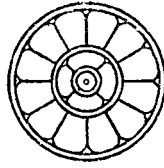


# MOTHER INDIA

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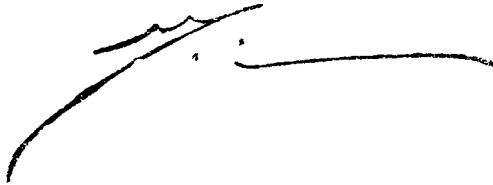


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XVI

No. 2

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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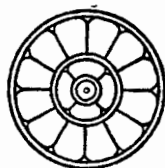
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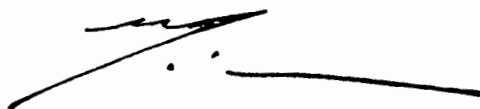


*Addressé au Seigneur Suprême Un*

Il n'y a pas d'autre vice, pas d'autre péché que d'être  
loin de Toi.

*addressed to the One Supreme Lord*

There is no other sin, no other vice than to be far from  
Thee.



## **SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY'S WORLD CONFERENCE**

THE World Conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society will be held in Pondicherry from the 10th to the 14th August, 1964.

There will be a Seminar on the first two days. The third day will be for sight-seeing and the opening of a Cultural Exhibition. The last two days will be devoted to the Conference proper.

The Mother has given a Message for the occasion. It is reproduced in *Mother India* on the opposite page.

The following subjects have been fixed by the Mother for the Seminar :

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

Those who are interested in attending the Conference are welcome. They may write to :

The Chairman,  
The Reception Committee,  
Sri Aurobindo Society's World Conference,  
Pondicherry 2.

Those who would like to give their views on the above four subjects are invited to send them to the same address but with "Seminar" marked on the envelope.

## **THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH DEPENDS ON A CHANGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

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

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

THE MOTHER

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

DECEMBER 4, 1939\*

S : Ancient Yogis always believed that human nature couldn't be changed. They compared it to a dog's curved tail and left it alone, although they admitted the spiritual principle to be at work. Only Sri Aurobindo thinks it can be changed.

N : And you don't ?

S : No.

SRI AUROBINDO : What on earth has this spiritual principle been doing if the world has remained just the same ?

S : X, the well-known Yogi from Western India, also thinks there can be a change and his mission is to bring it about. But he is himself so changeable that he decides one thing today and changes it tomorrow !

SRI AUROBINDO : Then he must be of the Overmind plane ! *(Laughter)*

N : Why Overmind ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Because it is a plane of infinite possibilities.

S : There is something curious about X's realisation. Once while he was returning from College he met a Muslim woman fakir who, as soon as she saw him, embraced him. After that he lost his normal consciousness, his eyes became glassy and his speech incoherent. He behaved like an eccentric. He was in this state for a long time, till some other Yogi brought him back to the normal state. I know of another Yogi who remained in a similar strange state for a considerable number of years. What could such a state have been ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the going into a higher consciousness without being able to maintain contact with the instrumental nature.

S : Is it the Absolute Consciousness ?

\* This part was inadvertently omitted from the issue of February 21. Its place is before the last part dated December 5 in that issue. — Nirodbaran



SRI AUROBINDO : If you mean the Supreme Consciousness, no. If it had been that, he would have either gone away for good into it or come down and established a harmony and balance in his instrumental nature. But this must have been a higher consciousness in some touch with the Absolute.

S : X has been so many times on the verge of breaking his silence but again and again he has deferred the date.

SRI AUROBINDO : Now I can fix his position and everything is clear about him. Formerly I couldn't understand what he was. Yes, I can see him now clearly. He must have gone to that higher consciousness but not established a contact with the instruments, and so long as this contact is not there people behave incoherently and they have this *bāla* or *unmatta bhāva*<sup>1</sup> because they allow any Force to take hold of their instrumental nature and their conduct looks like a want of balance to others. It is something "of" *paramahansa bhāva*<sup>2</sup>; only, here the higher consciousness remains in the background while they allow their nature to behave like a child or a mad man. Europeans, of course, would find it difficult to understand such a phenomenon, and so I suppose Brunton calls X a humbug. As for trying to break his silence so many times, I suppose he thought that the contact was going to be made and he was trying to establish it before he spoke. The whole problem till now has been to express the higher consciousness through the instrumental nature.

N : That means he has something genuine.

S : X has an Ashram especially meant for mad people. I mean such mad people as have lost their normal consciousness by Yoga or by coming into touch with Yogis.

SRI AUROBINDO : I see. Yes, these people are trying to do the same thing by bringing down something from above while Westerners like Huxley and Heard are going about in their own ways from below.

S : X's method is now to impart spirituality by touch. The recipient feels a sensation or emotion of love.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, it is the vital physical way.

S : But he is waiting to break his silence and he says that when he will speak a great miracle will take place.

SRI AUROBINDO : He wants to act by the mind, I suppose. Now he is acting through the vital being, but the mental is more effective and so he is waiting for it. Lele also used to act through the vital. Once I remember somebody wanted to weep and he thought that if he couldn't weep he would not get any realisation. So Lele said, "Pretend to weep." The man pretended and then the emotion became actual and he began to weep uncontrollably. It is a kind of auto-suggestion.

C : Yes, Lele made my niece also weep like that. Another thing he did was to give the mantra : Om Dattatryeya.

SRI AUROBINDO : He never gave me any mantra. He said the mantra would

<sup>1</sup> Childlike or madman-like disposition

<sup>2</sup> The disposition of the liberated man

rise from within.

S : X makes a lot of prophecies and they don't come true. I can't understand why they fail.

SRI AUROBINDO : Perhaps he thinks that if, say, four times out of ten he has been successful the rest also would come true. He must be forgetting his failures. He doesn't seem to have a critical mind.

P : Lele also used to prophesy, committing God in advance. Whenever he failed to cure an illness, he said it was God's defeat !

SRI AUROBINDO : But philosophically, it would mean perhaps that the higher consciousness failed to carry out his purpose.

S : Could these eccentricities and incoherencies be due to egoism still remaining in the being ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Not necessarily. In the ordinary life the ego-construction holds things together and when that ego is removed by one's going into the higher consciousness, one behaves in this way, until a greater principle takes the place of the ego and establishes another balance. If we went by his utterances, X seems to have a strong mixture of the ego in him. What is his principle of Yoga ?

S : He says the ego is the root of everything wrong : it must disappear.

SRI AUROBINDO : What is to replace the ego ?

S : Something like Divine Mind—Divine Mind acting through the individual consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh, he recognises the individual consciousness as real?

S : He has no systematised philosophy. One has to build it out of his utterances.

SRI AUROBINDO : No critical mind, as I have said.

S : At least no philosophic mind.

SRI AUROBINDO : Some might say no mind at all to speak of, leave aside the philosophic mind.

DECEMBER 6, 1939

N : Dakshina has had no sleep for three nights.

SRI AUROBINDO : What's the matter with these people ? Why can't Dakshina sleep ? Thinking ?

N : No, vital restlessness. He says everything is a chaos.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, he has to build a cosmos out of it. He has to quiet the vital being.

N : S told me of an experience. She feels a stillness coming down upon her and she becomes perfectly still, without any vibration. Then the stillness melts and the outline of her body disappears into a void, a nothingness. She becomes unconscious of even her breath. When she comes back to the body-sense, with slow breathing, she has the feeling : "I am in the heart."

SRI AUROBINDO : Is the experience frequent—and is she conscious of the nothingness ?

N : She is conscious.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is a kind of Nirvana of the personal being, where the cessation of breath usually happens. It is not really a cessation but only apparently.

S : Is that *śūnyam* (void) ? and is it really what we call Nirvana ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, (*after a pause*) a temporary Nirvana of the personal self.

N : And what is that feeling in the heart ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the return of the sense of existence felt in the psychic being—what may be called the individual spiritual existence.

S : In exteriorisation also a cessation of breath occurs.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but here she loses the individual existence and is conscious only of nothingness.

S : Does it mean liberation from desire and ego ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No, unless the experience is frequent. That is why I wanted to know if she has it frequently. If the experience has become permanent—that is, if it remains all the time or can be called up any time—then one can get rid of desires or at least quiet them down.

In the Nirvanic experience you don't feel yourself as particularly anybody, nor are you exactly nobody. Either your physical being, the normal body, is felt as a point or spot in Infinity or you feel yourself as part of the Universal. The body is felt inside you and not you inside the body.

S : According to traditional Vedanta, the experience of *śūnyam* precedes the experience of Self-realisation.

SRI AUROBINDO : Can't say that. It may precede or come after.

#### EVENING

The talk started again about X.

S : X speaks of a latent state of consciousness which is the origin of everything. After that latent state comes the play of possibilities.

SRI AUROBINDO : If it is a play of possibilities only, how does the cosmos evolve ? It would remain a chaos. What decides the actuality ?

S : He doesn't say anything definite. He speaks of fourteen *śūnyams* : Intuition, Superconscious State, Lower Inspiration, Higher Inspiration, Insight, Illumination, etc. etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : How does he classify them ? Is Intuition the Intuitive Mind ?

S : He has no classification. He has not the critical mind required for that. But he doesn't believe in the Vedantic withdrawal from life. He wants to bring down the realisation into this earth and work there—a sort of heaven on earth.

SRI AUROBINDO : There he agrees with our system. This aim seems now to be followed by others also.

S : In X's scheme there is no place for the individual.

SRI AUROBINDO : How ?

S : When you realise the Divine, you act from the Cosmic Consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO : Who is this "you" ?

S : I am putting it in that form. He means the individual consciousness is identified with the Cosmic Consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then it is all right.

S : But it is the Cosmic Consciousness that acts through the individual.

N : In Europe, during his travel there, he got a bad reputation. He was called a fraud and a cheat.

S : That is the European mentality. They can't bear anything mystic.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. Huxley and others are ridiculed for their mysticism.

S : About X one thing is queer. He has never been in want of money. Money has simply flowed in.

C : Then he has reached God !

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : And he surely must be in the Cosmic Consciousness !

S : He is so erratic in his behaviour. Today he is going to one place, tomorrow another, brings lady disciples from England to go to China, then after they have made a tour of India he suddenly alters his plan and sends them back to England.

SRI AUROBINDO : That obviously is his cosmic movement. (*Laughter*)

NIRODBARAN

## MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

(Continued from the January issue)

### CHAPTER III

#### THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

*What is man that thou art mindful of him?*

THE mystics do not make the mistake of treating man as the measure of things. But, in their own way, they give him an even wider value, an unlimited liability and destiny such as no other view of life can or does. To time's fools they hold up a wisdom beyond time. The value of such an undertaking will be obvious from the findings of two modern psychologists. "Since insight is our greatest need," they write, "the greatest task psychology faces today is the task of discovering new ways of satisfying that need—not only of bringing more insight to more people, but of finding why it is the simple process of living seems to diminish rather than increase it."<sup>1</sup> We who live in such a world of diminishing return have need of this. Among mystics there is general agreement that life in a human body provides uniquely good opportunities for achieving salvation or deliverance. It is at once man's duty and right. In the Upanishads the suggestion is often met with that a man who leaves the world—gentle euphemism for death—without first knowing Brahman has missed his chance, indeed has missed everything, that for which he had been born. In the words of a modern mystic: "Therefore man's importance in the world is that he gives to life that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery becomes possible."<sup>2</sup>

Extremes of world-negation apart, most mature forms of mysticism hold out the promise of a conscious evolution, an enlargement of interests and relations, both for the individual and the group. In the mystical view of life "The ascent to the divine Life is the human journey, the work of Works, the acceptable Sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence, without which he would be only an insect crawling among other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water which has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensities of the physical universe."<sup>3</sup>

For all this labour the individual is necessary, to justify the ways of God or divine becoming. History without Incarnation is "bunk". Independently He exists in Himself, but through the individual He manifests himself in relation. That, to put the matter a little metaphysically, is the justification of the individual, his "real busi-

ness" here, even if the *Wall Street Journal* has not heard of it.

But such a promise, or premiss, is based upon a psychological view of things, very different from the current ones. The simplest way to describe this would be to call it a transcendental psychology, only one must be prepared to qualify it and others perhaps to accept the qualification ! The mystic is not necessarily a perfect human being. Very often he is not. But, always, if he is a mystic at all, he admits a further becoming of man, to become what he is, to use Nietzsche's dark phrase. The mystic's sense of life and adventure of mind strain upward, "beyond all present maps". The world of the senses, of material facts and goals of life is never enough for him. In all this he feels the sense of something missing. Keenly aware of his limitations, death, desire and incapacity impel him to seek for their opposites, to dream of release, reconciliation and victory. He feels differently and, when the eyes have been opened, knows better. Metaphysically sound, the mystic psychology is based on experiment and verification, just like any other. It is, as we have maintained throughout, a science; only its methods, field and basic assumptions differ, sometimes radically, from the popular versions. Simply put, in the mystic view man appears as a meeting place of many levels of reality. The mystic's main interest lies in effecting a transition from the lower to the higher, and after the transition has been secured a transformation of the lower in terms of the higher. Word became Flesh, so that Flesh might become Word.

A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme :  
His nature we must put on as he put ours;  
We are sons of God and must be even as he :  
His human portion, we must grow divine.  
Our life is a paradox with God for key.

Man as he is is a mid-term, he never is but always to be blest. This shows what many dislike and suspect about the mystical business, that the psychology is intuitive, the psychology of beatitude and deification. "This is the life of the gods and godlike and blessed men—a liberation from the alien that besets us here," was Plotinus's phrase for this state. A defense of the intuitive position would be quite easy. As Allport has pointed out : "William James, for example, invoked the hypothesis of a subliminal connection between the individual mind and a universal mind. The island of individual consciousness, to use his analogy, rests ultimately upon the limitless ocean floor from which it draws its composition and support. The theory that the individual mind is merely a fragment of a universal mind is common in many religions as diverse in type as Hinduism and Christian Science. To some extent this theory seems to be present in nearly every religion. Its merit, as James himself clearly saw, is metaphysical rather than psychological. It provides a possible channel for the rush of divine consciousness into the individual mind."<sup>4</sup> And that is what we have earlier called the promise of transcendental psychology. In the simple

words of Swami Vivekananda, who may be taken to speak for the Indian tradition and standpoint : "There is a continuity of mind, as the yogis call it. The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds, are fragments of the universal mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity we can convey our thoughts directly to one another"<sup>5</sup> As regards intuition, if we will but look closely,<sup>5</sup> "In each stage of Matter, in each stage of Life, the Intuition assumes a working proper to that stage and acts from behind the veil, supporting and enforcing the immediate necessities of the creative Force. There is an Intuition in Matter which holds the action of the material world from the electron to the sun and planets and their contents. There is an intuition in Life which similarly supports and guides the play and development of Life in Matter till it is ready for the mental evolution of which man is the vehicle. In man also the creation follows the same upward process,—the Intuition within develops according to the stage he has reached in his progress. Even the precise intellect of the scientist, who is inclined to deny the separate existence or the superiority of Intuition, yet cannot really move forward unless there is behind him a mental Intuition, which enables him to take a forward step or to divine what has to be done. Intuition therefore is present at the beginning of things and in their middle as well as at their consummation."<sup>6</sup> If one is still sceptical and should ask for the reason why, here is the reason : "It is a sound rule inherent in the very constitution of universal existence that where there are truths attainable by the reason there must be somewhere in the organism possessed of that reason a means of arriving at or verifying them by experience. The one means we have left in our mentality is an extension of that form of knowledge by identity which gives us the awareness of our existence. It is really upon a self-awareness more or less conscious, more or less present to our conception that our knowledge of the contents of our self is based. Or to put it in a more general formula, the knowledge of the contents is contained in the knowledge of the continent. If then we can extend our faculty of mental self-awareness to awareness of the Self beyond and outside us, Atman or Brahman of the Upanishads, we may become possessors in experience of the truths which form the contents of the Atman or Brahman. It is on this possibility that Indian Vedanta has based itself. It has sought through the knowledge of the Self the knowledge of the universe."<sup>7</sup> In the simpler style of Lao Tse, "Without going out of doors, you may know the whole world." Or, as Plotinus has it, "Each being contains within itself the whole intelligible world. Therefore all is everywhere. Each is there all and all is in each." In the words of an early theologian : "It is necessary to know, in the first place, that the God, who is the fabricator of man, produced his form, his condition, and his whole essence, in the image and similitude of the world....And thus the Demiurges exhibited man by the artifice of a divine fabrication, in such a way, that, in a small body, we might bestow the power and essence of all the elements, nature for this purpose bringing them together; and also, so that from the divine spirit, which descended from a celestial intellect to the support of the mortal body, he might prepare an abode for man, which, though fragile, *might be*

*similar to the world....So that the animal which was made in imitation of the world might be governed by an essence similarly divine.*"<sup>8</sup>

This is the mystic's point of departure, what he has sought and found and therefore cannot deny. So far as he is concerned there is nothing hypothetical about it, a knowledge "curiously self-consistent and often mutually explanatory". If the rest of the world were to disregard and disown, as has happened often, he would walk alone, the eternal outsider. But it is to the outsiders that the world has owed most, even if it has now and then forgotten to be grateful.

From what has been said it is easy to see that the psychology of the mystics is really a study or quest of consciousness or Self. The difficulty of the modern man is well described by Ouspensky. "Never in history," says Ouspensky, "has psychology stood at *so low a level*...lost all touch with its *origin and meaning*...perhaps the *oldest science* and unfortunately, in its most essential features, a *forgotten science*, the science of his possible evolution."<sup>9</sup> It is, as we can see, a psychology of levels or dimensions, deeper than most "depth" psychologies. The fifth dimension, as Rosenkrantz says, is the liberating dimension.<sup>10</sup> In some ways this sounds esoteric. But this is true of all science. The laws of things are never on the surface. Only the mystics do not take the material alone to be the real. They go further without always faring worse. In support of their procedure they refer, just as much as the scientist does, to our powers of analysis, observation and experiment. Also, they do not refuse to accept the material formula so much as refuse to accept it as final and the only one. The mystics speak of man the machine, but they also refer to that in man which is more than machine and capable of making him an agent or expression of freedom. They know, what nearly everyone some time or other suspects, that the individual is part of a larger Self. This knowledge, for it is really that, they are unwilling and unable to give up, to oblige those whose prejudices or lack of understanding keeps them shut from this liberalising experience. But a little sympathy and open-mindedness is often enough to release the possibility. As a result of his experiments in extra-sensory perceptions William James had arrived at the following honest but unorthodox conclusions : "One conclusion was forced upon my mind and my impression of its truth has ever since remained unshaken. It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness, as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question—for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region, though they may fail to give a map. At any rate, they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality."<sup>11</sup>



With all this the mystics would whole-heartedly agree. For whoever else—and that, unfortunately, includes nearly everybody—may have closed the account with reality, the mystic minority at least has kept its accounts open and straight, kept faith in “the seed of God in us”. Only in keeping with the nature of their inquiry the technique has been different and necessarily more inward. In course of his “Experimental Mysticism” Ouspensky discovered, “knowledge of the real world was possible, but, it became clearer and clearer to me during my experiments, it required a different approach and a different preparation”. This approach and preparation has as much right to be considered scientific as any other inquiry into the secrets of nature and self, and what might be beyond both. In the words of Edward Carpenter, obviously based on his experiments or experience, experience known to the eastern mystics from the dawn of history : “Of all the hard facts of life ...I know of none more solid and fundamental than that if you inhibit thought (and persevere) you come at length to a region of consciousness below and behind thought and different from ordinary thought in its nature and character—a consciousness of quasi-universal quality, and a realization of an altogether vaster self than that to which we are accustomed. And since the ordinary consciousness with which we are concerned in ordinary life, is before all things founded on the little, local self, and is in fact self-consciousness in the little, local sense, it follows that to pass out of that is to die to the ordinary self and the ordinary world. It is to die in the ordinary sense, but in another sense it is to wake up and find that the I, one’s real, most intimate self pervades the universe and all other beings—that the mountains and the sea and the stars are a part of one’s body and that one’s soul is in touch with the souls of all creatures. Yes, far closer than before. It is to be assured of an indestructible, immortal life and of a joy immense and inexpressible.... All life is changed.... For the ceaseless endeavour to realize this identity with the great Self, there is no substitute. No teaching, no theorising, no philosophising, no rules of conduct of life will take the place of actual experience. This is the Divine Yoga or union, from which really all life, all Creation proceeds.” This is the Alpha and Omega of which Plotinus said : “You ask me : how can we know the Infinite ? I answer, not by reason. It is the office of reason to distinguish and define. The Infinite therefore cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the Infinite...by entering into *a state in which you are your finite self no longer*. This is ...the liberation of your mind from finite consciousness. When you cease to be finite you become one with the Infinite.... You realize the union, the identity.” Anyone who feels like it can verify the facts. The mystics always have.

It will be seen that their psychology is based on the incontrovertible fact of man’s double nature, *Zwei Seelen*, that Faust knew so well. This is part of the traditional view everywhere, from which our own naturalistic psychologies are a deviation. The paradox of man, the pull of opposite tendencies and impulses, the crown of thorns of our divided being and the crown of redemption through suffering and sacrifice, the mechanical wheel of Nature (*Prakriti*) and the freedom of the

Person (*Purusha*, the Witness Self) are known to every seeker, is in fact one of the bonds that bind the invisible brotherhood. It needs no ghost from the grave, or the clinics of Vienna, to tell us that, biologically and existentially, we belong almost wholly to a mechanic, animal and libidinal universe. But if that were all and this other, mystic or spiritual possibility were not, the life of contented animals would have done as well. But, as the wise have always insisted, there is such a possibility, or door of escape. A shift in the fields of perception that opens up a different, and more truly human prospect, "windows through which the mind looks out upon a more extensive and inclusive world", as James said. This is not a matter of faith alone, but of works, for the experience profoundly modifies both attitude and action.

Two methods for achieving this—the escape from the flame of separation, as Rumi puts it—suggest themselves : detachment and transference. The mystics are not asking for freedom in order to do what they please, they are not Egotistically Sublime. As the *Theologica Germanica* has it : "So long as man seeketh his own highest good, *because* it is his, he will never find it." If our will is for ever caught in the act there is no freedom for man as agent. He is for ever bound. It is only in so far as a man may stand back, watch and control his impulses that he has some chance to know and be the free self within. In most traditional cultures we have, therefore, as a matter of rule, emphasis on discrimination, or contemplative withdrawal and non-attachment. In the classic formula of the Upanishads : "The good is one thing, the pleasant another ; these two, having different objects, chain a man. It is well with him who clings to the good, he who chooses the pleasant misses his end." For all who wish to explore reality, the reality of self, the advice holds, in fact, imposes itself. This has been sometimes misunderstood and led to negative results, even among practitioners. In itself this is a stage, of self-vision. In the Indian system of Samkhya psychology, upon which the practice of yoga is so largely based, the concept of *Sakshi*, or Witness Self, plays a central role. We hear echoes of it in Henry David Thoreau. In *Solitude* he writes : "With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences ; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the driftwood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I *may* be affected by a theatrical exhibition ; on the other hand, I *may not* be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me much more. I only know myself as a human entity ; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections ; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but a spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it ; and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life, is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbours and friends sometimes." In psychical research, Gardner Murryhy

reports, "out-of-the-body experiences (and)...phenomena appear to be real...and consistent with a modern conception of the unity of the living system in which mental phenomena, such as changed conceptions of the self, sense of identification with the universe, tendency to undergo bilocation (in which one looks down on one's own body and feels that the observer and the observed body are two different and equally real things), are experiences not very far from the known terrain of general psychology."<sup>12</sup>

Another related method, or another way things happen, is to transfer the centre of personality from the ego to the Self, the Self that is one in all men, the uniting factor. As Evelyn Underhill has it, "a spiritual life is simply a life in which all that we do comes from the centre, is anchored in God." It is easy to understand, why, as part of today's tragedy,

Things fall apart ; the centre cannot hold ;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. . . .

The idea of such transference, or replacement, appears in most ethical systems, but is based on and is sanctioned by mystical psychology, for otherwise it would not make much sense. Witnesses to its reality are to be found in all ages and periods. Not I but the Christ in me, wrote St. John. Whether we live or whether we die we are the Lords, said St. Paul. Even for Arthur Koestler, "The I had ceased to exist." (It must have been marvellous, if it did ) How the lack of our understanding the need for such transference of the centre of personality vitiates large areas of self-centred modern living will be seen from the following sober analysis of two clear-eyed psychologists :

"All feelings about one's value and worth, about what one can or cannot do are embodied in the Ego. So distorted are they, that the Ego is always a false image of the Self...a psychological shell encasing the Self. Every human being is unconsciously shut up within a system of mistaken ideas and feelings which thwart the fullest expression of the powers of the Self. The individual is limited, also, by the defects of the culture of his time.

"One basic task of man is the removal of this shell. A lifelong problem. . . . But we must distinguish between an intellectual insight into the broad fact that the Ego is only our second, not our real nature—and the actual breakdown of the shell (is what we need) . . . . In the end, it seems that nothing short of the severest kind of pressure is enough to shatter the shell.

"This drastic experience we call the major crisis . . . . It should be welcomed . . . for through it we may move into the joy and peace that comes from releasing the Self within from the limitations of its shell into the creative, productive, courageous, loving expressions of which it is capable. That is indeed the abundant life."<sup>13</sup>

(*To be continued*)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

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## UNFAMILIAR INDIA

### IV. THE HIMALAYAS

GEOLOGICALLY, we have already said, the Himalayas as compared to the Deccan Plateau are young. Indeed, as R. C. Mehridatta, former Head of the Geology Department of Jammu and Kashmir University, tells us : "The hills nearest to Jammu and the foothills lying between the Siwalik hills and the plains of India are the result of the latest and still continuing uplift of the Himalayas and not of the pleistocene age of about a million years ago as previously assumed. Their deposits were laid down immediately after the last glacial cycle and must be only about 10,000 years old or even slightly younger. They must have been raised to their existing heights by slow and imperceptible upheaval of the Himalayas—a movement believed to have commenced during the pleistocene period but was operating even a few thousand years ago." Mehridatta's conclusions are based not only on the study of the "scars of glaciation" on the boulders and pebbles in the youngest deposits but also on the method of dating by the use of radio-active carbon devised by Dr. William Libby.

Mehridatta continues: "From this young age of the Jammu hills and the existence of Y-shaped river valleys in the Kashmir Himalayas I feel convinced that the Himalayas are still gaining in height, maybe more slowly than before, and recent earthquakes that have visited the country and caused subterranean rumblings owe their origin to these factors."

May we not exercise the poet's sight and take this continuous though slow gaining in height by the Himalayas as a symbol of progress even now by India, progress secretly spiritual no less than imperceptibly material since the Himalayas have always been haloed by the Indian soul with a vision of divinity ? The recent earthquakes and subterranean rumblings may also be considered the natural concomitant of the growth of godhead out of India's depths. Some change, accompanied with a certain degree of danger, in the configuration of earth-life is bound to go with all such profound emergences upward.

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Some years back, V. S. Naravane wrote an interesting article in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (December 29, 1957) on the Himalayas in Myth and Art. We may cite a few passages :

" 'He who thinks of Himachal,' runs an ancient text, 'even though he should not behold him, is greater than he who performs all worship at Kashi. And he who

meditates upon Himachal shall have pardon of all sins. All things that die on Himachal, and in dying think of His snows, are freed from evil. In a hundred ages of the gods I could not tell you of the glories of Himachal, where Shiva lives and where Ganga falls from the foot of Vishnu like the slender stalk of the lotus flower. Truly, as the dew is dried up by the morning sun so are the sorrows of mankind dried by the sight of Himachal.'

"No other mountain range on earth has aroused such complex feelings of reverence and fear, love and devotion, as the Himalayas. They have been regarded as the centre of the world, and glorified as the source of life, the fount of purity, the storehouse of beauty and the ultimate destination of all that is noble and sacred. They are the final goal of every pilgrim even today, as they were of Yudhishtira and his brothers who, when the stupendous drama of the Mahabharata war came to a close, turned their footsteps towards the mountains. There are no holier peaks in the world than Haramukh and Mahadeo, Dhaulagiri and Annapurna, Badrinath and Kedarnath, Trishul and Nanda Devi and, above all, Kailasa....

"Kalidasa introduces us to the Himalayas with superb artistry. In his poems they appear in ever-new forms like changing scenes upon a gigantic revolving stage.... But the poet's finest touches are reserved for Kailasa. The sides of Kailasa he describes as sleek and glossy like sections of sawn ivory. They serve as perfectly polished mirrors, and goddesses at their make-up could ask for nothing better. The terraces of Kailasa form a staircase for Parvati—a staircase in which every step is diamond-studded. And the peak, dazzling-white like a new-blown lotus, looks around in all directions. It is a solid mass of whiteness, as if Shiva's frenzied laughter had been accumulated after every dance and had towered into the sky for all time to come. For it is here that Shiva, clad in an elephant's hide, performs his cosmic dance, the 'tandava'...."

The grandest lines about the Himalayas, however, come from Sri Aurobindo. In his blank-verse narrative, *Urvasie*, composed in his early twenties, he pictures the hero Pururavus wandering in search of his vanished bride Urvasie. Pururavus went swiftly up through the Siwalik hills and did not linger on the inferior heights

But plunged o'er difficult gorge and prone ravine  
And rivers thundering between dim walls,  
Driven by immense desire, until he came  
To dreadful silence of the peaks and trod  
Regions as vast and lonely as his love  
Then with a confident sublime appeal  
He to the listening summits stretched his hands :  
"O desolate strong Himalaya, great  
Thy peaks alone with heaven and dreadful hush  
In which the Soul of all the world is felt  
Meditating creation ! Thou, O mountain,

My bridal chamber wast. On thee we lay  
 With summits towards the moon or with near stars  
 Watching us in some wild inhuman vale,  
 Thy silence over us like a coverlid  
 Or a far avalanche for bridal song.  
 Lo, she is fled into your silences !  
 I come to you, O mountains, with a heart  
 Desolate like you, like you snow-swept, and stretch  
 Towards your solemn summits kindred hands.  
 Give back to me, O mountains, give her back.”  
 He ceased and Himalaya bent towards him, white.  
 The mountains seemed to recognize a soul  
 Immense as they, reaching as they to heaven  
 And capable of infinite solitude. . . .”\*

Rabindranath Tagore too was under the spell of the Himalayas. As Naravane tells us : “Tagore’s autobiography is full of references to his boyhood memories of the hills, many fine poems were written during his stay at Kalimpong and other resorts. And the well-known ‘Awakening of the Waterfall’ (*Nirjharer Swapnabhanga*) was suggested by the Himalayan cataracts.”

Tagore’s Muslim peer in poetry, Mohammed Iqbal, was held no less enchanted. “The *Kulhyat-i-Iqbal* opens with a poem which is among the finest tributes ever paid by man to any natural phenomenon : ‘O Himalaya, the heavens bend down to kiss your brow ! Ages pass. They leave no trace upon you. Amidst the flux of night and day you are eternally young. You are that mighty epic of which the first couplet is the sky. On your head the snows have placed a crown of glory, and fugitive clouds pitch their tents in your valleys. Your peaks converse with the stars, while night loosens her curly locks and the trees stand silent in thought. Will you tell us, O Himalaya, of those primeval days when humanity was as fresh and unspoilt as you are ?’ ”

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The Himalayas have been the painter’s paradise no less than the poet’s. And in modern times the greatest love for them has come from foreign artists : not only the Japanese Buddhist Ekai Kawaguchi but also the American Buddhist E. H. Brewster and the Polish Buddhist who calls himself Angarika Govinda and, the most famous of all Himalayan painters, Nicholas Roerich, “steeped in the mysticism of old Russia and the religious sensitivity of Dostoevski, Berdayev and Merejkowsky”.

Perhaps it is not well-known how the Himalayas have inspired architecture.

\* *Collected Poems and Plays* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1942), Vol I, pp. 34-35.

There is the Kailasa temple at Ellora which some consider the highest achievement of the Indian sculptor and architect. "The original plan was drawn up keeping in mind the actual contours of the mountain (Kailasa) with its pyramidal snow-cap and its pointed rocks. And at one time the entire temple was painted a silvery white to suggest the snows....

"Mount Meru has also left its mark upon Indian architecture. Meru is taken as the synthetic expression of the entire Himalayan mass, and the tall, curvilinear spires of Khajuraho and many other temples point to Meru as described in a number of myths. Meru is associated with Vishnu, as Kailasa is with Shiva, and suggests a friendlier aspect of the Himalayas, which probably appealed to the Vaishnava builders.

"Many years ago E.B. Havell put forward the view that all the basic ideas of Indian architecture and sculpture are in some ways derived from the Himalayas. Even the famous design of the Asoka pillars symbolises the Himalayas, which have been described as the 'earth's stately pillar girt with clouds'. Havell goes so far as to suggest that even the origin of the Buddha image can be traced to the idea of the Divine Yogi meditating on inaccessible peaks."

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It is curious that nowhere in Indian literature of the past do we read of any attempt to scale the highest peaks of the Himalayas. Was it regarded as a blasphemous venture to lay foot on the head of this god among earth's hills? It is not that the spirit of enterprise was lacking in ancient India. Indian sailors and merchants crossed the high seas both westward and to South-East Asia. But everything seems to have been done for a purpose—expansion of culture, extension of trade, even enlargement of empire. But there appears to have been no aim sheerly to assert man's power over Nature. To climb the Everest just to plant a flag there as a sign of human conquest over the highest of all mountains was foreign to the old Indian mind. It would almost have been like daring to wake up Shiva from his trance. Only one figure in Indian legend had the temerity to take such a step: the Rakshasa Ravana. "Worsted in his fight against Rama, he mounted his magic chariot and flew to Kailasa. He thought he would compel Shiva to come to his support and started burrowing under the foundations of the great mountain. Parvati felt the ground tremble beneath her feet and tried to rouse Shiva from his ecstasy. But Shiva did not even open his eyes. He gently pressed his foot and held the demon-king a prisoner in the dungeon he had dug for himself. And there he remained a thousand years."

Even the mountaineering of Pururavas, which Sri Aurobindo has so graphically delineated, had no mere titanism in it. He compared himself, no doubt, to the Himalayas, but only to express the mightiness of his love for Urvashi and not as any prelude to demonstrating his mastery over Nature.

And yet the point has to be faced: "Is the modern urge which strains even



beyond the highest peaks and strives to conquer interplanetary space nothing save a Rakshasic impulse ?” The answer can hardly be a straight “yes”. After all, Ancient India herself, for all her veneration of the Gods, longed to surpass them and pass beyond Shiva and Vishnu and Brahma into the Formless, the One Spirit of the universe and above all universe, Brahman, who is identical with the infinite space of the Self within, Atman. And it is not with a sense of unfaithfulness to the past that Modern India follows in the steps of the Modern West in mountaineering adventure.

In the temper of Western mountaineering, in the insatiable zest for knowledge and power, which marks what is called the Faustian mood of Modernism, the personal element, the ego set against the universe, is at once insistent and yet something that is surpassed at every moment. This temper brings a certain heroic irreverence—irreverence both towards the object pursued and towards one’s own sacrifices on the way. The sacrifices are so great that one almost gets the right to be irreverent towards the object pursued. The object pursued is often felt as so great that the irreverence towards it compels one to make utterly light of one’s own pains and strains, no matter how enormous. Thus an expedition to climb any Himalayan peak can involve permanent loss of fingers and toes through frostbite, and many other losses including that of life itself. The attack on Mount Everest has taken quite a toll of brave valuable lives. And those who have attacked it have not only competed, as it were, with it but also loved it, thought it their all in all and believed, like Antony of Cleopatra, the world well lost for its sake. So we must not misunderstand the modern temper even when it is somewhat wanting in the worshipful attitude that is traditional India’s to her Himalayan Ancient of Days.

Although it may be difficult, we should try to take in the right spirit the first words which Hillary, that gay-hearted dreamer of the unattainable, uttered on reaching the top of Mount Everest. Recently Sir John Hunt, leader of the 1955 expedition which included Hillary and Tenzing, visited a boys’ school in Nottinghamshire. He answered all questions readily, but hesitated long over the query : “What did Sir Edmund Hillary say after conquering Everest ?” Brows knit, Sir John at last blurted : “He said, ‘We’ve knocked the bastard off !’”

*Compiled by K. D. SETHNA*

## THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

### THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

#### I. THE CHALLENGE

“Wilt thou claim immortality, O heart,  
Crying against the eternal witnesses ? . . .  
I only am eternal and endure . . .  
I am a timeless Nothingness carrying all,  
I, Death, am He ; there is no other God.  
All from my depths are born, they live by death ;  
All to my depths return and are no more.”<sup>1</sup>

“I bow not to Thee, O huge mask of Death,  
Black lie of night to the cowed soul of man,  
Unreal, inescapable end of things,  
Thou grim jest played with the immortal spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

“HERE a Mill and there a river, Each a glimpse and gone for ever !”<sup>3</sup> : In these words Robert Louis Stevenson epitomizes for a child the transitoriness that characterizes the landscape seen on a railway journey. But do they not equally convey the sense of dismay that Man feels in his insecure confrontation with this “wild and monstrous and sweet and terrible world” which, alas, seems to be so strongly marked with the stamp of transitoriness and inadequacy, suffering and evil ? “A glimpse and gone for ever ! *sabbam amiccā*—all is impermanent, just a passing show !”—so goes forth his wail of despair, under the afflicting burden of the twin shadow of Death and Time overhanging as it were the whole gamut of manifested existence.

An ultimate decay and dissolution appears to be the ineluctable end of all individual existence. For, everything here in this material world seems inexorably to pass through the sequenced procession of birth and growth, and decay and death, with a period of transient stability in between (*jāyate, asti, bardhate, viparimiti, apakṣayati, naśyati*). Did not Arjuna on the battle-field of Kurukshetra get overwhelmed with his vision of Time the Destroyer and cry out in awe and wonder :

“O Form universal, enormous are thy burning eyes ; thy mouths gape to de-

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book IX, Canto II p. 669.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 664

<sup>3</sup> R. L. Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses* (quoted by Ian Ramsay in *Prospect for Metaphysics*).

vour, terrible with many tusks of destruction. People are hastening into thy terrible jaws and some are seen with crushed and bleeding heads caught between thy teeth of power. The nations are rushing to destruction with helpless speed into thy mouths of flame like many rivers hurrying in their course towards the ocean or like moths that cast themselves on a kindled fire. With thy burning mouths, O Form of Dread, thou art licking all the regions around."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, '...Death prowls baying through the woods of life'<sup>2</sup>, and the spectre of the ever-approaching tread of this dire Doom is the most sombre hurdle before embodied existence. And this has naturally generated a horror of death that is verily universal among mankind. The pathos and horror do not spring so much from the physical pain that often accompanies dissolution as from the unbearable mystery of it, from the 'absence of freedom, the compulsion, the struggle, the subjection to something that appears to be Not-Self,'<sup>3</sup> also from the emotional tragedy to the subject and to the survivors—the abrupt and irrevocable cessation of the old familiar relations between near and dear ones.

Yet, somehow, in his race consciousness, man has refused to reconcile himself to the all-too-evident fact that all embodied life has to end in death and dissolution. This race refusal, sometimes vague and subconscious, has given rise to various attempts,<sup>4</sup> continually repeated in spite of the invariably dismal experience of failure, to somehow escape death and disintegration. "The picture thus presented," as E. S. Hartland has aptly remarked, "of the desperate refusal of mankind to accept what seems a cardinal condition of existence is one of the most pathetic in the history of the race."<sup>5</sup>

Man's mythical lore—very often the repository of his unrealised dreams and aspirations—bears ample witness to this universal incredulity of mankind as to the *necessity* or *naturalness* of Death as a sequel to life. The forms through which this stubborn denial of death has expressed itself are indeed many and varied. To glance at only a few amongst these :<sup>6</sup>

(1) *Myths and legends concerning the origin of death* : The unsophisticated man has sought to assure himself through various mythical accounts that, after all, from the beginning death was not pre-decreed for him. This sombre Adversary could force his advent in the kingdom of the living simply because of some act of disobedience on the part of man to some Divine Command (e.g., to abstain from the fruit of a certain tree, in the *Genesis* story) or due to the enmity or slackness of one of the lower animals, or perhaps owing to the fact that the heavenly message of eternal

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, Chap XI (Adaptation from Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, 2nd Series, pp. 148-149)

<sup>2</sup> *Savitri*, Book IX, Canto II

<sup>3</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (American Edition), p 179

<sup>4</sup> Cf the alchemist's search for the Elixir of Life, or, in Indian tradition, for the mythical plant *Vishalyakarani* or for the ambrosia *Mrtasāñjivani* deemed capable of restoring life to the departed,

<sup>5</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Ed James Hastings), Vol. IV, p 411

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

life for man was on the way interrupted and thwarted or somehow wrongly transmitted to him.

(ii) *Escape of the soul* : Amongst the races of primitive culture, 'from Siberia to Australia, from Puget Sound to the islands of the Eastern Archipelago', death is often ascribed to some inadvertent escape of the soul from the body and means are adopted in the fond hope of catching the errant soul in its wanderings abroad and bringing it back to its old habitat.

(iii) *Myths about effective or quasi-effective return from the land of the dead* : The Babylonian myth of Ishtar and Tammuz and the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice illustrate this type.

In the Babylonian myth, Ishtar descends into *Aralu*, or Hades, demands entrance to 'the land whence there is no return' and after a series of adventurous experiences rescues from the world of the dead Tammuz, her only son, who was taken away before his time.

In Virgil's version, the descent-myth of Orpheus depicts how, after the death of Eurydice, his beloved wife, Orpheus descended into Hades, moved Pluto and Persephone to pity with the sweet notes of his lyre, and sought and received their permission to bring back Eurydice to the land of the living but 'on one condition—that Orpheus should precede her and not look back till they arrived on earth.' But, alas, 'just before reaching the final limit, his love overcame him. He looked round and lost her for ever' (Virgil, *Georg.* iv).<sup>1</sup>

In India we have similar accounts in the mythical restoration of life to Satyavan through Savitri's intercession with Yama, the Lord of Death, and to Lakhindar as a result of the loving venture of Behula. The *Nāchketas Upakhyān* of the Kathopanishad is also a case in point.

(iv) *Myths about legendary heroes' avoidance of death* : In Indian tradition, Yudhishtira, the eldest among the Pandava princes, is supposed to have ascended to heaven in his material body, and heroes like Vibhishana and Ashwatthama are considered to be immortal, still existing somewhere in their earthly bodies.

(v) *Assumption and ascension* :<sup>2</sup> Instances are recorded of supposed bodily 'assumptions' into heaven—as in the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature of Judaism and Christianity—wherein this assumption is claimed to have been granted to some exceptional individuals like Abraham and Isaiah so that they might be informed of some spiritual truth. 'Assumptions' of this kind are temporary only and the vision ends, the person returns to earth.

But there are legends, too, representing heroes and saints being permanently transported to the world beyond the grave, without having to suffer the experience of death. In the Sumerian mythology, Ziusudra, the hero of the Deluge, and in Jewish literature, Enoch and Elijah stand out as having been granted this high privilege.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IV (Article Descent to Hades)

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Bernard, *Assumption and Ascension* in *Ibid*, Vol II, pp. 151-153.

There is a third group of legends claiming for their heroes an assumption after death, the forsaken body too being removed from earth and caught up to heaven. A classical example is the legend of Hercules. A Christian legend of the same kind is that of the 'Assumption of Mary', according to which first the soul, and then the body, of the Virgin were assumed to heaven.

Be that as it may, these legendary accounts, although springing from the subconscious need of the race to combat the stark proposition of the inevitability of death, have remained as myths and myths alone. For, they cannot and do not carry any conviction or solace in the moments of actual personal crisis in the life of the individual. The sting of Death which lies in 'the sense of being devoured, broken up, destroyed or forced away' is too real and painfully sharp to be abrogated or even mitigated by the implied assurance of these mythical sagas.

Then arises for man the metaphysical inquiry, also his spiritual urge to effectuate an intrinsic escape from the hold of suffering and the poignant sense of death.

*(To be continued)*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

## PHYSICS OF THE FOURTH DIMENSION

A point is the cross-section of a line , a line is an infinite number of points.

A line is the cross-section of a plane ; a plane is an infinite number of lines.

A plane is the cross-section of a body ; a body is an infinite number of planes.

A body is the cross-section of a subtle body ; a subtle body is an infinite number of bodies.

The movement of a point, leaving the trace of a line, creates the first dimension by extension, resulting in length.

The movement of a line, leaving the trace of a plane, creates the second dimension by widening, resulting in breadth.

The movement of a plane, leaving the trace of a body, creates the third dimension by heightening, resulting in height.

The movement of a body, leaving the trace of a subtle body, creates the fourth dimension by expansion, resulting in growth.

All one-dimensional objects are part of a two-dimensional object.

All two-dimensional objects are part of a three-dimensional object.

All three-dimensional objects are part of a four-dimensional object.

Plane-beings, having the form of shadows, experience space-beings, having the form of solids, as space-beings experience subtle beings.

Unable to perceive the inside of a two-dimensional object plane-beings perceive everything as one-dimensional, that is, as lines.

Unable to perceive the inside of a three-dimensional object, space-beings perceive everything as two-dimensional, that is, as planes.

Able to perceive the inside of a two-dimensional object, space-beings perceive plane-beings as they are.

Able to perceive the inside of a three-dimensional object, subtle beings perceive space-beings as they are.

The capacities of a space-being in the world of plane-beings is as miraculous as the capacities of a subtle being in the world of space-beings.

It can manifest and withdraw freely from their world simply by moving on to a higher or lower level than that of their plane.

It can change its form in an apparently infinite number of ways, manifesting different cross-sections of its body on their plane.

It can multiply itself by manifesting cross-sections of several limbs at one time.

The fourth dimension is the result of a movement of a body of which every part moves from the centre of the body along its radii.

This movement is called expansion.

The subtle body, being a body in the fourth dimension, therefore is determined by a specific degree of expansion or growth in addition to its length, the breadth and height. It is limited on one side by a state of the maximal contraction possible to it, on the other by that of the maximal expansion.

All cross-sections of a subtle body, appearing as solids in space, are characterised by a specific state of expansion.

In the fourth dimension the state of expansion of this cross-section decreases towards one direction and increases towards another.

Thus the three-dimensional cross-section of a subtle body may be of any shape or size, the subtle body itself will always have a form the circumference of which increases in one direction and decreases in another.

In originating, every subtle body starts from a state of absolute contraction, that is, from the zero-point of expansion. This is the state of absolute potency in the subtle body from which it originates

In the state of absolute contraction the speed of vibration of its constituting force is infinite.

Following the tendency of every force contracted it expands and in doing so the speed of the vibrations at the centre becomes less and less until it reaches a point where the centre becomes perceptible in space, either as gas, fluid or solid.

Therefore the three-dimensional cross-section of a subtle body is always at its centre. With the vibrations at the centre getting less and less the body starts disintegrating. When the vibrations finally cease the body has vanished from three-dimensional space and the subtle body has given up its individuality. It has spent itself in radiating its energy.

In the process of expansion each part of the subtle body becomes the centre of a new subtle body, which, finding the possibilities for expanding, again grows.

The vibrations leaving the radiating mother-body still are moving at very high speed.

The greater the distance from the centre becomes, the lower becomes the speed until they again become perceptible in space.

This process continues making a sharp separation between one subtle body and another impossible; while radiation still goes forth from the mother-body the new centres still belonging to it start emanating their vibrations which in turn become the centres of new growth.

There is not one common centre to all subtle bodies. Each one of them is the centre of the whole manifestation.

We can conceive of the World as originating from a point of supreme contrac-

tion, the focal-point of an involving transcendent Concentration manifesting the possibilities of infinity in the Infinitesimal of the Unconscious. Out of this grow by a progressive process of gradual expansion the infinite possibilities contained in this primordial state of creation. This growth is termed Evolution.

In the course of Evolution each of the infinite possibilities contained in the Infinitesimal becomes a centre of expansion and again the centre of infinite possibilities which it inherits and out of which it realises those that are realisable under the conditions provided by the present state of Evolution. The realisation of these possibilities determines its form, a cross-section of which is represented in space.

As each possibility of the Infinite contains the Infinite as its possibility this expansion itself must be infinite. Thus there is no end to Evolution.

With the evolution of Evolution expansion itself expands and thus new possibilities of realisation become available.

The manifestation of each new evolutionary principle in matter opens up new dimensions permitting the possibilities concealed in expanding matter which cannot manifest in the direction of the fourth dimension to outgrow it and to realise themselves in consequent dimensions.

In this way matter changes its law of expansion with each new principle manifesting in it and starts to follow the law of the new dimension opened up to it by the new principle.

The fourth dimension therefore is the last dimension of matter in itself, of material matter. It is not the last dimension possible to matter.

The last dimension is opened up with the descent of the supramental principle into matter.

In this dimension it becomes possible for matter to realise its highest possibilities : that is, the last possibilities contained in the original state of absolute contraction in the Infinitesimal of the Unconscious.

This centre of universal radiation and manifestation will thus have been exhausted. It will have lost its power to radiate and will have ceased to exist.

The infinite possibilities contained in the Infinitesimal will be manifested in the Infinite from where, by a process of transcendent Concentration, they originated.

JOBST MUHLING



## THE MYSTERY SWEET...

ALL "pranams" swept the path to His Abode  
And kisses trembled on the portal's floor.  
"Let in, O Thou ! Let in, Thou Lord and God !" —  
So knocked my humble heart-throbs at the royal door.

But answered only a delightful stir  
As if two laughters hid in one bush of fun  
Or an enamoured whisper danced with her  
Who of all happiest murmurs was the golden one,

As if not leaves but smiles from that Tree of Light  
Were shed to touch the Earth in time of Fall,  
Pursuit by Love until in joyous flight  
All turned to chase and catch the sunny call.

And while I look to God's high door of fate  
My heart-throbs lured by that mystery sweet  
Break instead my own heart's secret garden-gate  
To clasp in my heart His close child-beat.

JANINA

## ON THE TRAIN TO PONDICHERRY

THERE looms the Face—  
A perpetual silent call  
Transfigured in the bliss-radiance of Thy smile  
Which thrills mile after exulting wheeling mile  
On my journey to the All  
In time and space,  
O Love !

Drunk with the wine  
Of speed, revels of noise,  
Giant clangorous cadences now thrill the soul—  
The cosmic sounds delirious swirl and roll,  
Lifting my all to a poise  
That's nearer thine,  
O Love !

NARESH BAHADUR

## OF LONGING AND EARTH

### I.

THE check-ways are mindful of music—  
The cross-ways are golden  
And the road on the left is aflame.  
Yet the tree with the fruit, the white round fruit,  
Stands apart with its arms to the sky—  
Looking and yearning,  
Aching for soil in the rain.

### II.

Ignore the brushwood in the sand moving  
Through the metal corridors—but look,  
The ceilings are blue, unbroken, unsmashed—  
Blue but not light,  
Never light, not shining and white...

### III.

Why are there wings on the egg of that owl—  
Where can it fly—  
Not to the moon,  
Or the warmth of dark earth,  
It can only wait—and break.

ANURAKTA  
(TONY SCOTT)

## ESSAYS ON SAVITRI AND PARADISE LOST

### INTRODUCTION

I DO not propose to make a comparative study, in the strict sense of the word, of these two great epics. But rather by contrast I want to show their place and value, their beauty and purpose, their truth and significance. Truly speaking, no proper comparative study is possible. For, the two belong to different spheres of consciousness, viewpoint, standard and aim. But these differences in themselves form interesting points of study. Lastly, we must not forget the formative geniuses behind. Both were masters in their own domains; supreme in their own types of art; unchallenged in their own peculiar genres of poetry. One is *par excellence* a Yogi who has put in the medium of winged and felicitous verse the rich panorama of his world-experience and God-realisation. The other comes as a master-craftsman of language, a great force of utterance that can turn the fabric of religious belief and intellectual dogma into a living cosmic drama.

Greatness has had many standards. It is not possible to define greatness in a loose or popular way. In this particular instance greatness is perfection, the expert execution, the faultless technique, the impeccable style, the height of vision, the depth of feeling, the wideness of approach. We may also include richness of language and expression, a constant undiminished pitch of inspiration. It is under these heads that we shall examine these epics to determine their greatness.

Then comes the question of value. This in itself is a vast and controversial field. Time has played an important role in forming standards of value. Our mentality and intellectual growth, our prejudices, inclinations, natural sympathies go to build a gauge. And, with this shifting and unsure background, we can never arrive at any permanent and unchanging standard—because value changes with height and evolution of consciousness and our inner development. This is another side we shall try to consider.

These essays do not bear a large number of footnotes, or borrowed comments from other writers of eminence. I have a great respect for the colossal work done over Milton or his work; yet I have not gone to them to build my own judgment. I am neither a Miltonolater nor a Miltonoclast. If I have a gauge, it is the Aurobindonian way of looking at things. Neither is this a thesis put up for approval of pedagogic dignitaries. I do not believe that borrowed comments can enrich an essay. It may only show the author's vast reading, but certainly does not make his opus intrinsically better—unless it happens to be a historical treatise or critical essay needing a number of facts to show the validity of the viewpoint adopted. I have no facts

to disprove and no point of view which I offer for acceptance by the sheer weight of other writers' corroborating statement.

It may appear that I am opposing Christianity—both in the aspect of theology and in philosophical doctrines. But I take this opportunity to examine these issues that occur in Milton in particular and Christianity in general. Seeing from the Aurobindonian standpoint, we would get a proper perspective and be able to estimate the proper place and value. But let it be clear that it does not affect the poetical quality of *Paradise Lost*. What I am trying to evaluate is its underlying philosophy and dogma, its ontological and cosmological theories. I have also attempted to evaluate the personality of Milton, his convictions, faith, ego, which help to form the epic. I have examined Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and work in outline in contrast. The topics nevertheless are not exhaustive.

## I. THE TWO AIMS

### (a) *Paradise Lost*

This is the most controversial point in our scheme. If we agree that *Paradise Lost* was written with a purpose, we have to look beyond the mere art-aspect of poetical creation. If it has no purpose we would not find prominently in it Milton's ideas of God, Right and Ethics, and Duty. Also we must look into his character, which was deeply puritanical and devoutly religious, ethical with a deep sense of following a cause, a definite aim in life. He was by nature a fighter, a rebel on one hand and a man of principles on the other. All these aspects are clearly reflected in his work. This complicates the issues; but we cannot overlook the presence of an aim.

In a Keats or a Coleridge such an aim might be absent, except that the creation would be something beautiful and noble. But Milton came when the Elizabethan renaissance, with all its heat of eager and sweeping creation, had passed. There was turmoil, the residue of an upsurge. There was a groping for the discovery of something new in all walks of life. In such an environment the Ideal and Utopia cannot live. Just skip two centuries; you will find the conditions changed. The political unrest has ceased, the industrial revolution shows its physical effects of prosperity and the minds of men are now calm and broad. It is now that the Romantic age can be born; an age of pure aesthetic creation can take place. Men need not have a purpose or a clear ethical aim to keep themselves afloat against the eddies of chaos that seem to wash away all apparent ground of well-being. It is true the Romantic Age has its ideal. But that ideal is not of a strenuous self-disciplinary groping or discovery : it is not an ethical aim and does not follow any given intellectual concept. Where as in Miltonic times we find men have just lost the wild creative surge. The stigmata of the middle ages yet lurk in the mind of men. The birth throes of individualism is vibrant in all as a result of the time-spirit.

Milton was an acute individualist. He felt the waves of individualism approach. He responded to them eagerly. He was eager to lead, to become the hero of the hour,

to deal a death blow to Catholicism and Royalty, which, according to him, kept England in bondage. But he was an idealist at heart. He had not the rough vitality of the soldier nor the subtle acumen of the political fighter. A poet, a thinker, a classical genius, he realised, when blindness finally compelled him to abandon all political activities, that poetry was his only peculiar line, the unique means to reveal his genius. We see, in his political tracts, the mastery of Latin and English prose and his still earlier odes and poems show us his rare poetical gift.

With all this as the background, we cannot expect him to lie indolently dallying with occasional amorous lyrics. His fighter-nature, his stout and vehement character would not allow him such a romantic pastime. Also, his political cause was lost. He was unhappy in his married life. So a few bitter poems would not enhance his position. His ego demanded attention, his life and creativity were not dead. So he revived, rather brought to a significant maturity, his earlier plan for an epic. He wanted a cosmic tale, a great universal folklore to embody his passionate ideas. Thus the nucleus of *Paradise Lost* was conceived in his search for the expression of something divine which nevertheless had a close link with England's crisis in general and with human conditions in particular. Had he chosen a myth or a story denouncing the existent conditions, he could have been easily censored as a rebel or stamped as a traitor to the commonwealth. Going to the Bible immediately saved him from all such charges and at the same time he could express his feelings, sentiments, his approbations or refusals behind the cloak of a religious tale. Further, with religious sentiment yet having an undiminished following, he was sure to be heard if he could do his job well.

Another fact of importance. Milton was conscious of his genius and his greatness : he was keenly aware of his intrinsic power; otherwise he could not have dreamt of bequeathing something of value to the world. This sensing of his own greatness was mixed with his egocentricity and gave him the rare satisfaction of seeing that his voice was heard, and his eminent presence felt among the teeming insignificant populace.

But after all what could be his message ? A message of a mere religio-ethical nature written in flat prose was likely not to be heard except by a few erudite high-brows. But poetry had wings; and it had the magic of making a drab physical fact wear a celestial robe. He had been a pamphleteer in the past. This certainly did give him some kind of eminence. But a poet of distinction had a greater claim to fame. He therefore must give his message in poetry.

Yet a message is a sermon at its best. No high poetry can stand the strain of sermonising. It must be subtle and elevated. It must not be too abstract or dry.

Milton looked back; there was only one thing that was of value. That was in the Biblical myth of creation and the fall of man. It appealed to him. It suited his temperament and the deep distress into which he had fallen. But the poems that he had read, both of English and continental authors, on the tale of *Genesis* were flat or did not possess the needed substance of greatness. He thought that here was a perennial

source, and the message of *Genesis* could become his message to the world. What was underlying and unmanifest in the Biblical legend could become a patent and potent drama having not only a message but also a warning to wayward humanity.

Now next we may put that most obvious query : What type of message does Milton want us to listen to? Is it purely social or is its bearing theological? Has it any philosophical value or ethical import ? Has it any link with politics, or does it step beyond all these into some ideal realm of beauty or truth ?

It would be difficult to answer these manifold questions definitely and categorically. For, Milton himself is a complex personality; he has his heights and his depths; his humanity and his ethical summits. His life-parts are at war with his mind's rational outlook. His ambitions clash with his poetical afflatus. He has his classical background, his puritanical environment and his purely creative inspiration that comes down on him with a sublime, sonorous cadence which we hear like a majestic wave throughout his verse. All these go to weave the complicated texture of his poetry. It is quite possible to find one trend or side of his personality and show it to be the sole one. This has given rise to the hectic quarrel between the two camps of Miltonolaters and Miltonoclasts.

Milton is not obviously a philosopher, but he has propounded a philosophical doctrine based on Christian theology. He has the depth of a thinker and the flight of a poet, which make his doctrine appear convincing. He believes the world to be made out of spirit and matter. And both are real and true. Further, he holds there is a fixed hierarchy in the world. If this is broken the harmony is uprooted. This is his philosophical message.

But closely linked with his philosophical message is the moral aim. In fact Milton never rises beyond ethics and his rational Good and Virtue. His God is a moral godhead. All those who break a fixed moral law and disobey a paramount moral authority must be outcasts. Adam before his fall was a moral person. The fall lowers his status and degrades his ethical nature. Milton's sin means moral poverty. His angels are personifications of moral truths. In one word, he has placed Reason on the highest seat and it has become a God, a light, the sole guiding principle.

His theology is not so pure. He has his heterodoxical element that admits other non-Christian principles. A purely Christian theology would have rejected the Hellenic influence, the mediaeval lore; he admitted all ideas freely into his similes and metaphors. Christ's war-like attitude when he overcame Satan is not a purely Christian concept. It is akin to that of the Jehovah of the Jews. Further, Christianity shows Satan to be an egoist and a scheming creature, whereas Satan in Milton is almost human in his despair, fall, flattery and lust. Thus we see that Milton's theological message is the message of the fall of man and his redemption by Christ. This is the greatest message he would want us to hear. But linked with this are other factors as well. Here is Hebraic sternness on one side and the true Christian piety on the other.

What social message does he have ? This is more implied than obvious. Society,

as it actually existed, was a semi-disorder standing upon the unsure grounds of sin, impiety and injustice. Like the celestial hierarchy of God, society has ideally a fixed hierarchy with a leader at the top and tiers of people below. This social structure is immutable. That is why Milton stood for the commonwealth regime. And that is why he started a poem that had the appearance of a religious tale but which, nevertheless, had the motive of making clear the concept of a fixed hierarchy of things be it in heaven or on earth. Earth was not banished from heaven and was in fact a replica of Elysium.

Last in our category we come to the aim of the poet, the motive of the vehement egocentric thinker and the message of a man whose works would lay an indelible stamp on the mind and literature of England. Here the aim and message is creation—creation of a new and ideal world where, in spite of the tremendous result of Satan's scheming, the truth prevails; the Divine compassion wins in the face of opposition by God himself. Here is a world of vitality, power, and a great Homeric splendour; here is also recreated for us the worlds of stark and naked night, and that of Satan and his Pandemonium with colour and fury, wrath and crafty intelligence. Vivid too is the picture of Eden and of innocent voluptuousness reminding one of the Hellenic cult of beauty. There is grandeur everywhere, an ardent passion lights up the whole creation of Milton.

*(To be continued)*

ROMEN

## BEAUTY-DESCRIPTION IN KALIDASA, SHANKARACHARYA AND SRI AUROBINDO

### II

ARRIVING at the summit of the description of human beauty, aesthetic literature takes a new turn and makes use of its capacities to depict the celestial aspect of beauty.

Shankaracharya can be considered as the pioneer and one of the supreme artists of this description. It is a pity that little attention has been given to his poetic talent. His poetry has not found its rightful place in the field of literature. The verve, sweetness and gracefulness of Shankara's poetry create, as its stable character, a *śānta-rasa* of living delight and not of Vairagya (renunciation). His poetic creation combines the delight of the erotic mood and the purity of *śānta-rasa* and creates a new movement of aesthesis.

Shankara had the vision to penetrate the deepest secrets of beauty. Whereas we see in Kalidasa's descriptions of beauty the pleasure-play of man's unreined passions, Shankara gathers the various facets of human beauty and recreates them in a divine image. Shankara describes beauty, form, charm, etc., all according to the traditional scriptures of aesthesis, but not as subtly as Kalidasa does. Yet has he been able to keep himself clear of the vitalistic bewitching fascination of form, such as Kalidasa undergoes in his *Kumārasambhava*. How sublimely effective is Shankara's description of eyes in comparison to that of Kalidasa :

*Śve śṛṅgārārdrā taditarajane kutsanaparā  
Saroṣā gaṅgāyaṁ giriśacarite vismayavatī  
Harāhibhyo bhītā sarasiruha-saubhāgya-jayinī  
Sakhīṣu smerā te mayi jayati dṛṣṭiḥ sakaruṇā.*

“(Calm) Mother ! Thy look yearns with love towards Shiva, contemptuous of others, full of anger against Ganga, astonished and quietened by Shiva's deportment, frightened on seeing the snake of Hara, triumphant over the beauty of the lotus and smiling at her comrades, towards me it is full of grace.”

Thus does Shankaracharya describe the ten moods of eyes. Later, having sung of the face, voice, cheek-marks, chin and neck-lines, in his top-to-toe description of the body of the Deity, he speaks of the more lust-provoking parts like the breasts, but his description is full of the atmosphere of motherliness, singular in its purity:



*Tava stanayam manye tuhinagirikanye hṛdayataḥ  
 Payaḥ-pārāvāraḥ parivahati sārasvatamiva  
 Dayāvatyā dattaṁ draviḍa-śiśurāsvādya tava yat  
 Kavīnām prauḍhānāmajani kamanīyaḥ kavayitā.*

“Oh Daughter of the Mountain! I believe that the milk of thy breast streams out from thy heart as it were the ocean of milk in the form of Saraswati (the milk of poesy), on drinking which, offered by thee out of grace, the *Draviḍa* child became the most renowned amongst the greatest poets.”

From Kalidasa's physical and purely form-conscious and Shankara's motherhood-dominated description of body, one can feel that the latter is more compact in emotion and more subtle. Of the smile, Shankara sings beautifully:

*Smita-jyotsnājālaṁ tava vadanacandrasya pibatā  
 Cakorāṇāmāsīdatirasatayā cañcu-jadimā  
 Ataste śītāmśoramṛta-laharīmāmlarucayaḥ  
 Pibanti swacchandaṁ niśi nśi bhṛśaṁ kāñjikadhīyā.*

“The chakora birds, drinking in the white ray of the smile of thy moon-face, are cheated by the too delicious sweetness of it; hence, eager to taste something sour (for a cure), they freely drink in excess, every night, the nectar flowing from the moon believing it to be gruel.”

Here we see that only in one stanza there are three figures of speech: exaggeration (according to the Lakshmidhara commentary) and hypothesis and delusion (according to the Arunamodini commentary). Shankara's spiritual imagination has found hymnal voice in the description of other deities, rivers and places of pilgrimage. These hymns sprang from the source of devotion rather than were composed for a literary purpose or for mental enjoyment. Although we do not find much variety in him, yet there is no dearth of word-beauty and natural form-revelation.

See how he describes the meditative mood of Sri Krishna:

*Hṛdambhoje kṛṣṇaḥ sajalajaladaśyāmalatanuḥ  
 Sarojākṣaḥ sragvī mukutakatakādyābharanavān  
 Śaradrākānātha-pratimavadanaḥ śrīmuralhkāṁ  
 Vahan dhyeyo gopīgaṇa parivṛtaḥ kuṅkumacitaḥ.*

Krishna whose body is violet-blue  
 Like the rainwater-loaded cloud,  
 Whose eyes are lotus-like, and who  
 With a garland of wild flowers is proud;

With crown on head and rings in ears,  
 And other ornaments; clear-bright  
 Like full moon of the winter's night,  
 He of the splendoured face, who bears  
 His famous flute in luring hands,  
 In the midst of cowherd maiden-bands,  
 That saffron-scented Krishna—keep  
 In Thy heart of meditations deep.

The literary depth of the peaceful imagination of this stanza is hard to comprehend. The same splendour and beauty of description can be found in Shankara's other compositions such as *ġagannath Vandana*, *Haragauriashtaka* and *Umamaheshwar stotras*. The composition of *Ardhanaristotra* is indeed pleasing :

*ġhaṇat-kvaṇat-kaṅkaṇanūpurāya padābja-rājan-maṇinūpurāya*  
*Hemāṅgadāyai bhujagāṅgadāya namaḥ śivāyai ca namaḥ śivāya.*

“Salutations to Parvati and salutations to Shiva, to that One on whose one lotus-foot rings the anklet and on the other is coiled the cobra, and in his one hand glitters the golden bangle and in the other the hooded serpent.”

Apart from this, wherever Shankaracharya has given the top-to-toe description of Parvati, he sings of Lalita, Minakshi and Tripura Sundari in language measured and excellent. After having described the splendid face of Lalita, he says :

*Prātarbhajāmi laṭṭā-bhujakalpavallīm*  
*Raktāṅguliya-lasadaṅguli-pallavādhyām*  
*Maṇṭikya-hema-valayāṅgada-śobhamānām*  
*Puṇdreṣu-cāpa-kusumeṣu-sṛtīrdadhānām.*

“Salutations to the slender arms of Lalita, whose ring-finger is red with ruby, whose wrists are splendid with bangles of gold and gems, whose hands carry the lotus, the bow, the flower, the arrows and the goad.”

Beautifully indeed does Shankara hymn the personifications of the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Narmada and other sacred rivers. He sings of the Yamuna in these musical rhythms :

*Sunanda-nandanāṅga-saṅga-rāga-ranjitā hitā*  
*Dhūnotu me manomalaṁ kalindanandiniṁ sadā.*

“Let ever that daughter of Kalinda, who is full of passion and surge and ever aspiring for the sublime touch of the divine son of Nanda, Sri Krishna, cleanse our

mind of its impurities.”

Here, besides the flow of rhythm, Shankaracharya is matchless in bringing out the concreteness of his image: that is enough to establish him as a great artist of poetry. His verse is more turned than Kalidasa's towards the higher light. Such evolution in Shankara brings a divine touch and a loftier clothing to beauty than Kalidasa's description which is more of an outer and physical character. This development symbolises the evolution of aesthetics which, according to Sri Aurobindo, is gradually opening itself towards higher and higher aims.

*(To be concluded)*

DEVADUTT

*(Translated by Har Krishan Singh from the Hindi)*

## THE TRUE TRAVELLER

MOST people today live under the spell of travelling. They are swept into its atmosphere right from their early childhood and seldom emerge out of it until late in their lives. Modern education, particularly social and cultural education, demands travelling as a prerequisite for graduation into full manhood. Growth of the adventurous spirit, first-hand knowledge, direct experience gathering into its grasp all the mysteries of the world are among the many blessings it is supposed to bestow upon man and yet we know that many a man has foundered in its trail. What is the cause of this ? The root of the trouble is not far to seek. It lies right across the surface of modern culture like an inflated vein—SUPERFICIALITY. Whatever the pristine aim of travelling might have been it has now dwindled into a mere fashion. It has become fashionable to wander from place to place, to squander wealth, to gaze blankly into things. When travelling, people carry their “giants” with them. Their likes and dislikes, their moods and temperaments travel with them and “make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.” To them all places are faithful projections of the chaos within so much so that they could join Satan and say, “Wherever I go is hell, in me is hell, I myself am hell.”

But if we push this cynicism too far we shall be taking rank with Diogenes. Just as there are good men which his lamp failed to discover there are also doubtless true travellers. Carlyle has said : “The eye sees what it brings means of seeing ; to Newton and to Newton’s dog Diamond what a different pair of universes !” Though surrounded by truth and good and beauty the ordinary man is unaware of them. Seeing he sees not, hearing hears not. Like a silly fish in quest of the ocean he looks in vain for light. He struggles with maddening zeal to find a sage when his own friend and neighbour stands with pity knocking at his door. Antiquated foreign culture comes more home to him than that in which he lives and grows and has his being.

The true traveller is one who has an open mind, a large heart and a keen observation. He travels not for his good alone but for the benefit of the whole human race. He has deep insight and sympathy and performs his mission as ordained by God. His work is holy. The invalids find in him their limbs, the blind their eyes, the dull their sensibility and the mere bodies a heart, a mind and a soul. His aim is to peer into the secrecies of variegated humanity, to correlate them and to put before his fellow-men a harmonious intelligent whole. He creates anew the life of the world and in doing so turns out an artist. For in order to fulfil his mission he must recreate for us his exact experience. He must reveal to us the soul of his travels. He must get to the very spirit of things and with godlike understanding and

sympathy prove to men of different climes and nations that all life is in reality but one continuous song, that

These million discords dot the harmonious theme  
Of the evolution's huge orchestral dance.

If he fails to do this the world will remain for ever a labyrinth, an intricacy of blind-alleys, and life just a meaningless tale. Of course, we cannot deny that science has taken giant steps towards simplification. The world is no longer as big as it was during the time of Magellan. It cost his men a thousand and ninety-five days' strenuous labour to go round the world whilst today any pilot can do it within a week. And science is endeavouring to squeeze even these few days and will continue to do so until our metallic wings will race neck to neck with that as-yet-invincible runner, light. But will the realisation of such wonders bring us any nearer the solution of the problem of existence? Science may perform miracles, man may amass encyclopaedic knowledge from his travels in time but he will never discover the key to the paradox of life until he becomes also "a voyager upon eternity's seas". Sri Aurobindo says :

To seize the absolute in shapes that pass,  
To feel the eternal's touch in time-made things,  
This is the law of all perfection here.

It is not enough that a man skim the surfaces of things with his physical eyes ; he must get through the appearances to the heart of the mystery. He must see in life a continuity, a singleness of goal, a wide divergence thinning to a point. He must realise that life past or present is everywhere and always the same, that all human aspirations have sprung from the same source, have run through parallel channels and are flowing into a common sea, he must realise that an Egypt, an India and a Greece are but three lines of existence running alongside from the original source of bliss to a divine consummation. This realisation is possible only if he becomes a two-way traveller, a traveller in time and in eternity, he must at once walk through the macrocosm and plunge into the microcosm. He must tread upon the roads of life in the light of the torch he has found within ; then and only then will travelling become a real educator and aid him towards his perfect manhood.

PARU PATIL

# *Students' Section*

## **"MAL DE MÈRE"**

(d'une mère anglaise)

Chère Mlle. Lauzanne, je veux  
Savoir, s'il vous plaît,  
Si chaque jour ma Veronica peut  
Boire quelque tumblers de lait ?

Je sais qu'à Paris en Septembre  
On est apt d'attraper un chill;  
So voulez-vous please remembre  
De la donner chaque semaine un pill ?

C'est une delicate child, je l'avoue,  
Et il faut qu'elle s'habille dans un vest  
Et si il y a une signe of a toux  
Put Thermogène vite sur son chest.

Now, Veronica's juste comme son père,  
Elle est remplie d'English reserve,  
Mais sous son expressionless air  
Elle est pleine de bonne humeur et verve.

Elle est vraiment artistique, je crois,  
Aimant peinture, et chantant, et danse;  
Et, même si je dis so, comme moi  
Elle a beaucoup de commun sense.

Mademoiselle, je vous donne  
La favourite fille de sa mère,  
Et vous serez excessivement bonne  
De la rendre votre spéciale care.

*(With acknowledgments to "Punch")*

# BATTLE FOR LIGHT

## A PLAY

### ACT I

#### SCENE II

##### *Maya's Court*

*A cabal of Light-haters around their Prime Minister Ahankar.*

**AHANKAR** (*Ego*)—*a hefty youth of demomac men, his face a play of formidable smles, his eyes rolling in arrogance that "sees a part and misses the whole", his voice bespeaking mystery, majesty and authority.*

**KAMA** (*God of love*)—*beautiful in appearance, emitting a sweet perfume, attractively dressed, looks and smles adding to the charm of the face.*

**KRODH** (*Anger*)—*blood-shot eyes, lips quivering, looks ferocious, moustache shaggy and bristling, voice thundering.*

**LOBH** (*Greed*)—*mouth open, eyes as if groping about for something, nostrils dilated, head downward and restless.*

**AHANKAR** : The vanity of Jnana (Knowledge) must be crushed. (*Turning to Kama*) Are you equal to the job ?

**KAMA** : That is why Kama was born.

**AHANKAR** (*delighted*) : I give you the supreme command of the army. (*To Lobh*) What's to be your part ?

**LOBH** : To make blind.

**AHANKAR** : Whom ?

**LOBH** : The people.

**AHANKAR** : How ?

**LOBH** : By selfishness.

**AHANKAR** : Very good.

**LOBH** : If Trishna (Lust) is by my side I'll kindle such a fire in the human heart as no downpour can quench.

**AHANKAR** : Yes, she must join you. (*Addressing Krodh*) When Lobh starts a campaign of selfishness what will you do ?

**KRODH** (*pointing to himself*) : Me you ask ? Fire ! Fire and storm I'll raise (*with a gesture*) and thrust people into it.

AHANKAR : Do one thing more. Before raising the storm call Dwesh (Jealousy) and like gunpowder in a bomb hide him in the human heart. I miss Sansaya (Doubt).

*Enter Sansaya, blind in one eye.*

AHANKAR : So you are there ! I appoint you Chief of the Intelligence Branch. It is yours to keep watch over all and mark their movements. Mind that nobody flees our realm. Keep them swinging between yea and nay, doubting all the time.

SANSAYA : What about him whom I can't sway (*Nervously*) And if faith...

AHANKAR (*startled*) : Oh yes ! (*Nodding his head*) You're right; let me see. (*Waves him away*).

(*Musing*) How long can Sansaya stand before Faith ?

(*Hitting upon an idea*) That's it ! That's the only way out. Vasana (Desire) must join us. Then alone can I cast our net wide to catch all in one sweep. Who can then dare defy us !

*Asakti (Attachment) in her full-blown youth and colourful dress appears in a corner.*

AHANKAR (*absorbed in his own mood*) : O, how charming ! No, I shall love her, kiss her poisonous lips and grow immortal. (*His eyes falling on Asakti*) Oh, you're here ! Where's Vasana ?

ASAKTI (*with a mystified look*) : She's where you are.

*Enter Vasana (Desire), ever-youthful, brilliantly dressed. Her eyes a scene of storm, her lips a living flame.*

AHANKAR : Did you ever remember me ?

VASANA (*with a mischievous smile in her eyes*) : No.

AHANKAR : What a heartless reply ! A desert heart !

VASANA : Desert heart ? Say—heart of honey. Don't you see how people swarm round me like flies ?

AHANKAR : Ah ! Swarm like flies ! That's why I'm mad after you. Who's there who would'nt be lured by the laughter of your rosy desires and be tangled in its endless circles ?

(*Clasping Vasana's hand impulsively*) You are the axis on which turns the kingdom of our Queen Maya. Nothing will please her than to see people tied down to life.

VASANA : Do you feel happy with me ?

AHANKAR : Ah, to be with you is to be in Paradise.

VASANA (*jocularly*) : Let me be off. You would fool me with your lavish praise.

AHANKAR : Fool you ? You who fool all the world ! Let us join our powers and make the world a playfield of our wills.

VASANA : Fine ! Fine idea. You'll find me ready at call.

(*Exit.*)

(*Enter Maya, Kama, Krodh, and others follow.*)



MAYA : Is everything O.K. ?

AHANKAR : Yes, Your Majesty.

MAYA : Have they sworn allegiance to our cause ?

AHANKAR : Just awaiting your presence.

MAYA : All right. Let them, one by one.

*Each repeats the following oath before Maya.*

"I do solemnly swear allegiance to the cause of our beloved Queen Maya—the annihilation of the forces of Sattwa and the establishment of an absolute sovereignty over the world of Maya."

AHANKAR (*at the end of the oath-taking ceremony*) : Now one most important principle to be strictly observed by all. If you see anybody doing sadhana in order to upset our sovereignty, mark him out for your target of attack in the name of Queen Maya.

ALL (*in one voice*) : Mighty we're by her might !

MAYA (*feeling relieved*) : Glad of your loyalty. (*Looks at them and adds*) Make falsehood the law of their being, "turn into defeats the victories of Truth" and see that Darkness rules over Light, Ignorance over Knowledge as Death roars over Life. (*Defiantly*) Sattwa, now we'll see how the shield of your Mother's Protection stands our might !

*Enter a troop of able-bodied dancers shouting "Victory to our Queen Maya," looking terrible in their masks, dressed in red-black, flame-coloured, flame-shaped costumes suggestive of rage and fury, war and destruction. They dance a devil dance encircling Maya, creating the sensation of an earthquake accompanied by a violent eruption, the atmosphere surcharged with smoke and dust and thunderstorm.*

MAYA (*firmly*) : I shall see now who does not submit to my rule ! Come on, my heroes !

*(To be continued)*

NARAYANPRASAD

# THE POETRY OF T. S. ELIOT

## THE FOUR QUARTETS

*(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1963)*

### II

EAST COKER

### I

THE second of "The Four Quartets" should not be considered as a separate poem but rather the continuation of the first in another direction—the second side to a square. Or to employ another analogy: all the 'Four' are like the musical movements of a sonata and should therefore be judged as a single work rather than four separate poems.

As "Burnt Norton" is a meditation on 'Time', "East Coker" is continuing the sonata with a meditation on the 'Self'—the philosophy of the movement is firmly stated in the opening line :

"In my beginning is my end...."

We have our end in the seed of our primitive beginnings. We have found in our meditation on 'Time' that only by getting out of time can we hope to approach the reality of the true 'Self' or the true purpose of our *becoming*. Only if we stand back as a witness to the play of Forces and the Time-Circumstances of the world can we see the true purpose of our being : detached from the play of the dualities and the insistence of Cause and Effect, the consciousness widens into the larger view and we enter into the Knowledge of a Higher Law that has created this Play of the worlds and we see that man's path is fashioned by That and not by the world.

The lines continue with :

    "...In succession  
Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,  
Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place  
Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.  
Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,  
.....  
Houses live and die : ....."

The circumstantial history of man, his material buildings, come and pass away, but man's destiny is determined by a Higher Law than the ephemeral circumstances of the world.

"Houses live and die : . . ." The houses that house the Self live and die—*Houses* is used as an allegory to symbolize the great movement of 'change' in the world which on a higher level of consciousness is recognised as the constant symbol of the instability of the outer world impinging itself drop by drop upon man's consciousness as life-experience until such time as he becomes aware of a greater Law than his own.

Time also is part of the illusion, for Time, like "the deep lane", is the man-made direction—to the village (or to wherever one thinks one is going).

"And the deep lane insists on the direction  
Into the village, . . .

. . . .

If you do not come too close, . . .  
On a summer midnight, you can hear the music  
Of the weak pipe and the little drum  
And see them dancing around the bonfire

. . . .

In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie . . ."

And Time means remembering that for centuries man seems to have done the same things over and over again. From the Romantic Movement of Chaucer to the present day—dancing or daunsinge has symbolized the fertility cult of man and nature in its seemingly endless cycle of the seasons, the cycle of birth, creative energy and death. And from such a meditation the thought is born : *It matters very little what one does or where unless one is conscious of the purpose of the doing.* But is it all pre-ordained ? Is life conditioned by the winds of Fate ?

"Dawn points, and another day  
Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind  
Wrinkles and slides. I am here  
Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning."

## II

"What is the late November doing  
With the disturbance of the spring . . . ?

Can 'Nature' in winter be disturbed by one lone summer day ? Are we conditioned by climatic changes or influenced by our superstition of the stars ?

"Comets weep and Leonids<sup>1</sup> fly  
 Hunt the heavens and the plains  
 Whirled in a vortex that shall bring  
 The world to that destructive fire  
 Which burns before the ice-cap reigns."

But all that is a part of ignorance, fear and superstition, it is not of the knowledge of the true Self—as the poet now says :

"That was a way of putting it— . . .  
 A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion,  
 Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle  
 With words and meaning. . . ."

That was a roundabout way of speaking caught up in the intolerable wrestle with words. Compare a similar expression in "Burnt Norton" :

"... Words strain,  
 Crack and sometimes break, under the burden. . ."

It is the cry of every poet who has felt the higher experience of Reality—words are inadequate to express the experience, it is beyond language and yet he must continue to try—to make the effort is always a step forward. But to those who preach and easily tell of the calm serenity of experience, is

"The serenity only a deliberate hebetude"?  
 . . . .  
 "The knowledge imposes a pattern and falsifies,  
 . . . .  
 Do not let me hear  
 Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,  
 Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,  
 Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God."

All sects, all religions, all professed obedience to a deity, to a guru or to God as a true way of life has little value if it is built on fear, or superstition, which is the hand-maiden of fear.

"The only wisdom we can hope to acquire  
 Is the wisdom of humility : humility is endless."

<sup>1</sup> Meteors from Leo.

In humility we enter into the seed of our becoming—into the original core of our true Self.

“The houses are all gone under the sea.  
The dancers are all gone under the hill.”

All suffers a sea change, all dies and is buried under the ground, but the wisdom of humility endures for it is the Self recognizing its place in the universal scheme of things, it is That which lives when all else passes away.

### III

“...O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,  
The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,  
The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,  
Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,  
Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,  
And dark the Sun and Moon, and the Almanach de Gotha....<sup>1</sup>”

To know all the detailed and specialized allusions and allegories that run throughout Eliot's work is not necessary in order to allow the poetry to flood into and over the mind so that the intuitive faculty may have the chance to rise to the understanding which these lines invoke. One reads great poetry, not once but often and on many occasions, taking it up again and again as one grows oneself in intelligence and conscious awareness. If there is an end to our interest in and love of poetry—true poetry—then that is a sure sign that we have come to an end in our capacity to love and learn new things, new concepts of beauty, new ideas, new ideals—we have begun to die.

It is at precisely such a state of consciousness that Eliot aims in the above lines. If the people we are wont to look up to and respect—the captains of industry, the statesmen and the rulers—count success in life in terms of their position or fame, affluence or power; or if we regard them as important because of these same attributes, then both they and we have missed the true purpose of life and the part to be played in life. For all goes into the dark (unknown)—the lord of industry as also the petty contractor.

There would be no meaning in life if that was the only view to take, but

“I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you  
Which shall be the darkness of God....”

<sup>1</sup> A genealogical and diplomatic and statistical annual, covering all the states and countries of the world. Published in French by Justine Perthes of Gotha 1763.

It is this capacity to be 'still' in the midst of movement, 'calm' in the midst of the storm, 'silent' in the midst of the shouting that is the great secret, especially of our generation, and the poet sees this intuitively as a truth. It is the same experience one can have with pain; if we do not resist the pain but relax instead and let it flood over us, it becomes more bearable; more than half our feeling of pain is caused by our instinctive resistance to it.

It is our fear of the (dark) unknown that makes it so difficult for us to enter the unknown experience which is an awareness of the Divine. Of course the 'dark' is not really dark, we call it dark because we are blinded by the brilliance of the Golden Presence and comfort our loss and incapacity by assuring ourselves that all was darkness where we ventured to tread. In that region, on those heights, *the dualities cease to exist* but for a long time the mind refuses and rejects this.

"With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on darkness,  
And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant panorama  
And the bold imposing façade are all being rolled away...."

We are so conditioned by our upbringing, our education and our culture that it is almost impossible to break through the 'carapace' of our ego mentality to a higher and wider state of consciousness to get behind the façade.

"I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing."

How can we arrive there? Eliot says:

"You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.  
In order to possess what you do not possess  
You must go by the way of dispossession.  
In order to arrive at what you are not  
You must go through the way in which you are not."

To arrive then, one must go by the way of surrender and non-attachment. This is the teaching of the Gita—this is the teaching of Sri Aurobindo.

#### IV

The fourth movement is similar in technique to the rhymed stanzas in "Burnt

Norton." There is now a lightness in the rhythm and a reiteration of the theme; a recalling of that which we are a part of and from which we are inspired to escape. The first line states the case of the average man's awareness anew:

"The wounded surgeon plies the steel."

We are in the hands of those who would administer to our ills and cure us of our sickness, but those same hands are themselves in need of curing. We are reminded of the words of Christ—

"Physician, heal thyself!"

Lines 162 to 166 in this fourth movement again restates the question of the dualities—and that we only learn by the awareness of opposites. The last stanza echoes the Christ symbol and our attitude (or non-attitude) to the Christian idea of Communion:

    ". . . we like to think  
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood—  
Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good."

## V

In the opening lines of the fifth movement the poet brings us back into focus with his own personal attitude towards the problem of 'knowing the Self'—

"Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt  
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure."

These lines 'counterpoint' in experience what was stated as the wisdom to be sought at the end of the second movement—the wisdom of humility. That wisdom which is so very rare in the adult because he is seldom ready to make a new start and much less ready to admit failure. But for the poet, every attempt is a wholly new start—

"Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate."

The true poet, like a little child, looks eagerly to the dawn of each new day as a promise of possibilities yet to come. He always aspires to the possibility that one day the inarticulate may be made articulate, the unmanifest made manifest, the impossible become possible. Then Eliot concludes this meditation on the Self with:

" . . . As we grow older

The world becomes stranger, the patterns more complicated  
Of dead and living. . . .

. . . .with no before and after,  
But a lifetime burning in every moment.”

Love is nearest true love when it demands no love in return, not even conditions.

“We must be still and still moving  
Into another intensity  
For a further union, a deeper communion.”

Do these lines not echo the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?  
Compare the Mother’s words:

“Work is the body’s best prayer.”

It is no longer enough to sit still and meditate on the glory of God—the old yogas are too one-sided and narrow in outlook for the flood of complexities pouring upon the modern world in a rapidly changing universe. A further union (yoga), a deeper communion (yoga)—an Integral Yoga—is needed if man is to come to know himself and the world in which he lives.

“ . . . In my end is my beginning.”

NORMAN, C. DOWSETT,



# YOGA AND LIFE

## II

### ONE-LEVELMENT OF YOGA AND LIFE

YOGA, it may be stated at once, is no partisan process; it is also not religion or religious practice. It is an ordered psychological process for spiritual development of the human individual towards self-perfection. An all-comprehensive Yoga is independent of any specialised practices, it is a free movement and an upward aspiration of the entire being for a higher and diviner life.

We would do well to discard the idea in the very beginning that Yoga has anything to do with escape from life. Taking to the life of a Sannyasi or a Sadhu depends on individual temporary necessity, inclination and choice, but it is not essential to Yoga, it is not its condition. Rejection of life does not necessarily lead to a union with the Divine. Nor should we mistake Yoga for *āsana* or *prāṇāyāma*, as is commonly implied or understood. These methods are used in certain systems of Yoga for exclusive purposes and exclusive results. They do not form the general or the central lines of the universal Yogic movement. The general and the central action in Yoga pertains to the movement and growth of consciousness towards higher and higher levels of spirituality, and all that tends to help this process is incidental or complementary.

Yoga, in its deeper, wider and more general sense, is more an attitude and an aspiration than a set process. It is an enlargement and an all-round growth of consciousness rather than an attempt to gain a conceived siddhi or to clutch at some occult realisation. Ours is a finite and circumscribed consciousness. By Yoga, we enlarge it by breaking and crossing the human limits, by developing new high and intuitive faculties that can establish our relationship with the universal and transcendental consciousness. This will entail in its wake a greater and more integral knowledge of life, afford us a fuller and richer participation in and enjoyment of this greater consciousness bringing an elevated reorientation in human action and the ways of the world.

At the start there might be felt an incompatibility between the ways of the world and the demands of Yoga; there might be felt a division and a gap between Yogic aspiration and the worldly exigencies and impositions of ordinary life. But this gap remains till a workable harmony between the two movements has not been set working in the individual and as long as a pliable parity between them has not been achieved. This harmony can only be achieved when we have taken up the movement of Yoga more or less consciously and wilfully.

Life in the body is the basis upon which and in which the Yogic working has to have its conscious play. Any impoverishment and rejection of this bodily life will seriously impair that working and thus harm and defeat its very purpose, *i.e.* transformation and spiritualisation of life, bringing life and Yoga to one level, realisation of the divine life on the earthly plane. The exclusivist tendency either in Yoga or in life has to be carefully and wilfully discouraged. Any tendency which separates the Yogic movement from the field of life has not to be entertained unless it is only for a time and for a temporary and urgent purpose.

When we speak of bringing life to one level with Yoga, it does not mean that we have to accept life as it is. It is not in its degraded and impure form, assumed and exploited by the ordinary man, that we have to accept it. It has not to be used for the inferior sense-impelled or ego-driven purposes of his ambition-blind push; nor even to exhibit to the world the effects of possible or realised mastery gained over it by Yogic elevation. No mixture of any downward impulse of life with the realising force and the manifesting dynamism of the Spirit is permissible. Any extraneous motive unconnected with or against the realisation of the Divine and His manifesting Will is out of place; or, being contrary to and dangerous for the Yogic purpose of progressive spiritual harmony or order in life, it is inadmissible.

One has to achieve inner freedom from all attachment, at the same time purifying, elevating and training life's elements to hold the perfecting power of the Spirit. For, freedom and purity are the basis of all higher spiritual build-up. Unless a genuine inner freedom from petty and dwarfing limitations of the human consciousness is accomplished, an entry into the richer infinite consciousness is not possible. The human vessel, as said Ramakrishna, has to be emptied of its impurities before the divine nectar can be poured into it. The field has to be prepared for the divine sowing.

God and Nature must harmonise themselves in man, Spirit and Life must stand together in the entirety of an integrated being. Life's flowering into the nature of the Spirit and the Spirit's self-revelation in the sublimated and perfected being of man must become co-ordinated processes. Then alone can we have the genuine and potent hope of a better and happier humanity on the solid foundations of the Spirit's light and power.

*(To be continued)*

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

# **SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION**

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

### **NEWSLETTER**



No. 1.

*January, 1964*

WITH the Mother's Blessings, the above Department has come into operation as from 6th January 1964.

Its function will be to collect and collate information and suggestions of interest on all aspects of education from teachers here and from other countries and cultures abroad which will be of value and service to our Centre of Education.

A filing and card index system has already been instituted to receive any educational material or teaching experience which teachers may consider of interest and value to others and to the Centre as a whole.

For the present, the Department is to function from the Students' Study Room, where a notice board will keep teachers and students informed on matters of immediate educational interest in the world ; and where they may co-operate in contributing their own suggestions or "reading experience" for filing and for the use of other teachers.

Building from this modest beginning, we look forward to the realization of a Department of Research which will one day become a valuable asset to the Centre of Education and to teachers as a repository of their own experience as well as an educational 'bank' of other teachers' and educators' experience in other parts of the world.

NORMAN DOWSETT

### **D.E.R. NEWSLETTER**

No. 2.

*February, 1964*

1. The International Schools Association Conference on the Teaching of Modern Languages held on September 2nd-6th 1963 at the International School of Milan which served as host for the meeting put forward the following recommendations which might be of interest to Language Teachers of this Centre :

## FOR TEACHERS

1. The first aim of the teacher should be to produce a minimum adequate vocabulary within which the pupil can converse. Excess grammar and structure without adequate content words militate against this. Pronunciation at this stage should be them inimum comprehensible with emphasis on the rhythm of the language.

2. The spoken language is learnt by speaking. The teacher should endeavour to get maximum pupil talking time. (Mass practice and practice in pairs are helpful devices.)

3. Short behavioural plays (all in dialogue) should be used to bring the language to life in a realistic out-of-class situation.

4. "Read and Look Up" is a very important means of learning. A language is spoken by someone to someone, not to a book

5. Reading should be commenced as early as possible using "Simplified" reading books to overcome the age discrepancy. The aim should be to get early surrender value and overcome the discouragement of the initial oral work and also to act as an appetizer for reading in the language. There should be class libraries.

## BOOKS

*An Experiment in Education* by Sybil MARSHALL, Cambridge University Press.

This book is available to those interested in Primary Teaching through the 'symphonic method' where art takes its rightful place,—from the D.E.R.

NORMAN DOWSETT

## D.E.R. NEWSLETTER

No. 3.

March 1964

1 Out of the three thousand eight hundred or more people who visited the Ashram for The Mother's Birthday it was estimated that about 500 to 700 teachers, professors and principals of schools, colleges and universities from almost every part of India and some from abroad visited this centre of education during their homage to The Mother on the 21st and 29th February occasions

2. The opinion was expressed by several of these professors that the Government of India and especially those in charge of education should now recognise the growing significant importance of the Sri Aurobindo Centre of Education as a prototype of what education is striving to become in India and that they should do everything in their power to promote and encourage the ideals of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother in all phases of education from the physical to the spiritual.

3. Several of the principals of colleges have put forward requests for permission

to send young teachers to this Centre for training in English as many schools which were formerly concerned only with the vernacular have now reverted to English as a medium of instruction as well as the mother tongue.

Some of these principals have already had the opportunity to send teachers for instruction in physical education in the past and now wish to extend this to other subjects.

4. *Comment* : It could very well be predicted now that the Future Education of Man will be *the Practice of Integral Yoga* as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, and as summarized in the legend over the temples of ancient Greece :

‘Gnothi Seauton’—‘Know Thyself’

NORMAN DOWSETT

## A TRAGI-COMEDY

WHEN I came first to Pondicherry on a visit to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, I felt as if I had come to a wonderful and peaceful spot.

The Ashram Authorities took me to a house in which I was to stay. It was half a furlong off from the Ashram. I finished my dinner at the Dining Hall and returned to the house at 8.30 p.m. It is a one-storied building consisting of three rooms. There was a well-arranged garden with big trees in it. I was told that two gentlemen stayed at the same house, one a Bengali, the other a Frenchman. At times, they went out for a few days. Well, I finished my bath and went to bed, feeling very calm and peaceful.

Hardly had I fallen asleep when I heard the sound of a woman weeping. I also heard some footsteps on the terrace. "Why has the Ashram put me up in a haunted house?" I asked myself angrily. Has it done so on purpose? And did the two gentlemen go out deliberately? Then I decided to switch on the light and see what was going on around. But somehow I couldn't find the switch. I was dead sure that some evil spirits were playing mischief with me.

I thought of going out and calling the neighbours or going back to the Ashram. But how should I express myself to the neighbours? I did not know their language. I could not make up my mind what to do. I tried to go to bed again, but sleep was impossible, I was afraid. If I got into any danger, no one could come to my help. My heart beat fast, my throat was parched and my body perspired profusely. I decided to go out to the veranda for a drink. So I got off my bed. Suddenly I heard knocks at the door like the tick-tocks of a big clock. Here the last vestige of my courage left me. Someone forced open the door and got in. Taking off one of the sticks on which the mosquito curtain hung, I got ready to fight. But I found nobody in the house. Again I heard the same sound. This time from under my cot. Desperately, I hurled my stick in that direction. Then came angry groans which gradually subsided. I thought my end had come and I looked up. I saw two glowing eyes staring through a window. I threw another stick at the window and the eyes vanished. The whole night I spent in nerve-racking tension.

In the morning I saw marks of blood on the floor; I traced them up to the window.

Then the night's drama was made clear to me—a big bandicoot (rat) lying dead, besmeared with blood!

VISHWAJIT TALUKDAR

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN EUROPEAN MIND

*(A student's History-Paper in an examination at the Sri Aurobindo International  
Centre of Education)*

THE development of the European mind from the period of the Enlightenment to the present day, can be best summed up in one revelatory phrase by Sri Aurobindo : "from faith, through the valley of doubts, rising to more luminous heights of knowledge." In fact, the development of the European mind does reflect an evolutionary movement and completes a cycle. It begins with the Age of Faith, followed by a strong scepticism, an age of subjectivism, and lastly reverts to an age which is in quest of the true soul of man, in nature and in the universe. The modern mind consequently is undoubtedly more mature than his predecessors' in the sense that his mental, vital and physical beings are rich with experiences and a profound knowledge of himself and the truths that exist behind all things, and is now prepared to seek God who is the Truth of all things.

The Enlightenment was the age of Reason, the first stage of revolt against the church and Faith. Reason was the only infallible source of wisdom , religions and churches were false impositions made on man who could be perfected if solely guided by Reason.

This assertion of Reason was reflected in all the spheres of life, in society in economic institutions, in literature, in art and on philosophy and religion more devastatingly.

In the literary field in spite of the reign of Reason the classical tradition of the Renaissance culture was preserved. The great tragedians of France, the poets and writers of England were deeply steeped in the ancient Greek literature. But in spite of their profuse allusions and inspired themes from the classical myths neither French tragedians, like Corneille or Racine, nor English poets such as Milton or Pope or Dryden, could escape from the hold of Reason as the supreme deity who rules and regulates Life and Nature.

The classical trend was reflected also in sculpture and painting. Architecture stopped evolving as an independent art as buildings were erected according to the choice and wish of the church or the monarch. In sculpture there were three trends which were clearly visible. The Baroque was characterised by hugeness and extravagance of ornamentation modelled on the classical style. It reflected the prosperous age of Louis XIV and the reign of rich and powerful dynasties all over Europe. In contrast to this style came the Rococo style which was sumptuously refined, reflecting thus the indolent ease of the reign of Louis XV. The Georgian style which ensued was an attempt at a sincere expression of the classical spirit, thereby prizing simplicity the most.

Painting closely reflected the trends of sculpture. Rubens, the greatest artist of the age, imitated the baroque style depicting classical themes with a richness and sumptuousness of colour so admired by the bourgeoisie. Watteau and Boucher in France and Gainsborough in England kept more or less to the Rococo style and their paintings were emotional, decorative and often frivolous. Rembrandt and Goya defied the classical tradition and chose subjects of their own with a richness of human appeal.

There were considerable changes in the musical sphere too. Attempts were directed to an improvement of the instruments and the first orchestra saw the light with a combination of flute-family and the violin-family. Later the opera came into being and the three important musical compositions as concerto, sonata and symphony were invented. The great masters of this age who imitated and perfected this movement which led it to be called the classical age of Music, were Mozart, Bach and Schubert.

But this subservience of the spirit to the Reason caused a restlessness and led ultimately to a revolt against the Classical Age. With 1750 came the breath of a new life. The Romantic Age broke away from the contraptions of the reason, responded avidly to the instincts and impulses of nature. Nature was regarded as a Spirit in whom solace and protection could always be found, a Being who had her own moods and who expressed them in objective manifestations ; and, what is more significant, there was an attempt to realise God whose presence pervaded all beings. This was the New Dawn, as Sri Aurobindo significantly terms it.

The movement initiated in Germany by Goethe and Schiller overtook France and reached its climax in Britain.

Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther* symbolising the dissatisfaction at the way of life so far dominated by reason served as a basis for revolt. The works of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats pulse with the life breath of liberty. Goethe's *Faust* represented the restlessness and the yearning for a fullness of life which is the trait of modern man.

With the heralding of the 19th century and the victory of empiricism, Literature and Art underwent a radical change in their method and their outer expression.

Deductive philosophy from the beginning of the Enlightenment up to the present date had held sway over the literary and artistic fields. With the overthrow of deductive philosophy science was now held as the only source of wisdom. Life was meant to be understood not as conceived by reason but as science saw it, analytically, directly.

The new style that came into vogue in the literary field was Realism. Realism began as a revolt against Romanticism. It tried to see life not through the colours of phantasy but as science dictated it, without any veil or pretence. Never before had there been such a minute but comprehensive and intellectual insight into man. But the field of inspection was limited as it was confined to the present. Life was put under the microscope and the outer imperfections and the littlenesses were stressed and exaggerated because they were the first which were visible. Life was treated



as a psychological and physiological disease. This perverse outlook on life of the Realists defeated the idealist element in art whose truth lies in taking account of the aspirations of man and not his pastimes.

Balzac and Flaubert laid bare the littlenesses of men. Balzac in his *Eugenie Grandet* laid bare the hypocrisy and the greed behind the apparent polish of Père Grandet. Flaubert with a cool analysis showed the human degradation.

Zola and Anatole France were nationalists. They had apparently no philosophic view in their mind but described life as science presented it. They revolted against the flamboyant romanticism of their two predecessors and a cognate attempt was made to view life with a sceptical and reflective attitude.

Realism spread to England too, where the main aim was towards a social reform. Thackeray and Dickens exposed to light the poverty of the slums and the miserable conditions of the poor man's life.

All this quagmire and dirt which dominated and found a place in the literary field soon passed away with the establishment of a new healthy society and the prosperity brought by scientific inventions. Shaw and Wells wrote plays and stories where there was a dominant stress on a social utopia founded on equality and abolishment of poverty.

Painting reflected the sordidness of the prevalent literature. There was a succession of schools beginning with the Pre-Raphaelites who attempted to get back to a simplicity and naturalness of art, the Realists, Impressionists, Post-impressionists, Cubists and finally Futurists. The dominant note was a revolt against the traditional standards of form and beauty and expressing the reality of life. Art came to express more and more the restlessness and the chaos brought in by the machine age. Beginning with such innovating masters as Renoir, Monet, Manet, Gauguin, Cézanne and ending with Matisse, modern art was a living record of the chaotic conditions which disturbed and haunted the modern man.

Architecture developed a new trend with a complete break with the past. It was called functionalism. Buildings were meant to correspond to the purpose they stood for. Modern man does not believe in Greek ideas of beauty and form but speed, efficiency and comfort.

Music was safeguarded against any of the modern trends for it was an art which was neither pictorial nor descriptive and therefore realism could not be pushed with extreme hints in this field. The romantic trend prevailed in this sphere. Schumann, Mendelssohn, Wagner broke from the intellectual and classical tradition of music. Music was meant to be an expression of their feelings and they tried to bring it closer to literature and to that part of literature which corresponds to phantasy, the land of enchantment.

The contemporary Literature and Art can be classified into three distinct groups as they corresponded to the moods of men after the war and the final turn they took, mounting in an aspiration towards the benevolent God who is their father.

The literature from 1920 to 1930 was pervaded by cynicism, bewilderment, des-

pair and the seeking for an escape. The age was the age of the so-called lost generation of young men who had anticipated a bright advent in the War but found their ideals shattered with the defeat and the unfulfilled promises. Never was the shadow of the Past so insistent on the minds of men filled with horror and despair. The works of Hemingway, Dos Passos and T. S. Eliot abound in cynicism and despair.

With 1930 came an age full of promise. In all the spheres, whether social, economic, artistic or literary, there was an insistent outlook on a future 'teeming with possibilities.' Life had a purpose; it was not a 'tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing'. Man like Hemingway came with fresh literary creations which breathed with this assurance of a bright future.

In 1940, the trend continued even after 1940. Men now reverted to religion and spirituality to seek the meaning of life. Aldous Huxley's 'After Many a Summer Dies the Swan' and Franz Werfel's 'Song of Bernadette' revert to a spiritual basis of life.

In painting Salvador Dalí and Picasso are still groping to find a new expression delving into the subconscious. Their art is an expression of their 'state of the soul', chaotic, confused.

In Music Debussy tried to communicate the impressionistic feelings from life. The notes are discordant and do not flow in a harmony as the music is a record of a string of incoherent feelings and emotions.

The truth of life is not the ultimate. Man had reached to the very foundation stone of his life but the truth found there was insufficient, partial.

He was forced to revert to his original state of faith and the cycle is complete. Modern Europe is heading for a fullness of life seeking to synthesise the material life with the spiritual.

PRITI

## A MOMENT OF VISION

UTTERLY hushed the world stood still  
And silent was the wind ;  
Clouds had gathered upon the hill,  
No thought assailed the mind.

The indrawn sight no more could see ;  
Troubled and bowed the face ;  
Two tearful eyes so miserably  
Spanned the vacant space.

Then came to fill the empty sky  
And marched among the stars  
A sprightly vision soaring high  
Beyond all earthly cares.

Was it a hand of love that feels  
The throbbing hearts of pain ?  
Came it to salve the bleeding heels  
And lift the iron chain ?

The door was locked, the hollow hall  
Resounded at the knock ;  
And none came forth to the summoning call,  
The shadows stood as rock.

Nothing was found and nothing lost,  
The moments hastened by ;  
The living souls embraced the ghost  
And formed a loving tie.

For Death was down before the throne  
Of a mighty loving soul  
And mortal men divinely grown  
Had reached their supreme goal.

Sweet faces smiled now lucently  
All hearts were strong and bold ;  
The hour had come to wake and see  
The shining rays of gold.

SAILEN

## THE "PRESENCE" AND "GRACE" IN DISEASE AND HEALTH

THE word "disease" is very often used to explain some kind of physical, mental or emotional discomfort, to which we give a certain name or label after observing a particular group of symptoms for each type of known acute or chronic ailment. In short the word "disease" means a feeling of dis-ease in the body or in the mind or anywhere in the being.

The modern medical science of diagnosis is mainly based upon a group of external or internal symptoms ; so, if we trace back and examine the source from where these symptoms originate then we find that a particular pattern of living as a whole in the past or at present produces a particular symptom, external or internal. An unhealthy and unconscious pattern of living produces dis-ease symptoms, whereas a healthy and conscious pattern of living produces healthy symptoms.

Nowadays, even an illiterate villager is conversant with the different symptoms and names of various diseases. This partial knowledge is orally propagated by patients ; it is mixed with fear of suffering ; it creates a sense of danger and one sees an inevitable death in the near future. But all that may not be true at all. In the majority of cases the ignorant way of living produces disease symptoms ; then these symptoms produce fear and fear in its turn produces a further psycho-physical group of symptoms and thus a vicious circle is formed of which the result is a total chaos in the normal working of the whole being. Our organs become atrophied, or degeneration sets in, due to the fact that they are forced to function under the pressure of chaotic and disharmonious conditions of living as a whole for a considerably long period of time, and also due partly to ignorance as well as negligence.

Now, let us see how we can come out of this vicious circle of symptoms, fear, disease and company.

We propose two ways :

Firstly, we can deal with this problem as an ordinary man and try to solve it with our limited human efforts. Then we may be able to have some kind of favourable results and a relief either temporary or permanent. We can start observing closely and in detail the reactions of the pattern of our superficial living of inward and outward life. Then we can try to readjust and re-organise our whole life according to the highest human knowledge of healthful living with a particular type of new hygienic habits.

The second way is of a little difficult nature, but it can lead to a permanent solution of the problem of all dis-ease if we try to solve it logically with the help of higher powers, the "Divine Presence" and "Grace".

As Sri Aurobindo has said, "There may be difficulties but there need not be any suffering," so it can be said that there may be dozens of so-called disease symptoms but there need not be suffering or fear or dis-ease of any kind at all.

Only an inner self-observation and gradual transformation from unconscious living to conscious living with the constant Presence of the Grace in the whole being may bring this dis-ease-free condition in the midst of more than one disease symptom produced by the unconscious living of the past or acquired from parents.

All the well-known so-called ordinary dreaded diseases of today are merely the outer expressions or by-products of inner disharmony or discord in the being and they lead to disharmony and dis-co-ordination in the normal functioning of the physical organs.

In fact there can be only one main source of dis-ease and it is the feeling of a discomfort, a deep pain and agony, a sort of vacuum created by the absence of the Divine Presence. When one is not conscious of that constant Presence one should feel a dis-ease which is capable of making all other pains and agonies absolutely negligible; all other petty symptoms may be dominated by that single feeling of absence.

If one can feel the Presence of the Divine in each cell of the body then there can be no room for the dis-ease to stay. When a room is lighted the darkness automatically disappears. This Presence is constant and more concrete than any material object of this earth. A little turning of our gaze inward, a little shifting of the veil of ignorance and we become aware of this magnificent Presence. And when we possess the Delight of this Presence and Grace then all the cells radiate with divine illumination, and there are the vibrations of joy and happiness; the whole body becomes a Temple of Ananda, a symbol of Divine health.

The dis-ease and the Divine cannot co-exist in the same temple which has become the chosen seat of the Supreme. I may quote here a sentence from *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo :-

"Do not imagine that truth and falsehood, light and darkness, surrender and selfishness can be allowed to dwell together in the house consecrated to the Divine."

TARAK BOSE