

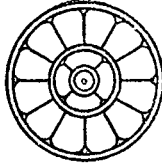
MOTHER INDIA

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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. XVI

No. 9

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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NOTE

THE NEXT ISSUE WILL BE A JOINT ONE
OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER. IT WILL
BE OUT ON DECEMBER 5.

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THE MOTHER ANSWERS A CHILD'S QUESTIONS

Q. If we want to have conversations with God (of course within us), is it possible? If yes, on what condition?

A. God does not indulge in conversations.

Q. Does ever God become angry with us? If yes, when?

A. When you believe He is angry.

Q. If we shed tears for God, does He ever shed a tear for us?

A. Surely He has deep compassion for you, but His eyes are not of the kind that shed tears.

21-9-1964

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 right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Mamilal, 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.)

DECEMBER 27, 1939

P : Some Madrasi has come to see X to learn Pranayama from him as he had written a book on that subject. X replied by signs that he was now vowed to silence and couldn't teach. People will say that he is vowed to silence and yet has written so many books !

SRI AUROBINDO : The vow is not supposed to apply to speaking through books. Carlyle not only wrote 37 volumes but also spoke profusely on the value of Silence !

N : Poets write poems on Silence.

SRI AUROBINDO : In 1914 when the Mother came here there came also a Dutch painter who drew a sketch of me. At the end of every meditation, he used to say, "Let us now talk of the Ineffable."

EVENING

N : There is a lot of controversy going on regarding War Aims. Have you seen Shaw's article ? Is the declaration of War Aims now going to be helpful ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Nonsense ! How can War Aims be declared now ? Who is going to agree at present to the idea of Federation of Europe which Shaw is advocating ? That is all intellectual people's talk. Besides, Russia will want a Communist Federation, Italy a Fascist one, Rumania of another form and some will even want a Federation of Autarchy. I don't know that the German people themselves are keen about Federation. Of course some form of it has to be found afterwards.

JANUARY 2, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO (*suddenly*) Is Nolini Sen going today ?

N : He has already gone.

SRI AUROBINDO : His wife has sent a poem which she received in meditation. It is very good. Pavitra has seen the horoscopes of both husband and wife. He

says they are complementary to each other. He has ability, the power of success.

N : Nolini Sen told me about his wife. About himself he said that he had some organising ability. The Government used to send him to all bad places to organise. So he has acquired a bad name as being strict and disciplinary.

SRI AUROBINDO : He has a clear mind and seems to be an intellectual.

N : He was one of the three most brilliant students of his year, the first being Satyen Bose. He says there are only two people who understand Einstein's Relativity Theory.

SRI AUROBINDO : In India or the world ? I thought there were five or six in the world.

N : I mean India. One of the two is Bose and the other is Kothari. He further says that Bose pointed out some mistakes in Einstein's thinking and his corrections have been accepted and the scientists speak now of Bose-Einstein statistics.

SRI AUROBINDO : I see. That is very creditable for India.

P : What about Suleman ?

N : Sen says Suleman also pointed out some mistakes. *

P : No, Suleman claims to refute the whole theory.

N : Sen says the results of the last solar eclipse have not come out yet. They should have a bearing on Relativity Theory.

★

★

N : In our New Year Calendar the Mother says that this is a year of silence and expectation. We are wondering : expectation of what ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Of what is to come.

N : That is to say ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Whatever is the expectation for.

N : For individuals or in a general sense ? We are all expecting the Supermind to come.

SRI AUROBINDO : How can it come unless you are all prepared to receive it ?

P : I thought it was more or less an individual matter.

SRI AUROBINDO : How do you mean by "expecting the Supermind" ? Do you want the Supermind without any preparation ?

N : No, I don't mean for myself. I mean that the Supermind will descend into you and the Mother and perhaps a few disciples first and we shall be benefited by it. At least that is what I understood.

SRI AUROBINDO : You wanted to be benefited without doing anything yourself and do you expect the Supermind to do everything for you ? That is supreme laziness.

N : I don't say that. I say that if at present in spite of my efforts I don't get satisfactory results and my progress is slow and tardy, the Supramental Force being the Highest Force will help me in comparatively less time to overcome my troubles. That is what you wrote to me on the action of the Supermind.

SRI AUROBINDO : So you will wait for the Supermind's descent. That is like Moni's idea. He says that the Divine will do everything and one has nothing to do at all. Anyway, this used to be his idea. I don't know what he thinks now.

N : This is an extreme view. I don't go so far. I believe or I have been led to believe that the Supermind will help me in every way possible.

SRI AUROBINDO : Will it ?

N : Won't it ? As for Moni's idea, I can't say there is no truth in it if one sincerely believes in it and sticks to it.

SRI AUROBINDO : Ah, sticks to it !

N : There are people who rely entirely on Divine Grace and have the faith that the Divine will do everything for them. It is not entirely wrong, is it ? I think you have yourself written somewhere like that, though, as you have said, such people are rare.

SRI AUROBINDO : Faith and idea are quite different. Ideas are of the mind and they are abstract. If they have no dynamic power behind, they remain ideas till the end.

S : I am also coming round to Moni's idea.

N : But yours is from a different point of view. You have tried.

S : Unless the fellow within, as Y calls it, awakes, nothing can be achieved. One must have the hunger first.

N : Yes, that hunger also can be created by the Supermind.

Here Sri Aurobindo smiled. P brought some other topic in, at the end of which both S and N looked at each other and broke into smiles. P thought it was as if N had thrown a jet of refreshing water on S, and he said : "Jetting the Supermind on S ?"

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh, baptising him into the Supermind ?

EVENING

N : In the *Hindu's* editorial on the Defence Forces of India it is said that there is not a single Bengali unit in India's land forces. The majority are from the Punjab Muslims ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Muslims ?

N : Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO : What land forces ? The army ?

N : Perhaps.

SRI AUROBINDO : People say the Bengalis and the Madrasis are non-martial races. But it has been pointed out that the English conquered Bengal with the help of Madrasi sepoys, the United Provinces with that of Bengali sepoys and the Muslim Punjab itself with that of Hindu sepoys. And now they are all non-martial races !

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Ego

Q : My English teacher told me that the ego and the soul are like two sides of a rubber ball. The outer side is the ego, the inner is the soul. So if you pull out what is within you have the soul, the psychic being.

SRI AUROBINDO : The ego has nothing to do with the soul. It is a formation of Nature in the mind, vital or physical. 11-1-1936

Q : It is said that with the presence of ego one cannot have love, joy, happiness etc. in Yoga. But I had these experiences in the past. What about my ego ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It had been subdued by a Knowledge from above and a will in the mind. It was still there, but its movements and their power were too small and the movement above too large for that to interfere except by bringing in small movements of error and desire.

Q : Some suggestions say, "You are studying by a push of ambition." Is it really so ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is for you to see. You have to become sufficiently conscious of yourself to see where ego mixes and where it does not. 20-1-1936

SRI AUROBINDO : If the ego is gone and the full surrender is there, then there should be no obstacle. If however the rajas of the vital is only quiescent, then its quiescence may bring up the tamās in its place, and that would be the obstacle. 20-1-1936

Q : I feel there is some difficulty in the descent of the Mother's Force. What is the matter with the vital ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I suppose not yet sufficiently surrendered or free from ego. The Force can come down in spite of that, but then it is in danger of being misused by an exaggerated ego for its desires. 25-1-1936

Q : Instead of thus being misused cannot the descent be rather used for lessening or destroying the ego and its desires ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is its proper working, but if the ego is not rejected, then the wrong use may take place. 25-1-1936

Q : Have my ego and vital desires remained the same as before ?

SRI AUROBINDO : In nature they are the same—the stress on the being is more confined to the surface parts. 25-1-1936

If it (ego) is not ever indulged in thought, speech or action, it will not return. That is the full rejection. 27-1-1936

The Divine is there in all men so the Divine and the ego do live together. But the Divine is veiled by the ego and manifests in proportion as the ego *first submits itself*, then recedes and disappears. There can be no complete presence by the Divine without disappearance of the ego. 30-1-1936

The sense of ego can disappear into that of the Self or the Purusha but that of itself does not bring about the disappearance of the old ego reactions in the Prakriti. The Purusha has to get rid of these by a process of constant rejection and remoulding. The remoulding consists in throwing everything into a consecration to the Mother and doing all for her without regard to oneself, one's desires, opinions, vital reactions as if they were the things to be fulfilled. This is most easily done if the psychic being becomes quite awake. 2-2-1936

The ego and the vital movements do not come up for the sake of the sadhana, but because they are there and wish to remain there. Whenever the consciousness relaxes, and gives them room, they rise up. 7-2-1936

It is not possible to get rid of the ego-movements all at once. They have to be worked out of the nature by a constant consciousness and rejection. Even when the central ego has gone, the habitual movements stick for a long time. 16-2-1936

Obviously one must not get egoistic about it, but withdrawal from the outer or lower consciousness into the inner is not in itself an egoistic movement. If it were so, all sadhana would be egoism and to be always social and on the surface would be the only thing. 24-2-1936

From NAGIN DOSHI

THE CHOICE AND COURSE OF SADHANA

(A LETTER)

It really depends upon what you want to make of your life. Now you have arrived at a stage when you can take stock of yourself, look back and see in what direction your natural faculties have been pointing, discover what were just enthusiasms of the moment and what have been the imprints of your true mission in life. You are also in a position to make a dispassionate appraisal of the strong points and the weak in your make-up, how far the body is capable of supporting the mind and the vital being, to what extent your mind and will are developed and how far they are ready to cooperate with the heart. You have a measure of your nature, a glimpse if not sufficient look into the soul in your best moments. It is time now that you decide what you want to be in this life. And whatever you want, be assured, it is possible to achieve here in the Mother's environs.

I wonder if I ever told you of a sage observation made by an unlettered lady who was here for a number of years. It is amazing how the unsophisticated get at the heart of things with a facility that is denied to the sophisticated. One day a person from her own village happened to come to the Ashram; he had his own ideas of what ashrams are or should be and naturally he was bewildered by what he saw here. So he went to this lady who had been here sufficiently long and asked her opinion and help to understand things in the Ashram. The lady smiled and told him : "Look here, the Mother is a Kalpa Vriksha (wish-yielding tree). Each one here can get what he wants. If you want peace of mind, you get it; if you want to improve your health, there are more facilities here than anywhere else and there is Her spiritual help also; if you want to learn, you can learn to any lengths; if you want to lead a cosy life, enjoy yourself in the material way, you can do that also; if you want God you can get Him too; the Mother's Yoga-shakti is vibrating all over and yoga becomes easy."

And it is so. The Mother has given full freedom for everyone to shape his own life and Her help and support are there ever extended. She has here organised a Centre of life where you are assured of the minimum wants of the person and enough liberty is there for each individual to do what he will with the opportunity that is given him by Providence. Life in freedom, progress in freedom, change by choice : these are features in the Ashram that none can miss.

With this background it is for you to come to a firm decision as to what you will do in the best and the more mature span of your life that is now opening. If you feel it is enough to live in quiet happiness, it is easy to do it. Thanks to the Mother's Grace all things are conducive to it. You do not have to come into contact with elements not congenial to your nature; you can choose such company and such things as are pleasing to you, participate in activities that make you happy. Reasonable care of

your physical health, avoidance of strain of any kind and an easy occupation in things that interest you are enough. You can spend the rest of your life in reasonable comfort and peace. If only your soul will allow it !

I say this because certain souls have not taken birth to live a contented creature life, particularly those that have come here to the Mother. Most of these have been waiting for this hour to take birth. For this is a unique period in the history of Man and represents a confluence of forces and movements that have been gathering for ages; this is a moment of the highest spiritual and deepest occult significance and I have been repeatedly assured that such an opportunity will not come for a thousand years more. Beings have flocked here and are continuing to do so. So many people come here, but they really do not know what brings them and why. But He who draws them knows. Unknown to them their souls receive the touch that sets them on the high road to liberation and transformation. Some day, some life, they will arrive sooner than otherwise.

This being so, it would be natural to expect a person of your type—refined in the sattvic grain—to take to the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo which forms the backbone of the Ashram and provides the Ideal of a divine humanity to the modern world. It is such a big Ideal, you may say and entertain doubts about your capacity to practise the yoga with any measure of success. True, the ideal of transformation is high, higher than any held up in the past and difficult of achievement. But whoever said that it can be achieved by human effort ? It is not the strength or the weakness of a man that is going to determine the results in this endeavour : it is the Supreme Grace at work for the purpose that will effectuate. Be that as it may, the stage of transformation comes only last in this Yoga. There are many antecedent stages, indispensable prior realisations, that are to be worked out before one can think of transformation or the supramentalisation that makes it possible. Let us therefore set to ourselves a comparatively limited and immediate objective : the union with the inner Divine. Mind you, though this is only the first crucial step here in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, providing the foundation for the subsequent edifice, it is the end of many lines of yogic effort in the old way. It is not easy of achievement but given the necessary effort, the help of the Guru and the Grace of the Divine, it is possible to achieve it in one life-time.

You may choose this practical and—may I say immediately practicable ?—objective. To become aware of a divine presence within you, to deepen that awareness by psychological and other disciplines into a steady consciousness of the Divine within, which in turn can lead to union with that inner Divine: this is the broad picture you should have in your mind. And once you decide on it, you should organise your whole life around that purpose. What you think, what you feel, what you do—all must have a relevance, a reference to this inner seeking for the Divine. What helps and promotes this inner search and effort should be welcomed, entertained and utilised; what dampens, blunts or has a contrary effect on the aspiration and its workings should be naturally rejected. As the Mother says, this means the exercise of your will at

every moment : for the choice is presented to you at every minute and you are called upon to decide whether you will throw your weight on the side of your aspiration or on the side of desire and ego at every step in your life. There are no small things and big things in Yoga; all are equal occasions to make or mar your future.

To come back to the point. You can choose any door of entry into the kingdom of God. To each, Nature provides a means most fitted for his development and type. To one it may be the faculty in the mind seeking for the delivering knowledge, to another it may be a causeless welling up of devotion to God in the heart. You have to look into yourself and decide which way is natural to you and then take steps to tread that path.

But there are certain preliminaries that are to be observed before the journey proper is begun. For all yoga, says Patanjali, a prior purification is indispensable. He lists eight limbs of self-discipline under the heads of *yama* and *nyama* which every seeker has to practise and perfect before he is fit for further effort. This requirement is not separately proclaimed in this Yoga because it is presumed that those who seek to practise it are perforce equipped in this regard. Also required is a general benevolence in the being creating the right condition for the flowering of the yogic seed. Here too Patanjali enjoins upon the novice friendliness toward the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and indifference to the wicked.

Happily you do not need to cultivate these qualities. You have them as your natural equipment. What you need is not so much internal purification—you have it already—but an organisation of your consciousness and life. Start at some point, at any point that you feel strong in you and that could be the means of advance. Let it be the main note of your daily life. All other phases should subserve, they should be so organised as to feed your main preoccupation.

Let us take music for instance. It is born with you, it is your second nature and wells up spontaneously in you. When a thing is so dominant it is a sure sign that that is your means of linking with the soul. Approach music in that spirit. It shall no more be an accomplishment to be acquired and perfected, but a golden thread gifted by the Divine to draw you to Him. Make music a sadhana. Leave aside its external frame for the time being; technique and other details are not so important in this setting. Know it that the soul of music, *nāda*, is the body of Brahman. Take up the *nāda*, the sound-vibration, and follow attentively, reverently and lovingly. Mark that the vibrations must be followed up even after the physical notes end; the vibrations in the subtler air are the real link. Wait upon them with all your being. The Sound itself will gradually lead to its Source, to its "point" of origin and disappear leaving you in the Presence of That of which it was the Sound-Symbol. It is not a few that have touched the depths of the Soul on the line of *nāda*. The entire consciousness gets used to focus itself on the sound and loses itself in the rhythms of the sound; the culmination of this movement is *laya*, absorption. Naturally a discipline like this cannot be practised in the form of a fixed routine for so many hours a day or night. It is a continuing movement which is always at the back of the active conscious-

ness and takes in everything that feeds its harmonies. It goes without saying that music is not an end in itself, but is a means, a joyous discipline that quietens the unrest in nature, soothes the nervous channels and takes you aglide to the Master of Harmonies within.

You can use any opening or openings that present themselves to you. There is for instance the aspiration for knowledge which can be easily turned to capital use. You are always athirst for fresh bits of knowledge, in science, in sociology, in so many branches of human understanding. Channelise that aspiration into a seeking for that Knowledge which is the Source of all knowledge. Read the works of those who have realised the Truth, for their works are full of the power of what they have realised. Luckily for us we have the oceanic literature of Sri Aurobindo throwing light upon every conceivable question or problem in human life; there are the unbelievably simple, direct and lucid writings of the Mother touching every aspect and colour of Sadhana. To read them is to get in contact with the Consciousness behind them. Take up any page from their writings. Do not try to understand in the way of a school-student. Read slowly a line, a paragraph and pause. You become aware of a wave of Peace somewhere, a current of joy somewhere. Read again, read ahead. Slowly the understanding will dawn and with it some crust fall broken, some contact be established. Have a fixed, regular hour for these studies which are best done alone and that too so long as there is no feeling of tiredness. The mind gets quieted, processed and readied to receive and enlarge itself into a greater Consciousness. Not only that. The Mother once observed that the mind grows in stature; at the best, new cells begin to form in the brain and a new receptacle is forged for the New Knowledge that is pressing to manifest.

Or, you love the Divine, love Her who embodies for us the Divine—our adored Mother. Who can help loving Her? Brimming with compassion, supreme Love emanating from every pore of the body, there She stands the Light of our lights, the Life of our lives, bearing with all our foibles, bathing us incessantly in the streams of Her uplifting and transforming Consciousness. Even the worst among us has a corner which loves Her. You have known moments when you have melted in utter love for Her. Do not let that love dissipate itself. Gather all the threads of this love, raise their tensity by constant adoration, confirm them by ceaseless consecration in every detail of daily life, abandon yourself to Her outstretched arms with confidence. Loose yourself into Her and emerge as one wave of the Love that is the Mother.

YATRIK

THE STORY OF RISHI YAJNAVALKYA

(1)

YAJNAVALKYA was one of the great Brahmins and a supreme master of the Knowledge of Reality during the Upanishadic age. But it was not that he was only a man of Knowledge, deep and serious; he was also a fine humorist. That is, he combined his Knowledge with a keen sense of irony and fun. Here are some stories about him.

King Janaka was his contemporary. That would seem to place his story in the Upanishads about the time of the Ramayana although Rama or Sita does not figure anywhere there. King Janaka too was a man of Knowledge, a sage-king, *rājarsi*. But he had not taken any disciples. The seekers would come to him for the solution of their problems, and he used to hold the seat of umpire at the sessions of Rishis and men of knowledge.

As he sat in his royal court at one such session, and numerous were the men of the princely race who had assembled there to see him, Rishi Yajnavalkya suddenly made his appearance. The king greeted the mighty sage with due ceremony and respect, and asked him, "Yajnavalkya, what is the object that brings you here ? Is it the acquisition of Knowledge or of kine ?" Yajnavalkya said, "Both, my king,—*ubhayameva samrāt !*" with a smile.

There was a previous history to this "both", to which the king had been referring. It happened like this.

King Janaka had been celebrating a sacrifice, and had arranged for the gifts to be on a generous scale. The lure of the gifts had brought together a number of Brahmins from the surrounding country too. The measure of the gifts he had announced, that is to say, the first prize, like the gold medal offered by our Academies, consisted of a thousand kine; and not only that, for each of these thousand cows was to have, tied to each horn, a ten *pāda* weight, equal to about three tolas of our measure, of purest gold, *kaṣṭha kañcana*, not the fourteen-carat variety. A thousand cows meant two thousand horns; so you can figure out how much gold that would be. King Janaka had it announced that the Brahmin men of learning and knowledge who had assembled there were all invited to participate : the prize would go to him who proved to be most proficient in the Vedic lore. The best among these Brahmins was called upon to come up and lead those kine home. But none among the learned Brahmins had the courage to declare himself the best; they all sat in silence. Then Yajnavalkya stood up, and called upon his band of disciples to take the herd of kine to his home. This created a sensation among the Brahmin crowd. What was this Yajnavalkya doing ? How very insolent of him ! One of them came up—he was a priest of King Janaka's, Asvala by name. He called out to Yajnavalkya, "Yajnavalkya, do you then happen to be the best among us Brahmins ?" Yajnavalkya replied

with folded hands, "Salutations to the best of Brahmins ! We have taken the cows because I need them. I am a seeker of kine, not that I have the most Knowledge."

But Asvala was insistent. He said, "You have taken the cows, now you have to prove that you are the best. I am putting you some questions, let us see what answers you can give. . . . All you see here is subject to Death. Then how does the sacrificer, *yajamāna*, manage to escape from the clutches of Death ?" Yajnavalkya gave answer, "Sacrifice implies the four : the priest of the offering and the priest of the call, Fire and the Word, *ṛtvika, hotā, agni, vāk*. It is by virtue of these that the sacrificer escapes from Death. But Fire alone is the Priest of the Call, he is the One who makes the Offering, the Word is no other than He. Fire means freedom, not ordinary freedom but the supreme Liberation. Fire is the Conscious-Force, the Power of Austerity." But there was no end to Asvala's questionings; he went on asking and Yajnavalkya gave due reply. This dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Asvala forms a chapter in the Upanishadic Science of Reality.

After Asvala had finished, another got up. This was the Rishi Artabhaga of the family of Jaratkaru. The dialogue that ensued between him and Yajnavalkya forms another chapter of the Upanishadic lore. Then arose Rishi Bhujyu of the Lahya family. He began with a rather amusing story. "Yajnavalkya," he said, "when in my student days I was travelling round the country, I happened to be in the Madra region once. I was the guest of a householder whose name was Patanjala. Patanjala had a daughter who was possessed by an evil spirit. We were familiar with this particular one—it was a Gandharva. I asked him, 'Who are you ?' The Gandharva replied, 'I am Sudhanvan born of the family of Angiras.' From this Gandharva, we had learnt a few things about the other worlds. That is why I am going to ask you, Yajnavalkya, a few questions about those other worlds. If your answers tally with those of the Gandharva, then I shall admit that you really know." Yajnavalkya repeated exactly what the Gandharva had said. After Bhujyu it was the turn of Ushasta Chakrayana, who was followed by Kahola Kaushitaka.

And now there arose Gargi, the daughter of Vachaknu. Gargi began with the question, "Yajnavalkya, all this here is permeated by the waters. What then permeates the waters ?"

"The waters are permeated by air," said Yajnavalkya.

"And what contains the air ?"

"The heavens."

"And where are the heavens contained ?"

"In the world of the Gandharvas".

"And the world of the Gandharvas ?"

"In the regions of the Sun."

"And the solar regions ?"

"In the worlds of the Moon."

"And the lunar worlds ?"

"In the regions of the stars."

Gargi went on thus with her seemingly endless questions, but Yajnavalkya had to cry halt when he came to the world of Brahman. Yet Gargi asked him again, "And what contains this world of Brahman?" Thereupon Yajnavalkya exclaimed, "Your questions are now going beyond the limit, Gargi. You have been asking too much, and if you ask more, your head will fall off."

But she was going to make one last attempt. She told the learned assembly that she was going to put her last questions to Yajnavalkya, and this would be his final test. She then called out to Yajnavalkya, "Yajnavalkya, I am going to put two more questions to you. They are like a couple of arrows. When the king of Videha goes to war, he pulls the bowstrings and shoots his arrows. In like manner, I am aiming these arrow-like questions at you. Let us see how you will ward them off with the appropriate answers." Yajnavalkya said, "Very well, try." Then Gargi said, "Can you tell me what is above the sky and what is below the earth, and what is in between the earth and sky?" To this Yajnavalkya replied, "That is called *sūtrātman*, He binds all from within as by a thread and puts everything on as it were; He is Brahman." This satisfied Gargi and she repeated her question to Yajnavalkya, —the very same question again; and Yajnavalkya gave the self-same reply.

Now Gargi turned to the learned men and addressed them thus, "You had better bow down to Yajnavalkya and take your leave. No one among you has the power to get the better of him in the matter of learning or wisdom."

What Yajnavalkya had really sought to convey in his final reply to Gargi was this. Brahman is the supreme Seer, though He be invisible. He is beyond all hearing and yet is Himself the Hearer. He is beyond the ken of mind, but is Himself the supreme Thinker. He is Unknowable, but is the supreme Knower. There is none other than He who sees, hears, thinks and knows.

(2)

In that very assembly, during all this discussion and deliberation there took place an incident that was rather sad, and of a lugubrious nature. It looks so unseemly to us, but perhaps to the seekers of the Truth in that distant age the whole thing might have appeared quite natural.

I think I have already mentioned the name of Sakalya. He was very fond of argument and his series of questions one after another made Yajnavalkya almost lose his patience. Finally, Yajnavalkya had to warn him, "You are straying from the path of logic and are arguing beside the point. Since you have been asking so many questions, let me put to you now one single question. If you can give answer, so much the better. But if you can't, then your head will fall off." You may recall this manner of warning in connection with the Gargi episode. Perhaps this was the natural consequence of arguing beside the point; perhaps it is so even today, though not in such a gross form but in a subtler way.

Yajnavalkya continued, "You have been raising so many points of inquiry

in connection with the Science of Reality. Now, can you tell me this: what is this Reality in its essence ?” Sakalya merely said that he did not know and held his peace. And immediately his head fell off. His retinue of disciples got up in a flurry and carried off the truncated corpse of their teacher,—ostensibly for the funeral rites, but actually in the hope of bringing it back to life by joining the head on. But here too they had ill luck. As they carried the dead body along a deserted road beyond the limits of their hermitage, a gang of robbers made their appearance. The robbers thought they must be carrying some precious treasure. So they attacked and carried off the corpse as booty. Thus did Sakalya meet his end. The moral of the story, as the Upanishad itself has pointed out, is that not by argument can this Knowledge be had, *naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpanīyā*.

(3)

YAJNAVALKYA AND MAITREYI

The next story belongs to an earlier stage in the life of Yajnavalkya. He had not yet become a prince among sages, the foremost of Brahmins, although there is evidence that he was even then a seeker of the Truth and had some knowledge of the Reality.

By this “earlier” stage I mean his life as householder. The story relates to the last phase of this life. He was now wanting to give up the householder’s state and live the life of a forest recluse. He had been a family man, had two wives in fact, and some property as well. The wives were Katyayani and Maitreyi. Of the two, it was Katyayani who cared most for her position as wife, *striprajñā*; Maitreyi’s interests were in spiritual things, *brahmavādinī*.¹

So, one day he called Maitreyi in and said to her, “Maitreyi, I am forsaking all and leaving home. If you so desire, I can make separate provision for Katyayani and yourself.” To these words of Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi gave answer, “If all my possessions were to fill the whole earth, would they bring me immortality, my lord ?” Yajnavalkya had to reply, “No, that could never be, that would be impossible. But you could thereby have a life of enjoyments, like all other people who have wealth. But of immortality there would be no hope.” Thereupon Maitreyi exclaimed, “What then am I to do with that which does not make me immortal ?” On hearing this reply of Maitreyi’s, Yajnavalkya said, “You have been always dear to me, Maitreyi ; today you become still more dear. Let me tell you more, in fuller detail. Listen to my words with care.”

¹ One may recall here the story of the two women devotees who followed the Christ, the two sisters Martha and Mary. Christ had noted in Martha this womanly concern of which the Upanishad makes mention, and said to her one day, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary has shown that good part which shall not be taken away from her.” (*St. Luke, X. 41-42*)

And Yajnavalkya began, "Not for the sake of the husband does the husband become dear, O Maitreyi; the husband becomes dear for the sake of the Self. It is not because of the wife that she is held dear; it is for the sake of the Self. The son is held dear, not for the sake of the son, but for the sake of the Self. Wealth is dear, cattle are dear, not because of the cattle or wealth, but because of the Self. Spiritual power, military power, are held dear not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the Self. The other worlds are held dear not for their sakes but for the sake of the Self. The gods too are held dear not because they are gods, but because of the Self. The Vedas are dear, all created things are dear, not because of themselves, but because of the Self. Whatever else there be that is held to be dear is so because of the Self. It is this Self that has to be seen, heard about, thought of, meditated upon. The Self being seen, heard of, thought about, meditated upon, all else will be known, O Maitreyi.

"Let me illustrate. You see this lump of salt. It is of one piece both within and without, has one pervading taste, the taste of salt. In exactly the same way, the Self is of one pervading quality or taste; it is a solid mass of Knowledge. If this Self were to depart from created things, then they would vanish into nothingness. It will then leave no form or name. That is the state of release or liberation."

On hearing these words of Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi had to say, "What you say, my lord, about this Knowledge-Self leaving no form or name behind makes me perplexed." To this Yajnavalkya made answer, "There is nothing here to be perplexed about, Maitreyi. The Self is an entity that knows no change or destruction, it is left untouched by any kind of change, nor does it ever disappear."

Yajnavalkya had given his answer, but Maitreyi's problem remained unsolved. The world is bound to be reduced to nothingness on attaining Self-knowledge, form must disappear on gaining the true status—these statements of Yajnavalkya, however impartial he might try to be in his attitude to the Vedic Word, *ubhayameva mantra-vādi*, seem to be wholly in favour of the illusionist view. Maitreyi has hinted at another possible solution.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

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

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PART TWO : THE CONQUEST OF SLEEP

II. THE UNIVERSAL SLEEP

(Continued)

*Hypnotic phenomena*¹ : Hypnosis is a special psychological state with certain physiological attributes resembling sleep. When hypnotized, or in the hypnotic trance, the subject "can think, act and behave as adequately and often better"² than he can in the ordinary state of psychological awareness. As a matter of fact, while in this state, the individual is persuaded to withdraw his interest in external events and "function at a level of awareness other than the ordinary state, a level of awareness termed, for convenience in conceptualization, unconscious or subconscious awareness."³

Hypnotic phenomena differ from one subject to another and from one trance to the next, depending upon the depth of the trance state, but always exhibit certain basic manifestations like rapport, suggestibility, catalepsy, amnesia and hypermesia, regression, etc.

The *rapport* is the limitation of the subject's awareness to what is included in the hypnotic situation, usually directed by the hypnotist.

Catalepsy is a peculiar state of muscle tonus and balance which permits the subject to maintain, on suggestion, postures and positions, for unusually long periods of time, without appreciable fatigue response.

Suggestibility is a remarkable manifestation of the hypnotic state. "By the acceptance of suggestions, and acting upon them, the subject can *become deaf, dumb, blind, hallucinated, disoriented or anaesthetized*, or he can manifest any type of behaviour regarded by the subject as reasonable and desirable in the given situation."⁴

Amnesia signifies the loss of memory *vis-à-vis* certain things or happenings; *hypermesia* is the converse phenomenon of the acquisition of an ability to remember, far transcending the everyday capability of remembering the past. *Regression* denotes the process of return to earlier and simpler patterns of behaviour.

In hypnosis there occurs an amnesia of an extensive character, whose expe-

¹ This section is based on Prof. M. H. Erickson's article "Hypnotism" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 12, pp. 23-24.

² ³ & ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

rienced utilization along with that of regression may result, on the part of the subject, in the effective forgetting of "all experiences and learning subsequent to a chosen age level and the revivification of the actual patterns of behaviour, responses and understandings of the selected age level."¹

Through the converse process of hypermnesia, the subject in his trance state may be induced to "remember vividly long-forgotten, even deeply repressed experiences, recount them fully and still have a complete amnesia for them when aroused from the trance state."²

A most fascinating phenomenon is that of the *posthypnotic behaviour*. By this is meant the execution, at some later date, of instructions and suggestions given during a hypnotic trance. Thus, for example "the subject may be instructed to read a certain chapter in a chosen book at a specified later time, hours, days, months and even years later, and at that time he performs the act *without really understanding consciously* why he does so."³ Well, in this type of situation, should we say that the person is awake, executing some purposeful action, or, on the contrary decide that he is in a state of sleep ?

A phenomenon of profound interest from the point of view of our present discussion is that of *hypnotic somnambulism*. While in this state "the subject, *seemingly awake in a state of ordinary awareness*, behaves, within reasonable limitations, as if he were not hypnotized, but *actually he is in a deep trance* and capable of manifesting any desired hypnotic behaviour within his personal capabilities. Experience and training are often required even to recognize the somnambulist state."⁴

All the aforesaid behaviour patterns tending to obliterate the borderline between the states of sleep and awakesness can be explained on the assumption—and this is not merely a conjectural assumption, it is a fact of occult-spiritual experience—that there is not just one unique level of awareness, that of the ordinarily understood waking hours of a man, but that there are many levels. And unless and until all these are mastered and integrated in one's consciousness, the person concerned, while seemingly awake on one of them is liable to be in a state of sleep in relation to the others. It is also possible that different parts of the being of one and the same person may be awake at the same time on different levels of awareness and thus be mutually ignorant each of the others' movements and experiences. In some other instances, a part of the being functioning at a higher level of awareness may dominate and direct the movements of another part wakeful only at a relatively lower level and hence in a state of sleep *vis-a-vis* the movements of the higher part.

Here at this point we may recall with profit what the Mother has said in one of Her class-talks on the subject of somnambulism and the exteriorization of consciousness :

"When you leave one part of your being (for example, when you enter fully

^{1 2 3} *Ibid*, pp. 23-24.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp 23-24.

conscious into the vital world), your body. . . may go into trance. . . It is what one calls a lethargic or cataleptic state. When it is at its maximum, it is a cataleptic state, because the part of the being which animates the body has gone out of it, then the body is half dead, that is to say, its life is diminished to that extent and its functions are almost abolished : the heart is slowed down and is hardly felt, the respiration hardly perceptible. . . . But you yourself during the time are fully conscious in the vital world. And even, by a discipline which is besides neither easy nor without danger, you can see to it that the body remains conscious independently with the minimum of forces that you leave in it. By a wholly methodical training, you can make *the body keep its autonomy of movement even when you have totally exteriorised yourself*. Thus in a state of almost complete trance, you can speak and narrate what is seen and done by the exteriorised part. . . .

“There are examples, spontaneous and involuntary, of a state which is not altogether this but something analogous : such are the states of somnambulism. That is to say when you are in deep sleep, when you have gone out of your body and when the body obeys automatically the will and the action of the vital part which has gone out. Only because it is not the result of willed action, a regulated and progressive education, such a state is not desirable, for it may lead to disorders in the being. But this is an illustration of what I have just said, of a body that can, while *three-fourths of it remains asleep*, obey the part of the being which is itself fully awake and altogether conscious.”¹ (*Italics ours*)

It is said that in the land of the blind everyone is credited with sight ! In a similar way, since most men ordinarily function only at a particular level of awareness, the level of the so-called waking hours, we are apt to think that all of us are really and truly awake while in this state. But this is nothing but a most serious error of perspective.

In fact, a consideration of the facts that have been adduced above and other facts of an allied nature leads us to make a far greater and profounder generalisation and formulate the query whether our so-called “waking state” can verily be considered a condition of awakeness. Are we not after all profoundly asleep, even while we are in this state, as regards the total range and truth of our own self-being as well as that of world existence, of which only an insignificant little comes ordinarily into our ken and action, “the rest (remaining) hidden behind in subliminal reaches of being which descend into the profoundest depths of the subconscious and rise to highest peaks of superconscience, or which surround the little field of our waking self with a wide circumconscient existence of which our mind and sense catch only a few indications.”²

Is it then any wonder that we act and think and move about as so many veritable somnambulists, blissfully ignorant all the time of the greater and more meaningful

¹ The Mother in *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, pp. 45-47.

² Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 592.

part of our being ? Is it not drowsy creatures like us, *the seemingly awake but in truth sleeping* souls in the Ignorance, whom the Upanishad has in view when it declares :

“They who dwell in the ignorance, within it, are wise in their own wit and deem themselves very learned, (but) men bewildered are they who wander about stumbling round and round helplessly *like blind men led by the blind.*”¹

But what is the explanation for this sleep universal, what its extent and essential character and ultimate destiny ?

(*To be continued*)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

CHAPTER V

THE PROSPECTS TODAY

(*Continued*)

APPLIED to society the unmitigated rationalist formula has led, as we have witnessed, to interesting, characteristic and disturbing consequences. Beginning with an outburst of individual energy it has gradually moved towards state control or the pseudo-democratic falsehood of the dominance of a class or party over the rest. In the process both liberty and equality had to be given up or else make room for some form of organisation. The only item that has lingered on is brotherhood or comradeship. But this can never be compulsive, without losing its character, its *raison d'être*. Here the method of totalitarian mystiques is unmistakable. It is a bitter and violent betrayal of all reason and common sense, “the same in Russia as in Fascist countries, so that to the eye of the outsider the deadly quarrel (between the two) seems to be a blood-feud of kinsmen fighting for the inheritance of their slaughtered parents—Democracy

¹ “*Avidyāyāmantare vartamānāḥ
svayam dhīrāḥ paṇḍitammanyamānāḥ
dandramyamānāḥ pariyaṇṭu mūḍhā
andhenava niyamānā yathāndhāḥ*”

(*Katha Upanishad, I.ii.5*)

and the Age of Reason . . .” Communist threats may not be able to achieve their end, for if they did it would be *ave atque vale* to the life of the reason, what to speak of the spirit.

But the “red” light is there and the danger is far from being over. Maybe, to more critical eyes, “The pressure of the State organisation on the life of the individual has reached a point where it is ceasing to be tolerable”. The thoroughgoing mechanisation, the logical, Pavlovian end of the process, is dreaded by those who can see furthest and have still some regard left for freedom of the spirit. To such thinking it might seem that some form of spiritual anarchism, to use a much abused word and idea, a free equality founded upon willing co-operation without mammoth organizations or other forms of compulsion, might be the way out towards a better society, composed of “devoted individuals” or what the old Russians called Sobornost. But, of course, the method employed is not so important, provided we keep on ascending. It will really be a method of no method, for “no machinery invented by reason can perfect either the individual or the collective man; an inner change is needed in human nature, a change never to be effected except by the few. This is not certain; but in any case, if this is not the solution, then there is no solution, if this is not the way, then there is no way for mankind.”

This resumé on the role of reason in man and society must give us pause. Its services must not be whittled down even if we are unable to accept its arrogant claim to dictate the whole truth of man. It had a purpose to serve, which we may put like this: “The temptation to live merely as a highly complex animal and to treat the physical world as the ultimate reality and true end of life has always been present for millions of souls who lacked the means to try it. It may be hoped that this magnificent trial and failure, which has affected not the West alone, but the whole world, was necessary to get the temptation out of the human system, at least in some degree.”¹⁵ If it would end as a gentle purge it would be a blessing indeed !

The quarrel between reason and spirituality, however unnecessary, is one with a long history. But mysticism itself is a new organon of understanding, it is not merely, or essentially, a state of *raptus*. That is a state, or indication. In any case, as McTaggart liked to say, a mysticism which ignored the claim of understanding would be doomed. “None ever went about to break logic, but in the end logic broke him.” The only proviso being that the logic of physics is not the monolithic master of man, the whole man. As Dean Inge put it, the mystic has little interest in appealing to a faculty ‘above reason’, “if reason is used in the proper sense, as the logic of the whole personality”. Those who still think in terms of the whole will sooner or later accept the mystic rationale, which opens a door or way without which man’s long journey through the ages would lack both point and purpose and without which, today, there is nothing but doom ahead of the blundering human race.

Some other, perhaps less spectacular services of the mystical attitude to modern society would be in the fields of power and action. The problem of power, it has been well said, is insoluble except by the saint. St Francis would have been incapable of

discovering the ICBM or of using it either. Patanjali had warned against the lure of *siddhis* or spiritual powers. What would he have said to the scientific *siddhis* of today? The spirits that came to Yeats during his seances gave him not only metaphor but also the ethics of mysticism. For every step one took towards power, they said, one should take three steps towards charity, a lesson that has been totally lost upon the scientific wizards of today. No wonder power politics is recoiling like a boomerang and paying such rich dividends in anxiety and neurosis, the almost certain *néantisation* of man and his 'rational' civilization. Perhaps there is 'No Exit'. Perhaps there will be few or none left to benefit from retrospective wisdom, none to recollect in tranquillity. Or, "At the time of the end shall the vision be?" Is Anxiety an awareness of Freedom?

Sometimes our politicians seem to be fully aware of the presence of the mystic minority. After all it was this conflict—between Caesar and God—that led to the trial. "Our Lord said that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. That explains why the wicked who walk in darkness have a truer instinct about the location of the universal light switch and the best way to throw it. . . . And when the hour of darkness is at hand in any country, the first act of the powers of evil is invariably to throw the switch. They rage the clusters. They turn the contemplatives out of their monasteries with loud speeches about the good of the state and contributing to the social need. No one is deceived very long by such speeches; those who make these not for a moment."¹⁶ The mystics have been a perennial opposition to all humanistic schemes and methods of forcing men to be free. Their utility is not yet over.

Another vexed sector of modern life where the mystic attitude throws the modern mind into an introspective mood is with regard to action and the idea of usefulness to man and society. It purifies pragmatism of all its grossness. At some time or other, if not at all times, the mystics have been accused of being inactive and worthless. In some cases the charge may have been well founded. But it cannot be used as a stick to beat all mystics with. For the best among them have been men and women of enormous activity, perhaps the only kind of activity that leaves no bitter residue behind. As J. B. Rhine points out: "The great hope is in that minority who know that, however useful. . . physical discoveries may be, they are not carrying man toward the kind of world to which he really aspires, and the good life he wants to live with his fellow men. Some few at least recognise the tragedy that, in this vast scientific conquest of physical nature, it is man himself that is being conquered. . . . They realize that not all of the most brilliant physical explorations put together, whether penetrating into the nuclear energies of the atom or reaching far out to the remotest galaxy, have brought man even a short step nearer to grasping the essential mystery of himself as a personality. They know, too, that there are other directions. . . . As a spark can start a conflagration, so can a handful of perceptive men and women initiate a movement they could not stop or even guide."¹⁷ These things do not depend on number. "We are still at the dawn of human evolution, and if only one man out of a million

were endowed with a conscience, this would suffice to prove that a new degree of liberty had appeared. Many important steps in the history of evolution started out as a mutation affecting only a very small number of individuals, perhaps only one."¹⁸ Or, to quote Fosdick : "As a matter of fact, it is always the minorities that hold the key of progress. The still small voice speaking through the conscience of a man, bidding him choose obloquy and ostracism rather than conformity is, now and always, the hope of the race."¹⁹

Lonely antagonists of destiny
Who went down...before many spears.

What is often forgotten about mystical activity is that the mystics have always had a well-defined theory of action which spares them the stupid expenditure of all kinds of energy which has become a mark of an age without the slightest discrimination. As Aldous Huxley has shown, the practical mystics have critically examined the whole idea of action and have laid down, in regard to it, a set of rules, for the guidance of those desiring to follow the mystic path towards the beatific vision. Or, as Swami Pravabhananda says, summing up the Indian attitude, "Not *karma*, mere action, but *karma yoga*, union with God through action." Along with the classic doctrine of *niṣhkāma karma*, non-attached action, the mystics also know of liberated action, *muktasya karma*. "Liberation and transcendence need not necessarily impose a disappearance, a sheer dissolving out from the manifestation; it can prepare a liberation into action of the highest knowledge and an intensity of Power that can transform the world and fulfil the evolutionary urge."

But of course the mystics do not suffer from any do-gooder complex, "they did not seek God *in order to* return to the world better fitted for active life"²⁰ Contrasted with this theory and practice, most of our well-laid schemes, apart from going agley, look puerile and part of the vicious circle. The idea of usefulness to humanity is surely one of the persistent errors of our times. Even Simone Weil had tried to expound the Upanishads to peasant girls and Greek mythologies to factory workers. Perhaps the mystics do even more good by what they are, or become, than by what they do.

Many years ago a wise lady had been asked if yoga, which may be defined as the discipline of mysticism, was likely to benefit humanity. Yoga, she had answered, was for the sake of Divinity, It was not the welfare of humanity that was directly aimed at. Whether humanity as a whole would be benefited or not would depend on the condition of humanity itself. Humanity would have to change much before it could hope to profit from yoga or mysticism. How many desire that change may be doubted. But salvation is never a matter of statistics. What is important is that the thing should be done at all, in however small a number; that is the only difficulty. If this is not done, if even the small number is not there, if a new kind of sanctity fails to materialise, then indeed will mankind be a useless passion.

There will neither be United Nations nor One World unless we have united notions. Perhaps none can help us better in this task than the mystics. It will be a test for them as well. They alone have the know-how, in all times and ages they have spoken with the same voice, acted unwearily, without rest, without haste. The satire of their presence, to use Emerson's phrase about Thoreau, is meant to profit us. Or shall be rather :

Our fathers have been churchmen
Nineteen hundred years or so,
And to every new proposal
They have always answered No !

For the good of the world as well as out of self-respect, it is better to believe that there will always be "a few whose supreme loyalty will be to a realm of meanings yet to be."²¹ The few will "save the city."

(Concluded)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

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TWO LETTERS ON POETRY

I

“POETRY is life at a remove of form and meaning.”

This dictum of R. P. Blackmuir’s strikes me as crystallising a very central truth. Let me interpret it to you as best I can.

It is a mistake to cut poetry off from life, but it is also a mistake to equate it with life. In poetry we do get life, but not in its crude immediacy. We get it at a remove—with a certain refining change of it.

Life, as it is, has a looseness, a roughness, a disorderliness : it lacks a perfect organisation of energy, a rounding off and a finishing touch, a harmonious weaving together of many strands into one whole. All that life lacks here is attained in poetry as Form.

Similarly, we see in life a welter of motives, a series of cross-purposes, a shifting scenery of intention and action that falls short of satisfying coherence. But in poetry we have a vision that is not only sight but also insight : our thinking, willing, feeling sensing are all seen lit up with an importance beyond the passing moment; they carry, together with their individual quivers, a rhythm of universal experience and, even beyond this experience, a thrill of some eternal Ideality trying to manifest in the flux of time. Each experience reveals its true direction, its substance of creative idea and becomes a worth-while end achieved. All that life lacks of Meaning is attained in poetry.

Poetry arises from life but does not repeat it. There is a transcendence of it and yet no withdrawal or rejection. Poetry returns upon life, seizes its adventure of exciting imperfections and half-lights and infuses into that adventure the sense of a soul seeking to fulfil a high and happy purpose in a body of faultless beauty and power.

2

Your letter was very welcome. I have always wondered who could be reading my “Talks on Poetry”. There cannot be many to take interest in the music of the spheres that poetry really is. The cry of things that are close and claspable is always so much more appealing. Who wants to be haunted by unattainable planets ?... But are we not actually living in the Space-age when planets are fast becoming attainable ? Physically at least, the heart of the poetry-lover is now not cut off from its goal. But the spheres that have called it are, of course, symbolic, And when the poetry-lover rockets to Venus or Jupiter, he will not outgrow

The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,

The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.

That "something afar" is in the depths of the Divine, and poetry in its essence is the rhythm of the movement of the Gods from one state of rapturous repose to another. Living as we are, we cannot imitate this movement, we cannot share in its splendour—and for this reason most men take poetry to be offering us nothing that can satisfy the acute needs of life. But that attitude is an error committed by those who have failed to vision feelingly and comprehend visionarily and feel comprehendingly the touch of the rhythm I have spoken of. Being a movement between two rapturous reposes it is inevitably what Sri Aurobindo terms

Force one with unimaginable rest.

In the aching dream of divine distances which poetry gives to its lover, there is yet a "rest" unimaginable to the common man. The substance of poetry is an infinite seeking: the form of poetry is an eternal attainment.

You have found this secret: you are one of the earth's lucky ones.

K. D. SETHNA

ESSAYS ON *SAVITRI* AND *PARADISE LOST*

(Continued from the previous issue)

4. INSPIRATION (continued)

IN Milton we discover the heightening and lowering of inspiration. There are phases of sheer, vibrant force, while elsewhere we have merely padded verse, full of a rhetorical skill which replaces the intensity of genuine inspiration. We are not going to discuss the cause of this singular phenomenon. But we shall examine how this fluctuation occurs and what effect it has on the total build-up and execution of *Paradise Lost*.

The first Book is indeed a triumph; it is abundant with force, brilliance, the rapture of creation. The content is replete with images that create the atmosphere of darkness, fall, defeat and futility for Satan. There is intensity in all its lines and inspiration flows like a full and vigorous stream never ebbing in its plenitude of power and splendour. In it we find some of the best lines in the epic. Also it builds up a base, a sure foundation for the construction of epical structure. It prepares us directly for the events to come and is not a mere prologue, but the very substance on which

the edifice stands. There is drama in it, and the speeches stand out like a vehement antithesis of all that is pure, good and noble. Here we feel the impact of creative intelligence at its height and the passion it contains is irresistibly vibrant.

The second Book continues the theme of the first. The inspiration yet sustains the splendour of the first, as in :

The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss.

This line has a strange Aurobindonian strain in it, and possesses a definite overhead touch. Or again :

The day or night for his destruction wait.

or,

To waste eternal days in woe and pain ?

or,

To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven and Heavenly born—
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamours compassed round.

The last has a Homeric strain. There is no rhetoric but the directness of the state of defeat. In this Book we listen to a new music. Added to the richness we feel a sweetness and subtlety which is not often found in Milton.

The third Book does not contain the heroic splendour of the first two. The inspiration is cut off from its source of power due to the mind's intervention. The state of chaos, fall, defeat, revolt and revenge awoke the deeper poet in Milton, while the religious sentiment can rouse only the ethical being; but a poet is not necessarily moral or religious; his inspiration surpasses these, for it can fulfil itself only by the answer to it from the deepest and most fruitful portion of our being. All the same here too we come across some striking lines like :

a boundless continent
Dark, waste and wild, under the frown of night.

The fourth and fifth Books are not remarkable. They show no surprises of inspirational outpour. Milton's creativity moves here along conventional and preconceived lines which do not evoke any large torrent of inspiration. The grandeur has been replaced by lyrical description, which is not Milton's best. The passion has been replaced by docility. This means he can work only under certain conditions and his poetry is best when there are loud outraged sentiments, appalling catastrophes and revolts. His inspiration can be most fertile when extraordinary conditions and events take place.

We shall not examine the rest of the poem critically, for we find the recurrence of high and authentic inspiration now a thing of rare visitation. It is by sheer will that Milton continued the poem and brought it to completion. There are rhetorical excellence, metrical skill, the clever manipulation of vowels and proper names. But the flight of authentic inspiration has passed. Satan's role is over; the revolt has borne its dismal fruit; as the result of all the preparation that was going on in the first two Books, the fourth and fifth have taken actual shape. But the end is not so remarkable as the beginning; it is tragic, but not heroically pathetic as in *King Lear* or *Macbeth*, an end full of pang and frustration and loss, the climax of a great drama. This is what we expected when the epic started with a high and passionate note. The fault lies not so much in execution as in inspiration. The diction, the masterly handling of the lines, the verse, the metrical pattern are all present from the beginning to the end; this makes its reading till the end possible. But what we miss is not the actual form but the inspiration behind, which heightens the quality of expression. Here for example from Book 1 is :

Sonorous metal blowing martial sound—

or,

A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.

Compare it to an example from Book 12 :

Or theirs whom he redeems—a deathlike sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.

From the first Book again :

his face

Deep scars of thunder had entrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheeks, but under brows
Of dauntless courage and considerate pride
Waiting revenge

But in the tenth Book

O conscience ! into what abyss of fears
And horrors hast thou driven me ; out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged.

In one there is power, a height of mental inspiration that builds up its own world, and in the other insufficient vehemence that cannot create anything living or leave

a stamp on the hearer by a sure and faultless force. Compared to the first intensity the intensity of the second examples seems insipid, lacking in colour, in brilliance, in winged magnificence. Thus in the beginning we hear the surging muse, while towards the end we hear the poet only, devoid of the inspiration that can make poetry the rhythm of the gods. One can mark the Virgilian invocations to the Muse of poetry in the first and third and seventh Books. These show the inner condition of the poet. He begins with an invocation, opening his mind to the divine guidance. The inspiration carries him through the first two Books. Then he is afraid and is not sure of his powers; which makes him call again to 'Light, heaven's first-born'. As he guides the inspiration, the inspirational voice becomes less audible and he awakes with a start in the seventh Book to send out the S.O.S. of his appeal to Urania. This is because he is conscious of the lessening intensity, the weakening glory of force and wants to recapture something of the original cadence he had caught earlier. After Book 7 he ceases to invoke, for already the authentic breath has passed from him. From a poet he has become a story-teller and he must complete his task whether the inspiration abides with him or not.. His pride, his obstinate sense that he has a mission to fulfil carries him along.

In Sri Aurobindo this fluctuation of inspirational intensity does not occur. There certainly are phases of intensity more elevated or less. But on the whole the inspiration does not flag as in Milton. He draws from many sources as he goes along, sometimes revelatory, sometimes mystical, now clear like the sunlight, now half-veiled like the moon-gleam. *Savitri* like *Paradise Lost* has twelve Books and the inspiration is at its highest in the eleventh, unlike as in Milton where later we find merely a verse rendering of *Genesis*. Also, *Savitri* starts with a surprise, a dawn, an awakening of the mind that makes possible the advent of Savitri. The first Canto of the first Book is the richest in the English language and builds up at once the atmosphere of the poem by its symbol dawn. The inspiration flows unabated like a vast and surging sea leaving in its wake a deep and lasting poetical creation. But the inspiration here does not work from behind a veil; it is direct; its impact is direct; what it builds is something definite for the consciousness to grasp though not necessarily for the mind to seize in its limited fashion. Milton's opening lines sum up the contents of his epic, seizable by mind and thought. They are also direct. But between the overhead directness and the directness of the mind there is a whole realm of difference. *Savitri* tells the adventure of the divine soul on earth, while *Paradise Lost* retells a biblical tale. What gulf there is between *Genesis* and the overmental creation, is the gulf between these two. One calls down the highest inspiration possible to express in English while the other has no conception of it. For example :

It was the hour before the Gods awake.

Here the inspiration is like direct sunlight. It at once reveals the early state of the world. It is not sonorous, beating like a loud drum, grand with a music that can

attract the outer hearing. Behind it is the music of a larger consciousness; it is subtle; it is unadorned by any linguistic skill or metrical manipulation. Its direct simplicity is the stamp of its larger origin. It comes down, reveals and does not stay on to dilate on what it has revealed. If one can grasp its message, one is elevated; if one fails to do so it is not anxious to explain itself. All true overhead inspiration comes in this way. In fact the moment one sits down to analyse the occult breath, the mystical impact vanishes leaving one distant and cold, facing abstractions. So too here; one can feel its content, its revelatory character, but cannot analyse critically the very nature of its flow. Not that this is impossible. But analysis would satisfy neither the rational critic nor the spiritual visionary. For this inspirational phenomenon is something intangible, inscrutable to the mind's abstract analytical process. But once we have been able to tune ourselves to this realm, vistas open before us. The impact of the unseen is sensed like something tangible. Seen from this point of view the first line of *Savitri* quoted above would be felt like something direct.

The inspiration of Sri Aurobindo makes no distinction between darkness or light, between bliss or pain, union or bereavement. It is equal to all conditions, all aspects of human change. Even in the cosmic ways and in the path of the spirit's adventure through the darkness that precedes the actual event of its birth in time, it sees with its mystic eyes of unchanging light; as here "the mute featureless semblance of the unknown"

Cradled the cosmic drowse of ignorant force,
Whose moved creative slumber kindles the suns
And carries our lives in its somnambulist whirl.

Sri Aurobindo reveals the process of mind's awakening in this seemingly vacant world. Or again here we hear the opposite note—the note of sheer luminosity :

A march of universal power in Time,
The harmonic order of self's vastitudes
In cyclic symmetries and metric planes
Harboured a cosmic rapture's revelry
In an endless figuring of the spirit in things
Planned by the artist who has dreamed the worlds...

All this is possible because the source of inspiration is not in some outer domain but in the inner and higher spheres of consciousness. In Sri Aurobindo all things seem to open their secret core, their secret meaning, their secret identity. Thus the darkness and light are not supreme things in themselves but are the expressions of the one Reality that does not get lost in the maze of obscurity nor revels in the

the sheer magnificence of its sun. In the wake of inspiration, we are shown the different worlds, the planes, the gods, the typical beings, the creative powers, the sons of darkness, the titans of evil. Sri Aurobindo's vision sees all and feels all as an integral part of his consciousness. And yet all seems a natural process, a spontaneous movement of the process of creativity. Such a drama could not be written by a Miltonic inspiration that was extrovert. The grand style of *Paradise Lost* would be a violence to this subtle extra-sensorial theme. If on the other hand Milton had written with the aid of Aurobindonian inspiration, his poetry would have acquired the wings of felicity, the ranges of height, the spans of beauty, which he can now rarely stumble into. This dwindling of the inspirational force and the unsure, intermittent intensity of inspiration would not have been there. To the outer richness of metaphors and classical references the formidable force of inner intensity, vision, and rapture would have been added. He would no longer have been tied to the small orbit of the Christian theological myth, but would have escaped into the rampartless regions of the spirit, from where he would have seen the fall of man and the boon of the saviour's birth from a very different viewpoint. Lastly he would have been the master of the inspirational process, calling down wider, sweeter, profounder chords of beauty at will as Sri Aurobindo has done.

In Sri Aurobindo there are no fluctuations of inspiration, as we have discussed earlier. This is because he was identified with the source of inspiration and did not allow the exterior mind to interfere with the working of it. When the poet is at work, all functionings of reason, logic, critical faculty stop mute. Alone the inspiration like a supreme master governs and makes possible the creation of poetry; visions, descriptions, images, metaphors all come from it; the silent mind merely transmits the message and gives it a form. Bereft of the reasoning capacity and the voices of opinions, judgements, evaluations, it stands by, only lending its expression, turns and language to become the instrument of the spirit. Inspiration does not utilise for its purpose every or any learning and knowledge. Only those that have sunk into the depths of the consciousness and have acquired a unity with the inner mind, the inner vibrations of life, are employed to enrich the form of created poetry. This is what happens with Sri Aurobindo. His metaphors and similes are part of the vision, the total picture. They seem to be there as the very soul of the lines that precede them or are preceded by them. But in Milton the figures of speech are planned, and have a place and beauty no doubt, but do not always become functionally one with the poem itself. They may give variety or serve as enriching ingredients, but, if left out, the essential significance of the piece would not be harmed.

In Sri Aurobindo the poem unrolls itself by the panoramic sweep of visions after visions, pictures after pictures, patterns after patterns, themes succeeding themes each distinct, clear, natural, native and inevitable. The whole is thought out by some creative godhead and planned and executed by some invisible overhead artist. Here the inspiration is the planner and the creative deity; it is the word and it is the tale. The human brain, the outer being are only occasions for its self-

fulfilment, self-unveiling. It is sometimes difficult to follow the current or the logic of the poem for this reason. But once we can tune ourselves to the proper plane of consciousness the meaning, the symbol, the whole pattern assume clarity.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

SECRET CONSCIOUSNESS

EYES closed in head laid low,
 A plunge all-gathering inward—
 Quivering mind now emptied—
 Multi-sounds, heard yet unheard.

A world of violet clouds—
 A world of secret oblivion,
 Where poppies emit a glaze of purple,
 An opium-light, a sleep of sun;

Where the mind sinks into silver crystals,
 And thoughts become a rising haze
 Enveloping the conscious present
 Amid trance-vapours of Your Grace.

Troubles fade like pleasant wraiths,
 Perplexities are wool set free...
 A lovely Escape, a deep Abode,
 A dream-sought wakeful Sanctuary !

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

THY LOVE

LOVE

shooting from spheres
unknown, above,
outpours on the universe,
and drenches my being,
and through me soars unbarred
like a huge bird
at liberty.

But what is the hitch or hidden wall
of vanity
that cuts across my call
seeking a little of Thy Smile,
Thy Love?

O Mother, hark awhile !
What makes my wings halt at Thy door ?
O wash each ego stain :
Let none remain
By Thee unlit.
I implore,
with gratitude,
humble and pure of mood,
Thy Smile,
Thy Love,
to pay a little of debt
that for births I owe
to Thee,
O Love.

MOHANLAL
HAR KRISHAN SINGH

WHY KRISHNA AND KALI ARE BLACK

(A comment on the article : "The Beauteous Black Divinities of India"
by M. Mansingh—"Mother India", June, 1964—as invited by the Editor.)

"Along a path of aeons serpentine
In the coiled blackness of her nescient course
The Earth-Goddess toils across the Sands of Time."

SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri* (Bk. I. Canto IV)

THE subject of colours of Godheads and Deities invariably raises all sorts of spiritual questions. The Blue-Black (Mitra-Varuna) concept is all right but there are other significances as well. One thing, however, should be made clear first—Time is always conceived as Black because in this world under the clutch of Death—the absolute cosmic determinism in nature up to now—Time represents Kala the Lord of Death (Yama) who is Black and Lord Krishna himself is also the Lord of Death in His cosmic aspect (*Kālo'smi loka-kṣayakṛt pravṛddhaḥ*—The Gita XI. 32) and therefore appears as Black.

Krishna and Kali appear as Blue in their cosmic aspect when they are identified with the limitless vast bluish expanse of the sky and as Black in their individual aspect when they are identified with Kala (Time), the Godhead of Death and Destruction.

As for man Krishna there is nothing unnatural in his being dark-skinned (and named as such by his parents) and yet remaining an Aryan in the truest possible sense of the term; no man-made law or conception can prevent the Divine from being born dark or white or of whatever colour He or She chooses to take. For example, in our own times, we have seen that Sri Aurobindo, through whose body the Overmental Krishna-consciousness descended into the gross physical (*Vide* : announcement of 'Datta', Miss Dorothy Hodgeson on the eve of the *Siddhi*-Day, 24th November, 1926) was also born dark and remained so for a considerable part of his early life and could as well have been named Krishna by his parents but can anybody say that he was *not* an Aryan by birth and culture ?

The Blue-Black (Blue Sky, Black Earth) appearance is evidently ascribed to Krishna (or to Rama) who was not only a mere man but a Godhead as well and, as innumerable legends have it, was endowed with supernatural powers from his very boyhood and such a being is also affirmed by the emphatic utterances of many a modern thinker and writer of repute, as shown by Prema Nanda Kumar in her *A Study of Savitri*. Even a writer like Henry Miller asserts :

"I say the whole world, fanning out in every direction from this spot, was once alive in a way that no man ever dreamed of. I say then were Gods who roamed every-

where, men like us in form and substance, but free, electrically free.” (*The Colossus of Maroussi*)

Colour symbolises Gunas, modes, possibilities, variations, etc., and represents in this physical world of electro-magnetic radiation various shades of light over the entire visual range (roughly 4000-8000) differing in wave lengths and frequencies.

The Sat-Chit-Ananda who is at once Individual, Cosmic and Transcendent, who is All-Light, All-knowledge, All-Bliss and therefore White like the symbolic Vedic ‘Cow’ descends in course of involution into the abyss and becomes No-Light, No-Knowledge, No-Bliss and therefore Black like the symbolic Black Sheep (Krishna or Christ—born in a ‘cow’-shed—being the shepherd). Omniscient White becomes, by means of this miraculous Yoga-Maya Inconscient Black. In course of evolution the all-devouring and all-negating darkness gradually disappears till it becomes the blazing White Light of the spiritual Sun: hence the eternal prayer—“Lead us from Darkness to Light, . . .” and the emphatic declaration of the Truth-Seers to have known the Great Sun-white Purusha beyond the all-encompassing Darkness. (*Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntaṁ āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ paraśtāt.*—Upanishad).

Krishna himself, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the eternal player or flutist who like a huge magnet attracts everything and all being (*ākaraṣayati iti Kṛṣṇaḥ*) and ploughs the field of everything and all being for proper fertilisation and ultimate fruition (*Karaṣayati iti Kṛṣṇaḥ*) and who is the Seed-giving Cosmic Father (*Ahaṁ bījapradāḥ pitā*—The Gita) becomes the Inconscient and therefore, although full of White Light in His Purushottama aspect, appears as Black in his individual aspect of manifestation.

Krishna, the huge Black Magnet, is in his north pole the omniscient all-absorbing White Light (Purushottama) where the Transcendental Truth-Consciousness is the Law of his Being; in his south pole the nescient, non-absorbing Black Body where the ceaseless flux of creation and mutable individuality are the Law of His Being. From White Light to Black Body through innumerable shades of colour variation and *vice versa*—this is the ‘flow-chart’ of the creative cycle.

From the spiritual standpoint also it can be seen that He who in his transcendental static aspect is measureless, limitless and potentially full of infinite possibilities of mutable variations has in his cosmic aspect voluntarily thrown a Black veil of Yoga-Maya (apparent measure and not illusion) around Himself and has projected this multi-dimensional but limited and finite creation of Desire, Drudgery, Dragnet and Doom out of his own Being. (*Daiṁ hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā*—The Gita). Anything which is finite by the physical process of birth is subject to doom and destruction (*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ*—The Gita) and is therefore Black and gloomy.

Krishna, who in his cosmic aspect is limitless like the sky which has no colour or, in his transcendent aspect of Concentrated power, is full of White Light like the blazing Sun (‘the symbol of the Divine in Physical Nature’), appears as Blue Black

in his cosmic-cum-individual aspect just as the sky sometimes appears as Blue and, when full of dark clouds, as Black but is really void of all colour; Krishna is *Nava-jala-dhara-syām*—the Being containing within Himself infinite possibilities of creation and pour—like a cloud the water of creation perpetually as if from an inexhaustible jar. In our scripture Salila (water) stands for creation and, as is well-known, the water (or rain) cycle is inseparably connected with the cycle of creation,—the eternal dance of Kali, the Mighty Mother, the Parama Prakriti who plays with time (*Kālam kalayati yā sā*) and who is also jet Black (*Mātramiśāmayī*). This is so because time itself is without any beginning and end and from a present point of time if one stretches one's vision towards the past or future what does one see? Beyond one's physical memory and vision everything is dark and hazy and therefore the Mother Kali, being herself the playmate and presiding Deity of time, in her individual aspect of manifestation appears as Black.

Dynamic and Black Kali eternally dancing on the breast of static and White Śiva (all-witness Soul-space) forms with him an inseparable picture of the Deity who is really one-in-two- (or many) and symbolises the space-time continuum.

From the above discussion it should be clear that Krishna and Kali cannot appear as anything but Black in their manifestation in the physical plane of existence. To conceive them of any other colour would be spiritually (and therefore essentially) wrong and untrue.

As regards Lord Krishna's "pride" (?) in being an Aryan, well, this is also too much of a superficial understanding and judgement. The Gita is nothing if it is not a spiritual book through and through; hence every word contained in it must be understood from that standpoint.

'Anarya' does not mean one who is non-Arya by blood or race but only one who is non-Arya by outlook on life. An 'Arya' is one who is truthful, noble, beautiful, courageous, etc. (in short, all that is spiritually lofty, glorious and magnanimous) and, essentially, Aryanism has nothing to do with race, blood, colour, creed or dogma.

As regards the role of the artistic imagination in ascribing a bluish appearance to Krishna or a calm serene beauty to the meditating Buddha-on-lotus, well, they are not imagination at all. Krishna, the Anandamaya, as the Lord of Over-Mind emits Sapphire-Blue Mystic Light which is more concrete in its own sphere than any brick or stone or grossly physical being in flesh and blood. One can see it if one has the inner eye to see, otherwise one sees nothing. Likewise, the Buddha-on-lotus with closed eye-lids, radiating Peace and Bliss and Calm eternally all round like a gigantic radiating-tower, is more powerful than the mighty Himalayas and that is why these Names and Forms have conquered Time and have become truly immortal in their own inherent right. There are things like subtle-physical, vital, mental and supramental sheaths (the Sukshma and Karana Sharira, etc. of the Hindu scriptures) which are as concretely (if not more) existent in their own planes of existence as we are in our own gross physical plane, and those who by inward concentration can attune their minds to the wave-lengths and frequencies of that particular plane—

very much like a radio receiver being attuned to a particular wave-length and frequency—can see and hear and feel with their inward senses the Name and Form and Seed-sound of a particular Deity or Mantra on which they choose to focus their pin-pointed minds, utterly purified of all dross by the inward mystic Fire ‘of upward aspiring Force and Will’ and heat of Tapas.

“A darkness carrying morning in its breast
 Looked for the eternal wide returning gleam,
 Waiting the advent of a larger ray
 And rescue of the lost herds of the Sun.”

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book I. Canto III)

M. K. SINHA

BAGHA JATIN

THE HERO OF THE BENGAL REVOLUTION

“YOU have heard of Jatin Mukherjee?” Sri Aurobindo once asked his disciples; and then he exclaimed in his unique tone, “A wonderful man! He was a man who would belong to the front rank of humanity anywhere; such beauty and strength combined together I have not seen, and his stature was like that of a warrior!”

Jatindranath Mukherjee is better known as Bagha Jatin because, as a young man, he had fought face to face with a Royal Bengal Tiger in his native village and killed it single-handed with just a Darjeeling knife. It was not merely a feat of physical strength, presence of mind, cool courage, or self-sacrificing determination. His contemporaries have attributed a spiritual power to his superman-like personality.

After killing the tiger, while Jatin was being removed in a serious condition to Calcutta for proper treatment, not only was he fully aware all through, reciting to himself his favourite verses from the Gita, but also, in order to cheer up his friends and relatives, he was found cracking jokes and laughing with a defiant vivacity. Moreover, before the operation, when the well-known surgeon Dr. Suresh Sarbadhikary wanted to amputate his right leg—since the knee had got badly crushed under the tiger’s jaws—Jatin requested him to try his best to avoid amputation. And so the idea of amputation was dropped. Greatly moved by Jatin’s calm and patience during the operation, Dr. Sarbadhikary wrote an article in *The Bengalee* in appreciation of the unique faculties of Jatin’s physical and psychological make-up. And he was surprised beyond measure when, six months after the operation, he found Jatin discarding

the crutches altogether and resuming his normal physical activities, riding, motor-cycling, shooting, swimming, rowing, fencing, lathi play, wrestling and other combatives and sports, in all of which he excelled.

About Jatin's generosity and nobility countless anecdotes have been written and told by many of his followers and close associates like Dr Taraknath Das (who later settled in the U.S.A.), M. N. Roy, Dr. Jadugopal (brother of the noted writer Dhana-gopal Mukherjee), Bhupen Dutt, Atul Ghose and Bhupati Majumdar (who became a minister of West Bengal after 1947)—anecdotes which have become legends today and inspired poets and writers down the decades to sing of the glorious deeds of a master-mind and a pioneer in our struggle for freedom. Giving away in charity the last piece of coin he had on him, even the costly suit from his person; nursing cholera and plague patients day in and day out, cleaning their discharges by handfuls, with a smiling face; bringing home mad men from the streets, bathing them, treating them kindly with Ayurvedic oils and drugs, giving them good food and clothing; helping orphans and poor students, arranging for their studies and well-being; protecting everywhere helpless 'natives' against the wrath of the conceited 'white skins'; punishing the wicked and defending the weak and the victimised : such were the deeds attributed to him; and many of those who witnessed them are still alive.

According to Dr. Jadugopal, "Jatin Mukherjee's entire life was a living Gita. To him, pleasure and pain, life and death, gain and loss, victory and defeat, praise and spite made no difference. . . . When Jatindranath spoke, his words sent thrills of electricity down the minds and nerves of the listeners, and would generate an unimaginable force. Nothing seemed impossible in his presence. . . . So high did he soar and so strong he was in his physical, mental and spiritual strength that I have not seen another man to compare him with."

M. N. Roy wrote, "We called him simply *Dada* (big brother); because in the land and age of *Dadas* he was peerless, not another like him. . . . As in modern art, so in our infantile politics; 'Dadaism' was an irrational cult. . . . But Jatinda was not a prophet of the cult of Dadaism. . . . All the other *Dadas* practised magnetism; only Jatin Mukherjee possessed it. Therefore he was a puzzle and a despair to his rivals. . . . He never cast his net; yet he was loved by all, even by the followers of other *Dadas*. . . . At that time I did not know what was the attraction. . . . His frame did not speak for his legendary physical strength, though he had been a trained wrestler. Nor did he put on an air of condescending superiority. . . . Later, I had the privilege of meeting many outstanding personalities of our time. These are great men; Jatinda was a good man, and I have still to find a better. . . . He must be appreciated as the archetypal man the like of whom, though not many, live and die apparently without leaving any footprint on the sands of time. But in reality they embody rays of hope breaking through the darkness of the mass of mediocrity. . . . Good men are seldom given a place in the galaxy of the great. It will continue to be so until goodness is recognised as the measure of genuine greatness. Jatinda was not an embodiment of the mediaeval values of warlikeness and heroism. He did not belong to any age; his values were

human and as such transcended space and time... He believed himself to be a Karmayogi;... and recommended the ideal to all of us. Detached from the unnecessary mystic preoccupation, a Karmayogi means a humanist. He who believes that self-realisation can be attained through human action must also logically believe in man's creativeness—that man is the maker of his destiny. That is also the essence of Humanism. Jatinda was a Humanist—perhaps the first in modern India...”

Jatindranath Mukherjee was born in December 1879, in a respectable well-to-do Brahmin family of Jessore. His father, Umesh Chandra, was a profound scholar, reputed for his strength of character and courage. His mother, Sharat-Shashi Debi, was a poet of considerable merit. She was a living example of the spirit of Hindu womanhood, of lofty ideals and stern determination.

Jatin lost his father at the age of five and was brought up, along with his elder sister Vinodebala, in his maternal uncles' house in Koya, near Krishna-Nagar. Apart from their vast properties, Jatin's maternal uncles had an important position in contemporary cultural and social life. His eldest uncle Basanta Kumar Chatterjee was a prosperous government pleader as well as a professor in the local law college; poet Tagore was one of his esteemed clients and a family friend too. The second uncle Hemanta Kumar was a very popular surgeon in Shobhabazar (Calcutta): among his fast friends were Dr. Suresh Sarbadhikary and Dr. Nilratan Sarkar. The youngest uncle Lalit Kumar was a good litterateur, and a son-in-law of the great thinker and patriotic writer Shri Yogendra Vidyabhusan who was among the first to inspire the youth of Bengal with his narrations of the freedom fight in other countries and, like Bankim's *Anandamath*, Vidyabhusan's lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi were among the writings most favourite with the Bengal revolutionaries.

At an early age Jatin showed a remarkable development of body and mind. Uncle Basanta Kumar had appointed Feraz Mian, an ex-military service man from the North-West Frontier Province, to train Jatin and other children of the family in the art of self-defence, combatives, and body-building. Jatin not only acquired a rare mastery over all these, but also caught a spark from Feraz's freedom-loving nature. In studies as well as in innocent mischief-making, he was so brilliant that his teachers and fellow-students both loved and respected him. As a schoolboy, one day he halted a frenzied horse rushing down the streets of Krishnanagar and creating panic among the people; and after quieting it by caresses, he returned the horse to its owner.

While studying the Fine Arts in Calcutta Central College, Jatin came to know Sister Nivedita during the plague relief work. Nivedita was so impressed with Jatin's idealism that she took him to Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji liked him very much and is said to have become quite intimate with this young dreamer who was an excellent man of action as well. In later days, a Bengali writer remarked that Vivekananda and Jatin were but one single person born in two different bodies and belonging to two different generations and, in fact, had Vivekananda wished to become Jatin, and Jatin Vivekananda, well could they have exchanged their roles.

Thanks to his conversations with Vivekananda, Jatin felt confirmed in his con-

viction that the spiritual regeneration of India would not be possible till India was politically free.

In 1899, while nursing a cholera patient, Jatin's mother caught the infection and succumbed to it. This was the crowning lesson of selfless service and sacrifice which she had been all along inspiring in her children.

Soon afterwards, Jatin joined the Bengal Secretariat as an expert stenographer, and had to spend half the year at Darjeeling and the other half in Calcutta. Wherever he was, boys and young men flocked round him, attracted by his personal magnetism. From a very early age, Jatin had a natural love of great writings. The Gita was his greatest inspiration. He could draw upon it at need. Wherever young men gathered about him, he would hold classes on the Gita and other sacred writings as well as the fiery works by Yogendra Vidyabhushan, Bankim, and many foreign authors and thinkers, in order to create in them a deep-rooted love for the Motherland whose bondage was much too painful for him to bear.

At the instance of his elder sister Vinodebala, Jatin was married to Indubala Debi in April 1900. Jatin's children Ashalata, Tejen, and Biren are still alive.

In 1903, at Yogendra Vidyabhushan's place, Jatin first met Sri Aurobindo and J. N. Banerjee (afterwards Swami Niralamba). From that day, till Sri Aurobindo's coming to Pondicherry in 1910, Jatin was an intimate and esteemed friend of his, whom Sri Aurobindo once called his "right hand man" while he was in Bengal. At the same time Jatin had come to know other eminent men like Barrister P. Mitter, Satish Mukherjee, Upadhyaya Brahmavandhav, Sir Jagadish Bose, Suren Tagore, Sarala Devi, Ramananda Chatterjee and a few more.

Above all, Jatin was a man of inner spiritual attainments, and a seeker—an initiated disciple of the great Saint Bholananda Giri of Haridwar, Jatin's devotion to the Divine was hard to distinguish from his devotion to Mother India. His mission was to shake the country out of its sterile torpor and make it poignantly conscious of India's freedom, since it was the Divine's will that India should be free. Jatin's disciple Chittapriya, the unforgettable hero and martyr, was a descendant of a realised *tāntrik sādhak*, and himself a worshipper of Mother Kali from his early childhood. On his first meeting with Jatin, Chitta asked, "Dada, can one realise the Divine by serving the Motherland?" And Jatin in his serious tone of certitude replied, "If it were not so, I would be the last person to follow this path."

Even before meeting Sri Aurobindo, Jatin had started organising secret societies and initiating young men of the country into the creed of an armed revolution whose aim was to overthrow the foreign government. His acquaintance with Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo helped him formulate clearly his programme of action. For, Sri Aurobindo too wanted to start a secret revolutionary propaganda and organisation of which the central object was the preparation of an armed insurrection; next, there would be public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence which was regarded, at the beginning, by the vast majority of Indians as unpractical and impossible; and then there would be the organisation of the people

to carry on a public and united opposition and undermine the foreign rule through an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance. "At that time," writes Sri Aurobindo, "the military organisation of the great empires and their means of military action were not so overwhelming and apparently irresistible as they now are : the rifle was still the decisive weapon, air power had not yet been developed and the force of artillery was not so devastating as it afterwards became. India was disarmed, but Sri Aurobindo thought that with proper organisation and *help from outside* that difficulty might be overcome and in so vast a country as India and with the smallness of the regular British armies, even a guerrilla warfare accompanied by general resistance and revolt might be effective. There was also a possibility of general revolt in the Indian army."

When in 1908 the "bomb factory" at Maniktola was discovered by Government and most of the leaders (including Sri Aurobindo) and revolutionaries were arrested, Jatin managed to stay out in order to keep the organisation running. During the trial, Ashu Biswas, Public prosecutor, was trying his best to get all the accused convicted. Jatin decided to put an end to this man's ignominious existence. On hearing of this, young Charu Bose, one of Jatin's dearest disciples, volunteered again and again to take the job up. Charu's right hand was paralytic. Therefore Jatin repeatedly asked Charu to wait since he had reserved something else for him. But Charu's insistence prevailed; Jatin agreed, and tied a loaded revolver to Charu's disabled wrist. Concealing his right hand under cover of a chaddar, Charu bowed to Jatin, took his blessings and went straight to the court at Alipore, where the trial was going on. Before any one could notice it, Charu lifted up his right hand with his left, and fired the fatal shot. Then, instead of trying to escape, he stood immobile, looking at the dead body with a smile of satisfaction. Arrested on the spot, and tortured, Charu boldly said, "No sessions' trial, but hang me tomorrow. It was all preordained that Ashu Babu should be shot by me, and I should be hanged." Charu went to the gallows with his unfading smile, as Khudiram, Kanailal and ever so many revolutionaries had done.

Next came the turn of Samsul Alam, the most notorious deputy Superintendent of Police, who dreamed of an ambitious future at the cost of the revolutionaries. Jatin's disciple, Biren Datta Gupta, came forward and this time did the job well in the open High Court. But a sudden nervousness made his escape impossible and he was arrested.

Though Jatin was very much against terrorism, under unavoidable circumstances (such as raising Funds to defend the accused revolutionaries) he had to consent to Swadeshi "dacoities", in which M. N. Roy was one of his main lieutenants; several such "dacoities" were carried out all over the country and the police arrested Lalit Chakravarty, one of Jatin's disciples, at Darjeeling. Lalit turned approver, and gave away thirty-two names, stating Jatin to be the absolute leader of the entire revolutionary movement. Samsul's killer, young Biren too in a moment of bewildered weakness faltered under the devious machinations of the police and declared Jatin to be the supreme leader.

After a good deal of vain attempt, Government at last on January 27, 1910, arrested Jatin who had till then, surprisingly enough, continued in his high post in the Bengal secretariat, directly under the personal Secretary to the Governor of Bengal. During the search of his room the police discovered one of his manuscripts, "The Scheme and Formation of the Vigilance Committee."

The alien Government soon realised that their guest was a veritable Royal Bengal tiger. After four days of starvation in the lock-up at the Royd Street police station and the most brutal torture, when no information could be forced out of Jatin, the police went to try their usual method with him—that of temptation : large purse, palatial home, kingly situation, finest wine, prettiest women.

"Shut up !" thundered Jatin's voice and he brought his fist down with such a bang on the table that it cracked and collapsed.

Then he was sent first to the Presidency Jail and afterwards to the Alipore Central Jail, as a convict under trial. His historic trial began as "the Howrah Conspiracy Case." After fifteen long months of rigorous prison experience, Jatin was acquitted in April 1911, since the police failed to prove the case.

Still, Government at once dismissed the entire 10th Jat Regiment on the charge of having responded to Jatin's seductions.

(To be continued)

PRITHWINDRA MUKHERJEE

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Satya ka Rahasya (Hindi) by Keshavadeva Acharya. Publishers : Sri Aurobindo Pustakalaya, Railway Road, Hapur, Meerut, U.P. (Present Address : Divyajivan Sahitya Prakashana, Pondicherry-2). Price Rs. 5 only.

Before one starts practising truth, one has not to be told that true action consists in doing it in all honesty and sincerity of heart and mind. There is something deep and inherent in man which spontaneously senses that any kind of twist or turn in the normal simplicity of candid working in Nature's ways, is a falsification and a deviation from truth. Yet so fumbling and insincere has become the nature of man that innumerable sons of the earth and countless children of heaven have down the ages tirelessly exhorted man not only to follow truth elementarily in thought and action but also to express the higher power of harmonising divine truth in life so that he becomes the real man as he ought to be in a deeper, nobler, wider and higher way.

Satya Ka Rahasya (The Secret of Truth) is indeed a true and sincere attempt to bring out the same truth rather simply and explicitly. In the beginning of the book the author gives the deeper philosophy and definition of Truth especially in the light of the integral vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The book is studded with numerous jewel-tales of truth from ordinary life; they carry easy conviction to the heart because of their very simplicity and vivid mirroring of the various aspects of life based on truthfulness.

In his Foreword, Sri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, former Speaker of the Indian Parliament, now the Governor of Bihar, introduces the author in these words: "Sri Swami Keshavadeva Acharya is a man of experience and high learning in the field of Indian and Western Philosophy." He believes that this book will be of great help in uplifting and ennobling the life and character of students and all others in general, especially at a time when, as he says, are seen manifest after independence increasingly low tendencies towards moral degradation, bad character and indiscipline which have become a source of serious anxiety for men of thought. Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the present Prime Minister of India, says in his Introduction that Swami Keshavadeva has gone sufficiently deep and has endeavoured to make in many ways the secret of truth simple for our understanding.

When all the facets and factors of applied truth, as enumerated by the Acharya—goodwill for others; truthfulness; sweet and balanced speech; calmness; simplicity; fearlessness and spontaneous love; sincerity; honesty; detachment; self-sacrifice; forbearance; faith in God; truthful will and mental honesty; truth in behaviour, belief and being, etc.,—synthesise in a harmonised whole, then we have the right condition for concord and happy growth. The author cites numerous touching instances from men of various achievements in their experiments with truth, e.g.

Śri Aurobindo, The Mother, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Socrates, Harishchandra, Mahatma Gandhi, Raichand Bhai, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Ashwinikumar Dutta, Abraham Lincoln, etc., The list is unending.

This is truly a book worthy to be taken notice of by educationists and a book worth prescribing for the school and college courses, for it is not only of absorbing interest but one which has a promise of helping the readers, young and old, whether in ordinary or in spiritual life, to build a great and noble personality on stable foundations of the deeper reality of man's being and to raise a harmonious social life on the same basis.

The author deserves our praise for having produced a book so interesting and comprehensive and so widely representative and cosmopolitan in outlook and content, useful for everybody. The title page and get-up are artistic and attractive, the printing fine and the price moderate. It contains two nice photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The book should claim wide circulation.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Nari Naye Yug Men A Hindi rendering by Devdutt of the original Bengali *Narir Katha* by Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Price. Rs. 2.50

It has been said and rightly too that since the very beginning of creation, two problems have always baffled the intelligence of man and escaped real solution—the relation between man and State and the relation between man and woman. Here again we find the learned author, Nolini Kanta Gupta, lifting his lucid pen in an effort to find a radical solution of the latter.

He starts with a sharp cut at all the mist and veil—including of course the gross physical veil associated with woman's dress—of age-old customs and traditions that shroud and eclipse woman's personality. The author holds that the human soul being without sex, the real and lasting union can come only when man and woman have discovered this common background which is the real truth of their existence. It is on this firm rock only that they can companion each other and have the joy of a divine felicity. As the author puts it : "The union of soul with soul, the unity of God within is the principle of Divine Felicity."

But this is the culmination. What is the starting point ? Woman must be free first. For this the author puts forward some very bold suggestions, almost staggering to the orthodox line of thought clinging clumsily to the past and viewing any new departure with cynicism and scepticism. But the old traditions which were perhaps essential for the growth of her soul at a certain stage of her evolution seem now to bar the way for her further widening into the Spirit by putting around her lamentable limitations, and must be shattered for good if woman is to take her

legitimate part in the forward march of evolution. Through all oppositions the evolutionary urge of Nature must satisfy itself. Woman must be free. And as the very first step in this direction the author advocates her economic emancipation. For, as long as she is a helpless dependant in this respect she cannot even think of a greater freedom. The primary necessities of food and other physical amenities will ever keep her an appendage of man.

For a deeper and higher psychological study of the problem the reader may well be advised to refer to the Mother's article, "The Problem of Woman" (*Bulletin of Physical Education*, April 1955), in which She views both woman and man in their mutual relations as at once a despotic master and a pitiable slave to each other, and points out their weaknesses that have made them such.

Finally the young writer-cum-poet Devdutt deserves our thanks for putting this Bengali gem before the Hindi readers—now that the study of Hindi is increasing fast in the country—at a time when all human values are in need of an urgent revaluation. In this fine version the translator has successfully tried to keep in certain places the spirit of a few elegant words and phrases of the original Bengali which is certainly the creation of a master artist.

The printing is very neat and the cover with the sketch of *Durga Kamaldharini* in front and *Venus and Vinavadini* behind is very attractive. The price too, considering the present trend of upward shooting prices of every commodity, is reasonable.

BRAJNANDAN

SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY'S WORLD CONFERENCE

(A SUMMARY REPORT)

THE first World Conference of Sri Aurobindo Society was held in Pondicherry from 10th to 14th August. It was attended by more than 400 delegates from all parts of India and from U.S.A., Japan, East Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam and Ceylon.

The Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, who is President of the Society, presided over the Conference in spirit. Her presence was felt very concretely all the time. On the dais were large-size photos of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother amidst beautiful floral decorations and fragrance of the Ashram incense sticks. In front of them was The Mother's chair as a physical indication of Her presence.

The Mother's message to the Conference was :

“The future of the Earth depends on a Change of Consciousness.

“The only hope for the future is in a change of man's consciousness and the change is bound to come.

“But it is left to men to decide if they will collaborate for this change or it will have to be enforced upon them by the power of crashing circumstances.”

The Conference comprised a two-day seminar, and a two-day plenary session besides a day free for committee meetings. The subjects of the Seminar were the following :

1. How can humanity become One ?
2. What is the way of making the consciousness of human unity grow in men ?
3. What is a change of consciousness ?
4. How can a change of consciousness change the life upon earth ?

The Conference started with The Mother's tape-recorded organ music ‘Aspiration of the body for the Divine’ and Her words “No human will can finally prevail against the Divine's will. Let us put ourselves deliberately and exclusively on the side of the Divine and the Victory is ultimately certain.”

This was followed by a hymn on Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Navajata, General Secretary of Sri Aurobindo Society, welcomed the delegates and introduced the two-day Seminar. He observed that the Society had been registered four years back to work for the fulfilment of the ideals of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother throughout the world and that one of the dreams mentioned by Sri Aurobindo in his message of 15th August 1947 was—“A world union forming the outer basis for a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind.” The Mother too, in the book ‘Words of The Mother’ had stated that the general aim to be attained was the advent of a progressing universal harmony.

He explained that our present life of competition, fearful alertness and brinkmanship was spelling ruin to us in terms of both time and resources and, what was

worse, it harmed us psychologically as it meant living in the falsehood of a narrow, egoistic and ignorant division rather than in the truth of unity. In our ignorance we do not realise that by indulging in jealousy, hatred and greed, we ourselves close the doors of our true progress. A true solution to all these problems lies in a change of consciousness. Imagine for a moment, he added, what would be the result if we realised the truth that we are one and the Supreme is progressively manifesting Himself in this world, and if we planned life accordingly. He informed the gathering of what The Mother had told him, that if the Conference could help even one individual to become conscious, it would be considered a success.

Many papers for the Seminar were received but only a few were selected to be read and discussed.

Dr. V. K. Gokak, Director, Central Institute of English (Govt. of India) and Vice-Chairman of the Society's Hyderabad branch was the first to read his paper. He explained that a change of consciousness implied a fourfold self-expansion :

- 1) Knowing ourselves and discovering and utilising all our potentialities.
- 2) Becoming conscious of the Divine and thus sublimating the thought, life and flesh.
- 3) Building a life and action in conformity with the truth of the spirit.
- 4) Bringing in a new principle in everyday life.

Dr. A. Narasinga Rao of Madras Institute of Technology explained how the building up of our physical and mental worlds is both a vertical and a horizontal process. He dwelt on the various states of consciousness, viz.—waking consciousness, dream consciousness, samadhi, cosmic consciousness, etc.

Sri Ishwarlal Bhatt mentioned the various social economic and political movements and pointed out how they worked on the outer periphery and did not care to relate themselves to the source of existence without which neither change of consciousness nor true unity was possible.

Dr. K. Sivagnana Ratnam of Ceylon asserted that humanity has always been one but looks different because of the inability of the 'I' or ego consciousness in each one of us to realise the truth of the Unity of our 'Self' which is hidden. We have to devise a way, he added, for practical realisation of this great truth by all. He suggested some form of World Government, an International Commission of 'Egoless' people to study and solve all world problems.

Sri Debajyoti Burman said that the individual must grow and plan the society in a way as would help his growth. He stressed the need of spreading dynamic education as suggested by Sri Aurobindo, to further the work.

Dr. Akshay Shaha related that when his wife Mrs. Tatiana Shaha went to Russia in August '63, she found a genuine interest there in Yoga. He favoured the establishment of Sri Aurobindo International Centres throughout the world to help in bringing about peace, unity, harmony and beauty in life. He added that were we to work in earnest for the unity of the world, our task should be to start with children of the world.

Sri V. V. Seth's paper explained that there were many planes and each plane had its own consciousness. The change of consciousness implies evolution and not simply a mental change.

Mr. Raynor C. Johnson, the world-known physicist of the University of Melbourne, Australia, whose written speech was read out at the Conference said —“We must not be overwhelmed by the vastness of the situation in contrast to the smallness of the contribution we can make. So long as I think of ‘myself’ and my contribution, I have forgotten God. History has shown to us how the dedicated individuals, who altogether forgot themselves to become instruments of God, have changed the world.”

Sri A. Nandi's paper, Sri Prahlad Agarwal's answers in the form of a drama and Mrs. J. Bhatt's answers in Gujarati were much appreciated.

Some of the other views received in writing but not read out at the Conference endorsed the views expressed by the various speakers though treated from a slightly different angle. Amongst those who sent their views were :—

Gen. K. C. Cariappa, Rev. Obadiah Harris (Arizona—U.S.A.), P. V. Pathak, J. Dayanand Rao, Purna Chandra Roy, T. Kodandarama Rao, Raghunath Mohanty, B. C. Bhattacharjee and P. V. Shah.

On being requested, The Mother had graciously given Her answers to the subjects of the Seminar. They were tape-recorded and played at the end, and were accepted as the findings of the Seminar.

The Mother's Answers

1. How can humanity become One ?

By becoming conscious of its origin.

2. What is the way of making the consciousness of human unity grow in man ?

Spiritual Education, that is to say an education which gives more importance to the growth of the spirit than to any religious or moral teaching or to the material so-called knowledge.

3. What is a change of consciousness ?

A change of consciousness is equivalent to a new birth, a birth in a higher sphere of existence.

4. How can a change of consciousness change the life upon earth ?

A change in human consciousness will make possible the manifestation upon earth of a higher Force, a purer Light, a more total Truth.

A statement giving the general consensus of the Seminar was issued and placed before the Conference by Sri V. K. Gokak. Winding up, Sri Arun Tagore thanked the delegates for their co-operation and participation in the Seminar and expressed gratitude to The Mother for Her constant spiritual presence.

12th August :

On 12th August the office-bearers and workers of the Society from India and ab-

road met informally and discussed the future plan of work. The visiting delegates were also taken round the various departments of the Ashram.

Plenary Session :

On 13th August, the proceedings of the Conference started with The Mother's tape-recorded music and words followed by 'Vandanam'.

Sri Narendrasinghi, Maharaja of Panna, welcomed the gathering. Sri Navajata gave a report of the progress of the Society during the four years of its formation, as also its future plans. He related what The Mother had told him in connection with the subjects of the Seminar that the first step in spiritual education was to live within unaffected by outward circumstances. This, said Sri Navajata, did not mean renunciation of life but realising a contact with one's psychic being, which alone could give illumination for a correct organisation of external life.

Four papers read by the teachers and students of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education were very much appreciated by the audience. They were :

(1) Are You Ready ?

Sri Kishore Gandhi in his speech explained the significance of the present human crisis in the light of Sri Aurobindo's vision of human evolution on earth and its future destiny. He showed how the usual interpretations of this crisis and the solutions proposed for it were erroneous and unsatisfactory and how the only true solution lay in a radical change in the human consciousness lifting it from the present mental to the supramental level. He said that this was the inevitable next step in the terrestrial evolution but humanity as a whole was incapable of taking that step. Only a few exceptional individuals could first accomplish this change in themselves and from them it would extend to the rest of humanity. The whole issue of humanity's fate at the present moment, therefore, rested upon a few individuals.

(2) The Future Society

Miss Jhumur Bhattacharya in her speech said that society like the individual follows a course of evolution, from the physical, through the vital and the mental into the spiritual domain. She pointed out that humanity was rising in consciousness, and moving towards a greater unity, a confederacy of states based on freedom and brotherhood, but the inner basis of the spiritual society had always to be the Spirit, and to realise it the one thing needful was for everyone to feel the necessity of this change and to turn inward to accomplish it.

(3) How One can best serve the Divine

Sri Manoj Das Gupta said that it is not by proclaiming or advertising one's religion and not by philanthropic work that one can best serve the Divine. The only goal that one must put before oneself is the Divine manifestation and a complete working out of the Divine Will. For that the first step is to be conscious of the Supreme's presence within oneself, to offer one's whole life, and its each and every act as a sacrifice to the Lord.

(4) The Call of the Hour

Sri Vijay Poddar pointed out that humanity is going through a period of acute crisis. The only solution as asserted by Sri Aurobindo is a complete reversal of the consciousness of the individual, a new birth, which implies a double movement : First the individual must ascend to realise the spirit, and then bring down the supramental power to change earth nature. For this, he must aspire for and be conscious of that change at each moment of his life, and plunge whole-heartedly into the new adventure.

Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Vice Chancellor of Annamalai University, spoke of the conquest of spirit over matter in everyday life and stressed the need for spiritual education as was being given at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Pondicherry. He expressed his gratification at being able to participate in this great gathering.

Dr. H. K. Mahatab, M.P., related how curiously and silently the higher forces were working everywhere, moulding men and leading them to unity. He asserted that the time had come for Human Unity and enjoined upon the delegates to formulate concrete steps to achieve it. He pledged himself to do his best to implement the decisions arrived at in the Conference. He recalled his meeting with Einstein in 1952 when he asked the great scientist about nuclear research. "I am also doing a spiritual work,—seeing the end of matter, where the spirit begins," replied Einstein.

Prof. V. K. Gokak pointed out the necessity of preparing text books for all grades which can impart integral education to the students.

Mrs. Edith Reames, one of the directors of Cultural Fellowship in San Francisco, U.S.A., suggested the introduction of Correspondence Courses on the writings of Sri Aurobindo as there was felt a need for such Courses in U.S.A.

Sri N. N. Kaul, Secretary, International Labour Organisation, Delhi, drew attention to the peace and harmony in the Ashram with its Dining Room as a typical example and said that this was so because people here act from a peaceful inner Centre. He asked whether the same harmony could not be possible outside and added that a conflict was a falsehood. It could be countered successfully only with Truth which one could grasp only when one was in touch with inner peace. Self-finding, he explained, on the part of both workers and members of the management, is indeed the key to industrial amity. Man must evolve to be free from conflict.

Sri Ajit Bose, President of the Film Federation of India, informed the delegates of The Mother's project for producing films in Pondicherry to impart true knowledge through the right kind of entertainment.

Dr. Indra Sen explained the purport of the subjects of the Seminar and remarked that this was truly a World Conference as people assembled here were considering ways to world unity in all sincerity. By putting to the audience questions like 'Are you body or consciousness or both ?' etc., he helped them to think out the answers themselves. The replies by the distinguished gathering and the counter questions by Dr. Indrasen brought forth a lively discussion on the items in hand.

Sri M. J. Patel, Convener, Sri Aurobindo Society, Osaka, Japan, spoke about

the Society's work there. He said that in Japan there was a growing and sincere interest in Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future. He suggested that while Japanese students had already started coming to Pondicherry for study and practice of Integral Yoga, Indian students could go to Japan to learn Art and Industry.

Sri Balkrishna Poddar, Secretary of Sri Aurobindo Society in Nairobi (East Africa) with Centres at Kampala and Mombasa and a group at Johannesburg, gave a brief report of the work being done in that continent and remarked that more and more people in Africa were getting genuinely interested in Sri Aurobindo's thought.

Mr. Ensho Kobayashi of Japan stated how his search for truth had led him to Pondicherry to find in Sri Aurobindo's writings what he had been seeking. He opined that Sadhana, serious aspiration and practice were essential in order to understand the true purport of these writings. He gave the following meaning to the three letters of Aum.

A—Aurobindo

U—Unity

M—Mother

Dr. Narsinga Rao proposed that all interested in spiritual education should get together and evolve a scheme acceptable to all.

Sri Ishwarlal Bhatt said that Sri Aurobindo Society should bring together all those who aspired for a higher life and effectuate through its various activities the ideals in view. He felt that publications, conferences, seminars, research into the theory and practice of a model collective life, dramas conveying the ideals, etc., would be specially useful for this purpose.

Sri Sundaram's and Pandit Pratapnarayan Misra's beautiful recitations of their poems in Gujarati and Hindi respectively were much liked by the audience.

Summing up the proceedings, Sri Navajata informed the audience that he had prayed for The Mother's guidance on what the members should do.

The Mother had graciously answered that for his own progress and service to the collective organisation each member should do at least three things every day.

1) Devote some time to study something from the writings of Sri Aurobindo or Herself according to the query within him.

2) Sit quietly for a few minutes and ask himself—Why am I here? What exactly do I want to achieve in life? etc.

3) Devote one hour daily for some work for the Society and do it in an unselfish and if possible unegoistic spirit.

This, She said, was the minimum.

The work should be selected according to what is best suited to each individual, *e.g.* a scientist can concentrate on some discovery or invention which does not bring him personal profit but is for the good of the world. A politician can work on a solution of problems which will help the progress of his country and humanity. Similarly an artist, an industrialist, an educationist and others can all contribute the best they can in their own ways.

At all the sessions, the tape-recorded music and some readings by The Mother were played and they created an uplifting atmosphere.

Conference Souvenirs of Sri Aurobindo's symbol were distributed to the delegates and members. The Tea Board extended the courtesy of serving tea and snacks to the delegates every morning and evening. The Railways granted the concession of single fare double journey to those attending the Conference.

Exhibitions :

Two exhibitions were specially arranged for the occasion. 'Unity a Fact', a very interesting and instructive exhibition of posters, charts, photographs and models was prepared for Sri Aurobindo Society by the Sri Aurobindo library and members of the faculty to illustrate the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother that unity in diversity is a fact not only in spiritual life but also for modern science. This unity was shown on all the levels of becoming, in matter, life and mind—from the molecular particles to the galaxies, from the amoeba to the elephant, from animal reasoning to the latest computer. During the past almost exclusively mental phase in the evolution of the race, our attention was drawn mainly to the diversity. But for the new mind in this age of Sri Aurobindo the underlying and crowning unity of all is becoming everyday more manifest.

Embassies and Consulates of different countries in Delhi, Rotaries of several nations and individuals abroad extended their co-operation in the other exhibition named "World Culture," which displayed the culture of different countries, through photographs, handicraft, books, etc. The exhibits came from 24 countries.

Two more exhibitions—one Ashram Products exhibition and the other an exhibition on 'International Photography' with entries from 27 countries, both arranged by the Ashram—attracted a large number of visitors.

Cultural Programme :

Three Cultural programmes were arranged during the Conference. The first programme staged by the children of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, on 11th August, covered 16 skits and songs in Sanskrit, most of them dramatising important episodes from the Puranas and Kalidasa's writings.

The second performance by the Orissa Cultural Troupe, on 12th August, comprised Geeta Govinda (a dance drama), Srimad Bhagavat Gita (a ballet), sitar and violin recitals and devotional songs.

On the 14th, the third programme 'Chaula', a dance drama, depicted in a story form the theme that in turning to the Divine lay the true liberation.

15th August :

Sri Aurobindo's commemorative stamp was released by the Govt. of India on his birthday on 15th August at a special ceremony in Sri Aurobindo Ashram Post office, Pondicherry, attended by Sri Silam—the Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Sri

S.R. Bhashyam, P.M.G., Madras, and other personalities. The delegates had the pleasure of participating in the function. The first few stamps and first day covers were cancelled by The Mother. There was a heavy rush at the Ashram post office which remained open up to 10 p.m. as a special case, to oblige the public. The picture on the stamp released was from a photograph of Sri Aurobindo taken in 1950.

The Mother's message on the occasion was—'He has come to bid the earth to prepare for its luminous future.'

At 10 a.m., there was a collective meditation around the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo in the Ashram, followed by a visit to Sri Aurobindo's room. The 15th August message, distributed to all, read :

"Avoid the imagination that the supramental life will be only a heightened satisfaction of the desires of the vital and the body; nothing can be a greater obstacle to the Truth in its descent than this hope of glorification of the animal in the human nature. Mind wants the supramental state to be a confirmation of its own cherished ideas and preconceptions; the vital wants it to be a glorification of its own desires, the physical wants it to be a rich prolongation of its own comforts and pleasures and habits. If it were to be that, it would be only an exaggerated and highly magnified consummation of the animal and the human nature, not a transition from the human into the Divine."—Sri Aurobindo.

The Mother gave terrace Darshan at 5.30 p.m. Thus the delegates had the opportunity to meditate in Her presence.

At 6 p.m., the delegates were invited to the Independence Day reception given by Sri Silam the Lt. Governor of Pondicherry. Later, there was a programme in the playground, which included march past, and Ashram band and concluded with collective meditation preceded by The Mother's tape-recorded words.

The following proposals are approved by The Mother :—

- 1) Opening of Sri Aurobindo Society's Centres in the different countries of the world.
- 2) Translation and publication of Sri Aurobindo's and The Mother's writings in different languages.
- 3) Development of a township near Pondicherry, with all the amenities and facilities for residence and work for those who want to prepare for a better life.
- 4) Establishment of a studio for production of good films.
- 5) Setting up of Industries which will demonstrate a true solution to labour problems.
- 6) Publications and meetings in different countries of the world to explain what is spiritual education, how it can be imparted, and how a true world unity in diversity can be achieved.

All who may like to cooperate are welcome.

Students' Section

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

Sri Aurobindo is the Flower. The Mother is the Fragrance.

Sri Aurobindo is the Face. The Mother is the Smile.

Sri Aurobindo is the Cup of Nectar. The Mother is the Spoon.

Sri Aurobindo is the Crystal-pure Water. The Mother is the untiring Tap.

Sri Aurobindo is the Song. The Mother is the Singer.

Sri Aurobindo is the Medicine. The Mother is the Doctor.

Sri Aurobindo is the Handkerchief. The Mother is the Hand to wipe the disciples' tearful eyes.

Sri Aurobindo says : "The Mother is everything." The Mother says : "Yes, but all I am is in Him, with Him, of Him, and for Him."

THE MOTHER

Our vital depression says : "The Mother is the Examiner."

Our heart's gratitude says : "No, She is the Private Tutor."

No aspirant is free from one enemy, and that enemy is Ego. Poor Ego—it too has an enemy, and that enemy is the Mother's constant love for the aspirant.

CHINMOY

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

6 September 1964

The First Annual Conference of the New Age Association was held on 6 September 1964, as fixed by the Mother, in the New Hall of the Centre of Education, from 8.30 to 11.30 a.m.

At the beginning Arati read out a writing of Sri Aurobindo, "The Divine Superman", from *The Hour of God*.

Then Kishor Gandhi, the Chairman of the Conference, delivered his speech on "The Second Advent of Sri Aurobindo".

After him the following seven members of the Association spoke on the subjects shown against their names :

- Vijay : The Foundations of the New Age
- Debranjan : Life in the New Age
- Tarini : India—The Leader of the New World
- Subash : The Future of Religion
- Romen : Sri Aurobindo—The Poet of the New Age
- Kokila : The Failure of Reason
- Sumedha : The True Superman

The programme of the Conference commenced and concluded with short recorded pieces of music by the Mother.

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

FIRST SEMINAR: 9 AUGUST 1964

(Speeches continued from the previous issue)

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY OF SURMOUNTING THE ORDINARY MENTAL ACTIVITY?

IV

THE Mother has likened our ordinary mental activity to a market place. A little observation is enough to show the appropriateness of the simile.

To rise above this ordinary mental activity we must, first of all, be conscious of its constant pell-mell movements. This we can easily and successfully do if we can detach ourselves from the whirl of its thought currents and keep hold of our inner consciousness because this inner consciousness remains untouched and unperturbed by the shocks and furies of external events.

Gradually with the development of our inner consciousness we can develop the habit of watching thoroughly and critically over our ordinary mental thought and get at the roots of all these haphazard movements.

By no means is this an easy task; because the whole movement behind our surface mind is a world by itself. To get an adequate idea of the constitution of this veiled world we may see its picture given by Sri Aurobindo:

“The truth is that all this that is behind, this sea of which our waking consciousness is only a wave or a series of waves, cannot be described by any one term, for it is very complex. Part of it is subconscious, lower than our waking consciousness, part of it is on a level with it but behind and much larger than it; part is above and superconscious to us.”

Perhaps this will help us best to realise the magnitude of the whole problem. And once we can measure the problem in all its dimensions, the solution becomes feasible. Because knowledge always remains crippled until translated into action.

Above all, upon the mastery of our mental movements hangs our whole future, not only as sadhaks but as destined citizens of the New World that is taking shape beyond our ken.

The silent mind is the single gateway for the entry into our being of the Supramental Light and Force.

With the advancement of knowledge, the process of purification can be steadily carried out. What is needed is a sincere and persistent effort on our part to develop our Psychic Being and realise this Divine Presence in us, and through this realisation

to open ourselves fully and unreservedly to the Supreme Mother-Force. For, the Mother's grace alone can victoriously annihilate all our difficulties.

To sum up, the best way of surmounting the ordinary mental activity would be to silence the mind by the combined force of our sincere aspiration and will and the grace of the Divine Mother.

BOREN GHOSH

V

By "ordinary mental activity" I understand what one might call "thinking by habit". Some of its constituents are: comparison, judgment, generalisation, conclusion, that satisfy some set pattern in the mind. Its natural tones are : "I know it is like that! I knew it would be so! just wait and see!..." It shows a deep and often aggressive faith in laws, particularly in the laws of human nature. It is a fatalist and a pessimist attitude of mind. It wisely reminds us of the nature of reality, explaining with illustrations what really happens at the end. Dreams cannot survive long in its company. It calculates meticulously for safety and takes no chances with the future. Even while it is considering present or future events, its real field is the past. It is happy only when it can keep the individual or the event tied to the past. It is by its very nature historical, claiming that it is, because it has been. It carries in it all the signs of an imminent death; yet even serious efforts to surmount it must have crumbled before its persistence.

Mental silence, I suppose, must be for most seekers a necessary training, before we can uproot our mind from the past and give it an upward and forward tension. We could then have glimpses of the future that must be throwing its beams, without finding a reflecting milieu....Instead of this habitual turning to the past for reference, if we could realise that it is the Future that draws the chariot of Time, we would pass from the slave-habit of following limiting laws to the master-power of seeing and following in freedom. We would see to what the moment beckons us, see into the very being of events, and, in an intense identification with the powers that shape the worlds, we would participate in the shaping of our own universe.

But I do not know if all this can be done by our own powers....

BRAJKISHORE

VI

I hold it significant that, in the first Seminar of our New Age Association, the Mother should set before us a question which asks not so much for learned transactions as for our readiness for a New Life to which we aspire. For, ridding ourselves from the morass of ordinary mental activity we establish the basis of our aspiration.

We are, however, not entirely unacquainted with the present problem. Our

Master and our Mother both have given us ample instructions for purification of the mind. They are mainly as follows: to remain conscious in the mind and reject otiose and unwholesome thoughts, together with practising an austerity of speech; to remain detached from the stream of thought-currents by going above or behind the mind; and, to practise meditation and concentration every day for a few minutes to begin with. For those who have succeeded in their efforts to lift the mind up from the ordinary mental activity, the problem no more exists. But for those of us who have made attempts and somehow failed to attain the crowning success, the problem still remains unsolved. Let us, therefore, face the question squarely so as to realise its true nature; let us also face candidly our human weaknesses that cause our failure.

A deeper observation reveals that to obviate any spiritual problem we must have an unfailing faith in our ultimate victory and in our inherent capacity. In fact, self-confidence is the key to success in all spheres of life. Secondly, we observe that none of the spiritual problems are isolated phenomena—they are all linked up with one another. We cannot purify one part of our nature while others remain impure. We seek to surmount our ordinary mental activity, but is it really possible to attain to this victory without slaying our vital and physical desires? Do not these desires crowd our mind with unbecoming thoughts and weaken our will? And, again, can we conquer desire unless we stay away from the objects of desire, till a perfect equality is established and nothing can shake our inner serenity? Therefore, to surmount our ordinary mentality we must have a complete faith in our own capacity, we must give up desires in order to gain calm equality and lead an inner life. This we cannot do unless we stand face to face with an inevitable choice, a crucial decision: to live for the Divine alone and not for our small necessities. For, verily, we cannot serve God and Mammon both together; if we do, we shall sin against the truth of our nature.

But, once the decision is made without reserve and division, the victory is inevitable. For, there remains then only one thought in the mind, one passion in the heart, one will in life: to seek to fulfil the will of the Mother in all our activities. This remains our sole aspiration; this also, I believe, is the sole solution for all problems we encounter against our spiritual destiny.

DEBRANJAN

VII

The subject of this talk is: what is the best way of surmounting the ordinary mental activity? Before we come to the problem, it would be useful to see what this ordinary mental activity is, what is its nature. I have no pretensions of giving you an analysis of this mental activity; I shall only say that we might divide this activity into two very broad categories. Firstly, that activity in which the mind is a tool of the lower parts of our being, that part which is constantly engrossed and absorbed in the

pursuit and satisfaction of the physical comforts and vital desires. The second is the activity of the mechanical mind, for in most men the mind is constantly active, jumping about without any conscious direction.

Our problem then is to surmount this activity. The surmounting of the first type of activity cannot be done by a mere pressure or control of the mind; for we shall see that our thoughts are very often the result of our emotional reactions, our likes and dislikes; thus a control of the emotions is demanded. In fact, the perfection of any part of our being demands a perfection of every other part; for all spiritual problems are linked and one might even say in a certain sense that nothing is done until everything is done.

The first essential and indispensable condition for surmounting the ordinary mental activity is to feel strongly the need for it, to desire constantly this control. We must then understand the importance of the control of the mind, for an observation of ourselves will show us that all our actions are the result of our thoughts and therefore if we wish to control our actions we must control our thoughts.

The development of a sense of detachment, a sense of impersonality is of great help; retirement into solitude, daily practice of meditation may also be useful.

But, I believe, nay, I am convinced that, here in the Ashram, no method is better than a constant remembrance, a dwelling of the mind upon the Mother. This is the most powerful, the most effective and also the most satisfying means.

KITTU

VIII

Friends, I believe that the Mother has given us the above subject for this Seminar not because it has a wide scope for deliberation but because it is of vital importance to all those who aspire to be candidates for the New Age. Indeed we cannot hope to become superman before first becoming man in the true sense of the term. As the time at our disposal is very short I shall not enter into a discussion of what constitutes man's true manhood—though that would surely be necessary for a fuller treatment of the subject. I shall rather endeavour to give a clear idea of what we mean by the ordinary mental activity.

In all civilised societies it is widely accepted that "since man is preeminently the mental being, the development of the mental faculties and the richness of the mental life should be his highest aim". Indeed a cultured man is he whose preoccupation is "knowledge, science, art, thought, ethics, philosophy, religion", in contrast with the ordinary man who is satisfied with the mere vital-physical life : "to be born, grow up, marry, get his livelihood, support a family and then die".

Seen in this light the answer to the above question is obviously : Education. But I guess the word 'ordinary' in the above context has a much deeper connotation. Therefore in order to surmount the ordinary mental activity education, as we under-

stand it today, may be a useful step but it is only a first stumbling step. For at best it is capable only of putting certain checks and controls over our animal propensities but not of transforming them.

We should also be careful not to confuse the cultured man with what Sri Aurobindo calls "the modern civilised barbarian", who for all we know may be holding not one but many university diplomas. Sri Aurobindo has given us in *The Human Cycle* an admirable account of this modern Philistine and I cannot resist the temptation of quoting a few lines from it.

"He is open to new ideas, he can catch at them and hurl them about in a rather confused fashion; he can understand, or misunderstand ideals, organise to get them carried out and even, it would appear, fight and die for them. He knows he has to think about ethical problems, social problems, problems of science and religion, to welcome with as understanding an eye as he can attain to at all the new movements of thought and inquiry and action that chase each other across the modern field or clash upon it. He is a reader of poetry as well as a devourer of fiction and periodical literature,—you will find in him perhaps a student of Tagore and an admirer of Whitman; he has perhaps no very clear ideas about beauty and aesthetics, but he has heard that Art is a not altogether unimportant part of life. The shadow of this new colossus is everywhere. He is the great reading public; the newspapers and weekly and monthly reviews are his; fiction and poetry and art are his mental caterers, the theatre and the cinema and the radio exist for him: Science hastens to bring her knowledge and discoveries to his doors and equip his life with endless machinery; politics are shaped in his image."

I am afraid if we now look at ourselves in all sincerity we shall all find the shadow of this modern Philistine lurking in some hidden corners of our being. Yes, how often do we mouth only the current stock of ideas and opinions? Do we not value a person merely for his social status? Do we not feel a secret pride in being dressed *à la mode*—the latest hair-style (no matter if it should resemble a crow's nest after a severe storm), the magyor cut and the pipeline trousers?...

But this revelation of striking resemblances with ourselves and 'the modern civilised barbarian', far from being a source of despair, should on the contrary act as a strong lever to pull us out of this sorry state. We must first have a true and unflattering picture of our psychological state if we wish to transform it. We can thus fruitfully concentrate on what we are expected to become.

We believe that man is not, as revealed by Western thought, merely the mental being, but rather a soul developing under the conditions of Ignorance. Therefore, in the words of Sri Aurobindo: "Man's consciousness of the divine within himself and the world is the supreme fact of his existence and to grow into that may very well be the intention of his nature." Sri Aurobindo says: "Animal man is the obscure starting-point, the present natural man, varied and tangled, the mid-road, but supernatural man the luminous and transcendent goal of our human journey."

We shall therefore term 'ordinary' all activities, however high and grand ac-

ording to human standards, which do not have in view this supreme fact of existence, namely, the Divine. This criterion naturally demands a complete revaluation of all our judgements. For it is no more the action but the consciousness behind it which shall matter. In this perspective a man apparently occupying a very high social rank may very well be 'ordinary' compared to a daily labourer.

I have expatiated at length on what we should understand by 'ordinary mental activity' but as to how to surmount it I shall leave my other friends to dwell upon it. I shall only mention in passing what I personally consider to be the most important step in that direction.

We must first *desire* to surmount the ordinary state of consciousness. In other words, if we are satisfied with our present self, the will to surpass it can never be dynamic and effective. This dissatisfaction may come due to several reasons and at various stages. But I think one of the most inspiring means is to come in closer and deeper contact with the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. For these writings not only awaken us to the need of a higher life but put us in touch with vibrations whose subtle effect on our consciousness is too deep for the mind to assess.

In conclusion, I would suggest the following guiding principles, taken from the book *On Education* by the Mother, for achieving our goal :

1. "Try to take pleasure in all you do, but never do anything for the sake of pleasure."
2. "Never take physical happenings at their face value."
3. "Never complain of the behaviour of anyone, unless you have the power to change in his nature what makes him so behave; and if you have the power, change him instead of complaining."

To these we shall add what the Mother considers to be the most important mental discipline : control of speech. A perfect silence : silence within, silence without. I think it is time I began observing this golden rule of silence. Thank you.

MANOJ

IX

Why should we surmount mental activity at all ?

Reasoning mind may be called ignorant for in its very nature it is analytic; *e.g.*, in order to know, mind has to split and divide the whole. Even if mind tries to put the parts together in order to understand the whole it can never know the whole in all its aspects. At its highest, mind can represent one aspect of the manifold truth. Mind in everyday life is most often the slave of the vital being. The vital encroaches upon ideas or revelations of the mind and tries to possess them for its own ends and desires. Out of the ignorance of the mind the vital thus creates falsehood actively opposed to truth.

In rare cases mind might be able to detach itself from the lower nature. Then it becomes abstract and it seems to move away from the dynamic realities of life.

Many Yogis, saints, sages, philosophers, writers, scientists have realised these inherent defects of the mind. Today we witness the powerful influence of the agnostic movement amongst intellectuals. However, Socrates said that the ideal wise man "knows that he knows nothing".

Some Yogis have gone even farther and passed beyond intelligence which is in their view the instrument of illusion and ignorance.

It may be said that mind splits and distorts the Truth. In order to solve our problems we have to find some other mode of knowing so that we can grasp the Truth directly. The higher, purer lights or intuitions descending into the absolutely silent mind are said to disclose and express "things as they are".

One might add that according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother the full Truth in its splendour can be experienced in the Supermind only. This implies that most spiritual experiences and realisations of the past which are still in the realm of spiritual mind are partial and, in their nature, carry ignorance because these expressions are separative rather than unitive.

In order to come to grips with the enemy we must know him. What then is mental activity ?

The three most important parts of mind are conceptional reasoning, the mental will, and the sense mind. Intelligent thought and reason are based on sense-perception, judgment and opinion. Even such a simple statement as "This is a red rose," is composed of several judgments. We affirm that the object we see is existing, that it is one, that it has certain qualities, etc. Unconsciously we daily pass hundreds of judgments which, due to the inherent defects of the mind, are ignorant or even false. The will helps to execute the conclusions of our thinking and reasoning. The function of the sense-mind is both to supply us with physical data and to verify our reasoning.

Regarding the best way of surmounting mental activity I think that it is up to the individual to choose the way which suits him best. The individual might even utilize different ways according to his variable state and disposition.

The classical way of surmounting mental activity is meditation and concentration. However, meditation and concentration are two different processes.

Concentration is a gathering of consciousness to one point inside or outside the body. The aim is to reject thoughts in order to become completely identified with the object of concentration, resulting in complete silence and receptivity.

Meditation we may practise in different ways. The most difficult but most efficient way is a complete emptying of the mind, accompanied by a widening and expansion into infinity in order to receive higher forces.

There is also the way of the Mantra where one repeats a certain name constantly, e.g., "Ram, Ram, Ram", until the vibration of the Mantra settles down in our very body and replaces our mental activity.

A very important way is that of the constant remembrance of the Mother, the Divine or the concentration on the inner being, etc. Our work has to be done as an offering by the worker, the instrument, to the Divine.

It seems to me that in order to have a richer and fuller experience we should follow not only one way but several ones, according to our abilities and state of progressive integral union with the Divine.

Silencing the mind does not mean to neglect or reject it. As an instrument of action in dealing with things it plays a very important role. Surmounting of mental activity demands first a development, widening and enlargement of the mind. The silencing of the mind is most often the last step in the yogic perfection of mind. We should have the capacity to deal with ideas in every way but remaining always their observer, rejecting or accepting. If we do not develop our mind we shall lack a very important instrument. The Mother said recently : "If you do not want to develop your mind now, do not think that the supermind will do it. You will remain an insufficient instrument of the supermind." Silent mind does not correspond to a state of complete passivity but it implies a silent receptivity, making possible perfect, harmonious action.

For getting rid of mental activity in meditation Sri Aurobindo suggests the following methods : The first one is that of the observer, the witness, letting the thoughts come and go until they exhaust themselves.

For most, the most difficult way of silencing the mind is to apprehend and reject the thoughts before they enter the head. It is the shortest and most powerful road to silence. A very efficient method is the calling down of the silence which always waits above to descend.

I find it quite difficult to express one's own experiences when pursuing the achievement of mental silence. As general remarks one could say that the path is long and perhaps more austere than anything else. Not everybody will achieve the result in the same time. The development of our soul is perhaps the chief determining factor. We might realise mental silence in half a minute. It might also take us one or even several lives. A strong aspiration and an iron will are required. However, without the grace from above nothing can be done. Continuing surrender allows perfect transformation by the Divine grace. The path is not straight nor smooth. There are many ups and downs and many dangers along the way. Purification of our nature, combined with a constant call for protection, is the best armour against the danger of hostile forces entering us.

If we persevere, victory is certain. Our personal effort will vanish more and more and Divine Hands will take care of us, until we merge and become one with the Supreme, which is the aim and meaning of Yoga in its universally accepted sense.

(To be continued)

OSCAR

**SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

NEWSLETTER

No. 10.

October

1. *Sri Aurobindo's old school*, St Paul's at Hammersmith, is now preparing to establish itself at its third London location in Barnes.

The school, founded by John Colet in 1509, included in its original statutes the thoroughly metropolitan instruction that there should be—

‘taught in the Schole children of all the Nacions and Countres
indifferently to the number of CLIII.’

This total has subsequently grown to about 680, and the school's building and land requirements have grown proportionately. The new site is only five minutes away across the river in Barnes. At present the area is largely covered by open water reservoirs, some of which are to be filled in to give forty invaluable acres to St. Paul's. In this superb position, undisturbed by traffic though only twenty minutes from the West End of London, the school will have space for all its academic and athletic purposes. It is remembered that during the last war the old school at Hammersmith was used once as a headquarters for Montgomery on his last D-day briefing.

2. *Physical Education*

THE MOTHER gave the following message for the opening of the athletic season :

We are here to lay the foundations of a new world.

All the virtues and skills required to succeed in athletics are exactly those the physical man must have to be fit for receiving and manifesting the new force.

I expect that with this knowledge and in this spirit you will enter this athletic competition and go through it successfully.

My blessings are with you.

This is the year of the Olympic Games, which are the world's most important sporting event.

The Games this year are to be held in Tokyo, Japan. The Games take place every four years, just as they did in ancient times. The winners of the Olympic Games were first recorded in 776 B.C. Held in the valley of Olympia in south-western Greece every four years for more than eleven centuries, the Games were in such high esteem that even Greek armies were withdrawn from the battlefield during the sports events. Only those Greek citizens who were honourable men were allowed to take part in the Games. They had to swear that they had been in training for at least ten months of the year.

The Games were abolished in A.D. 394 by the Roman Emperor Theodosius the First. For 1,498 years no Games were held, but in 1892 a 29-year old French

educator, Pierre de Coubertin, speaking at a jubilee of French athletics societies asked for a revival of the Games. Through his efforts a meeting of the world's athletic authorities was held in Paris in 1894, and as a result the first of the modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

The Games are a world symbol that embodies the faith of international sportsmanship and the aspiration of man towards world unity.

The Mother's message embraces sportsmanship throughout the world but more especially perhaps it applies to the athletes of this educational centre.

3. *Research*

Several universities in Britain and America have co-operated in experiments that show that academic performance is measurably impaired by such thoughts as, 'I'll never be any good at mathematics', or 'I'm naturally hopeless at grammar,' or 'I never could spell.' When the students with such depressing thoughts were persuaded to change these ideas about themselves, their work improved remarkably.

4. *Thought of the Month*

Purity of mind depends upon the thoughts one chooses.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

THE EXPANSIVE ORDER IN WHITMAN'S LIFE AND POETRY

OF late sex and sex-imagery in Whitman's poetry seem to dominate the major attention of research students and amateur critics in Western Universities. To speak of Whitman as 'the representative voice of his age', as the 'prophet of democracy and of the Soul', as 'the founder of the poetry of the future' is, in their opinion, to tell an oft-repeated tale full of sound and sentiment. The dim but enticing light of Freudian psychology helps them to 'discover new areas and levels' in the poet and his poetry—but no deeps, vistas, horizons. They miss two things: namely, that any psychology to be complete will have to join hands with mysticism; and the light that prompted Whitman to pour out himself in song was a mystic light, *the* Light that kindles the inner light of the soul.

"What is it the poet conveys through his Songs? First of all, himself, his ego, Walt Whitman. This ego, however, is part of America, part of the world, part of

humanity, part of the universe. This is how he sees himself unrolling before our eyes a magnificent panorama of the world, intertwining the small with the large, taking his point of departure in America (the future belongs to a free country only) and returning to it over and over again. A touch of the cosmic is part of Whitman's individuality and his American character, as it may be found in those who, fond on meditating in the presence of infinity, have spent lonely days on the sea-shore, lonely nights under the starry sky of the prairie. He is part of the universe, as the universe is part of himself. He, Walt Whitman the individual, is embodying humanity and the world. Humanity and the world, for him, are one great poem. Whatever he may see, hear, touch, with whatever he may come in contact, in all of it he sees a symbol of a higher, spiritual realm, even in the most trivial, the most common, the most ordinary things of daily life. Or rather, matter and spirit, reality and ideal are for him one and the same. Thus he appears to us : one who is responsible for his own making; one who strides along singing; one who, first and foremost a human being, a proud and free human being, opens up universal perspectives of social and political significance."

To stride along singing is a sign of happiness. It is the religion of healthy-mindedness. "In many persons, happiness is congenital and irreclaimable. 'Cosmic emotion' inevitably takes in them the form of enthusiasm and freedom. When unhappiness is offered or proposed to them, they positively refuse to feel it, as if it were something mean and wrong. We find such persons in every age, passionately flinging themselves upon their sense of the goodness of life, in spite of the hardships of their own condition. From the outset their religion is one of union with the divine."

One can but recognize in them the presence of a temperament organically weighted on the side of cheer and fatally forbidden to linger—as those of the opposite temperament linger—over the darker aspects of the universe. In some individuals optimism may become quasi-pathological. The capacity for even a transient sadness or a momentary humility seems cut off from them as by a kind of congenital anaesthesia. The supreme contemporary example of non-pathological inability to feel evil is of course Walt Whitman.

"His favourite occupation," writes his disciple, Dr. Bucke, "seemed to be strolling or sauntering about outdoors by himself, looking at the grass, the trees, the flowers, the vistas of light, the varying aspects of the sky, and listening to the birds, the crickets, the tree-frogs, and all the hundreds of natural objects and sounds. Until I knew the man, it had not occurred to me that any one could derive so much absolute happiness from these things as he did. He was very fond of flowers either wild or cultivated; liked all sorts. I think he admired lilacs and sunflowers just as much as roses....He appeared to like all the men, all the women and children he saw. I never knew him to argue or dispute, and he never spoke about money. He always justified, sometimes playfully, sometimes quite seriously, those who spoke harshly of himself and his writings, and I often thought he even took pleasure in the opposition of enemies. When I first knew him, I used to think he watched himself, and would not allow his

tongue to give expression to fretfulness, antipathy, complaint, and remonstrance. It did not occur to me as possible that these mental states could be absent in him. After long observation, however, I satisfied myself that such absence of consciousness was entirely real. He never spoke depreciatingly of any nationality or class of men, or time in the world's history, or against any trade or occupation—not even against any animals, insects, or inanimate things, nor any of the laws of nature, nor any of the results of those laws, such as illness, deformity, and death. He never swore. He could not very well, since he never spoke in anger and apparently never was angry. He never exhibited fear, and I do not believe he ever felt it." Whitman exclaims :

"How curious ! how real !

Under foot the divine soil—over head the sun..."

Again :

"And all the things of the Universe are perfect miracles, each as profound as any". (*Starting from Paumonok*)

This feeling of happiness and the awareness that everything in God's creation is just perfect indicate that he had experienced the nearness of God's spirit. "The near presence of God's spirit," says a German writer, "may be experienced in its reality—indeed *only* experienced. And the mark by which the spirit's existence and nearness are made irrefutably clear to those who have ever had the experience is the utterly incomparable *feeling of happiness* which is connected with the nearness, and which is therefore not only a possible and altogether proper feeling for us to have here below, but is the best and most indispensable proof of God's reality. No other proof is equally convincing." (Hilty)

"Walt Whitman owes his importance in literature to the systematic expulsion from his writings of all contractile elements. The only sentiments he allowed himself to express were of the expansive order; and he expressed these in the first person, not as your mere monstrously conceited individual might so express them, but vicariously for all men, so that a mystic ontological emotion suffuses his words, and ends by persuading the reader that men and women, life and death, and all things are divinely good." (William James)

Sri Aurobindo admirably sums up the secret of the expansive order in Whitman's life and poetry thus : "Whitman, by the intensity of his intellectual and vital dwelling on the things he saw and expressed, arrives at some first profound sense of the greater self of the individual, of the greater self in the community of the race...of the greater self of Nature and of the eternal, the divine Self and Spirit of existence who broods over these things, who awaits them and in whom they come to the sense of their oneness."

YOGA AND LIFE

VIII

YOGA OF LIFE : YOGA OF THE FUTURE

(Continued)

THE CENTRAL PROCESS AND WORKING (I)

Now we have to consider the method and the effort which will enable us to attain the high objective set by us before ourselves. Our method and effort to be applicable in the midst of the affairs of life must be so spontaneous and natural, so simple and so all-comprehensive that it should be on the lines of Nature's own secret and true intentions and central workings in life—only made more conscious and conscientious, more vigorous and urgent and direct.

We said in the beginning that Yoga is man's conscious effort at self-perfection, and that Nature herself is working at it subconsciously. It is Nature's own Yoga in life which at the human level we have to make more conscious to be made more effective and swift. In this statement we may note that the most significant word is "conscious", for our effort lies in bringing Yoga out from its earlier sub-conscious state to the conscious state. Consciousness becomes for us the power bringing effectivity of the Yogic realisation.

So our first step in Yoga is also 'to be conscious'. We have to be conscious of all that comes to pass in us, through us, about and around us. We have to be conscious of our aim, our actions, their wherefore, what-for and why. All that leads us to our objective is justified and is the right Yogic movement and all that leads us away from our goal is wrong and must be abandoned and rejected. We have to be conscious of our own will and urge and of Nature's secret urge in us for higher development and growth. We have to be aware of the call which has shot forward in us from its secret sluggishness in Nature, which is made evident, manifest, 'urgent and pressing in us by some involved necessity being imposed upon us by Nature's outburst or choice in us. It is a kind of peeping out of that urge and necessity through the willing breaches or fissures, perhaps because of some sheer inevitable push or because of some sensed preparedness of the outer field which is not more than partial in the beginning. This urge is a call for a new birth. It is Nature's intrinsic aspiration in us for a greater progress.

So we should hold on to this aspiration as our first Nature-willed and God-decreed instrument of progress. We have to fondle it, reinforce its intensity

and drive and turn it into an inextinguishable fire, once and for all time, a crack in Nature made a wide gap and opening for the invocation and assimilation of greater and higher gifts of dawning and descending divine Life from the divine Grace in terms of consciousness, peace, power, joy, love, harmony, truth, knowledge, inspiration, intuition, light and all that is high and noble and ample but denied to and lacking in ordinary human nature.

This is how Sri Aurobindo sums up the whole pith of Yoga in one of his pregnant sentences : "There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing which is the aim of our endeavour, a fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below and a supreme Grace from above that answers."

We may note here a significant fact. That the very fissure and opening made in the outer crust of Nature, in her secret urge for a new orientation, is conscious, shows that the secret truth of Nature is conscious, her progress lies in the out-coming and out-flowering of this consciousness. This process of being conscious is not only her progressive urge but also her progress-guide. It is the divine Purusha that comes to liberate Nature from its lower enmeshments, from its deformations and to turn it into its real divine Form. This liberator Purusha is Nature's own Lord seeking a more conscious, illumined and manifested play.

This Purusha-Consciousness emerging and manifesting in man is what we have called the psychic consciousness, becoming the key and the lever of all our high and divine realisations. The psychic consciousness sums up in man the individual divine truth of his being, manifesting within the cycle of birth and death, just as the eternal divine truth of his being above the cycle of birth and death is called his central being, the Self, the Jivatman. Beyond is the Universal Self presiding over all the central beings, the individual Selves, called the Vishwatman; while beyond the Universal Self is the transcendent or the supreme truth of the Purusha-Consciousness, what Indian Philosophy calls the Paramatman.

The greater, wider and higher is the Purusha-Consciousness, which emerges through the individual's psychic agency, the greater, wider and more powerful is the mastery which he gains over Nature. The aspiration of which we become conscious is the conscious aspiration and emergence of this Purusha-Consciousness out of Nature's thick veils, which in the individual is the psychic consciousness. The wider and fuller emergence of this consciousness from its spark-form turns it into an increased and inextinguishable fire, making the course of Yoga definitive and intense.

Let this aspiration be, says Sri Aurobindo, "vigilant, constant, unceasing", translating in mind as mind's will, in heart as heart's seeking, in the vital as its assent and plastic readiness to change. Let this aspiration in the physical become its will to open and make plastic its consciousness and nature. Let every atom in man aspire for this new opening and birth of the psychic consciousness and be influenced by it vigorously and effectively so that the whole nature of man may become one-willed, single-minded, unitary-aimed and integrally and integrately afire with the sole purpose of divine manifestation in the human nature.

Naturally this aspiration to be full-fledged demands our complete self-consecration and total dedication. We must be fully ready to give ourselves to the spiritual cause.

This aspiration demands from us an unqualified will for utter consecration of ourselves, our energies, capacities, means and ways of living, to this purpose which in effect means the descent of the high new-moulding and transforming powers of the Divine Consciousness,—the Mother's Consciousness—whose one form is the Grace mentioned before, through the plastic and conscious human agency of our deeper and truer psychic consciousness.

As this Yoga is integral and entire, life has to be taken into account; as the results sought are integral and total, our self-dedication must also be total and integral. Here no dual allegiance is permissible or possible. In this integral working and integral aim, we cannot subscribe our life to divided pursuits, to anything which may diffuse our attention, energy and consciousness, which may diffuse our dedication into contradictory or contending chases and aims.

So in this aspiration, total self-consecration becomes our first step and stage of the Yogic endeavour. Again, this consecration becomes in effect Nature's consecration to its Lord, the Purusha Consciousness, our human nature's consecration through the psychic agency to the Divine Mother's Consciousness and Will.

We have spoken about the triune mental-vital-physical human nature, having its outer form as well as its inner and subliminal aspect. This nature coming under the psychic aspiration, influence and consciousness must dedicate itself in all its thoughts, imaginations, feelings, emotions, passions, desires, demands, hankerings, likes and dislikes, its griefs and joys, its intentions, pursuits and willings, in its pleasure and comfort-seeking impulses, in its unimpulsive unwillingnesses, in all its modes—*sattwic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*, *i.e.*, its lucent and virtuous, its emotive, dynamic and violent and its passive and inertial aspects; all that it seeks and all that it fails to seek.

All dispersiveness and separative and divergent tendencies of this human nature must come under one banner and canopy, under one silent and blazing influence and deep and living control of the psychic consciousness and the all-embracing sweep of its aspiration, and become harmoniously integrated in the one divine purpose.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH