

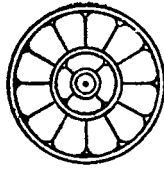
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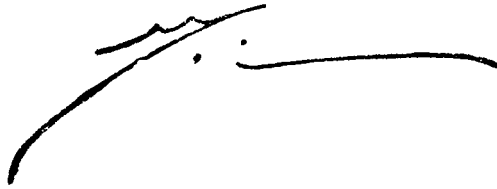


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 6

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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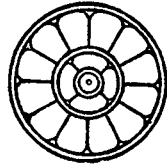
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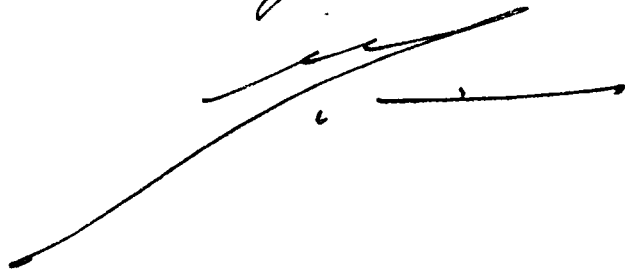
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One of the chief obstacles
to the establishment of a
progressive harmony is our
eagerness to prove to an
opponent that he is wrong
and we are right.



TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

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

DECEMBER 13, 1939

SRI AUROBINDO (*hearing laughter*): What is the matter ?

N : P and C are laughing together.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is their usual business.

C : P has again hurt his big toe.

P : A plank fell on it.

SRI AUROBINDO : You are always knocking against or throwing down something.
(*Laughter*)

At this moment, N, by inattention, happened to splash water all about from a bowl.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : What's the matter now ? You are doing the same thing as P along your own line.

N (*as Sri Aurobindo started reclining*) : In the *New Statesman* a reviewer quotes a line of Turner's poetry as an example of "careless and lazy inversion". The line is :

When the last tune is played and void the hall.

SRI AUROBINDO : The inversion is rather deliberate. It's there for the sake of emphasis.

N : I don't understand why the reviewer calls it "careless".

SRI AUROBINDO : It's certainly not careless. If he doesn't like it, he can say so but he can't attribute it to carelessness. Who is the reviewer ?

N : He is another poet, Richard Church.

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh, these are all fads of different poets !

N : In the review Church says that Yeats was very enthusiastic over Turner's poetry. In his adventure through modern poetry he has made a discovery, Yeats says.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, in rhymed verse Turner writes very finely at times. But his prose-poetry comes to nothing.

N : Turner seems to be a worshipper of "Silence".

SRI AUROBINDO : Not quite, because he is a music-critic !

DECEMBER 14, 1939

S : Meherbaba says that Saibaba and others were moulding the events of the last war. But, if so many spiritual figures work at the same job like that, I wonder what the result will be. Each will try in his own way and cut across those of the others.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, they may make a muddle of it.

P : They can't make a worse muddle than the politicians.

N : But why a muddle at all if they work from intuitive insight ?

S : Even so, up to Overmind everything is a play of possibilities. And one possibility will counteract another.

SRI AUROBINDO : Quite so. Dayanand had the idea of establishing world peace by bringing all the nations together. He could have said he established the League and some other Yogi disestablished it.

S : Did you meet Dayanand ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No, I met one of his disciples, a scientist in Calcutta National College. When I wrote about the future Avatar, he said the Avatar was already there, meaning Dayanand.

N : Weren't there two Dayanands ?

S : Yes, the one Sri Aurobindo has written about was an Arya Samajist, while there was another, a Bengali, who used to keep nothing for the next day and believed in never planning for the future.

SRI AUROBINDO : He is the man who started Sannyasi marriages. I don't know whether they were real marriages or spiritual ones. He had something genuine in him. Barin used to be in ecstasies over him.

S : Another Avatar is coming out from Poona. He will declare himself in 1941.

SRI AUROBINDO : Who is that ?

S : He is claimed by those people who dissociated themselves from the Theosophists.

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh, one more of their romances !

S : Didn't Madame Blavatsky have something real in her, something mystic ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but the romance was also there. When one deals with mysticism one has to be very careful. There is any amount of truth and there is any amount of imagination. Nivedita spoke of the Theosophists as "woolly-headed people".

S : The Rosicrucians too believe in the reality of mystic experiences.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, Arjava (John Chadwick) belonged to one of their groups at Cambridge, and this created a lot of difficulty for him at the beginning of his

sadhana here. The Rosicrucians posit two principles in man—good and evil personas. The evil persona has to rise up in order to be got rid of. There are already sufficient things in nature to deal with without raising up other evil things. Europeans have no knowledge of these matters. Even the Christian mystics seem to have no clear idea.

S : I suppose it is because the Europeans don't want to get rid of their individuality.

SRI AUROBINDO : They mix up the Self and the Ego. Even when they are identified with the Self, they think it is the Ego that has become that. Even Blake who had some idea of identity with the Self appears to have made this mistake.

P (*after a lull in the talk*) : Anilbaran says that according to Kant if one follows Reason one is free but if one follows Sense one is bound. There is also the question : Is Buddhi or Intellect an instrument of Prakriti and can a man, so long as he follows Buddhi, be free in the Gita's sense—that is, free from nature ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Does the Gita say that he can't be free ?

P : Well, there is a sloka which says that Sattwa, the mental guna, binds by happiness.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is quite a different thing. You are mixing up two different things. The question is whether Buddhi can help you to detach yourself from your nature and lead to the perception of the Purusha, the free Witness.

P : The text of the Gita will support this role of Buddhi.

SRI AUROBINDO : I should think so. Otherwise what is the meaning of the Gita laying so much stress on Buddhi ?

N : Then does it mean that Buddhi is not an instrument of nature ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is an instrument that helps one to rise to the higher nature. You have to use lower instruments to rise to the higher.

P : Anilbaran does not want to admit Sisir Maitra's contention that Kant's idea of following Reason is the same as the Gita's Buddhi-Yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO : He is quite a controversialist (*Laughter*)—but in a controversy one has to see whatever truth there is in others' points of view.

P : Kant, it seems, changed his mind in later life and admitted the necessity of Faith, which he deals with in his *Critique of Practical Reason*.

SRI AUROBINDO : I haven't read European philosophy carefully.

P : Besides, it doesn't interest us, as it has no practical bearing.

SRI AUROBINDO : That was Arjava's great complaint that here people want always something practical. They don't want to think for the sake of thinking. (*Laughter*)

P : Kant's notion of freedom is not the same as our Indian of Mukti.

SRI AUROBINDO : The European idea is to arrive at the Truth.

S : They have also some idea of applying the Truth.

P : Yes, a sort of idealism but not spirituality. In his *Practical Reason* Kant maintains that Pure Reason is an abstract faculty hardly to be found unmixed in men.

SRI AUROBINDO : What is it then for ?

P : It is just an ideal hardly attainable. So Practical Reason is necessary. Kant's opponents say that everybody follows reason and so everybody is free. Everybody justifies his action by some reasoning. But in that case, even a thief can justify his stealing by some reasoning.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, and a very practical reasoning too. (*Laughter*)

P : Even the thief is free because he acts freely.

SRI AUROBINDO : How ?

P : He decides out of his own free will.

SRI AUROBINDO : But by merely reasoning he can't be free. If we apply the Gita, one is not free when one reasons about stealing, but if one can steal disinterestedly and with detachment one can be free.

S : Wouldn't it be difficult for Europeans to grasp such ideas—for instance, that of killing people with detachment ?

N : In the *New Statesman*, the French author Gide speaks of disinterested action, even crime or any other kind of action.

EVENING

Dr. B : Are trust and faith the same ?

SRI AUROBINDO kept silent, giving no answer.

Dr. B : In the *Words of the Mother*, it is said that trust in the Divine brings the Grace. So isn't trust the key to have the Grace ?

SRI AUROBINDO : There is more than one key.

Dr. B : Doesn't trust lead to surrender ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Not necessarily. If you trust a friend, it does not mean that you surrender to him.

Dr. B : But as the trust increases you surrender more and more.

SRI AUROBINDO : If you trust a friend in a particular matter, it doesn't mean that you surrender to him in everything else.

NIRODBARAN

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

WORK-FORCE FROM ABOVE AND BELOW

Q : About the mind in relation to study, you said, "If it refuses, of course you can't—unless you allow the Force to work through you." How am I to do it?

SRI AUROBINDO : I was not speaking of the Force coming down from above, but of the Force from behind doing action through the mind and body as instruments. Very often when the mind and body are inert, their actions still go on by this push from behind.

10-1-1936

The Force from above is the Force of the Higher Consciousness. That from behind works as a mental, vital or physical force according to need. When the being is open to it and there is a certain passivity to its working, it takes the place of the personal activity and the Person is a witness of its action.

11-1-1936

Q : It is said that we should refer all our acts to the Mother. But I don't know how to refer and get her answer before doing actions.

SRI AUROBINDO : There is no question of getting an answer. It is simply to offer the actions to the Mother and call her Force to guide or do what is necessary.

13-1-1936

Q : Today I happened to work much more than usual. And yet there was hardly any fatigue. I presume, it was due to shama.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. With the right consciousness always there, there would be no fatigue.

14-1-1936

For the actions to be psychic, the psychic must be in front. The observing Purusha can separate himself, but cannot change the Prakriti. But to be the observing Purusha is a first step. Afterwards there must be the action of the Purusha Will as an instrument of the Mother's force. This Will must be founded on a right consciousness which sees what is wrong, ignorant, selfish, egoistic, moved by desire in the nature and puts it right.

22-1-1936

When doing this work you had the Force in you and the right consciousness filling the vital and physical—afterwards with relaxation the ordinary physical consciousness came up and brought back the ordinary reactions—fatigue, sciatica etc.

1-2-1936

These are the wrong suggestions from the physical mind—work done with the thought of the Mother and not for oneself cannot be egoistic. How was the idea of the Mother's "room" superficial ? it was on the contrary a suggestion that could only come to or from the deeper consciousness; for the ordinary mind does not think like that. The idea of Jasavanta's room, Jasavant's personal work was rather the ordinary superficial notion.

1-2-1936

Q : Was it not then the inner being alone acting during the work in J.'s room and the outer being simply becoming its tool ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is correct.

The stress of the Power is all right, but there is really nothing incompatible between the inner silence and action. It is to this combination that the sadhana must move.

2-2-1936

Once the mental silence is attained, then in that the mental thoughts can be replaced by some vision and intuition regarding the work.

Q : You wrote, "When doing the work you had the Force in you." But how is it that as soon as that particular action was over I lost it and fatigue and sciatica came back ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The Force in these instances comes for the work, when the work is over, it usually withdraws—unless and until you have become able to keep it.

3-2-1936

From NAGIN DOSHI

REMINISCENCES

THE STORY OF JABALA SATYAKAMA

I THINK I told you once of the story in the Upanishad about a seeker of spiritual knowledge who had been given by his teacher as a first assignment the task of looking after his kine. This was meant to serve both as an initiation and a training; it was to be his work and also his test. But the student had had to pass through another, perhaps somewhat minor, ordeal of a preliminary nature. Tagore has a well-known poem based on this episode. I begin my story with that narrative, giving it almost *verbatim* as it appears in the Upanishad (Chhandogya, IV.4).

Jabala Satyakama, says the Upanishad, approached his mother, Jabala, and put to her the question, "What, O my mother, is the name of my caste and family, for I desire to become a student of sacred lore?" To this Jabala replied, "I do not know about that, my darling, but I obtained you when I was young and was serving maid to a number of different men. That is why I do not know what is the name of your caste and family. But my name is Jabala and yours is Satyakama. So you may say that you are Satyakama, the son of Jabala."

Satyakama now went to Gautama, the son of Haridrumana, and said, "I come to you with the desire to stay as a student of sacred lore." Gautama asked him, "What is the name of your caste and family, my child?" Satyakama answered, "I do not know what my caste or the name of my family is. But when I asked my mother, she said, 'I obtained you when I was young and was serving maid to a number of different men. So I do not know who your father was. But my name is Jabala, and yours is Satyakama. You should therefore say you are Jabala Satyakama.' This is the whole story." Thereupon Gautama answered, "No one but a Brahmin could have spoken thus. Bring in the fuel, my dear; I shall take you as a disciple, for you have not swerved from the truth."

Thus was Satyakama given admission to the Ashrama of Gautama. Now for his initiation and training and the tests. Gautama sent for him and said, "Satyakama, I shall now invest you with the sacred thread." This investiture is a sacred rite which "sets one on the path"—what the Buddhists call in Pali "sotāpatti" (*srotāpatti* in Sanskrit), that is, "getting into the stream" or starting on the way. He added, "You bring in the fuel"—from the neighbouring wood, that is. Gautama did as he was told and the ceremony of initiation was duly performed.

The teacher now sent for him again and said, "Satyakama, I possess some four hundred kine. But they are all puny and weak. You should look after them." This meant that he was to take them out to pasture. Satyakama replied, "Very well, sir, it will be as you desire. I am leaving with the four hundred kine and I do not return till they are a thousand." Gautama sent him off with his blessings.

Satyakama went along with his herd of kine. He looked after them as they roamed over the meadows and fields, through the forests and village settlements. Months passed, and years went by—many years. The kine had by now all gained in bulk and had a well-fed look; their numbers too had reached the thousand mark. One day, all on a sudden, a Bull from out of the herd appeared before Satyakama and addressed him in the voice of a man. “Satyakama !” he said. Satyakama took it as nothing unusual and answered in a polite tone, “Yes my Lord.” The Bull went on, “Satyakama, now let us turn homeward. We have reached the thousand mark and all of us are fit and strong.” Then the Bull added something more. “Meanwhile, Satyakama,” he said, “let me tell you something about the knowledge of Reality, *brahma-vidyā*—the very first lessons. Brahman has to be known in his four aspects; of these I shall tell you about the first just now. Of this first phase or aspect there are again four limbs. North, south, east and west, these four quarters are the four limbs of the first aspect of Brahman out of the four. Through the four quarters Brahman appears as the manifest One, *prakāśavān*. And he who realises this manifest aspect of the Brahman becomes himself manifest and wins all the manifest worlds. This is the first of the four aspects of Brahman. Now, Agni is going to tell you about the second.”

The next day, Satyakama resumed his march with the kine. As evening came, he gathered his herd together and penned the kine. Then he collected the fuel and lighted the sacrificial fire, and sat facing the east with Agni in front. Now Agni called to him, “Satyakama!” And Satyakama gave reply with his usual humility, “Yes, my Lord ?” Agni continued, “Let me now speak to you about the second aspect of Brahman. This too has four limbs ; these are earth, mid-air, the heavens and the ocean. This second aspect of Brahman that is constituted by these four is the Infinity of Brahman. He who gains it lives in Infinity even on this earth and wins all the worlds of Infinity.”

Again the homeward march began, and again the Bull came and informed Satyakama thus, “Now it will be the Swan who will come and tell you about the Brahman.” When it was eventide, Satyakama gathered his herd again, penned them in, and lighted his sacrificial fire. Again he sat in front of the fire facing the east. Then the Swan appeared as promised by the Bull and called in a human voice, “Satyakama !” And Satyakama made answer, “Yes, my Lord ?” The Swan continued, “I shall speak to you about another aspect of Brahman.” “Tell me, my Lord.” “This the third aspect of Brahman consists of Fire, the Sun, the Moon and Lightning. Through this quartet of the third aspect Brahman appears as the Effulgent One. He who realises this aspect of Brahman becomes himself effulgent and wins all the worlds of effulgence even while on this earth.”

Satyakama started on his march again, and once again the Bull came and informed him that this time a Flamingo would come and tell him about the fourth aspect of Brahman. As evening came, Satyakama gathered his herd together and penned them as usual. He lighted the sacrificial fire and sat in front facing the east, and waited.

The Bird flew in and called, "Satyakama !" Satyakama replied, "Yes, my Lord ?" The Bird went on, "I shall give you the knowledge of the fourth aspect of the fourfold Brahman." Satyakama replied in all humility, "Tell me, my Lord." The Bird said, "The four limbs of this aspect are the Life-force, the Eyes, the Ears and Mind. These four combined make Brahman the All-Form. He who knows this becomes the All-Form and wins here itself the All-Form.

By now Satyakama arrived at his master's home, accompanied by his herd of a thousand well-fed kine in place of the original four hundred weaklings. As he came to his master, Gautama gave him a look and came out with these words, "Satyakama, I see your face shining with the light of Brahman. Who has given you the knowledge of the Brahman ?" Satyakama told him about the four strange encounters. But he added, "My master, you are my sole teacher, and my knowledge will remain incomplete until I receive the knowledge directly from you." Gautama then repeated to him the same things that he had heard about the four aspects of Brahman, thus confirming what Satyakama had already experienced and realised; it was now sanctified with Gautama's blessings.

Thus did Satyakama become a knower of Brahman and foremost among Brahmins. In course of time he himself took the place of a Guru.

I intend to tell you on another occasion the story of his dealings with his own disciples. That story too appears in the Upanishad. Let me in the meantime add some explanations of the knowledge given to Satyakama.

The knowledge and realisation that he had gained from his life of a wandering cowherd are the basic truth of the world, the supreme secret of creation. He realised that Brahman is the ultimate Truth, the one and only Reality. The signs or qualities of this ultimate Truth or Reality are four. Brahman may be described as if in a group of four aphorisms, like the first four aphorisms of the Brahmasutra, the basic compendium of Vedantic thought, which Shankara has commented on in very clear terms. If you know his commentary on these four aphorisms, you get to know practically the entire philosophy of the Vedanta as interpreted by Shankara.

The first of the aphorisms taught to Satyakama implies that Brahman has made himself manifest, for He is self-manifest. An Upanishad has said the same thing : *tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam*, "His is the Light that illumines all." Of this self-luminous form of Brahman or God the four limbs are the four quarters. He is manifest on all sides, above and below, in every direction, and he is not only thus manifest; there is also no end or limit to his manifestation. Hence, as a second step in our knowledge, we learn that God or Brahman is the Infinite. This Infinity too has four limbs or lines : (1) earth, or the physical and material extension, (2) mid-air, or the expanse of the vital worlds, (3) the vast expanses of mind, and (4) the oceanic reaches of the higher worlds that stand above the mind. The third attribute or quality of God is Luminosity, He is the Bright, the Effulgent One—He is the supreme light. Of His Brightness or Effulgence the symbols are four, the four that serve as the medium or base : these are fire, the sun, the moon and the stars. Fire is enkindled on the

solid earth of matter; the sun burns in the mid-regions of life; the moon illumines with its cooling rays the regions of the quiet and happy mind; and the stars give us the brilliance of the world beyond mind. It is needless to add that the Seer is not speaking here in terms of astronomy. He has been expressing his meaning through the help of significant symbols or metaphors. And finally, the Reality or God is made up of Form : that is to say, He has put Himself forth variously through a multitude of forms, *rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babhūva*. And the functions or instrumentalities through which Form has taken shape are the four main powers of sense-consciousness. These are . (1) the power of sensitivity, the capacity of living contact and intimate or close experience, of which the sense of touch represents to us the external form or activity, for through it we get a sense of reality as living existence; (2) the power of vision or sight, for through the eyes we get a sense of form and definite shape; (3) the power of hearing, for the organ of hearing gives us a sense of rhythm, of sound, the form of articulate speech; and (4) the power of mind which, being the centre of thinking, gives us a sense of meaning, builds the forms of thought.

These then are the four aspects of Brahman, the fourfold quartet through which we get a glimpse of the wholeness of Brahman, *pūrṇabrahman*.

This story of Satyakama brings out a picture that tells us something about the lines or circumstances of ancient Indian education.

We know that the Upanishads are classed with the Aranyaka literature; the Brihadaranyaka is a well-known name. The forest life of the recluse was in those days intimately associated with education and learning, and especially with the spiritual disciplines. The injunction for the seeker of truth was, "Repair to the forest," *vanam vrajet*. The seers, the Rishi, had their hermitages in the forests alone. That of course was an age when the forest reigned upon earth. The greater part of the globe was still a virgin forest. Cities and townships were not so common; there were only a scattered few that glimmered like torches amid vast stretches of night. There is also the point that the free and easy association of day to day with Nature brings about a natural heightening and widening of the consciousness. The English poet Wordsworth, as I told you the other day, had some experience of this to which he gave voice in lines like these :

And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

The quiet beauty and rhythm of Nature permeate the limbs if one lives in close proximity to Nature. We in our country had, no doubt, the advantage of forests. But even in other countries like Arabia or Egypt which had no forests but only desert tracts with their wide stretches of bare sand, the same method was followed. There the seekers and the saints and mystics lived in the heart of the desert and drew from that source its rhythm and harmony and inspiration.

But in the modern world, under the circumstances of today, we no longer follow the ancient method either physically or even perhaps psychologically. Man does not now depend on external props or surroundings, nor does his consciousness either. Man's consciousness has grown to be in large measure free and self-reliant. It would rather bring external Nature under its own control than be guided by its influence. As in our outer so in our inner spiritual life, we are becoming city-dwellers in place of the old forest recluses. Even when we repair to the forest we try to make it as far as possible akin to the city. But this need not give rise to a quarrel or conflict between the forest and the city; it is possible to reconcile the two—the rural and the urban—even as it is necessary to effect a reconciliation between the inner and the outer life, between the consciousness within and the conditions of life without.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

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

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

(Continued from the last issue)

V. THE DOUBLE DENIAL

God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

(Savitri, Book I, Canto IV, p. 63)

A. THE MATERIALIST NEGATION

Matter on the firm earth sits strong and sure.
It is the first-born of created things,
It stands the last when mind and life are slain,
And if it ended all would cease to be.
All else is only its outcome or its phase....
If Matter fails, all crumbling cracks and falls.
All upon Matter stands as on a rock.

(Savitri, Book I, Canto II, pp. 691-92).

THE materialist comes with his dour denial and asserts on the basis of his monism of matter and material energy assumed to be the sole ultimate principle sufficing for the explanation of every conceivable phenomenon in the universe—that man's body and mind, as well as all other animal and plant organisms extant or extinct, are but the products of organic evolution brought about through the action of "an inconscient energy which acts automatically by mechanical processes and can have no element of purpose in it."¹ Thus, according to the scientific materialist line of thought, no spiritual significance need be sought in this process of evolutionary elaboration or, for that matter, in the emergence of life in the initially inanimate universe. For, according to the materialist view, the phenomenon of "life is of profound unimportance. Among the infinite permutations and combinations through which matter has passed, one has supervened in which matter has achieved consciousness. This consciousness by matter of itself is life. *Life, then, is a chance product of material forces and substances, evolved under certain conditions, and doomed to disappear when those conditions no longer obtain.*"² (*Italics ours*)

And so far as the evolutionary process itself is concerned, leading to the appearance of new species with novel life-characteristics, in order to account for it, we need not postulate or admit therein any sort of teleology or finalism nor any creative oestrus or any intervention of consciousness. For, the sole agency of random genetic mutation leading to chance variation and natural selection seem to afford an adequate explanation of the whole process.

Thus "the appearance of life upon the earth, the evolution of life through an infinite variety of forms, the whole of the process which begins with the amoeba and ends with man"³ is sought to be "explained not in terms of the operation of some purposive force or spirit, but as the result of the action of purely haphazard external agencies."⁴ And in this connection it is important to note that in this view "*changes which occur in living organisms never spring from within, but are always imposed from without. In order to account for them we need postulate no spiritual force or purposive will, whether operating within the organism or directing it from outside.*"⁵ (*Italics ours*)

And so it is asserted that the liberating and transmuting action of consciousness upon the material body is a sheer figment of imagination. For the conception of a consciousness, as a separate unity, functioning or even existing independently of the physical brain, seems to lack in validity. Is consciousness really anything more than an aspect of the brain's reaction to the events occurring within the body?

According to the adherents of various schools of metaphysical materialism, consciousness is either an attribute or property of matter (*attributive materialism*), or a product and effect of matter (*causative materialism*), or else conscious processes

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 742.

² C.E.M. Joad, *Guide to Philosophy*, p. 525.

³ & ⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 522-523.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 522-523.

are in reality material in character (*equative materialism*).¹ Indeed, recent findings of physiological, psychological and pathological researches bear evidence to the "concomitance of psychical processes with physical, their dependence on material phenomena such as the functioning of the brain, the correlation of mental development throughout the animal kingdom with organization of complexity of brain-structure, the effects upon mind of injury or disease in brain-tissue, and so forth."² Do we not know that a very serious attempt has been, and is still being, made, both in the field of human psychology and in the domain of animal behaviour, to demonstrate that all modes of behaviour can be adequately explained in terms of adaptation and natural selection on the phylogenetic scale, also in terms of underlying physiological and physico-chemical operations in the individual body? Thus all the life-processes starting with those in a protozoan organism and ending with those in man, all the body-rhythms like feelings of hunger and thirst, sleep-cycles and the rise of sex-impulses, all behaviour-patterns such as the nest-building by birds or the manifestation of 'affection' by mother animals towards their offspring, have been sought to be accounted for in terms of biophysical determinism.

Two conclusions follow by implication: first, there can be no such thing as 'free will' since mind can never function independently of bodily causation and, thus, nothing can occur in consciousness unless its neural-cerebral counterpart has *first* occurred in the brain; secondly, consciousness being a mere function of the brain—almost an epiphenomenon—it can in no way influence a physical happening. So, given the existing physical organization of the human cerebrum, how can there develop in man a greater supramental consciousness and how can it—even if the possibility of its existence is at all admitted—act upon his body to effect therein any transfiguration of structure or of functioning? For, is not the material body something autonomous in its operations, independent of any consciousness appearing to inhabit it, and solely governed by an inexorable chain of physico-chemical processes?

In brief, if the tenets of materialistic determinism have to be seriously considered, "we have to suppose that the body is constructed by the agency of chemical elements building up atoms and molecules and cells and these again are the agents and only conductors at the basis of a complicated physical structure and instrumentation which is the sole mechanical cause of all our actions, thoughts, feelings, the soul a fiction and mind and life only a material and mechanical manifestation and appearance of this machine which is worked out and automatically driven with a figment of consciousness in it by the forces inherent in inconscient Matter."³

B. THE ASCETIC REFUSAL

How canst thou force to wed two eternal foes?....

How shall thy will make one the true and the false?....

¹ Kulpe, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 23.

² *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 489.

³ *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, pp. 60-61.

The Real with the unreal cannot mate.
 He who would turn to God must leave the world;
 He who would live in the Spirit must give up life...

(*Savitri*, Book X, Canto III, p. 713)

The denial of the exclusive spiritual seeker has been equally categorical. We have already had occasion to mention his scorn and disparagement of the body (§ II, *Mother India*, April 1964). In more moderate terms, in so far as the figured destiny of an evolutionary transformation of the human body is concerned, does there not exist—so he avers—a serious metaphysical objection to this notion of a teleological cosmos ? For, has not the Infinite and the Absolute everything in it already ? How, then, can it possibly have “something unaccomplished to accomplish, something to add to itself, to work out, to realise ?”¹ Hence it follows that there cannot be in the so-termed evolutionary process any element of progress or for that matter any original or emergent purpose.

Also, even if we accept for the sake of discussion the dubious fact of a progressive evolution from type to higher type, then, man must be the last stage of this process, “because through him there can be the rejection of terrestrial or embodied life and an escape into some heaven or Nirvana.”² After all, as all evidence points out—so would the ascetic claim—that this manifested world is *fundamentally* and *unchangeably* a world of Ignorance, *ajñānātmak viśva*, transient and full of suffering, *anityam asukham lokam*, devoid of any essential reality, *saṃsārameva niḥsāram*, the only sensible and legitimate task before man is to find out some way of escape from the discordant falsehood of this manifested world, *saṃsāra*, into the eternal bliss of some supraterrrestrial heaven or in an eternal dissolution in Brahman or in Nirvana. And in the nature of things this spiritual evasion and escape must represent the only true end of the cycle of individual existence.

Indeed, throughout the ages, whether the spiritual seeker be an uncompromising absolutist who considers this manifested world to be an illusion, *jaganmithyā*, or an impermanence, *sabbamaniccam*, or he be a subscriber to some supraterrrestrial view of existence, holding that the soul’s true home lies beyond this terrestrial interlude, this latter representing no more than a spiritual fall and exile, or a place of ordeal where to expiate the sins, or at the best a temporary field of development of a single scene of the drama of soul’s existence and experiences—his general verdict has been that this earth-life is a rather difficult liability for a spiritual being, full of obstinate and obscure resistances to the growth of the Spirit.

And thus a “war is declared between the spirit and its instruments and the victory of the spiritual Inhabitant is sought for in an evasion from its narrow residence, a rejection of mind, life and body and a withdrawal into its own infinitudes. The world is a discord and we shall best solve its perplexities by carrying the principle

¹ & ² *The Life Divine*, p. 742.

of discord itself to its extreme possibility, a cutting away and a final severance.”¹

This ‘revolt of spirit against Matter’, this metaphysical dualism, culminates in a second negation—at the other pole to the materialistic—of the eventual prospect of the divine transfiguration of the body and the physical existence of man. Indian thought, in particular, since the advent of Buddhism on the scene, has lived in the ‘shadow of this great Refusal’ and generally considered that the final end of life for all is the garb of the ascetic.² For “all voices are joined in one great consensus that not in this world of the dualities can there be our kingdom of heaven, but beyond, whether in the joys of the eternal Vrindavan³ or the high beatitude of Brahmaloka,⁴ beyond all manifestations in some ineffable Nirvana⁵ or where all separate existence is lost in the featureless unity of the indefinable Existence.”⁶

After all,

...truth shines far from the falsehoods of the world;
How can the heavens come down to unhappy earth
Or the eternal lodge in drifting time ?⁷

And the apparently indubitable evidence for this great denial lies in the fact that

The Avatars have lived and died in vain,
Vain was the sage’s thought, the prophet’s voice;
In vain is seen the shining upward Way.
Earth lies unchanged beneath the circling sun;
She loves her fall and no omnipotence
Her mortal imperfections can erase,
Force on man’s crooked ignorance Heaven’s straight line
Or colonise a world of death with gods.⁸

And hence goes the ‘lofty and distant appeal’ to renounce all ‘longing to build heaven on earth’ and accept the stern and dour message of “renunciation [as being] the sole path of knowledge, acceptance of physical life the act of the ignorant, cessation from birth the right use of human birth, the call of the Spirit, the recoil from Matter.”⁹

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 215.

² cf. *Ekadāṇḍam samgrhya.. sarvam tyaktvā parivrajat* (Vidyaranya Muni, *Jīvanmuktī Viveka*): “Collecting a staff and renouncing everything, one should take the path of a wandering monk.”

³ “Golaka, the Vaishnava heaven of eternal Beauty and Bliss.” (Sri Aurobindo)

⁴ “The highest state of pure existence, consciousness and beatitude attainable by the soul without complete extinction in the Indefinable.” (Sri Aurobindo)

⁵ “Extinction, not necessarily of all being, but of being as we know it...” (Sri Aurobindo)

⁶ *The Life Divine*, p. 24.

⁷ & ⁸ *Savitri*, Book X, Canto II, p. 685.

⁹ *The Life Divine*, p. 24.

These, then, are the two great denials—the materialist's negation and the refusal of the ascetic—and it is obvious that if either of these represented the true truth of existence, then "any divinisation or transformation of the body or of anything else would be nothing but an illusion, a senseless and impossible chimera."¹

But, as a matter of fact, this is not so. These views represent indeed aspects of the Truth but in no way the whole of the Truth nor the liberating integral Knowledge that would harmonise all partial and segmented views of existence and at the same time transcend them.

The present essay seeks to meet the arguments leading to these two great Negations and show in the light of the Integral Yoga-Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo that, although some of the propositions held by the materialist and the exclusive spiritual seeker are indeed valid in their own way, their total view of things as well as the negating inferences they profess to arrive at lack altogether in conclusive cogency. We shall try to justify, on metaphysical as well as on scientific grounds, the glorious prospect of the transfiguration of the body and indicate, again in the light of the Supramental Vision vouchsafed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, how far and in what way the insistent problems of food and sleep, fatigue and inertia, sex and sensuality, animal impulses and appetites, diseases and decay, and finally the Sphinx-like problem of death and dissolution are going to be solved in the transformed divine body to appear. We shall incidentally seek to find out—in however meagre and suggestive a measure—any corroborative evidence gleaned from the field of biological evolution so far, for after all "evolution...must have at any given moment a past with its fundamental results still in evidence, a present in which the results it is labouring over are in process of becoming, a future in which still unevolved powers and forms of being must appear till there is the full and perfect manifestation."² And so Nature, the Great Mother, must have left her clues of approach even in the earlier phases of the great World-Becoming that is being worked out through this process of evolution.

END OF PART ONE

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth*, p. 61.

² *The Life Divine*, pp. 630-631.

MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

(Continued from the last issue)

CHAPTER V

THE PROSPECTS TODAY

A FEW statements, old and new, will show them.

Modern man begins to see that every step in material 'progress' adds just so much force to the threat of a more stupendous catastrophe."—Carl Jung, *Modern Man In Search of a Soul*.

"Shall we then sin, that grace may abound?"—Bible.

"The old order is over anyhow."—Gerald Heard.

"Do you not hear the entrance of a new theme?"—Cecil Day Lewis.

"O Lord, this is not the work of one day nor children's sport."—*Imitation of Christ*.

"The way is all so very plain that we may lose the way."—G.K.Chesterton.

So, where do we stand today, and where do we go from here? and how does mysticism come in?

We stand, at last, trembling and tottering, on the edge of the Abyss, and if we do not choose wisely we may, as many fear, go under. This is no rhetorical threat, such as prophets of doom delight to deliver. The Western world *is* tottering under the onslaughts of forces of destruction it was harbouring as its most treasured possessions. Our civilisation is challenged by its own offspring. Maybe when the strong have devoured each other—perhaps it would not be so bad if they devoured only each other and left the others—the mystics shall inherit the earth. How much better if that could happen before the Disaster, and the costly education avoided! Whatever happens, the mystics have always pointed to the necessity of choice, if we are to go ahead or even survive, the choice that might provide the necessary breakthrough. It will never be an easy thing, even if we agree to follow them, which is not certain. Nearly everything in our modern society seems opposed to it. To accept the mystic insight and activity would mean a radical change of nearly every idea and institution responsible for the present phase of our civilization, or de-civilization as some would like

to call it. Maybe the hour has come, as William James said, when mysticism must be faced in good earnest.

Going back in history one remembers that Hume wrote, with characteristic self-assurance: "If we take in our hand any volume, of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity and number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact or evidence? No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." In the light of a larger knowledge his own book would be perhaps the first to qualify for that singular honour! As Sorokin points out: "We have seen that modern sensate culture emerged with a major belief that true reality and true value were mainly or exclusively sensory. Anything that was supersensory was either doubtful as a reality, or, being imperceivable by the senses, amounted to the non-existent . . . Its first positive fruit is an unprecedented development of the natural sciences and technological inventions. The first poisonous fruit is a fatal narrowing of the realm of true reality and true value."¹ It is this "fatal narrowing" that has led many of our thinkers and artists, guilty, uneasy and afraid, openly or by indirection towards the Mystic Way. Some have been apprehensive of spelling it clearly lest it sound too unorthodox or un-'scientific', while others have not hesitated to announce their affiliation, discovery, or re-discovery. Dean Inge, for instance. "I am venturing to predict," he wrote, "a revival of spiritual or otherworldly religion. . . . I have this opinion partly on the tendency of human nature to seek for compensations. Now that the idols...are lying broken at the foot of the pedestals; now that...the last western heresy, the belief in an automatic law of progress, has been so far disproved... that it has become a manifest absurdity; now that we are losing faith in our political institutions, it is plain that we must either give up hope...or once more fix our hearts where true joys are to be found...If, as I believe, we are threatened not with another Dark Age, but with a period of contracting civilization, we are likely to see a revival of community life, and perhaps another flowering time of mysticism and mystical religion. . . . If I am right, if we may look for a rebirth of spiritual religion, we must expect, as in former revivals, it will be very independent of the Churches, and not too kindly regarded by the ecclesiastics."² Such opinions are gaining ground, within and without the churches. The voice of wisdom has always been heard above the mêlée. Here it is, once again, up to date, from Sri Aurobindo:

"At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny, for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man's ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become

too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it....It is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggressive expansion of the collective ego. At the same time Science has put at his disposal many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something....But because the burden which is being laid on mankind is too great for the present littleness of the human personality and its petty mind and small life-instincts, because it cannot operate the needed change, because it is using this new apparatus and organisation to serve the old infraspirtual and infrarational life-self of humanity, the destiny of the race seems to be heading dangerously, as if impatiently and in spite of itself, under the drive of the vital ego seized by colossal forces which are on the same scale as the huge mechanical organization of life and scientific knowledge which it has evolved, a scale too large for its reason and will to handle, into a prolonged confusion and perilous crisis and darkness of violent shifting incertitude. Even if this turns out to be a passing phase or appearance and a tolerable structural accommodation is found which will enable mankind to proceed less catastrophically on its uncertain journey, this can only be a respite. For the problem is fundamental and in putting it evolutionary Nature in man is confronting herself with a critical choice which must one day be solved in the true sense if the race is to arrive or even to survive.”³

An informed, integral mysticism could be an overall answer to all this, a way out of the impasse. “A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being” is the hope, for which the mystics have always stood. This will be the Universal or Invisible Church of those that know, “the unifying of history” for which we have been waiting and which this age, if it so wills, might make possible. This will not be done by any get-together of ecumenical councils to settle ancient theological disputes. The world and not any accredited church, or number of churches, the united or disunited nations, is the mystical body of God. But the details of transition may well be left on the knees of the gods, if they have any use for an erring human race.

"From the integralist standpoint, the present antagonism between science, religion, philosophy, ethics and art is unnecessary, not to mention disastrous. In the light of an adequate theory of true reality and purpose, they all are one, and all serve one true purpose: the unfolding of the Absolute in the relative empirical world, to the greater nobility of Man and to the greater glory of God. As such they should and can co-operate in the fulfilment of this greatest task....Our remedy demands a complete change of the contemporary mentality, a fundamental transformation of our system of values, and the profoundest modification of our conduct toward other men, cultural values, and the world at large."⁴ To the eye of faith: "Therefore the time grows ripe and the tendency of the world moves toward a new and comprehensive affirmation in thought and in inner and outer experience and to its corollary, a new and rich self-fulfilment for the race."

This, one might say, is the theory or expectation. But it is obvious that there will be many problems of transition likely to wreck the plan, failures that would be a sore trial to the faithful. So while we must not look for any short cut, indeed must anticipate a long, even endless labour of adjustment and renewal, this will be a much better thing than to acquiesce in the existing evil or wait for an inglorious exit which is all that the present dispensation promises and so liberally distributes every now and then.

If, apparently, no age has been more removed than ours from any such attitude or approach as we have tried to outline, none needs it so much. In fact, we are loud in opposing it. But in most traditional views hostility to truth is a recognised technique and difficulties have been termed opportunities. This unspiritual age of ours, at least based on unspiritual foundations, calls for its opposites. The dreadful message of the Atom, the *ne plus ultra* of separation and slaughter, calls for the Atman, the ultimate of all Unity. In the words of our most sensitive historical thinker: "The release of atomic energy by Western technology in A.D. 1945 has had three effects on the Western technician's position. After having been undeservedly idolized, for a quarter of millennium, as the good genius of Mankind, he has suddenly found himself undeservedly execrated, as an evil genius who has released from his bottle a jinn that may perhaps destroy human life on Earth. The arbitrary change in the technician's fortunes is a severe ordeal, but his loss of popularity has not hit him so hard as his loss of confidence in himself. Till 1945 he believed, without a doubt, that the results of his work were wholly beneficent. Since 1945 he has begun to wonder whether his professional success may not have been a social and moral disaster."⁵ Earlier, in *Modern Man In Search of a Soul*, Jung had told us of the working of the law of psychic compensation, how while the champions of the French Revolution were celebrating the worship of the Goddess of Reason (very appropriately, one might add, impersonated by a lady from the streets, *une fille de joie*) the West had also received its first translation of the *Upamshads*. "I cannot take it as an accident," says Jung, "it seems to me rather [to satisfy a psychological law whose validity in personal life, at least, is complete....No psychic value can disappear without being replaced by another of

equivalent intensity....(Du Perron) brought the Eastern mind to the West, and its influence upon us we cannot yet measure. Let us beware of underestimating it."

In our present crisis too, the Decline of the West which engulfs us all, the star may rise in the East, the East being the land where the Sun rises. What Father Zosima, in *The Brother Karmazov*, says about the east is true of the mystics, for they are always turned towards it. "And when the time comes, they will show it to the tottering creeds of the world, . . . That is the great thought. The star will rise out of the East." That is why we have now and then used the insight of an eastern sage too little known for his importance. But this implies no idolatry of place, person or geography. The East or the Sun is a symbol and not a physical object. To talk in terms of division and differences even here can but be a continuing folly. It is a common crisis and the resources of mysticism everywhere are needed for all alike. Maybe in the process mysticism itself will shed some of its historical forms, its excesses and accidents and acquire a new look. In this respect those venerable elders—not a few!—who are still trying to perpetuate the dying gospel of separation between peoples, are perhaps not acting in the best interest of the cause. As someone has said, it is strange how the Devil has invaded the realm of mystical theology and shares the ground about equally with God. To set, for instance, the mysticisms of the East and the West at variance is to carry over from an earlier, false feud; it is to prolong that "blandly bumptious provincialism" which has today little or no right to exist. To say, as Denis de Rougement and Henri Massis have done, that Eastern mysticism is unacceptable, or, as Zaehner has said even more openly, that it is a heresy is not likely to endear them to lovers of truth. In one of his earlier essays T.S.Eliot had informed us that "a spirit of excessive tolerance is to be deprecated". Indeed, for how else can we appreciate the strength of his own suggestion? It is sad to see even Maritain falling for these futile and false distinctions, between what he calls natural experience and supernatural experience. How revealing, in this context, is Sadhu Sunder Singh's sad reflection on such dogmatists: "very nice but very narrow"! Simone Weil, who was no church theologian, saw into the truth more clearly than those with this more-holy-than-thou complex. "It is necessary," she said, "that differences should not decrease friendship and that friendship likewise should not decrease difference." Behold, how they love one another, said the pagans about the early Christians. How one wishes the same could be said about the self-styled mystics ! Perhaps the mystics know the truth all right, it is the narrow-minded pundits, the intellectuals and the ecclesiastics, who fail in the final test, whose pride and puerility prevent them from recognising the simple truth of unity in diversity. As Krishna said, it is only children that make distinctions. The great mystics have preferred to echo the poet's tongue : "O world, I cannot hold you close enough !" To the agent of division they would say, with one voice, *Nescio te*, I know you not. How much more tolerant, in this respect, has been the attitude of the eastern sages ! Toynbee, who is never weary of drawing Christian conclusions for the disasters of our times, has rightly recognised the exemplary tradition of toleration that has marked eastern and Hindu mysticism.

The demand that one's religious sentiment be comprehensive makes for tolerance. One knows that one's life alone does not contain all possible values or all facets of meaning. Other people too have their stake in truth. The religion of maturity makes the affirmation "God is", but only the religion of immaturity will insist, "God is precisely what I say He is". The Hindu Vedas were speaking mature language when they asserted, "Truth is one, men call it by many names." In the words of Kabir : "Benares is to the East, Mecca to the West, but explore your heart, there is both Ram and Allah." Or, to quote the Persian sufi :

My heart has become capable of every form; it is a pasture
for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks;
And a temple for idols, and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the
table of Torah and the book of the Koran.
I follow the religion of Love, whichever way his camels take.

This is the universal and non-denominational form of mysticism, the most likely form of the world religion to be. Factionalism, such as exists, will have to go, these cherished dogmas of the schools will have to go, before the truth which demands our total loyalty. The deeper one goes into the psyche the less is one bothered by these man-made differences. The differences exist, but to insist on them and them alone, is to fail to see the sense of their existence, it is to declare oneself as immature. For these are not differences that divide, but "sweet difference of the Same". In true mystical experience, "East and West and other differences vanish".

(To be continued)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

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ESSAYS ON *SAVITRI* AND *PARADISE LOST*

(Continued from the June issue)

3. SOURCE

THERE is a source of each thing, a beginning that makes possible the creation of an object. There is one point where a thing starts and unless one reaches this causal point, one may very well miss the very stuff of a creation—specially when one is dealing with such great creations as the two epics in question.

We have had scholarly debates regarding Milton's source and the many drafts that he experimented on, the hundred themes that he considered for his epic, also how much he borrowed from his English contemporaries or his earlier poet-predecessors. We could not add to this research or increase what has been already acquired. But we, for the moment, are concerned with the inner aspect, the esoterical side of the question. After all, the outer issues are but results of the inner causes. If we can tap these, we shall discover what a mere physical research may not yield. We may land in fruitless abstractions, or futile incomprehensible data. But this is better than arriving at conflicting theories that do not make us wiser.

To seek the source of *Paradise Lost*, we must go back to the personality of Milton, his psychological make-up and his environment and how he reacted to it.

All great poets are egoists, self-centred men, which makes possible the intensification of any sentiment, the raising of one sentiment to a pitch of vibrant creativity. Ego-centricity shuts out all other influences and so makes artistic creation possible. What is an ethical loss is a gain in poetry and art. This is because artistic creation needs an opening to planes which are supra-physical and man, as he is, has no opening to these hidden spheres unless he raises himself up or tunes his being's chords to a high pitch of tension. All these are abnormal processes from the point of view of nature. There are two ways one could raise up one's self to a higher state of consciousness—one is by self-discipline and the other is by acute sensitivity—the result of self-centredness. Self-discipline is an arduous process but the other is easy enough if one has a great personality. Milton was a man of character, determination, and unswerving will. He was not one who could take defeat easily or succumb to hostile conditions. His will, determination and his egoism are at the root of his creation of an epic. If one read carefully enough the contents of *Paradise Lost*, one would find Milton's egoism markedly apparent. No amount of religious sentiment, ethical fervour, philosophical aloofness can obliterate this fact. But his ego is not a small or dwarf entity. It has a large personality, a great force of character, an undeniable nobility of strength in spite of the opinions it sets forth or the doctrine put out which seems almost abhorrently strong.

But the ego is only one facet of this creation. Although this poem starts from ego, what it expresses or tries to reveal is something beyond itself. It becomes in a way an instrument of something greater than itself. Milton knows how to curb his ego and, in spite of it, he speaks of something nobler, higher and attempts to reach out of his limitations by the force of his singular will.

A determination alone is not enough to create an epic. A capacity of an extraordinary character is necessary. Milton had this capacity and was acutely aware of it. It was not a foolhardy venture. He had full control of the medium. His intellect, his poetic capacity, his power to tackle the different strings of the situation were immense. His mind's eye had seen beforehand the whole tableau of his epic like a vast panorama. Further he had the capacity to turn a biblical tale into a living epic and give the impression of a vivid truth and not a copy. He added colour, description, form and music and these did affect the originally conceived theme.

Poetry comes like a voice of heaven, and the truer and more faithful the instrument, the greater is the height of poetry or its gripping power. In Milton it began as a lucid note restrained, unadorned. With the growth of his personality, it acquired breadth, it gathered force and grew intense. We can almost say it reaches its climax in *Paradise Lost*, although there are crowning touches in some stray poems. Apart from the egoism and the will to fame, the outward linguistic capacity, there is this poetical element, this poetical fervour standing behind a vivid and expressive instrument, which throws its light on the creative mind and life to express something of itself not as an ego but as a divine self-figure. How one receives and how one utilises this, differs from poet to poet and from instrument to instrument. Milton's ego was a great factor. The poetical soul employed this egoism towards its own end. It increased the capacity by intensification of purpose. It employed the will which in many poets is either in a slumbering state or else misguided into wrong channels. It gave definition, purpose and a fixed aim so that the will could become a channel for its throwing itself out in a potent stream into the mind of the poet. His education, learning, his power of penetration, mental acquisitions, his way of looking at things, his logic, knowledge, and drive, all it employed to give his poem a richer substance and significance. Lastly, it gave the needed vision, the insight, the poetical eye that can see what is screened from the common physical mind.

In Sri Aurobindo we get a totally different aspect of the scheme, owing to the difference in the instrument and the inner composition of the poet and the development of the soul, mind and life. To begin with, he did not start as an egoist like Milton. He had no need for renown or any need for establishing himself as a poet of distinction. He had taken his stand in his soul and had done away with the need of a motivated action that could serve as a spur. This is because the whole psychological structure had undergone a deep spiritual transmutation; what would be an aid to a common poet was to him a hindrance because of his altered status. He did not require to tune the strings of his being to a high pitch by the human process of concentration resulting from egoism. In him the creative process was not a blind way of

working which possesses unconsciously the recipient instrument. He was a conscious tool in the hands of the creative deity, the poetical afflatus; when he wrote *Savitri*, it was for self-expression alone and not for any spurious or lesser motive. Hence his source lay not in his ego, but in his soul. His source was in his pure creative urge and he needed no mediation of a stray and vital urge. One who had risen beyond the limits of common desires and was self-given totally to the supreme Will could have none of these common psychological prompters.

But it is thought that action without motive tends to become insipid or lack the vigour that a motivated action could have. This holds good for the unenlightened soul, the man who has not heard a deeper voice, the being that has not taken for guide the Divine Will. Such a thing would be possible in Milton or any other poet in fact. But Sri Aurobindo starts from a plane of consciousness unreached by Milton. He had access to heights Milton could not imagine even : Milton's highest heaven was the ethical paradise, his loftiest ascent the heaven of theological scriptures. Therefore Sri Aurobindo needed no human ambition to serve as a goad, for all attainment, fulfilment and plenitude were in him. His poetry, instead of becoming insipid, became fuller, richer and intenser.

In Milton the source is the mind; the source of Sri Aurobindo is in the soul. The beginning of Milton's poetry lay in a marked influence of the poetical daemon while that of Sri Aurobindo lies in open outbreak of the deity of poetry. She can speak to us through him unhindered, having no screen of ego or motivated action to stand between and interrupt the music. Words actually become an instrument in Sri Aurobindo's hands to reflect, send out, manifest the divine Idea, the uncaught thought-substance, the veiled seed of the inscrutable Spirit.

In Milton's words there are visible patterns that have musical qualities. Sri Aurobindo too was conscious of the musical qualities and tonal value of words, but he was not circumscribed by them but made the words instruments of something behind, something hidden and occult.

Beginning from a lesser height, Milton's poetry has not that sense of inevitability which Sri Aurobindo's has. Because the latter's inspiration comes from beyond the status of thought, it has power and directness. Milton's poetry on the other hand comes garbed with ideas and moods. In fact, his poetry starts with thought and ends with it; it does not soar higher or dive deeper.

Sri Aurobindo began from a different source. He started from the two hidden sources—that of the soul and that of the zones beyond the reason. This statement is only vague, for rich and varied is his inspiration. There are the inner mind and life-parts under the influence of the soul, which reveal the true portions of our mental and vital natures. There is the inner physical that feels the subtle and invisible vibrations and this too is there in his poetry. There are further grades of inspiration : some begin on the height of poetic intelligence, others beyond it on the higher or illumined mind, the intuition or the Overmind. This particular phase we shall develop again in detail in a separate chapter.

Not only thought, but beliefs, faith and personal mental trends are reflected in Milton and form in a way the source of his work. Sri Aurobindo was above these mental particularities, nowhere did his opinions reflect his mannerisms or make them obvious. But Milton's beliefs go to form the very substance of his poetry at times. He induces the inspiraion to channel itself into lines his thought dictates, a result of which is the withdrawal of the full and poignant flow of the inspirational afflatus. He has to rely on his physical mentality to run the show. At such instances we have rhythmized prose at best, lacking the vigour and substance of true poetry.

Thought itself has its limits and its horizons. These too are reflected in the poet, depending on the mental height he has attained. Thoughts can come from the pure intuitional levels or from the level of reason or, lower still, from the life or physical parts : these three levels give respectively clarity, vigour and grossness to the recipient. Milton rarely escapes to the pure intuitive zones; his egoism, his strong earthliness, his dynamic will stopped such aerial adventures. He possessed a rich vibrant will, a great vigour of reason; when he wrote, lines came to him from these zones of mind-afflicted life. This gives him the power and majesty. Reason by itself is incapable of such puissance. Also it lacks the glory, the majesty that come from life. Yet he does not lose hold of mind's height, a majesty and an aloofness. It is this life-portion that creates and is responsible for the creation-forms; mind here has to organise these formations. So, not only richness but organised variety is here; none of Milton's poetry is ever a loose product.

Another work of the life-part is the endowing of the creation with concreteness. Mind by its very nature is abstract, figurative or symbolic. It deals with pure ideas, thoughts that represent something of the reality behind but not Reality in itself. This abstractness, when not energised by the vital-mind, is almost a dead and unproductive element. Milton, when he is dull, draws his inspiration from this source. But oftener he can tune himself to the mixed inspiration wedding the concrete and the abstract.

In Sri Aurobindo, the soul was the creator, but it too needed something tangible to manifest its beauty, power and bliss. Unlike Milton, his creativity springs from the inner life-parts, the inner emotions, the inner substance of the mind rather than the outer mind, the discursive reason or the mind fused with the life-portions. Its splendour, colour, variety, surprises, music hail from these inner worlds. Just as Milton takes his stand on the mind, with life and will enriching his mental creation, Sri Aurobindo took his stand on the soul, with life, mind and emotions under the sway of the psyche. The intensity of Milton has a vital and rational nature; but that of Sri Aurobindo has the character of the soul with the vast influence and life-beat of the Spirit. In spite of his closeness to life, Milton fails to leave a deep enough impression like Sri Aurobindo.

(To be continued)

A READING OF VALMIKI

THE leading motive in both the 'Ramayana' and the 'Mahabharata' is the Indian idea of dharma. Yet there is a difference. The ethics of Vyasa belong to the liberated mind, to those who are ready for a life of Yoga. His is the gospel of निष्काम कर्म. Valmiki however is nearer to erring humanity. His more humanely moral spirit has also been more poetically presented in the sense that it is more concrete, steeped in emotion proceeding from the heart and acting through the heart.

It is not often that human beings are forced to choose between two courses of action appearing to be equally moral—as Arjuna for instance had to on the battlefield at Kurukshetra. In those situations we are advised to rise above the conflict and see things as the Divine sees them and become an instrument of His Vision and Will. The 'Ramayana' presents situations more common. Every one of us faces such situations every now and then—situations where the conflict between the desires of the ego on the one hand and the choice made by us in our highest state of consciousness in obedience to the inner voice of Truth on the other becomes so acute that the best of us are violently forced into giving up the Dharma and doing things which go to nourish our attachments. The concept of Dharma as presented in the Indian epics is indeed complex. It passes beyond our modern notions of ethics—ethics based on reason. It may be called, as presented in the 'Ramayana', spiritualized ethics—a system of ethics based on सत्य—a perception of truth when a man is in the highest state of consciousness. The glory of the 'Ramayana' consists in its concretely presenting this Dharma and the conflict arising from an attempt to practise it.

An attempt is made in this article to study certain sections of Bala-kanda with a view to discovering the theme of the whole epic and showing how the images and episodes are so organized as to help us to realize it. The first book is taken up deliberately. Hermann Jacobi says that the tone of this book is in striking contrast with that of the genuine parts of the second book and feels that it is a later addition. Strangely enough even some Indian admirers of the epic hold the same—to my mind—mistaken view. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, a genuine lover of Valmiki, says that the stories of Sagara and his sons making the ocean and of the descent of the Ganges seem to be interpolations.

The two values strongly stressed in the epic are Satya and Dharma; Satya as seen in the प्रतिज्ञा and the वाक्य and Dharma as seen in the fulfilment of a promise made. You give your word that you will do something—when you are in a heightened state or consciousness. But later on when you find that the fulfilling of it brings you suffering and pain largely created by your ego—your attachment to persons or things—you would like to go back on your प्रतिज्ञा. Dasaratha is typical of the normal cultured man who is in a state of conflict and Rama is the अवतार पुरुष embodying in himself Dharma—the person who would not only himself uphold the cause of Truth but help others to do it. And the events show the chastening influence of the sufferings undergone by the characters in the fulfilment of प्रतिज्ञा.

In a well-written epic we perceive that the plot, episodes, characters and diction all go to emphasize and reinforce the vision, and the reader with 'sensibility' recreates in himself the experiences by responding adequately to the medium. Valmiki's 'Ramayana' has been and is a most popular epic. But the enjoyment of the poetry of Valmiki is the last reward of consummated Vedic and Upanishadic scholarship. The sloka, that is often chanted before the Scripture is used for पारायण or religious purposes, defines the right reader of Valmiki. It runs thus

वेदवेद्ये परे पुंसि जाते दशरथात्मजे ।
वेद. प्राचेतसादासीत् साक्षाद्रामायणात्मना ॥

Sri Kuppuswami Sastri says that this should be punctuated in two ways, with a comma before जाते and a comma after जाते and it should be read in prose in two ways वेदवेद्ये परे पुंसि दशरथात्मजे जाते and दशरथात्मजे वेदवेद्ये परे पुंसि जाते—thus 'the supreme God of the Veda fulfilled himself in the highest type of Manhood as embodied in Sri Rama, Dasaratha's son; and the latter rose to his full stature of manhood and thus rose to the Brahmanhood of the Veda; then the ultra-human Veda came to have its delightful fulfilment in the essentially human Ramayana, through the Seer-poet Prachetasa'. The audience of Valmiki's Ramayana must have been, then, aristocrats of culture—scholars well-versed in the Vedas and Upanishads—to see the epic as the embodiment of the Veda itself. The ordinary reader may of course enjoy the story so well told; but he misses a good deal if he does not pause to examine the words. Let us turn to sargas 19, 20 and 21 of Bala Kanda to see what such an examination can reveal to us.

At the end of sarga 20, the sage Viswamitra arrives. King Dasaratha

receives him warmly. The noble king welcoming the great sage is presented appropriately in

प्रत्युज्जगाम त हृष्टो ब्रह्माणमिव वासवः ।

The visit is a great blessing to him in every sense of the term and he says :

यथा मृतस्य संप्राप्तिः यथा वर्षमनूदके ।
यथा सदृशदारेषु पुत्रजन्माप्रजस्य च ॥

—really a felt experience for the speaker. Then follows most naturally his assurance—his promise to do whatever the sage wants to be done.

इच्छाम्यनुगृहीतोऽहं त्वदर्थपरिवृद्धये ।
कार्यस्य न विमर्शं च गन्तुमर्हसि कौशिक ।
कर्त्ता चाहमशेषेण दैवतं हि भवान् मम ॥

Sage Viswamitra is happy : परमं ऋषि परमं जगाम हर्षम्. He has come to take his sons to help him in performing a यज्ञ. He requests him to send his sons along with him. He knows that Rama and Lakshmana can and will help him. He would protect them and help them to kill the demons :

शक्तो ह्येष मया गुप्तो दिव्येन स्वेन तेजसा ।
श्रेयश्चास्मै प्रदास्यामि बहुरूपं न सशयं ॥

The sage then proceeds to say that he knows Rama as nobody else does—

अहं वेद्मि महात्मानं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ।
वसिष्ठोऽपि महातेजा ये चेमे तपसि स्थिता ॥

After this categorical declaration there can be no hesitation. We expect Dasaratha to send his children along with the sage. But on hearing the words—विश्वामित्रवचः शुभ— Dasaratha becomes sad.

इति हृदयमनोविदारणं मुनिवचनं तदतीव शुश्रुवान् ।
नरपतिरगमन् महान् महात्मा व्यथितमना प्रचचाल चासनात् ॥

The last two words indicate so well the fall from a height—the state of consciousness in which the promise was made. It takes sometime for him to recover and his reply begging the sage to excuse him does not become

the great king of the Ikshwaku family. Valmiki writes : मुहूर्तमिव निःसंज्ञः संज्ञावान् इदमब्रवीत् ... These are words born of attachment, an attachment that makes him blind, stupid as it were. He would rather go himself.

Viswamitra is angry, but then he is not now the Kshatriya who fought with Vasishta. He is a Brahmarishi and his anger will not destroy. It will if anything only purify, chasten. Here is a picture of the sage :

इति नरपतिकुलजल्पनात् द्विजेन्द्र कुशिकसुत सुमहान् विवेश मन्यु ।
सुहृत इव मखे अग्निराज्यसिक्तः समभवत् उज्ज्वलितो महर्षिवह्नि ॥

Here is a happy instance of Valmiki's marvellous power of using words to evoke in the right reader a precise complex response, to evoke the combination of emotions and associations appropriate to the context. The life and growth of genuine poetry depend, according to Sanskrit poetics, upon a delightful synthesis of the artist and the art critic; of Kavi and sahridaya; of charm and response. And here are words which are only exquisitely detailed compulsions on a mind willing and able to be so compelled. Viswamitra is महर्षिवह्नि which may be rendered महर्षिश्रेष्ठः . True, it means that. But in describing him as वह्नि in a मखे Valmiki has put into the verse a whole world of association—what C. S. Lewis would call 'the subterranean Virtue' which we don't see in the rendering महर्षिश्रेष्ठः . वह्नि is that which carries and conveys our offerings to the proper deities. The ideal reader would again recall here the verse in Kathopanishad :

वैश्वानरः प्रविशति अतिथिः । ब्राह्मणो गृहान्

'Fire is the brahmin who enters as a guest the houses of men'—Viswamitra is the वैश्वानर (guest-fire), the bright flame fed by समित and आज्य. He is bright and powerful. He is however not destructive. This fire which is सुहृत can only chasten and purify and carry one to real joy. One has only to contrast it with the anger for instance of Ravana when Sitadevi refuses to be tempted : Ravana ज्वाला सहसा कोपात् चितास्थ इव पावकः—where the same fire-image is used to indicate a reversal of values—frustrated lust.

Sage Viswamitra's anger is not destructive. We understand the irony in मिथ्याप्रतिज्ञा काकुत्स्थ सुखी भव सबान्धवः . One who has gone back on his word cannot be happy and so the passage means दुःखीभव . It also means मिथ्याप्रतिज्ञात्वमूला भाविनी दुःखपरंपरा नावगच्छति Dasaratha does not see the consequences of his action. But Viswamitra is not going to be upset by it. Dasaratha is the loser and so it means in addition :

अपि च शापदानसमर्थः अपि अहं न ददामि कमपि शापम् । किन्तु विहतप्रतिज्ञस्यापि तव सुखावस्थानमेव अनुजानामि इति विश्वामित्रस्य स्वसाधुत्वप्रकटनम् । He is really सुहृतः महर्षिवह्नि ।

Vasishta is detached and sees in the whole event a प्रतिज्ञा violated because of attachment. The सज्ञावान् has become, owing to attachment, नि सज्ञ and he advises Dasaratha :

इक्ष्वाकणा कुले जात. साक्षात् धर्म इवापर ।
धृतिमान् सुव्रतः श्रीमान् न धर्मं हातुमर्हसि ॥
सश्रुत्यैव करिष्यामि इत्यकुर्वाणस्य राघव ।
इष्टापूर्तवधो भूयात् तस्माद्रामं विसर्जय ॥

The last Verse (recalling to us again the Kathopanishad in its reference to इष्टापूर्तवध) is to be noted as describing the nature of the violation. When Vasishta explains, and assures him, that it is for his own and for his own son's good that he should send Rama, Dasaratha becomes प्रसन्नचित्त and offers to send his sons.

The episode outlines thus the central theme of the whole epic. What is the nature of a प्रतिज्ञा ? What aspects of a man's character tempt him to violate it ? What are the consequences of the violation or the fulfilment ? The story of the Ramayana is just an elaboration of the theme of this minor episode. In the hurry of King Dasaratha in Ayodhya Kanda, in his fondness for his son which makes him resolve upon the coronation without even informing the near relations, in the conflict of attachments which bring about the कलुष in the will or बुद्धि we see the whole drama repeated. Nobody can advise him in that state. It requires all the resolution of the avatar to help the sentimental father to keep his प्रतिज्ञा . It is significant that in the description of Dasaratha's state in the sarga entitled दशरथसमाश्वासन the words used are विसर्जयिव दुःखेन ...etc. Rama tells him

अहं त्वरण्ये वत्स्यामि न मे कार्यं त्वयानृतम् ।
नवपञ्च च वर्षाणि वनवासे विहृत्य ते ।
पुनः पादौ ग्रहीष्यामि प्रतिज्ञान्ते नराधिप ॥

And Dasaratha gives his consent सत्यपाशेन संयतः

In between this exordium and the central story we have two more episodes which only reinforce the main theme : the story of Bhagiratha bringing down गङ्गा and the story of Viswamitra himself. Nothing is more natural than that the young princes should request the old sage to tell them all about the beautiful scenes they see on their way. The story of the Descent of गङ्गा is the most significant of the many stories—as one bringing out the triumph of one of Rama's own ancestors in fulfilling a प्रतिज्ञा Brahma tells Bhagiratha at the moment of his triumph :

पितामहानां सर्वेषां त्वमत्र मनुजाधिप ।
 कुरुष्व सलिल राजन् प्रतिज्ञाम् अपवर्जय ॥
 पूर्वकेण हि ते राजन् तेनातियशसा तदा ।
 धर्मिणां प्रवरेणापि नैष प्राप्तो मनोरथः ॥
 तथैवाशुमता तात लोकेऽप्रतिमतेजसा ।
 गङ्गां प्रार्थयता नेतु प्रतिज्ञा नापवर्जिता ॥

 सा त्वया समतिक्रान्ता प्रतिज्ञा पुरुषर्षभ ॥

The recurrence of प्रतिज्ञा, the stress on तपस्, a self-annihilating penance which enables one to fulfil the प्रतिज्ञा, deserve to be noted.

The story of the sage Viswamitra narrated appropriately by his disciple is again the story of a Kshatriya king striving to make himself a Brahmarishi by tapas. Rajasic impulses overcome him but he would not yield. He succeeds at last and becomes the complete man embodying in himself ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च.

Studied in this perspective the episodes become 'expanded metaphors', imaginative presentations of ideals for the young princes whose education seems to be the subject of Bala Kanda. There is, to start with, the direct education—the sage instructing them to use the weapons and the upadesa of Mantras. The Killing of Tadaka and the Yagna Samrakshana give the heroes an opportunity to show their mastery of the 'skills'. Then follow the episodes which have a marvellous effect on the soul of the young princes—placing before them heroic ideals which they would embody in themselves. We see how the stories touch their imagination in the following words of Rama.

अत्यद्भुतम् इदं ब्रह्मन् .
 क्षणभूतेव नौ रात्रि संवृत्तेयं महातप ।
 इमां चिन्तयतः सर्वान् निखिलेन कथां तव ॥

The story of Ahalya introduced between the major episodes is a story of separation and reunion by तपस् of the immortal couple symbolizing chastity. It not only prepares us for the marriage of Sri Rama but anticipates the separation and the reunion of the main story, and hints at another of the themes of the epic.

The Vision of Valmiki is thus a vision of spiritualized ethics. Life is a field for action. Righteous action or Dharma is the result of a choice that we make. 'A choice is a decision and an act. Preference is a desire, an impulse. Life is a series of conflicts between preferences and choice.

Choice is made and should be made, and if it is truly a choice, it is made without the least care for consequences, without the expectation of any result...You have chosen according to your inner truth, according to your highest consciousness सत्य; what the consequences will be is no business of yours. You have made your choice and the true choice. On the contrary if you have a preference you listen to your impulse and not to your inner voice of truth; it is the preference that will distort your choice and action. That will be calculation, that will be bargaining. You will act not because that is the truth, the true action to do but with the idea of getting a certain result—a satisfaction of your impulses and desires and that means you go down.’¹

My contention is that a local analysis of passages by readers who bring to the ‘Ramayana’ the right kind of sensibility will help us not only to see what a great poet can do with words but also to re-examine and revalue the relevance of those passages which are looked upon as spurious just because they do not advance the action or provide other interests. But that is a task not for an amateur but for the competent scholar.

V. S. SETURAMAN

¹ The Mother’s Conversations (*Bulletin*).

THE STORY OF PURURAVUS AND URVASIE

RETOLD FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S NARRATIVE POEM *Urvasie*

(Continued from the last issue)

CHAPTER II

URVASIE COMES TO PURURAVUS

MARVELLING and glad Urvasie went from the dawn and the mountain. She was no longer like a careless sunbeam as of old. An august constraint ruled her extravagant grace and wayward beauty. Familiar things grew strange to her and mists of mortal vision came to her eyes. Love was there with her but not of Paradise. For it was rapturous, troubled, self-absorbed, a gracious human presence which she loved, wondered at and hid deep in her heart. Whether she moved in the immortals' dance or brightened the harps of heaven with her fingers, whether she went to bathe in the heavenly streams, wandered in the woods of Eden or in a golden evening sat under peaceful boughs, all her celestial occupations, all that she thought and was, although the same, changed. There was a happy trouble in her ways and movements; her felicitous lashes drooped with a burden. Her daily acts were a statue imitating life, not single-hearted like the sovran Gods.

Now there was peaceful summer amongst the Gods. In heaven songs increased and dances swayed in multitudinous beauty. Often in high Indra's hall the immortal spirits met to watch the divine shows of action in a celestial theatre, for the delicate arts are not of earth alone but have their rich prototypes in heaven. On that day the "Choice of Lakshmi" was staged before the divine audience. The Goddess, Ocean's child, was played by Urvasie; Menaka was Varuni and the other girls took different parts.

In one of the scenes Menaka with a golden wave of her arm towards the warlike consistory indicated Vishnu where he sat like a cloud, discus-armed, and she said to her sister, "Daughter of Ocean, sister, you have scanned the dreadful beauty and heard the blissful names of the eternal powers of heaven; before these listening faces say whom you love above all the gods?" Musing with wide unseeing eyes Urvasie replied in a far voice, "The King Pururavus." Then a gust of laughter swept through the assembled gods, a happy summer sound. But Bharata, the mighty dramatist of heaven, seeing his smooth work marred, was angered and cursed her, "Since you have brought the mortal air into the pure solemnities of heaven I curse you to possess your heart's desire. Exiled from heavenly streams and golden groves enjoy your love by the terrestrial Ganges, on sad majestic mountains or in troubled towns; do not

hope here to breathe felicity in regions built for peace. For the gods, erect in their own nature, keep the glorious world living by fated toil." He ceased; the gods were silent.

Though ill-pleased, Indra answered smiling, "Bharata, it is not allowed by the fates to exile without limit from the skies one who is a part of the skies. Will you banish her from our groves and streams and make them empty of her smile?" The severe high poet Bharata replied, "The doom pronounced by my lips is irrevocable. But if you speak of limit, nature that fixed the limits still inevitably effects its fated ends. For fate, the dim great presence, is but nature made irrevocable in its fruits. Let Urvasie go to the pure banks of sacred Ganges. There she may keep her exile, it was intended from of old for the perfection of earth through her sweet change. Heaven too shall grow fairer with her returning feet. For she will come human, blest with touches of the warm delightful earth."

Then Urvasie departed from the dumb place and the presence of the thoughtful gods into the breezy noon of heaven. Under green boughs laden with nameless fruits, over blissful swards and perfect flowers and through the wandering alleys she arrived at the heavenly Ganges where it streams over stones. With one little golden hand gathering her dress above her naked knees she stepped downward and passed through the pellucid river to the gates of heaven, pausing on the slope that goes towards the world. She looked with yearning eyes far into endless space. All heaven was behind her, but she sent no look to those eternal seats of joy. She gazed down the sunbeams where the bleak mighty hills of earth rose in snow and on vast virgin forests, great infant streams, cities that were young in the heroic dawn of history. As she gazed, her sister Tilottama came shining out of heaven, clasped her quiet hand and softly murmured, "Sister, let us go." Then they went down to the waiting world. Through mute gorges the golden women passed Budricayshwar in the silent snows and silently Urvasie came to Pururavus.

For Pururavus did not sojourn in the streets of the Ilian city or in the happy throng of men but with the infinite and lovely hills. He was weary of palaces and temples, the tramp of men, the sessions of Kings, battles and the mighty chant of the Vedas and all the daily occupations of his people. He loved no more the blaze of kingship with its immense iron toils, with one hand shielding the ease of his people and with the other smiting back the tireless foe. These things were no longer alive to him but were like pale magnificent ghosts out of the past closing him with sad obsession from warm life. For in his heart and in his musing eyes there was a light on the cold snows, a blush upon the virgin quiet of the East and a storm and slowly-lifting lids. So he left the Ilian city and the plains.

He journeyed to the cold North till in the sixth month of his uneasy pilgrimage he came to a silent place amidst huge mountains covered with snows. In that waste and wonderful region he sojourned. The morning and the evening star shone and faded over him. An immense darkness wrapped the hushed mountain solitudes and brilliant musings of the moonlight and the cold stars, then the day brightening on their sum-

mits. Before the day advanced, the hero nympholept climbed towards the summits and came down with the falling evening. He lay watching the marvellous sky. He did not call sleep or need food, he who had now grown a god. In the seventh month of his long waiting he climbed the summits no more but sat motionless in the surrounding hush gazing towards the gorge. He sat six days and on the seventh they came, the girls of Eden stepping with moonbeam feet over the barren rocks and dazzling snows, their tresses half-bound, and their delicate raiment girdled enchantingly. The perfect presences of heaven came silent towards him and stood a little away like flowers waiting for a sunbeam. He did not stir but, merged in vision, sat without voice.

Then divine Tilottama, holding her sister's hand, drew nearer and stood before his statuesque silence. Extending one bright arm she spoke, "Pururavus, you have conquered and I bring no dream into your life but Urvasie." And at that name strong Pururavus rose swaying to his feet like one struck blind. Slowly the divine Tilottama said, "Yet, O son of Ila, one is man, other are the Apsaras of heaven, daughters of the sea, unlimited in being, Ocean-like. They do not yield to one lord, they do not limit the universe in one face but remain pure in unrestrained surrender like sweet air, unowned water and beautiful common light. We fill large high-venturing spirits with sacred passion and visit them with bliss so that they may be moved to creative anguish. In heaven we clasp the gods and the souls of men with bodily embrace and know liberty with wind and flowers. But what have you with us or winds or flowers? Will you not keep your pure and lovely eminence and move for ever towards morning like a star?

"As the Ganges that rolls down between homes and passionate deeds of men, bearing many boats and white with oars, and yet is separate from all that life and only lives towards the Ocean, so you do human work, making a mighty nation, doing high and necessary deeds but all untouched by action, and live in your soul apart to climb pure to the immortal zenith."

But he said low, "One, I thought, spoke far-off of purity and whiteness and the human soul in God. These things were with me once, but now I see the Spring. All beautiful things draw near and come to me. What shall God profit me who love one small face more than all His worlds?" He woke with his own voice. He beheld her standing and his look grew strong. Like a wave he yearned towards her and she received him in her eyes as the earth receives the rain.

Then in a shining glory over them Tilottama cried, "O happy lover! the gods do not give irrecoverable gifts, even the highest bliss given to most favoured men is not unconditioned and your deep joy must tremble over her with soul on guard. For one year you shall know her on the peaks, in the solitary vastnesses of the hills and snow-besieged regions. For one year you shall enjoy her in the green forests and delightful streams—and for another year where the busy tramp of men goes by, subduing her to lovely human cares. Afterwards, O King, you shall have her so long as you observe one law. Man may never dwell with an Apsara and both be known.

O Virgin Ila's son, do not reveal to her your naked being, nor allow any light round your body naked to her eyes, lest the day should not dawn on felicity."

She left them, shining up into the sunlight. Pururavas stood for a space like an entranced calm before great winds and thunder. Then through all his limbs there flashed the youth and beauty and warmth of earth and the joy of her left lonely to his will. He moved and came towards her. She cowered, a leaf before a gust among the nearing trees. But, all a sea of mighty joy rushing and swallowing up the golden sand, Pururavas with a great cry seized her and caught her to his bosom, clinging and shuddering. Overborne, panting she lay with inarticulate murmurs, her naked arms clasping his neck, her cheek and golden throat averted, and trouble in her large eyes bewildered with their bliss. Their faces met amid her wind-blown hair. With her sweet limbs all his, he kissed the glorious mouth of heaven's desire. So they clung as two ship-wrecked in a surge. Then, mastering her with his godlike eyes, strong Pururavas cried tremulously, "O beloved, one word to tell me that you love." All broken on his bosom, her godhead lost in his passion, Urvashi moaned out from her imprisoned breasts, "My lord, my love!"

(To be continued)

PRITHWISINGH NAHAR

I DO NOT KNOW

I do not know Thy Name, O Thou who art,
When Thy armour of death and these dreadful feet
Trample the white calm of my praying heart...
I do not know.
But I am the bleeding hill of Thy defeat,
O Mask, of all Thy doom.

I do not know, O One, Thy Name of Light
When Thy swift little feet—touches of the Sun—
Fall on me chasing the retreating night...
I do not know.
But I am Thy path—of this victorious run
And of triumphs that loom.

I do not know Thee, Lord, but I am Thou,
O Giant Warrior behind the death-black shield,
O Radiant One to whom all meadows bow!...
I do not know.
I am the mystery on Thy Battlefield...
I only bloom.

JANINA

(The gifted author of this poem and of several others published in *Mother India* passed away on the 17th of this month. Originally from Poland, Janina came to stay in the Ashram in 1957. She was for several years in charge of one of the Ashram's Nursing Homes. She was also an artist of a rare subtle sensibility.—Editor)

THE MACHINE AGE

(Continued from the last issue)

A ROUNDED harmony is ushered in,
And life's apparent gaps are neatly patched,
But what of sainthood like the Buddha's or Christ's ?
'Buried full fathom five' the answer came,
'Last in the trail of myths and pieties old'.
From weeds and stale aroma of weird faiths,
From the mazes of esoteric camouflage,
From all sheer jargon of the 'inner life'—
The gospel catchwords have been weaned away
To be reoriented and rechristened to suit
The socialistic idiom of the day,
Highlighted by the James-Lange theory :
The outer modes induce the inner state—
We shake and therefore fear or rage is born;
Even so can our external acts of help
Quicken new souls of saintliness in us
Along the social service camps; a whole
Congregation of public-spirited hands,
And legs, and lungs and mouths perform the rites
Of sacrificial service; in full swing—
And watched by charmed ubiquitous cameras—
Thus thrives the vogue of initiation grand
Into the technique of neo-Buddha-hood !
Occult phenomena all turned inside out
By the simple trick of first improving others—
Bettering the world before bettering oneself—
Now shine as clear statistical verities
Of real liberating deeds, whose after-glow
Reacting from without in, leaven-like
Tickles the birth of Love, Compassion, Bliss,
And Truth of oneness with community souls !
Without the vigils lone of Sadhana¹
And long disciplines of indrawn reserves
That opened up the springs of a Greater Force

¹ Spiritual Discipline

Which made the words and acts of the apostles
 The miracle they were—the saviours of to-day
 Just hitch their wagons to the nether stars :
 The strength of numbers, the vast reservoir
 Of mass-energy, the huge dynamo
 Of man-power, sovereign curc for all the ills
 That plague the world; more hands, more service, more
 Of pain dissolved—this is what introverts,
 The prophets, saints, apostles never knew !

 This is the Shivam of the Trinity;
 The other two—Satyam and Sundaram—¹
 Purged of their dross of the fourth-dimensional—
 The inscrutable and the ineffable
 Have also been acclimatized to earth.
 Some 'Charvak'² monster once upon a time
 Perhaps was elbowed out by men of faith :
 His rebel spirit scrambling for revenge
 Was seized upon by the suzerain Mind to serve
 As guardian angel to these twin god-powers,
 And thus preside this cycle of our earth.
 Hence are the Senses now the current coin
 In all transactions of the mind or heart;
 The beast returns and wallows in the slime,
 The Ego splits the whole into infinite parts,
 Then pieces them into convenient wholes.
 And since knowledge is valid, and the Truth is truth
 Only if sense, the arbiter, so declares,
 The Satyam must appease this deity !
 Even if Reason grants the atom can break,
 That must become a fact to convince sense !
 Mén must be blown off showing it can destroy !
 Satyam is knowledge and destruction both—
 For was not Shiva destroyer and Guru too ?
 If Shiva was worshipped, Satyam must be now—
 The modern Science-protagonist of Death-dance :
 Now cosmos must bring chaos new with it !

 But Shiva was also giver par-excellence
 Of gifts whatever asked; that power inheres
 In science—which therefore gives and ever gives,

¹ The True, the Good, the Beautiful—the three aspects of God forming an eternal trinity.

² The Indian materialist and epicure, who denied Soul and God, asserted Matter to be the sole reality and advocated the doctrine of "Eat, drink and be merry".

Nay, more, it whets craving itself, and then
 Is out to feed it; all pursuit of truth
 And knowledge must lead up to this one goal—
 Adoration of the sense with concrete things :
 Along this groove the wheels of Progress move !
 And the law of numbers covers commodities too—
 The articles of need—‘the more the happier’ :
 Hence men and nations all devoutly chase
 The frenzied pastime of possessing more—
 That gives a throb, a pulse, a pep to life !
 But the senses found their fullest homely warmth
 In the seraglio of the Sundaram.
 Among the five the twin prime majesties—
 The queens predominant being the Eye and Ear—
 For them the Sundaram plies the cosmic play
 Within the orbit of their earthly reach;
 For this the mind, past-master in the art
 Of mould and model making, shoots afar,
 Tumbles amid mysterious empyreans,
 Captures their secrets and embodies them
 In the proportions of our finitudes,
 Miniatures of the inaccessible !
 Thus were annexed gods’ fabled privileges—
 No more will Shankar’s third eye¹ blaze in wrath,
 For Kam-Dev died only to live diffused
 In every bosom as an after-boon !
 No more will his voluptuous feet alone
 Spill forth the raptures of a dance divine;
 Nor even the heavenly nymphs’ ravishing rhythms
 Beguile the perpetual holiday of grand-do-nothings;
 No more shall Beauty haunt the heights apart,
 Nor mute star-faces flaunt their nightly grace
 To earth’s despair and wonder; yea, no more
 Shall that lack-lustre Lakshmi of the sky,
 The cold wan moon, dally with dreaming lots:
 The lover, the poet, the lunatic and the child !
 Oh, nevermore the lordly Vrindaban
 Shall hold eternal session in ‘Go-loka’.
 A galvanising fit has gripped the Earth

¹ The occult Eye in the middle of Shiva’s forehead, which opened when He was in wrath—as when Kamadeva, the God of Love, tried to disturb Him in his great austerity and was burnt to ashes. At his wife’s importunity, Shiva revived him but diffused him in the vital nature of every human being.

That might out-heaven the brilliant heaven itself!
 Hot from the crucible will be tossed up soon
 A moon to skip a heady measure round
 The globe at man's bidding, and ginger up
 Sky-gazers' drooping spirits and give earthlings
 Lusty joy-rides at giddy exalted heights
 Which had for want of an actual lift in space
 Been reached by faith and fancy's symbolism!
 And a day may come when this bold pioneer
 Just launches on a quest of the Great Unknown
 Somewhere above in the skies—for suddenly
 Faces in prayer lift up to someone there!
 From all its veils the vault being bared to view,
 There may emerge, perched on the radiant peak
 Of the last Beyond, the Great Domed Sanctuary—
 The seekers' topmost missing link of dream,
 The mystics' looming zero summit of trance!
 Dashing headlong the moon may light upon
 The Lone One nursing. His occult privacies.
 The foremost riddle then of the universe
 Will have been solved for ever afterwards!
 God's massive darkness raided by Man's light,
 Right on God-altitude might be unfurled
 Mind's flag of discovery of the Ultimate Truth!
 Thence only Man's world could be also God's.
 Much is accomplished on the Earth itself.
 Across a neat square firmament now flash
 Unravelling by the Projector's mid Shiva-eye
 New stars that don the flesh, not merely shine,
 To regale blithe proletariat India courts
 At their nocturnal sittings; now behold
 Hladini Shakti's Lila Antarang¹
 (Behind shut doors, open to all who pay)
 Whose elfin strains and bright seraphic sights
 And all the spells of love and loveliness
 Televised upon the waves of popular craze
 Kindle the Bahirang vale from end to end
 Animating streets and homes with rare delight!

¹ In Vaishnava terminology, the powers of Sat, Chit, Ananda are denoted by Sandhim, Samvit, Hladini respectively.

Antarang Lila is the lila (play) going on in the Unmanifest Vrindavan or Goloka (internal). Bahirang Lila is the play in the manifested cosmos (external).

The old monastic cults had starved the sense,
 Shutting the doors upon the Sundaram
 Who knocked and knocked and baffled went away:
 Perchance he had stumbled long before his day
 Into a world morose, Religion-ridden!
 Wooed by Time-Spirit now appeared afresh
 The Beloved with his whole prodigality
 Of charms, as the darling cynosure on the Earth
 Gone wholesale Vaishnav, Love and Beauty-mad!
 All's now mellifluous Banshi round our ears,
 All's treat celestial of enchanting Grace
 Before our eyes; yea, at our very doors
 While He reveals in full terrestrial bloom
 To shut them or have fill is sacrilege!
 While ever the Sundaram pours and pours and pours,
 Each boy and girl—the nation's future hope—
 Must never tire of asking more and more,
 Must never cease to be insatiate!
 Each home must turn into a carnival
 If Chaitanyas dead drunk with joy sublime
 Are to become a mass phenomenon!
 To such a pass all things are veering round!

So was to manifest the Trinity—
 The True, the Good, the Beautiful on our Earth!
 The full blue-print of the planned Elysium sent
 A tremor of concern through the Upper Worlds:
 Forlorn they cried, 'Beware the advancing pace
 'Of the light of common day; the tables turn—
 'The kingdom of Earth may take over heaven itself.'
 Meanwhile the Supreme Almighty's fiat rang:
 'Mind's hectic devil-dance is ebbing out,
 'On Earth the kingdom of Heaven shall descend
 'As was announced by prophets and the books:
 'A dynamic and transcendent destiny
 'Awaited Earth; baptism of brutish fire
 'Prepared the ground for the Spirit's sovereign rule—
 'When a luminous rhythm gathering earth and sky,
 'The heights, the depths, the surface into one
 'Supernal symphony of Love-Light-Peace
 'Shall make man heir to Immortality.'

Glory to thee, O beatific Age of God!

(Concluded)

NARESH BAHADUR

A POET ON POETRY

By far the boldest definition of poetry is A. E. Housman's in that much-in-little of a book, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, which I have recently read again. Yes, the boldest—and yet it seems to be both natural and penetrating, a logical completion of the hints thrown out by other poets concerning their own art.

Wordsworth's is well-known : "All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Byron, with his usual turn for rhetoric expresses this spontaneity and power in a more impressive, almost threatening manner : "Poetry is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake." Shelley has a less psycho-analytic idea and prefers a philosophic statement when he is not making a highly poetic one : "Poetry is not subject to the control of the active powers of the mind, and its birth and recurrence have no necessary connection with the consciousness and will." How many poets must recognise in these dignified phrases a *cri du cœur* about the divine caprices of the Muse! Still more discouraging appears Keats, quite a wet blanket with his simple and pointed utterance : "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all."

Of course anybody who knows Keats's own methods of composition will not commit the mistake of confusing naturalness with immediate fluency. A tree does not put forth its leaves all at once or in a full-grown condition—shape by shape and by various stages the "limpid glory" is born—and, though some works of art may take birth like the Indian magician's mango tree, there are many and perhaps most that follow Nature's patient and progressive curve. So Keats's wet blanket is meant not for imaginative creators, however slow and piecemeal their labours, but for intellectual constructors without that something elemental which is evidently the sum and substance of what Wordsworth and Byron and Shelley are also driving at.

Now comes Housman, himself a fine poet, and says that if poetry is not intellectual at its core and if its function is rather to transfuse emotion than convey thought, it must be defined essentially as independent of intellectual meaning and as consisting of a sort of thoughtless thrill ! Indeed a dangerous view to broadcast when significance and unity are terribly at a discount in modern poetic experiments : it seems to put a crown on the head of gibberish and phantasmagoria—but one's fears are laid at rest by Housman. He illustrates his thesis by choosing no less a genius than Blake : this choice is a very nugget of the true gold of critical perception.

The traditional example of poetry neat and pure is Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. Housman plunges still nearer the heart of things by selecting work which goes even beyond the non-moral, non-intellectual, sheer visionary delight of Xanadu. There is in Coleridge's perfect picture a meaning seizable by the normal intelligence—not surely a logical formula but all the same a harmony of images recognisable by the mind. The stately pleasure-dome, the underground river, the sunless sea, the caves of ice,

the woman wailing for her demon-lover, the maiden with a dulcimer, the poet-wizard with flashing eyes and floating hair are certainly uncommon, yet they are all made to cohere in a vivid whole of revelation : though enchanted beyond humdrum reality, one understands these rare sights because the language renders each clear-cut and "sympathetic" with the rest. Blake, on the other hand, deals often in "embryo" images and "mysterious grandeurs" : nothing is evolved, nothing given a definite mental identity. Take Housman's first quotation :

Hear the voice of the Bard,
 Who present, past and future sees;
 Whose ears have heard
 The Holy Word
 That walked among the ancient trees.

Calling the lapsèd soul
 And weeping in the evening dew;
 That might control
 The starry pole,
 And fallen, fallen light renew.

'O Earth, O Earth, return !
 Arise from out the dewy grass;
 Night is worn,
 And the morn
 Rises from the slumberous mass.

Turn away no more;
 Why wilt thou turn away ?
 The starry floor,
 The watery shore
 Is given thee till the break of day.'

Impossible not to be stirred by this music and this mystery, impossible, again, not to feel that a momentous message is spoken, a perfect harmony created though in a region other than the normal mind. But from what region has the poem derived ?

Housman supplies a tentative answer. He says that all poetry goes back to "something in man which is obscure and latent, something older than the present organisation of his nature, like the patches of fen which still linger here and there in the drained lands of Cambridgeshire." His statement combines a deep truth with a disappointing ambiguity. "Obscure, latent, older" are correct terms because the region of poetry in us is unusual and secret and it is reached more through the ancient immediacies of sense and emotion than the intellect's sober newly-evolved poise.

But sense and emotion do not *per se* make poetry : they are its effective mediums. It passes from the delight of sense to a subtle discovery behind appearances and plucks some central satisfying soul-thrill from transitory emotion. Laurence Binyon's

And sweet the rose floats on the arching briar's
Green fountain sprayed with delicate frail fires

has a texture and range of vision to which the acutest sense-perception would seem rough and myopic, while his

What has the ilex heard,
What has the laurel seen
That the pale edges of their leaves were stirred ?
What spirit stole between ?

sheds a glimmer unknown to outward observation. Consider the speech put into Gruach's mouth by Gordon Bottomley : Gruach fastens in the lacing of her bodice below her throat the flower that has fallen from her lover's cap—

Lie there; move with my life-breath; ah, look up
And breathe again to me his earlier warmth,
As if the vital tremor of his person
Mixed with my heat that veins thy texture now,
Thou hast been set above his brow; sink down,
Bring down to me his head in here, in here.

Is that emotion ? Yes and no. It "registers" natural passion with a strange revealing eye, it fills out with keen unnoticed relevancies a simple gesture and makes it ideally complete. Poetry conveys with intense word and rhythm an apt amazement, a flash of insight which brings in powers larger, subtler, more gripping than sense and emotion, in the same way as the "high seriousness" of a Sophocles and the profound mood that emanates from a Wordsworth are not intellectual ingredients so much as a wider revelation pitched in the key of the intellect. No doubt, poetry functions in us through a faculty which has not emerged altogether, but it is not submental : its sweep and boldness and sudden spell or its slow masterful invasion and sorcery pierce through the crust of a theme by a supra-intellectual excitement. It is obscure too, but only with a superior light that is still hidden. In itself quick with a quintessence of our powers of sense, emotion, intellect, it may incline towards thought or towards feeling or towards sensuous rapture; its mark everywhere is a sovereign glow of concrete perception deeply penetrating into a thing—widely circling for all that is in vital connection with it—harmonising diverse matters by a touch on some basic substance in which they partake of one another's nature and attitude—arriving

at its disclosures through a quick identification of subject and object as if whatever is external in appearance were really internal to the poet's self—and finally striking on a form of word and rhythm which seems to have an absolute and irreproachable beauty like a divine archetype. For the sake of a compact label, we may designate this manifold process as creative intuition.

Critics generally employ the term imagination. But that is inadequate because imagination is just the outer aspect of the activity present in the poetic phenomenon. What gets expressed through a poet is something more magical than his imagining; for, his imagination does not bring about an actual identity with its object so that the very heart of the object is shown forth under the colour of the moment's mood, nor an actual experience of the hidden oneness of several objects despite their differences, nor an actual participation in some realm of perfect beauty. In a poem, with its revelatory inwardness about things and its multiple felicity of illumining significance-expanding similes and metaphors and its expression as of an archetypal form, there is accomplished what the poet seldom accomplishes in his own consciousness—a contact with a single Cosmic Life whose common essence permits the interfusion of different parts, a contact with an Overworld of Perfection which the world here seeks to manifest. His imagination is the channel conducting a greater power to embodiment. It is the surface-display of a secret faculty that is more than human. At times the secret faculty comes to the surface in the poet's mind and then he feels he is not merely a mouthpiece of the Gods but himself a God for a few flashes. Mostly he remains no more than a medium who is worked from behind without being made truly aware of the greatness moving through him, somewhat as his own hand is worked by his brain without becoming truly conscious of the marvel it transmits to paper. So it is advisable to distinguish between imagination and intuition by saying that the poet imagines but the poem intuits !

All art is intuition self-expressed—in stone, colour, sound or language. And just because Blake in some of his poems provides us with the language of intuition in a mode that is least mixed with logico-intellectual elements—elements having the smallest importance in poetry—Housman's choice of him is so admirable : he catches the nectar of poetry at its very fount. Unfortunately, however, he is led in general to a theory that is one-sided. When he declares, "Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it," he means that an emotional turn of expression gives the poetic effect. Yet, if poetry is the rhythmic word of intuition, then surely the thing said has undeniable value. Not that any special theme or content is more suitable than another; but whatever the theme or content, the expression must be of its intuitive core. Always that intuitive core must be the thing said. Clothe something else than this core in language and the poetry is bound to suffer, no matter how emotional the manner of expression. Just as the poetic substance is seized as something other than a thought—it has undertones and overtones of suggestion the bare idea sadly lacks—so also no amount of emotive tremolo can supply it. The emotion, whether definite because of the clarity of the idea accompanying it or indefinite as in Blake's

poem because the idea is "unevolved", does not suffice. Just by being divested of a clear idea it does not grow the pure poetic stuff: it merely becomes nondescript and baffling. Where the intellectual content is elusive, the emotional too is the same: this is all that happens when in poetry the emotion is as sheer and neat as possible: no pure poetic stuff results.

That stuff is intuition—a type of substance *sui generis*, which without being itself thought or emotion bears the seed-form of both and wears the outward look of either, when it arrives through an atmosphere of the intelligence or of the heart; only, there is a magic transfiguration wherever it passes. But we must remember that intuition is not devoid of significance; Housman's dictum—"Meaning is of the intellect, poetry is not"—cannot be accepted without any reserve. He himself means and rightly enough that poetry is not determined by logical clarity or precision: to measure it by some accurate mental formulation of its meaning is to degrade if not nullify its glory and beauty. But there can be a significance which is implicit, which is not exactly formulable—and that is the stuff of poetry. Besides, words have meaning and as poetry is the art of words it must have an articulate background more specific than any other art's—something more interpretatively opposed than in any other art to unrelated emotion-waves or to a series of sense-shocks constituting a helter-skelter of pictorial points. Else the dethronement of meaning might be used in justification of a would-be-profound turbidity, a confusingly colourful mystagogism or the vagaries of surrealist composition. Housman is far from that pitfall; the modern irrationalists are not. Blake is mysterious in essentially the same sense as, say, Shakespeare. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well" moves us as art in the same *essential* way as anything from Blake, because in both cases the art-thrill is due to the fiery particle called intuition—the sole difference lying in the fact that through Blake the spark leaps from a level of consciousness other than the one from which it makes its *saltus* through Shakespeare. It seems vague to the normal perceptive power because that power is not accustomed to this kind of manifestation by the poetic particle, but there is here an order, a consistency just as concrete and real to a reader who is at home in mystic intuition as Shakespeare's poetry has for those who can grasp intuition on a "vitalistic" plane. In other words, Blake possesses a concrete and convincing substance, however difficult it may be for normal perception to appreciate his unusual vision; and just because that substance, that vision, is concrete and convincing at bottom, we are so moved by it in spite of its appearing to be vague and without an outward thought-texture. We cannot be moved in a similar fashion by a Cummings, a Raymond Lulle or a Tristan Tzara. To knock off meaning and pick up the raw emotion or the amorphous subconscious is not necessarily to get quintessential poetry.

In consequence, the test of poetry is not a certain quizzical state or a befuddlement caused in the reader; it is rather a sense of enlightenment, of a secret harmony, of a completeness that satisfies no matter in how mysterious a manner. The deep excitement it creates may show itself in physical symptoms such as Housman des-

cribes; yet to write as he does—"poetry indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual"—is unwittingly to state a half-truth. While removing stress from the intellect it magnifies an accidental series of emotive reactions instead of the true intuitive satisfaction which alone discovers poetry. A sentimentalist will feel like crying, or find his hair bristle, or experience a sudden spearing of the solar plexus, when the villain of a story overpowers the beautiful heroine or the heroine falls into the hero's arms and is locked in the terrible suffocation of a never-ending kiss. On contacting great poetry a mind above tosh may have the physical disturbances Housman speaks of, but he will know great poetry even without them. Its presence is felt as in the words of Eliphas the Temanite quoted by Housman : "A spirit passed before my face."

That, like Eliphas, Housman could also say, "The hair of my flesh stood up" shows, however, a noble sensitivity on his part, even if it takes us no nearer a criterion of poetic appeal. What that sensitivity can reveal to us is amply demonstrated throughout his book by his comparative responses to poetry. A more pointed and clear survey of the various grades of poetic excellence is not to be found elsewhere. As a theorist he may not be fully illuminating; as a practical critic he is at once brilliant and exquisite with an infallible taste.

K. D. SETHNA

(First Published in the "All-India Weekly")

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sarvodaya Ideology and Acharya Vinoba Bhave by *V. Narayan Karan Reddy*. Published by : The Andhra Pradesh Sarvodaya Mandal. Gandhi Bhavan, Hyderabad.

It may not be right to expect that limited to one hundred and one pages only, making profuse allocation to quotations, the author of *Sarvodaya Ideology and Acharya Vinoba Bhave*, Mr. V. Narayan Karan Reddy would be in a position to create appropriate contexts for about two hundred great names, philosophies and schools of thought, in order to provide a mighty background against which Vinoba could be estimated. Yet, if Mr. Reddy has attempted to build such a background, he has done so with a sincere fervour of homage, sincere enough to embolden him to compare the Acharya not only with the greatest of philosophers, but also with the personages of legends such as King Arthur. Consequently, the Acharya's followers emanate from his pen as the great Arthurian Knights.

Though the contemporary age may continuously tend to an evaluation of Vinoba from evidence and achievement rather of a documentary nature, the Acharya's mission is undoubtedly yet another noble manifestation of mankind's urge for rushing off its narrow tracks—perhaps the very urge which elsewhere inspires some people to go tossed towards the moon. 'The Saint on the March' proceeds through villages and cities, making observations often amazingly frank and illuminative, expressive of a personality possessing the broadness of view to touch on various problems and topics in their various aspects.

If, from the viewpoint of this broadness of Vinoba, the author attributes an integrated social philosophy to him and feels the necessity of warning his readers against the possibility of a confusion between the same and Sri Aurobindo's "integral Philosophy", he should take care not to put Sri Aurobindo's 'design' for "a spiritual integration of mankind" on a par with Marx's material integration of mankind", Rousseau's "social integration" and Buddha's "ethical integration", in order to show Vinoba's as the attempt towards "The total human integration". Indeed, such a sense of 'integration' easily obfuscates the reality of Sri Aurobindo's integral way.

Like Procrustes getting his guests fitted into a bed by stretching them or cutting them, in any case killing them, it is the tragic habit with many today to interpret world-events according to one's private or group-ideology, adding a little invention or deducing a little truth, in order to obtain the desired fitness in interpretation, finally perverting the reality. If Vinoba stands for anything, he stands against such ideological tribalism, and the first care should be taken by his admirers to see that the spirit of his mission is not defeated by any emotional claim. The course of events, the tides of time will decide where lies the true way for a real integration. If the records of human experience are to be assessed, certainly the way lies deep beneath the moral, emo-

tional and intellectual endeavours towards such a goal—or rather in a depth by which all such levels can be steered properly. In the meanwhile, however, one must go ahead with one's genuine inspiration, to the best of one's faith, with the utmost regard for sincerity, praying to be guided by Providence. Vinoba is a bright example of this and hence no sensible homage is more than he deserves.

The book will certainly provide material for a timely evaluation of contemporary Indian thought, in relation to the progress of human thought through the ages. It will bring inspiration to the workers devoted to the Acharya's mission to listen again to the name of their leader in the 'Roll-call of Honour'.

MANOJ DAS

Sri Aurobindo Circle Annual. Published by : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

Sri Aurobindo Circle Annual entered its 20th year on 24th April. It includes a picture of the Mother at the Terrace on 29th February, 1964, at 6 p.m., when about four thousand aspiring souls gathered to receive the Divine Light and Force from her.

Besides an excellent compilation, *The Supramental Perfection*, from Sri Aurobindo's writings, we have some choice letters of his, published and unpublished, collected under the title *The Supramental Manifestation and the Readiness to Receive It*. Elsewhere we read the Mother writing simply but significantly : "From the viewpoint of the spiritual knowledge decay and dissolution, disintegration are simply, undoubtedly, the result of a wrong attitude."

Three articles stand out : Prema Nandakumar's *Approaches to "Ilion"*; Kishor Gandhi's continued series *Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*, culling systematically the various concepts of the Master from his writings and relating them analytically to the thoughts of other social philosophers; and Jugal Kishore Mukherjee's *The Physical Conquest of Death in the Seer-Vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother*.

Then we have interesting contributions like : *Experience of a Student-Professor of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, *The Knowledge and the Ignorance*, *The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo*, *Readings in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, *Indian Art : Some Fundamentals*, *Glimpses of Mallarmé* (concluded) and a few poems.

With a simple get-up and fine printing this journal of 132 pages published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry, is priced at Rs. 5 only—a real bargain for all who want their minds and hearts quickened beyond themselves to the sense of a greater light and life.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Students' Section

BATTLE FOR LIGHT

A PLAY

ACT I : Scene 7

Residence of Bhakti—a lovely home of good-will for all.

Bhakti and Sincerity

Sincerity shining like the morning star. Dressed in jasmine-white, wearing a sparkling diamond brooch. 'Heaven's fire laughing in the corner of her eyes'. She is seen among children singing in chorus.

O Thou, Eternal Beauty's form,
Our hearts uplift to Thee,
Grant that for ever we remain
Steeped in Thy honey like the bee.

May every beat of our ignorant heart
Echo Thy rhythm divine,
And in the core of every cell
Thy golden glory shine !

Let the Truth-seed Thou hast sown in our life
Grow to a luminous tree,
Shelter of all world-wanderers
Who long to be pure and free !

BHAKTI (*deeply moved*) : How refreshing it is to be in your atmosphere !

SINCERITY : To be with children is a joy in itself. I've decided to work among these children of the future.

BHAKTI (*earnestly*) : Surely, they're our hope. India looks to them not only for her good but also for the world's. Your presence among them will be their heaven. It'll open to them new doors of perception. (*Reflectively*) But why on earth do you deny your boons to grown-ups ?

SINCERITY (*somewhat ruffled*) : It's no use. Enough of their sickening duplicity ! Fair faces, foul hearts !

That's why I love children above all.

BHAKTI (*in a persuasive tone*) : You're the key to the doors of the Infinite. Can't you by the force of your diamond purity create a few who may grow true to themselves, true to the Mother ?

SINCERITY (*in a mystic voice*) : How can I ? Tell me how I can make stocks and stones feel the Divine.

BHAKTI : But what about those crying in the Night for Light?

SINCERITY (*in a voice vibrant with joy*) : Oh, I'd be all help to those who love to be true. Like babies in my arms I'll take them to the Mother Supreme.

Enter Shanti (Peace) whose very "look and smile awake celestial sense". In a milk-white robe fluttering like the wings of a dove. Moon-bright face, glittering eyes.

SHANTI : I beg your pardon. Am I interrupting you ?

BHAKTI (*welcoming her with a smile in her eyes*) : No, no, You're our delight. (*Taking her by the hand*) The ailing earth is wistfully looking up to your kindly eyes. A moment's touch of your feet and her woes are healed.

SHANTI : Ah, if you but know, tell me: is there any country, any town, any village, free from hate where I could have a breath of fresh air ?

BHAKTI (*musings*) : Is not the whole world crying for you ? Does not the U.N.O. of 119 nations voice a collective solicitude for you ? But I find the more they approach you, the more...

SHANTI (*smilingly*) : I slip away from them ? (*seriously*) Is that my fault ? Can they expect me amid heaps of atom bombs ?

BHAKTI : Look into the heart of the world. Is it not throbbing and heaving for peace? Can you deny that ?

SHANTI : Say what you will. But is there any inner change anywhere ? Don't you see how the sons of Darkness are making capital out of me ?

BHAKTI : No matter. As the "Light grows the Night will recede".

SHANTI : Night of course recedes but soon returns doubly dark. And all our efforts come to nought...

BHAKTI : That has been the problem of problems for ages, defying all solution. Do whatever you can, earth remains earth, tied to her ignorance and suffering.

SHANTI : Ah, it rejects whatever comes from above.

"The doors of light are sealed to common mind."

BHAKTI : The lower nature must consent to change.

SHANTI : Ever possible on a universal scale ?

BHAKTI : Only Jnana can give the answer.

(The very mention of Jnana stirs Shanti's soul.)

BHAKTI : It is a joy to meet him and hear his illuminating talks. He speaks Truth in a form most suited to our times.

SHANTI (*thrilled*) : Oh, that I might see him !

BHAKTI : Your call will be a joy to him.

(Exeunt hand in hand)

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRAŞAD

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER

No. 7.

July

1. There are still fields of research to be worked to bring about some synthesis of the terms reason, truth and God, in the classics, in all forms of literature and in art.

Sri Aurobindo made a very real, if subtle, contribution to reconciling Homer to a terminology nearer to our age when he gave us his *Perseus the Deliverer* presenting Greek poetic symbology in terms of Elizabethan drama technique.

One wonders if we are always aware of the vast difference between the meaning of words when, say, Homer used them and what a modern student of today would understand them to mean. Renford Bambrough, a lecturer at St. John's College Cambridge, said (I do not quote verbatim): "Let us suppose that we are walking with Homer along the cliffs. Homer may say to us, 'Poseidon is angry today.' We would answer in the same terms, 'Certainly, Poseidon is very angry today.' We both use the same words, 'Poseidon is angry', and yet it is clear that there is a vast difference between what Homer is doing with these words and what we, with our much greater knowledge of meteorology and oceanography, are doing with the same words. When Homer says that Poseidon is angry he is offering what is meant to be an *explanation* of the wild aspect of the waves, whereas when we say that Poseidon is angry we are using a conscious metaphor to give a picturesque *description* of the lashing of the waves. It is, however, not a mere metaphor on our part, but an accurate description which correctly deserves the adjective *angry*." There is surely pabulum for much thought here as an interesting basis for research.

2. *Facts and Figures*

UNESCO has made an extensive survey of *students studying abroad* and has thereby disclosed a new adventure in learning. The study showed, for example, that in Japan 59 per cent of foreign students were from Korea and 25 per cent from China. In the United Kingdom, there are 19 per cent from its non-governing territories, 12 per cent from India, 9 per cent from U.S.A. and 8 per cent from Nigeria. Switzerland has 20 per cent of its foreign students from Germany, 13 per cent from U.S.A. and 9 per cent from France. The U.S.S.R. has about 0.5 per cent of its student population from abroad, and the U.S.A. a mere 1.4 per cent.

3. In a discussion group the subject of enquiry was :

‘What is Man’s greatest common enterprise?’

The best effort put forward with almost unanimous agreement was—

‘The technical and financial aid given to countries undergoing economic development.’

We dug up a few facts and figures and they are quite impressive as an indicator towards a future Ideal of Human Unity....

There is the United States International Co-operation Administration, the British Commonwealth Colombo Plan, the U.S.S.R. foreign aid programme, the bilateral aid programmes of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and other countries.

The United States allocates over 2,000 million dollars per year for economic aid. The British Commonwealth Colombo Plan disbursed about 3,500 million dollars in the period 1950-1957. The equivalent of over 8,000 million dollars is aid devoted each year by industrial countries as a whole. The French outlay on such assistance is said to amount to 1.2 per cent of the national income, which is claimed to be a record.

4. *Shakespeare and the Sonnets*

A new light seems to have been shed upon the age-old controversy as to who was ‘W.H.’ The popular and long accepted theory was that W.H. was either the Earl of Pembroke, whose initials were W.H., or the Earl of Southampton with his initials H.W. deliberately reversed, or the Earl’s step-father Sir William Hervey. But now G. Wilson Knight, Professor Emeritus of English literature at Leeds University, seems with the help of Dr. Leslie Hotson to have made out a very good case for a young man by the name of William Hatcliffe who was elected, at the Inns of Court, Prince of Purpoole, in the winter of 1587. Any comments?

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

EAST MEETS WEST IN CHILDREN'S ART

EAST meets West is always a promising development, portrayed especially well in an article entitled, "Children and the Arts", by Edward Mattil,¹ head of the Department of Art Education at Pennsylvania State University and President of the National Art Education Association in the United States. In addition the article is a criticism of modern times, which are not always promising, although often promising to engulf us all.

"Some months ago," our author begins, "a friend who had been working in the Orient for many years showed me a remarkable collection of prints made mostly from woodblocks by Japanese and Korean children." He marveled at the technical quality and the completeness of expression of these art works, in a medium generally considered advanced for young children. The quality of the prints was high enough to have received praise even in a college graphics class. "I wondered—are the children of the East more creative than our children ! I looked again. No, I concluded, they are expressing themselves as our children do; but their statements are more skillful and more complete. Superior results suggest that they have mastered their tools and have learned to work for extended periods of time to achieve their desires."

He asked his friend at what age children began with their tools and how often they used them. They began, he was told, when very young and used the sharp gouge as frequently as most children use paints and brushes. The child worked with gouge on woodblock so often that he had ample opportunity to explore its many possibilities. Furthermore, its use was so natural that the tool became an extension of his hand and thinking. When the child reached this point, the medium was no longer the object of his experiments and explorations; it no longer stood in the way of his ideas. There were few technical problems to block his way. The tools became his means of expression, not just ends in themselves.

Amusingly the author recalls how he and thousands before and after him learned to make linoleum prints :

It was nearly Christmas and time was of the essence . We were to hurry, to listen carefully. "Don't make any mistakes." "Please be careful not to cut yourself or the desk." "Don't make any miscuts as there are no more lino blocks." "Reverse your lettering." "Bandages are on the desk." "Make a wreath or a cradle of something !"

"All that effort for a one-time activity which, if we did survive it without calamity, didn't give us a chance to say Christmas in a child's way !" It was a process, all mechanics and no expression.

¹ *Childhood Education*, February 1964, pp. 289-90.

Several years later, when another brave soul pulled out the lino equipment just before Christmas, all the children moaned in unison, "Oh, not again, we did them in fifth grade!"

What is the point in relating all of this? In modern art education the teacher is "expected to provide all kinds of experiences with the widest variety of materials so that children can explore, experiment and discover for themselves...." The hope is that each child will find the materials and methods for a personal way of expression. Children can develop their imaginations, widen their artistic scopes through a variety of materials and techniques—this is the value of modern programs. But inherent in this broad experimentation and self-discovery is the possibility that the child becomes so accustomed to something new and different with every lesson that he begins to believe it is undesirable to repeat experiences over and over to gain mastery of a material or a process.

Mattil speaks of what he calls "the materials exploration race" in art education. The "new-material-new-process-every-day approach," he says, has a monotonous rhythm, and he laments modern times: "everything new, everything novel, everything fast, everything shallow, everything acceptable." But dynamic art teaching, according to him, does not reveal with any certainty its next direction. Rather it sets up a rhythm that is not monotonous; it moves fast, then slow; it is wide, then deep; it is quiet and orderly, then lively; it looks long into the past, reaches into the future; it expects exploration but asks for perseverance; it expects mistakes but encourages efficient performance; it treasures the creative abilities of children and allows them to be used; it recognizes differences in children and makes no effort to establish conformity. This is a balanced approach. When the children are allowed the freedom and joy of a finger-painting experience on one day, they must be allowed to go into depth with drawing or painting the next lesson. If given the opportunity the children will so dictate. "We want to draw," they say, or, "Let's work with clay," again and again. The littlest ones never tire of their crayons day after day.

Only if we select one or two mediums to work with in depth can we expect children to develop the necessary skills and personal techniques that will satisfy their critical awareness as they get older. Only if we allow children to work with one or two mediums in depth can we prevent their abandonment of creative work because it looks too unskilled and immature.

East meets West in this small case of children's art hinting of that future day when we being universal shall find our East and our West new-made, unified and One.

MILIANA DRACHMAN

MEET THE EXAMINER*

ANSWER papers in written examinations have, of necessity, to be distributed among several examiners, who naturally may be of various temperaments and in diverse moods. It is not unusual for the paper of a meritorious student to be examined by one who is strict in his scrutiny while another less meritorious student may have the good fortune of having his paper examined by one who is more lenient.

After sitting for an examination the candidates often ask, "What kind of people are Examiners?" and they wonder whether they will be sympathetic when reading through the work of the candidates.

The early summer is the chief examination season; during this period many students complete courses of study which have extended over a period of years. The students at Technical Colleges seek to complete their professional qualifications; and University students hope to receive degrees as a result of the written work presented to examiners. Students are justified in asking to what extent the examiners appreciate the anxieties of candidates and in wondering whether they realise that success or failure may have great influence on the careers of the young people whose work they mark.

But very many examiners with their personal experience and knowledge say, "Examiners are eager to help students to achieve their aims." In the first place, examiners have been through the mill themselves and have not forgotten their own early hopes and fears during the examination period. In addition, they are usually experienced teachers and specialists in their own subjects; they have, therefore, been in contact with young people for many years and know their capabilities and limitations. They realise that the examination scripts represent the work of candidates of varying temperaments, and are therefore anxious to give credit for written evidence of thoughtful work. They cannot, of course, ignore untidy or incorrect answers. Nevertheless, examiners try to be consistent in their standard of marking and to reward all evidence, all good work.

Examiners, however, do not have a free hand in the marking of scripts : they are controlled by an Examination Board, which draws up a detailed scheme of marking. This is necessary in an examination in which there are a large number of candidates, so that all the examiners may mark at the same standard. When marking for certain examining Bodies, the examiners are not asked to decide whether a candidate shall pass or fail; their task is merely to arrange the scripts of the candidates in order of merit. A few days after the examination, when the examiners have had time to mark about 30 of the scripts, a Meeting is held. At this meeting differences in marking are

* This article, in its technical aspects, applies mostly to educational conditions in the world at large—Editor.

discussed and the examiners return to their homes with a clearer idea of the standard required. If necessary, the examiners revise the marking of the scripts they have already been working upon. The marking in any subject demands great concentration.

The marking of the examiners is checked at the offices of the Examination Board which employs a large staff of "Checkers". Every script is gone through to make sure that all questions have been marked. In addition, the standard of marking of each examiner is tested by the use of statistics; where there is a large number of candidates, the proportion of good and weak candidates will not vary much from year to year. Statistics show that the distribution of marks is uniform from one year to another and, as a result, any abnormal marking by an Examiner would soon be detected and investigated.

Examiners, therefore, whether acting as individuals or as members of a Commission take the greatest possible care to avoid unfairness to candidates; their sympathies are on their side; and, in practically all cases, failure, where it occurs, is due to inadequate preparation by the candidate.

S. KALYANASWAMY

YOGA AND LIFE

VI.

YOGA OF LIFE : YOGA OF THE FUTURE:

A Philosophical Outline (I)

"A SMALL but clamorous company of desires, some imperative intellectual and aesthetic cravings, some tastes, a few ruling or prominent ideas amid a great current of unconnected or ill-connected and mostly trivial thoughts, a number of more or less imperative vital needs, alternations of physical health and disease, a scattered and inconsequent succession of joys and griefs, frequent minor disturbances and vicissitudes and rarer strong searchings and upheavals of mind or body, and through it all Nature, partly with the aid of his thought and will, partly without or in spite of it, arranging these things in some rough practical fashion, some tolerable disorderly order"—this is the material and the psychological existence of man according to Sri Aurobindo. This gives a complete picture of the confusion in which an ordinary man lives. The pursuit of Yoga make us delve into the deeps of our inner personality and we come face to face with the various levels of existence, with different scopes and regions of consciousness ranging from the most outer to the inmost and the highest, which form the human complexity.

Behind our gross (*sthūla*), crude and complex triune mental, vital and bodily life of which we are normally but vaguely aware, there are vaster inner regions of mental, vital and physical consciousness. These form our subtle (*sūkṣma*) body. This subliminal consciousness opens, largely, into the universal mind, universal vital and universal physical consciousness. These are, for us, not fully conscious stages of evolution. We are not conscious of harmony on these levels. We can say roughly that at the beginnings of the evolutionary development, the stage of Matter is inconscient, that of the physical and the vital subconscious, and of the mental semi-conscious. The full-consciousness stage of evolution has not yet come. It is rare and there are only a few who have achieved this development and a harmony at this stage. This is the next step of evolution towards which Nature is tending. The Yoga of Life seeks to attain this full-consciousness in man and, making this attainment the key and the lever, lift and transform the build-up and material of humanness into the highest possible divine nature, remould him, even on the most outward level of his environment, in the image of the Divine. This full-consciousness can be brought out by deeper and deeper inwardness. This deepest level of our subtle body and the inmost being and consciousness in us is called in the language of Sri Aurobindo the psychic being, which can also be termed the soul-consciousness (*antaratman*).

A vaster and higher inwardness opens us to many grades or levels of ascending consciousness, which are mostly super-conscious to normal man. Above the human mind is the higher mind, then the illumined mind, then intuition. Roughly speaking, men of awakened intelligence and ideals are in contact with the first level; enlightened men, high saints and men of great vision in contact with the second and third levels. Above the level of intuition is overmind which is the world of Gods. Overmind is the apex of the universe. Beyond this is the transcendental status of consciousness called by Sri Aurobindo the supermind which, the Rishis said, could not be attained in the body, *i.e.*, keeping the body intact along with the realisation of that status. This is the world of perfect harmony, perfect knowledge, perfect power, beauty, delight, truth, light and life. This is the world whose reflection below gives rise to the sense of the Platonic archetypes. It is that heaven whose growing representative embodiment in men on earth can bring the promised reign of Heaven on Earth. This is the Utopia which is the promise of perfect harmony in social living.

From this transcendental level of supermind extends the status of Sachchidananda (Knowledge, Consciousness-Force and Delight) and the Absolute. All these levels of consciousness which form our causal body (*kāraṇa śarīra*) are indeed extra-individual and extra-cosmic, but they are still psychologically subjective and thus realisable by man.

The Yoga of Life is essentially and directly concerned with the realisation of the supramental consciousness through the level and agency of the psychic consciousness and its operation in the affairs of life so that the gradual change of Nature fixes its working and ultimately its rule irrevocably. This is the next step of evolution and the harmony-to-be-evolved which we contemplate and seek to realise through the Yoga

of Life, bringing in a race of supramental or gnostic beings. "A life of gnostic beings carrying the evolution to a higher supramental status," says Sri Aurobindo, "might fitly be characterised as a divine life;...since it surpasses the mental human level, as a life of spiritual and supramental supermanhood. But this must not be confused with past and present ideas of supermanhood; for supermanhood in the mental idea consists of an overtopping of the normal human level, not in kind but in degree of the same kind, by an enlarged personality, a magnified and exaggerated ego, an increased power of mind, an increased power of vital force, a refined or dense and massive exaggeration of the forces of human Ignorance; it carries also, commonly implied in it, the idea of a forceful domination over humanity by the superman. That would mean a supermanhood of the Nietzschean type; it might be at its worst the reign of the 'blonde beast',...a return to barbaric strength and ruthlessness and force: but this would be no evolution, it would be a reversion to an old strenuous barbarism." "But what has to emerge is...a self-realised being, a building of the spiritual self, an intensity and urge of the soul and the deliverance and sovereignty of its light and power and beauty,...a new consciousness in which humanity itself shall find its own self-exceeding and self-fulfilment by the revelation of the divinity that is striving for birth within it....This new status...would reverse the whole principle of the life of the Ignorance...."

The higher spiritual levels to which we have referred before are not only the aim but also the cause of the complex mental, vital and physical life on the material plane, which has got deformed because of its separation from its eternal and supreme source. Perfect harmony in life on earth can only be achieved if this deformation and separation is removed by a mutual free and unfettered rapport between these states of existence : our lower and outer triune states forming our physical life on earth, and those deeper and higher states which will usher in the spiritual and the divine life.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH