutionary march.

Another important emphasis and realisation of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga which we find absent in the Tantra may well be put in Sri Aurobindo's own words, appearing on the page preceding the beginning of the Journal and in between the two beautiful new photographs of the Mother (the latest and the first available according to age) : "Certainly, the supramental manifestation does not bring peace, purity, force, power or knowledge only ; these give the necessary conditions for the final realisation, are part of it, but Love, Beauty and Ananda are the essence of its fulfilment."

For realisation in the Integral Yoga it is not so much the personal effort which is the decisive factor, as is the Divine Grace, and for that the complete surrender to the Divine Will. In the words of the Mother :

"We have only one thing to do : the perfect surrender of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, the total self-giving to the Divine Will, whatever happens, even in the midst of the night.

"There is the night and there is the sun, the night and the sun, again the night, many nights, but one must cling to this will to surrender, cling to it, as through a tempest and give up everything into the hands of the Supreme Lord, until the day when it is all Sun for ever, the total Victory."

Sri Aurobindo Circle 1960 is to be congratulated for helping by various ways of the inspired word this will of spiritual self-giving.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sadhana for All By *Swami Sivananda*. Pub. Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, Rishikesh. Pp. 55, Price nP. 50.

This is a handy compilation from the books of Swami Sivananda whose number of writings is incredibly large and the range of subjects extremely wide. The extracts compiled in these pages relate to sadhana, the practical discipline that is necessary to realise the object of all knowledge, *i.e.*, to grow from manhood into godhood.

For any sadhana to be undertaken, however, there is one indispensable condition. There must be a sound health of body. Swamiji prescribes a number of select asanas which tone up the system, promote blood circulation and generally keep the body in a robust condition. Asanas are evidently preferred to the usual physical exercises of the western type because the former have a bearing on the psychological health also which is the next step. Prāṇāyāma, the regulation of breath, control and direction of life-energy, Dhyāna, development of concentration and the like which are cultivated in the line of this discipline train the mind to collect itself, and initiate a process of purification and subtilisation which culminates in a complete cessation of the activities of the mind and an entry into the Silence of the Brahman.

There are many auxiliary disciplines that help on the way. Japa, prayer, bhakti, karma-yoga—all these have their parts to play at varying stages in the development of sadhana and enough has been said in the book to give a preliminary introduction to them. All of them or any or many of them in combination can be followed; the goal is the same: to attain union with God. And God, adds the author, is not merely in temples and caves and in the heavens, but also and much more immediately within the recesses of your own heart. Seek Him within yourself and you will find Him everywhere.

Altogether the book makes interesting and useful reading. There is a lively sense of humour in these exhortations to a higher and better life. Speaking of sleep, for instance, the author observes: "According to an old adage, there should be six hours of sleep for man, seven for ladies and eight for fools!"

M.P.P.

Students' Section

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

Q. Douce Mère, qu'est-ce que c'est que les "facultés suprêmes" ?

Q. Sweet Mother, what are the "supreme faculties" ?

R. Il est difficile de répondre sans avoir le contexte. De quelles "facultés suprêmes" est-il question ici ? Sont-ce celles de l'homme en voie de devenir surhomme, ou sont-ce celles que possédera l'être supramental quand il apparaîtra sur la terre ? Dans le premier cas, ce sont les facultés qui se développent dans l'homme à mesure qu'il s'ouvre au mental supérieur et au surmental, et qu'à travers ces régions, il reçoit la lumière de la Vérité. Ces facultés sont alors non pas une expression directe de la suprême Vérité, mais sa traduction, sa réflexion indirecte. Parmi ces facultés on peut signaler l'intuition, la prévision, la connaissance par identification et certains pouvoirs comme celui de guérir et, dans une certaine mesure, d'agir sur les circonstances.

S'il s'agit des "facultés suprêmes" de l'être supramental, nous ne pouvons guère en parler, car tout ce que nous pourrions en dire pour le moment appartiendrait plus au domaine de l'imagination qu'à celui de la connaissance, puisque cet être supramental n'est pas encore manifesté sur terre.

A. It is difficult to answer without having the context. What supreme faculties are in question here ? Are they those of man on the way to becoming superman, or are they those that the supramental being will possess when it will appear on the earth ? In the first case, they are the faculties that develop in man according as he opens himself to the higher mind or to the overmind, and through these regions receives the light of Truth. These faculties are then not a direct expression of the supreme Truth, but its translation, its indirect reflection. Among these faculties one may point out intuition, prevision, knowledge by identification and certain powers like that of healing and, in a certain measure, of acting on circumstances.

MOTHER INDIA

If the question is of the "supreme faculties" of the supramental being, we can hardly speak of them, for all that we could say at the moment would belong more to the domain of the imagination than to that of knowledge, since this supramental being is not yet manifest on the earth.

23-4-1960

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, que veut dire "Le yoga de la devotion et le yoga de la connaissance" ?

Q. Sweet Mother, what is meant by "The yoga of devotion and the yoga of knowledge" ?

R. Le yoga de la connaissance est le chemin qui mène au Divin par la recherche exclusive de la Vérité pure et absolue.

Le yoga de la dévotion est le chemin qui mène à l'union avec le Divin par l'amour parfait, total et éternel.

Dans le yoga intégral de Sri Aurobindo, les deux se combinent avec le yoga des œuvres et le yoga de la perfection de soi et font un tout homogène pour aboutir au yoga de la réalisation supramentale.

A. The yoga of knowledge is the path which leads to the Divine by the exclusive quest of the pure and absolute Truth.

The yoga of devotion is the path which leads to union with the Divine by the perfect, total and eternal love.

In the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the two combine with the yoga of works and the yoga of self-perfection and make a homogeneous whole in order to culminate in the yoga of the supramental realisation.

5-2-1960

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, Sri Aurobindo a écrit dans 'La Vie Divine' : "Il n'y a encore aucun être surmental ni aucune nature surmentale organisée, aucun être supramental ni aucune nature supramentale organisée, qui agisse soit sur les parties superficielles de notre être, soit dans ses parties subliminales normales". Douce Mère, maintenant après la descente du Supramental, est-ce qu'il y en a ?

Q. Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo has written in 'The Life Divine' : "There is as yet no overmind being or organised overmind nature, no supramental being or organised supramental nature, acting either on our surface or in our

normal subliminal parts." Sweet Mother, now after the descent of the Supermind, is it still like that ?

R. Ce que Sri Aurobindo veut dire c'est que seuls quelques êtres exceptionnels qui n'appartiennent pas à l'humanité ordinaire ont un être surmental et une vie surmentale conscients et organisés et encore moins nombreux sont ceux qui ont un être supramental et une vie supramentale organisés, en admettant même qu'il y en ait. Certainement la toute récente descente des premiers éléments du Supramental dans l'atmosphère terrestre (pas encore tout à fait 4 ans) ne peut pas avoir changé cet état de chose.

Nous ne sommes encore que dans une période de préparation.

A. What Sri Aurobindo means is that only a few exceptional beings who do not belong to ordinary humanity have a conscious and organised overmind being and overmind life and still fewer are those who have an organised supramental being and supramental life, even admitting that there are some at all. Certainly the very recent descent of the first elements of the Supermind into the earth's atmosphere (not yet 4 years back) cannot have changed this state of things.

We are still only in the period of preparation.

18-12-1959

THE MOTHER

TALKS ON POETRY

(These Talks were given to a group of students starting their University life. They have been prepared for publication from notes and memory, except in the few places where they have been expanded a little. Here and there the material is slightly rearranged in the interests of unity of theme. As far as possible the actual turns of phrase used in the Class have been recovered and, at the request of the students, even the digressions have been preserved. The Talks make, in this form, somewhat unconventional pieces, but the aim has been to retain not only their touch of literature and serious thought but also their touch of life and laughter.)

TALK EIGHTEEN

SRI AUROBINDO—we closed last time with this name after talking of Yeats's two incantatory stanzas on the Rose in the deeps of his heart. Especially apt is this name in the Yeatsian context because Sri Aurobindo is not only the sovereign artist of incantation but has also given us a climax of the incantatory art in a poem on the Mystic Rose itself. The most famous of mystical symbols he has steeped in the intensest inner light and lifted it on a metrical base of pure stress into an atmosphere of rhythmic ecstasy. To receive the true impact of this poem we have to read it with a mind held quiet and the voice full-toned ; but we must be very clear in our enunciation, not allowing any emotional fuzz to come between the poet's significant sound and the intuitive depths of our intelligence. It is not a mere emotional thrill that he is communicating—the thrill is of some experience in which the Divine is feelingly visioned and visionarily comprehended and comprehendingly felt. Our reading has to convey accurately the quiver and colour of sight, the luminous structure of idea, the meaningful enthusiasm of emotion. A controlled intonation in which every word, while accorded its full music of vowel and consonant, stands out distinct and keeps clearly patterned in syntax its intuitive relation with its companion words—thus have we to make the Aurobindonian *Rose of God* paint and perfume our speech.

There are five stanzas, each conjuring up an aspect of the Epiphany which Sri Aurobindo poetises :

Rose of God, vermillion stain on the sapphires of heaven,
Rose of Bliss, fire-sweet, seven-tinged with the ecstasies seven !

TALKS ON POETRY

Leap up in our heart of humanhood, O miracle, O flame,
Passion-flower of the Nameless, bud of the mystical Name.

Rose of God, great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being,
Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing !
Live in the mind of our earthhood : O golden mystery, flower,
Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour.

Rose of God, damask force of Infinity, red icon of might,
Rose of Power with thy diamond halo piercing the night !
Ablaze in the will of the mortal, design the wonder of thy plan,
Image of Immortality, outbreak of the Godhead in man.

Rose of God, smitten purple with the incarnate divine Desire,
Rose of Life, crowded with petals, colour's lyre !
Transform the body of the mortal like a sweet and magical rhyme;
Bridge our earthhood and heavenhood, make deathless the Children of
Time.

Rose of God, like a blush of rapture on Eternity's face,
Rose of Love, ruby depth of all being, fire-passion of Grace !
Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss :
Make earth the home of the Wonderful and life Beatitude's kiss.

At first glance one may get a little bewildered and think that here are splashes of oriental hues and a luxury of decorative effects for their own sake. But really there is no riot in the splendour : we have a many-sided system in it, exploring the secrets of the Divine Rose. A mystical metaphysics and psychology, as it were, unfold before us in the succession of vibrant images. Let us get a little to close quarters with this metaphysics and this psychology. But let me warn you that since they are mystical we cannot be very sure about everything we say.

There are two sides of spiritual reality presented in each stanza. The first two lines everywhere are charged with the Glory that is on high, the Reality above the human consciousness, ever perfect and ever manifest. In the last two lines the same Reality is invoked to reveal itself by evolution in the human consciousness and to become progressively a part of earth or, rather, to make earth progressively a part of it. What is eternally in bloom in the Divine is asked to blossom anew in our time and space—a Brightness that, unlike as in Nashe's line, never falls from the air. The nature of this Brightness can be gauged by a brief review of the figures under which the spiritual Reality is shown. The

basic figure is, of course, that which gives the poem its title. The Rose is the symbol of Beauty and here we have the God-Rose—God as Beauty. But what shall we understand by the Beauty of God ? Beauty is perfection of form. But there are levels of perfection and the determinant of each level is the type of being that assumes the form. The Divine Being makes the supreme perfection of form, the infinite Beauty : that is, a Form which is perfect with an infinite Being come to focus in it, a Perfect Form in which Divinity is individual yet is not limited by individuality but overflows the Form into the universal.

Now the question is : Does the Rose of God which stands for such a Form mean the same as the Deathless Rose about which Sri Aurobindo has spoken in *Savitri* ?

In *Savitri* he has written of Being's "effulgent stair" climbing from the human mentality to "the Eternal's house" and he has put on either side of the steps of the journey upward through the mystical consciousness "the heavens of the ideal Mind". On one side are

The mighty kingdoms of the deathless Flame

and on the other

The lovely kingdoms of the deathless Rose.

Sri Aurobindo says further :

Above the spirit cased in mortal sense
Are superconscious realms of heavenly peace,
Below, the Inconscient's sullen dim abyss,
Between, behind our life, the deathless Rose...
World after coloured and ecstatic world
Climbs towards some far unseen epiphany.

Sri Aurobindo tells us that even in our mortal existence we can be visited by touches of those worlds, but the fullness of the Deathless Rose is beyond.

This does not run counter to the suggestions in the poem we are studying. However, what we have in this poem is a certain sheer supremacy of the Rose : the Rose of God is the "far unseen epiphany" itself and not merely "the heavens of the ideal Mind". And we have also a fusion, as it were, of the deathless Rose with the deathless Flame whose kingdoms are said to be "mighty" as distinguished from those that are "lovely". Our poem, though presenting the Divine under the aspect of Beauty, seems to exceed the distinction drawn in the passages of *Savitri* : it takes us to a summit Reality which is the All—

Eternity itself directly meeting us in the Form of Divine Beauty. In the language of Indian mystical thought, this Form bringing forth into manifestation the mystery of the Absolute, this Rose of God, is the One whom Sri Aurobindo hails in *Savitri* as

Mother of the worlds,
Creatrix, the Eternal's artist Bride,
and also as
The Mother of all godheads and all strengths
Who, mediatrix, binds earth to the Supreme.

And that eternal Mother-beauty—the prime Creatrix, the ultimate Mediatrix—is the form of a fivefold divineness of being. The Rose of God is a perfection crystallised from the substance of an absolute Bliss, an absolute Light, an absolute Power, an absolute Life, an absolute Love. And through its crystallised perfection these five divinenesses can become active and transformative in the finite substance of mortal man.

The divineness to which Sri Aurobindo devotes the first stanza, figuring the Rose of God as the Rose of Bliss, is what Indian mystical thought has always not only considered the original fount of creation but also linked most immediately with beauty. Essentially the perfection of form conveys delight because essentially delight composes it. All art is creative delight expressing itself perfectly in one mode or another. Of course, art has significant values also, but they are taken up and absorbed into the creative delight. Similarly, God's joy in His own creative possibilities lets loose the interrelated scheme of significant forms we call the universe : the universe is God's *līlā*, God's play, an expression of the Ananda which He takes of His Conscious Being. That Ananda constituting the God-Rose is vivified for us by Sri Aurobindo against a background which he terms "the sapphires of heaven". Try to visualise an illimitable stretch of unbroken bright blue—the supreme Ineffable shining far and aloof like a cloudless sky, the Absolute lost in the heaven of Its own self. Then see the burst of the primal Form like a flower out of formlessness, a vermillion Rose standing out in an incandescence of Bliss from the sapphires of that absorbed heaven and holding a multiplicity of self-expression. Seven are said to be the ecstasies blended in that Bliss and each ecstasy contributes to the Rose a tinge of its own. The sevenfold self-expression has a full flower-aspect and a growing bud-aspect. The flower-flush is the Nameless Absolute in its passion of manifestation in the superhuman azure above. The bud-glow is the same Absolute manifesting as the mystical Name, the Divinity relating its miracle-flame to the human heart and leaping up there, a progressive perfection, in answer to that heart's cry for happiness.

MOTHER INDIA

A semi-parallel to the two opening lines and to a couple of phrases in the rest of the stanza is found in a passage in *Savitri* :

An all-revealing, all-creating Bliss,
Seeking for forms to manifest truths divine,
Aligned in their significant mystery
The gleams of the symbols of the Ineffable
Blazoned like hues upon a colourless air
On the white purity of the Witness Soul.
These hues were the very prism of the Supreme,
His beauty, power, delight creation's cause.

The background here is white and not blue, but all the rest has an affinity to the overture of our poem and when the Bliss-revealed and Bliss-created hues blazoning forth the Ineffable are said to be the Supreme's very prism—that is, something which breaks white light into its component rainbow-colours—we have a manifestation “fire-sweet, seven-tinged with the ecstasies seven”.

One may ask why the ecstasies are said to be seven. Even as far back as the Rigveda we find seven a sacred number. It answers to a truth of mystical experience, a truth recorded in many languages and not only in Sanskrit. But the Rigveda itself, though giving prominence to this number, does not confine its numerology to seven : what is most often spoken of in it as seven is also at times counted by it as five, eight, nine, ten and twelve. So, whether we take up seven or another number would seem to depend somewhat on our line of approach and our frame of reference. But perhaps the specific mysticism of Bliss demands seven rather than any other number. It cannot be for any merely poetic reason that both here and in the *Savitri*-passage about the spiritual Bliss this particular number is involved. Still, I believe that over and above mystical truth there must be in poetry an artistic justification for such a choice. The mysticism of Bliss must be rendered artistically inevitable. In the *Savitri*-lines the prism-image is an inevitable felicity after the Witness Soul's “white purity”. In our poem, what is the corresponding aptness of association ?

The blue background hardly calls for a sevenfold spectrum. We may argue that a rainbow always hangs against the sky's blue, but there is no necessary connection between this azure and that iridescence. Besides, there is a difference between the colour-suggestions of the *Savitri*-lines and ours. The ecstasies in the latter, though seven like the prism-hues, cannot be thought of as running into all the shades of the rainbow : blue and green and indigo can have nothing to do with the Rose of God. Shades that are allied to the Rose-impression are

the only ones imaginable here. So the background need not be the white which is required for the rainbow-spectrum : the blueness of the background is no anomaly, and we must look for another artistic justification than that arising from the background colour. I submit that the justification is to be found in what the seven ecstasies vermillionly dynamise and what the sapphires hold static. Artistically, the ecstasies are inevitably seven because "seven" rhymes most proportionately with "heaven". "Eleven" too is a rhyme, but it is not quite proportionate : the word has an extra syllable at the start. Sri Aurobindo's context, from the purely artistic point of view, demands no more than a suggestion of mystic multiplicity, and the word he has employed serves best that suggestion. For, whatever truth shines out here from ancient esoteric vision in general and from spiritual Bliss-experience in particular becomes inevitable in terms of art by the logic of exactly proportionate rhyme.

Can we say with precision what "seven" stands for in the poem ? In reference to the ancient Indian scriptures, Sri Aurobindo has explained this number by a scheme of planes diversely distinguished at different historical periods. In the most popular version the number denoted the three transcendental planes of *Sat* (Being), *Chit-Tapas* (Consciousness-Force), *Ānanda* (Bliss), the three cosmic planes of *Swar* (Mind), *Bhūvar* (Life), *Bhūr* (Matter) and the intermediate plane of *Vijñāna* or *Mahas* (Truth-Consciousness, Supermind, Gnosis) which links the higher triplicity to the lower and formulates in its own transcendence the archetypal cosmos. On every plane there is a sevenfold existence with one term or another in the forefront and the rest subordinate. The phrase "ecstasies seven" is itself Vedic (*sapta ratnāni*) and perhaps the ecstasies in the poem are kindled by the characteristics of the seven planes; but the poem does not specifically build its significance on a sevenfold chord, it has a fivefold harmony, and the constituents of the harmony are not distinct planes or principles of existence. So here it may be better for us to remain with the mysticism of the poem's metaphysics than to probe the metaphysics of its mysticism.

As regards the fivefold harmony, it is interesting to note that, while the Rose of God is addressed as Bliss, Light, Power, Life and Love, it is invoked first to "leap up in our heart of humanhood", then to "live in the mind of our earthhood", next to be "ablaze in the will of the mortal", still next to "transform the body of the mortal" and, finally, again to accomplish a leaping up connected with the heart, though now the appeal is :

Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss.

The heart is brought in twice: the poem opens with it and rounds off with it. One may object that the second heart is not the same as the first and that Sri Aurobindo

means simply the very core of what the Rose of Love is asked to arise from. But is it possible to take this heart as a mere metaphor? Surely not. Love is too obviously a thing of the heart in a non-metaphorical sense. Besides, the first stanza and the last have too many resemblances for the second heart to be metaphorical. In the former we have "ecstasies", in the latter we have "rapture". Similarly, "fire-passion" corresponds to the earlier "fire-sweet" and "passion-flower". "Miracle" and "flame" are matched by "the home of the Wonderful" and "Beatitude's kiss". The very word "Beatitude" recalls the word "Bliss". And a general eye-catching sign of the essential affinity of the two and consequently of the two hearts is the opening line in either stanza : on the one hand the words about the Rose of Bliss —

...vermilion stain on the sapphires of heaven —

and on the other the phrase about the Rose of Love —

...a blush of rapture on Eternity's face.

A blush can be well defined as a vermilion stain and when this stain is, as the next line shows, a tinge of ecstasy, it is nothing save a blush of rapture. Psychologically, Bliss and Love are connected with each other and both are connected with Beauty. As Sri Aurobindo says in *The Synthesis of Yoga*,¹ "the general power of Delight is love and the special mould which the joy of love takes is the vision of beauty." He also says :² "Love is the power and passion of the divine self-delight and without love we may get the rapt peace of its infinity, the absorbed silence of the Ananda, but not its absolute depth of richness and fullness. Love leads us from the suffering of division into the bliss of perfect union, but without losing that joy of the act of union which is the soul's greatest discovery and for which the life of the cosmos is a long preparation. Therefore to approach God by love is to prepare oneself for the greatest possible spiritual fulfilment." If Bliss is the fount of creation and is the immediate substance of Beauty, it is by the passion of Love that it creates the object of Beauty and, by loving this object, knows itself most intensely and most profoundly with the utter richness and fullness which the poem calls "ruby depth of all being". And, when it is self-expressed as a cosmic multiplicity, the play of Love is fundamentally the secret of the self-expression, the secret which in our evolutionary universe emerges slowly and by degrees. Sri Aurobindo has written:³ "A supreme divine Love is a creative Power and, even though it can exist in itself silent and unchangeable, yet rejoices in exter-

¹ *On Yoga*, Vol. I, p. 675.

² *Ibid.*, p. 623.

³ *Ibid.*

nal form and expression and is not condemned to be a speechless and bodiless godhead. It has even been said that creation itself was an act of love or at least the bulding up of a field in which Divine Love could devise its symbols and fulfil itself in act of mutuality and self-giving and, if not the initial nature of creation, this may well be its ultimate object and motive." Bliss is the original movement of the Divine in which Love is implicit, Love is the Divine's final movement by which Bliss grows most explicit. They are essentially a single process with two ends or extremes : they stand at one extreme as the Creatrix binding the Supreme to earth, at the other as the Mediatrix binding earth to the Supreme.

Not that the "heart" of the last stanza is exactly the same as the "heart" of the first : there is a shade of difference, and we shall deal with it. But the second heart is far from being just a metaphor and the poem does come full circle by beginning with the Rose of Bliss and concluding with the Rose of Love. Before we deal with the shade of difference we must understand why the Roses of Light and Power and Life are put in between. Originally, Divine Bliss brings forth the cosmos by a certain conceptive and regulative principle which converts the free multiplicity-in-unity of that creative Ananda into an ordered pattern of what we may term idea-realities seen and selected out of it : a process of Knowledge and a process of Will, a Truth-vision and a Truth-organisation come into play in order to project and establish in various related centres and steady cosmic rhythms the contents of the All-Delight. Anything deserving to be termed a universe, whether it be an archetypal universe for ever perfect or one like ours in which perfection is hidden, needs a guiding Wisdom-sight and an executive Wisdom-force to guard it from lapsing into a teeming amorphousness. Thus there must be a Rose of Light and a Rose of Power. Conversely, when the creative Bliss has to blossom fully in a human existence which develops from an apparent absence of it, the budding of this Ananda in the heart of humanhood must call into play the Rose of Light, the great Wisdom-bloom, the golden Mystery, to act in our mentality as the Seer held like a guest in marvellous Yogic hours and directing with sunlike Truth-knowledge the growth of the supreme Ecstasy. But Truth-knowledge is not enough : the diamond-radiant Truth-power must be there within our will to organise what is luminously visioned and to set forth masterfully its own plan and to work out an image of the immortal Light by destroying the circumambient darkness of Ignorance.

What about the Rose of Life ? If we may go by the suggestions in the poem, it is not something unrelated to the Roses of Power, Light and Bliss. It is characterised as divine Desire that has a smiting drive and comes incarnate : it is also a multiform movement of colourful collectivity and a creator

of concordances in a Time-existence made deathless. The smiting drive towards deathless incarnation connects up directly with the infinite force and might and the piercing diamond halo spoken of in the preceding stanza, about the Rose of Power, as well as with the "image of immortality" there. It joins up indirectly with the sun that is the Rose of Light, the intensity of gold inseparable from the mystery of Divine Wisdom and justifying the appeal to that Wisdom to "live" in our mind. The multiform movement of colourful collectivity and concordance harks back to the seven-tinged fire-sweetness of the Rose of Bliss. But what the Rose of Life brings is outward' action, concrete achievement. It translates the Truth-Will into the Truth-deed, the Truth-Vision into the Truth-contact, the Bliss-passion and the Bliss-multiplicity into enjoyment of substantial grasp and embodied growth. The concretisation of various centres and the dense touching activity among them so that a complex cosmos may be most objectively real—these necessities are served only by the Rose of Life.

From this Rose to the Rose of Love the transition is natural. Desire, while on one side it is akin to Will-power, is on the other side akin to Love. It is not only a drive of outward achievement: it is also a longing to seize and possess with pleasure. But it knows only how to expand and take : the movement towards concrete growth of one centre in relation to other centres of being is incomplete if the expansion is not also by self-giving, a concrete happy growth by lovingly passing into others and achieving a multiple unification. The Bliss-passion and the Bliss-multiplicity are thus fulfilled and the original Ananda leads back with the Roses of Light, Power and Life to itself through the Rose of Love.

So we return to the problem of the two hearts—our heart of humanhood and the heart that yearns and sobs from the abyss of Nature until the Rose of Love arises from it to

Make earth the home of the Wonderful and life Beatitude's kiss.

The former heart cannot be quite separated from the latter, since in us Nature herself has become human. The human heart is the top, as it were, of the heart whose bottom goes down to the darkest base of material existence. The abysmal heart must be some power of feeling that is not confined to man but resides as an upward-yearning ache in the very depths of Matter from which all living things have evolved—a power of feeling which is Nature's counterpart of Supernature's "ruby depth of all being" and which must be there in man's own depths and of which his heart of humanhood must be the frontal expression. The heart of humanhood, our emotional being, is in us the meeting-place

between the mind-consciousness and the life-consciousness, it is the centre of our normal nature : whatever individual self or soul we may have is likely to be seated hereabouts. Intellectuals may enthrone the mind as the individual self; but we may cheekily ask an intellectual : "Who says the soul is the mind ?" He will answer, "I say so", and, while answering, he will thump the centre of his chest and never his forehead to indicate himself ! Sri Aurobindo tells us that the true soul of us is hidden behind our emotional being whose physical counterpart is in the centre of our chest. He calls it the psyche or psychic being which is in its essence a spark of the Divine. This spark came originally from the highest world into the night of material Nature and from that abyss kept yearning towards God and rose through various organisations of matter to its present level where it has developed a human instrument : it had during its lesser development in the past a subhuman instrument and shall have in its future greater development a superhuman one.

Its general character is "sweetness and light" and its natural turn is towards the Good, the True, the Beautiful; but, says Sri Aurobindo,¹ "it is the divine Love that it seeks most, it is the love of the Divine that is its spur, its goal..." Sri Aurobindo² continues : "It lifts the being towards a transcendent Ecstasy and is ready to shed all the downward pull of the world from its wings in its uprising to reach the One Highest; but it calls down also this transcendent Love and Beatitude to deliver and transform this world of hatred and strife and division and darkness and jarring Ignorance. It opens to a universal Divine Love, a vast compassion, an intense and immense will for the good of all, for the embrace of the World-Mother enveloping or gathering to her her children, the divine Passion that has plunged into the night for the redemption of the world from the universal Ignorance." In the last phrase we have the *rationale* of the Love-Rose's arising from Nature's abyss : it is Divine Love, the "fire-passion of Grace", that has made a holocaust of itself by plunging into that abyss as the world-redeemer, and through the psychic being's yearning that has all the ache of this abyss within it the Rose of Love whose supreme existence is in Eternity shall manifest in earth and beatify no less than beautify our life.

(To be continued)

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

On Yoga, Vol. I, p. 177

² *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.

THE MOTHER*

MAHESHWARI

PARAMOUNT Maheshwari dwells in the vast,
Above our pensive, groping mind and will.
Her core is flooded with Power and Knowledge unknown,
'Tis She who opens our heart to the zenith skies,
To the Golden All and wide expanse of the globe.
The surge of tranquillity and glory is She.
In her stupendous calm the Eternal breathes.
Ever supernal knowledge within her sports.
Nothing can dare remain to her concealed.
Nothing can stand against her adamant Will.
All worlds are at the fiat of her X'ray Eyes.
Her unique Power clasps taut all things and times.
Again, the main of sufferance is She,
And who can venture to plumb her love for earth ?
Hers is the sight that has no preference blind.
A brighter lore the wise from her receive.
Her confidants are those that vision own.
She compels the hostile to their natural doom :
She leads the souls devoid of knowledge true
And those that wallow in blind folly's joy
Agreeably to their own smallnesses.
Answers are given the way men call to Her.

Nothing can ever shackle her nimble Feet,
In vain tries earth's attachment to seize her love;
Yet the Mother in her heart is strongest of all.
Her disavowal is nought save a delay,
Her ruthless blows are only bounty sweet.
But her compassion's flood swamps not her Law
Nor turns her act from the course Herself ordained.
For the truth of things is her only choice divine.
Vigilant to shape our innermost and turn
Nature into the ultimate Truth She stands.

“MADAL”

* A versification of the substance of the section on Maheshwari in *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

“ MOTHER MIRA IS MY REFUGE, MY REFUGE·
IS SRI AUROBINDO ”

THIS chant brings a vision of the Supreme Lord,
It brings back to life the good deeds of the ages,
And makes body and soul divine.

“Mother Mira is my refuge, my refuge is Sri Aurobindo” :
Sweet as nectar is the refrain,
A music of heavenly dreams,
Sacred passion of heart.

“Mother Mira is my refuge, my refuge is Sri Aurobindo” :
Liberating from lust and wrath,
Filling mind and heart with love,
It kindles devotion’s new-born flame.

“Mother Mira is my refuge, my refuge is Sri Aurobindo”:
Of golden hue is its radiance cool,
It fills with love the strings of the heart,
It is the ecstasy of Love Divine.

“Mother Mira is my refuge, my refuge is Sri Aurobindo” :
A gift of the gods for suffering man,
This the adventure to the Goal,
This is the chant of Superman.

*(Originally composed in Hindi by Vyankat Raman Singh:
translated into English by Sanat K. Banerjee)*

I AM A SOVEREIGN IN MY LIBRARY

I WILL not weep if there is none to love me, I will not sorrow if I have no companions, for I know that my Library shall always greet me. When I am in my Library I forget that I am seated in a room and instead am carried to lands which do not even exist. Though I am surrounded on all sides by walls I journey across the whole universe. When I read *Hamlet* my room is turned into Denmark and the characters come before me and act their roles : the gentle Ophelia, the wise Polonius, the open-hearted Horatio.

In my Library everything is mine, for the books are at my service the moment I summon them. They give me all their knowledge and I swallow everything like a giant. I listen to the wisdom of Confucius and the parables of Jesus. I see Solomon seated on his bejewelled throne dealing out justice.

My books give me solace in my hours of distress and even if I insult a book by rejecting it in contempt the next time I pick it up it will be friendly and loving and not show the slightest anger. Great emperors like Akbar and Alexander are humiliated before me, for they are obliged to be present the moment I call them !

In my Library I am the monarch of all monarchs and there is none to oppose me though I be wrong or moody.

TARINI (Age 15)
Class 9a

ON PREACHING

PREACHING ceases to be among the difficult things to do so long as the preacher himself is not expected to practise what he is preaching to others. It remains, of course, necessary for such a person to be well-practised in the art or artifice of preaching.

This art of preaching attempts to ensure the diversion of the attention of the audience from the search of a practical application of the teachings of the preacher in the personality and life of the preacher himself. High-sounding words, suitable attire, mannerisms of speech and certain abnormalities in the way of living supported by a group of admirers around are a good aid to the preacher in such cases.

In course of time the preacher of this category generally falls a victim to the growth of ego and the urge in him for self-perfection on the way to his ideal gets more and more still. Not that it is of no use or effect for the whole audience. There will be always a number of persons ready enough to profit by it, but for a much larger number it will fail to go beyond satisfying some mental curiosity or intellectual exercise. At its low levels it may degenerate into demagoguery, at its highest it still falls short of the true preaching.

The true preaching has behind it the force and fire of one's experiences and realisations in life. It requires a much less number of words to make itself known, sometimes even no words at all.

The true preaching is artless yet artistic, effortless yet effective, the least noisy yet the most vibrant.

S. S. JHUNJHUNWALA