

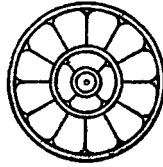
MOTHER INDIA

FEBRUARY 21, 1963 : THE MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

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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. XV

No. 1

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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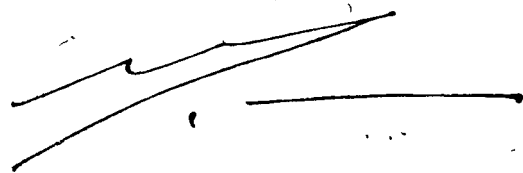
For those who are eager
to get rid of falsehood

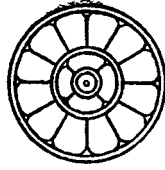
Here is a way.

Do not try to please yourself,
Do not try either to please the others.
Try only to please the Lord.

Because He alone is the Truth,
Each and every one of us, human
beings in our physical body, is a
coat of falsehood put on the Lord
and hiding Him.

As He alone is true to Himself,
it is on Him that we must
concentrate and not on the
coats of falsehood.





True spirituality is not to renounce
life, but to make life perfect
with a Divine Perfection.

This is what India must show
to the world now.

26.1.63.



WORDS OF THE MOTHER

ABOVE all the complications of so-called human wisdom there is the luminous simplicity of the Divine Grace ready to act if we allow it to act.

Life could be quite simple and easy if man's mind did not introduce in it so many useless complications.

29-12-1962

WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

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

2-2-1934

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

28-9-1933

THE HOUR OF THE TRANSCENDENT'S WILL

For in the march of all-fulfilling Time
The hour must come of the Transcendent's will :
All turns and winds towards his predestined ends
In Nature's fixed inevitable course
Decreed since the beginning of the worlds
In the deep essence of created things :
Even there shall come as a high crown of all
The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.

SRI AUROBINDO
Savitri, Bk. XI, Canto 1

THE HOUR OF THE DIVINE

But when the hour of the Divine draws near,
The Mighty Mother shall take birth in Time
And God be born into the human clay
In forms made ready by your human lives.
Then shall the Truth supreme be given to men.
.....
Some shall be made the glory's receptacles
And vehicles of the Eternal's luminous power.
These are the high forerunners, the heads of Time,
The great deliverers of earth-bound mind,
The high transfigures of human clay,
The first-born of a new supernal race.

SRI AUROBINDO
Savitri, Bk. XI, Canto 1

A COMMENT BY THE MOTHER

ON seeing a book-mark in the note-book of an inmate of the Ashram, carrying the following legend :

WHEN I AM RIGHT
No one remembers,
WHEN I AM WRONG
No one forgets —

the Mother wrote beneath :

“Because there are no true right and wrong — the only Truth is the Lord and He remembers everything.”

26-1-63

LETTERS FROM SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

(*To Kantie*)

THE grace and protection are always with you. When in any inner or outer difficulty or trouble do not allow it to oppress you; take refuge with the Divine Force that protects.

If you do that always with faith and sincerity, you will find something opening in you which will always remain calm and peaceful in spite of all superficial disturbances.

3-2-1931

SRI AUROBINDO

THE descent of calm and light which you experience is a sign that the Sadhana has actively begun in you; it shows that you open now consciously to the Divine Force and its workings. The descent of calm and light into the being is the beginning of the foundation of the Yoga. At first it may be felt in the head and upper part only, but afterwards it goes further down until it touches all the centres and is experienced in the whole body. At first it comes only for a moment or two; afterwards it lasts for longer periods.

The other experiences show that the faculty of inner vision is opening; this is also a part of the Yoga. The fire seen by you must have been the fire of aspiration lit in the vital being.

The other things you saw are not definite enough to be interpreted.

Continue your progress. Our blessings and protection are always with you.

11-3-1931

THE MOTHER

You are right in feeling that the protection and grace are always there and that all has been for the best. In your wife's condition, the best was that she should change her body and she has been able to do so in the state of mind which would give her the happiest conditions both after death and for a renewal hereafter of the spiritual development for which she had begun to aspire. It is good also that you have been able to keep your poise and the freedom of your spirit in this occurrence.

Again, you are entirely right in your resolution not to marry again; to do so would be in any case to invite serious and probably insuperable difficulties

in your following the path of Yoga, and, as in this path of Yoga it is necessary to put away sexual desire, marriage would be not only meaningless but an absolute contradiction of your spiritual life. You can expect full support and protection from us in your resolve and, if you keep a sincere will and resolution in this matter, you may be sure that the Divine Grace will not fail you.

6-10-1931

SRI AUROBINDO

THE first condition of progress in Sadhana is not to fear, to have trust and keep quiet during an experience. What happened was simply that the Force came down and tried to quiet the mind and hold the body still so that it might work. If you had not feared, that would have happened. But your terror made the mind and body resist and get the impression that they were being tortured or in danger. The feeling of the tough body and great force like a hand upon it is quite usual in this kind of experience and does not terrify the sadhak, but brings a great joy and release. In future you must try to be quiet and not have any fear or imagination of danger. Naturally when you thought that you could not bear it, the Force withdrew as you are not ready to receive.

15-8-1936

SRI AUROBINDO

WHATEVER comes from above can come like that in waves — whether it is Light or Force or Peace or Ananda. In your case it was the Force working on the mind in waves. It is true also that when it was like that, not in currents or as a rain or as a quiet flood, it is Mahakali's Force that is working. The first necessity when it is so, is not to fear.

August, 1936

SRI AUROBINDO

THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

I

IN the complete sadhana there are two powers necessary, the masculine, Purusha or Ishwara power coming down in knowledge, light, calm, strength, wide consciousness from above and the feminine, Nature or Ishwari power opening in receptivity, passivity, psychic sensibility, the responsiveness on all the planes of the being from below. The first by itself tends to be predominantly mental or mentalised intuitive and afterwards mentalised supramental. It is slow in action but sure and safe, only there is often a difficulty of opening up the separate psychic vital and physical being to the illumination and change. The second by itself is rapid, sensitive, full of extraordinary and striking experiences but apt in the absence of psychic or occult powers to be chaotic, uneven and open to many dangers. It is when both are present and act upon each other in the being that the Sadhana is likely to be most perfect.

*
**

As to the three photographs you have sent I give you Mira's comments in inverted commas with my additions afterwards.

1. K.

"An extremely interesting head, highly psychic personality but he must be careful about the physical as this type is likely to burn up the body in the intensity of its psychic developments."

The basis of calm, strength and purity brought down into the physical consciousness without any hasty trepidations or unhealthy vibrations will secure the physical safety and is here very indispensable.

2. G.

"An intellectual and philosophic temperament but there is something heavy below."

I think that the heaviness is in the vital being and the physical mind and may cause considerable obstruction but if these two can be cleared and illuminated there may be behind a fund of conservative energy and steadiness which will be useful.

3. J.P.

"Very dull, I don't know whether anything can be given to him."

I seem to find behind the eyes a psychic capacity of a very low kind and in the bodily vitality something dark and impure which may be a mediumistic

element for the lower psycho-vital forces....If he is to do any Yoga it should rather be of the old kind and especially a discipline of self-purification. Passivity of any kind in his case would be dangerous.

*
**

ALL should understand that the true direct supramental does not come at the beginning but much later on in the Sadhana. First the opening up and illumination of the mental, vital and physical beings; secondly, the making intuitive of the mind, through will etc. and the development of the hidden soul consciousness progressively replacing the surface consciousness; thirdly, the supramentalising of the changed mental, vital and physical beings and finally the descent of the true supramental and the rising into the supramental plane.

This is the natural order of the Yoga. These stages may overlap and intermix, there may be many variations, but the last two can only come in an advanced state of the progress. Of course the supramental Divine guides this Yoga throughout but it is first through many intermediary planes; and it cannot easily be said of anything that comes in the earlier periods that it is the direct or full supramental. To think so when it is not so may well be a hindrance to progress.

30-12-1922

2

As regards your own sadhana and those of others in Bhabanipore, I think it necessary to make two or three observations. First, I have for some time had the impression that there is a too constant activity and pressure for rapidity of progress and a multitude of experiences. These things are all right in themselves, but there must be certain safeguards. First there should be sufficient periods of rest and silence, even of relaxation, in which there can be a quiet assimilation. Assimilation is very important and periods necessary for it should not be regarded with impatience as stoppages of the Yoga. Care should be taken to make calm and quiet strength and inner silence the basic condition for all activity. There should be no excessive strain; any fatigue, disturbance, or inordinate sensitiveness of the nervous and physical parts, of which you mention certain symptoms in your letters, should be quieted and removed, as they are often signs of overstrain or too great an activity or rapidity in the Yoga. It must also be remembered that experiences are only valuable as indications and openings and the main thing always is the steady harmonious and increasingly organised opening and change of the different parts of the consciousness and the being.

January, 1923

3

It appears from your letters that there is a strong play around you of the hostile opposition from beings of the lowest physico-vital and physical ranges. These beings are small and without intelligence but full of power to do various kinds of harm and mischief. They are similar to those that did the stone-throwing in the other house. To produce brain-incoherence, freaks, absurdities, sexual disorders, nervous agitations and disequilibrium, coarse violence of various kinds is their sphere in the physical domain and in the physical to bring about accidents, illnesses, injuries, physical impediments, and on a smaller scale, little mischiefs, inconveniences and hindrances of all kinds. It is these that have taken possession of KS's brain and nervous centres and impel his speech and movements. It is these also that pursue with accidents those who are trying to collect money. I have for some time been aware of their activities and suggestions and they are now almost the only positively hostile forces of which I am aware in the Yoga, the rest being merely the normal obstructions of nature. In my own atmosphere I am able to make their suggestions abortive and minimise their play pending their elimination. But in your case they seem to be moved by some more powerful force which, not being able to act on you directly, is using them as agents. Probably you have in your Sadhana touched and awakened the plane on which they work, but are not yet able to conquer and protect as you can in the higher fields. Those entirely within your spiritual influence may resist or escape but others are exposed to their attack.

31st January, 1923

4

Where there is only a confused, vague or general idea, the force I put out loses itself very largely in the void. Especially I shall have in the future to try and act more and more from the Supramental and less and less from the mind. Now the first condition of the Supramental is exactness, clearness and order both in the total and the details and their relations. Therefore it is a great advantage if there are these elements in the data upon which I have to work and a great disadvantage if they are absent.

14th February, 1923

5

As regards K the experiences of which he is afraid do not seem to me dangerous in themselves. They are such as come to all people whose Yoga

runs strongly on psychic lines and those you mention and similar ones of a still stronger character have been experienced by Mira at least a thousand times during her Sadhana. The only danger, apart from any hostile interference, comes from the disturbances of the physical mind and the fears and apprehensions of the nervous and physical being. I have already written once before that fearlessness is the first necessary condition for going through this Yoga. These fears and apprehensions and the sense of weakness and insecurity come from the attachment of the physical and nervous being to its ordinary basis of consciousness and usual habits of living and its alarm at anything abnormal which forces it out of its own grooves. As for the need of immediate protection, that is only when the vital goes out of the body. The psychic being can go out without any danger if the physical consciousness does not disturb and itself create the danger. But unfortunately K's physical and nervous being seems to be weak and not on a level with the powers of his mind and psychic nature. It may be better for him to concentrate first on the preparation of his physical consciousness. I have already said that what he must do is to bring down the basis of calm light and strength into the physical mind, nerves and body. Once this is thoroughly done all attacks can be met. There will be no disturbing vibrations and all kinds of psychic and vital experiences such as those now pressing upon him will be welcomed as an expansion and fulfilment of the integral nature and a cause not of apprehension but of knowledge and Ananda. As to his coming here, I was not calling him because just now I am still in the concentration on the complete mastery of the physical and that prevents me from putting myself out very much at present. I could not give him the constant attention which will be needed according to your suggestion and besides, as his physical being is the weakest part of him, it might not be altogether advisable for him to be here until I have established a sufficient general security against any attack which might touch on that plane.

P.S.

If K really gets anything of the nature of psychic trance the one thing he will have to be careful about is to meditate under such conditions that it will not be roughly broken from outside.

30th May, 1923

REMINISCENCES

XII

I BOW TO THE MOTHER

THOSE of you who came to the Ashram as children recognised the Mother and called her by that name practically from your birth, that is, from the moment you began to recognise things. We the grown-ups did not have that privilege. It has taken us a long long time to open our eyes and know. We have lost valuable time, almost wasted it. But, as you know, it is never too late to mend and it is possible to recover and even to make amends for lost time; there lies an interesting secret.

But as I was saying, you did not have to be told about the Mother, for you have almost been born and brought up in her lap. In our case somebody had to introduce us to the Mother, for we had been born and brought up in a step-motherly lap, although that too was one of her own forms, her form of Maya.

The first time I heard about the Mother was shortly after our arrival here. It was Sri Aurobondo himself who told us about a French lady from Paris who was a great initiate. She was desirous of establishing personal contact with Sri Aurobindo. That the Great Soul whom she meant was no other than Sri Aurobindo would be evidenced by a sign : she would be sending him something that he might recognise. That something was Sri Aurobindo's own symbol — in the form of a diagram, known as Solomon's Seal. Needless to add, after this proof of identity, steps were taken to facilitate her coming. Monsieur Paul Richard was at that time much interested in spiritual thought and practice and he could find an opportunity for coming here : he wanted to find out if he could get elected as one of the Representatives of French India in the French Parliament and he stood as a candidate for election. In those days, there used to be two elected representatives of French India, one in the Upper Chamber, the *Sénat*, the other in the Lower House, the *Chambre des Députés*. I have already spoken to you about this business of elections ; this was a real bloody affair with murders and mob-attacks that caused terror among the populace.

The first time he came here for canvassing, he was alone. The Mother accompanied him the next time. To all outward appearances they arrived here to canvass support for the election, although M. Richard did not in the end get very many votes. But this provided the occasion for the Mother to meet

Sri Aurobindo and gather a few trusted friends and devotees. In this connection the Mother had to pay a visit to Karikal once. This was her first direct experience of the actual India, that is, what it is in its crude outward aspect. She gave us an amusing description of the room where she was put up, an old delapidated room as dark as it was dirty and a paradise of white ants. Thus it was that the Divine Mother, One who is fairer than the fairest and lovelier than infinite beauty had to come down and enter the darkness and evil of this human life; for how else could these poor mortals have a chance ?

When it first came to be bruited about that a Great Lady like this was to come and live close to ourselves, we were faced with a problem : how should we behave ? should there be a change in our manners ? For we had been accustomed to a bohemian sort of life, we dressed and talked, slept and ate and moved about in a free unfettered style, in a manner that would not quite pass in civilised society. Nevertheless, it was finally agreed that we should stick as far as possible to our old ways even under the new circumstances, for why should we permit our freedom and ease to be compromised or lost ? This indeed is the way in which the arrogance and ignorance of man assert the glory of their individuality !

The Mother arrived. She would meet Sri Aurobindo in company with the rest at our afternoon sessions. She spoke very little. We were out most of the time, but also dropped in occasionally. When it was proposed to bring out the *Arya* she took charge of the necessary arrangements. She wrote out in her own hand the list of subscribers, maintained the accounts herself : perhaps those papers might be still available. And afterwards, it was she herself who helped M. Richard in his translation of the writings of Sri Aurobindo into French for the French edition of the *Arya*. The ground floor of Duplex House was used as the stack room and the office was on the ground floor of Guest House. The Mother was the chief executive in sole charge. Once every week all of us used to call at her residence accompanied by Sri Aurobindo and had our dinner together. On those occasions the Mother used to cook one or two dishes with her own hands. Afterwards too, when she came back for good, the same arrangement continued at the Bayoud House; I have told you of that before. About this time, she had also formed a small group with a few young men; this too I have mentioned earlier. A third line of her work, connected with business and trade, also began at nearly the same time. Just as today we have among us men of business who are devotees of the Mother and who act under her protection and guidance, similarly in that period also there appeared as if in seed-state this particular line of activity. Our Sauren founded the Aryan Stores, the object being to bring in some money : we were very hard up in those days — not that we are particularly affluent now, but still... The Mother kept up a correspondence with Sauren in connection with these business matters even after she left here for Japan.

At one stage, the Mother showed a special interest in cats. Not only has she been concerned with human beings, but the animal creation and the life of plants too have shared in her direct touch. The Veda speaks of the animal sacrifice, but the Mother has performed her consecration of animals in a very novel sense; she has helped them forward in their upward march with a touch of her Consciousness. She took a few cats as representatives of the animal world. She said, the king of the cats who ruled in the occult world—you might call him perhaps their Super-cat—had set up a sort of friendship with her. How this feline brood appeared first in our midst is somewhat interesting. One day all of a sudden a wild-looking cat made its appearance at the Guest House where we lived then; it just happened to come along and stayed on. It was wild enough when it came, but soon turned into a tame cat, very mild and polite. When it had its kittens, Sri Aurobindo gave to the first-born the name of Sundari, for she was very fair with a pure white fur. One of Sundari's kittens was styled Bushy, for it had a bushy tail, and its ancestress had now to be given the name of Grandmother. It was about this Bushy that the story runs: she used to pick up with her teeth all her kittens one by one and drop them at the Mother's feet as soon as they were old enough to use their eyes—as if she offered them to the Mother and craved her blessings. You can see now how much progress this cat had made in the path of Yoga. Two of these kittens of Bushy are well-known names and became great favourites with the Mother; one was Big Boy and the younger one was Kiki. It is said about one of them—I forget which, perhaps it was Kiki—that he used to join in the collective meditation and meditated like one of us; he perhaps had visions during meditation and his body would shake and tremble while the eyes remained closed. But in spite of this sadhana, he remained in his outward conduct like many of us rather crude in many respects. The two brothers, Big Boy and Kiki, could never see eye to eye and the two had always to be kept apart. Big Boy was a stalwart fellow and poor Kiki got the thrashings. Finally, both of them died of some disease and were buried in the courtyard. Their Grandmother disappeared one day as suddenly as she had come and nobody knew anything about her again.

The style in which these cats were treated was something extraordinary. The arrangements made for their food were quite a festive affair; it was for them alone that special cooking was done, with milk and fish and the appropriate dressings, as if they were children of some royal family,—all was according to schedule. They received an equally good training: they would never commit nuisance withindoors for they had been taught to use the conveniences provided for them. They were nothing like the gipsy-bedouin cats of our Ardhendu.

In the days before the Mother came, we used to have a pet dog. Its story was much the same. All of a sudden one day there appeared from nowhere

in our earliest residence a common street dog—it was a bitch; she too came and just stayed along. Sri Aurobindo gave her the name of Yogini. He used to tell a story about her intelligence. It was already nightfall and we did not know that she had not yet turned in. She came to the front door, pushed against it and did some barking, but we heard nothing as we were in the kitchen next to the back-yard. Suddenly she recalled there was a door at the back through which she might perhaps gain entrance or at least draw our attention. She now ran around three corners of the house and appeared at the back door. From there she could make herself heard and was admitted. She too bore some puppies and two of them became particular favourites with Sri Aurobindo. I cannot now recall how they were called.

dog

You all know about the deep oneness and sympathy the Mother has with plants, so I leave out that subject today. As with the world of animals and men, so with the beings of the supraphysical worlds—from the little elves and fairies to the high and mighty gods, all have had their contacts with the Mother, all have shared in her Grace as you may have heard, but the Grace could mean at times thrashings too !

Today I leave aside the Mother's role as our Guide on the path of sadhana or yogic discipline. Let me speak in a very general way of an aspect of her teaching that concerns the first principles of the art of living.

The core of this lies in elevating our life to a cleaner level, and the first and most important need is to put each thing in its place. The training that the Mother has throughout been giving us—I am not here referring to the side of spiritual practice but to the daily routine of our ordinary life—is precisely this business of putting our things in order. We do not always notice how very disorderly we are: our belongings and household effects are in a mess, our actions are haphazard, and in our inner life we are as disorderly as in our outer life, or even more. Indeed it is because we are so disordered within that there is such disorder in our outer life. Our thoughts come to us pell-mell and our brains are crowded with straying bits of random thought. We cannot sit down quietly for a few minutes and pursue a particular line of thought with any kind of steadiness or order. Our heads are full of noise like a market-place without any peace or restraint or harmony. If the mind is in such a state, the vital being is still worse. You cannot keep count of the strange desires and impulses that play about there. If the brain is a market-place, the heart is no better than a mad-house. Well, I shall not now enlarge further on the state of our inner being. One of the things the Mother has been trying to teach us both by her word and example is this, namely, that to keep our outer life and its materials in proper order and neat and tidy is a very necessary element in our life upon earth. I do not know to what extent we have yet been able to assimilate this teaching in our individual or collective living. How many of us have realised that beauty is at least half the sense of life and serves to double its value ?

And even if we do sometimes realise, how many are impelled to shape our lives accordingly ? The Mother taught us to use our things with care, but there was more to it than this. She uses things not merely with care but with love and affection. For, to her, material things are not simply inanimate objects, not mere lifeless implements. They are endowed with a life of their own, even a consciousness of their own, and each thing has its own individuality and character. The Mother says about material things what the ancients have said about the life of plants, that they have in them a consciousness that responds to pleasure and pain, *antaḥ-saṁjñāḥ bhavanti ete sukha-duḥkha-samarvitah*. We are all aware how carefully the Mother treasures old things and does not like them to be thrown away simply because they are old. The reason for this is not niggardliness or a conservative spirit; the reason is that old things are to her like old friends, living companions all.

Let me illustrate the point with something Sri Aurobindo once said. One of the inmates had written to him that as the gate of his house seemed to have got jammed and could not be opened, he had to make it open by giving it a strong kick. The door did open but it hurt the foot rather badly. So what he wanted now was some ointment along with Sri Aurobindo's blessings. Do you know the answer he had from Sri Aurobindo ? "If you kick at the door, the door will naturally kick back at you" !

As I told you in the beginning, the Mother did not appear to us, the older people, as the Mother at the outset; she came to us first in this garb of Beauty. We received her as a friend and companion, as one very close to ourselves, first, because Sri Aurobindo himself received her like that, and secondly because of her qualities. Now that we are on this subject of her qualities, although it is not necessary for a child to proclaim the virtues of his mother, I cannot here refrain from telling you about another point in her teaching. This concerns something deeper. The first time Sri Aurobindo happened to describe her qualities, he said he had never seen anywhere a self-surrender so absolute and unreserved. He had added a comment that perhaps it was only women who were capable of giving themselves so entirely and with such sovereign ease. This implies a complete obliteration of the past, erasing it with its virtues and faults. The Mother has referred to this in one of her Prayers and Meditations, When she came here, she gave herself up to the Lord, Sri Aurobindo, with the candid simplicity of a child, after erasing from herself all her past, all her spiritual attainments, all the riches of her consciousness. Like a new-born babe, she felt she possessed nothing, she was to learn everything right from the start, as if she had known or heard about nothing.

Now to come back to a personal experience. The first thing I heard and came to know about the Mother was that she was a great spiritual person. I did not know then that she might have other gifts; these were revealed to me gradually. First I came to know that she was a very fine painter; and afterwards

that she was an equally gifted musician. But there were other surprises in store. For instance, she had an intellectual side no less richly endowed, that is to say, she had read and studied enormously, had been engaged in intellectual pursuits even as the learned do. I was still more surprised to find that while in France she had already studied and translated a good number of Indian texts, like the Gita, the Upanishads, the Yoga-sutras, the Bhakti-sutras of Narada. I mention all this merely to tell you that the Mother's capacity of making her mind a complete blank was as extraordinary as her enormous mental acquisitions. This was something unique. In the early days, when she had just taken charge of our spiritual life, she told me one day in private, perhaps seeing that I might have a pride in being an intellectual, "At one time I used to take an interest in philosophy and other intellectual pursuits. All that is now gone below the surface, but I can bring it up again at will." So, I need not have any fears on that score ! It was as if the Mother was trying to apologise for her deficiencies in scholarship. This was how she taught me the meaning of humility, what we call Divine Humility.

As I was saying, this capacity for an entire rejection of the past has been one of the powers of her spiritual consciousness and realisation. It is not an easy thing for a human being to wash himself clean of all his past acquisitions, be it intellectual knowledge or the habits of the vital, not to speak of the body's needs, and step forth in his nude purity. And yet this is the first and most important step in the spiritual discipline. The Mother has given us a living example of this. That is why she decided to shed all her past, forget all about it and begin anew the a-b-c of her training and initiation with Sri Aurobindo. And it was in fact at the hands of Sri Aurobindo that she received as a token and outward symbol her first lessons in Bengali and Sanskrit, beginning with the alphabet.

But all this is simply an attempt on the part of the small to comprehend something of the Vast; it is as if a particle of sand was trying to reflect a little of the sun's rays, a dwarf trying to catch at the high tree-top with his uplifted arms, a child prattling of his mother's beauty.

In the beginning, Sri Aurobindo would refer to the Mother quite distinctly as Mira. For some time afterwards (this may have extended over a period of years) we could notice that he stopped at the sound of M and uttered the full name Mira as if after a slight hesitation. To us it looked rather queer at the time, but later we came to know the reason. Sri Aurobindo's lips were on the verge of saying "Mother"; but we had yet to get ready, so he ended with Mira instead of saying Mother. No one knows for certain on which particular date at what auspicious moment, the word "Mother" was uttered by the lips of Sri Aurobindo. But that was a divine moment in unrecorded time, a moment of destiny in the history of man and earth; for it was at this supreme moment that the Mother was established on this material earth, in the external consciousness of man.

Let me now end this story for today with a last word about myself.

I have said that so far the Mother had been to us a friend and companion, a comrade almost, at the most an object of reverence and respect. I was now about to start on my annual trip to Bengal—in those days I used to go there once every year, and that was perhaps my last trip. Before leaving, I felt a desire to see the Mother. The Mother had not yet come out of her seclusion and Sri Aurobindo had not yet retired behind the scenes. I said to him, “I would like to see Her before I go.”—Her with a capital H, in place of the Mother, for we had not yet started using that name. Sri Aurobindo informed the Mother. The room now used by Champaklal was the Mother’s room in those days. I entered and waited in the Prosperity room, for Sri Aurobindo used to meet people in the verandah in front. The Mother came in from her room and stood near the door. I approached her and said, “I am going,” and then lay prostrate at her feet. That was my first Pranam to the Mother. She said, “Come back soon.” This “come back soon” meant in the end, “come back for good.”

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji from the original Bengali)

MOTHER INDIA

ON February 21, the birthday of the Mother, *Mother India* also celebrates its own day of birth. Fourteen years ago it was born and took shape under the light of the world-vision that is Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's. An idealistic venture, it was conceived without any narrow concern of profit: it sought to make current the gold of that spiritual light at any material expense. And with the grace of the Mother and the Master it has lived on through all difficulties.

Although now it concentrates mostly on cultural and Yogic matters, an important part of its object for several years was to plunge into political problems with a spiritual insight. It strove to look at national and international situations from the height of Sri Aurobindo's thought. In the hubbub of political slogans it brought a standard of judgment that was non-political. In general this standard may be summed up by saying that in every field of activity the aim was to criticise whatever militated against humanity's instinct of an evolving divinity within itself and to give the utmost help to all that encouraged that instinct.

Without flinching, *Mother India* spoke forth on many political subjects in direct contradiction of official or popular ideas. Those were the days when Stalin overshadowed, almost overawed, the world—especially the Asian world. But *Mother India*, while never advocating stark individualism or boosting rank capitalism, never hesitated to expose the sham of the Stalinist sociology and its rigid negation of the two beliefs or intuitions that are the authentic stamp of *homo sapiens*: (1) the key-importance of the creative individual in the evolutionary process, (2) the presence of a secret Godhead who can inspire and enlighten the consciousness of the individual.

Mother India went all out in support of the American intervention in Korea, regarding as it did the attack of the communist North Koreans as instigated by Mao and Stalin and as the first step of communism towards conquest of all Asia, including our own country. *Mother India* went beyond even America's anti-communist inspiration. It was the only public voice raised in the whole world against Truman's half peevish half panicky dismissal of General MacArthur. In MacArthur we saw the one clear force that had its finger on the precise pulse of Korean events, knowing immediately how to act. With supreme military genius at its command, it could have made America's venture a complete success rather than the stalemate it became in spite of 80,000 American casualties. If the declaration had been allowed him that the air-fields and the electric installations beyond the Yalu River would be bombed—even atom-bombed if need be—there would have been a masterpiece of “brinkman-

ship" leading Red China to withdraw her flooding "volunteers": Red China had deliberately kept her intervention a matter of "volunteers" so that under threat she might pull out without official loss of face. MacArthur alone had the true instinct of the situation and his summary dismissal constituted a sign of unexpected weakness and was, as in effect the Mother said to the editor of *Mother India*, a step further on the path to bring the danger of World War III nearer.

Mother India also refused to accept any right of Red China's to invade Tibet: the historical suzerainty of China over Tibet could be considered only if at the same time the equally historical internal autonomy of Tibet were granted. Our uncompromising protest, argued out at great length, created a bit of stir in Indian parliamentary circles. Even more disturbing to current thought was the earlier protest, voiced in three slashing editorials, against recognition of Red China—a protest based on an all-round survey of the situation. These editorials were dove-tailed soon after to form a pamphlet—*The Folly of Recognising Red China*—which was sent to an important international conference at Colombo.

We also spotlighted the delusion that there could be real cultural bonds between India and any country wedded to totalitarianism, or that a China gone Red and furiously working for world-communism would have no aggressive intentions against India. In fact, we made it particularly clear that India was the main target of all Red-Chinese moves and manoeuvres in regard to neighbouring countries. Not that we were against the Chinese people any more than against the Russian. Traditional China is, together with India, an eternal nation, with a living continuity through the millenniums because of her inner touch on the Spirit that is the ground of things, although her touch has not the same manifold intensity and richness as India's contact with the Divine in her depths. This true China is India's closest friend and will come into her own, just as in another way the true Russia will and, however slowly, is already doing so. But, as long as the totalitarian communist ideology keeps a tyrannical hold on the outer mind and life, all talk of cultural relationship is not only idle but also pernicious.

According to *Mother India*, the real affinities to our culture in general were to be seen in the democratic countries of the West who have essentially been lovers of freedom, advocates of live-and-let-live and, in spite of defects, kept the path open for man's multiform evolution towards godhead instead of trying to cast him in one rigid titan-type. Especially in the direction of the U.S.A. did *Mother India* draw the eyes of our country—the U.S.A. with not only her immense powers and resources but also her generosity towards small nations and her youthful temper open to new adventures of the mind. This did not mean accepting wholesale the surface-glitters of the American way of life, or completely rejecting the policy of Non-alignment. Although Non-alignment

should not be converted into an obsessive fetish for all time and much less into a whitewashed resentment of old imperialisms which are now as good as defunct, it is no fault in itself as a pragmatic political stance in the dangerously divided international field today. But there must be no blindness to the masked imperialism of the communist countries nor to the fundamental values of the free West and always the heart and mind must glow in response to these values. Thus only would our judgments on world-issues take the right shape and our planning for the future be assured of a luminous safety.

But, of course, it is not merely a democratic development that *Mother India* has worked for. The enterprising individual in an ordered society has to develop in tune with the spiritual aspiration which from the Vedic Age has been the chief preoccupation of this land at the foot of the sky-climbing Himalayas. However, that spiritual aspiration, that leap towards the Infinite, should mean no withdrawal from earth, no neglect of life. Do not the sky-climbing Himalayas stand solid below and stretch far and wide across mile on mile of earth and pour from their heights the Indus, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, to feed and fertilise a life of myriad moods ?

Further, even as the Himalayas are mountains neither markedly unequal in their peaks nor sharply separate at their bases but a mighty mass rising as one whole to throw up a series of companion crests, so too the spiritual aspiration should integrate all the parts of the being and raise them together to a multiple equality of fulfilment. The mind, the vital force and the body should make an organised *ensemble* in which all would be caught up in a shining communion breathing the same high ether.

And, as with the individual, so with the group. The spiritual aspiration is not meant solely for a few scattered persons, though it may and must begin with them. It has to call forth a vast collective endeavour : the entire society should be lifted up—an elevation and a transformation of the whole of mankind ought to be the final result. A new race must evolve to render the Divine Light no fugitive visitor on earth but an established dynamism operative in all kinds of psychological moulds, in every cast of material action. The quest for an organised whole, a collective existence of the Spirit in humanity is indispensable. But in that existence the unity would never become uniformity, nor the concord a monotony, and always the movement would be towards the inner as the foundation of the outer.

To help erect on an inner foundation a superstructure not of sketchy materials, as the other-worldly spirituality of the past was wont to do, but of rich substance and solid shape, *Mother India* has striven to express in a multitude of literary forms the message of what Sri Aurobindo has called Supermind. Supermind is not only the one infinite Self of selves. It is also the Creative Consciousness of the Divine, holding the effective truth of all the forces at work in the universal manifestation—the single all-integrating and all-fulfilling

Mother-power to which the cosmos owes its life and its evolutionary *élan*. So the detailed working out, in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and its International Educational Centre, of the great psycho-physical experiment towards Supermind in a small yet growing nucleus providing all kinds of human material as a challenge to the transformative energy of the supramental consciousness, is the background against which *Mother India* functions in the field of culture. And it is there that it establishes contact with the Bharat Shakti, the presiding genius of the land, the secret Nation-Soul. For, in India the Nation-Soul is most directly present where spirituality is most intensely and diversely embodied. And at the centre of the Ashram is the radiant co-worker of Sri Aurobindo, the one whom we name the Mother and whose birthday stands ever as the promise of a renascent India accomplishing a divine destiny and helping all the nations of the world to be at the same time uniquely themselves and profoundly one.

K. D. SETHNA

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were : Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the Notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.

This is the twenty-fourth instalment in the new Series which, except on two occasions, has followed a chronological order and begun at the very beginning. The four earliest talks, after Sri Aurobindo's accident, appeared in Mother India 1952.)

JANUARY 19, 1939

It was again the day of Dr. Rao's visit. Whenever he came, we had some fun, as he never forgot to bring up his pet subject : the removal of Sri Aurobindo's splints. In the course of the talk he remarked, in connection with the knee-swelling, that all disease or illness is an inflammation.

After he had gone, Sri Aurobindo asked : "In what sense is all illness an inflammation ?"

N explained as well as he could. After this, P continued yesterday's topic : Aldous Huxley's ideas. He quoted from his book *Ends and Means*. Huxley suggests two ways of change. One is to change existing institutions of education, industry, etc., and thus bring about a change in the individual. For industries he suggests small industrial units federated in a central organisation, so as to do away with large-scale productions which are the root of all trouble. The other way is to change the individual and make him, as he puts it, a non-attached ideal man. P mentioned also a French author who advocated small industrial institutions.

SRI AUROBINDO : That was my idea too, which I proposed to M : namely, a spiritual commune. I did not call it a commune but a *saṅgha*, based on spirituality and living its own economic life. It would develop its small-scale industries, agriculture, etc., and have an interchange of products with other communes.

N : Did you give X the idea also of the paper he is bringing out ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't remember. I asked him to start handlooms and weaving.

N : But now he is producing khaddar.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is because of Gandhism, and he took it up after he had been cut off from us. We used to call our cloth Swadeshi; now they call it Khaddar.

S : Was the commune something like the Dayalbag Centre ? But there they don't seem to have much spirituality.

SRI AUROBINDO : That may be due to their large-scale productivity. I have heard also that A. Thakur has started to work out the same idea.

N : Doesn't he belong to the Dayalbag Centre ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh no. He may be of what they call the Radhaswami school.

S : But to start that sort of commune, one must have some spiritual realisation first, and hence it will take a long time.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not necessarily. Obviously if one has to wait for spiritual realisation, especially the highest or supramental realisation, it will take time. Spiritual experience is enough for the purpose and that is not difficult to have. I told M, "Spirituality must be the basis; otherwise your success will be your failure."

There were religious communes of this sort before. The Dukhobor commune in Russia was very powerful and very well-organised and very strong in its faith. Its members held together in spite of all persecution. At last they had to migrate to Canada. One of their tenets was nudism, which the Canadian Government didn't like and so they got into trouble with it.

Then there were the Mormons, who became famous in the United States. The name of their founder was Joseph Smith—a prosaic name for a prophet ! But Brigham Young was a most remarkable man, who really made this commune. Curiously enough, one of their tenets was again unacceptable : it was polygamy. Their religion was based on the Old Testament. But when they were made to give up polygamy, they became quite like ordinary men. They lost their special characteristics. Mark Twain said that when the chief was interrogated, he used to reply that he knew his children by numbers and not by their names !

There was yet another commune in America which didn't allow any marriage.

S : Do you know of any such commune in India ?

SRI AUROBINDO : India ? The Sikhs are the only community here organised on a religious basis.

Thakur D established or tried to establish an order of married Sannyasins. I don't know if sexual union was advocated too.

N : I have heard that A. Thakur also adopted it for his disciples.

SRI AUROBINDO : Disciples are another matter.

S : I think it was for his Sannyasins as well, if I remember rightly.

SRI AUROBINDO : There is the same principle among the Vaishnavas too : they accept a Vaishnavi.

S : All sorts of attempts seem to have been made and one is driven to despair like the man who looking at Edward VII's bald head said, "I give it up ! I give it up !" (*Laughter*) No hope now except your Supermind. Have you any idea how the Supermind will proceed ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No idea. If one has an idea the result will be what has been in the past. We must leave the Supermind to work everything out.

S : But that sort of work has to be based on love; one must have love for everyone.

SRI AUROBINDO : Love is not enough. What is more important is the unity of consciousness.

S : The trouble is that as soon as one begins something one tends to become egocentric : quarrels start, like the "aggravations" in homoeopathy.

SRI AUROBINDO : And love also leads to quarrels. Nobody quarrels more than lovers do ! (*Then looking at P*) You know the Latin proverb that each quarrel is a renewal of love ? (*Laughter*) Love is a fine flower, but unity of consciousness is the root.

People become egocentric because, when they receive something, they gather it into their vital being and turn it into the lower nature. They think the power is their own.

When we were only a few people and the Ashram had not grown much, A and B tried to convert all sorts of people to spirituality. They were great propagandists. C and D were quiet. B caught anyone he could and made him do yoga and didn't consider such a thing as *adhikār*. He once caught hold of a young sheepish Tamilian. After a few months of contact with us, we found that he was no longer a sheep. He became a lion—quarrelsome, violent—a great transformation had taken place in him ! (*Laughter*) It was A who got hold of a politician here and made him what he is now. One thing, at any rate, he did was to make him get rid of all scruples about right and wrong, good and evil ! This politician once said to Dr. LM, "It is impossible for me to fail. I am Sri Aurobindo's disciple." All say that he has power and that he is the one man who can do something if he wants to. It was from the Mother he got his power. He considers himself a God-man—to use an American phrase.

Even people staying here for some time get that egocentric outlook. Mrs. R writes : "What has Nakas come to ? He is writing to us, 'Do this, do that' and keeps finding fault with us in our work." Of course, they were quarrelling in Japan too.

P : We had a hard tussle with Gandhi's followers over the question of

morality, etc. They think that going beyond the dualities of the world is immoral. All that does not correspond to their moral code is immoral.

S : That is the usual ethical standpoint.

SRI AUROBINDO : Of course all can't go beyond the dualities. The ethical standpoint is true in its own field. It follows a mental rule and, so long as one cannot come into contact with the dynamic divine source of action in oneself, one has to be guided by a mental law of conduct. Otherwise one may take up the attitude, "There is no virtue, no sin. So let us indulge ourselves merrily !" What Krishna says in the Gita—"Abandon all dharmas"—is at the end of the Gita, not the beginning. And he does not say this only : he also says, "Take refuge in me." The stage at which the ethicists are is the sattwic. Most people have to pass through it. Only a very few can start without the dualities from the beginning.

S : Does the psychic being always want transformation ? It is Doraiswamy's question. He says, "Yes, because the psychic being is in the evolution, while the spirit can merge in Laya."

SRI AUROBINDO : The psychic being wants transformation if it is a developed one or when it is in front. But it can also take any spiritual turn and not necessarily that towards transformation.

N : What sort of transformation ? Transformation of the psychic being itself or of the lower nature in general ?

S : Of the psychic being itself.

SRI AUROBINDO : Many yogis have had that. All saints had the psychic transformation : they have the pure bhakta nature. But many spiritual men may not have such transformation. All spiritual men are not saints. Of course one can be both spiritual and saintly.

N : You make a distinction between saints and spiritual men ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Certainly. Saints are limited by their psychic realisation. The spiritual men remain above in the higher spiritual consciousness. The saints are Bhaktas.

S : It is not very clear to me, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, the psychic being means the Purusha in the heart, not in the spirit. I never feel like a saint myself, though Maurice Magre calls me a saint and a philosopher. Krishna was not called a saint, and spiritual men may not behave like saints—say, for example, Durvasha. He may have many other things in him.

S : Saints are, I suppose, nearer to earth and are at the top of the human ladder. In our yoga it seems one has to face a Kurukshetra, I mean an inner Kurukshetra, and everyone has to be a fighter like Arjuna.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not necessarily. It depends on the nature of the being. For instance, some people in their vital beings or during dreams fight with the attacking forces, while others call for protection. Those who have the psychic

attitude need not fight. It is the vital and mental types that make the fighter : the mental type of course fights against ideas.

N : Some people regard quarrelling with the Divine for the fulfilment of their aspiration as a psychic way.

SRI AUROBINDO : In that case all people here are psychic !

P : I remember D writing to you a long letter in which he refers to Ram-prasad's song claiming that the Divine should satisfy his demands because he has sacrificed everything for the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO : Claim !—claim by what right ? His argument seemed to be : "You must give me the thing because I badly want it."

N : What did you reply to him ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It was not addressed to me. It was addressed to Krishna.

N : I see. Then I will ask him to write to you now.

SRI AUROBINDO : No, no, don't do that. In that case I shall have to be as hard as Krishna.

N : They say Shiva is a very kind and generous god and very easily gives boons. Is it true ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't know. Very inconveniently he gives boons to the demons also and then has somehow to wriggle out. He is a god who doesn't seem to care for consequences; Vishnu has to come afterwards to save the situation.

S : Krishna is hard to please, they say.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes.

P : Talking of Krishna reminds me of X. They say he has turned a Buddhist now.

SRI AUROBINDO : Good Lord !

P : He had such a fervour and devotion for Krishna.

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't understand why he should have become a Buddhist. Living with one's realisations as in a fortress, one can gather and add whatever knowledge one wants to one's original line of sadhana. It is not at all necessary to give up Bhakti for Knowledge. After all that ground gained, one can add more and more.

The European mind is much taken up with Buddhism. Magre was first a Buddhist. Blavatsky was much influenced by it. Next, when the Europeans understood Shankara they considered that there was nothing more in India than Shankara's Vedanta.

JANUARY 20, 1939

N : D says, about the subject of X's becoming a Buddhist from a Vaishnava, that it is not like that. Krishna Prem does not want to belong to any group or sect.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is understandable.

N : Nothing seems to be given out in the papers about the interview between Chamberlain and Mussolini. Both parties say they are satisfied with the results.

SRI AUROBINDO : I can't understand the present English policy. I don't know what England is after. France is being led by England—she is stuck to her like a tail. They say Mussolini is waiting for Franco's victory in Spain and then he will present his terms to France. Franco's victory will be dangerous for France. But it is very difficult to see how England profits by this. For, as soon as Italy and Germany have crushed France, the next victim will be England. England knows very well Mussolini's ambition to create an Italian Empire, and that means he will try to regain all that once belonged to Italy. She is deliberately raising Hitler and Mussolini against France and letting her down. I don't know why, unless the three are going to share the empire of France and then England may try to set Hitler and Mussolini against each other. That will be in line with her traditional self-centred policy of balance of power. But it is a very risky game.

N : But is it possible ? Can England remain aloof when France breaks out against the others ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Why not ? Chamberlain has said that so long as England's interests are not involved she is not obliged to fight. She will say that Italy's demands have not been satisfied and so she has gone to war and Germany has joined her : there was no aggression on Italy's part. Hence England is not obliged to come to the aid of France. Any number of excuses can be given. Daladier told Suryakumari's friend who is also a friend of Daladier's that he had to betray Czechoslovakia because Chamberlain told him he would support him so long as it was diplomatically possible but in case of war France should not count on England. This piece of information must be authentic, coming as it does from Daladier's own friend.

P : I wonder why Flandin wants to support Franco when Blum is against him. You know, Flandin even telegraphed to Mussolini his congratulations, etc. Hitler counts on him as a friend. Does Flandin want to join the Rome-Berlin Axis and thus keep England out ?

SRI AUROBINDO : How is that possible unless France satisfies Italy's demands ? After the Spanish question is settled, Italy is almost sure of claiming Tunis, Nice, Jibouti. Is Flandin prepared to give them ? Italy wants her empire in Africa. So Tunis and Jibouti are essential points for her and also she wants to be master in the Mediterranean.

Blum is a useless fellow. It was he who as a Premier applied non-intervention in Spain.

No, no, it is sheer imbecility to expect that sort of thing.

At present it seems that two people are brandishing their arms against

everybody and the rest are somehow trying to save themselves. The one man who has seen through the whole thing is Roosevelt, but he is too far off and he is not sure of the support of the American people.

N : What about Russia ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Russia is unreliable. One doesn't know its military strength. At one time she was supposed to have the biggest air-force. But according to Lindbergh, it doesn't appear to be so.

The inner state of Germany also is not known. They are trying to conceal everything as far as possible.

P : Jawaharlal says that Hitler and his generals didn't expect non-resistance from Austria. They were all very much surprised.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, the generals were opposed to Hitler's plan, for they were not prepared to fight. Now Hitler will say, "Have you seen that I am right ? Things have happened just as I told you."

P : Jawaharlal also said that their threatened attack against Czechoslovakia was mainly bluff. All tanks and machine-guns were only a show.

SRI AUROBINDO : This can't be reliable news. The Germans are too disciplined for such a thing.

P : There is some trouble in Holland. Germany is threatening Holland with cutting off the trade, etc., and establishing a trade-route through Antwerp instead of Amsterdam.

SRI AUROBINDO : If that takes place, it will make Chamberlain fight in spite of himself and not talk of peace. England doesn't want any German Navy in the North Sea. But Germany won't put it there unless she wants war with England.

Then P spoke of Russia's Canal Scheme to connect herself with Asia and also with the Arctic Sea. After that came a mention of some American lady visiting the Ashram in the company of Miss Margaret Wilson and finally some talk in a lighter vein.

C : Haradhan, when he used to work with the Mother, was asked by somebody : "Who are the advanced sadhaks here ?" He replied : "I don't know." Then after he had been repeatedly pressed, he said : "I will tell you but you must not tell anybody else. There are only two advanced sadhaks here—you and I." (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO : This instance of two reminds me of a joke about Hugo. Balzac is supposed to have told a friend, "There are only two men who know how to write French—myself and Hugo." When this was repeated to Hugo, he said : "But why Balzac ?"

There is also the story of a Calvinist lady. The Calvinists have the doctrine that people are predestined to go to either Heaven or Hell. She was asked whether she knew where the congregation to which she belonged would go:

She said : "All will go to Hell, except myself and the Minister—and I have doubts even about the Minister."

JANUARY 21, 1939

Again Dr. Rao's visit day. As usual he began the massage and asked Sri Aurobindo about the pain in his knee-joint.

SRI AUROBINDO : The pain is still there.

Dr. R : That is because you are moving the leg after a long time. It will disappear when you are accustomed to it.

SRI AUROBINDO : Accustomed to the pain ? (*Laughter*)

Dr. Rao could not catch the joke and was a little embarrassed by our hearty laughter. After the massage was over the Mother came in and we sat down to meditation for about ten minutes. After a while Dr. Rao asked S if he could stay longer. S told him he could ask the Mother. Then S himself conveyed the question to her. She smiled. Then, as it was about 7 p.m. and she got up to go for the General Meditation, she said to Rao : "Are you coming ? I am going to the Meditation." Rao jumped up and followed the Mother.

The talk turned to local politics and afterwards Indian politics and Gandhi and Non-violence and Hitlerism.

SRI AUROBINDO : If Gandhi met Hitler, Hitler would probably say to him : "You follow your inner voice, Mr. Gandhi, and I my own." And there is no reason to say he would be wrong, for inner voices may differ and one kind of voice may be good and necessary for one person while the very opposite may be the same for another. The Cosmic Spirit may have a certain thing for Hitler and lead him in the way he is going, whereas it may decide differently in another case.

N : That may end in a clash between the two and the breaking of the vessels.

S : What of that ? Something good may come out of it.

P : I am afraid this would lead to fatalism or belief in destiny.

SRI AUROBINDO : It may. There have been people who have believed in fate, destiny or whatever else you may call it. Napoleon III used to say : "So long as something is necessary to be done by me, it will be done in any case and when that necessity ceases I shall be thrown by the wayside like an out-worn vessel." And that is exactly what happened to him. Napoleon I also believed in fate.

S : Yes. When somebody questioned him why, if he believed in fate, he went on planning, he replied : "It is fated that I should plan."

SRI AUROBINDO : All men who are great and strong and powerful believe in some higher force greater than themselves moving them. Socrates used to call this force his Daemon. Daemon means divine being. It is curious how sometimes even in small things one depends on the voice. Once Socrates was walking with a disciple. When they were about to take a turn, the disciple said : "Let us go along this route." Socrates replied : "No, my Daemon asks me to take that other." The disciple didn't agree and pursued his own way. After he had gone a little distance he was attacked by a herd of pigs and trodden down by them.

There are some people who don't follow the inner voice but the inner light. The Quakers believe in that.

N : Do they see the light ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't know; but someone has said : "See that your light is not darkness."

The strange thing is that this inner voice doesn't give any reason; it only says, "Do this" or "Do that" and "If you don't do it, bad results will follow." Strangely enough, when you don't listen to it, bad results do follow. Lele used to say that whenever he didn't listen to his inner voice he met with pain and suffering.

P : But there are many kinds of voices owing to the forces on different planes and it is extremely difficult to distinguish which is right, the true inner voice. There may be voices from mental, vital and subtle-physical planes. Moreover, in the same man the voices may differ.

SRI AUROBINDO : Quite true. A friend of Hitler's said about him that what Hitler said today he contradicted the next day. I also heard a voice asking me to come to Pondicherry. But it was not an inner voice : it came from above.

S : Cannot one be mistaken in obeying these voices ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It was impossible to make a mistake or to think of disobeying that voice which came to me. There are some voices about which there is no possibility of any doubt or mistake. X wanted me to go to France so that he might have no further trouble, I suppose. When I arrived at Chandernagore, he refused to receive me and threw me on to M.

N : But why should he receive you ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Because as a revolutionary he was obliged to do so.

N : Was he a revolutionary also ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Good Lord, we were together in jail. But perhaps his jail experience frightened him. He was at the beginning a very ardent revolutionary.

P : Nolini says he was weeping and weeping in jail. The jail authorities thought that he couldn't be a revolutionary when he wept so much; and so they let him off. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO : No, that was not the reason. It was by the intervention

of the French Government, I think, that he got his release. At the beginning he was not only himself an ardent revolutionary but also egging others on to revolution. Barin once walked into his house, gave him a long lecture on revolution and converted him in one day !...

P : Yes, Barin had intensity and fire at that time. Once I saw him at Baroda with my brother. They were discussing revolutionary plans. I saw that fire in his eyes. I have heard that Nivedita also was some sort of revolutionary.

SRI AUROBINDO : What do you mean by "some sort" ? She was one of the revolutionary leaders. She went about visiting various places to come into contact with the people. She was open, frank and talked freely of her revolutionary plans to everybody. There was no concealment about her. Whenever she used to speak on revolution, it was her very soul, her true personality, that came out. Her whole mind and life expressed itself thus. Yoga was yoga but revolutionary work it was that seemed intended for her. That is fire ! Her book, *Kali, the Mother*, is very inspiring but revolutionary and not not at all non-violent.

She went about among the Thakurs of Rajputana, trying to preach to them revolution. At that time everybody wanted some kind of revolution. I myself met several Rajput Thakurs who, unsuspected by the Government, had revolutionary ideas and tendencies. One Thakur, Ram Singh, who joined our movement, was afterwards caught and put in jail. He suddenly died there in a short time. Moropant said, "He died out of fright." But he was not a man to be frightened. They may have poisoned him. Moropant, you know, turned afterwards a Moderate. More than one Indian batallion were ready to help us. I knew a Punjabi sentry at Alipore who spoke to me about the revolution. (*Turning to P*) Do you know one Mandale ?

P : With spectacles ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes.

P : I knew him. He became a quiet man later and settled down in life.

SRI AUROBINDO : It was he who introduced me through someone else to the Secret Society where I came into contact with Tilak and others.

N : Gandhi once criticised Nivedita as being volatile and mercurial. *The Modern Review* violently protested and he had to recant.

SRI AUROBINDO : Nivedita volatile ? What nonsense ! She was a solid worker.

Once she came to the Gaekwar and told him to join the revolution and said : "If you have anything more to ask, you can ask Mr. Ghose." But the Gaekwar never talked politics with me. By the way, he said about me, between my Swadeshi and early Pondicherry periods : "Mr. Ghose is an extinct volcano now. He has become a yogi."

One thing only about Nivedita I couldn't understand. She had an admira-

tion for Gokhale. I don't understand how a revolutionary could admire him. He was like tepid water. On one occasion she was much exercised over a threat to his life. She came to me and said: "Mr. Ghose, is it one of your men who is doing this?" I said: "No." She was much relieved and said: "Then it must be a free lance."

The first time she came to me she said, "I hear, Mr. Ghose, you are a worshipper of Shakti, Force." There was no non-violence about her. She had an artistic side too. Kashi Rao Jadhav and I went to receive her at the station. Seeing the Dharamsala near the station she exclaimed, "How beautiful!" While looking at the College building she cried, "How horrible!" Kashi Rao said later, "She must be a little mad."

P: That College building is an imitation of Eton.

SRI AUROBINDO: But Eton has no dome.

P: It is a combination of modern with ancient architecture.

SRI AUROBINDO: At any rate it is the ugliest dome possible.

The Ramakrishna Mission was a little afraid of Nivedita's political activities and asked her to keep them separate from its work.

P: What about her yogic achievements?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know. Whenever we met we spoke about politics and revolution. But her eyes showed a power of concentration and revealed a capacity for going into a trance.

N: She came to India with the idea of doing yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but she took up politics as a part of Vivekananda's work. Her book is one of the best on Vivekananda. Vivekananda himself had ideas about political work and had spells of revolutionary fervour. Once he had a vision which corresponded to something like the Maniktola Gardens.

It is curious how many Sannyasins have thought of India's freedom. Maharshi's young disciples were revolutionaries; our Yogananda's Guru also had revolutionary ideas; Thakur Dayanand was a revolutionary, I think, and the Sannyasin who spoke about the Uttara Yogi, the Yogi from the North, was another.

P: Brahmananda of Chandot spoke of driving away the British.

SRI AUROBINDO: Is that so? I didn't know it.

P: It is said that Nivedita wept bitterly because she found that everything the revolutionaries had done to awake the people had quieted down after the arrest of Tilak.

NOTE

Nirodbaran acknowledges the help of A. B. Purani in a few phrases.

SUCH WAS SRI AUROBINDO AND SUCH THE MAHARAJA

THIS event took place during the reign of the late Maharaja Sayajirava of Baroda. He was not only a progressive king but also a man of wisdom. He had a keen appreciation of the learned. He enriched himself with knowledge by giving them patronage. And yet he never assumed the air of being a scholar.

During his time the great Indian Yogi Sri Aurobindo was the Vice-Principal of the Baroda College. He was also the private secretary of Sayajirava. It was Sri Aurobindo or else Doctor S. Sirdesai who used to draft the king's speeches for the important social or state functions.

Once, when Sayajirava was at Lonavala, a hill-station near Bombay, Sri Aurobindo and Sirdesai received an urgent call from him.

The king had been invited to perform the opening ceremony at Bombay for a new institution. A speech had to be prepared. Sri Aurobindo was entrusted with the work of making a draft. In the evening all the three—Sayajirava, Sri Aurobindo and Sirdesai—sat together to discuss the draft. What could there be to correct when Sri Aurobindo had written ? The whole speech was full of scholarly brilliance. But just see how humble was his Highness of Baroda. He listened to the whole draft with deep attention and interest. Then to Sri Aurobindo he spoke in a low tone : “Aurobindo Babu, the speech is indeed very beautifully written. But it is written in a style so sublime and scholarly that my subjects will never believe that I have written it. Could you not make it a little simpler and less learned ?”

Sri Aurobindo quickly answered : “I cannot do it.” Pointing to Sirdesai seated nearby, he added, “He will do it for you.”

After a minute's silence Sri Aurobindo spoke again : “Do you really believe that by simplifying a little the language of the address you can make people think it is written by you ? Whether the speeches are good or bad, people do know that Indian kings' speeches are always written by others for them. Only for the ideas expressed do they praise you. And you have to be satisfied with that only. This draft of the speech is all right as it is.”

After this reply of Sri Aurobindo's, the Maharaja read out the speech as it was at the inauguration ceremony. Its ideas were fully applauded.

Such was Sri Aurobindo and such the respect in which he was held by even Sayajirava.

TRAMBAKLAL M SUKAL

*(Translated by Nagin Doshi from the Gujarati Annual NAVABHARAT,
Volume VI, 1962, Savanta 2018.)*

SPIRITUAL CAUSERIE

I

THE spiritual and the occult were never separate from each other in the hey-day of spiritual efflorescence in India. It is common to see many a spiritual personality of the Vedic times exercising his occult powers for the benefit of himself and of his fellow men. The hymns are full of hints on the ways in which these powers—spiritual and occult—were evoked and built up in themselves by those seers. For that is what is meant by the birth of the godheads in man. Each god-head represents a cosmic power with its own domain and the practitant who wins its favour receives and organises it in his own being and can share in it. Not only in the Veda but even later in the Epics, we come across instances of spiritual giants like Vashishtha and Vishwamitra summoning their uncommon powers to meet unusual situations and bringing about what we call “miracles.” They may be miracles for us, but they were not for those who worked them. For they were simply exercising their superior knowledge of the organisation of forces and things in the universe to achieve the desired results.

To the men of those days all creation was of one piece, a manifestation of One Reality. The world within and the world without were one. So, too, knowledge of the domains and powers of the soul within—the Spirit—was not different from or opposed to the knowledge of the system of the world or the worlds outside, the occult knowledge—occult because it was not patent to the common eye. Both were two sides of the same coin. The spiritual and the occult were mutually complementary and fulfilled each other. It was only in the later days of the decline of the spiritual vitality of the race that a separation between the two came and they took independent lines. Occult knowledge, occult practice began to be frowned upon in the spiritual paths and spiritual truths treated as irrelevant by the occultists.

A typical instance of this unrealistic divorce between the two spheres is the prohibition of the use of occult powers by spiritual seekers. Almost all the treatises on orthodox Yoga and spiritual practice make it imperative on the sadhaka to take no interest in—much less use—the occult powers that may manifest themselves in the course of the Yoga. This has continued for ages and has acquired the weight of an absolute Law in most traditions.

It is only Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who have questioned the correctness of this taboo. Sri Aurobindo brought a robust commonsense to bear upon this question and boldly said that it is an ascetic superstition to hold that a

spiritual man shall not use occult powers. And what are these powers after all ? They are faculties lying latent in the system or powers appropriate to different states of consciousness that open up in the course of development of the consciousness in the spiritual culture of the being. They strike as "miraculous" simply because they operate in a way which is different from the modes of operation in the present organisation of consciousness in this material world. That is why they look un-natural. But they *are* natural to the consciousness that emanates and puts them out in action. Who shall persuade this consciousness that it is acting in a prohibited manner ?

It is unreasonable to say that these powers shall not be used because they are a mighty temptation and might retard the progress of the practitioner by confining his interest to their fireworks. That is entirely a different matter. It does not require occult powers to hold up the progress of the seeker; there are plenty of other things that could play the same role. Again, to say that these powers could be used to harm others is an equally insufficient reason. Do we refrain from developing and using the powers of the intellect or of the muscle for fear that others may be harmed by these ? Do we prohibit the scientist from utilising the powers he discovers or perfects in his laboratory ? Possibility of the diversion of purpose or the danger of misuse could hardly be an adequate reason for shutting out the exercise of faculties and powers that manifest themselves in the natural course of the growth and expansion of one's consciousness.

What really matters is the motive with which the powers are used. If they are harnessed to the satisfaction or the aggrandisement of the ego, then it can be said to be unspiritual as the ego is the enemy of all spiritual progress. Like any other faculty or power, physical, intellectual or aesthetic, the occult also can be developed and used either for one's own well-being and progress or for that of others; what is to be guarded against here—as elsewhere—is the growth of unspiritual elements of which the ego is the most harmful.

D.B. is a young man in his teens who is gifted by Providence with certain occult capacities. He has a healing touch and people of all ages flock to him on fixed days to be cured of their long-standing ailments. He does a few passes and they are healed. Now this youngster thought, at one time, of taking to Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and asked the Mother if the healing that he had been doing so long ought to be stopped. I was very eager to know what the Mother would say. Without a moment's hesitation She said that it need not be stopped at all provided he took care to see that no egoistic claim crept into him for effecting the cures. He should be conscious that it was a universal Shakti, a Divine Power, that was acting through him. How far he acted up to this advice is another matter and it need not concern us here. What is important to note and do is to deny the loud claim of the ego to be the master. Of course, it is difficult to do it. Even when one thinks that the ego is not active, there are a hundred subtle ways in which it thrives. It is only an utter sincerity that is the sure shield against

* the manoeuvrings of the ego. If one is truly sincere to the call of the Soul one can very well know whether he has the capacity to withstand the ego under certain conditions or had better avoid the whole situation, as was wisely done by a seeker of whom we shall presently speak.

X took to the *Sri Chakra puja*—worship of the Divine Mother in the linear Form—in a most unorthodox way. Moved by some faith he drew a *Sri Chakra* design on a piece of metal he happened to have and commenced offering worship to it according to the instructions contained in a book. He received no initiation from anybody. He put his heart and soul into it and to the wonder of all—not excluding himself—the *Tirtha*, i.e., *prasad*, distributed according to the usual custom, wielded a potency which could not be missed. People started crowding at the end of his Puja every day. All this happened in the course of a few months. It went on for about two years when X felt unequal to the situation. He felt the danger of the ego coming upon him and, not willing to risk his sadhana, he ceased the distribution of *Tirtha* forthwith. Of course, he has continued his Puja and Upasana and we learn he is now well advanced in his line.

Thus it is really a matter of sincerity, capacity and strength of purpose which should decide the question of the use of occult powers by the seeker. A developed spiritual consciousness is indispensable for the right and safe use of these powers and we may say the awakening and utilisation of the occult powers is necessary for the establishment and organisation of the manifesting Spiritual Consciousness. Indeed one can do without the use of these powers if it is a matter of individual realisation alone. But where it is a question of manifesting the Divine Consciousness in the collective Universe the knowledge of its inner workings and effective direction of the occult powers is indispensable.

PRABUDDHA

TWO POEMS

THE CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN

PACIFIC silences are his
And forests rooted in the dawn
Are playground for his naked heart.

In all the gathered mystery of growth
His presence is a might of understanding
Yet unstirred by speech
Which sullies where it clangs.

No need touches his brain
To loose the tongue of passion
Or the boast of pride.

A phantom gradual moving
Flows uncalled to out of night
Nourished by sweet harmonic tyranny of love.

CODA

Generous rebuke which fosters light
Here stands
To garner withering patience
In the budding mind.

For every cell
Companionate and stern
A law relinquished
Waits in tidy state.

There is no need for
Penitential haste
To spring false craft
Into her idle trap.

The dignity of perfect
Joy has bent
And all awareness raises high
The long-forgotten child.

MARILYN

SOMA

MIND aside,
Carve, cut the candles...
Drip wax up to form
Flame landscapes.
Inside-out the flowers bend,
Making music over mind :
Deep star sounds unblemished
Circumfuse the fathomed, yellow roses,
Thrusting me centripetally
Shut in—
Beseeching—
Until
Tossed from the white weeds
The new chalice—offered
And thrown back glittering
Into luminous space.

ANURAKTA (TONY SCOTT)

TO NOLINI SEN : AFTER HIS PASSING

O MAN of wide attainments, noble, pure,
Thy every movement bore high culture's mark;
Accepting not the voices of the dark
Thy soul embraced the truths that ever endure.

To Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's Feet
Thou cam'st at last and brought'st thy dearest ones
Away from life and its unceasing drones
That they might grow in God's sun-gold retreat.

Thou hast passed beyond our mortal ken, O friend !
Sojourn awhile in the chamber of soul-sleep
To gather thy actions' thread so thou mayst reap
Sun-gifts of glory; ashes are not the end.

Nolini !¹ thou shalt bloom again on earth
When God shall smite His world with His vast sun-mirth.

PRITHWISINGH

¹ The Bengali word means lotus.

POSSESSED BY HER WINDOW

POSSESSED by the window of my Love, I roam
Corner to corner, wall to wall; no home
Of solace mine, without Her breath; a whole
World-busyness that moves to an earth-bound goal.
Men's laughter and mockery before me roll,
Leaving untouched the silence of my soul.

A haunting Hush, a pull from Her far height,
A call, a possession in its own Love's right,
Carry me on their wings of Instancy.
Self-squandered, lost to all world-care or glee,
My heart, in calm soul-ethers' vagrancy,
Has in this hard world but one living plea.

The joy of Love, the joy of giving free,
The viewless call are the only things in me
That ever my life, Her wassailer, onward drove.
They make me, tireless, corner to corner move,
From wall to wall without heart-solace rove;
For I'm possessed by the window of My Love.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THOUGHTS

Is not the soul in itself inherently and infinitely rich with the riches of the remembrance of God !

Then how can an awakened soul envy a person in possession of worldly wealth, infinite though it be !

Man, if you find even a trace of envy in you, know that the soul in you is yet not fully awakened.

*
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My experience of Peace is : It is a fire also.

It burns. But not one and all, not anything and everything at random.

It burns selectively. It burns impurities mercilessly, ruthlessly.

*
**

I live on the grain of God's Grace. I enjoy all things. But on condition that these things must have come from Him.

GIRDHARLAL

(Translated from the author's Gujarati book "Uparāma")

"SHE IS MY MOTHER"

(An American Visitor's Experience)

IN 1962, Sammie Spanier, an American youth, had an interview with the Mother for about forty minutes. He went to the Mother with a number of questions. But in her presence he forgot all about them.

The Mother asked him if, like other people, he would meditate with her. At this he set about sitting in a traditional posture of meditation. But the Mother said that the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo requires no rigid pose and asked him to sit relaxed and comfortable.

After the meditation was over, the Mother asked him if he had any liking for painting. The young man replied : "Certainly I have. But why ?" The Mother gave him a smile and said : "I saw during our meditation a number of heads around your face." Lo, the miracle had already begun. He asked himself how the Mother could come to know the fact of his being an artist. He could not immediately believe his eyes and ears.

On his expressing a wish to work for the Mother in America she said that she would like him to be a link between East and West. The Mother's words went home to his soul. At the end of the interview he grasped the Mother's hands and said, "I pray, tell me that you are *my* Mother." "If I were not your Mother you could not have grasped my hands, my child," said the Mother. Now the aspirant finds that there is no vestige of doubt that she *is* his Mother.

Feeling fully assured and visibly moved he took leave of the Mother and came down the stairs repeating to himself, "She is my Mother."

The interview was a turning-point in his life. Now he is working in New York with his kindred spirits. His object is to organise, in the solitude of a mountain retreat not far from New York City, a centre where all activities will be patterned on those of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and where the atmosphere will be like the Ashram's and the seekers of Truth will forget all differences between East and West.

NARAYAN PRASAD

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

CRY THE COSMOS

NAME the ancient elements, one by one. *Earth*. The stolid rock of the Santa Susana Mountains. *Water*. A sudden river, a flood, sluices a test pit carved in these rocks. *Air*. Above the upright rocket-test stand, wisps of cold liquid oxygen steam. Kerosene pulses. A switch is struck and...*Fire*...Thunder strikes the Californian sky. Blazing winds seize people, myself included, and thrust us spread-eagled on tin sidings where we name the old elements of earth, water, air, fire again.

For here, in 1962, ancient mythologies are being reborn as mankind prepares to fuse the rockets that will celebrate his Independence of Earth and set him free upon the Moon.

But above the concussions these questions are heard: why Space? why rockets? why treasuries of million-dollar bills blown to the fire-winds just to touch the same Moon poets once gave us free?

Sputnik, Gagarin, Titov, Glenn, Telstar, the orbiting twins, Schirra, all notable, will fade in the light of multiple new fire assaults on the Moon, the planets, and beyond, while the real question persists:

Will these rockets pull us taller, talk us wiser, move us prouder, closer, and live us better?

If so, how? If not, why?

By the century's end, everything will be turned turtle, reversed and in ferment, including time, space, and the condition of man.

*
**

...The atomic power which can cure our cancers can also broil us up in cauliflower clouds of radioactive chaff.

The rocket that can lift us to the greatest freedom since Creation can also blow us to kingdom come.

The cities, once planned as beautiful machines for living, are turned monsters.

Conversely, the wilderness that encroached upon us and the weathers that have beaten us are coming under our control. We put lightning by in boxes, shore up floods, summon rains, and bring forth Edens in the barren wastes.

...Ambivalent man, with his similar ambivalent machines, half out of

Hell, half into Heaven, stands poised for flight and wonders what he is. For, surely, amongst all these equipments, these gaudy machineries of despair and delight, man can find a way to know himself so that he will be better prepared to fly off and question life forms on other worlds.

...For ultimately a Human Being, though we fondly think so, is not a shape at all. It is not a creature all torso, head and limbs. Neither is it a cylindrical shape with gills. It is not a colour. It need have nothing to do with size or place of habitat. Above all, humanity is an Idea, a concept, a way of doing, a motion towards light or dark, a selection between the will to destroy and the will to save. The more times such selection tends towards the Good, the more human we say that thing is becoming. We must seek ways to know and encourage the good in ourselves, the will towards light, in order to recognize and encourage it on other worlds.

Ideally, in the exciting times ahead, our society should provide more nuclei, more inward points towards which the movers and shakers would be drawn for reference, only to re-explode outward into fresh activity; a constant coming and going, a vital ferment, a Town Hall, if you wish, of intellect and intuition, of things needful of coming to birth and in process.

I would like to think of the coming years as a great cloud chamber where bombardments of atoms—the dreamers, thinkers, shapers, doers—collide and re-collide in ever-mixing patterns, in ever greater commotions, to discharge high energy Ideas as atoms discharge particles...

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We may take some comfort in daring to think that perhaps we are part of some Divine stir and perambulation, a vast blind itch of a God universe to touch, taste, see, hear, know itself.

If all the universe is God, then on the instant are we not extrusions of dumb miraculous matter put in motion to protest unknowingness, to combat darkness, to wilfully expunge Death, to long for immortality, to cherish Being, and, with our own extrusions, our metal machineries of joy and confusion begot in testpit and factory, to go off in search of yet finer miracles basking under far-journeying suns ?

Ours now the immense tasks, to find what is human, to build to be human, to dare to be human. To do all the works on Earth, in this microcosm, so as to stand ready for the macrocosm, the Universe.

RAY BRADBURY

(From an article in LIFE, November 5, 1962)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Historical and Literary Inscriptions by Dr. Raj Bali Pandey. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 1962. Rs. 15.00

It is not every day that a book of this nature is made available to the general reading public in India, and the Chowkhamba publishers are to be congratulated on their having secured the services of an eminent scholar for the compilation of this sumptuous volume on the inscriptions of ancient India.

The selection has been made with great care, and considerable discretion has been shown in omitting the less important documents. This was no easy task; for, thanks to the decades of painstaking work on the part of dozens of scholars Indian and foreign, the number of copper-plate and other inscriptions now available to the student of ancient Indian history is fairly large and to choose out of that number needs a good deal of knowledge and tact. The choice made here lives up to our expectations. The only comment one would be inclined to make on this point is that perhaps a greater number might have been chosen from the South Indian inscriptions, especially the Chola records dealing with village administration. Some of the variants in the Asoka edicts might perhaps have been omitted to make room for this purpose.

As it stands, the volume is rich in content. It opens with the well-known Piprahwa vase inscription which is one of the earliest specimens so far unearthed of the early Brahmi script. The edicts of Asoka follow and next we come across the Prakrit inscriptions of the pre-Gupta period reflecting the natural idiom of the day. Rudradaman's Girnār inscription in Sanskrit is a solitary monument to the literary tongue of this period for which one could fix a definite date. Prakrit disappears from the language of inscriptions with the coming of the Guptas and we have a long series of Sanskrit records, including some of the most well-known Prasastis or encomiums in the Sanskrit language, such as Harshena's inscription on an Asoka pillar at Allahabad, the Mandasor inscriptions of Kumaragupta and Yasodharman, and the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin the Chalukya king who measured swords with Harshavardhana. The volume ends with a copper-plate grant of Rajendra Chola.

An important feature of this volume is the use of Devanagari in place of the usual Latin transliteration that cumbers the "official" compilations. This may not be entirely to the taste of the purist, but will certainly be welcome to the general reader.

The editor has promised us an English translation accompanied by copious

notes in a subsequent volume. We shall eagerly await the publication of that volume. In the meantime, we cannot be too grateful for his venture in letting the general reader as well as the careful student of history have an opportunity to study at first hand the principal records on which the dated history of India has been based. The rare volumes of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* are practically out of everybody's reach and even the less expensive collections of South Indian inscriptions cannot be obtained easily. The editor and his publishers have performed a signal service indeed.

SANAT K. BANERJI

Walt Disney's World of Nature by *Rutherford Platt and the Staff of Walt Disney Studio* : Golden Press, New York. Price 4.95.

This is one of the volumes based on the Walt Disney Motion Picture Series. The book is a virtual treasury of true-life adventures containing 273 pictures in colour revealing the miracles lying unobserved in the far recesses of the Arctic region, the sun-seared deserts, the prairies and the dense forests of Africa all inaccessible but to the few adventurous spirits. The pictures are so living with vibrant colours that we feel as if we were following the cameraman in his explorations step by step. From the Arctic Wonderland of *Aurora Borealis* with its inhuman silence eternally pervading the snow-bound ocean occasionally ruffled by the crashing down of a broken iceberg we vividly pass to mysterious Africa with her savage forests peopled with strange birds, animals and insects. The book leads us, as the author says, "into seven worlds of wonder, each one more marvellous than any fairy-tale kingdom ever dreamed of by man. The seven worlds of wonder are areas of our earth's crust where nature is supreme: mountains, forests, prairies, deserts, swamps, seas, and ice-caps".

And we are regaled lavishly not only with pictures of superb beauty and marvel but also with graphic descriptions of these regions and the strange miracle of life existing there with its infinite variety, richness and cunning devices—in the "deep freeze of the Polar North, and in the scorched sands of the desert".

Throughout the book the writing is enlivened by an amazing power of imagination shot through with deep love and sympathy for all the diverse forms of life that struggle for existence in conditions full of all sorts of hazards. There is the underground kingdom of animals boring a network of tunnels stretching into long distances; there are migratory birds that fly from the North Pole to the South Pole and then back, led by some mysterious power as yet undiscovered by the ornithologist. We see the whale gliding down the sea-currents; the polar bear on a floating ice-pan, looking for fish for his supper, in the faint eerie

light of the Arctic sun; the beaver building his dams with indefatigable tenacity and incredible engineership, the honey-bees with their most complex organisation and powers of instinct by which they zig-zag to sources of honey many miles away with perfect precision; and many other creatures with dodges and counter-dodges by which they manage to survive in the midst of death.

The book is not only a storehouse of valuable information about the world we live in but a supreme creation of art for which the cameramen deserve the gratitude of children all over the world for making accessible to them for a small amount of money what has cost them an untiring labour spread over years in difficult places. The volumes should adorn every household, lending colour and charm to an otherwise often flat and humdrum existence.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

Rajkumar, a symbolic play in Hindi, by *Anuben Purani*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry-2. Price 62 nP.

Sri Aurobindo Society is a growing organisation given to carry Sri Aurobindo's message to places as far from its home of birth as possible, in India as well as abroad. It undertakes to knit the Aurobindonian family more and more close by association of common interests and helping the seekers by way of supply of literature and other materials and means of creating an atmosphere of spiritual fellowship.

In the field of literature, after bringing out a Youth Quarterly in Hindi and Bengali and other miscellaneous booklets and pamphlets, as also the New Year calendar with a grand "Realisation" picture of the Mother on it, it has now published this symbolic play of seven scenes. This has already been successfully staged in the Ashram Theatre on 30th December last year. It is powerfully penned in a language living and lucid and befitting each event of the play.

Rajkumar wants to liberate Mother India. A movement grows around him. Many young and enthusiastic souls join him in this sacred cause. But there is another greater call for him; it is that of fighting the battle not only with his opponents in the outer field, but also with the inner enemies whose mouthpiece and instrument Sukhiya, to be called later Sukhvir, follows the voice of the Lord of Darkness and wants to destroy Rajkumar, the instrument and mouthpiece of the Goddess of Light who appears to him and guides him in order to change the adversary and bring the real and lasting victory for humanity.

Many impatient and superficial-eyed young men desert him to follow their heady path of reckless sacrifice without proper knowledge and proper guidance. But Rajkumar surrenders his entire fate to the direction of the Goddess. Having shifted his field of work from politics to spirituality, he

bares the limitations and shortcomings of the ways of the philosopher, the philanthropist, the industrialist and others to ameliorate the plight of humanity. He gives the message of Divine Light and points the way to it.

Sukhvir, who wanted to destroy Rajkumar under the directions of the Lord of Darkness, suddenly finds a change in him and submits to the message of Rajkumar. But Darkness follows him and wants him, first through soft persuasion, then by command and by threat of death, to kill Rajkumar. He does not agree. But somehow Darkness persuades him to mix poison in the sacred water of sacrifice which Rajkumar is expected to take as the prasad of the Goddess after Her worship. The poison is mixed but just at the moment when Rajkumar wants to sip the sacred drink, Sukhvir runs and makes the vessel fall from Rajkumar's hands and pleads to be saved from the hands of Darkness. The Figure of Darkness appears and Sukhvir falls to the ground. Just then the Goddess appears too and the Darkness who wanted to run away cannot now do so. He bends, the cloak of obscurity gets stripped and his figure of Light hidden behind the veils of his own obscurity comes to the front. Now he surrenders to the Goddess completely, Rajkumar, Sukhvir and others singing praise of the Goddess.

The drama can safely be staged anywhere with equal success. We hope to get more of such easily utilisable literature for mass-purpose from the author of this play and from its publishers.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Students' Section

MODERN POETRY

ELIOT was perhaps the first to lay down the principle that the style of poetry should be like that of prose. By prose he means the current way of talk. According to him the language should be current, if not colloquial. Common words and sentences and the order of prose will satisfy this principle of poetic diction. Even in earlier times more than one poet acted upon this principle. Wordsworth's method was of this nature.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?

Or

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night
The moon is up,—

But the moderns demand something still more. Merely current words and expressions won't do; common parlance, even the commonest of common, has to be adopted.

There is the style of poetic prose. It is a special feature of literature of all climes. Since the time prose writing began enriching itself, this mode of composition has been in vogue. In addition to this, there is the prose poem. It is a step to rise from prose to poetry. The next step is free verse. But what the moderns aim at is quite different from these approaches. It will as far as possible contain the structure and outer form of poetry, but the style will be of prose, *i.e.* its measure and rhythm will be of poetry, but the tone will be of prose. The French Alexandrine, the high order of twelve-line poetry of Corneille and Racine—if it is read as poetry should be, it would sound totally dry and monotonous, but if despite pause and rhyme, it is read like prose, it would reveal its beauty. Because the noted actress Rachel discovered this, she has become renowned in the world of French drama. The intention of the moderns is somewhat like this. Take, for example, Eliot; but Eliot may be considered afterwards. Let us first take the echo of a Bengali poet :

For long have I looked for poetry
 In the neighbourhood of the Kidderpore Docks
 Almost as one looks about for a lost cow.

Or

Yet keep silent for the day,
 Let me keep still...

From the point of view of technique, it has been said to be flawless. One likes to characterise these lines as doggerel in English. But they are not so. From the standard of modern appreciation they are really solemn poetry. Such sort of appreciation reminds us of the rhetorician's wit. What is an instance of a faultless sloka or verse ? *Dugdham pivati mārjārah* (the cat drinks milk). How ? A sloka must have four feet. *Mārjāra* (the cat) has them. A sloka must have sweetness or *rasa* (lit. juice). What can be there more sweet than milk ?

Let alone wit and humour. The real problem is not perhaps with the style and trend of colloquialism, but with something deeper. The question, no doubt, raises a special aspect, but that is a mere symptom or complexity of the disease. For the composition of all ancient poetry was neither artificial nor unnatural. Rather, the reverse is the truth. Matthew Arnold has given proof of the grand style in poetry. For example, Milton's

Fall'n cherub ! to be weak is miserable...

Or Dante's

E la sua volontade è nostra pace...¹

What could be easier or more natural, more common and colloquial than such expression ? Milton's line may be taken as an exception to this standard, but the entire composition of Dante borders on popular speech. Yet the fact of the matter is not that. Even though the ancients speak in popular terms, they choose the zenith in poetry, they swim on the crest of its waves, never in its pit. The moderns choose their poetic note from the trough of the common day-to-day speech and hold fast to it, rejecting as far as possible the high note of the ancients. Hence Eliot says :

Madame Sosotris, famous clairvoyante,
 Had a bad cold, nevertheless
 Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe.

¹ Literally: "And His will is our peace."

Or

Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone
Tell her I bring the horoscope myself;
One must be so careful these days.

But why ? What is the intention ? What purpose does it serve ? First of all, we do not want any more of the poetic in poetry, we do not want imagination, we do not want anything of castles in the air. We want the real, the rude, never the good and the beautiful. Strong feeling, powerful emotion—these you want. Such materials are lying about in ordinary day-to-day life; you need not soar into the skies and rummage the Heavens. The true interest and meaning of life are inherent in the workaday world's ways and manners. Not so ? Well, listen further to Eliot :

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May.
Goonight.
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies,
good night, good night.

The thing to note here is whither this slow moving prose—don't we see that the sense has become a bit concrete, the trend has turned and the style has changed colour ? All is prose, indeed, prosaic in spirit—but the poet has had to play a trick—whatever be the principle—if the prose is left entirely as prose the poet's purpose is not fully served. When the poet's heart swells to overflowing, it can despite its efforts never remain in the ditch.

I say where the heart of the poet is in depth and intensity his voice rings with that depth and intensity. If Eliot has been a true poet, he became so when he spoke like this :

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream Kingdom
These do not appear :
There, the eyes are
Sunlight on a broken column.
There, is a tree swinging
And voices are
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn
Than a fading star.

This bit of jewel is far above his 'Madame Sosostris' or even his 'Good Night'. Theory is one thing. Reality is another. Theory is of the poet's mind, his expression tied to his intention, but that which is real in creation is the dictate of the poet's inner Soul—which bloweth where it listeth.

One aspect of that theory is this. The subject of poetry is free from design, free from covering. Stripped of all creation, what is demanded is 'Sunlight on a broken column.' Things have to be seen with the unblinking eye of the burning sun. Hence truth is dust, sand and grit—hard substance reduced to powder; covered over with a soft, green and illusory layer. Wealth and prosperity are the eternal pomp and luxury of a few, as for the masses, theirs are poverty and want, disease and sorrow. The true man, the educated man are mere parasites. The forthright children of the earth are the poor, the wretched, the primitive and the uncivilised. One has to go down to the root of all things, in other words, to cut off the head and move towards the lower limbs. The mystery of the lotus has to be sought in the mire. The thing has to be cut and pruned and reduced to its minutest, lowest, most despicable form. Our saints and seers transformed man and raised him to the level of a spiritual seeker. In the present age too we have aimed at the same thing in the reverse direction towards the lowest. The reason why we like prose and its low-pitched movement is that we do not want to remain in the higher spheres of the mind—we like to grovel in the dust.

It is not that the petty, commonplace and insignificant matters of daily concern cannot be the material for poetry. These can be freely used in a poem, but it will not do to have them in the poet's consciousness which should be of another stuff. The ancient thinkers have equated the poet's consciousness with seer-vision.

The moderns recognise this truth. They do not bother about the Infinite. Neither do they feel the need of it nor do they admit it for the beauty and sublimity of poetry. Their procedure is otherwise. A prosaic thing may be accepted, but it should be treated as something more than that. Otherwise there is no difference between prose and poetry. The two things seem alike. The modern poets seek to be considered poets. Hence they practically admit and establish a difference between poetry and prose.

The fundamental principle of this procedure is that the thing and the event which are subjects for poetry should be developed along with their characteristic nature and virtue. That is to say, the thing and the event should be shown as speaking for themselves without the poet speaking for them. Perhaps, it will not be much of a mistake to say that here lies the difference between the moderns and the ancients. For example, if a wasteland is taken for the subject-matter, then we do not look for the poet's account or his description of it as in the case of Kalidasa's Himalaya. If a wasteland could speak for itself, then the poet would be the organ of his speech, the poet could identify himself and be one with it. Similarly if 'hollow men' are the poet's theme, then we do not

require their introduction, nor a delineation of their character. We expect such a co-ordination of rhythm, sound and sense as would suggest dryness, despair and emptiness. The wasteland must float right before our eyes; not only that, we must feel like physically walking through it when we hear :—

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock...
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

And don't we become Hollow Men when we hear the words—

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms...

It has to be admitted that Eliot by his own method has achieved considerable success in such instances.

A little before I have referred to Good Night. Various poets have variously described their parting scenes. These are perhaps the most poetic features in poetry. Othello's

Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate...

Hamlet's

...the rest is silence...

Or when Virgil's Orpheus says :

Heu sed non tua palmas...

These are the immense outpourings from the depth of the human heart. But the moderns tend to give such feelings a different expression. These are articulations but the moderns want not articulations but incantations. Articulations may make things beautiful and touching, no doubt, but incantations make things look lifelike. Eliot's Good Night...Good Night.. and the repetition of the phrase—are they not making the parting vibration physically felt ?

Another feature of their incantation is not the transparency of sense, but its mystification. For it is not the sense, but something more. Just as the aim of incantation is to have the descent of the deity, so the aim of poetry is to present

the truth or the object as living and conscious. So we find that Eliot goes on ignoring reasonable sequences or the order of prose. By the impact of co-ordination of sound and suggestion he makes up his presentation of the truth. So he feels no hesitation in mixing up various tongues. He has expressed his thought by quoting even an Upanishadic utterance in one of his poems in order to prove the power of poetry as a medium of incantation. Listen :

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down.

Poi s'ascose nel foco che glie affina

Quando fiam ceu chelidon—O swallow swallow.

Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie.

These fragments I have shored against my ruins.

Why then Ile fite you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

Datta. Dayadhavan. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih.

This is, however, what may be called an incantation with a vengeance in poetry.

It may be supposed that we have moved a good way from the method and ideal of turning poetry with the spirit of prose. But it is not exactly so. This type of incantation is the essence of prose itself. Perhaps it may have measure but no tune.

Yet, in Bengal, we have not been able to rise to the standard of Eliot. The reason is that Eliot is highly serious and has depth of feeling. However whimsical and arbitrary may be his brains, he has behind all that an intensity of emotion, although we may not call it the joy of poetry. Those of our countrymen who want to follow Eliot's style seem to have had its form and not its spirit. However intellectualised may be the mode of modern western poetry, it is the particular expression of Western life. Behind it there lies a profound need, an urge of life. But here in our country this sort of creation is an artificial flower. As in the social and political fields, so in the domain of poetry the modern European trend has at most to a certain degree stimulated our brain. It does not move our heart, far from touching our soul.

That poetry is incantation may be taken for granted. But incantation is of two kinds. The moderns follow the incantation of the left-wing tantriks. The ancient poets took to the Vedantic and the right-wing of the Tantra as the best.

Yathey Dakshinam Mukham tena Mang Pahi Nityam.

(Lead me, O Rudra, along your right aspect.)

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the original Bengali in "Shilpa Katha")

THE DESCENT OF THE BLUE

ACT 5

Scene 7

(*Bipin Pal and Aurobindo*)

PAL : Aurobindo Babu, I have come to you with a special request. I know, you won't say nay, nor am I going to take a nay from you. The *Bande Mataram* has now become much too big a burden for me to carry single-handed. I need your personal help as Assistant Editor. It must cope successfully with the rapid growth of the Nationalist movement. I could think of no better person to take up the job than you. Besides, I have every hope that from your powerful pen it will go on producing the needed type of food the country requires from day to day. Now tell me 'yes'.

AURO : Thanks, Mr. Pal. I agree provided I have a free hand in the matter.

PAL : Undoubtedly you will have everything quite your own way. It's no business venture. There is no clash of ideals in the Party. So there is no question of interference with your work.

AURO : Thanks again, Mr. Pal.

PAL : Now that the *Bande Mataram* has your magic pen, I am sure India will no longer remain a slumbering Nation.

AURO : And your trumpet voice will remain hushed ? Your ceaseless stream of eloquence runs direct from your heart to inspire and conquer the hearts of our countrymen.

PAL : Ah, pray, do not extol me to the skies. My voice, you may at best compare it with a sword. But who can ever deny that the pen is mightier than the sword ?

AURO : If I extolled you to the skies, to what super-skiey ether would you be said to have extolled me ?

PAL : Now, Aurobindo Babu, I expect you to join hands with me at once. The rising tide of Nationalism must suffer no stemming because of any failure on our part to rise to the situation as it develops, henceforth perhaps from moment to moment.

AURO : His work will be done by Him. We are mere instruments. But as instruments, we must be ready too.

PAL : I fully agree. May Mother India bless you. Good-bye. Let us meet this evening at the *Bande Mataram* Office.

AURO : All right.

(Exit Pal)

Scene 8

(*Bhupendra Nath Dutt, brother of Swami Vivekananda, and Aurobindo*)

BHUPEN : You know I have been accused of sedition for two articles in the *Sandhya*. But I wish to offer defence.

AURO : Defence ! You, Bhupendra Nath Dutt, brother of the indomitable Narendra Nath Dutt, will offer defence ! No, never shall you do so.

BHUPEN : But why ? May I know the cause of your objection ?

AURO : It's so easy. Bhupen, it does not become you, a fiery revolutionary, to recognise an alien court. You must always be ready to meet prosecution with absolute indifference. You must accept all punishments in utter silence as a matter of course with erect head and dauntless heart. This is the spirit with which you must be surcharged to drive away the British from India.

BHUPEN : I am now convinced, Chief. And I consider myself to be a thing of some worth, for it is from you that I have taken the oath of the revolutionary movement. I am ever at your service.

AURO : Bhupen, be sure, India cannot perish. Ours is a race that can by no means become extinct. In us is the abode of *Sanatana Dharma*, the Eternal Religion. A day shall come when this Religion of ours will be the future Religion of the entire world. Our high mission is to purge barbarism out of humanity and to Aryanise the world. To this end India must recognise herself first. This is the peerless work. To initiate this work Sri Ramakrishna came into the world. His dearest disciple, Naren, walked through fire and water to preach it all over the world.

BHUPEN : I needs must remain beholden to God at least for one thing.

AURO (*bursting into laughter*) : That's fine. You are not much indebted to God. Only for one thing... And what is it ?

BHUPEN : It is this that God had not sent his representatives—Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Aurobindo—at one and the same time. Ramakrishna played his divine role in secret and left the earth. Vivekananda, although in a tearing hurry, acted his part more openly. Now, Chief, you have come on the scene. I am sure you too will meet with tremendous success. If God had sent all the three at a time, undoubtedly I would have been a terrible loser.

AURO : How do you mean ?

BHUPEN : That I need not explain to you, for you have already read my mind and felt my heart.

ACT 6

Scene I

(Mamcktolla Garden. The revolutionaries are engged in a twofold activity : attending classes on the Gita, and preparing bombs and practising the use of fire-arms. Barin is their leader. Attired in ochre clothes like a regular Sannyasi, Upen explains to them the Gita. It is no camoufluge. They are as serious in their study of the Gita as in their revolutionary work.)

BARIN : Nolini, will you please go to Sejda's place to bring him here ? He has said to me that he will come here to see our activities.

NOLINI *(pride and delight brighten up his face)* : I, I to bring him ?

BARIN : Yes, you go. You know, he is at the residence of Raja Subodh Chandra Mullick.

NOLINI : Yes, Barinda, I'm off.

(Exit Nolini)

BARIN *(turning to the revolutionaries)* : So, Sejda is coming to-day. I hope, he will be pleased with our revolutionary activities.

REVOLUTIONARIES : We hope so. Even if otherwise, we shall have his directions and guidance. Besides, his presence will be our inspiration.

Scene 2

(Nolini's first contact with Sri Aurobindo. He avails himself of a tramcar and arrives at Wellington Square. Raja Subodh Chandra Mullick's residence. On his arrival he asks the gate-keeper to inform Mr. Ghosh that he wants to see him. In those days he was not called Aurobindo, but Mr. Ghosh. It is 4 p.m.)

(Shortly after enter Mr. Ghosh)

AUROBINDO : Who are you, please ? Where do you come from ?

NOLINI : Barinda has sent me to take you to our garden.

AUROBINDO : Tell Barin that I have not yet had my lunch. So it is not possible for me to go there to-day. I shall go some other day.

(With a respectful pranam Nolini takes leave of Aurobindo. Those few first words are still a cherished memory with him.)

Scene 3

(‘Bande Mataram’ Office. Shyam Sundar, Hemendra Prasad and Bijoy Chatterjee.)

SHYAM SUNDAR : It seems to me that the more the writings of Aurobindo Babu are coming out in the *Bande Mataram*, the faster is India progressing towards the goal of her freedom.

HEMENDRA PRASAD : My friend, it is a pity that only a limited circle knows who is behind the great ideal of the Boycott movement, Passive Resistance and National Education. Aurobindo doesn’t care a straw for fame. He is all for action.

(A big procession passes by the side of the ‘Bande Mataram’ Office. The self-dedicated volunteers send up to the skies their inspiring cry of ‘Bande Mataram’. Song after song is sung, filling the atmosphere with fervent love of the country.)

BIJOY : Our Jugantar Party will remain no longer in secret. Look, look at the swelling stream of souls worshipping the country. Her awakening will be keener and deeper. Away from the rocks and shallows our ship is clearing towards the high seas.

Scene 4

(Surat Congress. The Moderates, the Nationalists, the Revolutionaries and the members of the different parties. Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo, Rash Behari Ghosh, Surendranath Banerjee and many other leaders. A wild uproar arises over the Presidential election. At last they decide on their respective voting strength. Suren Banerjee, leader of the Moderate Party, stands up.)

SUREN BANERJEE : I propose Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh to the chair.

TILAK (*getting up*) : I propose Lala Lajpat Rai to the chair.

THE MODERATES (*addressing Tilak*) : Sit down, please, sit down.

THE NATIONALISTS : How dare you, you fellows ? One more shout at our Tilak Maharaj and you get the lesson of your life.

THE MODERATES : Don’t yell. Your force is in your throat; ours in our arms.

(Chairs and tables are hurled about by the Moderates. The Nationalists too hit them back. Amid a great uproar there starts an exchange of blows.)

TILAK : I declare the Congress closed.

THE MODERATES : Shut up, you deliberate breaker of the Congress.

(One could read on the self-composed face of Sri Aurobindo his poignant thought.)

AUROBINDO : Alas, is this the India of my dream ?

(The police come in to restore order. In silence Tilak, Aurobindo and some of the leaders leave the spot.)

Scene 5

(Tilak and Aurobindo with the Nationalists and the Revolutionaries.)

TILAK : So, Aurobindo Babu, they dub me the deliberate breaker of the Congress.

AUROBINDO : How could you expect anything better from such fools ? Would they ever care to know that to no one else is the catastrophe so great a blow as to your patriotic heart ? You are absolutely right in disliking the do-nothingness of that assembly. That you valued it both as a great national fact and for its unrealised possibilities and hoped to make of it a central organisation for practical work is a matter of great joy to me. I am sure you will be remembered by all 'so long as our Motherland has pride in its past and hope for its future'.

TILAK : Alas, it is my own countrymen who let loose the full flood of their abuse upon me. But to my joy your fate will be otherwise. All those who have true love of the country must needs love you, admire your great sacrifice and adore the Seer in you.

Scene 6

(Baroda. Sardar Majumdar's Wada. Aurobindo in a small room. Enter Lele Maharaj. With a bow Aurobindo motions him to a seat. Lele sits down and keeps his eyes fixed on Sri Aurobindo.)

AUROBINDO : I need your help in my *sadhana*.

LELE : I see in you a Gnani-Bhakta—a rare blessing. But why are you so weighted with thoughts ?

AUROBINDO : Wave after wave of thought. How difficult it is to escape their onrush !

LELE : But I always take you to be an exception. Come, let us sit down on the floor.

(They sit down)

LELE : Sit in meditation, but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts coming into it; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence.

AUROBINDO : Let me try.

(He accepts Lele's statement with absolute faith and follows his instructions to the letter. He begins to meditate.

After one day all thought ceases. Three days, during which a little food is taken mechanically from a plate, pass by. There is the full realisation of Nirvana.

Lele communicates again with Aurobindo on the third day.)

LELE : Wonderful ! What I wanted from you, you have done within three days. It took me six long years to still my mind. And, even so, what you have achieved seems something much vaster than I had expected. I cannot quite fathom that look on your face...

(Aurobindo is in deep silence)

CHINMOY

(To be continued)

JANUARY 13 : BIRTHDAY OF NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

NOLINI's birthday was celebrated in the playground. In the evening of January 13 a tribute was paid to him by the Ashramites. Before reading it out, Manoj in his characteristically resonant and modulated voice said :

"Here is a tribute of love and respect to Nolinida on his birthday. It has been expressed in twelve languages by twelve Sadhaks, in the same spirit and with the same warmth of feeling. Here is the original written by our poet-brother Chinmoy."

Slowly Nolini petal on petal grows
At the Feet of his Master Divine.
On him the Fount of moon-gold Vision flows;
Through aeons its splendours shall shine.

He spreads in hush the Mother's nectar Light.
In secret through the days
He bears the tears and smiles of our yearning's flight
To the Mother's earth-humble Grace.

With the crescent souls a child of lucid thrill—
They barter with his heart their bliss.
He lulls to sleep his mind's volcano-will
In his eyes' unchanging peace.

Expunged is Ignorance-dream from his Ideal vast.
Through the pen he bares his Soul.
He reaps the golden fruit of his tireless past;
Now within grasp his Goal !

Nolinida's most significant reply ran :

"In answer to the tribute you have paid to me I can do nothing better than to transmit the Message I received from the Mother this morning. It is in French. 'En ce jour, nous prenons la décision de faire un pas décisif vers la victoire de la Vérité.' ('On this day, we resolve to take a decisive step towards the victory of the Truth'). The victory of the Truth, I take it as meaning the victory of the Mother."

SELF-TEACHINGS

THE DIVINE MASTER'S MAYA : HUMAN EVOLUTION

GOD has intended human life to be divided into two phases. First, a lower, ordinary human life constituted, worked and directed by Nature's executive force called Prakriti under her outward universal laws of ignorance—ego, lust, greed, attachment and anger—with the Master's sanction behind it. Nature performs a progressive play in man for the joy of God the Supreme, leading the scenes from his ignorance and mistakes, consequent falls and miseries, to his self-experiences, gradual knowledge and wisdom, to a certain limit of human perfection when his own self-experiences gain him the necessary faith within and knowledge about God. When this stage of self-growth and comparative human perfection is steadily maintained with a growing faith in the Creator, suddenly, some time or other, an acute contrastingly different, distinct change of consciousness, an awakening comes to light within. Here starts the second and final higher phase of man's life.

Now all human responsibilities to one's own family, friends and society, and to one's own egoistic work, gradually melt into a sole responsibility—the responsibility to the Creator, one's Eternal Parent and surpassingly beautiful divine Beloved. This strange abrupt change in man, exceeding his former routine of ordinary human-animal life, looks absurd, irresponsible and lunatic to the surrounding world of ignorance, and yet it is the destined change in store for everyone, bound to come in one life or another, and has behind it the will of our Supreme Lord, revealing to man His ultimate intended truth.

What is God ? He is formless and featureless, not bound by any human-like limitations of body, nature or qualities. He is the Supreme Divine, Infinite Shakti or an eternal, automatic, indomitable, self-creating and self-working Conscious Force, present in the universe.

Now, during the first phase of human life, that Divine Shakti—Conscious Force, God—works the man out to a point of comparative perfection, all the time hidden, unknown to his surface knowledge, though it has been there in him from birth; but, because of the pressure of the deep layers of egoistic ignorance and falsehood in his outer physical mind, he did not feel the conscious presence and the working of the God-Shakti in him. When the second and ultimate phase of his life commences, then gradually as he develops in the new consciousness with growing devotion and faith in God he begins to realise consciously, and experience within, the concrete developing presence of a Force—a Shakti—first for some time only during concentration and meditation, then with a spontaneous and regular inpouring of it all the time. This Shakti or Force reveals to him his own various defects and weaknesses and his definite gradual progress towards a diviner perfection.

It is God Himself taking lead. Offering a complete cooperation of our resolute will, firm faith and pure love to the inner working of His Shakti will surely one day lead us to an ultimate supreme success of divine life, in spite of various raging storms within.

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