

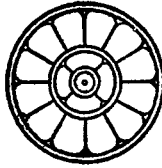
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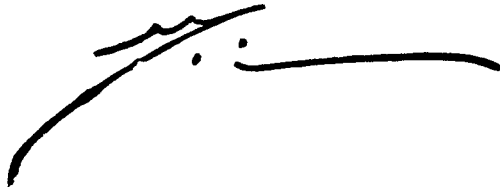


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 10 & 11

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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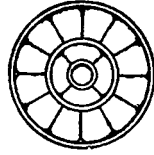
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Pour les hommes ordinaires, le sage est une sorte de boîte à musique de sagesse dans laquelle il suffit d'introduire les deux sous d'une question pour recevoir automatiquement la réponse.

LA MÈRE

For the ordinary man, the sage is some kind of musical box, a musical box of wisdom in which it suffices to introduce the penny of a question in order to receive automatically the answer.

THE MOTHER

THREE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(TO PRATAP SEN)

I

THE experiences you have had are very clear evidence that you have the capacity for yoga. The first decisive experiences in this yoga are a calm and peace that is felt, first somewhere in the being and in the end in all the being, and the descent of Power and Force into the body which will take up the whole adhar and work in it to transform mind, life and body into the instrumentation of the Divine Consciousness. The two experiences of which you wrote in your letter are the beginning of this calm and the descent of this Force. Much has to be done before they can be established or persistently effective, but that they should come at this stage is a clear proof of capacity to receive. It must be remembered however that this yoga is not easy and cannot be done without the rising of many obstacles and much lapse of time—so if you take it up it must be with a firm resolve to carry it through to the end with a whole-hearted sincerity, faith, patience and courage.

The vision of flowers is a symbol usually of psychic qualities or movements whether in potentiality or promise or in actual state of development. The swaying is due probably to the body not being habituated to receive the Force—it should cease as soon as the body is accustomed.

2-5-1933

2

The Mother will see you tomorrow morning, but as there are ten others and only an hour to see them in, she cannot give you more than a few minutes.

The defects you find in yourself need not discourage you—they can be worked out of the system by the progressive action of the Force, if one is conscious of them and aspires to be free. The first necessity is that the calmness you feel may fix itself and grow stronger and stronger, or that whatever happens outside or on the surface, all may be calm and strong within. Aspire for that first and next for the Force to descend and work on the basis of that calm to transform the nature.

15-8-1934

6

All these are different actions of the Force on the *ādhār* with the one intention of opening it up from above and below and horizontally also. The action from above opens it to the descent of forces from above the Mind and the ascent of consciousness above the lid of the ordinary human mind. The horizontal action opens it to the cosmic consciousness on all its levels. The action from below helps to connect the super-conscious with the sub-conscious. Finally the consciousness instead of being limited in the body becomes infinite, rises infinitely above, plunges infinitely below, widens infinitely on every side. There is besides the opening of all the centres to the Light and Power and Ananda that has to descend from above. At present, only the mind centres seem to receive fully the descent of Force, while the upper vital centres are being prepared with a minor action on other parts of the body. It is a matter of time and perseverance for the way to be entirely open.

16-3-1937

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. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

JANUARY 3, 1940

N : I had a letter from Nolini Sen. He speaks of visions of flowers and wants to know their significance.

SRI AUROBINDO : What flowers ?

N : Pink lotus closed and then opened by some invisible power. He asks if it is your (Master's) force.

SRI AUROBINDO : You can write the significance.

N : But he wants the implications too.

SRI AUROBINDO : The lotus would mean that the consciousness of the Divine is opening in him.

N : He calls it *your* force because we know the pink lotus to be your flower and the white to be the Mother's.

SRI AUROBINDO : Where does he see the lotus ?

N : I think in the heart.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then it is very good. It means his psychic being is opening.

N : Maybe, but seeing visions like that is not of much importance, is it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : There is more than that. He hears voices and gets inner guidance.

N : There are other flowers too he speaks of. I am thinking: if he goes on asking about such things there won't be any end to it. (*Laughter*) Sen seems to have other brilliant brothers—they make a gifted family, I hear.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes.

N : One brother who is an I.C.S. is said to be more brilliant.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then why did he go in for the I.C.S. to waste himself ?

N : That is what Sen told him but his father seemed to be keen about it. The I.C.S. was an easy walk-over for him.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is quite easy to pass the I.C.S.

N : He also had some interest in our direction I understand, but now—

SRI AUROBINDO : Suppressed under the burden of the I.C.S. work ?

N : Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO : In that official routine work all the brilliant qualities are lost. There is no scope for them.

At noon after Sri Aurobindo's writing had been finished N showed him Sen's letter and he explained the significance of his visions of flowers. Then the Mother came. N told the Mother again about his letter and that he was much worried by thoughts and couldn't concentrate.

THE MOTHER : Yes, he told me of that. Ask him not to worry. The more he concentrates on the trouble, the worse it will be.

JANUARY 4, 1940

P : X has replied to the review by the Vedanta Kesari of his new book. The Editor has also put in some footnotes.

SRI AUROBINDO : What does X say ?

P : He seems to say that the physical light and the inner light of the Yogi are the same light.

SRI AUROBINDO : Is he speaking from his experiences ?

P : He says so, and he quotes the Veda and the Upanishads to support him : their statements that God is light. The Editor says that all light is from the Divine, of course, but the inner light of the Yogi is different from the physical light : it has not the same wave-length, as it were.

Then about his recent change of views X argues that if the journey entails a change of landscape as one climbs higher he is not ashamed to admit the fact of change by the light of knowledge and experience.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is also what Krishnaprem says. As one advances in consciousness from one stage to another, one has to change his former views in the light of his present knowledge.

N : It will be like Y. He also says one thing and then contradicts it; and then X won't be justified in calling him a humbug.

SRI AUROBINDO : Does he call him a humbug for that ? I thought it was because his prophecies don't come true.

N : If one makes sweeping assertions and calls them light of knowledge, that light can't be very well trusted.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why not ? (*Firmly*) When one experiences the Personal God, one thinks that only the Personal God exists. When one goes beyond that, one comes to the Impersonal Realisation. When one transcends both, one comes to the Absolute, of which the Personal and the Impersonal are aspects.

N : But then X will go on contradicting himself all the time. Today he praises

Yoga, and Monasticism; tomorrow he damns Yoga and finds no truth in Sannyasa.

SRI AUROBINDO : He is not talking that from experience. It is a matter of opinion. (*After a pause*) If he had a wider mind he would not say things like that and lay stress only on the faults and mistakes of Monasticism, losing sight of the virtues.

N (*after a while*) : Jyotin (our gardener) explains the symbolism of your poem *Trance* by saying that the star is the individual soul and the Moon the universal. The storm is doubt. And when the doubt is cleared from the mental sky, the individual soul stands face to face with the universal.

SRI AUROBINDO : Good Lord ! I didn't know that I had put all that philosophy into the poem. Jyotin has built a big superstructure on a small poem.

S : That is the commentator's job.

P : Tagore also says that critics give meanings to his poems which he has never intended. He tells them : "They are simply poetry. Why don't you take them like that ?"

SRI AUROBINDO : What I have described is a condition of inner experience.

N : Yes, but the symbols do stand for something.

SRI AUROBINDO : I can't remember the poem; so I can't say anything.

N : You speak of a single-pointed star.

SRI AUROBINDO : Telling me that is no use. I must see the poem. What does Jyotin say about *The Bird of Fire* ?

N : He says that it is also symbolic but that this one is an example of perfect symbolism.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ?

N : I don't know.

SRI AUROBINDO : People read their own minds into the poem. It's like what they make of the Rigveda's *anāsah*—the "flat noses" of the European commentators. All sorts of meanings are made out of it.

N (*when Sri Aurobindo was about to lie down*) : Reviewers seem to be a funny race. One praises a book and another condemns it.

SRI AUROBINDO : I find nothing extraordinary in that.

N : In the *New Statesman and Nation* Anthony West runs down Priestley's new book while the *Manchester Guardian* praises it. So also with Huxley's *After Many a Summer*. Anthony West calls it a spiritual failure.

SRI AUROBINDO : West is a rationalist. He can't hear of mysticism. Anything that does not savour of rationalism is damned by him.

N : Huxley is already being called a Western Yogi—

SRI AUROBINDO : And a spiritual failure !

P : What does Huxley know of Yoga ?

N : D says he has practised some Yoga and this is quite evident from his writings.

SRI AUROBINDO : His book is here, you said. Well, you can read it and see for yourself how things are.

EVENING

N handed Sri Aurobindo the book in which the poem *Trance* had been printed. "What's this?" he asked. Then, on seeing the title *Six Poems of Sri Aurobindo*, he laughed out.

SRI AUROBINDO (*after reading the poem*): I have explained everything in the poem itself. I speak of the star of creation, the moon of ecstasy and the storm-breach of the soul-change—that is, the upheaval before the change. The trance brings in a change of the outer consciousness and nature. There is no philosophy anywhere. (*After returning the book and after a little time*) Let me have the book again. (*Looking at the poem once more*) There is a big printing mistake here. A hyphen has been put between "Self" and "enraptured". It makes neither poetry nor sense.

N : I remember Amal told me the same thing when the book was out.

JANUARY 5, 1940

N : I have been again trying to get intuition but no luck.

SRI AUROBINDO (*with a look as if meaning "Is that so?"*) After your last Brinjal intuition ? (*Laughter*)

N : Yes, but nothing comes.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is because you lost your faith by that Brinjal affair.

N : Nolini Sen began to have inner guidance as soon as he set his foot into Yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO : He had been doing Yoga for some time. Only he had lost hold of it temporarily.

S : Inner guidance in what way ?

N : In his practical work.

SRI AUROBINDO : In solving practical difficulties, I suppose. He has a mind which seems open to the intuitive faculty.

Usually a man of action has a sort of an insight which is half-intuition, while for a man of intellect intuition is difficult. His intellect thinks of various possibilities, saying this may happen, that may happen.

N : Does a man of action have no intellect ?

SRI AUROBINDO : He has one, but it does not come in the way of his action. He has a vital, not a mental, intuition about things and acts on it. I don't say he commits no mistakes but in most cases he turns out to be right.

The English people are so successful because they go by this vital intuition. Often they jumble things and make mistakes but in the end that intuition comes to their help and pulls them out. The French are logical; they think and reason.

P : The English now are thinking of actively helping Finland because they fear a German-Russian combination in the Baltic.

SRI AUROBINDO : But how are they going to help ? They require plenty of am-

munition and military equipment for themselves. I don't know whether they have enough to spare.

N : What they need more badly now is man-power.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but still ammunition is wanted.

N (*after some time*) : What am I to do now ? Intellect comes in the way of intuition. Desire in the vital and the hard crust of the physical—everything resists. Resistance everywhere !

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : Well, get rid of the crust and the desire, and quiet the intellect.

S : But I find that N's vital is quiet—and his intellect too. Perhaps the desires are less so.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*) : Oh, is it all like that ?

N : The trouble is that everybody sees my progress except myself.

SRI AUROBINDO : Are you trying to apply intuition in a special way ?

N : Yes, in my medical work.

SRI AUROBINDO : Instead of limiting yourself to a special operation, why not try to have the faculty in a general way—in other fields also ?

N : I am concerned only with medical work now.

SRI AUROBINDO : But try it elsewhere too.

N : For instance, in thinking ?

SRI AUROBINDO : In anything. It is difficult to get intuition in a special subject, especially if one has no bent for that subject. You didn't have any particular love for medicine, did you ?

N : I am afraid not.

SRI AUROBINDO : Try, for instance, to find out what S will be doing next. (*Laughter*)

N : That will be difficult. I may be more correct regarding Champaklal.

SRI AUROBINDO : Or, if you are a novel-reader, try to guess what will follow. Of course, it is easy for an expert reader to do this. (*After a pause*) Many people get intuition without knowing it.

N : I know my difficulty. I came a raw recruit to Yoga.

P : Recruits are always raw.

N : Not completely.

SRI AUROBINDO : They may have had some combat-experience among themselves !

S : Try to realise the Self first, and then everything will follow.

SRI AUROBINDO : It will be automatic.

S : Yes; the faculties will open by themselves.

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

VISIONS AND VOICES

Q : During yesterday's meditation I saw the Mother distributing the flowers called "Aspiration for the Divine". But as it was the Darshan day there were many visitors. The flowers were exhausted when my turn came. So She gave me an incense stick. What does it symbolise?

18-2-36

SRI AUROBINDO : The incense stick is the symbol of self-consecration.

Q : I am not able to understand the varying subtle smells coming from some people. I used to get a strong bad smell from J. Then it stopped. Now again it is coming.

SRI AUROBINDO : The smell is due to something in the person's vital-physical. That something may not be prominent at all times. When it is, the smell is there.

27-4-36

...the something may be of different kinds in different cases and one cannot give a rule that it is this or it is that. What has the dirtiest smell is sex.

28-4-36

It is not connected with one's sadhana. It is a part of the character, quite noticeable in those who do no sadhana.

28-4-36

Q : When certain people pass by me their influences cast a shadow on my being. Something within me discriminates whether it is a good influence or bad. I would like to know how to deal with them—how to accept the right ones and throw back the bad ones at will.

SRI AUROBINDO : The consciousness of these things is intended for knowledge—a psycho-occult knowledge, necessary for the fullness of consciousness and experience. It is not intended that what is felt should be allowed to become an influence, whether a good one or a bad one.

10-6-36

Q : You wrote yesterday, "Openness is not reckoned merely by visions." Quite so. But to have the fusion of the rays of sun and the moon on each side of the body and to feel the descent and the Mother's presence in, behind and above oneself, is it not an exceptional vision and experience? Can it occur without sufficient opening to the Mother?

SRI AUROBINDO : Why should it be exceptional to see the Sun and Moon on each side or to feel the Mother's presence everywhere around? There are plenty of sadhaks who have had these or equivalent experiences. What could be exceptional is to feel the Mother's presence like that always. But occasional experiences like these many have had.

15-9-36

Q : In your book, 'Bases of Yoga' one reads, "It is with the Mother who is always with you and in you that you converse." Could you kindly explain to me how one converses with the Mother ?

SRI AUROBINDO : One hears the voice or the thought speaking inwardly and one answers inwardly. Only it is not always safe for the sadhak if there is any insincerity of ego, desire, vanity, ambition in him—for then he may construct a voice or thought in his mind and ascribe it to the Mother and it will say to him pleasing and flattering things which mislead him. Or he may mistake some other Voice for the Mother's.

2-7-36

Q : L. told me, "I was in constant touch with the Divine Mother long before I entered Pondicherry. I saw Her not only in meditation or vision but before my wide-awake eyes, in a concrete form. I often used to converse with Her, specially during my difficult periods when She would come and tell me what to do. Only, I did not know till I visited this place that the Divine Mother was no other than the Ashram Mother and had cast herself into a physical mould." Well, I am too pragmatic to believe all such things, specially her claim of seeing Mother with the naked eyes, which would mean an advanced sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO : But there is nothing improbable in it. It means simply that she externalised her inner vision and experience so as to see through the physical eyes also, but it was the inner vision that saw and the inner hearing that heard, not the physical sight or hearing. That is common enough. It does not indicate an "advanced" sadhana, whatever that phrase may mean, but only a special faculty. 2-7-1936

These things are extremely common among those who practice Yoga everywhere. In the Ashram the sadhaks are too intelligent, sceptical and matter of fact to have much of that kind of experience. Even those who might develop it are deprived by the outward-mindedness and physical-mindedness that dominates the atmosphere.

2-7-1936

It is quite usual at a certain stage of the sadhana for people who have the faculty to see or hear the Devata of their worship and to receive constant directions from him or her with regard either to action or to sadhana. Defects and difficulties may remain, but that does not prevent the direct guidance from being a fact. The necessity of the Guru in such cases is to see that it is the right experience, the right voice or vision—for it is possible for a false guidance to come as it did with X and Y. 8-7-1936

Q : Some people here seem to take the visions and voices as the sole object of the sadhana.

SRI AUROBINDO : People who have the occult faculty always tend to give too large a place to it. 8-7-1936

Visions and voices have their place when they are the genuine visions and the true voices. Naturally, they are not the realisations but only a step on the way and one has not to get shut up in them or take all as of value. 8-7-1936

Q : What is wanted of us is peace, purity, devotion, surrender, etc. For these are the spiritual aids. It seems to me that visions and voices can help us to a certain extent to build faith. As soon as they have done it their utility expires.

SRI AUROBINDO : You take a very utilitarian view of spiritual things. Whatever develops in the sadhana, provided it is genuine, has its place in the total experience and knowledge. A knowledge of the occult worlds and occult forces and phenomena has its place also. Visions and voices are only a small part of that vast realm of occult experience. As for utility, for one who has intelligence and discrimination, visions etc. have many uses—but very little use for those who have no discrimination or understanding. 8-7-1936

Visions and voices are not meant for creating faith, they are effective only if one has faith already. 8-7-1936

SRI AUROBINDO AND VEDIC INTERPRETATION

SRI AUROBINDO'S REJOINDER TO AN EARLY CRITICISM

(Sri Aurobindo's first article on the Veda forming the first chapter of the series, "The Secret of the Veda", was published on 15th August 1914, in the first issue of the monthly magazine, "Arya".

Perhaps the chapter was found to contain such revolutionary ideas that it was reviewed in the "Hindu" in its editorial by Prof. Sunderam Aiyar, an orthodox Pandit. Sri Aurobindo's reply to it was immediate, on 27th August 1914.

During the years that followed, Sri Aurobindo created a vast body of Vedic interpretation: the book "On the Veda" contains "The Secret of the Veda", "Hymns of the Atris" and "Selected Hymns". These were written between 1914 and 1920. But his interest in the Veda continued throughout and the "Hymns to the Mystic Fire" was completed in 1946. The vast ground these books covered proved the applicability of his psychological and symbolic interpretation to the whole of the R̥g Veda.

This work was followed up by some of his disciples : the late Kapali Shastri wrote the Siddhanjan Commentary in Sanskrit on the first Ashtaka of the R̥g Veda. I compiled "Sri Aurobindo's Vedic Glossary" based on the "Hymns to the Mystic

Fire” and wrote “Studies in Vedic Interpretation” as an independent book applying his principles. M. P. Pandit has written many articles covering various topics of the Rig Veda. Nolini Kanta Gupta wrote on the Hymns of Madhucchhanda in Bengali. A translation of his essays appeared in “Mother India”.

Recently a small number of Vedic scholars in India have been raising their voice against the dry linguistic and historical approach to the interpretation of the Veda. It is a happy sign. It is heartening to find Sri Aurobindo’s early labours on the Veda beginning to bear fruit after half a century. We hope a time will come when the world of Vedic scholarship will accept his psychological and symbolic basis as the correct one for the interpretation of the Veda. — A. B. PURANI)

SRI AUROBINDO’S LETTER TO THE “HINDU”

WHILE thanking you for the generous appreciation in your review of the “Arya” may I also crave the indulgence of your columns,—if indeed you can spare so much space at such a time when the whole world is absorbed in the gigantic homicidal conflict convulsing Europe,—for an answer to your criticisms on my “Secret of the Veda”, or rather to an explanation of my standpoint which the deficiencies of my expression and the brief and summary character of my article in the “Arya” have led you, in some respects, to misconceive.

Surely, I have nowhere said that “knowledge of which no origin can be traced to previous sources must necessarily be disregarded or discarded” ! That would be indeed a monstrous proposition ! My point was that such knowledge, when it expressed a developed philosophy and psychology, stood in need of historical explanation—a very different matter. If we accept the European idea of an evolving knowledge in humanity,—and it is on that basis that my argument proceeded,—we must find the source of the Brahmavada either in an extraneous origin such as a previous Dravidian culture,—a theory which I cannot admit, since I regard the so-called Aryans and Dravidians as one homogeneous race—or in a previous development, of which the records have either been lost or are to be found in the Veda itself. I cannot see how this argument involves a *regressus ad infinitum* except in so far as the whole idea of evolution and progressive causality lies open to that objection. As to the origins of the Vedic religion that is a question which cannot be solved at present for lack of data. It does not follow that it had no origins or in other words that humanity was not prepared by a progressive spiritual experience for the Revelation.

Again, I certainly did not intend to express my own idea in the description of the Upanishads as a revolt of philosophic minds against the ritualistic materialism of the Vedas. If I held that view I could not regard the earlier Sruti as an inspired scripture or the Upanishads as Vedanta and I would not have troubled myself about the secret of the Veda. It is a view held by European Scholars and I accepted it as the logical consequence, if the ordinary interpretations of the hymns, whether Indian or European, are to be maintained. If the Vedic hymns are, as represented by Western scholar-

ship, the ritualistic compositions of joyous and lusty barbarians the Upanishads have then to be conceived as a revolt "against the ritualistic materialism of the Vedas". From both premiss and conclusion I have dissented and I have finally described, not only the Upanishads, but all later forms, as a development from the Vedic religion and not a revolt against its tenets.

Our Indian doctrine avoids the difficulty in another way, by interpreting the Veda as a book of ritual hymns and revering it as a book of knowledge. It puts together two ancient truths without reconciling them effectively. In my view, that reconciliation can only be effected by seeing even in the exterior aspect of the hymns not a ritualistic materialism, but a symbolic ritualism. No doubt the Karmakanda was regarded as an indispensable stepping-stone to the knowledge of the Atman. That was an article of religious faith, and as an article of faith I do not dispute its soundness. But it becomes valid for the intellect—and in an intellectual inquiry I must proceed by intellectual means,—only if the Karmakanda is so interpreted as to show how its performance assists, prepares or brings about the higher knowledge. Otherwise, however much the Veda may be revered in theory, it will be treated in practice as neither indispensable nor helpful and will come in the end to be practically set aside—as has happened.

I am aware that some hymns of the Veda are interpreted in a sense other than the ritualistic; even the European Scholars admit higher and religious ideas in the "later hymns" of the Vedas. I am aware also that separate texts are quoted in support of philosophical doctrines. My point was that such exceptional passages do not alter the general tone and purport given to the hymns in the actual interpretations we possess. With those interpretations, we cannot use the Rigveda as a whole as the Upanishads can be used as a whole as the basis of a high spiritual philosophy. Now, it is to the interpretation of the Veda as a whole and to its general character that I have addressed myself.

I quite acknowledge that there has always been a side-stream of tendency making for the Adhyatmic interpretation of the Veda even as a whole. It would be strange if in a nation so spiritually minded such attempts have been entirely lacking. But still these are side-currents and have not received general recognition. For the Indian intellect in general, there are only two interpretations, Sayana's and the European. Addressing myself to that general opinion, it is with these two that I am practically concerned.

I am still of the opinion that the method and results of the early Vedantins differed entirely from the method and results of Sayana for reasons I shall give in the second and third numbers of the "Arya". Practically, not in theory, what is the result of Sayana's Commentary? What is the general impression it leaves on the mind? Is it the impression of "Veda", a great Revelation, a book of highest knowledge? Is it not rather that which the European scholars received and from which their theories started, a picture of primitive worshippers praying to friendly Gods, friendly but of a doubtful temper, gods of fire, rain, wind, dawn, night, earth and sky, for wealth, food, oxen, horses,

gold, the slaughter of their enemies, even of their critics, victory in battle, the plunder of the conquered ? And if so, how can such hymns be an indispensable preparation for the Brahma-vidya ? Unless, indeed, it is a preparation by contraries, by exhaustion or dedication of the most materialistic and egoistic tendencies¹ somewhat as the grim Old Hebrew Pentateuch may be described as a preparation for the mild evangel of Christ. My position is that they were indispensable not by a mechanical virtue in the sacrifice but because the experiences to which they are the key and which were symbolised by the ritual, are necessary to an integral knowledge and realisation of Brahman in the universe and prepare the knowledge and realisation of the transcendent Brahman. They are, to paraphrase Shankara's description, mines of all knowledge, knowledge on all the planes of consciousness, and do fix the conditions and relations of the divine, the human and the animal element in the being.

I do not claim that mine is the first attempt to give an Adhyatmic interpretation of the Veda. It is an attempt—the first or the hundredth matters little—to give the esoteric and psychological sense of the Veda based throughout on the most modern method of practical research. Its interpretation of the Vedic vocables is based on a re-examination of a large part of the field of comparative Philology and a reconstruction on a new basis which I have some hope will bring us nearer to a true science of Language. This I propose to develop in another work, the "Origins of Aryan Speech". I hope also to lead up to a recovery of the sense of the ancient spiritual conceptions of which old symbol and myth give us the indications and which I believe to have been at one time a common culture covering a great part of the globe with India, perhaps, as a centre. In its relation to this methodical attempt lies the only originality of the "Secret of the Veda".

THE SECOND ADVENT OF SRI AUROBINDO*

THE spiritual evolution of earth is a progressive manifestation of the Divine Light in the darkness of inconscient Matter. Because this manifestation is progressive, the full splendour of the supreme Divine Light can only come at the summit of the evolutionary ascension. Till then the emerging Light has continuously to fight against the resisting darkness. It is for this reason that the spiritual evolution on earth has the appearance of a prolonged battle through many vicissitudes between the forces

¹ Editor's Note · The paired words "exhaustion and dedication" in this clause are not clear: there seems to have been some misprint in the "Hindu"

² A speech delivered at the First Annual Conference of the New Age Association on 6 September 1964.

of Light and the powers of Darkness with the final victory of Light achieved only at the end.

In this long continuing battle there are also periods of crisis when the issue between the forces of Light and Darkness becomes so uncertain that only a direct intervention of the Divine can turn the balance on the side of the forces of Light and prevent the earth from being engulfed by the powers of Darkness. These are the periods of Divine Incarnations on earth who come in a succession to sustain the progressive march of humanity towards the supreme Light.

Several such Incarnations have come on earth in the past, but since each one of them came to enable the progressive evolution to take only one more step forward, none of them have brought the perfect splendour of Light on earth. Each of them won a victory over the powers of Darkness but it was only a partial and inconclusive victory. The complete and decisive conquest still remains to be achieved. As Sri Aurobindo says :

“The universe is certainly or has been up to now in appearance a rough and wasteful game with the dice of chance loaded in favour of the Powers of darkness, the Lords of obscurity, falsehood, death and suffering. But we have to take it as it is and find out —if we reject the way out of the old sages—the way to conquer.”¹

The central reason why all the Incarnations or Avatars of the past failed to achieve the complete conquest over the opposing forces was that they brought on earth only a higher Light and Love but not a greater Power than that of those forces. And it is because of this that there is the persistent traditional belief of their second advent on earth equipped with a Power or Force that will enable them to achieve a lasting victory in their battle against the forces of Darkness and Evil. As Sri Aurobindo has put it in one of his Aphorisms :

“When all is said, Love and Force together can save the world eventually, but not Love only or Force only. Therefore Christ had to look forward to a second advent and Mahammad’s religion, where it is not stagnant, looks forward through the Imams to a Mehdi.”²

The same idea is vividly expressed by Sri Aurobindo in another Aphorism :

“Christ came into the world to purify, not to fulfil. He himself foresaw the failure of his mission and the necessity of his return with the sword of God into a world that had rejected him.”³

The “sword” in this Aphorism is only a symbol of the Spirit’s Power that will enable Divine Love, when it manifests in the world, to slay the Evil that opposes it rather than be slain by it as it, has often happened in the past. Only that All-Powerful Love when it incarnates on earth can win the final victory in this age-long struggle. As the Mother has said :

¹ *On Yoga*, Tome One, p. 401.

² *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, p. 28.

³ *Ibid.*

“A Power greater than that of Evil can alone win the victory. It is not a crucified but a glorified body that will save the world.”¹

(2)

But even the greatest Avatars of the past did not possess that All-Victorious Power. The basic reason of this was that even the highest consciousness that they came to manifest on earth was of the Overmind plane. This Overmind plane, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the highest plane of the cosmic consciousness which is the direct creator of the present universe. But on the plane of the cosmic consciousness there is always a duality, for the integral truth of unity gets covered up there behind a veil. So on that plane it is impossible to find that all-effective imperative Power of the Spirit that is irresistible in its action. All the movements of the cosmic consciousness on its lower planes, therefore, work themselves out by a constantly shifting balance of the conflicting forces in which there is no lasting victory on either side.

So even when the Overmind Truth and Love manifest on earth they cannot achieve their decisive victory over the powers of Darkness and Evil which combat them on the lower cosmic planes. That decisive victory can only be won if a transcendental dynamic power from beyond the highest cosmic plane intervenes in the combat.

But none of the Avatars of the past had an access to that dynamic power of the transcendent Spirit. For them the Overmind plane was the summit of the spirit's ascension. The result was that even the Avatars who brought the highest Overmind Truth and Love on earth could not completely succeed in the work they came to accomplish. The Truth and Love they brought to save the world eventually got corrupted by Falsehood and Evil. They had not the “sword of God” which could slay these opposing powers in the world's arena. Often they themselves got slain at their hands.

(3)

Sri Aurobindo, however, refused to accept this defeat as final and inevitable. That was because in his own yogic endeavour he was able to ascend beyond the Overmind cosmic plane into the plane of the Supramental Truth and command its irresistible transcendental Power. As a result of his personal realisation he was convinced that by dynamising the transcendental Power of the Supermind in the earth-consciousness a final and decisive victory over the powers of Falsehood and Evil and Suffering and Death could be won and the reign of Truth could be permanently established on earth. He was also convinced that the descent of that Supramental Truth was the

¹ The Mother's New Year Message on 1 January 1957.

inevitable destined culmination of evolution on earth. He said : "I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth evolution."¹

To this work of supreme importance for the earth's destiny Sri Aurobindo dedicated himself entirely. With what an all-engrossing passion he made it his sole personal preoccupation can be judged by his own words : "It is a question between the Divine and myself—whether it is the Divine Will or not, whether I am sent to bring that down or open the way for its descent or at least make it more possible or not. Let all men jeer at me if they will or all Hell fall upon me if it will for my presumption,—I go on till I conquer or perish. This is the spirit in which I seek the Supermind, no hunting for greatness for myself or others."²

(4)

But it may be asked : Why could Sri Aurobindo not bring down the Supermind on earth during his life-time ? Why did it become necessary for him to give up his body ?

The answer to this is that Sri Aurobindo was not trying to realise the Supermind for himself but for the earth and humanity. He sought the realisation of the Supermind in himself only as a pre-requisite, a necessary condition for its manifestation in the earth-consciousness and humanity. As he said "I have no intention of achieving the Supermind for myself only—I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (Moksha) nor supramentalisation. If I am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others. My supramentalisation is only a key for opening the gates of the Supramental to the earth-consciousness; done for its own sake, it would be perfectly futile. But it does not follow either that if or when I become supramental, everybody will become supramental. Others can so become who are ready for it, when they are for it—though, of course, the achievement in myself will be to them a great help towards it."³

So for humanity to receive the Supermind, which Sri Aurobindo was bringing down, it was also necessary for humanity to make itself ready to receive it. And since the secure manifestation of the Supermind on earth required its establishment directly in the very roots of Matter, Sri Aurobindo had to bring down the Supermind into his own body so that the material substance of his body could serve as a transmitting channel of the supramental Force in earthly Matter. For that purpose he had to work out the supramental transformation of his own body. But as the Mother has said : "A particular body cannot change unless there is some sort of a corresponding

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother*, p 214.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

change in the surrounding bodies and in the surroundings generally also; for one lives and moves through mutual interchange in the midst of others. A collective change takes more time than individual change.”¹

So in order to work out the transformation of his own body it was also necessary to have a certain collaboration from the collective humanity. If that collaboration had been given Sri Aurobindo would have surely accomplished his mission in his life-time and, establishing a direct conscious link between the Supermind and Matter, planted the Divine Life on earth.

Unfortunately, however, that needed collaboration was not given by humanity. Sri Aurobindo therefore could not complete during his life-time the work of transformation in his body and of the supramental manifestation on earth.

(5)

But his love for humanity and his concern for its fate were so profound that he did not give up his work because of its unreadiness. What humanity failed to do, he sought to accomplish by what the Mother has called “an act of supreme unselfishness”. Let me read out to you in full the Mother’s own explanation of Sri Aurobindo’s decision to leave his body :

“Sri Aurobindo has given up his body as an act of supreme unselfishness, renouncing the realisation in his own body to hasten the hour of the collective realisation. Surely if the earth were more responsive, this would not have been necessary.” 12-4-53²

Mark the Mother’s words : “...to hasten the hour of the collective realisation.” These words make it quite clear that Sri Aurobindo’s leaving his earthly body was not a failure of his mission or a retreat from the formidable difficulties with which he was faced in accomplishing it, nor was it a succumbing to the inescapable end which overtakes all human life. Rather it was a deliberate act, a consciously willed event, self-chosen with a specific intention. It was in fact a strategic manoeuvre, in the cosmic battle that he was fighting for earth and humanity, to hasten the hour of victory. His passing away thus marked an event of momentous significance for humanity’s fate because it assured a swifter realisation of the promise of supramental realisation on earth. Hardly anyone has an adequate understanding of this event. No wonder the Mother has to say : “People do not know what a tremendous sacrifice Sri Aurobindo has made for the world.”³

Sri Aurobindo’s withdrawal from his body thus meant only a strategic shifting of the disposition of his field of action for a continuation of his work with an intenser concentration for a swifter victory. That victory in its initial but decisive stage was accomplished on 29 February 1956 when the supramental manifestation took place

¹ “Towards February 29, 1960”, *Mother India*, February, 1960.

² *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, Ninth Number, 1953, p. 199.

³ “Towards February 29, 1960”, *Mother India*, February 1960.

on a global scale in the earth's subtle atmosphere. After that date the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness have been incessantly working with an increasing intensity to remove the obstruction which humanity still offers to the inevitable unveiled manifestation of the full Supermind in the material consciousness and the physical life.

(6)

When that obstruction is removed, the unveiled manifestation of the full Supermind will bring the second advent of Sri Aurobindo on earth. That manifestation will initiate a New Age in the life of humanity and Sri Aurobindo will preside over it by returning upon earth in a new divine body. The Mother has said : "Since the beginning of earth history, Sri Aurobindo has always presided over the great earthly transformations, under one form or another, one name or another."¹ He will therefore also come back to preside over the next earthly transformation that is soon going to happen.

Even now, from behind the surface scene of the material consciousness, he is preparing for that transformation, and when the conditions are ready he will arrive on earth in a new divine body. The way of directly manifesting that new body in the material conditions of the earth, without recourse to the usual sexual process, is now being worked out and when that way is found Sri Aurobindo will be the first to arrive on earth as the new Supramental Being in a divine body.

But before that can happen a direct link between the descending Supermind and the involved Supermind in Matter must be consciously established. Then alone can Supermind have its unveiled direct action in Matter and the new divine body can directly materialise in earthly conditions. At the present moment the central action of Sri Aurobindo is directed towards the establishment of that link.

The second advent of Sri Aurobindo is therefore a continuous process with a long preparation. Even though his final appearance in the divine body may seem like a sudden miracle, it has to be prepared stage by stage by a long working. Veil after veil has to be removed until the final veil is rent and the glorious body appears. All the veils up to the subtle physical plane have already been removed and Sri Aurobindo is now stationed on that plane in a permanent home and is working for the removal of the final veil before he arrives on earth in his new body.

That can only happen at the culmination of the process of the supramental manifestation. The Supermind in its manifestation on earth does not manifest its fullest power all at once but by gradual degrees. Initially it puts forth only a modified power of its full omnipotence. The supramental manifestation that took place on 29 February 1956 was only a beginning; it was a first modified power of the Supermind. But since then the manifestation of its greater potencies is continuously progressing in

¹ *The Mother on Sri Aurobindo.*

order to remove the last resistance that still blocks its way. That resistance can be ultimately vanquished only when the Supermind manifesting from above is directly linked with the Supermind awaking from below.

That direct link can be established only when the power of Ananda of the highest Supermind begins to act. That Supermental Ananda comes from a supreme divine Love which alone has the power to conquer entirely the resistance of Matter and make possible the manifestation of the divine body and fulfil the promise of divine life on earth. As Sri Aurobindo himself has said : "...that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda which flows from a supreme divine Love, the Ananda that alone can heal the gulf between the highest heights of the supramental spirit and the lowest abysses of Matter, the Ananda that holds the key of a wonderful divinest Life and even now supports from its secrecies the work of all the other Powers of the universe."¹

(7)

That supreme divine Ananda which is indispensable for the full supramental manifestation on earth is now no longer working from its secrecies but more and more directly intervening in the transformation of the physical consciousness and the material substance. The power of the vibrations of this Ananda is absolutely irresistible. It will utterly destroy all that tries to resist its transforming action in the world. As the Mother has recently said :

"...the state of the consciousness of this ecstasy would be dangerous in the present condition of the world. Because that has reactions that are almost absolute—I see that this state of ecstasy has a for-mi-dable power. But I insist on the word formidable, in the sense that it is intolerant or intolerable—rather intolerable—for all that is not alike. It is the same thing or almost the same (not quite the same but almost) as the supreme divine Love; the vibration of this ecstasy or rapture is just a small beginning of the vibration of the divine Love, and that is absolutely, yes there is no other word, intolerant in the sense that it does not admit the presence of anything that is contrary to it.

"Then that would have naturally frightful results for the ordinary consciousness. I see it quite well, because sometimes this power comes—this power comes and you have the impression that everything is going to burst. Because it can tolerate nothing but union, it can tolerate nothing but the response that accepts, nothing but what receives and accepts. And it is not an arbitrary will, it is of the *very fact* of its existence which is all-powerful, all-powerful not in the sense in which all-powerful is understood, but a true all power. That is to say it exists entirely, totally, exclusively. It contains all, but what is contrary to its vibration is compelled to change, naturally, because nothing can disappear. And then this change that is immediate, brutal so to say, absolute, in the world as it is, is a catastrophe."²

¹ *The Mother*, p. 77.

² *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, November 1963.

After describing this action of the divine Ananda and Love, the Mother has softly added a personal remark of which everyone must take careful note at the present moment : "Because it was that, I said to myself : 'Why I who am...at any moment I have to do his (*gesture upward*). . . . There is nothing but the Lord, all is That—but in a way so absolute that all which is not That disappears ! now then the proportion (*laughing*), there would be too many things that must disappear.'"¹

(8)

It is the Mother's personal role to prepare the advents of the Lord on earth. In the past history of earth it was She who manifested all the Incarnations of the Lord. In the future also it is She who will manifest the Supramental Avatar.

At the present moment Her exclusive concentration is on the preparation for the second advent of Sri Aurobindo on earth. To make the way clear for Him She will rid the earth of all that resists His Will, eventually by the irresistible vibrations of the supreme Ananda and Love. She is for that alone and Her presence on earth is an absolute certitude that She will accomplish Her will. She will surely bring back Sri Aurobindo on earth in His divine body and establish His rule in the world. The New Age will be His Image. The New Life will be the rhythm of His Love.

KISHOR GANDHI

SPIRITUAL CAUSERIE

THE GODS AND OUR SADHANA

RECENTLY a prominent organiser of one of the Sri Aurobindo Study Circle put me a question. Is it permissible for the disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who have taken up the Integral Yoga, to worship the traditional deities like Durga, Krishna, etc. ? Can these celebrations be held in the Study Circle Meetings ? At the moment I answered briefly that while the ritual of the worship of family deities could be carried on in the households as part of the social conventions by those who live as members of society, it was out of the question to bring in these activities at the meetings of the Circles which are expressly founded for the purpose of study and promotion of the Ideal and Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Any proceedings which are not directly connected with the understanding and the practice of the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother stand outside the legitimate scope of the Circle or the Centre.

Later I was asked to explain the position to a group of devotees and disciples to

¹ *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, November 1963.

whom the question had posed some problems of understanding and adjustment. Why is it not possible to realise the New Ideal through the worship of the time-hallowed deities ? Can they not give what we seek ? Are they not Divine ? It is quite natural to be perplexed in view of the facile generalisations to which men are accustomed, especially in matters of this kind. It is commonplace now-a-days to hear, for instance, that all gods are one and it does not matter whom you worship. Learned people even take the trouble to quote a passage or two from the Veda to emphasise the point and repeat 'The one Existent the wise call by different names.' We should all be catholic, respect each other's beliefs, each other's gods, for ultimately we know all are one. Of course, there are some who would smile indulgently even at the mention of the gods. The gods are concessions to the popular mind. Actually, they would say, there are no gods or goddesses; they are just conceptual crutches on which to approach That which is the only Reality, an Impersonal Something, a Formless Infinite—you may call it Brahman or the Spirit.

To start with the last point first. The Supreme Divine is indeed something Absolute, Infinite, Ineffable. It is a sheer Existence beyond any determination by Name and Form. But that is not the whole truth. In this Existence all Name and Form are implicit. And when the Divine moves into manifestation, Form becomes inevitable. Nor is there any possibility of an active relation between the Supreme Existence and the manifestation without the mediacy of Form. What relation can I, an individual in this manifestation, have with an Infinite for purposes of my life ? Can I pray to a featureless Peace, to an Ineffable Bliss ? Besides, for the workings of the manifestation also, some kind of formulation, some particularisation is necessary. There is, for instance, electricity all over. But that cannot be put to any use as it is. It has to be channelled and centred somewhere in order that the power of electricity may function for a purpose. Similar is the need everywhere. For the working out of the Purpose of manifestation, the Divine puts out different concentrations of its Consciousness into the Creation. As the manifestation unrolls itself, as newer and newer Truths come to be manifested, new Emanations are put forth with the appropriate charge. These are the Gods who are so many Powers and Personalities of the Divine charged with definite functions in the building and maintenance of the Cosmos. Known under various names to man, they lend themselves to relation with him. The gods have a world of their own, their own gradation and their respective fields of activity. They have forms, but the forms are not fixed in our sense. The forms vary in details according as the human consciousness that transcribes them varies from people to people. Apart from these Gods who are typical beings standing outside the evolutionary movement, there are occasional direct manifestations of the Divine for special purposes, the Avatar. The Avatar comes to participate in and help to lift up the evolving creation to a higher status and to establish a new Truth each time. Thus whether it is the Gods or the Avatars, they represent in Creation the special formulation of the manifesting Truth that they embody. They have actualised their truths in creation and they are helping each individual to actualise them in himself.

Each of them has it in his power to manifest and help manifest a particular aspect or poise of the Truth with which he is charged either singly or in association with other gods. If I resort to a certain Deity it can give me what it carries within itself, and only that in a full measure. No doubt the Deity derives from the Supreme and is that Divine in its essence, but on that account it cannot function in the infinitude of the Divine; it is bound to the terms of its becoming; it is a part of an organised Creation. That is why when the Rishi in the Veda aspires for a large widening of his consciousness, he prays to Varuna; when he seeks wholeness of health in body, mind and life, he calls upon the Ashwins or Rudra to come to his succour; when he needs to build up a strong flame of aspiration, an irresistible will to break through the walls of Ignorance, he invokes Agni. The Rishi knows very well that all these Gods are but forms of the One. But he knows too that the Gods are manifestation of specific divine Energies and hence he calls only those who are relevant to his purpose at the moment.

I should know that if I pray to Hanuman, the God of life-strength, I can hope to get life-energy but not any other gift which is in the keeping of some other god. Similarly if I pray to Rama or Krishna, at best I can receive the full realisation of the special Truth of the Divine which they came to manifest and establish. Each Deity is a canalised expression of movement of the Divine Truth-Consciousness. And if I seek to realise in myself any Truth, I should approach and wait upon that Centre in the Cosmos which is charged with its expression. If today I want to achieve siddhi in the supramentalisation of my being and in its transformation, I have perforce to appeal to the Power, the Shakti, that is active for that purpose in the Person of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. No other agency, past or present, can give that to me. This is a simple truth that must be borne in mind by those who tend to an oversimplification of things by saying that the Divine is everywhere and so everything can be had everywhere; in effect it comes to nowhere.

If any God or Avatar could do anything and everything then there would be no need to have so many Gods and Avatars. It is precisely because each one is empowered to manifest a particular truth and has his field fixed for him, that when another truth needs to be manifested, it is another Power or Personality that descends for that purpose. Someone said that Sri Krishna and Sri Aurobindo are the same and so Sri Krishna can give the fruit of Integral Yoga. Now, it is common sense that unless the Truth Sri Aurobindo represents is something more than what Sri Krishna brought into manifestation, there was no need for Sri Krishna to come again as Sri Aurobindo (assuming that both are the same—they are not quite that, but this is another subject). Sri Krishna came down to establish the Truth of the Overmental Consciousness on Earth. Centuries after, when the human consciousness has evolved further and registered higher developments and the time has arrived for a still greater Truth to manifest, the Truth of the Supramental, another Avatar in the form of Sri Aurobindo has had to come. He or His Shakti can alone give what He represents; not necessarily through their physical form but always through their essential, spiritual Personality. Neither the Divine nor the Creation which is His expression is a

monotone. The Truth is multitudinous and Its manifestation is equally many-sided, graded in the tiers of Its becoming. Consequently graded and varied are the realisations of the Truth possible to the human consciousness; graded and varied too are the means therefor.

I have put things rather trenchantly for purposes of clarity. Actually there is considerable flexibility in the dynamics of manifestation and this applies to the workings of the Gods as well. There is, up to a point, a mutuality or interchange of functions among certain Deities but that does not abrogate the unique nature and purpose of each centrally. And even the mutuality or interchange takes place within the level upon which those Deities function. One level cannot do duty for quite another grade.

Even if transformation and supramentalisation cannot be secured through the offices of Rama, Sita, Krishna or Hanuman, is it not possible to pass through the aid of these gods to the kingdom of the supramental ? This was the next question. I can only answer in the perspective of the seers of the Veda and the Upanishad that not all the gods are happy to let you pass beyond them. The Rig-veda describes in more places than one how the advancing Rishi is held up in his path by one god or another. The Upanishad observes how the gods are anxious that men should not come to know too much. Theoretically it is of course possible that by the force of one's sincerity and will one can pass through the doors of one realisation into another but that implies an unusual strength and self-reliance on the part of the practitioner. A benevolent deity may also help in the journey; it depends upon so many factors. These are exceptional cases and cannot be made the rule.

Then what about the general public ? was the last question. People are used to worshipping their traditional gods and they cannot be suddenly asked to discard them and take to new objects of worship. They have to be led through the means they are familiar with in the hope of their changing over gradually, as a result of either their own experience or the slow pressure of Thought.

It is better to be frank on this point. The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Object it sets for itself are not meant for the masses. Its effect on the generality can only be indirect. It is only a few who are prepared, or ready to be prepared in some way or other, by previous evolution, that can hope to take the leap that is implicit in this Yoga. It is neither necessary nor useful to make propaganda and get adherence to this Teaching. The Circles are not centres for recruitment. Has not Sri Aurobindo categorically said that he does not believe in bringing the Truth to another's door ? Those who have the seeking but find the existing means inadequate to meet their need, those who feel that the present religions, their rituals, the existing ideals have ceased to be a living power today, are bound to turn to newer and expanding affirmations of Truth and the means thereto. Publicity must be confined to making known the Ideal, the way to realise it as also the practical results achieved so far of effort in this direction. This is the function of the Centres and the Circles; to make known, to provide facilities for the understanding and the practice of the Yoga perfected by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to achieve the Ideal of transformation of the human

into a Divine life. Even one single life earnestly dedicated to this Path and holding the Mother's Light in the heart with humility and good-will is sufficient to give meaning to each Centre, a candle to light other candles.

Naturally all this applies only to those who seek to practise the central Teaching of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—their Yoga of Life Divine. There are other aspects which touch humanity at different levels, social, political, ethical, cultural, etc., and anyone can profit by them without necessarily breaking with his past habits and the present grooves of convention.

PRABUDDHA

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S PREFACE TO SISIRKUMAR GHOSE'S "MYSTICS AND SOCIETY"*

How should mystics be related to society? And what should society do about mystics?

The mystic-society problem is a limiting case of the more general problem of the individual and his culture. Like the pre-mystical modes of aesthetic and visionary consciousness, the mystical mode of consciousness is to some extent potentially in all of us. Normal waking consciousness is necessarily utilitarian, and its primary concern is survival and the avoidance of pain. But normal waking consciousness is not the only form of consciousness. There is also the aesthetic consciousness, for which the world is unimaginable beauty. There is also the visionary consciousness, for which the world is fathomlessly strange, enigmatic and unpredictable. And there is the mystical consciousness, for which the world is unity—the wisdom of the other shore whose other aspect is *mahākaruṇā*, universal love. This 'other kind of seeing' is a faculty which, in Plotinus' words, 'all men have but few make use of'. In what way does the culture, within which an individual has been brought up, inhibit the actualization of his mystical and pre-mystical potentialities? How and why does culture prevent the great majority of individuals from making use of those capacities for other kinds of seeing with which they are endowed? These are the questions that confront us.

Every culture is rooted in a language. No speech, no culture. Without an instrument of symbolic expression and communication, we should be Yahoos, lacking the

* With this Preface by Aldous Huxley we close the series: *Mystics and Society* by Sisir Kumar Ghose.

rudiments of civilization. It is because he starts by being *Homo loquax* that man is capable of becoming *Homo sapiens*. But this is a world in which everything has to be paid for. Language makes it possible for us to be more intelligent and better behaved than dumb brutes. But whereas the dumb brutes are merely bestial, we loquacious humans, who can talk ourselves into pure reason and an almost angelic virtue, can also talk ourselves down into being devils, imbeciles and lunatics. Our destiny is ironically equivocal. Language and culture, the sources of all civilization, the preconditions of law, science, philosophy, poetry, religion, are also the preconditions of superstition, comic strips, magic and war, the sources of all the collective and individual insanities that, throughout recorded history, have been the contrapuntal accompaniments of mankind's collective and individual triumphs in the matter of intelligence and human-heartedness. We are not only the beneficiaries of our culture and of the language in which the culture is rooted; we are also their somnambulistic or wildly intoxicated victims.

Thanks to Dr Ghose's wide reading and his gift of discriminating selection, this book is, among other things, a valuable anthology of texts, ancient and modern, Western and Eastern. Directly or indirectly, all these texts refer to the mystic-society problem. One reads them with respect and interest, sometimes with a grateful sense of having been vouchsafed a new insight. But gratitude, interest and respect are mingled in all too many cases, with a certain impatience, a feeling of frustration. Why do terms employed have to be so vague? And why, if everyone is potentially capable of 'the other kind of seeing', is so little attention paid by the authors of the texts to the all-important problem of helping ordinary people in ordinary social situations to actualize their potentialities? Words like 'spirit', 'soul', and 'God' are too ill-defined to be helpful. Talk about the ineffability of mystical experience is perfectly correct, but requires to be related to a theory of language and a psycho-psychology of the symbol-making, symbol-using mind-body. Retirement from the world and yogic practices within a group of like-minded individuals are certainly recommendable. But what about those for whom this sort of thing is not practicable? Ought not something to be done for *them*?

The philosophy of mysticism is a kind of transcendental operationalism. Perform certain operations, it teaches, and certain states of the mind-body may result. These states are experienced as being intrinsically valuable, and their fruits—improved character, increased sensitivity and insight—are often ethically desirable. These self-evidently valuable and socially useful states may be explained, on the symbolic level, in terms of some metaphysical or theistic hypothesis. But these hypotheses must never be taken too seriously. Nobody was ever saved or enlightened by assent to a proposition, only by an immediate experience on the non-verbal level. "What is called the teaching of the Buddha is not the teaching of the Buddha." "Why do you prate of God? Everything you say about Him is untrue." The teaching and the prating may encourage certain people to undertake certain operations which, in their turn, may result in the states of body-mind called 'mystical experience'. The value of the

metaphysical or theistic words is merely instrumental; that of the experienced states is absolute, self-evident and intrinsic.

The universe inhabited by acculturated human beings is largely home-made. It is a product of what Indian philosophy calls Nama-Rupa—'name and form'. Language is a device for de-naturing Nature and so making it comprehensible for human minds. The enormous mystery of existence, the primordial datum of an unbroken psycho-physical continuity, is chopped up by the symbol-making mind into convenient fragments, to which verbal labels are attached. The labels and their logical (or illogical) patternings are projected into the outside world, which is then seen as a storehouse of separate, clearly defined and nicely catalogued things. Our names have created forms 'out there', each of which is an embodied illustration of some culture-hallowed abstraction. From the Christian 'prayer of simple regard' to the Zen Koan, from Wordsworth's 'wise passiveness' to Krishnamurti's 'alert passivity' and 'awareness without judgment or comparison', all yogas have a single purpose—to help the individual to by-pass his conditioning as the heir to a culture and the speaker of a language. Mental silence blessedly uncreates the universe superimposed upon immediate experience by our memories of words and traditional notions. Mystics are persons who have become acutely aware of the necessity for this kind of de-conditioning. Intuitively they know the essential ambivalence of language and culture, know that complete humanity and spiritual progress are possible only for those who have seen through their culture to be able to select from it those elements which make for charity and intelligence, and to reject all the rest.

Exceptionally gifted mystics in an exceptionally good environment will always find their way. What about ordinary people in ordinary social situations? How can these be helped to actualize their potentialities? We can begin by inculcating realistic notions about the nature of things in place of the inappropriate and outdated notions drummed into them by their cultural conditioning. Thus all young people can be taught something about the history of culture, something about the relationship between reality and symbol, something about the indispensable uses and fatal abuses of language. A person who knows that there have been hundreds of different cultures, and that each culture regards itself as the best, will not be inclined to take the boastings of his own culture too seriously. Similarly a person who has come to understand that labels are not identical with the things they are attached to, that words can be the most dangerous of narcotics and intoxicants will probably be cautious in speech and on his guard against the wiles of preachers, advertising men and demagogues.

Such education on the verbal level requires, of course, to be supplemented by appropriate non-verbal training. Training in mental silence. Training in wise passiveness and choiceless attention. Training in sensitivity to other people's feelings and our own motives. Training in awareness of what, within ourselves and in the outside world, is actually happening, here and now, irrespective of what happened in the past and of the traditional notions connected with happenings of this particular kind. To

work out a curriculum and a methodology for the non-verbal education of children and adults should not be too difficult. But whether the powers that be would ever permit such an education to be made gratuitous and universal is quite another question. The powers that be are at once the victims and the Machiavellian exploiters of all that is worst in their culture. They have a vested interest in the linguistic and cultural *status quo*—even in the *status below quo*. A population trained to make use of such ‘other kinds of seeing’ as the aesthetic, the visionary and the mystical would be unmanageable by the traditional methods of narcotizing or inebriating propaganda. Mysticism *equals* misty schism *equals* subversion. In the eyes of the politicians and generals who control our destinies, it is most undesirable that the mass of humanity should be trained to see the world as beauty, as mysteriousness, as unity. It is in a culture-conditioned world of utilitarian values, dogmatic bumptiousness and international dissensions that our rulers have come to the top; and that is the kind of world they would like their subjects to go on being conditioned to create for themselves. Meanwhile let us derive what comfort we may from the thought that other kinds of seeing are always there, parted from the normal waking consciousness (in William James’s words) “by the filmiest of screens....Apply the necessary stimulus, and they are there in all their completeness.” Dr Ghose’s lucid and thought-provoking little book is a salutary reminder that, in spite of appearances to the contrary, all is never lost.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

PART TWO: THE CONQUEST OF SLEEP

(Continued)

III. THE SLEEP AND THE WAKING

“The status he reaches is the Brahmic condition; he gets to firm standing in the Brahman, *brāhmī sthiti*. It is a reversal of the whole view, experience, knowledge, values, seings of earth-bound creatures. This life of the dualities which is to them their day, their waking, their consciousness, their bright condition of activity and knowledge, is to him a night, a troubled sleep and darkness of the soul; that higher being which is to them a night, a sleep in which all knowledge

and will cease, is to the self-mastering sage his waking, his luminous day of true being, knowledge and power." (Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, p. 140)

A PSYCHOLOGICAL self-investigation far transcending its present artificial bounds, an occult-spiritual exploration of the total field of our being, reveals to us the truth that "we are not only what we know of ourselves but an immense more which we do not know; our momentary personality is only a bubble on the ocean of our existence."¹

As a matter of fact, there are, broadly speaking, four clear and distinct elements in the totality of our being : (1) the waking consciousness, (2) the subconscious, (3) the intracoscient and circumcoscient subliminal, and finally (4) the supercoscient. Apart from a very small and restricted part of our waking individual consciousness, we are normally perfectly ignorant of the whole of the rest of our being—so appalling indeed is the extent and intensity of our psychological sleep !

The waking consciousness : Our ordinary waking consciousness is a limping and cabined surface consciousness that is shut up in the body limitation and within the confines of the little bit of personal mind. In this part of our being, we receive consciously only the outer touches, know things in ourselves and in our surroundings only or mainly by the intellect and the outer mind and senses, and become aware of the cosmic forces and movements, ceaselessly playing through and around us, primarily by their outward manifestations and only secondarily—and that too in a highly insecure way—through inferences drawn from these data. The ordinary man is aware only of this surface self and quite unaware of all that functions from behind the surface. And yet "what is on the surface, what we know or think we know of ourselves and even believe that that is all we are, is only a small part of our being"² and by far the larger part of which our waking consciousness is no more than a wave or series of waves, lies hidden "behind the frontal consciousness, behind the veil, occult and known only by an occult knowledge."³

The subconscious : The subconscious part of our being represents an obscure unconsciousness or half-consciousness submerged below and inferior in its movements to our organised waking awareness. The true subconscious is "the Inconscient vibrating on the borders of consciousness, sending up its motions to be changed into conscious stuff, swallowing into its depths impressions of past experience as seeds of unconscious habit and returning them constantly but often chaotically to the surface consciousness, missioning upwards much futile or perilous stuff of which the origin is obscure to us, in dream, in mechanical repetitions of all kinds, in untraceable impulses and motives, in mental, vital, physical perturbations and upheavals, in dumb automatic necessities of our obscurest parts of nature."⁴

This subconscious evolutionary basis of our being is the root cause why things and movements one hoped to have got rid of for ever come back again and again at

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 496.

² & ³ *On Yoga II*, Tome One, p. 353.

⁴ *The Life Divine*, pp. 499-500.

the least opportunity and lay siege to the waking consciousness so much so that it has given rise to the adage that character cannot be changed.¹ "All seeds are there and all Sanskaras of the mind, vital and body,—it is the main support of death and disease and the last fortress (seemingly impregnable) of the Ignorance. All too that is suppressed without being wholly got rid of sinks down there and remains as seed ready to surge up or sprout up at any moment."²

The subliminal : The subliminal proper in us comprises our inner being, that is to say, our inner mind and inner life and inner physical with the soul or psychic entity supporting them. It is of the nature of a secret intraconscious and circumconscious awareness, only *sub*-conscious in the specific sense that it functions behind the veil and does not bring most of itself to the surface of our being. Otherwise, it is not at all of the subconscious character as depicted a little before. Rather, it is in full possession of a brilliant mind, a lupid life-force and a clear subtle-physical sense of things. It has "a consciousness much wider, more luminous, more in possession of itself and things than that which wakes upon our surface and is the percipient of our daily hours."³

This concealed self and consciousness is in fact our inner being, our real or whole being, of which the outer waking existence is no more than an instrumental part and a phenomenon, a selective formation for a specific and delimited surface use. "Our waking mind and ego are only a superimposition upon a submerged, a subliminal self,—for so that self appears to us,—or, more accurately, an inner being, with a much vaster capacity of experience; our mind and ego are like the crown and dome of a temple jutting out from the waves while the great body of the building is submerged under the surface of the waters."⁴

It is really this subliminal element of our being, along with the lower subconscious end, that provides the whole material of our apparent being and "our perceptions, our memories, our effectuations of will and intelligence are only a selection from its perceptions, memories, activities and relations of will and intelligence; our very ego is only a minor and superficial formulation of its self-consciousness and self-experience. It is as it were the urgent sea out of which the waves of our conscious becoming arise."⁵

The superconscious : All that we have said so far as regards the total constitution of our being does not suffice to give an adequate account of what we really are. For a whole line of *supra*-mental spiritual experiences testifies beyond any pale of doubt to the existence of a range of being superconscious to all the three elements we have so far spoken of. The subliminal proper is no more than the inner being, no doubt luminous, powerful and extended in capacity but yet on the level of the Knowledge-Ignorance.

¹ cf. *aṅgārah śatadhautena malinatvaṃ na muñcati*" ("A piece of coal cannot forego its black even when it is washed a hundred times"),

² *On Yoga II* Tome One, pp. 359-60.

³ *The Life Divine*, p. 496.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *The Life Divine*, p. 498.

Thus, "there is not only something deep within behind our normal self-awareness, but something also high above it: that too is ourselves, other than our surface mental personality, but not outside our true self; that too is a country of our spirit."¹

Also, "if the subliminal and subconscious may be compared to a sea which throws up the waves of our surface mental existence, the superconscience may be compared to an ether which constitutes, contains, overroofs, inhabits and determines the movements of the sea and its waves. It is there in this higher ether that we are inherently and intrinsically conscious of our self and spirit, not as here below by a reflection in silent mind or by acquisition of the knowledge of a hidden Being within us; it is through it, through that ether of superconscience, that we can pass to a supreme status, knowledge, experience."²

Whose sleep and whose waking?—Apart from our limited waking existence, these then are the three great departments of our being and consciousness, the three occult sources of our actions and movements: the superconscient, the subliminal and the subconscious. But alas, in our so-called waking state, we are not even aware of any of these, not to speak of having any conscious control over them.

But aware or no, we cannot deny the fact of occult experience that all that we 'become and do and bear' in the physical life is prepared behind the veil within us. For it is a mistake to imagine that we live physically only, with the outer mind and life alone. As a matter of fact, "we are *all the time living and acting on other planes of consciousness*, meeting others there and acting upon them, and what we do and feel and think there, the forces we gather, the results we prepare have an incalculable importance and effect, unknown to us, upon our outer life."³ (Italics ours.)

Thus do we see that our waking existence is no better than a state of immense and all-forgetting somnambulist sleep and it is a mere euphemism to call it 'waking'.

Indeed, one of the fundamental aims of all spiritual practice is to cancel this sleep of the so-called waking being of man and instead wake up more and more on the deeper and higher planes of our existence.

Yes, it is an "awakening" into the superior and sublimer states (*uttara-dhāma*); for, after all, is not the normal run of our waking life whose essential badge is an ignorant and externalised turn of consciousness, verily a state of sleep for the illumined (*prabuddha*), just as the superior planes are but planes of sleep to our ignorant physical mind which is not at all at home in these planes?⁴

As a matter of fact, our apparent waking from a physical slumber is not a true waking at all; it is merely a full emergence into a gross external and objective sense of reality of the apparently stable but yet transient structures of the physical consciousness. According to a powerful and well-established line of spiritual sadhana, the real and

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 500-01.

² *Ibid.*, p. 501.

³ *On Yoga II*, Tome Two, p. 110.

⁴ Cf. Gīta : *yā nisā sarvabhūtānāṃ tasyāṃ jāgati saṃyamī,*
yasyāṃ jāgrati bhūtāni sā nisā pasyato muneḥ.

true waking should signify no less than a total “withdrawal from both objective and subjective consciousness...into the superconscience superior to all consciousness; for all consciousness and unconsciousness is Maya.”¹

Thus, it is asserted that with the progress of sadhana the sadhak withdraws more and more from the defiling *jagad-bhāva* or the consciousness of the world of dualities and illusory appearances and retires as it were into a progressively deepening sleep-status *vis-à-vis* his awareness of the phenomenal world, although at the same time he acquires a greater waking with regard to the reality of his self-existence.

It has even been suggested to categorize the stages of progress in sadhana, not in terms of the spiritual awakening, *jāgarana*, but in terms of *mīdrā* or the profundity of sleep attained in *jagad-bhāva*.

Thus we find in *Yoga-Vāsīṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, a well-known treatise on Advaita Vedānta, that the great sage Vasīṣṭha has delineated an ascending sequence of seven statuses of consciousness (*saptadhā jñānabhūmī*), beginning with that of a spiritual seeker who has just set out on the path of spiritual progress and reaching up to the highest *curyagā* status. These seven levels of consciousness in their ascending order are called : *subhecchā*, *vicāraṇā*, *tanumānasā*, *sattāpatti*, *asamaśakti*, *padārthābhāvīnī* and finally *curyagā*.

Vasīṣṭha groups the first three statuses under the generic name *jāgrat* or ‘awake’, since, while in these states, the seeker as yet in his *sādhaka* status perceives the world of dualities and the mental structures of the universe to be very much real to his consciousness (*bhedasatyatva-buddhi*).²

Arriving at the fourth status of *sattāpatti*, the lowest level of *siddha* consciousness, the seeker (now called by Vasīṣṭha *brahmavid*) still perceives the world of duality but is not any longer deceived by the appearances, since he knows these to be unreal and illusory (*bhedamithyātva-buddhi*). That is why Vasīṣṭha has named this status *svapna* or ‘dream-consciousness’.³

The last three levels having *curyagā* for their crown are variants of *siddha-jīvanmukta* status in an ascending degree of perfection. The seekers attaining to these stations, all stations of *suṣupti* or sleep *vis-à-vis* the world and its illusory appearances, have been given by Vasīṣṭha the respective names of *brahmavidvara*, *brahmavidvarīyān* and *brahmavidvariṣṭha*. What distinguishes these three states among themselves is that in the fifth station of *asamaśakti*, a status of oscillation, the *siddha* comes out occasionally, and of himself (*svayaṁ vyutthita*), from the condition of *suṣupti* into that of ‘dream-consciousness’; arrived at the next station of *padārthābhāvīnī*, a status

¹ *The Life Divine*, p 464

² *bhūmikātrīṭayam tvetadrāma jāgrāditi sthītam*
Yathādvbedabuddhyedam jagajjāgrati ch syate
(*Yoga-Vāsīṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, *nirvāṇaprakaraṇa*, 126.52)

³ “*advaite sthairyamayate dvaita prasamāgāte*
paśyanti svapnavalokaṁ caturthīm bhūmikāntah”
(*Yoga-Vāsīṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, *nirvāṇaprakaraṇa*, 126.60)

of *gāḍhasuṣṭi* (deep sleep), the *siddha* can indeed be pulled out from this state of nonduality but only through the violent efforts of people around him (*pārśvasthanajana-vyutthāpita*). But from the last status of *turyagā*, a status of *pragāḍha-prasuṣṭi* (intensely profound sleep), there is no return to the awareness of the world of appearances either by oneself or through the efforts of others (*vyutthāna-rahita*).

It is worth remembering in this connection that the terms 'dream-status' and 'sleep-status' are sometimes supposed to connote much more than their figurative symbolic senses. For, it is often asserted that with the progressive withdrawal from the status of the divisive external consciousness the *sadhak* may very well lose his hold over his dynamic becoming and his action upon the world around him. Thus, *Va-sishtha* points out that the *siddha* *yogi* comes to live *always* in a state of drowsiness, not merely in its figurative aspect but in a very much real and tangible way (*nityam nidrāhuriva lakṣyate*). And has not, in our own time, *Sri Ramakrishna* declared that the vital-physical demeanour of a *Paramahansa* becomes like that of an immature child (*vālavat*) or of a madman (*unmattavat*) or of a demon (*piśācavat*) or, in the extreme case, he may even be totally inert (*jaḍavat*).

Evidently, this sort of spiritual realisation, luminous inside and disjointed outside, cannot be compatible with the goal of the Integral Yoga which seeks to objectivise the inner spirituality in a divine and dynamic world-action. For that purpose, it is not certainly a laudable achievement to cancel the siege of sleep in one part of our being, only to court instead the siege of the same sleep in another part. The *sadhak* of the Yoga of Transformation must be "awake to all the states of being together in a harmonised and unified experience and...see the Reality everywhere."¹

We shall come back to this topic later on while discussing the spiritual possibilities of the waking state of man; but, for the moment, what we would like to stress is the *other* fact that, in a very deep and real sense, we in our present natural state are in the grip of a profound sleep as to our inner and higher existence, so much so that we have been sometimes called '*gambhirabhedī*'² elephants' *vis-à-vis* the whole truth of our self and nature.

Hence it is that throughout the ages the exhortation has gone forth to the somnolent souls to arise and awake (*uttiṣṭhata jāgrata*), for the heavenly dawn has come upon the scene with the opulent splendours of her spiritual light (*uṭho jāgo, musāphir, bhora bhoul*). It does not behove to sleep any longer (*Dādū, aceta na hoiye*) and the soul must bestir itself to awaken the mind in torpor (*manuām sūtā nīnd bhori sām saṅ jagai*)

But are we not digressing and becoming irrelevant? When the problem in hand is the problem of the physical conquest of sleep, why have we brought in the question of psycho-spiritual slumber?

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 406

² In popular parlance, an elephant is said to be of the *gambhirabhedī* type if it cannot be aroused from its sleep even by piercing its epidermis or by cutting its flesh and shedding its blood.

The reason is indeed threefold. For we shall see in the course of our discussion that

(1) the state of physical sleep is but a symbolic outer projection of what we have termed the Universal Sleep;

(2) no conquest over this physical state of sleep is ever feasible unless and until the psycho-spiritual somnambulism is cancelled and replaced by a luminous wakefulness;

(3) So long as lasts the psycho-spiritual slumber, the body's sleep is, or can be, when enlightened and transformed, the only available means of escaping, even if for brief periods, the sway of this slumber over our instrumental existence and entering the inner and higher domains of our being.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJEE

EVOLUTION

THREE letters on Evolution appeared in the Madras daily, *The Hindu*, on last April 23, 26 and May 3 respectively. One of the two correspondents is a practising scientist with a strong "modern" outlook, the other a well-read layman with a religious bent. As a cross-section of Indian thinking on this scientific subject they are very interesting. So we reproduce them and then follow up with a short Comment, giving each side its due but trying to rectify whatever lop-sidedness seems to be there and suggesting the conceptual possibilities that strike one as legitimate at the present stage of scientific research.

I

Sir,—To commemorate the centenary year of publication of *Man and His Place in Nature* by T. H. Huxley, the British Council organised a series of seven lectures on 'Evolution' by the Professors of Zoology in the Madras City Colleges. One lecturer affirmed that there were no convincing proofs for the Theory of Evolution, and reiterated his arguments for special acts of creation, the basis of the Fundamentalist doctrine of the theologians.

Scientists are careful in demarcating facts and theories clearly in their mind. The fact of evolution in nature is that it is a universal self-transforming process, which generates new patterns, and novel qualities, resulting in the origin of new species.

This fact, like the force of gravitation, has to be recognised, as an integral part of reality. Theories of Evolution only relate to the mechanisms which underlie this process, and of how such species-transformations are brought about. These theories may be accepted or rejected or modified, according to their conformity or non-conformity to facts. Species are found to possess a closely knit genetic structure, and evolutionary changes are brought about by genetic recombinations and mutation. This self-transforming process in biological evolution is a continuous one, being maintained by natural and reproductive selection, by survival.

In view of these facts of evolution, the Fundamentalist theory of special creation will be seen to be untenable, and should be rejected by all students of biology. I would draw the attention of your readers to an excellent survey of Evolution, in its scientific and philosophical aspects, the book *Evolution in Action*, by Sir Julian Huxley, F.R.S., the grandson of the eminent Victorian biologist T. H. Huxley.

DR. J. T. CORNELIUS

2

Sir,—I refer to the letter of Dr. J. T. Cornelius on the above subject. There is a cleavage in the camp of the Evolutionists, many of whom are now finding shelter in Fundamentalism. But incurable atheists should hug the hypothesis of Evolution and the myths woven around it. So there is nothing shocking in a University lecturer attacking the Evolution theory and supporting the doctrine of Special Creation.

To begin with, the age of man has been progressively put back in the geological chart—the recent findings in the gorges of Tanganyika. As Prof. Randal Short declares: “The further back we look for early man, the more like ourselves he appears to be.”

Ever since the fake missing link “The Pilt-down Man” was exposed by Dr. K.P.Oakley of the British Museum and the two Oxford professors, Dr. J.E. Weiner and Dr. W.E. Le Gros Clark, the jaws of the Neanderthal Man, the Hiedelberg Man, the Java Man and their ilk are chattering at the joints. As Prof. Wm. L. Strauss Jr. wrote in *the Quarterly Review of Biology* (Sep. '49). “It is noteworthy, moreover, that forms intermediate between the human and any other primate groups, forms popularly termed missing links are as conspicuous by their absence to-day as they were in Darwin's day.” And this almost after a century of efforts.

Prof. D.M.S.Watson of the University of London has stated: “Evolution itself is accepted by Zoologists not because it has been observed to occur or can be proved by logical coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, Special Creation, is clearly incredible.” Incredible indeed to the atheistic mind, which must fill the gap with imagination and myths, miscalled science.

Prof. H.F.Osborn of the American Museum of Natural History, writing in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th Edn.), concludes: “The net result of observations is

not favourable to the essentially Darwinian view that the adaptive arises out of the fortuitous by selection, but is favourable to the hypothesis of the existence of some quite unknown law of life which we are at present totally unable to comprehend or even conceive. The nature of this law, which upon the whole appears to be *purposive* and teleological in its operations, is altogether a mystery, which may or may not be illumined by further research." Thus bows proud biology emerging from the illusory cave of evolution before the Mystery that creates, sustains and dissolves universes !

SAMANANDA

3

Sir,—Kindly permit me to make a few comments on the points raised by Sri Samananda in his letter published in your issue of April 26-27. The time relations of Evolution are highly significant in understanding the evolutionary process in nature.

According to dating by radio-active minerals, the earth's crust was formed 3,000 million years ago. Life came into being some 2,000 million years ago. About a million years ago, man did not exist, much earlier no mammals and reptiles nor any land forms existed. The earliest forms of life appeared in the primeval sea. Life from an evolutionary standpoint is a unitary process from the so-called inorganic to organic, with the appearance of the highly complex protein molecule, the physical basis of life.

As Julian Huxley states, natural selection converts randomness into direction, and endows blind chance with apparent purpose, as it operates in relation to the future—the future survival of the individual and the species. Hence purposive action does not exist at the level of biological evolution, except natural selection, although the later products of evolution, notably the mammals, give evidence of purposive action, because of an increase in the complexity of the organisation of their nervous system.

It has taken Nature to evolve man as we know him nearly 2,000 million years of existence, through the wasteful, blind, cruel, incredibly long periods of struggle for existence, through natural selection. Thus the evolution of man could not have been the goal of cosmic purpose, as is implied in the theory of special creation.

The fact is : the species and not the individual is the unit of evolution. Evolutionary biology reveals the great potentialities, which await man's development, through his knowledge of nature, and of how he can direct and control his own destiny.

The discovery of the principle of natural selection, as the only effective agency, and the discoveries of genetics make evolution comprehensible, and all other explanations untenable.

DR. J. T. CORNELIUS

A COMMENT

NEITHER the first letter of J.T.Cornelius nor the reply by Samananda comes to grips with the scientific facts bearing on the problem of Evolution *vis-à-vis* Fundamentalism.

To believe, with Samananda, that the net result of observations suggests some purposive and teleological law operating on the whole in the evolutionary process is not to admit that science favours Special Creation all along the line, such as Fundamentalism essentially posits. Teleology in evolution merely implies that, besides many measurable factors, there is the action of some secret intelligence within the phenomena of mutating life through the ages—a mysterious action under circumstances that mostly have the look of blind accidental forces at play. There is no necessary implication here that every species originates *de novo* or even that at least once at the beginning life was suddenly created, marking a sheer break with physico-chemical events. Scientific purposivism is not equivalent to the Fundamentalist hypothesis.

However, can we say—as Cornelius would want us—that biological science has given the death-blow everywhere to the theory of Special Creation? The correct position is rather complex and may be best seen in a quotation from Alfred Romer's article "Darwin and the Fossil Record" in *Natural History* (New York) of October 1959, pp. 457-469.

"The fossilised remains of animals and plants advance from lower to higher forms in perfect harmony with the dates assigned to the strata. There are no higher animals (above the Kangaroos stage) in or below the chalk; no mammals, reptiles, or birds below the coal and so on. The palaeontological record alone decisively proves the truth of evolution. . .

"From the beginning of the Cambrian up through the rest of the geological sequence, we have an abundant representation of animal life at every stage; even in Lower Cambrian formations, marine invertebrates are numerous and varied. Below this, there are vast thicknesses of sediments in which the progenitors of the Cambrian forms would be expected. But we do not find them; and these older beds are almost barren of evidence of life, and the general picture could reasonably be said to be consistent with the idea of a special creation at the beginning of Cambrian times. . .

"To the question why we do not find rich fossiliferous deposits belonging to these assumed earlier periods prior to the Cambrian system,' said Darwin, 'I can give no satisfactory answer.' Nor can we today, although some signs of pre-Cambrian life unknown to Darwin have since been discovered and a number of palaeontologists have devoted much thought to the question. Darwin advanced a hypothesis that, in pre-Cambrian days, the world 'may have presented a different aspect, and that the older continents, formed of formations older than any known to us, exist now only as remnants in a metamorphosed condition, or lie still buried under the ocean'. This hypothesis is none too convincing. Later workers have made various additional sug-

gestions towards a solution of the problem. But even today we have not completely solved this greatest of remaining palaeontological puzzles.”

There we are ! Alfred Romer himself does not doubt that a solution will be found. And no genuine scientist can deny evolution over millions of years. But it has to be admitted that, in the lowest-known fossiliferous strata, groups of allied species are found to make a sudden appearance which Science has been unable to explain as yet.

As to Cornelius's own reply to Samananda, it is a good corrective to old-fashioned non-scientific thinking but is itself rather old-fashioned in a scientific way. No student of biology denies the operation of natural selection to a considerable extent, yet is it scientific to deny purpose as a secret power behind the processes apparently worked out with chance and randomness ?

Cornelius himself admits : “the later products of evolution, notably the mammals, give evidence of purposive action, because of an increase in the complexity of the organisation of their nervous system.” Man, of course, is openly and persistently purposive. Cornelius says : “Evolutionary biology reveals the great potentialities, which await man's development, through his knowledge of nature, and of how he can direct and control his own destiny.”

In these statements we see that the nervous system gets organised more and more complexly in the course of evolution. Through one line of “the later products of evolution”, the mammals, purpose shows more and more until the mammal with the greatest complexity in the organisation of its nervous system—namely, man—is almost purpose incarnate. In the midst of what Cornelius calls “the wasteful, blind, cruel, incredibly long periods of struggle for existence through natural selection” a hidden direction pointing towards man seems at work. The presence of this direction is not reconcilable with the smug formulas of Special Creation, but to ignore it is unscientific and the call can be for a new formula of spiritual vision.

Cornelius would have it that an eminently purposive being like man evolves from an utterly purposeless inorganic world. Is such a paradox easier to swallow than the mystery of a purpose concealed in Matter and slowly, under the adverse obstructive conditions implied by Matter, disclosing itself ? Doubtless, we can see no purpose at play when we study physics and chemistry—but if we assert that there can be no purpose in their domains we must also infer that purpose would never come out of them at any point of history. On the assumption of a continuity between biology and physics-chemistry we should be free to posit a secret purpose becoming open.

Besides, biologists themselves are not prepared to regard organic processes as a mere development of inorganic ones. Whether we invoke the terms of Vitalism or no, something more than an extraordinary aggregate is implied in the former processes. Something unique to biology forces itself on every unbiassed observer today. We have all heard of Emergent Evolution. A lot of loose thinking is abroad on this topic, but the central fact is well set forth in what are called “organismic” theories. Ludwig von Bertalanffy, of Ottawa University and late of the University of Vienna, is a big

name in modern biological thought and his *Problems of Life* (Watts, 1952) expounds these theories with great acumen and comprehension. The book is written from a non-vitalistic standpoint, but it drives home the fact that biology is an autonomous science. This means that biology has laws of its own which, instead of being new applications of known physico-chemical laws, suggest a new conception of the so-called inorganic world and demand the discovery of new laws there. Physics and chemistry have to be subsumed under biology and not *vice versa*: they become limited cases of the latter. Fresh insights into physical systems, novel views of them become necessary.

Bertalanffy claims that all this can be brought about without introducing a life-force as such. But, by embracing an "organismic" theory of biological phenomena, he throws the field open to less materialistically oriented minds than himself. He frees us from the dead hand of physics and chemistry, which Cornelius would make the ruler of evolution. The next scientific step is not a jump into the arms of pure theology or the lap of obscurantist Fundamentalism. It is the growth of the sense of an "open world" in which as much intensive work as possible must be done to find "materialistic" laws yet in which there would be no dogmatic generalisation that negates all purpose at the basis of things.

The palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin has thrust into the forefront a point increasingly realised by science: no factor can emerge which does not exist in some form at the very root of existence. Cases termed exceptional and irregular are not freaks but the glaring appearance of movements subtly co-extensive with the world. For instance, we observe velocity changing mass in certain atomic processes. We do not say: "Here is a stark exception to Nature's rule!" We now say that every mass is modified by its velocity: only the velocity is too small to make an appreciable modification in the large-scale affairs of science. With regard to radioactivity we do not say that it is confined to a few phenomena. We now hold that every physical body radiates: the apparent non-radiation is due to a greater stability and longevity of the component elements. The same should apply to purposive activity. It must be, in Teilhard's language, a "Within" to every "Without".

We must not imagine that Teilhard urges such a principle because he is a Christian. Even a non-believer, even a Marxist (though non-Russian) materialist like J.B.S. Haldane affirms: "We do not find obvious evidence of life or mind in so-called inert matter, and we naturally study them most easily where they are most completely manifested; but if the scientific point of view is correct, we shall ultimately find them, at least in rudimentary forms, all through the universe." ("Science and Ethics" in *The Inequality of Man*, Chatto, 1932, p. 113.)

THIS is but another way of putting Sri Aurobindo's vision that Matter is involved Life and Life involved Mind—and Mind the involved form of a supra-mental consciousness which is pressing to be evolved. Science does not go so far. But if it has to grant that rudimentary purpose must be at play in even the sub-atomic realm, we may well conceive this purpose to be the first faint expression of a supreme con-

sciousness self-locked for a special manifestation—under the most opposing conditions—of a Supermind and Spirit existing in full splendour in its own divine rights in depths or heights to which Man's inmost ideals and values and highest aspirations and experiences provide the shining index.

Cornelius quotes Julian Huxley. Well, Julian Huxley has written a most sympathetic introduction to Teilhard de Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man*. True, he cannot follow Teilhard to the end of his vision. But once the beginning of the vision is allowed, it depends on the temperament and the experiential rhythm of a mind whether it looks on purposive Man as merely an interrelated collection of tiny purposivenesses in physico-chemical components or as the grand disclosure of a more-than-human Purpose aeonically evolving through them a suitable form for itself on way to Super- man.

Cornelius has first to catch up with modern scientific trends. Then he may stop short as most scientists do on the threshold of the non-material. But when he reaches that threshold he can lay no restricting hand on those who want to move further. To move further is not science, strictly speaking; but, at the point where such a step can be taken, it is impossible for science to say "No" or to declare that science is all in all.

K. D. SETHNA

BAGHA JATIN

THE HERO OF THE BENGAL REVOLUTION

(Continued from the October issue)

RELEASED, Jatin saw that in the thick of the commotion following the assassination of Samsul Sri Aurobindo had already left for Pondicherry, foiling the Government's attempt to arrest him again on the ground of his familiarity with Jatin. Motilal Roy of Chandernagore says that Sri Aurobindo had left word with the revolutionaries to assist Jatin in his programme of insurrection.

Except for a few centres under powerful leaders like Swami Prajnananda, Hemendra Acharya, Purna Das, Motilal Roy, Sashibhusan Roy Chowdhury and Jatin Roy—the revolutionist organisation seemed to have been paralysed by the two great blows from Government.

But set-backs, however shocking, could not upset Jatin's plans. After reading Bernhardt's book on the coming war, and through various secret sources, Jatin's conviction grew firmer than ever that Germany would be helpful to the Indian freedom fight during the World War, when the hold of the British on India would no doubt

slacken on account of their preoccupation with the "front". Therefore Jatin set about reviving the whole organisation by galvanising the centres.

H. W. Wilson, in his monumental history, *The Great War* (Vol. III, p. 348) writes, "Bernhardt, the prophet of the New Germany, forecast : 'There is another danger which concerns England more closely and directly threatens her vitality. This is due to the Nationalist movement in India and Egypt, to the growing power of Islam, to the agitation for independence in the great colonies . . . The danger is imminent that Pan-Islamism will unite the revolutionary elements of Bengal'."¹ According to Mr. Wilson, for years even before the partition of Bengal, German leaders had made a minute study of India. They knew all about the secret societies plotting against Britain.

Leaving the charge of the Calcutta centre in the hands of his able lieutenant, Atul Ghose, Jatin went to Jessore and, apparently, led a peaceful existence with his family and children and became a very busy contractor to the district board and Government, running a prosperous business with its head-office at Jessore and two or three branch-offices here and there. But very few noticed that most of Jatin's employees were his own associates and disciples in the revolutionist movement. Under cover of his contractorship, he started moving from district to district on cycle or on his favourite horse at such a dizzy speed that often he was seen covering more than a hundred miles a day. Government could hardly suspect that Jatin's motive could be anything else than a serious desire to earn his livelihood and feed his family and children. And, as a proof of his bonafide, big bridges and new public roads were seen springing into existence under Jatin's creative hands, as had done mills and factories during the boycott days in 1905. It was all too late, however, when Government discovered what Jatin was really about.

In Calcutta and elsewhere too, Jatin's associates and disciples were all seen engrossed in business, but secretly continuing their real work. Amarendra Chatterjee and Ram Majumdar had opened a big cloth-shop, the *Shramajivi Samabaya* in Harrison Road, Hari Chakravarty had opened the *Harry and Sons* in Woodmund Street, to receive and supply orders. In College Square, Suresh Majumdar had started the Gouranga Press (from where, a few years later, journals like the *Anandabazar Patrika*, the *Hindusthan Standard* and the weekly *Desh* came out). Kaviraj Bejoy Roy opened his Ayurvedic dispensary in Bowbazar. Bejoy Chakravarty was sent to Chakradharpur (B.N.Rly.) to start another cloth-shop, and Saileswar Bose to Balasore (Orissa) to open the *Universal Emporium*, dealing in cycles and watches. Similar shops were opened nearly everywhere in the country. They served as shelters and underground meeting places for the revolutionists. Among other important shelters were the Shobhabazar home of Dr Hemanta Chatterjee (Jatin's uncle), Dwarika Vidya-bhusan's house at Mirzapur Lane, Dr Nilratan Dhai's hostel (where Jatin would often spend his nights, and where brilliant scholars like Dr Meghnad Saha, Jnan Ghose,

¹ This explains Lord Curzon's haste in bringing about the partition of Bengal.

Dr Satyen Bose, Dr Nilratan and Jibanratan Dhar first came in contact with Jatin).

On the occasion of the flood in Burdwan and Kontai, in June 1913, revolutionaries from all sides flocked there ostensibly for relief work. There, in a secret meeting, Jatin clearly stated his future plan in regard to an armed insurrection at the outbreak of the World War. All the parties assembled under Jatin's banner. The *Anushilan* of Dacca too promised their collaboration.

In August 1914, by looting the *Rodda Company* of Calcutta, Jatin's associates and disciples got hold of a good number of Mauser pistols (made in Germany, and well-known as very powerful arms) and distributed them to all the important centres of the organisation. Quite a few years before that, Jatin had thought of importing arms and ammunitions from abroad and, accordingly, had sent out his emissaries (mostly as students) to Europe, America and other parts of the world in order to arrange for foreign aids.

In the very early years of the century, Swami Niralamba (J. N. Banerjee) had gone to the Punjab and spread there Sri Aurobindo's revolutionary ideals. Freedom-loving Punjabis had at once welcomed these ideals, and men like Sardar Ajit Singh, Kishen Singh (father of the Martyr Bhagat Singh) and so many others embraced this new movement with all their ardour. It was this ardour that had kindled a flame in Lala Hardyal too, who, in 1911, carried these fire-seeds to San Francisco and, with the help of revolutionaries like Adhar Laskar, Dr Taraknath Das,¹ Pandit Ramchandra, Barkatulla, Bhai Paramanand, Panduranga Khankhoje, Kashiram, and Sohan Singh Granthi sowed them among patriotic Indians by founding the *Yugantar Ashram*. Soon after, he started publishing the historic journal *Gadhar* (which too means "Yugantar" or revolution) and had an immediate appeal to lovers of India all over the world. In no time, the powerful Gadhar Party came into being.

In the meantime in London, Zürich, and Berlin too Indians like Maratha, Paranjape, Suktankar, Dr Dhiren Sarkar, Siddiki, Dr Jnan Das Gupta, Sovan, Biren Chattopadhyay (Sarojini Naidu's brother), Champakraman Pillai, Savarkar, Dhingra, Shyamji Krishnavarma, Madame Cama and others had started organising secret societies to work for India's freedom. Among them too, there were a few of Jatin's emissaries. In course of time, Hardyal went to Berlin and met Biren Chattopadhyaya who had already established an excellent relationship with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Germans had definitely promised to help the Indian insurrection against the British Raj, in form of money, arms and ammunitions. That the Kaiser himself was directly interested in the Indian freedom fight has been clearly stated in *The Great War* by H. W. Wilson: "About 1909, he (the Kaiser) opened relations with seditious Indians, and a bureau was established in Berlin to promote Indian plots. . . . The Crown Prince followed faithfully in the footsteps of his father. During his visit to India persons in his suite were able to meet on the spot Indian sedition-mongers" (Vol. 10, p. 387).

¹ Jatin's emissaries and initiators of the Indian movement in U S A.

During the "Maniktala" years, Rashbehari Bose had occasions to become intimate with Jatin and his doings. For some time, however, Bose dissociated himself from the revolutionary activities. But when, released from prison, Jatin once more invited Rashbehari to come and work for the imminent insurrection, he could not but join him. The way Jatin influenced Rashbehari is clearly shown by Dr Jadugopal in his autobiography. He writes that in a secluded garden at Dakshineswar, Jatin, Rashbehari and Amarendra Chatterjee were busy discussing about the insurrection when, suddenly, Jatin looked straight into Bose's eyes and asked, "Fort William has to be captured. Possible?" As though spell-bound, Bose immediately replied, "Yes. I shall do it." And he actually went and settled the whole matter with Genda Singh, the Sikh in-charge of the Fort, so that all the Indian soldiers agreed to participate in the revolution.

The first All-India direct action was to take place on February 21, 1915. But the plan fell through owing to Kirpal Singh's turning King's approver. Though a failure in India, this direct action was a unique success in Singapore where the entire 5th Light Infantry and the Malay States Guides (in all, a thousand soldiers) joined the insurrection, attacked the fort, and kept it under siege for seven long days. But, getting no reinforcement from India, they had to surrender. "Probably the seed was sown by Indian agitators," writes H. W. Wilson, "who returned from America at the beginning of the War and visited Singapore on their way. That the German intrigues in U.S.A. were responsible for the return of these dangerous conspirators to the East during the critical period of August, 1914, there can be little doubt" (*The Great War*, Vol. 6, p. 159).

At this juncture, one of Jatin's emissaries, Satyen Sen, returned from America, via Japan where he had met Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen who showed a genuine interest in India's freedom struggle and promised active support. Along with Satyen, came two bright young revolutionaries, Pinglay and Kartar Singh (the latter was equipped with knowledge of Aircraft-making), and four thousand members of the Gadhar Party. Twenty thousand more, as Satyen reported, were to join them soon and German ships too, loaded with money, arms and ammunitions were coming.

With the hope of collecting more money and arms, Rashbehari sailed for Japan in May 1915, while Jatin started preparing the organisation for another decisive action. Expecting the aids to come, he arranged for distribution of the Gadhar members all over North India.

The 'Berlin Committee' of Indian revolutionaries decided that, aided by the German Foreign Ministry, they would collect money, arms and ammunitions and send them to Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, and to Captain Von Papen, German Military Attache at Washington. Bernstorff and Papen together would arrange to send them to India by chartered ships. All the German Ambassadors and Consuls in the European and Asian countries had already received instructions to help the Indian revolutionaries as best they could, thanks to which, Jatin's emissaries had always received most cordial welcome especially in Bangkok and Batavia.

In March, 1915, Jatin's emissary Jiten Lahiri returned from America with the news that the German ship *Maverick* was going to leave San Francisco on April 22 and that on its way, two more ships, *Anne Larcen* and *Henry S*, would join it, all loaded with valuable material for the Indian insurrection.

One of the ships, it was decided, would stop either at Noakhali or Hatia, another at Raimangal (*Sundarbans*). Bepin Ganguli and M.N.Roy were given the charge of taking delivery and, on the fixed date, marching into Calcutta where all the Indian soldiers would join the revolutionaries, capture Fort William and all Calcutta, and hoist the Indian Tricolour. Phani Chakravarty and Bhupati Majumdar were in charge of dynamite and other explosives. The third and, if possible, a fourth ship would contain the most important consignment of materials, and anchor at Balasore (Orissa). Jatin himself took the responsibility of taking delivery and proceeding towards Calcutta through Singbhum and Midnapore where, on his route, waiting revolutionaries would join him. Jatin would also destroy all means of communication between Bengal and Madras. Bhola Chatterjee and Satish Chakravarty were to destroy the Bengal Nagpur and the East Indian Railway lines. In response to this direct action in Eastern India, other centres all over India and the Asian countries would simultaneously join hands. The whole British Raj would be paralysed in India and, on top of it, troops of Indian revolutionaries would enter the mainland from outside. In India there were only twelve thousand British soldiers then, and there was no possibility of bringing in fresh troops, since the British army could not be moved away from the frontier.

Aided by his brilliant associates, Jatin, the master-mind, had even chalked out a plan for the administration of free India. It was from the British rulers that he had the privilege to learn the secrets of administration, while he was holding a high post in the Bengal secretariat. Also, he had the prudence to forestall any possible entry of the Germans as new rulers.

At such a critical moment, towards the beginning of 1915, when the British Government had set a high price on Jatin's head, and issued his photos in their circulars in order to help his identification and arrest, Jatin could often be seen in crowded streets. When one of his disciples protested against such recklessness, he smiled and replied, "If we should be hiding for safety all the time, why on earth did we venture upon this path?"

One day, while Jatin was in a secret meeting at a Calcutta centre, a shadow suddenly loomed up outside the room, aiming at which Chittapriya fired a shot. It was a spy, Nirod Haldar, who now lay prostrate and bleeding. Immediately Jatin ordered the meeting to disperse. But Nirod did not die before he could name Jatin as responsible for his death.

As soon as news arrived that the ships were coming, Jatin decided to go to Balasore. It was towards the end of March, 1915. After leaving necessary instructions with Saileshwar at the Universal Emporium in Balasore town, Jatin and a few of his associates went to Kaptipoda, thirty miles inland, in the dense forests of Mayurbhanj, and waited for the ships.

Among the local people Jatin became very popular as *Sadhu Baba*, and his dwelling came to be known as Ashram. Sadhu Baba became their idol in their weal and woe, joy and sorrow. Jatin was good at homoeopathic and allopathic treatments, and would often bring serious cases home and nurse them for days and nights running. Also he had opened a grocer's shop for the poor villagers, and most often the sales were 'on credit'. Moreover, every evening Jatin would hold a class for the illiterate villagers.

Leaders from various centres came regularly to meet Jatin in Kaptipoda, discuss current topics with him, and take instructions. In June, 1915, M.N.Roy returned to Kaptipoda after a month of tour of a few Asian countries, and after contacting the German Representative, Von Helfferich, at Batavia, on Jatin's behalf. As token of German collaboration and friendship, Roy dramatically placed a heap of sovereigns at Jatin's feet and also a map of India with spots thereon, where the Germans had indicated important revolutionary centres and other spots where the ships would anchor. Also Roy reported that the German ships were already on their way. Jatin broke this piece of good news to his disciples and associates. Everybody eagerly looked forward for the ships to come.

The *Maverick* had punctually left San Francisco. But by the time it neared Mexico—after an unusual delay due to its attempts to avoid the American sea customs—the *Annie Larcen* was captured by the Americans. Therefore the *Maverick* had to proceed all alone.

It was the time when the Czech revolutionaries were hiding in America and attempting to rid their country of the Austro-Hungarian domination. The Czechs were apparently interested in the Indian insurrection, and had managed to become intimate with the Gadhar members. But when they came to know that the Indian revolutionary effort had advanced so far, they grew jealous and passed the information on to the French Intelligence Department; from where it promptly reached the British spies. As an emergency measure, under the *Defence of India Act*, the police started arresting Indians indiscriminately. The Central Intelligence Department girded up their loins to arrest Jatin. At the same time, British spy ships started following the *Maverick*. Desperate, it threw away all the important documents, arms and ammunitions into the Pacific, and was captured in Java.

The Singapore press-cuttings of this news was sent to Jatin. Without feeling the least depressed, he at once sent Phani Chakravarty and M.N.Roy to Batavia again, in August 1915. From there, Roy and Chakravarty went to Shanghai, met the German Ambassador, and made arrangements for two more ships. In Shanghai, Chakravarty found Rashbehari Bose waiting for them with plenty of money and material, some of which he had already despatched to the *Shramajivi* of Calcutta, through two young Chinese friends. Also he had sent another lot of arms, some important names and addresses, and valuable documents through Abani Mukherjee, a member of Jatin's party. But unfortunately, all three of them were arrested in Singapore. Seeing Chakravarty too under arrest, Rashbehari again fled to Japan.

On one of such stormy days, Jatin had a vision of Sri Krishna appearing before him. The sun was setting. The entire Kaptipoda forests seemed to have been touched by a meditative calm. Manindra Chakravarty of Kaptipoda happened to have gone out to see Jatin at that auspicious moment, and finding him in an in-drawn state and tear-filled eyes, Manindra quietly sat beside him. He has left a soul-stirring description of Jatin's state : seeing him, Jatin suddenly clasped his hand and exclaimed, "Look, look there !" The touch was thrilling. Currents of lightning flashed through his limbs. But his eyes failed to see Sri Krishna. He has written, "Where shall I get such eyes ? . . . In spite of Jatin's eagerness to make me see, how could a miserable person like me deserve to see Him ? But I was thrilled to witness Jatin altogether lost in ecstasy . . . So many cares he had ! Ever so many problems weighed heavy upon him ! But he seemed to have forgotten everything ! . . . He kept on sitting in that trance. We sat side by side, as though in another world, until it was dark . . . Such was the trance of this great devotee ! Blessed be you, Jatin ! Blessed be your name !"

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Unable to trace Jatin's whereabouts, G. D. Denham (D.I.G., Intelligence Dept., of the Central Govt.), along with Sir Charles Tegart (Deputy Commissioner of Police), and L. N. Bird (Assistant Superintendent of Police) went to Balasore on September 4, 1915, pursuing a faint clue. On the 5th morning, while searching the *Universal Emporium*, a scrap of paper with the word 'Kaptipoda' written on it, fell into their hands. With a great deal of suspicion, they proceeded towards Kaptipoda, accompanied by R. G. Kilby (District Magistrate, Balasore), Sergeant Rutherford (Proof Dept., Chandipur) and E. C. Ryland (D.I.G., Behar and Orissa), both with their contingents; also at Tegart's request, a company of armed police from Balasore joined them.

They reached Kaptipoda on the evening of the 7th. Informed of their arrival, Jatin personally went to see and make sure that they were really his "friends", and made up his mind about what steps to take. Only Chittapriya and Manoranjan were in the 'Ashram' then. Returning there, Jatin explained the matter to them and asked them to get ready without delay. But Chittapriya and Manoranjan repeatedly requested Jatin, "Dada, don't bother any more about us. If you decide to go away all alone, who in earth can ever guess your whereabouts ? If you kindly care to save yourself now, any number of insurrections can be hatched and organised at your bidding. Don't worry about anything else, Dada !" But without uttering a single word, Jatin went to his host, Manindra, informed him of the coming of the Police, and moved fast towards Taldihī, twelve miles away, where two more of his disciples, Jyotish and Niren, were waiting. When they too entreated him again to escape, Jatin replied, "I had an impression that by this time you at least knew your Dada pretty well. But is this the proof of it ? To save his own life from danger, could that be the leader's first concern ?"

Chitta, Niren, Manoranjan, and Jyotish—four young hero warriors, silent and

resolute, moved forward, following in the footsteps of their revered leader, their loving brother and beloved Guru who, according to Amarendra Chatterjee, "can be compared with Napoleon alone, as a warrior and a general. Had he been born in a free, Western country, he would have left an immortal name in the history of Mankind." Or, in Atul Ghose's words, "A consummate military leader and devoted lover of the country like Shivaji and a sea of compassion like Chaitanya : these together would make a Jatindranath."

On the night of the 8th, Jatin returned to Manindra's house. It was drizzling, and the sky was thick with clouds. All day long, the police had searched the entire area minutely, tortured Manindra, trying to squeeze information out of him, and kept a strict watch all around after sunset. "In spite of all these obstacles, how could Jatin come to me ? It was really a puzzle !" Manindra wrote later. He briefly told Jatin about the day's experience and warned him to be more cautious, since the police had promised to the public a prize worth a few thousand rupees, if anybody could capture Jatin or his followers. And then Manindra added, "Still there is time. If you go away in the direction of the Meghasani range across the dense forest, you'll very soon be out of danger. Please don't delay, for the country's sake at least."

"No !" replied Jatin in a firm tone, "It is no more an occasion to keep in hiding and save our little life. The crucial moment calls for a show-down !" Then, taking some money from Manindra (out of their own funds), and a rifle, Jatin went away to join his four disciples.

Early next morning, Jatin and his party reached the bank of the river Bura-Balam, near Balasore town. But no ferry agreed to take them across, since it was raining. All of a sudden, one of the boatmen shouted, "Well, these must be the dacoits. Hurry up ! you'll get thousands of rupees ! Dacoits ! Dacoits !"

At once a terrible row shook the banks of the Bura-Balam with excitement. In vain did the revolutionaries try to convince the villagers that they were not dacoits. But, when the crowd desperately rushed to catch them, Manoranjan fired blank shots to keep them off. The crowd retreated. But, as Jatin and his party swiftly ran past village after village, the pursuers increased in number. When they were near the village Kamtana, two daring villagers pounced upon Jatin, but only to be hurled off in a split second. They, however, managed to stand up with difficulty, and urged others to run after the fugitives. None dared fight; and yet none gave up the chase.

After a while, when some fellows mustered courage and tried to seize the revolutionaries, Manoranjan killed one of them and injured another. At last the mob, demoralised, shrank back, and went to inform the police. Taking advantage of the position, Jatin and his party reached the Mayurbhanj Road, and moved fast in search of a vantage-point.

For a few whole days, the five heroes had walked without food and any kind of rest, not to speak of sleep. Jatin realised that this could not continue for long. Something had to be given to the boys. On their way, when they found a

village sweets shop, they bought a rupee-worth of inflated rice, and having no change on them, they gave the shopkeeper a ten-rupee note, and left the place.

It occurred to the shopkeeper that probably these were the much spoken-of dacoits. Again a crowd gathered. Again the chase began. By the time they reached Sahupura, they saw a company of police rushing towards them. Encouraged by the sight, the crowd grew so excited that the revolutionaries had to fire blank shots again in order to scare them away. Then they jumped into the river, swam across, sped through a big paddy field, and entered a forest at the end of the village Chasakhand. Niren was ill. So Jatin selected a hillock skirted by a tank on one side and surrounded by ant-hills, climbed up it with his disciples, and asked them to be ready with their Mauser pistols and long-range rifles, and wait for his orders to fire.

Through his binocular, Chittapriya saw the British army advancing rapidly towards them in the manner of a pincer movement, on one side of which was Major Freath (Superintendent, Defence Dept.), while on the other, were Sergeant Rutherford and his detachment.

Suddenly Manoranjan noticed a man waving a piece of white cloth from the top of a tree. The revolutionaries understood the signal and shot him down. Meantime, realising where the fugitives were, the police opened fire as they charged towards the hillock. But there was no response from the hillock.

Jatin, strategist that he was, had deluded his enemies into thinking that his party had no long-range fire arms, and so drew them well within his firing range. When the soldiers were about to climb the hillock, he riddled them with a volley of bullets. The firing continued from behind the termite-hill, decimating the enemy ranks, till the struggling survivors were forced to retreat. The bewildered officers sharply ordered the soldiers to lie prone. But the relentless rain of bullets gave them no respite. The regiment tried hard to advance, crawling up the muddy slopes. The British officials, struck by awe and admiration for Jatin's military tactics could find no way to save their men who were falling by the dozen.

After three hours' constant firing, Jyotish murmured, "Dada, the bullets are running short!" Stopping for a moment from firing with both hands equally steady Jatin gave them the last bag of bullets. But its key could not be found, and the leather was so thick that while they tried to open it, a sepoy had already climbed a tree and fired from there. The shot whizzed past Chittapriya's head. Next moment, when the brave young hero lifted his head, a second shot hit him dead.

Jatin had received a bullet wound in his left thumb; yet he continued firing with his right hand. Seeing Chitta's tragic end, he drew the body on to his lap. The stock of bullets almost over, and Chitta dead, the four heroes desperately fired away, with all their might. In a quick succession, Jatin received a few bullets in the abdomen and armpit. Hot blood gushed out and streamed down on the soil of Chasakhand, the blood that sanctified the spot into a centre of pilgrimage for generations to come.

Niren, Jyotish, and Manoranjan too were badly injured. But unable to bear their beloved Guru's fatal wounds, they quickly tore their *dhotis* into shreds and sought to give him some first aid. Looking at them Jatin said, "I am leaving you three behind. Before you die tell the people of our country *that we were never dacoits*. Let them know about our unfulfilled mission, so that posterity may take it up!"

In the meantime, British officers and soldiers gathered around and captured them ! Hats off before Jatindranath, the officers bowed in respect, and arranged to remove him immediately to the Govt. Hospital at Balasore.

Before the operation, that night, Jatin said by way of a dying declaration, "I alone am responsible for all that has been done till now. My associates are mere boys and they are innocent, mere tools in my hands... Please see that they are acquitted."

The operation was successful. But on the morning of September 10, 1915, while Mr. Kilby was busy nursing Jatin with brotherly care, Jatin tore off all his stitches and bandages. And again blood gushed out, Jatin smiled and exclaimed, "So much blood left still ? Fortunately, every drop of it has been shed in the worship of the Mother !"

Jatin's elder sister Vinodebala had once written to him, "Jati, take care that we may never have to hear of the lion being caged."

No ! stone-walls could not make a prison for him, nor iron bars a cage. He smiled at all the care the alien government were taking to keep him alive.

Charles Tegart, who had known Jatin for years, eagerly came to him and asked with all his sincerity, "Mukherjee, tell me, what can I do for you ?" With a beaming smile Jatin replied, "Thanks, Charles. All's over. Good bye!"

And he passed away.

Such love for the country, such a great sacrifice moved the British officers so much that, with tearful eyes, some of them stood round Jatin's bed. Sir Charles Tegart later said : "I have high regard for him. I have met the bravest Indian. But I had to perform my duty."

The glorious death Jatin died at the end of a glorious life of 35 years made all the lovers of freedom weep for him. Men like Deshbandhu C.R. Das and Rabindranath Tagore (who knew Jatindranath personally) joined in the country's silent homage to the memory of this invincible harbinger of national freedom and glory. Poets and bards down the decades sang of the deeds of Jatindranath Mukherjee and inspired patriots like Bhagat Singh of the Punjab, Surya Sen of Chittagong, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose who followed the trail Jatin had blazed, and carried the torch of Revolution right onto the portals of our INDEPENDENCE.

(Concluded)

PRITHWINDRA MUKHERJEE

ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

4. INSPIRATION (*Continued*)

IN Milton the mind, the will, the man of learning is the planner of the epic. Inspiration aids merely when openings or occasions permit; often it is silent before the tide of human understanding, the theological data, the negative elements that either bar its self-expression or else permit a diffused influence to trickle through the thick veils of conceptions, ideas, forms and patterns. From the point of view of inspiration there is confusion throughout the poem, because there is no clear superior guidance that can succeed amid the complex story put forth—and it is this inspirational daemon that is the true guiding spirit. It may be argued that Milton's completion of *Paradise Lost* is itself a proof of the guidance of inspiration. I admit he finished his task. But how did he complete it? Is the end as effective as the beginning? The force that is there, the afflatus that overwhelms one at the outset, does it remain to surprise the reader and give him shocks of inspirational outbursts? We hear the genius of Milton as a versifier and not Milton as the inspired bard who takes by storm all that he touches in the first Books.

It may be further objected that what is true of Sri Aurobindo may not be valid for Milton. We are not putting them at the same level and judging them from equal standards. We are judging Milton by his best moments of highest inspiration and this shows us what he could achieve if he were open to the true inspiration all the time or at least in the majority of instances. But there are lapses and breaks which mar the intensity of the epic. Also none would deny his ego-centricity; this too hampered his tuning up to the highest inspiration that visited him. His learning, his ideas, his theological conceptions all at one time or another, either singly or together, stood in the way of the inspiration's coming and possessing him. For inspiration is the voice of light, the voice of truth, it is the Word. It cares little for the dogmas and the philosophical content of thought.

In Sri Aurobindo the learning, the classical education, the philosophical background, the Yogic discipline did not, in any way, cut across his inspiration. These rather went to enrich the poetry, and the inspiration found a silent room in which it could pour itself. The very essence of education, the very heart of philosophy and all acquired human understanding and knowledge became the substance of an integral, all-gathering, all-revealing wisdom. This, when outer thoughts have been hushed, comes out and aids the process of inspiration. All sensations, experiences, feelings, desires, the states of rapture, the status of large unmoved tranquillity, the roll of passion and power are transmuted in his silent soul. Inspiration drops into this soul ready to answer the slightest *nuance*, change and vibration which become agents of self-expression. It is this core of joy, the very heart of power, the centre of sweetness

that inspiration expresses. And all these subjective experiences, caught within a framework of word-meaning, thought-substance and idea-formation, are redescribed again by the aid of inspiration, which gives them the final stamp of truth.

In Milton inspiration comes less as a process of opening than as a drawing and calling it to be creative and asking it to work in the pattern put forth by the mind and ordained by the theological reason. It is an objective way and a path for the hero who is the master and needs must control all, even the inspiration that comes. This may appear the reverse of what we find in the invocations to the muse that occur. By these invocations Milton is doing two things. First, he is following obviously the lead of Virgil; secondly, he wants to find room for the inspiration and, once it comes, curbs it for his own rational purpose. But inspiration eludes his grasp, leaves behind only an effigy. For inspiration cannot be controlled in so crude and pragmatic a manner. It is a goddess that needs submission and faithfulness, needs a heavenward gaze and an aspiring attitude. It will not be dictated to by a mental process or lend itself to be the instrument of ignorance. It works under conditions. It needs a certain fulfilling of terms before it can answer to the prayer of the recipient poet.

In Sri Aurobindo inspiration abides constantly and surely. This is because he was one with all that came from above and he had abolished the ego, gone beyond the human range of mind and its status. He imposed nothing, asked nothing, and made no conditions. Even the theme, the plot, the details of the story came from the inspiration. He merely stood below as under a vast surging cataract and allowed the inspiration to do its work in any manner it pleased, to heighten the pitch, to increase the vibrations of intensity, to make use of all the acquired learning, experiences for its own purpose. But to do this one needs a great preparation and a great sacrifice. This is a mightier task than the heroic use of Inspiration by Milton. To acquire and grasp needs power. But submission needs sacrifice—no easy matter.

Milton's inspiration comes mostly from the poetical intelligence and rarely reaches the acme of overhead poetry. Sri Aurobindo's inspiration comes always and invariably from the overhead planes and at his lowest he reaches the level of the poetical intelligence, the highest attainable to Milton, but even then it is this intelligence swept by a greater vision. Milton dictates to the inspiration and fails to receive what the inspiration can give; while Sri Aurobindo is given it and led by the inspiration. In one it is the mind speaking of itself while in the other it is the soul speaking of the triple realities of the world, God and self. One is loud, heroic and bold, while the other is intense, rare, pure, surpassing in sweetness, in power, in grandeur. In one we hear the human genius speaking, in the other the diapason of the Gods.

5. PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is the basis of any great work. Poetry may or may not possess a metaphysical background in the general sense, but poetry of the genre we are consi-

dering can legitimately possess a philosophy without undermining its poetical value.

A poem of a romantic nature may not possess a philosophical background. A lyric may point to some philosophical truth, but need not have one. A narrative never has one. But an epic can certainly have a philosophical basis, as in Dante, Milton, Vyasa or Sri Aurobindo. Epics that are sung by bards in ancient times seldom had this; they were more narrations of events, characters and the play of forces. If any implied philosophy was there, it was that of the futility of human existence, the supremacy of the Gods and the inevitability of Doom. Here we are referring to the works of Homer and the Scandinavian bards. But the Mahabharata bears a great synthetical philosophy. Dante sums up the typical medieval religious attitude and is the forerunner of Milton in this respect. Milton's source is in Genesis and whatever philosophy Christian theology possesses, Milton too has been the faithful follower of the religious idea. Sri Aurobindo deals with things of the spirit, of consciousness, of psychology and as such possesses the true materials of a poem that can have a philosophy behind it. But this does not mean that *Savitri* is a philosophical poem and deals with abstractions, concepts, ideas, logical theses and anti-theses and all that constitutes a philosophical treatise. On the contrary its point of view is that of a seer, a prophet, and a prophet never waits to prove anything by logical balancing of facts or ideas but sees the reality of a thing because he feels it, and sees and experiences it as an integral part of his undivided consciousness. His is the philosophy in the highest sense of the term—*Darśana* or vision,—and not in the Western interpretation of the term.

Milton's philosophy is not an original body of thought, but is the thinking out of the principles laid down in the Hebraic and medieval Christian theology. He takes his stand on this and wants to take a rational view of things, be it man, nature or evil. But by disposition he was not a dialectical thinker like Bacon, Spinoza or Descartes. He set out to write poetry; but as this poem encompassed a cosmic field and touched the heart of human misfortune which Christianity terms "*The Fall*" he necessarily had to answer some of the fundamental questions in his own way. For he had to describe the conditions under which the fall occurred. Much of his philosophy is implied, also a great extent can be deduced, only a few outstanding concepts are put forth.

The background of Milton's philosophy starts with man's fall from a state of felicity into a state of chaos due to the imposition of his passion on his reason. This disobedience, this intrusion into the barrier which marked the limit of human passion, causes that great calamity. This was the disobedience of the Fiat of the Almighty against which there was no appeal and the sentence of this Supreme is like an arrow which once unloosed cannot be revoked. Milton is a strict Protestant—he views in this light the strife between the sects of religion, and the conflict between the political ideological parties. That is why the only theme he can choose is this theme and all the problems to him ensue from this critical and primal mistake. He does not attempt to show a solution to it. Nor does he reveal any way by which we could find a relief

from the great doom of suffering. Even Christ who mediates between man's ignorance and the anger of God has to pay for his mediation in the most gruesome manner.

Milton's God is a sole supreme entity. He has no peers, no co-existent powers or lights. Such a concept is peculiar to the Hebraic teaching to undo the differences in the minds of people who adored many presences, worshipped many Gods of nature. This is the mind's imposition upon the many-sidedness of life. It wants to rule and be sovereign in its dominion. It is the assertion of the mental ego over the cry and dissonance of lesser influences. It wants to keep its power by imposing a strict adherence to its law, on pain of death and expulsion. Here we find no hierarchy or grades. The one and only God has created out of His omnipotence the only Son, the sole revealer of the Light to man, the only mediator between humanity and the Almighty. This too is typical of the mental entity. It thinks in terms of single ideas or concepts and takes its stand on one characteristic thought. This too is typical of the ethical power. It has a single code, a single ensuing influence. The one begets the one.

The Holy Ghost, the Spirit, is absent from the scene. This is because Milton's ethical thought could not conceive that which was intangible, rare, unattainable. He wants clarity as imposed by Reason. He seeks the mental lucidity, even in theology and in pure philosophical concepts, because his mind is bred in reason and imbued with rational principles. The rest, even if it be the esoterical concept of the Spirit, must be swept aside.

But Milton has to endure the Son for two reasons. God, as a principle, none has touched. He is formless, featureless according to the Hebraic idea. Christ is the one who reveals the Word of God. But Christ is not God himself, because God is beyond the limits of form and sense. Also unless Christ was born, the whole religious structure of Christianity could not be. Who then would be saved? But Spirit as a pure entity plays no such utilitarian role. Milton cannot find any moral justification for its existence. It may be argued that of God too we have no tangible contact. What moral use does He serve as an entity? Christ was amidst us, and lived our life. An omnipotent being could not suffer or die. And He is birthless. But Christ was dependent on something higher than himself; thus by deduction we find that God exists. Also the two existences are interdependent. If Christ did not exist, the world would not know the sole moral reality. If God did not exist, Christ too could not exist or, if he existed at all, he would live as a human being and not as an Avatar.

It is due to Christ that we find the tide of the world change. Otherwise God's pronouncement would have left man without any hope of redemption. This aspect of God's dictatorial stubbornness or inflexibility shows us that Milton's God is not without any quality. This position is totally opposed to the Vedantic metaphysical stand. There God is the sole entity but has no qualifications; even in less extreme schools of Vedantism like that of Ramanuja (Dwitya-Adwaitya) God has modifications, but this divinity is never stubborn, ruthless or blatantly dogmatic. So we find ourselves in a queer position. On the one hand God appears to be unknowable

and is known only through the mediacy of Christ. On the other hand this unknowableness does not prevent Him from being qualified, specially with the quality of an ethical despot. If Christ was the modification of God, he is not a true modification, for he does not reflect God's ruthless quality. In fact he shows what God is not, for he is compassionate and humane. This is our second enigma. Milton does not attempt to resolve it. His sharp intellect does not question this illogical aspect of the theological doctrine.

We cannot understand too Christ's position. Christ is born from God. But his sympathy for earth and man is something which does not, in actual manifestation, come from God. He does not share the burden of creation, not even the smallest fraction of it. God is unwilling to let his sole progeny share a small portion of creation. He is there as the true quintessence of humanity, the soul. But the soul too has its own field of creativity; Christ has no creative faculty. He is the Saviour—but Saviour from what? From the wrath of God. And since God has no intention to save mankind, because He does not stop the path of Satan, Christ's coming in between man and God's wrath is an act that is opposed to God's will. For this sacrifice, he had to wear the crown of thorns and be crucified, and be abandoned in all respects by God and humanity.

This brings us to the Truth which Milton mentions merely and does not dare to express openly. Christ is the incarnation of Love and Mercy. And his power of compassion is greater than God's ire and can save in spite of the curse and the evil. He is more effective in his power to create than God, for while God creates a material world Christ creates an inner world, greater than the material existence. His position is that of Prakriti that has the actual labour of making existence move. He is not the *Prakṛti* of the Sankhya, a power of ignorance, but a power of the soul that makes things move by its soul-force.

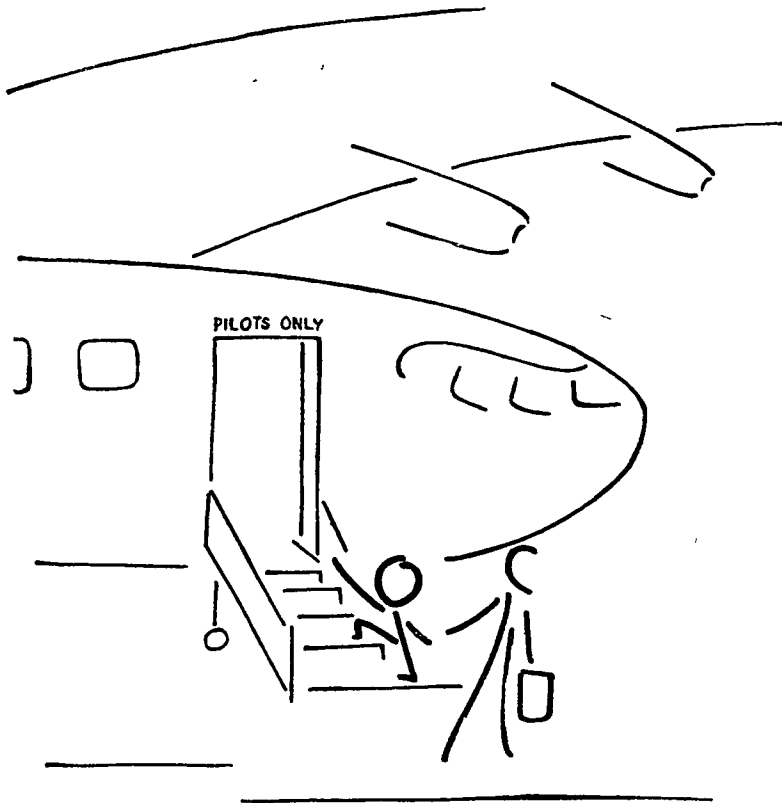
Also Christ is not an automaton. He has his own peculiar will apart from God's. And in spite of the suffering which would be his reward, he does not flinch from seeking to save man. Another stark departure from the current concept of Christ is his aspect of power as revealed in Book Six of *Paradise Lost*. Here we see him as Apollo and Mars, the God of Light and War who triumphs where the angels are defeated. Whatever be the way of expression, the concept itself is unique. Once more we find Milton's special capacity to deal with themes of power and glory. This aspect shows Christ a true offspring of God. Here he is not the soul, or saviour; he is like Jehovah the thunderer, a martial spirit put forth to save the Glory of God. Here he gets back something of the prestige he had seemed to lose in Book Three.

This again proves that Milton's God is capable of power but not Grace. Yet we can defend him in this way: Christendom does not recognise, like India, the aspect of Shakti or rather it has not advanced psychologically enough to conceive this aspect. Milton can make minor modifications, but major departures he cannot dare to conceive.

As the nett result we get a queer amalgam of Augustinian and Hebraic doctrines with a touch of the Hellenic ideal. But Milton's borrowings are clear, and his synthesis is not always very legitimate or successful, for he makes an outer fusion of ideas but does not wait to make a true synthesis where all aspects are fused. This is because perhaps he did not want to create a philosophical school, or give a philosophical justification to his poetry.

(To be continued)

ROMEN



"But Mother, I know all about airplanes!"
"No, No! Let's give the pilot a chance first."

NIGHT

THE Night obstructs the darkness with the stars
And spreads, wide-winged, her mantle of delight
That men may cease from care. She gives us sight
To look beyond the senses' close-set bars.

Our soul's mysterious deeps the Night reveals,
Her solemn presence stills our wandering mind :
The finite's reason can no longer bind
The dance of Infinity day-light conceals.

She opens the door to revelation's Fire,
Kali's impetuous dance in dark-mooned air,
The high-walled Heaven's steep ascending stair,
The flutings of the Godhead sweet and dire.

When Chaos reigns and sole the mystic Night,
She harbours in herself the slumbering Light.

PRITHWISINGH NAHAR

EYES

YOUR Eyes, an undreamed world of waking—
Vast vistas of luminous violet
With spark-speckles of electric bronze—
Deep seas where suns never set.

Eyes around whose glow all things fade,
Depth upon depth of healing light,
Calms of an intimate all-penetrating joy—
Green hazel Elements of mysterious might.

Realms of long-sought inner comfort,
Hope's rebirth, despair's cessation—
Domains of never-ending universe-blending love—
Eyes starry with night-enveloping compassion !

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

HARMONY

LED by the Organist the soul broke into the wide rapture
Of a daring harmony in a moment of inner liberation.
Walls fell apart, boundaries were rescinded.
All the nations, men, women and children across the oceans
Joined in an immense upward venture even unknown to themselves.
Devotees aspiring for Truth beside the tomb of the Avatar at night,
Fortunate pilgrims conscious recipients of a New Light from Above,
Scientists in love with their work intent on finding out the secrets of life,
Astronomers sounding the spaces, technicians engaged in ballistic projects,
Mill-hands toiling in factories, mechanics bent over their lathes,
Farmers gathering a golden harvest of wheat, paddy and maize,
Women picking tea-leaves and oranges, flower-girls and vendors of laces,
Pilots concentrated on the dials of their supersonic jets,
Captains of cruisers, sailors and soldiers, famished minds seeking knowledge,
Leaders of finance, architects of highways, musicians, artists and poets,
Numberless humble people who grumble and take the crumbs offered by Fate
And crawl through rainy days and sunny lanes to the natural end,
Fomentors of trouble, revolutionaries, gamblers and death-dealers,
Starving children, the dead and the dying, prisoners without ransom,
Perverted visionaries who would gladly blow up creation,
Even those who hate the Divine and work against His will,
All in that miraculous instant gathered around the sacrificial Fire of Grace,
Solicitous bees surrounding the Mother-Queen to draw their sustenance of Faith.
Unknown to us, our soul participates in a magnificent plan.

NIRANJAN GUHA ROY

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

“You can’t come into my parlour,”
Said the spider to the fly,
Lifting loftily each dainty leg
As if to tell her why.
You weren’t born within the purple pale,
You have no pedigree—
You stick your tongue in everything,
You’re plebeian, I can see.”

But the fly looked at her scornfully
With a thousand glassy eyes.
“Your means of locomotion
Is not elegant nor wise.
I’d never think of crawling
Where I could use my wings.
I’d never appear dangling
On a thread with all those limbs.”

“I’m an artist,” said the spider,
“From whence my genius springs,
You’ve no elemental knowledge
Why I do the queerest things,
Why I weave a web of silver
And hang there by the toes,
Why I embalm my victims
In the most expensive clothes.”

“Don’t you be so hoity-toity
With your glamour gossamer
Though I hatched out in a stable
You’re not from another sphere.
You’ve never travelled far enough
To see beyond your web,
While I’ve hob-nobbed with Bacteria
In the living and the dead.”

“In such a social circle
I never would be seen,

Being in my incubation
 An embryonic queen.
 Who in all the realm of Nature
 Has the classic grace and skill
 With filaments so flexible
 For so elegant a kill ?

“You can’t come into my parlour,
 You might damage my décor
 By lifting your proboscis
 When coming through the door.
 You may argue in superlatives
 That only flies have wings,
 But your vanity prevents you
 From observing many things.”

“In your undertaking parlour
 Your salon, Couturier,
 You decorate your victims
 In a stunning negligée,
 You lure them by your arty wiles,
 In leisure them devour,
 I may be just a flitting fly
 But I shun your ivory tower.”

The Lord leaned out of Heaven,
 Being weary whirling suns,
 Through a billion, trillion light years,
 And discarding worn-out ones.
 He overheard the tittle-tat
 ’Twixt the spider and the fly,
 “To think I made such fiddly things
 To quarrel—My, oh My !

“In My House are many Mansions,
 Gabriel, build one parlour more
 In any period to your taste,
 Ransack the Angel’s store;
 Put cabbages and worms about
 Their pride to twick and twinge,
 I’ll have another little joke,
 I’m an expert at wing-singe.

“In all Creation’s magnitude
Both in pattern and design,
The insects realize the least
They’re only half-divine.
They were made of whim and fancy—
I turn from moon and sun,
From servicing the universe,
To little things for fun.”

“I love the bees and butterflies,
Like beetles, bugs and lice.
I find their little escapades
Exciting and so nice.
That spider’s wiles so feminine,
This fly, each vice the same
With a little variation
In their biologic strain.”

“Each in her erratic fashion
Fills Creation’s definite plan
With mandibles or lambent wings
Within its brief life’s span.
In cunning and by instinct
Each his own belated brother.
Distant cousin, poor relation,
Never learn to love each other.”

IDA M. ROPER

RELIGION, HUMANISM AND DIVINITY

WHAT is religion ? I grope within for an answer. No clear answer is found. I feel relieved to say, "I don't know exactly what it is." Then the question comes, "Is it completely unknown to you ? You feel so often the vibration of its flow in your blood; your heart is bathed at times by the spirit of its sacred influx." That is true. Simply I don't know how to express it in terms of human words, to give a voice to this sublime secret of existence. Perhaps it is the source of the highest human aspiration, it may also be the outer shape and form of that aspiration. The hesitation comes again. How is it then that history shows, and we also see in front of our very eyes, even today the ugliest brutality and the most savage antagonism take place in the name of religion ? How do military invasion and forceful conversion happen to be the means of its growth and expansion ? We observe how hypnotising its influence is to make its followers blind to the searching light of reason and clear vision. So many amongst the pioneers of the modern scientific age have sacrificed even their lives for their discovered truth at the altar of dogmatic religious authority. But fortunately they did not stop short at that. They broke through the iron grip of the dogmatism of the church and finally the truths discovered by them received universal acceptance not merely because of their rational integrity and soundness but also because of their practical applications in our day-to-day life.

In revolutionary Russia on the other hand the attack on religion came altogether from a different standpoint. At the sight of painful social injustices and the impotency of the common mass against religious and other influences, a question cropped up in many minds : What is the necessity at all of religion in society ? Can there not be a society without it ? Let men have no blind faith and meaningless devotion towards an imaginary something which they call God, a God constructed as it were by the petty and partial self-interest of a limited few. What benefit can, after all, be derived from an intoxication with such a God as appears to be flatly indifferent to and absolutely careless of human suffering and agony and, above all, the most vicious social inequalities ? They came face to face with only one truth, a most pressing social need, namely, the well-being of all men irrespective of any class distinction. That necessitated the abolition of a special class which was being enriched, according to them, at the cost of others by an entirely wrong social and economic arrangement. They took on their own heads the responsibility of eradicating this gross social defect, since they did not believe that the change could be brought about by any other agency, influence or power. It was for them to establish efficient and proper methods of administration, production and distribution not only of land, labour and capital of the country but also of the subjective pursuits of life, in the sphere of education, science, amusement and culture. This they did in their own way without allowing any religious motive to adulterate their purely humanitarian zeal and power of work. They developed with

considerable success agriculture, science, and technology on the one hand and, on the other, methods of education and culture, arts, music, painting, games, sports, gymnastics, etc. They helped to a great extent the common mass to have a sound mind in a sound body. According to them a perfect social relationship based on love, sympathy, kindness and mutual understanding is the essential prerequisite for a novel social order. How far that has been satisfied is to be decided by others; but, that being satisfied, what need is there to seek for a God and worship him for nothing? So they drove away God and religion from their social atmosphere.

Keeping aside the question of religion such sort of a change was, perhaps, a necessity in the events of things to come. There was a time in the past when Church and Priesthood were the rulers of society. Even the Kshatriyas or the warrior class had to accept subordination to the Brahmins or the learned class. In the medieval period the kings and monarchs or the Kshatriyas came into power. Then in recent times the Vaishyas or the commercial community took the lead and became the dominating class. Money became the monarch. But all throughout the period the position of the Sudras, the proletariat or the labour class, has been completely neglected and pushed away to the farthest corner. To complete the cycle this last class must also come to prominence. They have been shouldering the burden of the whole edifice of so-called civilisation half-fed, half-clothed without name, fame or any kind of recognition. Can they remain oppressed or down-trodden eternally? So, fighting against heavy odds and opposition, they are now awakened. It appears that what they have done, they have done in accordance with nature's demand on them. But in so doing they have been very much one-sided. They have neglected the psychological or the deeper side of human nature. Who I am and what for do I live?—this eternal question did not appear to them. Rather they did not care to look at that aspect of life.

At this point it will not be out of place to discuss a little about the Hindu system of four castes, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. These four, according to the Hindus, are said to have emanated from the four limbs of Brahma, the creative deity. Symbolically they are the four aspects of the human social existence. In an individual there are three gunas or modes of nature : Sattwa, Raja and Tamas. They are the constituents of the nature-part of an individual. According to the degree of predominance of any of these gunas in a man's nature, he is taken to be either a Sattwik man, or Rajasik man, or Tamasik man. But essentially he is above these gunas, he is a Purusha, a Soul, a projection of the Absolute. So also in collective existence Brahmin, Kshatriya, etc., are the four essential nature-parts of society. Keeping pace with the time and circumstances any of these may hold a dominating position in it. But behind all of them there is always the upholding deity, the supreme Purusha or God. In a man, no matter how far he may be a particular type, all the three gunas must exist. None of them can completely be cut off from his nature. Perfection comes by gradual betterment and transformation of these three gunas. Thus sattwa is transformed to Jyoti, Rajas to Tapas, and Tamas to Samata. These are respectively their divine counterparts. Just in the same way, in the nature-part of society also all the above four aspects,

i.e., Brahmin, Kshatriya, etc., are equally essential elements. None of them can completely be abolished. What is needed is the elimination of their defects, changing of the weakness of one and undue assertion of another, and gradual betterment of all the four towards divinisation. They are the different limbs of Brahma who symbolically represents the creative godhead. So when we deny any one of these and specially the sustaining Power or the Purusha behind the social frame or nature, we separate ourselves, as it were, from the underlying spirit of integrity and wholeness. And then for us to speak of relations based on love, sympathy and oneness is meaningless and absurd. Absurd because there cannot be any real sympathy and brotherhood without that integrating power or spirit behind, which is called God.

Coming back to the question of religion let us see what Vivekananda speaks about it. "In all organised religions, their founders, prophets and messengers are declared to have gone into the states of mind that were neither waking nor sleeping, in which they came face to face with a new series of facts relating to what is called the spiritual kingdom."¹ So we see that there are worlds or states of consciousness beyond our visible world and surface understanding. Before we discard religion from society as an unnecessary imposition we should try to realise the fact that social maladies do not come from true religion but from its perversions, from its defects. True religion can never stand in the way of social progress. On the contrary it is the gateway towards the fountain-source of progress, purity and perfection. Therefore when we do away with religion itself because it is subject to defects and perversions it is, as if, we kill the patient for his diseases instead of curing him from them. But is it possible? Religionism may die, not true religion; that is indeed too deep-rooted a necessity for the ignorant and helpless children of earth.

In Indian language religion is called Dharma. Although the word Dharma conveys a much more deep and universal significance than what is meant by religion, still for practical purposes the two are usually taken to be equivalent expressions. From the most remote past a voice comes up on Indian soil out of the depths of creation, a voice tranquil and serene,—“I am Dharma, ever ancient but ever new. I never die nor do I take birth. I simply exist. Mind cannot define me fully nor can I be abolished by ignorant refusal. Research will not find me in any ‘isms’ but I am not altogether absent in them. I am present in the temples of the Hindus, the Churches of the Christians, the mosques of the Muslims, the synagogues of the Jews. But my permanent abode is in the heart of man and all created beings. I am Agni, Fire, burning eternally in the core of existence. I am equally present in the spark of the glow-worm and in the flashing light of the stormy sky. My magic touch inspires the poets and the artists, the valour of the fighters bears the stamp of my invincible will. I am all-pervading and divine.”

The critical mind will perhaps remain still unsatisfied. It will perhaps argue: “What importance is there in this airy imagination, high-sounding though it may

¹ *The Complete Works of Vivekananda.*

appear? What is the tangible proof that such a voice really announces itself from the depths of creation? Can it be recorded on a tape or be reproduced through any other scientific device?" On the other hand, the believers who want to get religion in between their two hands through concrete forms of rites and rituals will cry out in surprise, as Sri Aurobindo points out, "If that is religion, where is its mind and fixed thought? Where is the form of its body? How can there be a religion which has no rigid dogmas demanding belief on pain of eternal damnation?"¹

Against such notions it is sufficient to say that the truth does not depend on any intellectual assent or theological doctrine. Moreover there is a fundamental difference between Dharma and religion. Dharma is a Sanskrit word and is derived from the verbal root *dhr*, that means 'to hold'. That which holds is Dharma. So its sphere is not limited or narrow. It is very vast, deep and all-pervading. There can be as many dharmas as there are individuals, sects, creeds or beliefs, provided the sustaining power lives and works behind them. If that power forsakes us, everything becomes dead and mechanical. It is mainly for this reason that most of the great and grand ancient civilisations of the world are no more today. It may so happen to the present civilisation as well if it does not discover the mainspring or the sustaining spirit of life and rely on it as the guiding principle. Let us hear what Vivekananda says about religion: "By means of intellectual assent we may subscribe to many foolish things and change our mind altogether to-morrow. But true religion never changes. Religion is realisation, not talk, not doctrine, nor theories however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing and acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion."² In a different manner we hear almost the same thing when Sri Aurobindo writes: "The supreme truths are neither the rigid conclusions of logical reasoning nor the affirmations of credal statement, but fruits of the soul's inner experience."³ Again he writes, "There are no true and false religions but all religions are true in their own way and degree."⁴

Of course there is no denying the fact that Dharma in practice relates itself with some functions and formalities, and there is no harm in this. But the difficulty starts when it gets completely covered up by the outer attire of rites and rituals. In fact the true spirit of religion or Dharma is above and behind these frontal forms and once that is grasped it remains no more the cause of dispute, rivalry and antagonism. Then we find within it the seed of universal acceptance and tolerance. It stands liberated from sectarian ill-will and malice. Questions may be raised here: "Then what is the necessity at all of these external forms? Why not do away with these paraphernalia and try to attain the clear and transparent spirit within the religion?" Surely it is a very good proposition, if of course it is possible to reach at a state that state. It may be possible for a few exceptionally gifted persons, but not for the general mass.

¹ *The Foundations of Indian Culture.*

² *Op. cit.*

³ *Op. cit.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

Religion does not follow any clear-cut mental dictation. It is a living principle. Just as it has its spirit within, it has also its mind and body without. It has its own inherent laws of growth and evolution, the nature of which can be appreciated only by inner attunement of spirit and knowledge through identity.

At this point let us try to follow the truth embodied in the following statement of Vivekananda. "It is good for you to remember, in this country specially, that the world's great spiritual giants have been in possession of very rich mythology and ritual. All sects that have attempted to worship God without any form or ceremony have crushed without mercy everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. Their religion is a fanaticism, at best a dry thing. The history of the world is a standing witness to this fact. Therefore do not decry these rituals and mythologies. Let people have them, let those who so desire have them. Do not exhibit that unworthy derisive smile, and say, 'They are fools; let them have it.' Not so, the greatest men I have seen in my life, the most wonderfully developed in spirituality, have all come through the discipline of these rituals. I do not hold myself worthy to sit at their feet, and is it for me to criticise them? How do I know how these ideas act upon the human mind, which of them am I to accept and which to reject?"¹

Sri Aurobindo's observation on the subject also gives more or less the same conclusion. "It (reason) cannot lay down the law for the religious life, it cannot determine in its own right the system of divine knowledge, it cannot school and lesson the divine love and delight, it cannot set bounds to spiritual experience or lay its yoke upon the action of the spiritual man."²

However, reason has also its part to play in the drama of life. Its guidance is indispensable in the pursuit of scientific truth in the physical and material field. Except for its help and guidance the present atomic and nuclear age is inconceivable. Of course whether these discoveries are going to give any real solution to the most pressing problems of man is a different question and needs a separate treatment by itself. But it is a fact that reason cannot pronounce its judgment successfully on matters religious. In the same way it is a folly to thrust rigid religious dogmas upon the mind bent upon clear-sighted rational scrutiny and research. The fact is that religion is not a fixed thing. With the advance of time, progress of consciousness and change of circumstances its forms also, just like other aspects of existence, undergo changes. Old forms become obsolete and new ones take their place. No doubt, reason has a role to bring about such changes, but it has its limitations as well. To clear the point we shall quote here Sri Aurobindo's view on the subject. "Religious forms and systems become effete and corrupt and have to be destroyed, or they lose much of their inner sense and become clouded in knowledge and injurious in practice, and in destroying what is effete or in negating aberrations reason has played an important part in history. But in its endeavour to get rid of the superstition and ignorance which

¹ *Op. cit.*

² *Op. cit.*

have attached themselves to religious forms and symbols, intellectual reason unenlightened by spiritual knowledge tends to deny and, so far as it can, to destroy the truth and experience which was contained in them.”¹

In the above statement we get a very significant expression : “unenlightened by spiritual knowledge.” What is this spiritual knowledge, and what relation has it with religion and its forms and rituals and also with the knowledge based on reason ? While considering this we enter into the last phase of our observation: that is, what is called yoga and divinity of life.

By now the main aspect of religion has sufficiently been discussed. In short it is the form or outer structure of the first movement of the rising spiritual impulse and aspiration of the mind and heart of humanity. But at times this outer mould gets perverted and loses its living freshness. Mechanical observation of rites, rituals and dogmas becomes the all-important occupation in religion, resulting in the mortification of the spirit behind. But when we come to the question of spirituality the inner essence, the Spirit or God or the Divine matters most. In relation to that the outer ceremonies appear to be insignificant. This is how Sri Aurobindo speaks about spirituality as against religion. “The spiritual life, on the contrary, proceeds directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness, ignorant and separated from its true self and from God, to a greater consciousness in which one finds one’s true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine.”²

Now, such a change of consciousness gives an inner eye and a deeper understanding to the seeker. Things and objects unfold their essential reality to his vision. The values of life shift their centre of support. A tree, for example, will not only appear to him as standing on the ground with its roots inside, it will also be seen as if upheld by a power from above taking it integrally into its bosom with its branches, roots, leaves and all. A man sitting inactive and silent will be found tremendously busy and active within. Similarly, a man vibrant with vigorous external activities will be found to bear within him an infinitely vast calmness and tranquillity. But there are different planes and gradations of such visions and experiences. The philosophy of Shankara, which declares that the world is an illusion and the featureless Spirit is the only truth, is understood to have originated from a kind of realisation which was actually partial and incomplete. However important his philosophy might have been in his own time, its adverse repercussion injured the Indian social life long afterwards. As a result of a one-sided spiritual pursuit people fell under the spell of inactivity so much so that they lost all power of reaction even at the time of self-defence. Fortunately for India the essential truth of the Hindu religion was after all brought into the forefront and proclaimed at home and abroad by India’s eminent spiritual personalities. Vivekananda’s clarion call invoked the rajasic power to rise once again in the race conscious-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

ness. The Spirit is no doubt the primary and original truth, but this phenomenal world is not on that account a falsehood or illusion. It is as real and true as the Spirit itself. It is the house and body of the Spirit.

It is interesting to note that revolutionary Russia has been following till now exactly the opposite of what Shankara proclaimed. That is : this visible world and its human interests are the only truth. There is no Spirit, no religion, no God, nothing except the bare truth of this material world. May we hope, therefore, that just as Shankara's world-negating teaching gave way to a profounder truth of the spirit so also the God-negating doctrine of Russia will one day give way and realise and accept the truth of Spirit? Will the followers of that doctrine also call out in despair like Tolstoy, "The conception of an infinite God, the divinity of the soul, man's conception of moral goodness and evil—are conceptions formulated in the hidden infinity of human thought, they are those conceptions without which neither life nor I should exist, yet rejecting all that labour of the whole humanity, I wished to remake it myself and in my own manner"?

The world now is passing through a period of transition. A time was when Priesthood and Church laid their immobile stony burden on the mind and body of society. Lifeless rigid conventions, religious doctrines and dogmas dictated to the common life. As a reaction came the scientific age flooding the horizon with the fresh light of practicality and reason and brushing aside old and effete social habits. But by now the part played by it is approaching its end. Questions come from all quarters: what next? The reply men search for and the solution they seek in religion and spirituality. It will be a mistake for them now to go back once again to the condition of a blind faith and unquestioning acceptance. Probably it will not be possible for them to do so. Reason has established its sway over man's nature. In all walks of life it demands the satisfaction of its legitimate claims. It is natural therefore that it will try to do the same in the case of religious and spiritual pursuits as well. But we have seen above that the scope of its application in matters religious is limited unless it is enlightened by the knowledge of the spirit. So the natural remedy lies in the spiritualisation of the reason. After the proper demand of the reason has been satisfied, it should be pointed towards the new light, the supra-rational light which is gradually rising up on the horizon, unfurling its victorious banner. That is the light of the Life Divine shed by Sri Aurobindo.

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

A REVIEW-ARTICLE

MRS. Prema Nandakumar who translated Subramania Bharati in English verse in 1958 has now given us a study of him in 88 pages in the *Indian Writers and Their Work* Series. In this monograph, Bharati's poetry of freedom and patriotism, his devotional poems, miscellaneous poems, the three great poems—*Kannan Pattu*, *Panchali Sapatham* and *Kuyil Pattu*, his prose-poems, prose writings and writings in English—are all considered and his poetic genius is duly explained. The exact influence of Sri Aurobindo on Bharati, and his writings while at Pondicherry has not yet been thoroughly gone into by the writer. The author has, however, brought together in her book the opinions of some previous writers on Bharati on this matter. We welcome this learned contribution to the growing literature in English on Bharati and his work.

The author has stated in the Preface that she did not want the biography to crowd out the critical study and that was why she has relegated the biographical outline to the Appendix. But it seems to us that no critical study of a dynamic personality like Bharati can afford to forego a picture of the part played by the poet in the great revolutionary movement in the early years of the century. For, Bharati was indeed a child of the Indian revolution which embraced every sphere of life, and not merely the political. He showed his poetic gifts when he was quite young and, left to himself, he could very well have bloomed naturally into a great poet of the Tamil land. But destiny called him to play his part in a wider sphere. Life in Tamil Nad, then, was quiet and stagnant. A short stay in upper India at the famous city of Benares at the very impressionable age of 18 certainly widened his outlook and he was already aware of the Nava Bharat that was being born. Bengal which gave birth to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra and Tagore and was the leading light of Indian thought and culture at the time, felt deeply hurt by its unnatural partition in 1905. The agitation against it soon developed into an all-India movement against the British rule. "Bande Mataram", the mantra taught by Rishi Bankim, became the war-cry of all the nationalists. The land of Bharat assumed the form of Bharat Mata enchained, who had to be liberated at all costs by her sons. Secret revolutionary societies sprang up and they were collecting arms and making bombs to overthrow the existing government. Bharati attended the Calcutta Congress of 1906 which defined the national goal as Swaraj. B. C. Pal started *Bande Mataram* and Sri Aurobindo became its editor in 1907. Bharati, a sub-editor in *Swadesamitran*, launched his *India* in April 1907. *India*, like *Bande Mataram*, preached revolution. B. C. Pal who was invited to Madras by Bharati delivered fiery speeches in the Triplicane beach and roused the slumbering people to action. Bharati attended the Surat

session of the Congress in December 1907 and came into contact with great men like Sri Aurobindo and Tilak. The Tuticorin riots led to the arrest of Chidambaram Pillai, a comrade of Bharati, and the savage sentence of transportation for life was passed against him in July 1908. The publisher of *India* was arrested and Bharati had to flee to Pondicherry in September 1908. *India* reappeared at Pondicherry in October, and it gave full accounts of the risings of the people in different parts of the country. The arrest of Sri Aurobindo, the proceedings of the Alipore conspiracy case—all were reported in *India*. Bharati paid a tribute to Sri Aurobindo for his sacrifices in the cause of freedom and wrote an appreciative life-sketch of him. The speeches of Sri Aurobindo, the important articles in *Karma Yogin*—all were extracted and published in *India*. Bharati arranged even for a Tamil edition of *Karma Yogin*. Owing to the repressive policy of the Government at Pondicherry, Bharati had to stop all his papers by March 1910. Sri Aurobindo arrived in Pondicherry on the 4th April 1910. The fruitful association between the two led to a veritable renaissance in letters. All these are momentous events which shaped and moulded Bharati, the poet and the prophet. His was the powerful voice of a newly awakened national consciousness. His songs on liberty and freedom thrilled the heart of millions and instilled in them a sense of faith, fearlessness and hope. But Bharati was no mere poet of political freedom. He fought for social equality and economic justice. He espoused the cause of the poor and the down-trodden. He became the poet of the woman the same as the man. He had a tough fight against the langour of the spirit of the people, and was dead against their inaction and otherworldliness. He preached faith and devotion and surrender to the Divine Shakti whose Grace alone can uplift them. He enjoyed the beauties of this earth and all the gifts that it bestowed on men. He showed the people the kingdom of heaven reflected on earth. Gifted with a Divine vision, he had also a golden tongue. Inspired, simple but forceful and musical in their wave-beats, his songs went straight to the hearts of the people. Such incantatory songs had never been heard by them before.

Did Bharati owe to Sri Aurobindo his Shakti cult? A good number of writers on Bharati opine that the poet owed his beautiful lyrics on Parasakti to Sri Aurobindo. The author of this book too says: "no doubt Bharati's fruitful association with Sri Aurobindo was partly responsible for this." But we have to point out that the Shakti cult was no new thing in Tamil Nad. It is as old as the Tolkappiam and Sangam Classics. Our Agamas and our Saiva Siddhanta give a prominent place to the Divine Shakti. Sankara the Mayavadin was also a Tantrik. The ceremonial recitation of Lalita Sahasranama and the Devi Stotras are often resorted to by people in times of difficulties. *The Devi Mahatmyam* is a favourite book among the masses. Shakti is universally worshipped in temples and in our households. Bharati himself seems to have been a Shakta. He saw the divine spirit everywhere. To him everything from the lowest to the highest is informed with the Divine Spark. Parasakti, the Supreme Creatrix, is also the Divine Ruler of the universe. Yadugiri Ammal, the gifted daughter of Bharati's colleague Mandayam Srinivasachariar, in her remuni-

scences says that Bharati offered worship to the Divine Shakti on all festive occasions and sang poems in praise of Her. Whenever his wife Chellammal grumbled about their poverty and misery, he always advised her to have complete faith in the Divine Grace and to surrender to Her completely. Some of his best lyrics on Mahasakti, Mahakali and Mahasarasvati appeared in a book published in 1910. It may also be noted that the book *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo, which is a brilliant exposition of the Four Powers and Personalities of the Divine Mother, was written only in 1928 when Bharati was already dead and gone.

But it is admitted on all hands that the association of Bharati with Sri Aurobindo during the last 8 years of his stay at Pondicherry influenced him greatly both as a man and as a poet. Bharati forgot for a while his own troubles and visited Sri Aurobindo almost daily and discussed with him the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. Sri Aurobindo spoke to him about the commentaries of Sayana and the interpretations of Western scholars and gave his own findings on the secret of the Veda. Under the inspiration of Sri Aurobindo, Bharati undertook a systematic study of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Even as early as 1913, we find him translating some Vedic hymns in *Gnana Bhamu*, a Tamil paper conducted by his friend Subramania Siwa. In the same year he seems to have translated the Gita too. Sri Aurobindo had not then started his *Arya* in which he was going to publish his *Essays on the Gita*. When the *Arya* appeared in 1914 and Sri Aurobindo began his serial, *The Secret of Veda*, Bharati was closely following it. He then translated the Vedic hymns to the Mystic Fire with the help of Sri Aurobindo's commentaries. He translated his studies and experiences into pure poetry in Tamil. His poems on Soma Deva and on the Sacrificial Fire are perfect gems in literature. His three longer poems belong to this period. The learned author has studied these poems in detail, though she has made only a passing reference to the other creations.

She has devoted a separate chapter to her study of Bharati's writings in English. The writings in English are scanty and are mostly collections from Bharati's cuttings and from his commonplace book. They were published in 1937, that is, sixteen years after his death, in two volumes, the one entitled *Agni and Other Poems* and the other *Essays and Fragments*. They contain translations of his Tamil poems, some by himself and some by others like Cousins. In the case of one or two translations in these publications, we regard their inclusion as mistaken. In the first volume of *Arya* (1914-15) we find published an introductory article on Andal, the Vaishnava Poetess, and a translation from Tamil into English of three of her poems. In the same volume appears an introductory article on Nammalvar, the Supreme Vaishnava Saint and Poet and a translation into English of his "Hymn of the Golden Age". The second volume of *Arya* (1915-16) contains a translation into English of the famous poet's poem entitled "Love-Mad". The name of the author of the above two contributions is not mentioned. In both cases, the editorial "we" announces the publication. On the face of it it is clear that both the introduction and the English translation of the Tamil poems are by Sri Aurobindo. But how could Sri Aurobindo have translated them from

the Tamil original ? The reviewer has consulted on his matter Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta who has been the Secretary of the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo since the days of *Arya*. The reviewer was assured that the introductory articles and the translations into English of the Tamil poems in question were all the work of Sri Aurobindo himself, but that Bharati helped him. Sri Aurobindo learnt enough Tamil from Bharati to appreciate the poems of Andal and Nammalwar but Bharati helped in the work of translation into English. The work may be said to be a joint production. In consideration of this, when the publishers who asked for permission to publish the same in the name of Bharati were given the permission.

There are of course one or two poems in English written by Bharati himself. They are about the Rig Vedic Gods like Agni and the Dawn. The composition is no doubt Bharati's. But the ideas and expressions are Sri Aurobindo's. In his description of Dawn Bharati himself quotes from Sri Aurobindo's translation of Rig Veda III. 61. verses 4 and 5 (See *Arya*, V, I (1914-15), pp. 286-287).

It seems to us that there is not much in the two books which contain Bharati's writings in English. Messrs. C. R. Reddy and K. S. Venkataramani who have edited them have praised Bharati for the ideas and the language. They even regard him as a man of self-realisation, and even praise his English. They have not evidently read Sri Aurobindo's writings on the poetry of the Vedic Rishis and his commentaries.

One word more. Bharati has paid enough tributes to Sri Aurobindo in his journal *India*. But in all his poetical writings there is not one single poem on Sri Aurobindo. The present author has mentioned on page 17 that Sri Aurobindo is one of the army of Indian Nationalists whose praise Bharati has sung in a poem. Evidently this is incorrect. One writer in his study on Bharati pointed to a song in which the expression "Dance, O Aravinda snake" occurs, as the poem sung by "Bharati". But on investigation it has been found that the poem was sung not by Bharati but by Bharati-Dasan, who told the reviewer that he had great respect for the Yogi Sri Aurobindo and that is why he sang in his honour. The snake is the Kundalini Power roused by Yoga Shakti.

P. KODANDARAMAN

Students' Section

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?

X

MAN has often been compared to a miniature world. If he is a world, his mind, we may say, is its most cosmopolitan province. For ordinarily at its frontiers there are no posts or sentries, no checks or controls of any kind. All thoughts or rather, all formations assuming the garb of thoughts get a free entry. The natural outcome of such an influx is that innumerable formations of every name and description originating from every conceivable nook and corner of our being collect and jampack the highways and even the bypaths of this huge metropolis. So thick is the cluster and so loud the confusion of the disorderly multitudes that it has all the appearance of a complete anarchy. But strictly speaking it is not an anarchy for the province suffers not from the lack of government but from misgovernment. The vital, a foreigner to this region, has crept in stealthily along with its army of desires, preferences, prejudices and the rest and has ousted the true ruler and seized the reins of government in its hands. But blind, ignorant, restless, tempest-tossed as it is, it plays havoc with its new powers. For as soon as a thought enters from outside it casts upon it its magic spell and starts off a hideous metamorphosis at the end of which the thought completely loses its identity and merges into the jarring mass bringing into it one more note of disharmony. Thus thought after thought gets coloured and deformed and day by day, hour by hour, the confusion grows. And yet we in our ignorance continue to identify ourselves with this nondescript mixture. We believe *this* to be our mind and submit ourselves to its mercy.

Now, if we want to put an end to this state of affairs, if we want to master the movements and activities of the mind instead of being carried off by them, the first step, the most difficult one, is to dissociate ourselves from this mental whirlpool and with the help of deep concentration get in touch with our true mental being, the mental Purusha and hand over to him the reins of government.

Once he emerges from behind the chaos, calm, detached and ever-conscious, he stands back for a while and quietly surveys his domain. When he has seen all with his dispassionate eyes he starts reshuffling and reorganising his province. He summons all thoughts before him and reviews carefully each, dismissing many, warning a few and disciplining the rest. The review over, we find on one side rows of well-disciplined thoughts holding their due ranks in the mental hierarchy and on the other a seething, pulsating chaos ready to be cast away.

After this process of purification and harmonisation the mental Purusha turns his attention to the gate of entry. He brooks no miscreants and therefore puts a severe check on the traffic of new thoughts and thereby controls all fresh admissions.

With this measure the situation is brought fairly under control. But we cannot afford to overlook in our hasty enthusiasm a twofold danger. On the one side the vacuum and on the other the pressing multitude.

A vacuum has been created by the rejection of all useless and disturbing elements which had once formed the bulk of the entire mind content. And as nature abhors a vacuum it may be wise to consciously intensify the various activities of the mind. The sense-mind, the physical mind, the emotional mind, the thought mind could all be given the nourishment best suited to their respective natures. This measure will diminish considerably the danger of the rejected elements rushing back to their old, accustomed places.

But what must we do with these elements ? Reject them and sit quiet ? No. For the ceaseless vigil of the mental Purusha and even the creation of strong ramparts may prove insufficient to ward off the persistent attacks of the nether forces. The enemies have been so far merely held at bay but nothing has been done to quieten them, to win them over. So the fourth step is to extend the influence of the mental Purusha to the Prakriti parts also and convert them and discipline them, as far as that is possible, with his light and wisdom.

With this the conquest and the administration of the mental province is complete. The movements and activities of our minds are now brought fully under control and can now help us to live a fuller, a more meaningful life. But in our triumph we must not forget that we have laid our entire trust on the mental Purusha alone. But he too, if he must serve happily and for long, should not cease to grow in light and wisdom. He too must, in his turn, get in touch with a surer light, a greater force, an inexhaustible energy that can aid and support him always and always. Or else he may doze off one fine Sunday morning and the whole cycle will have to begin all over again.

PARU

XI

Ordinary mental activity has its origin in ignorance; it is superficial and petty in character, limited in scope. It differs from the poised activity whose dynamism

starts from an inner spiritual silence and it has for its source the inner mind, life and soul. Ordinary mental activity is a flux, a surface movement and surprising enough, it does not change its nature and content. Even the most spiritual-minded seeker has his moments of common mental activity when he is pulled down from his superior consciousness. A mere outer effort or will cannot change this way of things. We need a greater aid, and on our part a greater vigilance and aspiration. So long as we are content with the vulgar, ordinary, self-repetitive way of life guided by the physical mentality, the vital impulses, the path of least resistance, the consciousness that opposes all change or widening, we cannot hope to get out of this condition. Further we do not seek a momentary elevation followed by the insistence of surface nature. What we seek rather is a constancy, a living in that consciousness where no waves of common emotions, feelings, thoughts and reactions can reach us and even if they do so, by chance, rouse in us any response; thus the rhythm of ordinary mentality will sink down exhausted. But how are we to fulfil this difficult task which may seem at first sight to be an insignificant issue?

To me personally, the problem can be solved in the way indicated below. But I do not pretend that my solution is the only or the best solution and that I am not subject to correction.

First, what we need is a concentration—a living, coherent and unchanging one-mindedness. For the ordinary life is a mass of disintegrated feelings, ideas, motives and moods. This course of ordinary nature we must change. In place of it, we must concentrate in the heart, or better still, in the soul, live in the silence of the psychic, await the inspiration that comes from above or within. In place of loose movements, the tissue of actions and reactions, we shall have impulses from a different source. Following concentration is silence—not the silence that is negative or fruitless but the silence that creates and is dynamic, silence that is the source of inspiration and action. Because silence is not the native condition of common humanity, man is enamoured of din, flux and unrest; his mind loves to be the market-place of petty thoughts, motives and formations and impulses. He loves the noise of ordinary things, meaningless words, and dreads the silence in which one could have mastery, poise, power and peace, the true fountain-head of spiritual activity. We have therefore to reverse this condition, not by an austere Raja-Yogic effort, but by calling down the silence from above which always gives the right motivations, the right will, the right source of action and prepares us for our dwelling in our soul.

But this condition cannot come about if we do not really aspire to go beyond the clutch of ordinary mentality and its actions. Unless we do feel in us some sincere need to rise above and give a new orientation to all our thoughts and feelings this change cannot come. If it remains only some vague ideal, or some distant Utopia, some feeling generated by association, or some dream for which we have not the capacity of fruitful manifestation, then we can never get rid of this common natural trend. It must be a genuine need and if it is genuine, then in spite of repeated failures, it would one day become the natural condition of our consciousness. If the central

aspiration is there, we are sure to succeed. Behind this must stand a vigilant will to overcome all obstacles, impediments of nature and habits if this aspiration is to become a potent fact. Further, if we call the higher impulses from above to illumine us on one hand, and on the other we open our gates to lower and vulgar propensities, then the labour of the Spirit in us would be futile. A revolt may result, or perhaps a psychological unrest. The face of the soul would then be veiled, and our actions may be the alternate rhythms of rise and fall.

But this upliftment or ingoing is not an escape from the so-called realities of life. We can tackle them better without lowering our consciousness and touching the same lower status of the ordinary world. An elevated consciousness can see the core of the problem, which the ordinary mental action cannot. By withdrawing from the grossness, we can discover the true value of things, their place and meaning; and it can give us the needed guidance for our own tackling of the situation.

Lastly, this elevation would not be possible unless we could constantly remember that it was not by our small human effort alone that the resultant effectivity could come. The Divine Will, Presence, Light and Love were always there guiding us, impelling us, giving us the needed strength, help, capacity, wideness, height, illumining our consciousness and leading us to our real nature, to the discovery of the soul and lastly to Itself.

The soul stands behind the outer motions of life and mind and heart, and in its discovery lies the supreme secret of our transcendence of our common mentality, existence and actions. The discovery of the soul is the solution to many ills of ignorance, many problems of life-parts, emotions and reason which stand behind the common mental activity. In fact, mental activity is not an isolated occurrence. The complex psychological structure of man is behind this mask. And the unveiling of the soul would bring all this under the ray of the Divine and lead all to the culminating transformation. Unless the roots changed, the surface could not change. All other remedies would be only palliatives and not radical cures.

The soul by its unseen pressure and guidance can accomplish this. It can perform what may seem marvels or impossibilities. For the soul alone knows the source of light, consciousness, peace, knowledge and joy and even if its face is veiled to us, it works from behind, as the invisible agent of the divine Godhead. If it could be allowed to come to the forefront and given the active reign of the workings of mind in all its aspects and of life with all its problems, then the common activity of life and mind would change, and ours shall be an effortless progression.

In it is the silence, the courage, the light, the nobility, the harmony, for it is the bridge between the lower nature and the Divine. In it are the needed will and strength, the needed Ananda to be the instrument of the Divine, the unseen Master. When the soul takes charge of our existence, the efforts become the Divine's endeavours, and all our activities the sacrifices to God.

XII

The subject given by the Mother for our first seminar forms a very interesting piece of study. The ordinary mental activity is indeed one of the commonest maladies besetting almost all mankind.

First of all, let us see what kind of mental activities can be regarded as ordinary. before we set out to devise ways and means of surmounting them.

We mean by ordinary mental activities those thoughts and preoccupations which drag us downwards, lower our consciousness and hamper our progress. These are the most trivial and superficial thoughts, absolutely unimportant and unnecessary, continually hovering about us and invading our mind. And it is strange to say that we find so many conflicting thoughts and so many contrary ideas at a time crowding our heads, so much so that at times they make us feel dizzy. The Mother says, "You can't imagine what a bazar there is in the head. It is something terrible."

It is the physical mind, which is most material, that is concerned with the petty thought-movements that mechanically go on in our mind without our desiring them and at times without our knowing them even. The thoughts may be those of anger, hatred, jealousy, lust and greed, or those of attachment, doubt, disbelief and distress, and so on, all of which originate in our lower nature which lies shackled in ignorance and inconstancy. The Gita says,

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरता यन्मनोऽनविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञा वायुर्नाविमिवाम्भसि ॥

"Such of the roving senses as the mind follows, that carries away the understanding, just as the winds carry away a ship on the sea."

This, in general, gives us the idea as to what ordinary mental activities are. Now, this state of the mind is as annoying as it is a hindrance to our inner growth and development. The constant inflow of pell-mell thoughts definitely stands as a bar to the spontaneous expression of the deeper values of life.

Now, let us see how best we can overcome this ordinary round of thoughts which occupy so much of our time and consciousness in our daily life. To find a solution, we are naturally led to the path of yoga. In fact, the very definition of yoga, according to Patanjali, the father of Indian yoga philosophy, is the 'control of thought-waves in the mind'. Sri Aurobindo also writes, "It is by the thought that we dissipate ourselves in the phenomenal; it is by gathering back of the thought into itself that we must draw ourselves back into the real." Certainly, it is not an easy job. In fact, as we shall see presently, it is quite a Herculean task.

To indulge in ordinary thoughts presupposes an ordinary state of consciousness. So, logically it follows that to come out of the ordinary thoughts we must either rise higher or go deeper in consciousness. There are several ways of attaining these states.

They can be broadly divided into synthetic and analytic. The synthetic way of approach is comparatively easier for those having an introspective bent of mind. The analytic way of approach tends to be rather intellectual which is quite painstaking. A certain amount of analysis is involved in the synthetic way also; and then the analytic way too finally merges into the synthetic. As we shall now see, there is no sharp line demarcating the boundaries of the two. They are, in fact, complementary, each helping and fulfilling the other.

In the synthetic way of approach, we can include aspiration, prayer, concentration, meditation, reflection, etc., with a view to silencing the mind. Needless to say that aspiration marks the first step. Prayer is perhaps the easiest method within immediate access to all. We may pray to the Divine and call down peace and serenity in our mind and consciousness. We may concentrate our mind on some higher thought or idea. With regard to concentration and meditation Sri Aurobindo writes, "This may be done by various ways; one is to stand back from the mental action altogether not participating in but simply watching it until, tired of its unsanctioned leaping and running, it falls into an increasing and finally an absolute quiet. Another is to reject the thought-suggestions, to cast them away from the mind whenever they come and firmly hold to the peace of the being which really and always exists behind the trouble and riot of the mind." We may also meditate to void our mind of all thoughts. It then becomes, as the Mother says, "a wide silence suffused with a still luminosity."

The more the mind will be silent, the easier will it be on our part to elevate our consciousness, to be always at our best and highest, and to open ourselves to ever widening horizons where the ordinary thoughts cannot reach. Also, in our mind's silence, we can go deeper and deeper and pass beyond the range of ordinary thoughts, and come in contact with the essence of our self, the psychic being, which is the direct spark of the Divine in us. Once the psychic being comes to the forefront and takes the lead, it will gradually put an end to all that is ordinary and undesirable, bringing in a perfect harmony in our thought-patterns.

Those who are too much entangled in the turmoil of ordinary thoughts may take up some particular line of study and application, such as art, painting, writing, music, poetry, philosophy, science, physical culture or any other subject requiring an absorbing concentration and diligent labour for their achievement, so much so that no stray or matter-of-fact thought can cross their mind or draw their attention.

Of course, it is not possible for all to take recourse to these lines, unless they have the aptitude and inclination for these subjects. For them the easiest way is to take up some useful and disinterested work within their capacity to shift their attention from the petty and disturbing mental movements. To devote ourselves to some disinterested work with a sincere good will, for example, to work for the Divine or for some high Ideal, is of immense value for all of us in acquiring an inner discipline and poise, and in collecting our consciousness.

Alongside with the above, it will do well to adapt ourselves to some regular

physical exercises which serve the purposes not only of body-building but of character-building as well. Physical exercise, done in the right way and right spirit, will go a long way in forming healthy mental habits and in instilling strength and stability in our general nature, as also in broadening our outlook and enabling us thereby to automatically resist the intrusions of unwholesome mental suggestions.

Let us now cast a glance at what has been termed the analytic way of approach. This consists in analysing our mental processes. We shall analyse the steps which are needed in finally freeing our mind of all thoughts and dispositions which are ordinary and outward-diverting.

The first step necessary to get over the ordinary mental activities is to feel the need of a radical change in our mental build-up and consciousness, as also the will on our part to rise above the ordinary thought-movements. Unless we are really willing to get rid of them, and until we feel the need of exceeding ourselves it is futile to try.

The next step is that we must try to be conscious, conscious of the various conflicting thoughts that our mind indulges in. This automatically requires us to be attentive and vigilant which again implies a steady observation. We must try to be inwardly conscious and vigilant and carefully observe, in a detached way, the various thought currents that perpetually influence and overpower our mind, so to say.

After we have become sufficiently conscious of the diverse thoughts that ceaselessly flow into our mind like so many cross-currents, and after we have sufficiently increased our power of observation, the next step will be to arrange and classify these multifarious thoughts. This will be an interesting study indeed. In our classification, we shall come across a very few sensible thoughts that are useful in some way or other; these can be retained in our consciousness. And the rest will be found to be devoid of any substance at all; such thoughts are to be eliminated and forthwith rejected and chased away. It is true, it is easier said than done. Still, if we are really serious about it, we must put in our maximum effort with a view to finally succeeding in our endeavour. Now, to come back to our point, these rejected thoughts do not easily want to get away from our environment; some of them take refuge in the subconscious mind and leap up at the earliest opportunity; and the very nature of the physical mind is that it comes back again and again to dwell upon these silly thought-formations. What we have to do is to persistently reject them; and for this, we must cultivate the qualities of patience, perseverance and endurance. These ordinary thought-waves will go on assailing us with such obstinacy that we must be much more obstinate than those mass of thoughts which are absolutely useless and serve no other purpose than to distract and disperse our consciousness. To quote Sri Aurobindo, "For the buzz of the physical mind, reject it quietly, without getting disturbed, till it feels discouraged and retires shaking its head and saying, 'This fellow is too calm and strong for me.' "

Then, we must gradually learn to organise our thoughts, i.e., to regulate our thinking procedure so that the thoughts which we need at a particular moment to serve a particular purpose may alone find their way to our mind, and no unnecessary

thought be prowling about. To say in one word, we must have disciplined thinking. We must strive hard and master our thoughts instead of sacrificing ourselves to the mercy of ordinary thoughts.

To achieve such efficiency in mastering the ordinary thoughts, the first condition which is indispensable is a quiet and silent mind with an equable disposition. Without the equanimity and tranquillity constantly enveloping our mind, it is impossible to come to any mastery whatsoever. The Mother says, "When we will have learnt to silence the mind at will and concentrate it in the receptive silence, then there will be no problem that one cannot solve, no mental difficulty to which a solution will not be found. Thought, while in agitation, becomes confused and impotent; in an attentive tranquillity, the light can manifest itself and open new horizons to man's capacity."

We will have to put forth our utmost personal effort, i.e. a strong determination, a sharp vigilance, an organised thinking and a silent mind, in order to accomplish an uphill task of such magnitude.

But personal effort, by itself, is not fully effective. To make it permanently effective and successful, we will have to evoke the Divine's Grace, Help and Guidance. With the intervention of the Grace, it will be made infinitely more easy than we can conceive, because we know, there is nothing which the Grace cannot achieve. What is needed of us is a conscious collaboration with the forces of Light and Wisdom. We must learn to open our mind's portals to the Mother's protective Grace and Force so as to receive in silence this inner and secret guidance which is always helping us in freeing our mind from the queer *entremêlée* of discordant thoughts, liberating us, thereby, in a permanent way from the grip of ordinary mental activities. The Gita says,

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥

"When all the mental consciousness is perfectly controlled and liberated from desire and remains still in the self, then it is said, 'he is in yoga'".

So, we come to the conclusion that it is the personal will and effort combined with the active support of the Divine's Grace that is the best way of overcoming ordinary mental activities.

ROSE
(MANJULA SEN)

XIII

We feel our mind to be something indispensable to our being; we cherish it as an object our very own. Yet do we not often wonder at the little we know of its activity ?

We have been asked here to speak on what we think to be the best way to overcome our ordinary mental activity. This immediately calls for an account of our daily experience of mind and its ways. When I observe my mind even a little carefully I find that like a spider my mind constantly spins webs of thoughts. This thought movement is a fast, incessant current going outwards, on which I have little or no control. It begins at a point and then extends in a centrifugal manner. One particular chain continues till another idea or sensation breaks in and a fresh web starts. Thus the mind works on mechanically, irrationally and most often I am unaware of this perennial outflow of thought. It is only at times, all of a sudden, that I catch my mind busy in the midst of a crowd of ideas and then it is very difficult to discover what began it all. "This is how human life passes in most part. This is what we most often call thinking".

As a natural result of the tremendous onrush of thoughts at every second, our mind lives without any order, in a state of constant confusion and agitation, while our thinking capacity becomes haphazard and follows no method.

This superficial activity of the mind has to be stopped if we wish at all to arrive at real thinking, that is to say, receiving, formulating and forming valid and necessary thoughts and at keeping our mind well arranged. To surmount this ordinary and habitual activity of the mind is not an easy task at all. For, when face to face with it, we find that our mind is almost beyond all our control; rather *it* seems to be the master, driving *us* at its own fancy and whim. Moreover, we seem to have definitely an attachment and a weakness for the fanciful thoughts that fill our mind.

There is one effective way of surmounting this difficulty : that is, to bring the mind under control through concentration; only then can we use it at our command and need.

The very first step in our attempt to control the mind is to realise that we act according to our thoughts and if we do not have full control over our mind, we cannot hold our actions in leash either. Such a discovery fortifies our will and this is the moment to take up the resolution to detach our mind from the influx of thoughts, to stand and watch from a distance. We become conscious of the futility of the multitude of petty shallow thoughts rushing in, and we close doors on them.

Of course, this is more easily said than done. In practice it takes time, needs sincere and persistent efforts and also enough patience to survive thwarted attempts. It is often better not to try to reject every thought and vacate the mind all at once but to have recourse to a more gradual procedure. It is often wiser to choose an idea, or a symbol as the object of concentration and then to approach it step by step in a centrepetal manner. This gradually succeeds in bringing the mind under discipline and control and finally in rejecting all stray ideas, and thus helps the development of our mental being.

Concentration is one way; however, the method of concentration differs with every individual, for, as the Mother says : "Everyone by successive tentatives must ascertain his own method."

At times, however, there comes a persistent and nagging chain of thought which clouds our mind and thwarts all our efforts to reject it. The only and best way then, as we all know it, is to send up a prayer to the Mother. If the prayer is sincere and ardent Her Help never fails to respond.

SUMITA

XIV

Silence is indispensable for surmounting our ordinary mental activity. But the silence must be perfect and absolute. An imperfect and incomplete silence may take us beyond our mind, but may not necessarily help us to "surmount" it. On the contrary, it may plunge us into a more dark and confused realm. For, beyond our ordinary surface mind there are realms after realms of the subliminal consciousness with their luminous as well as dark layers. Merely entering into it is not inevitably entering into its realms of light and knowledge; it may very well be an entrance into its dark regions of ignorance, which Sri Aurobindo calls "false subjectivism". If that happens then from our ordinary obscure mental movements we have moved into regions of greater darkness and falsehood; we have failed to "surmount" our mental activities. Again, around us there is the cosmic consciousness with its double aspect of knowledge and ignorance. An incomplete silence of our ordinary mind will not hew our path towards the greater knowledge of the cosmic consciousness but towards its vaster falsity. All around there lies what Sri Aurobindo calls "the intermediate zone", the zone which has brought disaster to so many sadhaks.

But, then, what is the best way of attaining this perfect and absolute silence, the silence that would enable us to surmount our ordinary mental activity ?

Once Ramakrishna was asked, "How to realize God ?" He replied that as a man would gasp for breath if held tight under water, so must one find this life suffocating before he can realize God. Similarly, if we wish to surmount our mental activity we must feel suffocated in its ordinary movements. We must gasp for the supernal Truth, the supernal Light and with the help of the Guru, find the way out of the mind towards the higher Light. Sri Aurobindo has stated clearly : "It is idle for anyone to expect that he can follow this road far,—much less go to the end by his own inner strength and knowledge without the true aid or influence. Even the ordinary long-practised yogas are hard to follow without the aid of the Guru; in this which as it advances goes through untrodden countries and unknown entangled regions, it is quite impossible."

Steady concentration on some figure or symbol seems to me to be one of the best ways of surmounting our ordinary mental flux. For, by this concentration, on the one hand, our mind becomes silent and, on the other, this silence gets constantly refilled by the higher spiritual consciousness that is beyond mind.

But let me hasten to tell you that whatever be the way, without the Guru's

aid or influence nothing can be done. In this Hour of God when “the breath of the Lord is abroad upon the waters of our being”, if we consciously and sincerely let our Guru, the Divine Mother, intervene with Her full power and force, She will slowly or swiftly silence our ordinary mental activity and lift us up into the new Supramental Consciousness. We must remember that “it is the hour of the unexpected” when She alone knows the best way and She alone is the helper.

TARUN

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★

After all the speeches were over, Kishor Gandhi read out the Mother’s own following answer to the question in the subject of the Seminar, which he had mentioned in his introductory speech:

“My answer : Keep silent.”

Then he read out Sri Aurobindo’s following answer (written by Him in August 1935) to a question having a bearing on this subject :

Q : Usually I am unable to concentrate in the sense of meditation. If I cannot meditate I can only imagine myself lying eternally in the Mother’s lap.

A : That is the best possible kind of meditation.

Then he thanked all those who had participated in the Seminar and also those who had come to attend it.

After that the Seminar concluded.

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

NEWSLETTERS

No. 11

NOVEMBER

1. Increasing interest in English

NIKOLAI TEPER, a teacher of English at the Kharkov Zoo Veterinary Institute, says that recently they had "an unusual but highly interesting conference—all the reports were delivered in English. The participants were mostly young research workers and post-graduate students. Their aim was to sum up the results of their research and show their achievements in mastering the language."

VALENTINA LOPATINSKAYA of Lvov Politechnical Institute writes of another interesting event: she tells of a student speaking in English to present his graduation thesis.

"One could find some mistakes in his speech," she writes, "but that was not the main thing. Much greater attention is being devoted now to out-of-class methods of work with the students. Every year several students of our institute present their graduation theses in English."

2. Research

What is the origin of Petroleum ?

According to Professor Vassoyevich, the latest geological and geochemical data obtained by Russian scientists corroborate the theory of organic origin: petroleum formed following the decomposition of organic matter buried on the bed of ancient seas. These findings agree with similar theories arrived at in the U.S.A. and are of great theoretical and practical significance.

A department for training physics teachers who are to teach their subject in English has been opened at the Moscow Teacher's Institute. They will work in Moscow schools where tuition is given in English.

3. Commonwealth Studies

At the conference on Commonwealth literature held at Leeds University last month it was suggested that Commonwealth countries should be encouraged to establish institutes of Commonwealth studies.

Fifty teachers have arrived in Britain for further training under the Commonwealth Teachers Training Bursary Scheme. They will attend an introductory course arranged by the British Council before they go on to their various training establishments.

4. *Books, Books, Books*

Colleges without degree work should have a minimum library of 10,000 titles; those with degree and specialized advanced courses, a minimum of 15,000 titles. This is the main recommendation put forward by the Library Association in a pamphlet published last month.

5. *The Palindrome Craze*

Palindromes seem to be an occupational disease among teachers. The palindrome or reversible epigram ("Madam, I'm Adam) recalls Blake's lines on the tyger :

What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

Imagine a Shakespearian heroine, perhaps Cleopatra, shrieking;

"Stop, Syrian, I start at rats in airy spots."

NO COMMENT "He is a scholar and sincere in his sense of vacation." Extract from a letter from the secretary to an appointments board regarding an applicant for a teaching post.

No. 12.

December

1. *Summing-up*

This year of 1964 will go down in the history books as the year of the most outstanding revolutionary changes of man's aspirations manifested in his fast evolving existence. Not least among these are the vast changes in man's attitude towards education, the outcome of which can be summed up as a genuine search for a more realistic understanding of motivation so as to bring about classwork which is predominantly student-activated rather than teacher-dominated. By this kind of classwork the actual needs of each student are assessed for the growth of his personality, and it aims at bringing out latent qualities of consciousness rather than cramming him for examinations which will give him a piece of paper enabling him to become a 'secure' cog in the machinery of bureaucracy.

2. *India*

The National Foundation for Teachers' Welfare was established in 1962 and it was decided to observe 5th September as "Teachers' Day". In that year over Rs.2 million were collected to assist teachers in all the States of the country.

The gifts of paper made to India by Australia (2,000 tons) and Sweden (8,000 tons) have, to a great extent, met the needs of the State Governments for the production of textbooks.

3. *International Educational Activity*

U.S.S.R.—U.S.A. A programme entitled “English for Soviet Teachers” was undertaken at Cornell University to improve the English proficiency of Russian teachers who teach English in Soviet schools. The second part of the two-way programme, conducted by Pennsylvania State University, sent American teachers to study in the Soviet Union.

Africa

Regional conferences on the organization of literacy programmes in Africa have taken place during this year in Abidjan to assist African States in organizing literacy and adult education campaigns.

France

The XI International Colloquium of the International Association of Experimental Education in French was held this year at Liège. The agenda theme was “Educational Research and Educational Practice.”

Netherlands

An international seminar for young teachers (20 to 35 years of age) organized by the New Education Fellowship took place in the Netherlands in August of this year. The theme of the meeting being: “Authority and Freedom in Education.”

The Commonwealth

The Third Commonwealth Education Conference was held in Ottawa (Canada) in September to consider questions relating to international co-operation in education.

Czechoslovakia

An International Exhibition of Children’s Art Work was held in Prague in October. Some 1,500 drawings, paintings, mobiles, collages, etc. produced by school-children from all parts of the world were on display.

United Kingdom

Over 250 courses in basic training will be available to serving teachers in England and Wales next year under two programmes recently published by the Ministry of Education. They will be held in training colleges and university institutions in many parts of the country and abroad.

United States

An American television programme entitled "Operation Alphabet" offers at the present time one hundred half-hour televised lessons in order to teach adults how to read and write. More than a hundred communities have taken advantage of this series.

The Department of Educational Research thanks the Educational and Information Services of Embassies in India for their generous gifts of complimentary copies of books, pamphlets and magazines, and for sending replies to the questionnaires on education addressed to them.

NORMAN C. DWSETT

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS IN CASE OF ILLNESS

What can you do of a constructive nature when a dear one or your own self happens to be ill?

(1) One prominent doctor has said, "In sickness send for your minister even as you send for your doctor." In other words, believe that spiritual forces as well as medical techniques are of great importance in healing.

(2) Pray for the doctor. Realise that the Mother uses trained human instrumentality to aid her healing powers. As one doctor has put it: "We treat the patient and the Mother heals him." Pray therefore that the doctor may be an open channel for the Mother's healing grace.

(3) Whatever you do, do not become panicky or filled with anxiety. For if you do that, you will be sending out negative thoughts and therefore destructive thoughts in the direction of your dear one who is ailing, whereas he requires positive and healing thoughts to assist him.

(4) Remember that the Mother does nothing except by law. Also remember that our little materialistic laws are only fragmentary revelations of the great power flowing through the universe. Spiritual law also governs illness. We practise healing through natural laws applicable by science; the Mother brings healing by spiritual laws applicable through faith.

(5) Completely surrender your loved one into the hands of the Divine Mother. By your faith you can place him in the flow of Divine Power. There is healing there, but in order that it should be effective the patient must be completely released to the operation of The Divine Mother's will. This is difficult to understand and equally difficult to perform, but it is a fact that if the great desire for the loved one to live is matched with an equally great willingness to relinquish him to the Divine Mother, healing powers are amazingly set in motion.

(6) It is also important that an atmosphere of love and unity prevails in the family; that is, a spiritual harmony. Apparently disharmony and disease are akin.

(7) Form a picture in your mind that you are very healthy, visualise yourself in perfect health. Picture your loved one as radiant with the love and goodness of the Divine Mother. The conscious mind may suggest sickness, even death, but nine-tenths of your mind is in the subconscious, and this powerful part of your mind will send forth radiant health energy. What we believe in the subconscious we usually get. Unless our faith controls the subconscious we shall never get any good thing, for the subconscious only gives back that which is our real thought. If the real thought is negative, the result will also be negative. If the real thought is positive, we shall get positive and healing results.

(8) Be perfectly natural. Ask the Divine Mother to heal you or the loved one when that is what you want with all your heart. Pray to Her that She may restore health and vitality and then be full of *gratitude* for Her benevolence and divine compassion. This affirmative move will help to release deep spiritual power and also joy through reassurance of the Divine Mother's loving care. This joy will sustain you, and remember that joy itself possesses a healing power.

DR. C. J. VYAS

References :—

1. From the Messages written by the Divine Mother in my diary.
2. *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Peal.
3. From the Divine Mother's Writings.

PLEA

WHO chooses who...
Should get the Dengue,
And who shall have it not ?
Which deity protects a few—
Then hands it out
To me and you...
Without a glimmer of remorse;
For first, second, *and* third course ?
What being divine decides who shall
Return once more into the Hell
Of pain-racked muscles, aching bones—
Synchronised with grunts and groans !

*I hope the god (if such there be)
Can see I've passed my Ph.D.*

LEENA

YOGA AND LIFE

IX

YOGA OF LIFE : YOGA OF THE FUTURE

The Central Process and Working (2)

HUMAN nature is so constituted, the elements in the individual are so many and so conflicting and contradictory that one will find it an uphill task to bring coordination between them before a real self-consecration becomes possible. In fact no consecration is effective if the personality does not get integrated. Opposing habits and hankerings are so deep-rooted, likes, dislikes and sentiments are so fix-formed that it becomes indeed very difficult to change and new-mould their tendencies in the light of a new divine consciousness. This coordination and integration of personality is achieved in and around the psychic being.

But for the emergence of the psychic being and its control over the integrating personality, the human ego-formation must break. The strong-knotted ego-will, aggressive with its deluding reasonableness and conceited naturalness, passively self-affirming, self-asserting and complacent, stubbornly and simply self-deceptive, all-assuming or overlordly, must abandon hold over the individual existence and loosen its teguments on the different elements of man and allow the psychic being to tame them for a divinely-integrated consecration of the life "to the aspiration for the discovery and embodiment of the Divine Truth and to nothing else whatever".

This task of the ego's annihilation is so important and indispensable in the Yoga that no amount of effort and energy and time is too much if we indeed want to succeed in replacing the ego-centric rule over the personality by the theo-centric power of the psychic being. For thus alone is the full consecration, complete integration and one-purposefulness of personality achieved.

Says Sri Aurobindo, "You must go inside yourself and enter into a complete dedication to the spiritual life. All clinging to mental preferences must fall away from you, all insistence on vital aims and interests and attachments must be put away, all egoistic clinging to family, friends, country must disappear if you want to succeed in Yoga. Whatever has to come as outgoing energy or action, must proceed from the Truth once discovered and not from the lower mental or vital motives, from the Divine Will and not from personal choice or the preferences of the ego."

Some might note an element of "renunciation" in the above quotation. But it is not renunciation which Sri Aurobindo favours; for, says the Mother, "so long as you have to renounce anything you are not on this path, so long as you are not thoroughly disgusted with things as they are, and have to make an effort to reject

them, you are not ready for the supramental realisation". "To renounce means that you are to give up what you value, that you have to discard what you think is worth keeping."

We have not to preoccupy our mind with thoughts of renouncing and rejecting this or that thing. Nor have we to make our mind so blank and unresponsive that it would lose all hold and knowledge of its consciousness over its objects of knowledge, by weakening the senses, by impoverishing them of their power of knowledge-communication. What we have to do is to break the attachment of the mind and the senses to things mundane and earthward-gravitating, so that thus liberated of bonds that limit and dwarf and blind they may be able to open themselves to a higher enlightenment. For attachment and bondage to things and dependence on them must be lessened and ultimately annihilated, before liberation comes; and without liberation no higher growth towards and into a divine universality of knowledge, light and power can be possible.

The usefulness and value of renunciation is only to the extent of detachment and liberation and not of non-usage or non-touchability of things. It is not the things, affairs, conditions and relations that are to be renounced, but the attachment and the clinging to them are to be broken; it is the enmeshment of the being in the lower pursuits that has to be rejected. Liberation from all attachment must become the basis of all new-creation and new-manifestation.

So here the element of "rejection" demands, according to Sri Aurobindo, the "rejection of the movements of the lower nature—rejection of the mind's ideas, opinions, preferences, habits, constructions, so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind,—rejection of the vital nature's desires, demands, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, strong and consecrated vital being,—rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, tamas, so that the true stability of Light, Power, Ananda may establish itself in a body growing always more divine".

Rejection is that inner essence and truth of the outer renunciation of the Sannyasin, which brings increasing purification and liberation of the being, making it fit and free for the divine dwelling and higher fulfilment. Rejection empties the human receptacle of its impurities and obscurities, and "surrender" of this purified void state of self to the Divine makes it a vessel worthy to be filled with those energies and elements of the high spiritual and supramental consciousness and Power and Bliss which will turn the human individual into a divine personality.

"Surrender" must be unqualified and unconditional, surrender of all that man is and has and becomes, surrender of each of his outward and inward formations and movements to the new-formative Consciousness of the Divine Shakti, the Mother.

"There must be a total and sincere surrender," elaborates Sri Aurobindo, "there must be an exclusive self-opening to the divine Power; there must be a constant and

integral choice of the divine Power; there must be a constant and integral choice of the Truth that is descending, a constant and integral rejection of the falsehood of the mental, vital and physical Powers and Appearances that still rule the earth-Nature." "It is not enough that the psychic should respond and the higher mental accept or even the inner vital submit and the inner physical consciousness feel the influence. There must be in no part of the being, even the most external, anything that makes a reserve, anything that hides behind doubts, confusions and subterfuges, anything that revolts or refuses."

"Your surrender must be self-made and free; it must be the surrender of a living being, not of an inert automaton or mechanical tool." "Make your surrender true and complete, then only will all else be done for you."

"In proportion as the surrender and self-consecration progress the Sadhaka becomes conscious of the Divine Shakti doing the Sadhana, pouring into him more and more of herself, founding in him the freedom and perfection of the Divine Nature. The more this conscious process replaces his own effort, the more rapid and true becomes his progress. But it cannot completely replace the necessity of personal effort until the surrender and consecration are pure and complete from top to bottom." "Note that a tamasic surrender refusing to fulfil the conditions and calling on God to do everything and save one all the trouble and struggle is a deception and does not lead to freedom and perfection."

This triple personal effort of aspiration, rejection and surrender brings the Yogic force of the Divine Shakti into wide operation, thereby effectuating consecration, purification and liberation which form the essential features of all Yogic fulfilment.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH