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SPECIAL ISSUE : THE INTEGRAL CULTURE OF MAN
ON THE OCCASION OF
SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

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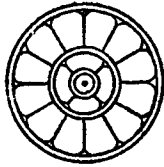
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

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Vol. XVIII

No. 7

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO	.. 5
ORGANISERS' NOTE—	
WITH THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE	<i>H. P., K. D. S.</i> ... 6
THE INTEGRAL CULTURE OF MAN :	
AN INTRODUCTION	<i>K. D. Sethna</i> ... 9
THE IDEAL AND THE GOAL FOR BOTH EAST	
AND WEST	<i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 11
AN UNPUBLISHED SONNET OF SRI AUROBINDO :	
THE ONE SELF	... 14
THE LIVING UNITY	<i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 15
CULTURE, PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL CO-	
OPERATION (A Compilation for Unesco by	
Miss Kailash Jhaveri)	<i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 16
INDIAN CULTURE	
(A Compilation by S. S. Jhunhunwalla)	<i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 34
THE RESHAPING OF HUMANITY	
(A Compilation by Miss Kailash Jhaveri)	<i>The Mother</i> ... 45
THE FREEDOM THAT UNITES	<i>Dr. G. N. Sarma</i> ... 59
SRI AUROBINDO AND THE PHILOSOPHERS	<i>K. D. Sethna</i> ... 64
RECENT AMERICAN INTEREST IN INDIAN	
PHILOSOPHY: THE EAST-WEST PROBLEM	
YESTERDAY AND TODAY	<i>Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg</i> ... 69

CONTENTS

A MODERNIST AMERICAN POET ON SRI AUROBINDO:

SEER			
“SAVITRI”	<i>D. R. Cameron</i>	...	76
O SPLENDOUR OF INFINITY (Poem)	<i>Prithwi Singh</i>	...	77
“THE SUN DOES NOT SET ON THE BRITISH EMPIRE” (Poem)	<i>K. B. Sitaramayya</i>	...	78
THE MOMENT (Poem)			
Translated by T. K. Balakrishnan from the Malayalam Original	<i>G. Sankara Kurup</i>	...	79
THE CONCEPT OF MAN	<i>Dr. K. M. Munshi</i>	...	82
“THE CREATIVE PROCESS”	<i>S. Gene Maslow</i>	...	91
TOTAL EDUCATION	<i>Dr. Sisir Kumar Ghose</i>	...	95
THE STUDENTS’ PRAYER	<i>The Mother</i>	...	102
YOGA AND CULTURE	<i>Dr. R. R. Dīwakar</i>	...	103
USHASHŪ CHAKRAYANA (CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD)	<i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	...	108
THE URGE FOR A TOTAL REDISCOVERY: THE IRRESISTIBLE UNDERTONE IN CURRENT REFLECTIONS	<i>Manoj Das</i>	...	112
TOWARDS A WORLD PHILOSOPHY	<i>Dr. K. C. Varadachari</i>	...	115
MODERN EUROPEAN CIVILISATION : ITS ORIGIN AND GROWTH	<i>Sanat K. Banerji</i>	...	122

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AUGUST 15

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

Not the blind round of the material existence alone and not a retreat from the difficulty of life in the world into the silence of the Ineffable, but the bringing down of the peace and light and power of a greater divine Truth and consciousness to transform Life is the endeavour today of the greatest spiritual seekers in India. Here in the heart of such an endeavour pursued through many years with a single-hearted purpose, living constantly in that all-founding peace and feeling the near and greatening descent of that light and power, the way becomes increasingly clear. One sees the soul of India ready to enter into the fullness of her heritage and the hour of an unparalleled greatness approaching when from her soil shall go forth the call and the leading to the highest destinies of the race.

ORGANISERS' NOTE

with

THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE

UNESCO has, for some time, been making Studies of Cultural Co-operation as an important factor in peaceful relations among different states and peoples. It has been inviting contributions from leading experts in the various nations. A request was received by Dr. Indra Sen of Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

Dr. Indra Sen inquired of us whether we could bring out a Special Issue of *Mother India* on Culture. He suggested as our theme "The Integral Culture of Man". He also pointed out that Sri Aurobindo has something very definite and momentous to say on the subject in several books of his, and that we could gather all the passages together in the form of a compilation. This, according to Dr. Indra Sen, would be an extremely helpful step in drawing the attention of leading world personalities to Sri Aurobindo's views. Some other expository features were also planned out. We agreed to work on a Special Issue.

At the same time Sri Aurobindo Society undertook to submit a basic compilation to Unesco. We are reproducing it in our pages and we thank Sri Aurobindo Society for its collaboration.

When we referred Dr. Indra Sen's suggestion to the Mother, she graciously approved it and, on our asking for a Message, gave us the following :

If in man the seed
of aspiration is watered
with true spirituality
then he will grow into
Divinity.

We requested a little further light, a more direct comment on some details we had proposed for our scheme. She replied :

I thought my message
was a sufficient answer
For me "culture" (read in French) means
"arroseur des plantes"

With the right push from the Mother, we felt encouraged to send out to a few authors in the Ashram and a few sympathetic writers outside the Ashram an invitation to contribute articles. Some of them gave a prompt response. From all we received valuable suggestions. A number of professors of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, as well as workers of Sri Aurobindo Society, have also come forward to help. We thank each one for his co-operation.

We have made a sincere attempt at a vast subject. It is natural to feel that we have not achieved as thorough a treatment as we might have with more time at our disposal. But it is our hope that matter of considerable value has been presented to serve as a first decisive step.

From our readers we shall welcome any comment that bears on our work. It will help to open some more windows in our minds. We, of course, believe that we shall receive their whole-hearted support for a wide circulation of the Special Issue.

A word of thanks is also due to all those who have given aid to the cause of Culture by accepting to advertise in our pages.

We dedicate this Special Issue in all humility to the Mother.

H. P.
K. D. S.

THE INTEGRAL CULTURE OF MAN*

AN INTRODUCTION

K. D. Sethna

CULTURE means essentially the inner refinement and education of man. It means also the outer system of civilisation, the arts and crafts, the literature, the philosophical thought, the sciences, the socio-political organisation, the economic and industrial set-up.

These various aspects of culture correspond to the various aspects of man's personality. And, just as some aspects are more in prominence than others in an individual, so also certain aspects stand out in any particular collectivity. Individuals thus become complementary to one another, and collectivities too in combination strengthen one another and fill up deficiencies.

The ideal to be aimed at in the individual is a cultivation of all sides of him so that we may reach an integral or integrated personality. A collectivity also would be ideal when it shows a balanced development of all the departments of its manifold life.

An effective step towards comprehensiveness, completeness, integrality is to bring together individuals of all kinds in an active cultural exchange, and to effect a meeting of all the world's nations with a view to match their various creativities and life-values. A movement towards human unity on the individual and the national scales is called for.

Such a movement is already afoot. It arises not only from the widening interests of modern life and from its inventions that conquer time and space. It arises also from a global need to live in peace and concord lest mankind by its own technological energy and ingenuity should destroy itself.

The trend towards human unity is like a writing on the wall today. None can ignore it. Therefore, the Integral Culture of Man is a most pressing issue. But can the fruitful meeting and exchange among individuals and among nations achieve by itself the desired integrality? After all, it can only provide a clearing-house for ideas, a stage for programmes, a milieu for external co-operation. The functioning of long-established human nature cannot undergo, for all the good will present, the radical change required for a lasting unification.

We have to look for some master power within man which can permanently unite and hold together all the different and even divergent aspects. Answering to the necessity and the dream of unity, there must be such a power waiting to be found.

* Some suggestions of Dr. India Sen's are incorporated here.

To find it, we must reach a level of consciousness where universality is a natural, a spontaneous experience.

Universality, however, can be of two orders. We may reduce everything to the lowest common factor where all significant variety, all arduous innovation are abolished and a bare easy minimum of shared and organised appetites is struck. But to work down to such a commonalty is to work for an arrested happiness. No more the urge of evolution—only an efficient typical existence. As a result, culture with its far-sweeping challenges will be cancelled. And it is even doubtful whether on a level of appetites there can ever be a true unification. Appetites are always egoistic : their creed is to increase and enlarge by swallowing.

The level to be realised is not the lowest but the highest common factor, where the individual lives by self-giving, progresses by mutuality, feels always a call for self-exceeding. This is the level of aspiration and idealism, but an aspiration which is not lost in a mere “beyond”, an idealism which strives to make a heaven of earth. It is the level of what we may, in a broad sense, term spirituality—true spirituality as distinguished from mere religionism which is narrow, fanatical, tradition-rooted and may itself become a sanctified appetite.

Appetites in whatever shape are a universality, a common point, from which all ultimately separate to exclude, and compete with, one another. True spirituality—non-sectarian, open-minded, world-affirming as well as directed to the deepest and highest ideal, the divine goal—is the common point in which all may join and in which, even amidst the differences of their individual vocations and national destinies, they can learn to include one another and form a diversified harmony, a many-sided unison, of Integral Culture.

THE IDEAL AND THE GOAL FOR BOTH EAST AND WEST

Sri Aurobindo

(The unified vision and the concerted movement needed for the Integral Culture of Man cannot be better expressed in brief than by this Message which Sri Aurobindo gave for August 15 a number of years ago—with a few luminous words by the Mother prefixed to it. Of course, as the reader will soon perceive, the terms “East” and “West” carry here their original basic meaning of “Orient” and “Occident” and have nothing to do with their popular political degradation connoting Communist Eastern Europe and the Western Democracies.)

STOP THINKING THAT YOU ARE OF THE WEST AND OTHERS OF THE EAST. ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE OF THE SAME DIVINE ORIGIN AND MEANT TO MANIFEST UPON EARTH THE UNITY OF THIS ORIGIN.

THE MOTHER

I HAVE been asked to send on this occasion of the fifteenth August a message to the West, but what I have to say might be delivered equally as a message to the East. It has been customary to dwell on the division and difference between these two sections of the human family and even oppose them to each other; but for myself I would rather be disposed to dwell on oneness and unity than on division and difference. East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seeking and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialistic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before.

There is a common hope, a common destiny, both spiritual and material, for which both are needed as co-workers. It is no longer towards division and difference that we should turn our minds, but on unity, union, even oneness necessary for the pursuit and realisation of a common ideal, the destined goal, the fulfilment towards

which Nature in her beginning obscurely set out and must in an increasing light of knowledge replacing her first ignorance constantly persevere.

But what shall be that ideal and that goal ? That depends on our conception of the realities of life and the supreme Reality.

Here we have to take into account that there has been, not any absolute difference but an increasing divergence between the tendencies of the East and the West. The highest truth is truth of the Spirit; a Spirit supreme above the world and yet immanent in the world and in all that exists, sustaining and leading all towards whatever is the aim and goal and the fulfilment of Nature since her obscure inconscient beginnings through the growth of consciousness, is the one aspect of existence which gives a clue to the secret of our being and a meaning to the world. The East has always and increasingly put the highest emphasis on the supreme truth of the Spirit; it has, even in its extreme philosophies, put the world away as an illusion and regarded the Spirit as the sole reality. The West has concentrated more and more increasingly on the world, on the dealings of the mind and life with our material existence, on our mastery over it, on the perfection of mind and life and some fulfilment of the human being here : latterly this has gone so far as the denial of the Spirit and even the enthronement of Matter as the sole reality. Spiritual perfection as the sole ideal on one side, on the other the perfectibility of the race, the perfect society, a perfect development of the human mind and life and man's material existence have become the largest dream of the future. Yet both are truths and can be regarded as part of the intention of the Spirit in world-nature; they are not incompatible with each other : rather their divergence has to be healed and both have to be included and reconciled in our view of the future.

The Science of the West has discovered evolution as the secret of life and its process in this material world; but it has laid more stress on the growth of form and species than on the growth of consciousness : even, consciousness has been regarded as an incident and not the whole secret of the meaning of the evolution. An evolution has been admitted by certain minds in the East, certain philosophies and Scriptures, but there its sense has been the growth of the soul through developing or successive forms and many lives of the individual to its own highest reality. For if there is a conscious being in the form, that being can hardly be a temporary phenomenon of consciousness; it must be a soul fulfilling itself and this fulfilment can only take place if there is a return of the soul to earth in many successive lives, in many successive bodies.

The process of evolution has been the development from and in inconscient Matter of a subconscious and then a conscious Life, of conscious mind first in animal life and then fully in conscious and thinking man, the highest present achievement of evolutionary Nature. The achievement of mental being is at present her highest and tends to be regarded as her final work; but it is possible to conceive a still further step of the evolution : Nature may have in view beyond the imperfect mind of man a consciousness that passes out of the mind's ignorance and possesses truth as its

inherent right and nature. There is a truth-consciousness as it is called in the Veda, a supermind, as I have termed it, possessing Knowledge, not having to seek after it and constantly miss it. In one of the Upanishads a being of knowledge is stated to be the next step above the mental being; into that the soul has to rise and through it to attain the perfect bliss of spiritual existence. If that could be achieved as the next evolutionary step of Nature here, then she would be fulfilled and we could conceive of the perfection of life even here, its attainment of a full spiritual living even in this body or it may be in a perfected body. We could even speak of a divine life on earth; our human dream of perfectibility would be accomplished and at the same time the aspiration to a heaven on earth common to several religions and spiritual seers and thinkers.

The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim and necessity, for that is the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit.

AN UNPUBLISHED SONNET OF SRI AURÒBINDO

THE ONE SELF

ALL are deceived, do what the One Power dictates,
Yet each thinks his own will his nature moves;
The hater knows not 'tis himself he hates,
The lover knows not 'tis himself he loves.

In all is one being many bodies bear,
There Krishna flutes upon the forest mood,
There Shiva sits ash-smeared, with matted hair.
But Shiva and Krishna are the single God.

In us too Krishna seeks for love and joy,
In us too Shiva struggles with the world's grief.
One Self in all of us endures annoy,
Cries in his pain and asks his fate's relief.

My rival's downfall is my own disgrace,
I look on my enemy and see Krishna's face.

THE LIVING UNITY

Sri Aurobindo

IN laying stress on culture, on the things of the mind and the spirit, there need be no intention of undervaluing the outward, material side of life, belittling that to which Nature always attaches so insistent an importance. On the contrary, the inner and the outer depend upon each other. We see for instance in the life of a nation that a great period of national culture and vigorous mental and soul life is always part of a general stirring and movement which has its counterpart in the outward political, economical, practical life of the nation. It brings the latter about, but also it itself needs that to flourish with an entirely full and healthy vigour. Therefore the peace, well-being and order of the human world is a thing eminently to be desired as a basis for a great world-culture in which all humanity must be united; but neither of these unities, the outward or inward, must be devoid of a thing even more important than peace, order and well-being,—freedom and vigour of life, which can only be assured by variation, by group freedom and individual freedom. Not then a uniform unity, not a logically simple, a scientifically rigid, a beautifully neat and mechanical, but a living unity full of healthy freedom and diversity is the ideal which we should keep in view and strive to get realised.

From The Ideal of Human Unity

CULTURE, PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

THEIR TRUE BASIS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sri Aurobindo

(This is a compilation of passages from the main books of Sri Aurobindo. To make it, as far as possible, a running text, slight adaptations have been introduced in a few places. Prepared by Miss Kailash Jhaveri, it has been submitted by Sri Aurobindo Society to Unesco.)

CULTURE AND THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

DOES the future of humanity lie in a culture founded solely upon reason and science ? Is the progress of human life the effort of a mind, a continuous collective mind constituted by an ever-changing sum of transient individuals, that has emerged from the darkness of the inconscient material universe and is stumbling about in it in search of some clear light and some sure support amid its difficulties and problems ? And does civilisation consist in man's endeavour to find that light and support in a rationalised knowledge and a rationalised way of life ?

Or is not the truth of our being rather that of a soul embodied in Nature which is seeking to know itself, to find itself, to enlarge its consciousness, to arrive at a greater way of existence, to progress in the spirit and grow into the full light of self-knowledge and some divine inner perfection ? Are not religion, philosophy, science, thought, art, society, all life even means only of this growth, instruments of the spirit to be used for its service and with the spiritual aim as their dominant or at least their ultimate preoccupation ?

What is meant after all by life and when is it that we most fully and greatly live ? Life is surely nothing but the creation and active self-expression of man's spirit, powers, capacities, his will to be and think and create and love and do and achieve. We shall find out in the end that our daily life and our social existence are not things apart, are not another field of existence with another law than the inner and ideal. On the contrary, we shall never find out their true meaning or resolve their harsh and often agonising problems until we learn to see in them a means towards the discovery and the individual and collective expression of our highest and, because our highest, therefore our truest and fullest self, our largest most imperative principle and power of existence. All life is only a lavish and manifold opportunity given us to discover, realise, express the Divine. The living aim of culture is the realisation on earth of the kingdom of heaven.

Thus, not to live principally in the activities of the sense-mind, but in the activities of knowledge and reason and a wide intellectual curiosity, the activities of the cultivated aesthetic being, the activities of the enlightened will which make for character and high ethical ideals and a large human action, not to be governed by our lower or our average mentality but by truth and beauty and the self-ruling will is the ideal of a true culture and the beginning of an accomplished humanity. A complete and universal appreciation of beauty and the making entirely beautiful our whole life and being must surely be a necessary character of the perfect individual and the perfect society.

THE WHOLE AIM OF A GREAT CULTURE

The whole aim of a great culture is to lift man to something which at first he is not, to lead him to knowledge though he starts from an unfathomable ignorance, to teach him to live by his reason, though actually he lives more by his unreason, by the law of good and unity, though he is now full of evil and discord, by law of beauty and harmony, though his actual life is a repulsive muddle of ugliness and jarring barbarisms, by some high law of his spirit though at present he is egoistic, material, unspiritual, engrossed by the needs and desires of his physical being.

There may be all the ordinary materials and circumstances of mere living, but if life is not uplifted by great hopes, aspirations and ideals, then we may well say that the community does not really live; it is defective in the characteristic greatness of the human spirit. Even when a nation or an age has developed within itself knowledge and science and arts, but still in its general outlook, its habits of life and thought is content to be governed not by knowledge and truth and beauty and high ideals of living, but by the gross vital, commercial, economic view of existence, we say that that nation or age may be civilised in a sense, but for all its abundant or even redundant appliances and apparatus of civilisation it is not the realisation or the promise of a cultured humanity.

However, while the first value of a culture is its power to raise and enlarge the internal man, the soul, the spirit, its soundness is not complete unless it has shaped also his external existence and made of it a rhythm of advance towards high and great ideals. This is the true sense of progress and there must be as part of it a sound political economic and social life, a power and efficiency enabling a people to survive, to grow and to move securely towards a collective perfection, and a vital elasticity and responsiveness that will give room for a constant advance in the outward expression of the mind and the spirit. If a culture does not serve these ends, then there is evidently a defect somewhere either in its essential conceptions or its wholeness or in its application that will seriously detract from its claims to a complete and integral value.

If we define civilisation as a harmony of spirit, mind and body, where has that harmony been entire or altogether real? Where have there not been glaring defi-

ciencies and painful discords ? Where has the whole secret of the harmony been altogether grasped in all its parts or the complete music of life evolved into the triumphant ease of a satisfying, durable and steadily mounting concord ? For from the view of the evolutionary future, European and Indian civilisations at their best have only been half achievements, infant dawns pointing to the mature sunlight that is to come. Neither Europe nor India nor any race, country or continent of mankind has ever been fully civilised from this point of view; none has grasped the whole secret of a true and perfect human living, none has applied with an entire insight or a perfectly vigilant sincerity even the little they were able to achieve.

We have to see not only the spirit and principle of the culture, not only the ideal, idea and scope of intention in its system, but its actual working and effect in the values of life. Here we must admit great limitations, great imperfections. There is no culture, no civilisation ancient or modern which in its system has been entirely satisfactory to the need of perfection in man; there is none in which the working has not been marred by considerable limitations and imperfections. And the greater the aim of the culture, the larger the body of the civilisation, the more are these flaws likely to overbear the eye. In the first place, every culture suffers by the limitations or defects of its qualities and, an almost infallible consequence, by the exaggerations too of its qualities. It tends to concentrate on certain leading ideas and to lose sight of others or unduly depress them; this want of balance gives rise to one-sided tendencies which are not properly checked, not kept in their due place, and bring about unhealthy exaggerations. Each age, each civilisation carries the heavy burden of our deficiencies, each succeeding age throws off something of the load, but loses some virtue of the past, creates other gaps and embarrasses itself with new aberrations. We have to strike a balance, to see things in the whole, to observe whither we are tending and use a large secular vision; otherwise it would be difficult to keep an unflinching faith in the destinies of the race.

OUR AGE OF CIVILISATION

As for the great spiritual seekers of the past, they would experience in all this huge activity of the intellect and the life [today] the sense of an aching void. A feeling of its illusion and unreality—because that which is greatest in man and raises him beyond himself had been neglected—would oppress them at every step. But an unbiased view will prefer to regard this age of civilisation as an evolutionary stage, an imperfect but important turn of the human advance. It is then possible to see that great gains have been made which are of the utmost value to ultimate perfection, even if they have been made at a great price. There is not only a greater generalisation of knowledge and the more thorough use of intellectual power and activity in multiple fields; there is not only the advance of science and its application to the conquest of our environment, an immense apparatus of means, vast utilisations, endless minute convenience, an irresistible machinery, a tireless exploitation of forces; there is too a certain development of powerful, if not high-pitched, ideals and there is an attempt, however

external and therefore imperfect, to bring them to bear upon the working of human society as a whole. Much has been diminished or lost, but it can be recovered, eventually, if not with ease. Once restored to its true movement, the inner life of man will find that it has gained in materials, in power of plasticity, in a new kind of depth and wideness. And we shall have acquired a salutary habit of many-sided thoroughness and a sincere endeavour to shape the outer collective life into an adequate image of our highest ideals. Temporary diminutions will not count before the greater inner expansion that is likely to succeed this age of external turmoil and outward-looking endeavour.

MAN IN THE INDIAN IDEA

Man in the Indian idea is a spirit veiled in the works of energy, moving to self-discovery, capable of Godhead. He is a soul that is growing through Nature to conscious selfhood; he is a divinity and an eternal existence; he is an ever-flowing wave of the God-ocean, an inextinguishable spark of the supreme Fire. Even, he is in his uttermost reality identical with the ineffable Transcendence from which he came and greater than the godheads whom he worships. The natural half-animal creature that for a while he seems to be is not at all his whole being and is not in any way his real being. His inmost reality is the divine self or at least one dynamic eternal portion of it, and to find that and exceed his outward, apparent, natural self is the greatness of which he alone of terrestrial beings is capable. He has the spiritual capacity to pass to a supreme and extraordinary pitch of manhood and that is the first aim which is proposed to him by Indian culture. There is room within it for all terrestrial aims, activities and aspirations; there is place in the ascent for all types of human character and nature.

EUROPE AND INDIA

Not only India but each nation is a Shakti or power of the evolving spirit in humanity and lives by the principles which it embodies. It may well be that both tendencies, the mental and the vital and physical stress of Europe and the spiritual and psychic impulse of India, are needed for the completeness of the human movement. Is not a unified world-culture the large way of the future ? Can either an exaggeratedly spiritual or an excessively temporal civilisation be the sound condition of human progress or human perfection ? A happy or just reconciliation would seem to be a better key to a harmony of Spirit, Mind and Body. Spiritual and temporal have indeed to be perfectly harmonised, for the spirit works through mind and body.

Every civilisation presents a mixed and anomalous appearance and can be turned by a hostile or unsympathetic observation which notes and exaggerates its defects, ignores its true spirit and its qualities, masses the shades, leaves out the lights, into a mass of barbarism, a picture of almost unrelieved gloom and failure, to the legitimate

surprise and indignation of those to whom its motives appear to have a great and just value. For each has achieved something of special value for humanity in the midst of its general work of culture, brought out in a high degree some potentiality of our nature and given a first large standing-ground for its future perfection. The future has to go on to a greater and more perfect, comprehensive development of these things and to evolve fresh powers, but we shall not do this rightly by damning the past or damning other cultures than our own in a spirit of arrogant intolerance. We need not only a spirit of calm criticism, but an eye of sympathetic intuition to extract the good from the past and present effort of humanity and make the most of it for our future progress.

THE PRESENT EVOLUTIONARY CRISIS

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. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and divine spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being : but 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's 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 ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life.

A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being is the only truth of life that can successfully replace the imperfect mental constructions of the past which were a combination of association and regulated conflict, an accommodation of egos and interests grouped or dovetailed into each other to form a society, a consolidation by common general life-motives, a unification by need and the pressure of struggle with outside forces. It is such a change and such a reshaping of life for which humanity is blindly beginning to seek, now more and more with a sense that its very existence depends upon finding the way. The evolution of mind working upon life has developed an organisation of the activity of mind and use of Matter which can no longer be supported by human capacity without an inner change. An accommodation of the egocentric human individuality, separative even in association, to a system of living which demands unity, perfect mutuality, harmony, is imperative. 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 infra-spiritual and infra-rational 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 organisation 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.

Individual and group harmonies of a comparative and qualified completeness are created, a social cohesion is accomplished; but in the mass the relations formed are constantly marred by imperfect sympathy, imperfect understanding, gross misunderstandings, strife, discord, unhappiness. It cannot be otherwise so long as there is no true union of consciousness founded upon a nature of self-knowledge, inner mutual knowledge, inner realisation of unity, concord of our inner forces of being and inner forces of life. In our social building we labour to establish some approach to unity, mutuality, harmony, because without these things there can be no perfect social living, but what we build is a constructed unity, an association of interests and egos enforced by law and custom and imposing an artificial, constructed order in

which the interests of some prevail over the interests of others and only a half-accepted, half-enforced, half-natural, half-artificial accommodation keeps the social whole in being. Between community and community there is a still worse accommodation with a constant recurrence of the strife of collective ego with collective ego. This is the best that we can do and all our persistent readjustments of the social order can bring us nothing better than an imperfect structure of life.

What the modern spirit has sought for is the economic social ultimate,—an ideal material organisation of civilisation and comfort, the use of reason and science and education for the generalisation of a utilitarian rationality which will make the individual a perfected social being in a perfected economic society, where it is hoped that he will subordinate his ego for the sake of the right arrangement of the life of the community. But it has not been found in experience, whatever might have once been hoped, that education and intellectual training by itself can change man; it only provides the human individual and collective ego with better information and a more efficient machinery, but leaves it the same unchanged human ego. For the way that humanity deals with an ideal is to be satisfied with it as an aspiration which is for the most part left only as an aspiration, accepted only as a partial influence. The ideal is not allowed to mould the whole life, but only more or less to colour it.

LIFE AND THE MAN OF IDEAS

The idealist, the thinker, the philosopher, the poet and artist, even the moralist, all those who live much in ideas, when they come to grapple at close quarters with practical life seem to find themselves something at a loss and are constantly defeated in their endeavour to govern life by their ideas. But even the man who is capable of governing his life by ideas, who recognises, that is to say, that it ought to express clearly conceived truths and principles of his being or of all being and tries to find out or to know from others what these are, is not often capable of the highest, the free and disinterested use of his rational mind. As others are subjected to the tyranny of their interests, prejudices, instincts or passions, so he is subjected to the tyranny of ideas. Indeed, he turns his ideas into interests, obscures them with his prejudices and passions and is unable to think freely about them, unable to distinguish their limits or the relation to them of other, different and opposite ideas and the equal right of these also to exist. Ideals and idealists are necessary; ideals are the savour and sap of life, idealists are the most powerful diviners and assistants of its purposes. But reduce your ideal to a system and it at once begins to fail, because the ideas themselves are partial and insufficient; not only have they a very partial triumph, but if their success were complete, it would still disappoint, because they are not the whole truth of life and therefore cannot securely govern and perfect life. Life escapes from the formulas and systems which our reason labours to impose on it; it proclaims itself too complex, too full of infinite potentialities to be tyrannised over by the arbitrary intellect of man.

“SALVATION BY MACHINERY” AND THE TRUE WAY OUT

The one way out harped on by the modern mind which has been as much blinded as enlightened by the victories of physical science, is the approved device of salvation by machinery. Machinery cannot form the soul and life-force into standardised shapes. If the spirit of the things we profess is absent or falsified, no method or machinery can turn them out for us or deliver the promised goods. The destiny of the race in this age of crisis and revolution will depend much more on the spirit which we are than on the machinery we shall use. Man's true way out is to discover his soul and its self-force and instrumentation and replace by it both the mechanisation of mind and the ignorance and disorder of life-nature. But there would be little room and freedom for such a movement of self-discovery and self-realisation in a closely regulated and mechanised social existence.

The one safety for man lies in learning to live from within outward, not depending on institutions and machinery to perfect him, but out of his growing inner perfection availing to shape a more perfect form and frame of life; for by this inwardness we shall best be able both to see the truth of the high things which we now only speak with our lips and form into outward intellectual constructions, and to apply their truth sincerely to all our outward living. If we are to found the kingdom of God in humanity, we must first know God and see and live the diviner truth of our being in ourselves. It is through the growth of consciousness that the collective soul and its life can become aware of itself and develop; the free play of mind and life is essential for the growth of consciousness; for mind and life are the soul's only instrumentation until a higher instrumentation develops; they must not be inhibited in their action or rendered rigid, unplastic and unprogressive. The difficulties or disorders engendered by the growth of the individual mind and life cannot be healthily removed by the suppression of the individual; the true cure can only be achieved by his progression to a greater consciousness in which he is fulfilled and perfected.

THE OBSTACLES FROM WITHIN

It is one of those vast critical moments in the life of the race when all is pressing towards change and reconstitution. The ideals of the future, especially the ideals of freedom, equality, commonalty, unity, are demanding to be brought from their limited field in the spiritual life or the idealism of the few and to be given some beginning of a true soul of action and bodily shape in the life of the race. But banded against any such fulfilment there are powerful obstacles, and the greatest of them come not from outside but from within. For they are the old continued impulsions and obstinate recalcitrance of mankind's past nature, the almost total subjection of his normal mind to egoistic, vital and material interests and ambitions which make not for union but for strife and discord, the plausibilities of the practical reason which looks at the possibilities of the day and the morrow and shuts its eyes to the consequences of the

day after, the habits of pretence and fiction which impel men and nations to pursue and forward their own interests under the camouflage of a specious idealism, a habit made up only partly of the diplomatic hypocrisy of politicians, but much more of a general half-voluntary self-deception, and, finally, the inrush of blinder unsatisfied forces and crude imperfect idealisms to take advantage of the unrest and dissatisfaction prevalent in such times and lay hold for a while on the life of mankind.

War and violent revolution can be eliminated, if we will, though not without immense difficulty, but on the condition that we get rid of the inner causes of war and injustice of which violent revolutions are the natural reactions. The limitations of armies and armaments, is an illusory remedy. Even if there could be found an effective international means of control, it would cease to operate as soon as the clash of war actually came. The European conflict has shown that, in the course of war, a country can be turned into a huge factory of arms and a nation convert its whole peaceful manhood into an army. The development of international law into an effective force which will restrain the egoism of individuals is another solution which still attracts and seems the most practicable to most when they seek to deal with the difficulties of the future. But not even the construction of a stronger international law with a more effective sanction behind it will be an indubitable or a perfect remedy. The real truth, the real cause of the failure is that internationalism is yet, except with some exceptional men, merely an idea; it is not yet a thing near to our vital feelings or otherwise a part of our psychology.

The question now put by evolving Nature to mankind is whether its existing international system, if system it can be called, a sort of provisional order maintained with constant evolutionary or revolutionary changes cannot be replaced by a willed and thought-out fixed arrangement, a true system, eventually a real unity—serving all the common interests of the earth's peoples.

If we consider the possibilities of a unification of the human race on political, administrative and economic lines, we see that a certain sort of unity or first step towards it appears not only to be possible, but to be more or less urgently demanded by an underlying spirit and sense of need in the race. This spirit has been created largely by increased mutual knowledge and close communication, partly by the development of wider and freer intellectual ideals and emotional sympathies in the progressive mind of the race. The real strength of this new tendency is in its intellectual, idealistic and emotional parts. Its economic causes are partly permanent and therefore elements of strength and secure fulfilment, partly artificial and temporary and therefore elements of insecurity and weakness. The political incentives are the baser part in the amalgam; their presence may even vitiate the whole result and lead in the end to a necessary disillusion and reversal of whatever unity may be initially accomplished. A common, intellectual, cultural activity and progress may do much but need not by themselves be sufficient to bring into being the fully powerful psychological factor that would be required.

No change of ideas or of the intellectual outlook of life, no belief in God or

Avatar or Prophet, no victorious science or liberating philosophy, no social scheme or system, no sort of machinery internal or external can really bring about the great desire implanted in the race, true though that desire is in itself and the index of the goal to which we are being led. Because man is himself not a machine nor a device, but a being and a most complex at that, therefore he cannot be saved by machinery; only by an entire change which shall affect all the members of his being, can he be liberated from his discords and imperfections. Until man in his heart is ready, a profound change of the world conditions cannot come; or it can only be brought about by force, physical force or else force of circumstances, and that leaves all the real work to be done. A frame may have then been made, but the soul will have still to grow into that mechanical body.

So long as war does not become psychologically impossible, it will remain or, if vanished for a while, return. War itself, it is hoped, will end war; the expense, the horror, the butchery, the disturbance of tranquil life, the whole confused sanguinary madness of the thing has reached or will reach such colossal proportions that the human race will fling the monstrosity behind it in weariness and disgust. But weariness and disgust, horror and pity, even the opening of the eyes to reason by the practical facts of the waste of human life and energy and the harm and extravagance are not permanent factors; they last only while the lesson is fresh. Afterwards, there is forgetfulness; human nature recuperates itself and recovers the instincts that were temporarily dominated. A long peace will come to an end; the organisation will break down under the stress of human passions.

THE HOPE OF A NEW ORDER

We of today have not the excuse of ignorance since we have before us perfectly clear ideas and conditions. Freedom and unity, the self-determination of men and nations in the framework of a life drawn together by co-operation, comradeship, brotherhood if it may be, the acceptance of a close interrelation of the common aims and interests of the race, an increasing oneness of human life in which we cannot deny any longer to others what we claim for ourselves,—are things of which we have formed a definite conception. The acknowledgement of them is there in the human mind, but not as yet any settled will to practise. The indwelling deity who presides over the destiny of the race has raised in man's mind and heart the idea, the hope of a new order which will replace the old unsatisfactory order, and substitute for it conditions of the world's life which will in the end have a reasonable chance of establishing peace and well-being. This would for the first time turn into an assured fact the ideal of human unity which, cherished by a few, seemed for so long a noble chimera; then might be created firm ground of peace and harmony and even a free room for the realisation of the highest human dreams, for the perfectibility of the race, a perfect society, a higher upward evolution of the human soul and human nature. It is for the men of our days and, at the most, of tomorrow to give the answer.

The hopes, the ideals, the aspirations that are abroad in mankind are themselves so many severe and pregnant questions put to us, not merely to our intelligence but to the spirit of our being and actions. And the gain they will bring to humanity depends on the spirit which governs us during the time of their execution. For these ideals stand and they represent the greater aims of the spirit in man which through all denials, obstacles and imperfections of his present incomplete nature knows always the perfection towards which it moves and the greatness of which it is capable. Circumstances and force and external necessity and past nature may still be too strong for us, but if the light of the ideal is kept burning in its flame of knowledge and its flame of power, it will seize even on these things and create out of their evil its greater inevitable good. At present it may seem only an idea, a word unable to become a living reality, but it is the Idea and the Word expressing what was concealed in the Spirit which preside over creation. The time will come when they will be able to seize on the Force that works and turn it into the instrument of a greater and fairer creation. The nearness or distance of the time depends on the fidelity of the mind and will of man to the best he sees and the insistence of his self-knowledge, unobsessed by subjection to the circumstances he suffers and the machinery he uses, to live out its truth within himself so that his environment may accept it and his outward life be shaped in its image.

TRUE BROTHERHOOD : ITS SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

Brotherhood is the real key to the triple gospel of the ideal of humanity—liberty, equality, fraternity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. Only when man has developed not merely a fellow-feeling with all men, but a dominant sense of unity and commonalty, only when he is aware of them not merely as brothers,—that is a fragile bond,—but as parts of himself, only when he has learned to live, not in his separate personal and communal ego-sense but in a large universal consciousness, can the phenomenon of war, with whatever weapons, pass out of his life without the possibility of return. Meanwhile that he should struggle even by illusions towards that end is an excellent sign; for it shows that the truth behind the illusion is pressing towards the hour when it may become manifest as reality.

Everything depends, first, upon the truth of our vision, secondly, upon the sincerity with which we apply it, last and especially, on the inwardness of our realisation. Vain will be the mechanical construction of unity, if unity is not in the heart of the race and if it be made only a means for safeguarding and organising our interests.

Human society never seized on the discovery of the soul as a means for the discovery of the law of its own being or on a knowledge of the soul's true nature and need and its fulfilment as the right way of terrestrial perfection. So far as it saw in

religion a means of human salvation and perfection, it laid hands upon it at once to mechanise it, to catch the human soul and bind it on the wheels of socio-religious machinery, to impose on it in the place of spiritual freedom an imperious yoke and an iron prison. It saddled upon the religious life of man a Church, a priesthood and a mass of ceremonies and set over it a pack of watchdogs under the name of creeds and dogmas. The supreme truths are neither the rigid conclusions of logical reasoning nor the affirmations of credal statement, but fruits of the soul's inner experience.

So far as we really succeed in living for others, it is done by an inner spiritual force of love and sympathy; but the power and field of effectuality of this force in us are small, its action often ignorant because there is contact of mind and heart but our being does not embrace the being of others as ourselves. An external unity with others must always be an outward joining and association of external lives with a minor inner result; the mind and the heart attach their movements to this common life and the beings whom we meet there, but the common external life remains the foundation,—the inward constructed unity, or so much of it as can persist in spite of mutual ignorance and discordant egoism, conflict of minds, conflict of hearts, conflict of vital temperaments, conflict of interests, is a partial and insecure superstructure.

The spiritual consciousness, the spiritual life reverse this principle of building; it bases its action in the collective life upon an inner experience and inclusion of others in our own being, an inner sense and reality of oneness. The spiritual individual acts out of that sense of oneness which gives him immediate and direct perception of the demand of self on other self, the need of the life, the good, the work of love and sympathy that can truly be done.

OUR REAL BEING AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE

Man's true end in life must be always this realisation of his own immortal self, this entry in its secret of an infinite and eternal existence. Our real being is not the intellect, not the aesthetic, ethical or thinking mind but the divinity within, the Spirit, and these other things are only the instruments of the Spirit. A mere intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture does not go back to the inmost truth of Spirit; it is still an Ignorance, an incomplete, outward and superficial knowledge. To have made the discovery of our deepest being and hidden spiritual nature is the first necessity and to have erected the living of an inmost spiritual life into the aim of existence is a characteristic sign of a spiritual culture.

A wider spiritual culture must recognise that the Spirit is not only the highest and inmost thing, but all is manifestation and creation of the Spirit. It must have a wider outlook, a more embracing range of applicability and, even, a more aspiring and ambitious aim of its endeavour. Its aim must be not only to raise to inaccessible heights the few elect but to draw all men and all life and the whole human being upward, to spiritualise life and in the end to divinise human nature. Not only must it be able to lay hold on his deepest individual being but to inspire too his communal

existence. It must turn by a spiritual change all the members of his ignorance into members of knowledge; it must transmute all the instruments of the human into instruments of a divine living. The true and full spiritual aim in society will regard man not as a mind, a life and a body, but as a soul incarnated for a divine fulfilment upon earth, not only in heavens beyond, which after all it need not have left it if had no divine business here in the world of physical, vital and mental nature. For man to become divine in consciousness and act and to live inwardly and outwardly the divine life is what is meant by spirituality.

A spiritual age of mankind will perceive this truth. It will not try to make man perfect by machinery or keep him straight by tying up all his limbs. Its aim will be to diminish as soon and as far as possible the element of external compulsion in human life by awakening the inner divine compulsion of the Spirit within. True it is that so long as man has not come within measurable distance of self-knowledge and has not set his face towards it, he cannot escape from the law of external compulsion and all his efforts to do so must be vain. We must feel and obey the compulsion of the Spirit if we would establish our inner right to escape other compulsion. Spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul, because it is itself fulfilled by freedom; and the deepest meaning of freedom is the power to expand and grow towards perfection by the law of one's own nature.

However, man does not actually live as an isolated being, nor can he grow by an isolated freedom. He grows by his relations with others and his freedom must exercise itself in a progressive self-harmonising with the freedom of his fellow-beings. The law of our self-determination has to wed itself to the self-determination of others and to find the way to enact a real union through this mutuality. But its basis can only be found within and not through any mechanical adjustment. It lies in the discovery within by the being in the course of it self-expansion and self-fulfilment that these things at every turn depend on the self-expansion and self-fulfilment of those around us, because we are secretly one being with them and one life. It is in philosophical language the recognition of the one Self in all who fulfils himself variously in each; it is the finding of the law of the divine being in each unifying itself with the law of the divine being in all. At once the key of the problem is shifted from without to within, from the visible externalities of social and political adjustment to the spiritual life and truth which can alone provide its key. Each being has his own truth of independent self-realisation and his truth of self-realisation in the life of others and should feel, desire, help, participate more and more, as he grows in largeness and power, in the harmonious and natural growth of all the individual selves and all the collective selves of the one universal being.

INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES, MANKIND

That which we are has expressed itself through the individual, but also through the universality, and though each has to fulfil itself in its own way, neither can succeed

independently of the other. The society has no right to crush or efface the individual for its own better development or self-satisfaction; the individual, so long at least as he chooses to live in the world, has no right to disregard for the sake of his own solitary satisfaction and development his fellow-beings and to live at war with them or seek a selfishly isolated good. The law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonise his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of the Divine in the type of mankind, taking full advantage of the free development and the gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one divine family.

The social evolution of the human race is necessarily a development of the relations between three constant factors : individuals, communities of various sorts and mankind. Each seeks its own fulfilment and satisfaction, but each is compelled to develop them not independently but in relation to the others. The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual; the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs and eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of a united humanity.

The object of all society should be, therefore, and must become, as man grows conscious of his real being, nature and destiny and not only of a part of it, first to provide the conditions of life and growth by which individual Man,—not isolated men or a class or a privileged race, but all individual men according to their capacity,—and the race through the growth of its individuals may travel towards this divine perfection. For civilisation can never be perfect or safe so long as, confining the cultured mentality to a small minority, it nourishes in its bosom a tremendous mass of ignorance, a multitude, a proletariat.

It must be, secondly, as mankind generally more and more grows near to some figure of the Divine in life and more and more men arrive at it,—for the cycles are many and each cycle has its own figure of the Divine in man,—to express in the general life of mankind, the light, the power, the beauty, the harmony, the joy of the Self that has been attained and that pours itself out in a freer and nobler humanity. Freedom and harmony express the two necessary principles of variation and oneness.

Humanity is one, but different peoples are variant soul-forms of the common humanity. When we find the oneness, the principle of variation is not destroyed but finds rather its justification; it is not by abolishing ourselves, our own special temperament and power, that we can get at the living oneness, but by following it out and raising it to its highest of freedom and action. The nations should therefore become conscious not only of their own but of each other's souls and learn to respect, to help and to profit, not only economically and intellectually but subjectively and spiritually by each other. For the final end is a common world-culture in which each national

culture should be, not merged into or fused with some other culture different from it in principle or temperament, but evolved to its full power and could then profit to that end by all the others as well as give its gains and influences to them, all serving by their separateness and their interaction the common aim and idea of human perfection.

The peoples of humanity must be allowed to group themselves according to their free will and their natural affinity; no constraint or force should be allowed to compel an unwilling nation or distinct grouping of peoples to enter into another system or join itself or remain joined to it for the convenience, aggrandisement or political necessity of another people or even for the general convenience in disregard of its own wishes. Unity would be the largest principle of life, but freedom would be its foundation-stone. Man's communities are formed not so much by the instinctive herding together of a number of individuals of the same genus or species as by local association, community of interests, and community of ideas; and these limits tend always to be overcome in the widening of human thoughts and sympathies brought about by the closer intermingling of races, nations, interests, ideas, cultures. Still, if overcome in their separatism, they are not abolished in their fact, because they repose on an essential principle of Nature,—diversity in unity. And so, a free world union must in its very nature be a complex unity based on diversity and diversity must be based on self-determination.

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

There is at work a more powerful force, a sort of intellectual religion of humanity, clear in the minds of the few, vaguely felt in its effects and disguises by the many, which has largely helped to bring about much of the trend of the modern mind and the drift of its developing institutions. This is a psychological force which tends to break beyond the formula of the nation and aspires to replace the religion of country and even, in its more extreme forms, to destroy altogether the national sentiment and to abolish its divisions so as to create the single nation of mankind. The great necessity, then, and the great difficulty is to help this idea of humanity, which is already at work upon our minds and has even begun in a very slight degree to influence from above our actions, and turn it into something more than an idea, however strong, to make it a central motive and a fixed part of our nature. Its satisfaction must become a necessity of our psychological being just as the family idea or the national idea has become each a psychological motive with its own need of satisfaction.

The idea of humanity has been obliged in an intellectual age to mask its true character of a religion and a thing of the soul and the spirit and to appeal to the vital and physical mind of man rather than his inner being. It has limited his effort to the attempt to revolutionise political and social institutions and to bring about such a modification of the ideas and sentiments of the common mind of mankind as would make these institutions practicable; it has worked at the machinery of human life and on the outer

mind much more than upon the soul of the race. It has laboured to establish a political, and social and legal liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association. But though these aims are of great importance in their own field, they are not the central thing; they can only be secure when founded upon a change of the inner human nature and inner way of living; they are themselves of importance only as means for giving a greater scope and a better field for man's development towards that change and, when it is once achieved, as an outward expression of the larger inner life.

There would be needed to make the change persist a religion of humanity or an equivalent sentiment much more powerful, explicit, self-conscious, universal in its appeal than the nationalist's religion of country; the clear recognition by man in all his thought and life of a single soul in humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul-form; an ascension of man beyond the principle of ego which lives by separativeness,—and yet, there must be no destruction of individuality, for without that man would stagnate.

The fundamental idea so far accepted is that mankind is the Godhead to be worshipped and served by man and that the respect, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and chief aim of the human spirit. Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventible death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted. The heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation, freed from belittling influences. The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men, and nations and mankind. This, speaking largely, is the idea and spirit of the intellectual religion of humanity.

But still in order to accomplish all its future, this idea and religion of humanity has to make itself more explicit, insistent and categorically imperative. For otherwise, it can only work with clarity in the minds of the few and with the mass it will be only a modifying influence, but will not be the rule of human life. And so long as that is so, it cannot entirely prevail over its own principal enemy. That enemy, the enemy of all real religion, is human egoism, the egoism of the individual, the egoism of class and nation. These it could for a time soften, modify, force to curb their more arrogant, open and brutal expressions, oblige to adopt better institutions, but not to give place to the love of mankind, not to recognise a real unity between man and man. For that essentially must be the aim of the religion of humanity, as it must be the earthly aim of all human religion, love, mutual recognition of human brotherhood, a living sense of human oneness and practice in thought, feeling and life, the ideal which was expressed first some thousand of years ago in the ancient Vedic hymn and must

always remain the highest injunction of the Spirit within us to human life upon earth. Till that is brought about, the religion of humanity remains unaccomplished. With that done, the one necessary psychological change will have been effected without which no formal and mechanical, no political and administrative unity can be real and secure. If it is done, that outward unification may not even be indispensable or, if indispensable, it will come about naturally, not, as now it seems likely to be, by catastrophic means but by the demand of the human mind, and will be held secure by an essential need of our perfected and developed human nature.

THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE

A spiritual religion of humanity is the hope of the future. By this is not meant what is ordinarily called a universal religion, a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief and dogma and outward rite. Mankind has tried unity by that means; it has failed and deserved to fail, because there can be no universal religious system, one in mental creed and vital form. The inner spirit is indeed one, but more than any other the spiritual life insists on freedom and variation in its self-expression and means of development. A religion of humanity means the growing realisation that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one; that humanity is its highest present vehicle, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here. It implies a growing attempt to live out this knowledge and bring about a kingdom of this divine Spirit upon earth. By its growth within us oneness with our fellow-men will become the leading principle of our life, not merely a principle of co-operation, but a deeper brotherhood, a real and an inner sense of unity and equality and a common life. There must be, too, a discipline and a way of salvation in accordance with this religion, that is to say, a means by which it can be developed by each man within himself so that it may be developed in the life of the race. To go into all that this implies would be too large a subject to be entered upon here; it is enough to point out that in this direction lies the eventual road. No doubt, if this is only an idea like the rest, it will go the way of all ideas. But if it is at all a truth of our being, then it must be the truth to which all is moving and in it must be found the means of a fundamental, an inner, a complete, a real human unity which would be the one secure base of a unification of human life. A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence.

Could such a realisation develop rapidly in mankind, we might then solve the problem of unification in a deeper and truer way from the inner truth to the outer forms. Until then, the attempt to bring it about by mechanical means must proceed. But the higher hope of humanity lies in the growing number of men who will realise

this truth and seek to develop it in themselves, so that when the mind of man is ready to escape from its mechanical bent,—perhaps, when it finds that its mechanical solutions are all temporary and disappointing,—the truth of the Spirit may step in and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection.

A SPIRITUALISED SOCIETY

A spiritualised society can alone bring about a reign of individual harmony and communal happiness. Therefore, if the spiritual change of which we have been speaking is to be effected, it must unite two conditions which have to be simultaneously satisfied but are most difficult to bring together. There must be the individual and the individuals who are able to see, to develop, to re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit and communicate both their idea and its power to the mass. And there must be at the same time a mass, a society, a communal mind or at the least the constituents of a group-body, the possibility of a group-soul which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, ready to follow and effectively arrive, not compelled by its own inherent deficiencies, its defect of preparation to stop on the way or fall back before the decisive change is made.

What then will be that state of society, what that readiness of the common mind of man which will be most favourable to this change, so that even if it cannot at once effectuate itself, it may at least make for its ways a more decisive preparation than has been hitherto possible? For that seems the most important element since it is the unpreparedness, the unfitness of the society or of the common mind of man which is always the chief stumbling-block. It is the readiness of this common mind which is of the first importance. And here the first essential sign must be the growth of the subjective idea of life,—the idea of the soul, the inner being, its powers, its possibilities, its growth, its expression and the creation of a true, beautiful and helpful environment for it as the one thing of first and last importance. If the common human mind has begun to admit the ideals proper to the higher order that is in the end to be, and the heart of man has begun to be stirred by aspirations born of these ideas, then there is a hope of some advance in the not distant future.

INDIAN CULTURE

ITS GREAT PAST AND ITS POINTERS TO THE FUTURE

Sri Aurobindo

(Here are some selections from The Foundations of Indian Culture by Sri Aurobindo. They have been made by S. S. Jhunjunwalla.)

CIVILISATION AND CULTURE—THEIR AIM

A TRUE happiness in this world is the right terrestrial aim of man, and true happiness lies in the finding and maintenance of a natural harmony of spirit, mind and body. A culture is to be valued to the extent to which it has discovered the right key of this harmony and organised its expressive motives and movements. And a civilisation must be judged by the manner in which all its principles, ideas, forms, ways of living work to bring that harmony out, manage its rhythmic play and secure its continuance or the development of its motives. A civilisation in pursuit of this aim may be predominantly material like modern European culture, predominantly mental and intellectual like the old Graeco-Roman or predominantly spiritual like the still persistent culture of India. India's central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here encased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man it enters the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality, *dharma*. This achievement, this victory over unconscious matter develops its lines, enlarges its scope, elevates its levels until the increasing manifestation of the sattwic or spiritual portion of the vehicle of mind enables the individual mental being in man to identify himself with the pure spiritual consciousness beyond Mind. India's social system is built upon this conception; her philosophy formulates it; her religion is an aspiration to the spiritual consciousness and its fruits; her art and literature have the same upward look; her whole *dharma* or law of being is founded upon it. Progress she admits, but this spiritual progress, not the externally self-unfolding process of an always more and more prosperous and efficient material civilisation. It is her founding of life upon this exalted conception and her urge towards the spiritual and the eternal that constitute the distinct value of her civilisation. And it is her fidelity, with whatever human shortcomings, to this highest ideal that has made her people a nation apart in the human world.

THREE ASPECTS OF EXPRESSION

The culture of a people may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. There is a side of thought,

of ideal, of upward will and the soul's aspiration; there is a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation. A people's philosophy and higher thinking give us its mind's purest, largest and most general formulation of its consciousness of life and its dynamic view of existence. Its religion formulates the most intense form of its upward will and the soul's aspirations towards the fulfilment of its highest ideal and impulse. Its art, poetry, literature provide for us the creative expression and impression of its intuition, imagination, vital turn and creative intelligence. Its society and politics provide in their forms an outward frame in which the more external life works out what it can of its inspiring ideal and of its special character and nature under the difficulties of the environment. We can see how much it has taken of the crude material of living, what it has done with it, how it has shaped as much of it as possible into some reflection of its guiding consciousness and deeper spirit. None of them express the whole secret spirit behind, but they derive from it their main ideas and their cultural character. Together they make up its soul, mind and body. In Indian civilisation philosophy and religion, philosophy made dynamic by religion, religion enlightened by philosophy have led, the rest follow as best they can. This is indeed its first distinctive character, which it shares with the more developed Asiatic peoples, but has carried to an extraordinary degree of thoroughgoing pervasiveness. When it is spoken of as a Brahminical civilisation, that is the real significance of the phrase. The phrase cannot truly imply any domination of sacerdotalism, though in some lower aspects of the culture the sacerdotal mind has been only too prominent; for the priest as such has had no hand in shaping the great lines of the culture. But it is true that its main motives have been shaped by philosophic thinkers and religious minds, not by any means all of them of Brahmin birth. The fact that a class has been developed whose business was to preserve the spiritual traditions, knowledge and sacred law of the race,—for this and not a mere priest trade was the proper occupation of the Brahmin,—and that this class could for thousands of years maintain in the greatest part, but not monopolise, the keeping of the national mind and conscience, and the direction of social principles, forms and manners, is only a characteristic indication. The fact behind is that Indian culture has been from the beginning and has remained a spiritual, an inward-looking religio-philosophical culture. Everything else in it has derived from that one central and original peculiarity or has been in some way dependent on it or subordinate to it; even external life has been subjected to the inward look of the spirit.

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OTHER-WORLDLY ?

To say that Indian philosophy has led away from the study of nature is to state a gross unfact and to ignore the magnificent history of Indian civilisation. If by nature is meant physical Nature, the plain truth is that no nation before the modern epoch carried scientific research so far and with such signal success as India of ancient times.

That is a truth which lies on the face of history for all to read; it has been brought forward with great force and much wealth of detail by Indian scholars and scientists of high eminence, but it was already known and acknowledged by European savants who had taken the trouble to make a comparative study in the subject. Not only was India in the first rank in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, surgery, all the branches of physical knowledge which were practised in ancient times, but she was, along with the Greeks, the teacher of the Arabs from whom Europe recovered the lost habit of scientific enquiry and got the basis from which modern science started. In many directions India had the priority of discovery,—to take only two striking examples among a multitude, the decimal notation in mathematics or the perception that the earth is a moving body in astronomy,—*calā pṛthvī sthīrā bhāti*, the earth moves and only appears to be still, said the Indian astronomer many centuries before Galileo. This great development would hardly have been possible in a nation whose thinkers and men of learning were led by its metaphysical tendencies to turn away from the study of nature. A remarkable feature of the Indian mind was a close attention to the things of life, a disposition to observe minutely its salient facts, to systematise and to found in each department of it a science, Shastra, well-founded scheme and rule. That is at least a good beginning of the scientific tendency and not the sign of a culture capable only of unsubstantial metaphysics.

ELEMENT OF ASCETICISM

There can be no great and complete culture without some element of asceticism in it; for asceticism means the self-denial and self-conquest by which man represses his lower impulses and rises to greater heights of his nature. Indian asceticism is not a mournful gospel of sorrow or a painful mortification of the flesh in morbid penance, but a noble effort towards a higher joy and an absolute possession of the spirit. A great joy of self-conquest, a still joy of inner peace and the forceful joy of a supreme self-exceeding are at the heart of its experience. It is only a mind besotted with the flesh or too enamoured of external life and its restless effort and inconstant satisfactions that can deny the nobility or idealistic loftiness of the ascetic endeavour. But there are the exaggerations and deflections that all ideals undergo. Those which are the most difficult to humanity suffer from them most, and asceticism may become a fanatic self-torture, a crude repression of the nature, a tired flight from existence or an indolent avoidance of the trouble of life and a weak recoil from the effort demanded of our manhood. Practised not by the comparatively few who are called to it, but preached in its extreme form to all and adopted by unfit thousands, its values may be debased, counterfeits may abound and the vital force of the community lose its elasticity and its forward spring. It would be idle to pretend that such defects and untoward results have been absent in India. I do not accept the ascetic ideal as the final solution of the problem of human existence; but even its exaggerations have a nobler spirit behind them than the vitalistic exaggerations which are the opposite defect of Western culture.

ACCEPTANCE OF LIFE WITH SPIRIT AS THE CENTRAL MOTIVE

Equally is it a misrepresentation to say that Indian culture denies all value to life, detaches from terrestrial interests and insists on the unimportance of the life of the moment. To read these European comments one would imagine that in all Indian thought there was nothing but the nihilistic school of Buddhism and the monistic illusionism of Shankara and that all Indian art, literature and social thinking were nothing but the statement of their recoil from the falsehood and vanity of things. It does not follow that because these things are what the average European has heard about India or what most interests or strikes the European scholar in her thought, therefore they are, however great may have been their influence, the whole of Indian thinking. The ancient civilisation of India founded itself very expressly upon four human interests; first, desire and enjoyment, next, material, economic and other aims and needs of the mind and body, thirdly, ethical conduct and the right law of individual and social life, and, lastly spiritual liberation *kāma*, *artha*, *dharma*, *mokṣa*. The business of culture and social organisation was to lead, to satisfy, to support these things in man and to build some harmony of the forms and motives. Except in very rare cases the satisfaction of the three mundane objects must run before the other; fullness of life must precede the surpassing of life. The debt to the family, the community and the gods could not be scamped; earth must have her due and the relative its play, even if beyond it there was the glory of heaven or the peace of the Absolute. There was no preaching of a general rush to the cave and the hermitage.

The symmetric character of ancient Indian life and the vivid variety of its literature were inconsistent with any exclusive other-worldly direction. The great mass of Sanskrit literature is a literature of human life; certain philosophic and religious writings are devoted to the withdrawal from it, but even these are not as a rule contemptuous of its value. If the Indian mind gave the highest importance to a spiritual release,—and whatever the positivist mood may say, a spiritual liberation of some kind is the highest possibility of the human spirit,—it was not interested in that alone. It looked equally at ethics, law, politics, society, the sciences, the arts and crafts, everything that appertains to human life. It thought on these things deeply and scrutinisingly and it wrote of them with power and knowledge. What a fine monument of political and administrative genius is the *śukra-nīti*, to take one example only, and what a mirror of the practical organisation of a great civilised people ! Indian art was not always solely hieratic,—it seemed so only because it is in the temples and cave cathedrals that its greatest work survived; as the old literature testifies, as we see from the Rajput and Mogul paintings, it was devoted as much to the court and the city and to cultural ideas and the life of the people as the temple and monastery and their motives. Indian education of women as well as of men was more rich and comprehensive and many-sided than any system of education before modern times. The documents which prove these things are now available to anyone who cares to study. It is time that this parrot talk about the unpractical, metaphysical, quietistic,

anti-vital character of Indian civilisation should cease and give place to a true and understanding estimate.

But it is perfectly true that Indian culture has always set the highest value on that in man which rises beyond the terrestrial preoccupation; it has held up the goal of a supreme and arduous self-exceeding as the summit of human endeavour. The spiritual life was to its view a nobler thing than the life of external power and enjoyment, the thinker greater than the man of action, the spiritual man greater than the thinker. The soul that lives in God is more perfect than the soul that lives only in outward mind or only for the claims and joys of thinking and living matter. It is here that the difference comes in between the typical Western and the typical Indian mentality. The West has acquired the religious mind rather than possessed it by nature and it has always worn its acquisition with a certain looseness. India has constantly believed in worlds behind of which the material world is only the antechamber. Always she has seen a self within us greater than the mental and vital self, greater than the ego. Always she has bowed her intellect and heart before a near and present Eternal in which the temporal being exists and to which in man it increasingly turns for transcendence. The sentiment of the Bengali poet, the wonderful singer and rapt devotee of the Divine Mother,—

How rich an estate man lies fallow here !
If this were tilled, a golden crop would spring.

—expresses the real Indian feeling about human life. But it is most attracted by the greater spiritual possibilities man alone of terrestrial beings possesses. The ancient Aryan culture recognised all human possibilities, but put this highest of all and graded life according to a transitional scale in its system of the four classes and the four orders. Buddhism first gave an exaggerated and enormous extension to the ascetic ideal and the monastic impulse, erased the transition and upset the balance. Its victorious system left only two orders, the householder and the ascetic, the monk and the layman, an effect which subsists to the present day. It is this upsetting of the Dharma for which we find it fiercely attacked in the Vishnu Purana under the veil of an apologue, for it weakened in the end the life of society by its tense exaggeration and its hard system of opposites. But Buddhism too had another side turned towards action and creation, and gave a new light, a new meaning and a new moral and ideal power to life. Afterwards there came the lofty illusionism of Shankara at the close of the two greatest known millenniums of Indian culture. Life thenceforward was too much depreciated as an unreality or a relative phenomenon, in the end not worth living, not worth our assent to it and persistence in its motives. But this dogma was not universally accepted, nor admitted without a struggle; Shankara was even denounced by his adversaries as a masked Buddhist. The later Indian mind has been powerfully impressed by this idea of Maya; but popular thought and sentiment was never wholly shaped by it. The religions of devotion which see in life a play or Lila of God and not

a half sombre, half glaring illusion defacing the white silence of eternity had a closer growing influence. If they did not counteract, they humanised the austere ideal. It is only recently that educated India accepted the ideas of English and German scholars, imagined for a time Shankara's Mayavada to be the one highest thing, if not the whole of our philosophy, and put it in a place of exclusive prominence. But against that tendency too there is now a powerful reaction, not towards replacing the spirit without life by life without the spirit, but towards a spiritual possession of mind, life and matter. Still it is true that the ascetic ideal which in the ancient vigour of our culture was the fine spire of life mounting into the eternal existence became latterly its top-heavy dome and tended under the weight of its bare and imposing sublimity to crush the rest of the edifice.

INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

The secular buildings of ancient India, her palaces and places of assembly and civic edifices have not outlived the ravage of time; what remains to us is mostly something of the great mountain and cave temples, something too of the temples of her ancient cities of the plains, and for the rest we have the fanes and shrines of her later times, whether situated in temple cities and places of pilgrimage like Srirangam and Rameshwaram or in her great once regal towns like Madura, when the temple was the centre of life. It is then the most hieratic side of a hieratic art that remains to us. These sacred buildings are the signs, the architectural self-expression of an ancient spiritual and religious culture. Ignore the spiritual suggestion, the religious significance, the meaning of the symbols and indications, look only with the rational and secular aesthetic mind, and it is vain to expect that we shall get to any true and discerning appreciation of this art. And it has to be remembered too that the religious spirit here is something quite different from the sense of European religions; and even mediaeval Christianity, especially as now looked at by the modern European mind which has gone through the two great crises of the Renaissance and recent secularism, will not in spite of its oriental origin and affinities be of much real help. To bring in into the artistic look on an Indian temple occidental memories or a comparison with Greek Parthenon or Italian church or Duomo or Campanile or even the great Gothic cathedrals of mediaeval France, though these have in them something much nearer to the Indian mentality, is to intrude a fatally foreign and disturbing element or standard in the mind. But this consciously or else subconsciously is what almost every European mind does to a greater or less degree,—and it is here a pernicious immixture, for it subjects the work of a vision that saw the immeasurable to the tests of an eye that dwells only on measure.

Indian sacred architecture of whatever date, style or dedication goes back to something timelessly ancient and now outside India almost wholly lost, something which belongs to the past, and yet it goes forward too, though this the rationalistic mind will not easily admit, to something which will return upon us and is already beginning to

return, something which belongs to the future. An Indian temple, to whatever god-head it may be built, is in its inmost reality an altar raised to the divine Self, a house of the Cosmic Spirit, an appeal and aspiration to the Infinite.

INDIAN SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

The art of sculpture has indeed flourished supremely only in ancient countries where it was conceived against its natural background and support, a great architecture. Egypt, Greece, India take the premier rank in this kind of creation.... The earliest recently discovered work in India dates back to the fifth century B.C. and is already fully evolved with an evident history of consummate previous creation behind it, and the latest work of some high value comes down to within a few centuries from our own time. An assured history of two millenniums of accomplished sculptural creation is a rare and significant fact in the life of a people.... This sculpture passed through many changes, a more ancient art of extraordinary grandeur and epic power uplifted by the same spirit as reigned in the Vedic and Vedantic seers and in the epic poets, a later Puranic turn towards grace and beauty and rapture and an outburst of lyric ecstasy and movement, and last a rapid and vacant decadence; but throughout all the second period too the depth and greatness of sculptural motive supports and vivifies the work and in the very turn towards decadence something of it often remains to redeem from complete debasement, emptiness or insignificance.

The spirit of this greatness is indeed at the opposite pole to the perfection within limits, the lucid nobility or the vital fineness and physical grace of Hellenic creation in stone.... What Greek sculpture expressed was fine, gracious and noble, but what it did not express and could not by the limitations of its canon hope to attempt, was considerable, was immense in possibility, was that spiritual depth and extension which the human mind needs for its larger and deeper self-expression. And just this is the greatness of Indian sculpture that it expresses in stone and bronze what the Greek aesthetic mind could not conceive or express and embodies it with a profound understanding of its right conditions and a native perfection.... The Olympian gods of Phidias are magnified and uplifted human beings saved from a too human limitation by a certain divine calm of impersonality or universalised quality, divine type, *guna*; in other work we see heroes, athletes, feminine incarnations of beauty, calm and restrained embodiments of idea, action or emotion in the idealised beauty of the human figure. The gods of Indian sculpture are cosmic beings, embodiments of some great spiritual power, spiritual idea and action, inmost psychic significance, the human form a vehicle of this soul meaning, its outward means of self-expression; everything in the figure, every opportunity it gives, the face, the hands, the posture of the limbs, the poise and turn of the body, every accessory, has to be made instinct with the inner meaning, help it to emerge, carry out the rhythm of the total suggestion, and on the other hand everything is suppressed which would defeat this end, especially all that would mean an insistence on the merely vital or physical, outward or obvious

suggestion of the human figure. Not the ideal physical or emotional beauty, but the utmost spiritual beauty or significance of which the human form is capable, is the aim of this kind of creation. The divine self in us is its theme, the body made a form of the soul is its idea and its secret....

The paintings that remain to us from ancient times are the work of Buddhist painters, but the art itself in India was of pre-Buddhistic origin.... The spirit and motive of Indian painting are in their centre of conception and shaping force of sight identical with the inspiring vision of Indian sculpture.... The only difference ..comes from the turn natural and inevitable to its own kind of aesthesis, from the moved and indulgent dwelling on what one might call the mobilities of the soul rather than on its static eternities, on the casting out of self into the grace and movement of psychic and vital life (subject always to the reserve and restraint necessary to all art) rather than on the holding back of life in the stabilities of the self and its eternal qualities and principles, *guṇa* and *tattva*.... In the treatment of the human figure all corporeal filling in of the outline by insistence on the flesh, the muscle, the anatomical detail is minimised or disregarded : the strong subtle lines and pure shapes which make the humanity of the human form are alone brought into relief, the whole essential human being is there, the divinity that has taken this garb of the spirit to the eye, but not the superfluous physicality which he carries with him as his burden.. . The same law of significant line and suppression of distracting detail is applied to animal forms, buildings, trees, objects.... Colour too is used as a means for the spiritual and psychic intention, and we can see this well enough if we study the suggestive significance of the hues in a Buddhist miniature.

INDIAN LITERATURE

The ancient and classical creations of the Sanskrit tongue both in quality and in body and abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech and in the height and width of the reach of their spirit stand very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literatures. The language itself, as has been universally recognised by those competent to form a judgment, is one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instruments developed by the human mind, at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly-formed and full and vibrant and subtle, and its quality and character would be of itself a sufficient evidence of the character and quality of the race whose mind it expressed and the culture of which it was the reflecting medium. The great and noble use made of it by poet and thinker did not fall below the splendour of its capacities. Nor is it in the Sanskrit tongue alone that the Indian mind has done high and beautiful and perfect things, though it couched in that language the larger part of its most prominent and formative and grandest creations. It would be necessary for a complete estimate to take into account as well the Buddhistic literature in Pali and the poetic literatures,

here opulent, there more scanty in production, of about a dozen Sanskritic and Dravidian tongues. The whole has almost a continental effect and does not fall so far short in the quantity of its really lasting things and equals in its things of best excellence the work of ancient and mediaeval and modern Europe. The people and the civilisation that count among their great works and their great names the Veda and the Upanishads, the mighty structures of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, Kalidasa and Bhavabuti and Bhartrihari and Jayadeva and the other rich creations of classical Indian drama and poetry and romance, the Dhammapada and the Jatakas, the Panchatantra, Tulsidas, Vidyapati and Chandidas and Ramprasad, Ramdas and Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar and Kamban and the songs of Nanak and Kabir and Mirabai and the southern Shaiva saints and the Alvars,—to name only the best-known writers and most characteristic productions, though there is a very large body of other work in the different tongues of both the first and the second excellence,—must surely be counted among the greatest civilisations and the world's most developed and creative peoples. A mental activity so great and of so fine a quality commencing more than three thousand years ago and still not exhausted is unique and the best and most undeniable witness to something extraordinarily sound and vital in the culture.

SOCIO-POLITICAL GROWTH

The socio-political evolution of Indian civilisation, as far as one can judge from the available records, passed through four historical stages, first the simple Aryan community, then a long period of transition in which the national life was proceeding through a considerable variety of experimental formations in political structure and synthesis, thirdly, the definite formation of the monarchical state coordinating all the complex elements of the communal life of the people into regional and imperial unities, and last the era of decline in which there was an internal arrest and stagnation and an imposition of new cultures and systems from western Asia and Europe.

At the height of its evolution and in the great days of Indian civilisation we find an admirable political system efficient in the highest degree and very perfectly combining communal self-government with stability and order. The State carried on its work administrative, judicial, financial and protective without destroying or encroaching on the rights and free activities of the people and its constituent bodies in the same departments.

In the person of the monarch it was the dignified and powerful head and in the system of his administration the supreme instrument—neither an arbitrary autocracy or bureaucracy, nor a machine oppressing or replacing life—of a great and stable civilisation and a free and living people.

A greater sovereign than the king was the Dharma, the religious, ethical, social, political, juridic and customary law organically governing the life of the people. The king was only the guardian, executor and servant of the Dharma, charged to see to its observance and to prevent offences, serious irregularities and breaches. He himself

was bound the first to obey it and observe the rigorous rule it laid on his personal life and action, on the province, powers and duties of his regal authority and office.

SHORTCOMING IN INDIAN POLITY

But there is another side of politics on which it may be said that the Indian political mind has registered nothing but failure. The organisation it developed may have been admirable for stability and effective administration and the securing of communal order and liberties and the well-being of the people under ancient conditions, but even if its many peoples were each of them separately self-governed, well governed and prosperous and the country at large assured in the steady functioning of a highly developed civilisation and culture, yet that organisation failed to serve for the national and political unification of India and failed in the end to secure it against foreign invasion, the disruption of its institutions and an agelong servitude.

THE FUTURE TASK

The master idea that has governed the life, culture, social ideals of the Indian people has been the seeking of man for his true spiritual self and the use of life—subject to a necessary evolution first of his lower physical, vital and mental nature—as a frame and means for that discovery and for man's ascent from the ignorant natural into the spiritual existence. This dominant idea India has never quite forgotten even under the stress and material exigencies and the externalities of political and social construction. But the difficulty of making the social life an expression of man's true self and some highest realisation of the spirit within him is immensely greater than that which attends a spiritual self-expression through the things of the mind, religion, thought, art, literature, and while in these India reached extraordinary heights and largenesses, she could not in the outward life go beyond certain very partial realisations and very imperfect tentatives,—a general spiritualising symbolism, an infiltration of the greater aspiration, a certain cast given to the communal life, the creation of institutions favourable to the spiritual idea. Politics, society, economics are the natural field of the two first and grosser parts of human aim and conduct recognised in the Indian system, interest and hedonistic desire : *dharma*, the higher law, has nowhere been brought more than partially into this outer side of life, and in politics to a very minimum extent; for the effort at governing political action by ethics is little more than a pretence. The coordination or true union of the collective outward life with *mokṣa*, the liberated spiritual existence, has hardly even been conceived or attempted, much less anywhere succeeded in the past history of the yet hardly adult human race. Accordingly, we find that the governance by the *dharma* of India's social, economic and even, though here the attempt broke down earlier than in other spheres, her political rule of life, system, turn of existence, with the adumbration of a spiritual significance behind,—the full attainment of the spiritual life being left as a supreme

aim to the effort of the individual,—was as far as her ancient system could advance. This much endeavour, however, she did make with persistence and patience and it gave a peculiar type to her social polity.

It is perhaps for a future India, taking up and enlarging with a more complete aim, a more comprehensive experience, a more certain knowledge that shall reconcile life and the spirit, her ancient mission, to found the status and action of the collective being of man on the realisation of the deeper spiritual truth, the yet unrealised spiritual potentialities of our existence and so ensoul the life of her people as to make it the Lila of the greater Self in humanity, a conscious communal soul and body of Virat, the universal spirit.

THE RESHAPING OF HUMANITY

THE AIM AND ACTION OF A TRUE SPIRITUAL CULTURE

The Mother

(These are extracts from the Mother's talks and comments on various themes. All of them carry her typical dynamism, at once deep and direct and acute, working everywhere for a new human life reshaped in a greater light.)

"Wherefore God hammers so fiercely at his world, tramples and kneads it like dough, casts it so often into the blood-bath and the red hell-heat of the furnace ? Because humanity in the mass is still a hard, crude and vile ore which will not otherwise be smelted and shaped ..."

Sri Aurobindo — *Thoughts and Glimpses*

AFTER all, the whole problem is to know whether humanity has reached that state of pure gold in which the ways of violence and destruction will be rendered unnecessary.

Evidently there is nothing of the kind and man is still attached to all the ways of being and acting which make such processes necessary and even inevitable. That is the cause of the general distemper from which all countries suffer today and of that war atmosphere which yet hangs upon the earth.

However, if humanity has not reached the state of pure metal, something has happened in the history of the world which gives us the hope that a selected portion of this humanity, a small number of beings is ready to be transmuted into pure gold and that they will then be able to manifest force without violence, heroism without destruction and courage without catastrophe.

Further on, Sri Aurobindo gives us the solution of the problem. "If man could once consent to be spiritualised !" he says. Could consent ! Something in him demands, aspires, but all the rest refuses and continues to be what it is : a mixed ore that requires to be cast into the furnace.

Once more we are at this moment at a decisive turn in the history of the earth. I am being asked from many sides : "What is going to happen ?" Everywhere there is an anguish, an awaiting, a fear. "What is going to happen ?".

There is but one answer : "If man could once consent to be spiritualised !" Perhaps it will be sufficient if just a few individuals become the pure gold so that their example may change the course of events. But this is an urgent necessity.

Then this courage, this heroism that the Divine requires of us, why not make use of that in order to fight against one's own difficulties and imperfections and obscurities ? Why not face heroically the furnace of inner purification so that it may not be

necessary once again to pass through one of those formidable titanic destructions that sweep away a whole civilisation ?

That is the problem before us. Everyone of us is to solve it in his own way.

This evening I am answering the questions put to me and my answer is the same as Sri Aurobindo's : "If humanity could once consent to be spiritualised !"

And I add : The time is pressing—from the human point of view.

How can one work to help in changing the conditions of the present world ?

Looking at the actual state of the world many are the people who despair and groan : "Why is the world so frightful ?" But it is quite useless to lament, what is useful is that it should change. Since the world is detestable—we all agree on that point—since it is not what it should be, the only thing for us to do is to work so that it may be different.

But how, individually, to make it otherwise ?

There is one means within the reach of all : and that is to change oneself. If you can tell yourself : "I do not know very well what I am, but this combination of things that constitute me is perhaps my share of work and if I can do it as best I can, perhaps that would be the best that I could do." That is a very great beginning, very great. And it is not crushing, it is not beyond the limit of your possibilities. You have always in your hand, one might say, a field of action in proportion to your strength and it is manifold, complex, vast and profound enough to be interesting, an unknown world into which to go for new discovery.

Perhaps you will tell me : "But then it is egoism !" It is egoism, if you do it in the egoistic way, for your personal profit, if you try, for example, to acquire powers, to become strong so as to influence others, if you seek means to make your life comfortable. Naturally in that case it will be egoistic. Besides, remember that you will gain nothing. You will begin to deceive yourself, you will live in the midst of growing illusions and fall back into greater and greater obscurity. Things are organised much better than one believes....The condition required is an absolute sincerity in your aspiration for realisation of the divine work.

If you start like that, I can guarantee that you will make such an interesting voyage that even if it takes a very long time, you will never be tired of it. If you have a strong will, an unflinching perseverance and that indispensable good humour which enables you to smile at all difficulties and errors, then everything will go well.

Can one with one's good will help the world ?

With good will one can change many things, only it must be a consummately

pure and unmixed good will. But it is quite evident that a perfectly pure and true thought or prayer, if it is thrown upon the world, does its work. But where is this perfectly pure and true thought when it passes into the human brain ? There are degradations. If you can in yourself, by an effort of the inner consciousness and knowledge, surmount, that is to say, dissolve and abolish truly, a desire, and you are able, by means of an inner good will, by means of your consciousness and light and knowledge, to dissolve the desire, you will be first of all for yourself personally a hundred times more happy than if you have satisfied the desire. And then it will have a wonderful effect. It will have such a repercussion in the world you have no idea. It will spread. Because the vibrations you have created will continue to spread. They are things that enlarge themselves like snowballs. A victory, however small it may be, that you win in your character is a victory which can then be won in the whole world. And that is what I wanted to say just now : all the things that are done externally without changing the inner nature—hospitals, schools, etc.—are done through vanity, through the feeling of being great, while small obscure things conquered in oneself bring an infinitely greater victory, although the efforts may be hidden. Each movement in you that is false and contrary to the truth is a negation of the divine life. Your small efforts have considerable effects, which you do not even have the satisfaction of knowing, but which are true and precisely produce an impersonal and general result.

If you want truly to do something good, the best thing to do is to win your little victories in all sincerity, one after another, and winning this way you will do for the world the maximum of which you are capable.

Will our victory act for the whole world ?

It will not change everybody. For your victory is too small to include everybody. Millions are needed. It is just a small victory if it is compared to the whole. But it mixes up with other things.

You could say that it is like winning in the world the capacity of doing a certain thing; but for its action to become effective, sometimes centuries are needed. It is a question of proportions. You may carry on the experiment with the people around you. You must be altogether sincere, you must not do the thing with the idea of securing a particular result, but simply because you want to gain a victory. If you gain the victory it will necessarily have an effect upon the people around you. But if there is even one commercial element, if you do such a thing in order to get such a result : "I want to conquer my defects, but that person also should conquer his", that will not do. It is the attitude of the businessman. "I give this, but I will take that." That spoils all. There is neither purity nor sincerity. It is bargaining.

Nothing must come and mix with your sincerity, with your aspiration, with your motive. You do a thing for the love of the Divine, for the truth, for the per-

fection, without any other motive, any other idea. And that produces results.

In the life of the ordinary man is religion a necessity ?

In the life of the society it is a necessity, because it serves as a corrective to the collective egoism which would assume excessive proportions without this control.

The level of the collective consciousness is always lower than the individual level. It is very remarkable that when men gather in a group or meet in large numbers their intelligence seems to go down in proportion. Thus the consciousness of a crowd is much lower than the individual consciousness, and the collective consciousness of the society is certainly lower than the consciousness of the individuals composing it.

In the ordinary life, the individual, whether he knows it or not, has always a religion, but the object of his religion is sometimes quite of an inferior order; the god he adores may be the god of success or the god of money, the god of power or simply a family god, the god of children, the god of the family, the god of the ancestors. Always there is a religion. The quality of the religion differs according to individuals, but it is difficult for a human being to live and to continue to live and maintain his life without something like the rudiments of an ideal serving as the centre of his existence. Most of the time he does not know it, and if he were asked what was his ideal he would not be able to formulate it, but he has one vaguely, something which is most precious in his life. For the majority of people, it is, for example, safety; to live in safety, to be in conditions in which one is sure of being able to continue to live. It is one among the great goals—if it can at all be called a goal—one of the great motives of human endeavour. There are some for whom comfort is the important thing, for others it is pleasure, amusement.

All these things have their place very much low down and one would hardly be tempted to give them the name of an ideal, but it is truly a form of religion, something which may seem to require that one should consecrate one's life to it. There are many influences that seek to possess men by making use of that as the basis. This feeling of insecurity, uncertainty is a kind of weapon, a means used by political or religious groups to influence individuals. One plays upon these ideas.

Every political or social ideal is a kind of inferior expression of an idea that is a rudimentary religion. As soon as there is the faculty of thinking, there is necessarily the aspiration towards something higher than the most gross existence of every minute and it is that which gives energy and the possibility of living.

It can be said, of course, of individuals as of groups, that their value is just in proportion to the value of their ideal, of their religion, that is to say, of the thing which they place at the summit of their existence.

To say the truth, everyone has, whether he knows it or not, his own religion,

even while he belongs to any of the great recognised religions that have a name and a history. It is certain that even when one learns by heart the dogmas and follows a prescribed ritual, every one understands in his own way and acts in his own way; the name only of the religion is the same, but this same religion is not same for all individuals who believe in practising it.

One can say that if this aspiration to the unknown and the higher found no expression, human existence would be very difficult. If there were not in the core of every being the hope for something better, for some order, whatever it be, it would be difficult to find the necessary energy to continue to live.

But there are very few people who are able to think freely, it is much more easy to join a religion, accept it, adopt it, adhere to the religious collectivity than to formulate for oneself one's own cult. Apparently, therefore, you are this or that, but in reality it is only an appearance.

What is the difference between yoga and religion ?

Well, my child, it is as if you asked me what is the difference between a lion and a dog !

Imagine a person who has in some way heard of something that is called the Divine or who has a personal feeling that something of the kind exists. And this person begins to make all sorts of effort—effort of will, effort of discipline, effort of concentration—to find this Divine, to discover what it is, to know it and to be united with it. Then it can be said that this person is doing yoga.

Now, if this person noted down all the processes that he had used and made of them a fixed system, erected into absolute laws all that he had discovered : the Divine is like this, to find the Divine you must do like that, this gesture, that ceremony and you must admit that that is the truth : “I recognise that that is the truth and I fully adhere to it and my method is the only good one, the only one that exists”, and if all this is written, organised, arranged into fixed laws and ceremonies, that becomes religion.

Can one realise the Divine by this method, that is, by religion ?

People who carry in them a spiritual destiny and who are born to realise the Divine, to become conscious of Him and live Him will reach there necessarily, whatever the way followed. That is to say, even in religion there are people who have the spiritual experience and who find the Divine—not because of religion, generally in spite of it,—because they have the inner urge and this urge leads them to the goal in spite of the obstacles and through them. Everything was good for them.

But when these people want to express their experience, they use quite naturally

the terms of the religion in which they were brought up and they restrict their experience, are compelled to limit it a great deal and make it in some way sectarian. But for themselves it is possible they may have gone beyond all forms, all limits and conventions and have had the true experience in its very simplicity.

Where does the true spiritual life begin ?

The true spiritual life begins when one is in communion with the Divine, in the psychic.

When one is conscious of the Divine Presence in the psychic,—and in case the communion with the psychic is as yet not constant, at least the aspiration and effort for the thing must be there,—then and not before begins the spiritual life, the true spiritual life.

When one is united with one's psychic being and conscious of the Divine Presence, when one gets the impulse for action from this Divine Presence, when one's will has become a conscious collaborator with the Divine Will, then that is the starting-point.

Before this, one can be an aspirant for the spiritual life, but has not got the true spiritual life.

What is the fundamental virtue to be cultivated to prepare oneself for the spiritual life ?

I have told you many times, but it is an occasion to repeat it. It is sincerity.

A sincerity that must become total and absolute, because sincerity alone is your protection for the spiritual path. If you are not sincere, even at the very second step you are sure to fall and break your nose. There are all kinds of forces and wills and influences and entities that are lying in wait for the least breach in this sincerity and they immediately rush through this breach and begin to disorganise you.

Therefore, before doing anything, beginning anything, trying anything, be sure first of all that you are not only as sincere as you can be, but you intend to become still more sincere. For it is your only protection.

Is it possible for a human being to be perfectly sincere ?

Certainly not, if he remains what he is. But it is possible for him so to transform himself as to become perfectly sincere.

First of all, it must be said that sincerity is a progressive thing; and as the being progresses and grows and as the universe unfolds itself in the becoming, sincerity also goes on perfecting itself continuously. If there is a cessation in the growth, that necessarily would turn the sincerity of yesterday into an insincerity of tomorrow.

To become perfectly sincere one must have no preference, no desire, no attraction, no disgust, no sympathy or antipathy, no attachment, no repulsion. You must live in a total, integral vision of things in which everything is at its place and you have the same attitude to everything, the attitude that gives the true vision. Evidently it is a very difficult programme for a human being to realise, and unless one decides to divinise himself, it is almost impossible for him to free himself from all these contraries. And yet so long as he carries them within him he cannot be perfectly sincere. The mental, vital and even physical functioning automatically gets falsified. I lay stress on the physical, for even the functioning of the senses is falsified; you do not see, you do not hear, you do not taste, you do not feel things as they are in their own reality, as long as you have a preference. As long as there are things that please you and things that displease you, as long as they awake in you an attraction or a repulsion, you cannot see them in their reality; you see them through your reaction, your preference or your repulsion. The senses are instruments that become false in the same way as sensations or feelings or thoughts become false. Therefore, you must reach a state of complete detachment if you want to be sure of what you see, what you feel, what you experience and what you think. Evidently this is not an easy task. But till then your perception cannot be wholly true and therefore it will not be sincere.

Naturally, that is the maximum. There are cruder types of insincerity which everybody understands and which, I think, it is not necessary to emphasise. As for example, to say one thing and think another, to pretend doing one thing but do another, to express a will which is not your true will and so on,—I do not speak of the blatant falsehood which consists in saying a thing other than what is, nor of that diplomatic way of behaving which consists in doing a thing with the idea of getting a result, saying a thing for the sake of producing a certain effect, and all such combinations that lead you to contradict yourself—that is a type of insincerity obvious enough for everybody to be able easily to recognise.

But there are others, more subtle and they are more difficult to discover. For example, as long as you have in you sympathies and antipathies, quite naturally and, so to say, spontaneously, you will have a favourable view of that for which you have sympathy and an unfavourable view of that for which you have antipathy. Here too the lack of sincerity will be flagrant. However, it may happen that you deceive yourself and do not perceive that you are insincere. In that case the reason is that you have the collaboration—if one may say so—of a mental insincerity. For while it is true that the principle of sincerity is the same everywhere, insincerity takes a somewhat different character according to the states and parts of the being.

But the source of all insincerity whatsoever is always a similar movement arising from desire and a seeking for personal ends, from egoism and the combination of all

sorts of limitations arising from egoism, and from all the deformations arising from desire.

To say the truth, so long as the ego is there, you cannot be perfectly sincere even if you try to be so. You must go beyond ego, give yourself entirely to the Divine Will, give yourself without reserve or calculation. Then only can you become perfectly sincere, not before.

However, this 'does not mean that you should not make an effort to become more sincere than you are, saying: "I wait till my ego disappears to become sincere." For one can turn the phrase round and say that if you do not exert yourself sincerely your ego will not disappear.

Sincerity is the basis of all true realisation. It is the means, it is the way and it is also the goal. Without sincerity, you may be sure of taking false steps without number and having to repair constantly the harm you would do to yourself and to others.

Besides, there is a wonderful joy in being sincere; every act of sincerity carries in itself its own reward; the feeling of purification, uplifting and liberation that one feels when one rejects, even if it be a particle, falsehood. Sincerity is safety, protection, guide; ultimately it is a transforming power.

What must one understand by "not to have preferences"? Must not one prefer order to disorder, cleanliness to dirt, etc.? Not to have preferences, does it mean to treat everybody in the same manner?

What you call here preferences, I call choice. And every moment of your life you have to choose, choose between that which pulls you down and that which pulls you up, between that which makes you go forward and that which makes you go backward. But that I do not call having a preference, I call that making a choice, choosing, and that choice is indispensable, and it is infinitely more than choosing once for all between cleanliness and dirt, whether physical or moral. This attitude of choice must be there constant and perpetual, you must never fall asleep; but I do not call that having preferences.

To prefer means just not to choose. The word has for me a very clear meaning. Preference is a blind thing, it is an impulse, an attachment, at times an unconscious and generally an obstinate movement.

And very often preference goes the contrary way to choice. Here is an example that I come across daily. You are in front of a problem and you make the choice of placing yourself entirely at the disposal of the Divine Will so that the true solution may come. It comes, but how is it that you are disappointed? It is because something in you wished, desired, preferred more, or less consciously a different solution. And it is just because of this preference it happens that if the answer to your aspiration or your prayer is not what you desire, you feel unhappy and have to struggle

to accept it. On the contrary, if you have no preference, whatever the answer to your aspiration, to your prayer and whenever it comes, you adhere to it in a sincere urge, joyously, spontaneously.

A choice you have to make every minute, every minute you are put in front of a choice to go up or to go down, to go forward or to go backward. But this choice does not imply that you would prefer things to be rather like this than that. It is a fact of every instant, it is an attitude you take.

A choice is a decision and an act. Preference is a desire, an impulse. 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; you have chosen according to your inner truth, according to your highest consciousness, 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, it is the preference that will make you choose one way or the other, it is the preference that will distort your choice. 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, and that opens the door to anything.

Preference attaches itself to a result, choice is independent of the result. I repeat, every second you are put under the necessity of choosing; and you do not choose truly well, in all sincerity, unless it is the truth of the choice that interests you and not its result. If you choose in view of a result, that falsifies your choice.

So you see now there has been a confusion in your mind.

As for treating everyone in the same way, it is a still greater confusion. It is the kind of confusion one makes when one expects the Divine to act in the same way towards everybody. In that case it would be of no use that there is diversity in the world, it would be of no use that there are no two individuals alike. To treat everyone in the same way would be contradicting the very principle of diversity.

You can or you should, if you cannot, aspire to have the same deep attitude of understanding, unity, love, perfect compassion for all that is in the universe. But this very attitude will be applied in each case differently according to the truth and the necessity of the case. In other words, while the origin of the action may be the same, the action itself can be wholly, diametrically opposite according to the case and the truth of each one. But that is possible only for the highest, the deepest or essentially the truest consciousness, that which is free from all contingent movements. There you see every minute not only the essential truth of things, but also the truth of action and this is different in each case. And yet, I repeat, the state of consciousness in which one acts remains in every case essentially the same.

To understand that, you have to enter into the essential depth of things or see them from the highest height. You are then like a centre of light and consciousness, high enough or deep enough to see all things at the same time not merely in their essence, but in their manifestation.

And although the centre of consciousness is one and the same, the action is as

diverse as the manifestation, it is the realisation of the divine truth in its manifestation.

Otherwise you suppress all diversity of the world and bring it back to the essential Unmanifest Unity. For it is only in the non-manifestation that the one exists in unity. As soon as you enter into manifestation, the One becomes diversified and expresses itself in multiplicity, and multiplicity implies a multitude of actions and means.

To conclude, I would say that choice is to be made without caring for the consequences and action to be done according to the truth of multiplicity in manifestation.

What does "mental honesty" exactly mean?

It is a mind that does not try to deceive itself. And in fact it is not a trying, for it succeeds very well in doing it.

It would seem that an almost constant function of the mind, in the usual psychological constitution of man, is to give an explanation which would be acceptable to what happens in the desire-being, the vital being, the most material parts of the mind and the most subtle parts of the body.

There is a kind of general complicity among the members of the being to give an explanation, even a comfortable justification of all that we do in order to avoid as much as possible the painful impressions that arise from errors that we commit and movements that are hardly desirable. Unless you have gone through or have been made to go through a special training, the mind gives to itself, whatever one does, a sufficiently favourable explanation in order not to feel uneasy. It is only under the pressure of external reactions or circumstances or movements from other people that one gradually consents to look less favourably at what one is and what one does and begins to ask oneself if things could not be better than they are.

Spontaneously the first movement is to justify oneself, to excuse oneself. You at once put yourself on your guard, and quite spontaneously you want to prove that you are in the right even in the very smallest things, things absolutely without importance, and this is the general attitude in life.

These explanations you give yourself. It is only when circumstances compel you that you give them to others or to another; but first of all you make yourself very comfortable: "It is like that, because it should be like that and it has happened because of that", and always it is the fault of others or the fault of circumstances. It requires truly an effort—unless, as I have said, you have passed through a discipline, unless you have formed the habit of doing it automatically—to begin to understand that perhaps it is not like that, perhaps you did not do exactly what you ought to have done or not reacted as you ought to have reacted and even when you begin to see it, you need a much greater effort to recognise it...officially.

When you begin to see that you have made a mistake, the first movement of the mind is to cast the thing behind and put a veil in front, the veil of a fine little explanation; and as long as you are not obliged to show it you hide it. This is what I call want of mental honesty.

First of all, you deceive yourself through habit, but even when you begin by not deceiving yourself, there is an instinctive movement in the being to try to deceive yourself in order to feel comfortable. And then you have to take a bigger step, once you have understood that you made a mistake, to avow frankly: "Yes, I was mistaken."

All these things are so habitual, so automatic that you do not even notice them. But when you seek to impose a discipline on your being, you make discoveries that are tremendously interesting. You find out that you constantly live in a state of wilful self-deception; you spontaneously deceive yourself, you need not think at all, spontaneously you throw a nice veil over what you have done so that the thing may not appear in its true colours, and that for things which are so insignificant, which have so little importance ! One could understand dissimulation when its recognition might have serious consequences for life itself—the instinct of self-preservation drives you to do it, it is a protection—but the question is not that here, the question is about things absolutely indifferent, without consequence, one has just to tell oneself, "I am wrong." That is to say, to be mentally sincere you need an effort, a great effort, a discipline. I do not speak naturally of those who tell a lie in order not to be caught, for that, everybody knows, is a thing not to be done.

When one speaks of mental honesty it is of a thing that is acquired by a constant and continued effort.

You catch yourself, don't you?, you catch yourself all on a sudden giving to yourself, somewhere there in the head or in the heart,—but there it is more serious,—a little explanation very favourable to you. And when you can so pin yourself down, hold yourself and look straight in the face saying, "You think it is like that ?", then if you are courageous enough and put a strong pressure you tell yourself in the end : "Yes, I know very well it is not like that."

Sometimes that takes years. You must allow time to pass, you must change very much within yourself, and the vision of things must be different; you must have a different relation with circumstances so you may see clearly, completely how much you deceived yourself, even at the very moment when you believed yourself to be sincere.

Probably perfect sincerity can come only when you will have risen above this sphere of falsehood that the life as we know upon the earth is, even the higher mental life.

Only when you have ascended into the higher sphere, into the world of the Truth, you will be able to see things truly as they are and when you have seen them as they are you will be able to live them in their truth. Then all falsehoods will drop naturally and favourable explanations having no longer any reason for existence will disappear, for there will be nothing to explain.

Things will become evident by themselves, the possibility of error will disappear, the Truth will shine forth in the forms.

Thermocautery

When you make a mistake, without knowing that it is a mistake, through ignorance, it is evident that as soon as you learn that it is a mistake and your ignorance goes away, you do not commit the mistake any more, provided you have the good will and so come out of the state in which you might do it. But if you know that it is a mistake and still you do it, that means there is something perverse in you, something that has wilfully chosen to be on the side of disorder or bad will or even on the side of anti-divine forces.

It is also evident that if one chooses to be on the side of anti-divine forces or if one is so weak and inconsistent as not to be able to resist the temptation of being with them, then it is infinitely more serious, from the psychological point of view. It means there is something vitiated somewhere : an adverse force is already established in you or you have an innate sympathy for these forces. It is much more difficult to correct that than to correct ignorance.

To correct ignorance means to remove obscurity : you kindle a light, the obscurity disappears. But to repeat a fault which you know to be a fault would be like putting off the light wilfully after you have kindled it. That would be exactly making it dark in a wilful manner, for the argument of weakness does not hold.

The Divine Grace is always there to help those who have resolved to correct themselves and they cannot say, "I am too weak to correct myself." They should rather say that they have not yet taken the resolution to correct themselves. Somewhere in the being something there is which has not decided to do it and that is serious.

The argument of weakness is an excuse. The Grace is there to give the supreme force to whosoever takes the resolution.

This means that there is insincerity, not weakness. And insincerity is always an open door to the adversary. It means that there is a secret sympathy with what is perverted. And that is serious.

When it is a matter of illumining the ignorance, it is sufficient, as I have said, to put on the light, but in the case of conscious relapse what is needed is thermocautery.

How to unite one's will with the Divine Will ?

First of all, you must will it.

Next continue to will it, always continue, never waver when there are difficulties, continue till you succeed.

That is all.

And a few other things are necessary, as for example :

Not to be egoistic,

Not to have a small narrow mind,

Not to live in one's preferences,

Not to have desires,

Not to have mental opinions, etc.

It is a long process, because one must change the ordinary nature.

Break all mental limits, break all vital desires, break all physical preferences —after that you can hope to be in contact with the Divine Will.

And when you are in contact with it, you must live it integrally, that is to say, you must be unified in your whole being, all in one single will; for a unified will alone is capable of identifying itself with the Divine Will.

What is the first step towards reaching the true knowledge ?

To lose the illusion of the concrete and absolute value of human knowings, and perhaps that is also the most difficult step.

If you study the sciences, for example, the different branches of science or philosophy or any other similar activity, if you study seriously and deeply, then you arrive easily at the sense of the relativity of all these knowings. But when you come down one step to a lower level of mental activity, which determines and governs your attitude to the practical problems of life, you see that like all reasonable beings or those that are on the way to it, you form every instant a set of ideas about things which are not true knowledge but knowings, mental constructions made out of observations and experiments and studies which increase in number as you grow in age. You live in this mental construction with an innate, spontaneous and unshakable conviction of the absolute value of your experiences and observations, unless you possess a strong intelligence and have an opening to higher worlds. Indeed, all these mental constructions act in your being, automatically, requiring no conscious reflection on your part, by a sort of habit of associating two movements, that such a thing will bring about inevitably such other thing and when you have seen the phenomenon repeating very often, that creates in you the feeling of the absolute value of these knowings about yourself and your life.

And here it is infinitely more difficult to come to understand the relativity, the uncertainty that goes even to the extent of illusoriness of this way of knowledge. You are aware of it only when, through a will for discipline and spiritual progress, you look at these things with a deep critical sense. You discover then to what slavery you are subject automatically, even without your being conscious of it, by the mechanical play of reflex action, supported by the subconscious which produces the fact of

causes and effects being linked together in a customary order without your perceiving in the least the mechanism of it.

If you want to attain true knowledge, the first indispensable step then is not to believe in the validity of all these things; because these knowings in which you have almost an absolute faith and which very reasonably appear to you as evident, are just the limitations that prevent you from arriving at the knowledge by identity.

When can one say that one is ready for the Integral Yoga ?

When one has established in oneself a perfect equality of soul in all circumstances. That is the indispensable condition, the absolute necessary basis; something very quiet, very calm, very peaceful and the feeling of a great force. Not the quietness that comes from inertia, but the feeling of a concentrated strength which keeps you always equal whatever happens, even in the midst of the most terrible circumstances of life.

Certain signs precede this state and show that you are well on the way.

A time comes, for example, when you feel literally imprisoned in the ordinary consciousness, squeezed as it were within something extremely narrow and hard. You feel suffocated, the constraint becomes almost unbearable, you try to free yourself only to knock against walls that seem to be made of bronze.

That means that the consciousness within has reached a point where the outer mould has become too small for it. The ordinary life, the ordinary activities, the ordinary relations, all appear so small, so petty ! You feel within yourself a force that is about to burst open this too narrow covering.

Yet another sign is that whenever you concentrate and aspire, you feel a force, a light, a peace coming down into you,—you aspire and the answer is immediate. This shows the relation is well established.

Compiled by KAILASH JHAVERI

THE FREEDOM THAT UNITES

Dr. G. N. Sarma

(Dr. G. N. Sarma is Reader in Politics in the Department of Political Science, Marathwada University, Maharashtra. He has given us a very lucid and penetrating little exposition of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of freedom, showing both its profound depth and its wide range. At present the author is working on a full-scale study of the political thought of Sri Aurobindo.)

तत्र को मोह क शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यत !

And Oneness is the soul of multitude.

Savitri—Book One, Canto 3.

SRI AUROBINDO'S philosophy of freedom is unique in its synthesis of what are usually regarded as the opposite poles of freedom and unity. The uncriticized freedom that usually disrupts and the unimaginative unity that generally results in a lifeless uniformity are interpreted as correlative, as foundations of each other. Unity without freedom is oppressive and freedom without unity is a vain insistence of the ego.

FREEDOM AND UNITY

Attempts towards the reconciliation of freedom and unity or the more familiar terms of liberty and law have been numerous in the history of thought but they have been usually forced attempts towards reduction of the one in terms of the other—a vague and undefined enthusiasm for the liberty of the individual reducing unity to the margins of anarchy or conversely a passion for unity denying the need for individuality altogether. Most of the western philosophers have shown a tendency towards quantifying these terms and regarding the increase of the one as a diminution of the other.

Sri Aurobindo's view of freedom and unity is part of his yoga of synthesis where freedom has its field set in the context of unity and unity is a living and dynamic association of free and developed selves.¹

The landmarks of the little person fell,
The island ego joined its continent.

Individuality is based on spiritual aspiration and, although freedom must be centred in individuals, freedom by its spiritual possibilities must transform and transcend individuality.²

Each was unique but took all lives as its own,
And, following out these tones of the Infinite,
Recognised in himself the Universe.

The realised Individual is universal in his aspiration and his realisation has, as its culmination, the realisation and freedom of all.

A lonely freedom cannot satisfy
A heart that has grown one with every heart :
I am a deputy of the aspiring world,
My spirit's liberty I ask for all.

As explained in *The Life Divine*, a point comes where the individual can break through the separation altogether, unite, identify himself with the cosmic being, feel himself universal and one with all existence. "On this line of thinking," as explained elsewhere, "we arrive at the idea of some great spiritual existence of which universal and individual are two companion powers, pole and pole of its manifestation, indefinite circumference and multiple centre of the activated realities of its being."³ Other philosophers conceived of liberation as the deliverance from the necessities and demands of a lower and inferior existence but in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the illumined individual is an active agent in the evolution of humanity. "...the continuation of the illumined individual in the action of the world is an imperative need of the world-play. If his inexorable removal through the very act of the illumination is the law, then the world is condemned to remain eternally the scene of unredeemed darkness, death and suffering."⁴

O Soul, it is too early to rejoice !
Thou hast reached the boundless silence of the Self,
Thou hast leaped into a glad divine abyss;
But where hast thou thrown self's mission and self's power ?
On what dead bank of the Eternal's road ?
One was within thee who was self and world,
What hast thou done for his purpose in the stars ?
Escape brings not the victory and the crown.

MAN'S URGE FOR TOTAL SELF-PERFECTION

As M. P. Pandit has pointed out, there is a single unifying theme in the writings of Sri Aurobindo—the urge in man for a total self-perfection, the deliverance from the hold of Ignorance, Incapacity and Death into the freedom of a divine Knowledge, Power and Immortality. "Sri Aurobindo develops this theme and expounds it in all the ramifications of a metaphysical system in his basic work *The Life Divine*. The

means for translating this doctrine into practice, the experience which gives life to the theory, is described in his other great work *The Synthesis of Yoga*. How this urge in man for a total self-perfection is reflected in the development of society and how this ideal of self-fulfilment can be worked out in collectivity is shown in *The Human Cycle*. *The Ideal of Human Unity* traces the lines on which the far-spread peoples of the globe are slowly but steadily moving towards an overt realisation of the Truth of Oneness that is governing their *development from within*,* analyses the nature of the obstructions delaying the achievement and indicates the direction in which the solution is to be found.”⁵

This unifying theme of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy is concretely illustrated with reference to World History and to the evolution of forms of collective human life. Human unity is the key to the interpretation of the world’s development—but it is not unity limited to the narrow capacities of mechanical institutions but the unity which flows from within outwards. “If unity is to be established in human society—it seems to be the most insistent demand of the modern age, in spite of the clashes and conflicts that disfigure it—it must radiate from the depths of our being outwards. It has first to be realised where it is eternally present, in our inmost spirit, and then to be infused into our mutable personality.”⁶ The trouble with all attempts towards achieving a world order lies in the limited and external view of the problem adopted so far. They have not proved adequate as the individual and the collectivity have not been able to rise to the demands of a spiritual unification. Mechanical and institutional devices have proved fragile for want of the spiritual strength that has to sustain them. Such spiritual strength has to develop from the individual and progressively enlarge its scope until humanity can become one. It is vain to expect institutions to create their own foundations. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are great phrases indeed but as long as they remain restricted within their external connotation and not enlarged and vivified by a spiritual urge they can neither transcend their mutual contradictions nor become the foundations of a new world order. “Neither liberty nor equality nor fraternity can be established in human society till the essential unity of existence is realised in the self or spirit that is one in all. ...A collective life, even as any individual spiritual life, lived in God, in the supreme Truth and Reality of all existence, and moved by the Will of God, will be a life of natural liberty, equality and, not only fraternity, but of love and inner identity.”⁷

TRUE EQUALITY AND INTERNATIONALISM

It is only if men can be made free, equal and united in spirit that there can be a secure freedom, equality and brotherhood in their life. These ideals must be understood not merely as formulas for institutional organisation but as the demands of the spirit seeking unity with kindred spirits. Spiritual life is no doubt evident in the

* Italics mine (G. N. S.).

life of the East as external and social endeavour is in the history of the West but it is only when the "spiritual travail" is universalised and the ideals of the East and West meet in understanding co-operation that the hopes of mankind can be realised.⁸ It is a change of spirit, therefore a spiritual change, that can alone be the sanction and the foundation of a greater and better human existence. Internationalism is a teleological need and its achievement is inevitable both from a biological and from a psychological point of view.⁹ "The ancient truth of the self is the eternal truth; we have to go back upon it in order to carry it out in newer and fuller ways for which a past humanity was not ready. The recognition and fulfilment of the divine being in oneself and in man, the kingdom of God within and in the race is the basis on which man must come in the end to the possession of himself as a free self-determining being and of mankind too in a mutually possessing self-expansion as a harmoniously self-determining united existence."¹⁰

Sri Aurobindo has shown in *The Ideal of Human Unity* how half understood formulas of liberty, equality and unity have resulted in insoluble self-contradictions. The attempt to arrive at a mechanical freedom has only resulted in a very relative liberty and even that has been enjoyed for the most part by some at the expense of others. It has amounted usually to the rule of the majority by a minority and many strange things have been done in its name.¹¹ Free societies have never been entirely free. The liberty of the Athenian citizen rested on a broad basis of slavery. In Rome the extensions of citizenship in no way served to alleviate social and economic disparities. Serfdom was a characteristic feature of medieval society as wage slavery has been of recent societies. The attempt, however, to do away violently and at once with such distinctions may result in the forcible inversion of existing disparities rather than in the attainment of genuine equality, the substitution of bourgeois oligarchy by proletarian dominance and the rise of the doctrine of international socialism. Socialism, as explained by Sri Aurobindo, is the theory of State dominance. Pursued to its full development it means "the destruction of the distinction between political and social activities; it means the socialisation of the common life and its subjection in all its parts to its own organised government and administration. Nothing small or great escapes its purview. Birth and marriage, labour and amusement and rest, education, culture, training of physique and character, the socialistic sense leaves nothing outside its scope and its busy intolerant control. Therefore, granting an international socialism, neither the politics nor the social life of the separate peoples is likely to escape the centralised control of the World-State." Doctrines of power opposed to individual liberty become the gospel of expansionist states and place both the liberty of the citizen and the liberty of nations in peril. Modern totalitarian states prove this point. The French and the Russian Revolutions have not achieved their initial promise, for, as the Jacobins sought to achieve their aims by force, the communists have also adopted the same instrument, necessary perhaps in the first stages of the Revolution but kept continually in use by determined and relentless potentates.

Mere ideals therefore are insufficient. The world has shown no deficiency of ideals but the deficiency has been in the sincerity and will which must sustain them. Neither can the creation of international institutions with all their charters and impressive preambles serve the purpose. "A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence."¹²

REFERENCES

Lines of poetry are all from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*.

1 *The Advent*, Nov. 1959, 45. K. C. Varadachari. "Sri Aurobindo's Eighty-seventh Birthday."

"The reconciliation of the many-one that Sri Aurobindo envisaged is unique and rescues his philosophy and *ipso facto* his sociology and political philosophy from becoming identified with the absolutism of either the idealistic or materialistic variety. His is an integral pluralism, as it may be appropriately called, as indeed it has been, as well as integral monism."

2 Cf. *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, Eleventh Number, 1955. K. C. Pati. "Pringle Pattison and the Problem of the Absolute."

"Sri Aurobindo has assigned a value and dignity to the individual, hitherto unknown either in the systems of speculative or spiritualistic philosophy. The individual, according to him, is the secret centre of the cosmic manifestation and the keynote of the evolutionary progression."

3 *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, Fourth Number, 1948. Sri Aurobindo. "Ascending Unity."

4 Sri Aurobindo. *The Life Divine*. American Edition, 38.

5 *The Advent*, Feb. 1959. M.P. Pandit. "Sri Aurobindo Literature."

6 *The Advent*, Aug. 1954. Rishabhchand. "The Proper Perspective."

7 *Ibid.*

8 Sri Aurobindo. *The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination*. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education Collection, 905-906.

9 *Ibid.*, 745-746.

10 *Ibid.*, 847.

11 *Ibid.*, 836.

12 *Ibid.*, 776.

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

K. D. Sethna

(This is a letter addressed to a well-known English author, two of whose early books were at one time best-sellers bridging the worlds of popular interest in the occult and of profound thought aspiring to the Unknown. He twice visited the Ashram at Pondicherry and was deeply impressed by Sri Aurobindo and, for all his doctrinal differences, remained a great admirer. He and the writer of this letter struck up a friendship which carried on a correspondence for a number of years. The letter marks a middle stage in the happy exchange of ideas.)

THE difficulties you have mentioned in the way of your seeing eye-to-eye with Sri Aurobindo in the realm of philosophy can very well be insuperable. All difficulties in that realm can be insuperable : if this were not so, then there would be a universal consensus of philosophers instead of Aristotle at loggerheads with Plato, Kant going hammer-and-tongs at the Schoolmen as well as the Empiricists, Bertrand Russell spitting fire at Bergson. The spectacle, though extremely fascinating, is a trifle ludicrous too. Seeing that all these men possessing first-class minds cannot agree, one is inclined to think that the heat of utter self-certainty with which they fight is rather a defect. The history of thought shows that there is endless argumentation possible : the mind can take up any standpoint and plead plausibly for it. To philosophise is one of our instincts, but no philosophising can arrive at indisputable truth. Certain aspects of the ultimate reality appeal to certain types of mind or chime with certain types of experience—and these we erect into a system by means of logical reasoning which seems cogent to us but which others with equal cogency for themselves put aside as erroneous. The only system which is likely to be accepted in the long run is one which satisfies all the sides of our nature. The acceptance will not be merely by intellectual argument : it will be by a deep instinct which wants harmony and integration rather than the apotheosis of one side at the expense of the others.

You declare with Berkeley that we can know only our own minds and that what we call matter is really a form of mind. I shall not for the present try to argue against Berkeley. Any history of philosophy will provide you with the traditional counter-attack and the work of the neo-realists in our own day will show the modern technique. I shall not try, because it is pretty futile until your *penchant* for Berkeley is weakened : you will be able to argue back and the neo-idealists of our own day will help you to return the blitz of neo-realism. What I want to say is simply this : there is no sense of rest in the Berkeleyan philosophy for that in us which strives for harmony. It

leaves something in us unconvinced, for, opposed to Berkeley, we have the very strong feeling that, instead of matter being a form of mind, mind seems often to be a form of matter. Most of our practical life is based on what appears to be the independent existence of matter. And when we ask ourselves : wouldn't matter be more amenable to mind if it were just an idea ?—the answer makes us seriously doubt Berkeley's position. Matter does impress us as a power in itself which we contact by means of mind. Mind does not bring us perfect harmony and fulfilment : it struggles and gropes, it is not the master-magician of life. Nor does matter as known in practical experience hold the secret we are vaguely aware of. There must be something else. Matter and mind seem to be two forms of some other reality which contains the archetypes of them both, archetypes from which they have derived and deflected.

Only when the mind is stilled, there dawns a deeper and higher consciousness which bears golden within it the harmony we are hungering for. Yes, it bears it within itself, but for us to get that harmony we need profound progress in the supramental domain. The limitation of the whole superb school of *ātman*-knowers is that they stop with the pure infinite Self beyond our narrow human selves and make no attempt to realise a divine dynamic to replace the dynamic that is human and discordant. At most there is some light reflected in the ordinary workings of the mind—a degree of intuition comes into play—but where is the divinisation of which we dream? The mind must be completely divinised after being stilled and a new faultless activity initiated and substituted for the old stumbling one. Mind must begin to function according to the archetype of it which must exist in the ultimate reality and without which we would never feel in ourselves that urge for perfection which is the mainspring of all our mental life. But can mind realise *wholly* its archetype without the other parts of our being doing the same ? No : if, as experience teaches us, we cannot rest finally in mind and, for the sake of a harmonious sense of life, grant matter a separate status, we must strive after an archetype of matter too. Here also the perfection we are seeking cannot be got out of matter itself. Not by material progress—though that is useful in its own way just as mental progress is—can we attain the perfection our bodily being desires. Again we must tax the Beyond, the supramental which is at the same time the supramaterial. In that Beyond are powers that transcend Nature. Many Yogis catch snippets, so to speak, of these powers, but the real and final miracle to work on Nature is what Sri Aurobindo calls transformation—the utter divinisation of the physical body so that it becomes a form of the Consciousness that is luminous and immortal.

Remember that Sri Aurobindo's teaching is Integral Yoga. That word "integral" denotes the Aurobindonian search. Sri Aurobindo says it is no use denying that man is in quest of an all-round harmony of perfection. If that quest is a fact, there must be in the unknown depths of the Divine the secret of an all-round fulfilment. Once you feel this, you will not stress intellectually your differences with his teaching. He is not primarily arguing out a system. With his instinct towards

harmony he has pressed on in spiritual experience. His is not an integral philosophy for the sake of philosophy, his is an integral Yoga, and all his philosophising is a statement in mental terms of what he has realised. *The Life Divine* expresses nothing except his experience, his realisation. Having attained in constant waking life and not merely in a sealed samadhi the reality which he terms Gnosis, he has but laid out in intellectual exposition what the gnostic consciousness is and what yogic possibilities it holds and what the results of its full descent into our earth-existence will be. And Sri Aurobindo does not proclaim to the world : "Read my book and I shall argue you into my beliefs." His call is : "Read this book in which I have clothed in philosophical language my actual experience and if you feel in your heart the urge towards the integral realisation I have pictured and propounded, come to me and I will give you every living and glowing bit of it."

The best way in which I can dissipate your difficulties is to ask you to feel in your heart that the essence of all our human endeavour is the thirst for perfection and that there can be no true perfection unless it is integral, all-round, top-to-toe. It is not very easy to have this feeling. In a weak form it can never be escaped. What I am asking for is not such a form; I want you to have it like a fire—keen and clear. In the path of it there is the whole débris of failure cumbering human history. "Man is finite, man is mortal"—this has been the cry through the ages. "Something indeed is infinite and immortal," the religions say, "but there is a residue of finitude and mortality which is irreducible"—and this contention is not based only on argument : it has behind it a lack of realisation. The great prophets have all striven to their utmost and come short. It is the concrete coming short in actual spiritual experience that has created the tremendous obstacle to a keen and clear recognition of the *élan* towards harmony. Yet the *élan* is there. "Thou art That", "Brahmaloka is here and now", "The Kingdom of God is within you", "I and my Father are one"—all these words are trying to let that *élan* find voice. The Vedic search for the Sun lost in the cave of Earth, the Vaishnava worship of the Incarnate Divine, the Word become Flesh of neo-platonic Christianity, the belief in the resurrection of the body—these too are the same *élan* seeking an outlet. And an outlet is sought in all our straining towards perfect beauty in art, perfect truth in philosophy, perfect law in science, perfect conduct in ethics, perfect health in day-to-day living. The mind yearns to immortalise its products and find means to transcend the limits of space and time, the body longs for blissful perpetuation, seeks it vicariously through the process of child-birth, ransacks the entire realm of Nature and of chemistry for the conquest of disease and for the *elixir vitae*. We are labouring to deliver some perfect all-embracing Godhead. Alas, we have laboured and failed, even Sri Krishna came and went without delivering the hidden Divine in a complete invulnerable form. Is it any wonder that we do not see keenly and clearly the hunger for perfection ? It is natural that we should envisage it vaguely : veil on veil of disappointment and defeat has covered it. These veils have to be pierced and struck aside, so that the true secret may shine out.

If you hold naked before you this secret and contemplate Sri Aurobindo's teaching in its light, you will perceive how sublimely, how exquisitely, how accurately that teaching answers to every little nuance of the world's aspiration. If like a flame you enshrine it in your mind you will put yourself in the right receptive mood to follow Sri Aurobindo's philosophy to its ultimates. The Berkeleyan *penchant*, the scepticism about avatarhood, the shying away from the doctrine of absolute union will slowly dissolve and the intellect, inclined to move along new tracks, will fall into line with the Aurobindonian teaching. Does not perfection imply the human ascending to absolute union with its own concealed origin, the Divine? Can there be perfection unless the Divine descends into the human mould—and what in general is the Avatar except the most centrally creative of the descending splendours? Is perfection possible if the mind's idea and experience be the last word on matter and no evaluation be made of the material in terms of a supreme spiritual Consciousness? My impression of you is of a man of great mental plasticity and breadth, a man capable of meeting the challenge of many unknown directions: there is no blind rigidity in you to check any movement towards new horizons. I am afraid, however, that you have slipped into an overstress on philosophical pursuit and not kept the living relation advised by all Indian wisdom between philosophy and Yoga. You have thus not seen, for what it is, the philosophical process of *The Life Divine* and other writings of Sri Aurobindo's. There is a mighty intellect in *The Life Divine* which we at once feel to be no whit less than Plato's or Spinoza's or Hegel's, but none of these giants was a full-fledged Yogi. Sri Aurobindo's intellect is an instrument used by a spiritual realisation: not one sentence anywhere is inspired by the intellect alone.

If the philosopher's realisation is poor and fragmentary, the philosophy will seem narrow in spite of the intellect being gigantic. In some respects Plato, Spinoza and Hegel seem very narrow, they do not cover our full sense of things: the cause is that each of them elaborated in terms of the intellect a one-sided intuition or a limited set of intuitions. The elaboration was stupendous, the root-sense of the real did not feed on wide intuitive experience. Even where, added to intuition, there is in philosophy actual spiritual contact with the unknown, we often get the impression of a narrow emphasis. Buddha and Shankara and Plotinus are powerful spiritualised intellects, yet their single-track extremism is apparent. Nirvana, the featureless Brahman, the absolute Alone are indeed grand and no Yoga can be complete without them, but as known and presented by the three arch-transcendentalists they cast on much of our life a blank of unfulfilment. Though they are grander than anything in ordinary human life, something in Nature weeps and weeps, the clinging clay of us feels torn, Mother Earth stands defeated and balked. The hidden instinct of integral harmony is not satisfied, even as it is not satisfied by the mere vicissitudes of Time, however colourful and varied. Does Sri Aurobindo's philosophy strike us as narrow in any such sense? The trouble here is quite the opposite: Sri Aurobindo is too broad for most minds, he is too comprehensive, he posits things which seem too

good to be true, too far-reaching to be believable, too gloriously integral to be realised by human capacity. We are led to say, "Yes, yes, all this is exactly as it should be, it is precisely what the age-old hunger for perfection and harmony wants, but can we really have the moon ? " Sri Aurobindo's reply is : "That hunger in you exists because the moon is just what you are made for : in fact, you have the moon, you *are* the moon—only you don't know it. Do the Yoga which I have done and you shall know."

So, there is a twofold solution I offer to your difficulties. First, bring forward into the utmost brightness and with all its facets before you the fiery gem of our secret *élan* towards perfect harmony, so that you may move with ease along thoughts put forth by one who plunged into the Unknown with that occult diamond for his guide. Then across those thoughts reach out for the concrete spiritual experience, the actual harmonious realisation which the Integral Yoga of that master-explorer is bringing to the world's view.

Perhaps you will be disappointed by my letter, since I have not argued out in explicit detail Sri Aurobindo's position *vis-à-vis* the points you have raised. I am hoping that what I have written will attune you to the Aurobindonian note and automatically suggest the arguments. Even if the arguments do not arise of themselves and only some attuning is achieved, I shall be rewarded, for then my future arguing will go home more swiftly.

RECENT AMERICAN INTEREST IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

THE EAST-WEST PROBLEM YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg

(This is the reconstruction, from notes, of a Talk given some years back by Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg, Ph.D. (Thubingen), S.T.M. (Hamburg), distinguished American thinker, author of The Religious Experience of Plotinus, The Religion of No-Religion, The Living Religions of the World, etc., and co-editor of The Bible of the World. The reconstruction was made by K. D. Sethna and fully approved by Dr. Spiegelberg.)

WE are faced all the time by the East-West problem. It is one of the most important and the acuteness of it demands an answer. Various answers have been attempted from Rudyard Kipling's to Benoy Kumar Sircar's. No solution has yet come forth, but it is possible to give a clearer definition of it. The definition is mainly psychological and therein lies its supreme interest because psychological analysis brings us a closer understanding of it.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL LAWS OF GENERALISATION AND PROJECTION

We must confront our own prejudices before we can draw the East and the West nearer to each other. Psychological research helps us to get over our handicaps. We must understand two chief psychological laws—the law of generalisation and the law of projection. When we generalise, we are inclined to speak of ourselves and our own group in contradistinction to other people. We think in terms of “we” and “they” : we are the chosen and they are the common lot, our own town is the centre of the universe and all other towns are nothing compared to it and are foreign to us. We use all sorts of lines of demarcation : even a railway track suffices to divide two sides. There is a strong drive in the human soul to make such divisions and label them as good and bad, right and wrong. Naturally, therefore, we tend to speak of us Westerners and you Easterners or *vice versa* and to set the categories in opposition and give them favourable or unfavourable colour.

By the psychological law of projection we throw out of ourselves and upon others all those qualities we do not have or do not wish to have. The East-West classification brings this law into very lively play, in a negative as well as a positive manner. Qualities the Westerners do not want to be blamed for—the defect or shadow in them—they project upon the Easterners who become to them the dark fellows, the defective races. The Westerners say : “We are active”, and in their anxiety to

affirm their own activeness they cast on the Easterners the slur of passivity. All kinds of specious proofs are brought forward to show that they are making the world glorious by their efforts while the inhabitants of the East are mere escapists without creative energy. "We are the realists," say the white men, "you Easterners are dreamers." Or, in another mood, they declare : "We are the idealists who have great dreams; you are the materialists who are content with things as they are and remain unprogressive." The qualities that are sought to be shoved on to the East vary with occasions and individuals : there is not much consistency, except that, throughout, it is the self-same impulse to clear oneself of the suspicion of undesirable attributes by using the other man as a waste-paper basket for them.

The habit of negative projection has prevented the Western world from having a true and useful picture of India. Equally dangerous is the habit of positive projection. Here there is a negative attitude towards oneself, a masochistic impulse to accuse oneself of ignorance and impotence and look to somebody else to do the world's work. Such masochism is a strong streak in the religious consciousness. Dr. Rudolf Otto elaborated on its presence in his famous book, *The Idea of the Holy*. He explained that what he called the Numinous, the Godly, is that before which we feel infinitely dwarfed and awed and which is entirely different from us. What is utterly incommensurable for us, the absolutely other to the frail and mortal human—this is, according to Dr. Otto, the genuine definition of the Divine, the Numinous. Such a definition, when it works on not too high a level of mind, passes easily into a delusion that all which seems very different from us is wonderful. The very different has not the depth and intensity of the entirely different which assumes the aspect of Godhead when we feel that we are poor sinners and that beyond the world are all the ideals and truths realised. The very different which figures in positive projection is an *ersatz* article. The West's usual picture of India is a glaring example. Any swami who dresses in a flowing robe is taken to be a source of supreme wisdom. Every word of his is swallowed by those who search for a realisation of ideals and cannot find it in their own too-well-known surroundings. This is a mistaken approach and modern psychology teaches us to understand the mistake and overcome it and thereby arrive at a more accurate comprehension of the East-West problem.

THE TIME-SENSE IN EAST AND WEST

Today this problem is dealt with in a much soberer way than in the past. There is no encouragement given to that malicious deception which served once as an outlet for passions. If Catherine Mayo wrote now a defamatory book on India, she would have hardly any followers. Such propaganda as hers would be seen for what it is : the psychological age has provided us with eyes to read the motivations of it and attach little importance to its slanders and scurrilities. We are eager for studies of the East-West problem on other lines, we want subtler and deeper evaluations. A book that has recently had a vogue is *The Meeting of East and West* by F.S.C. Nor-

throp. It is not exactly an original contribution but it sums up well the research that has been going on of late. Although it is not easy reading because of its rather technical language, one of its main theories stands out as especially illuminating, the theory that the time-sense in the East is different from the time-sense in the West.

The East lives in an indefinite continuum of the dateless, the West in a continuum of the definitely dated. In this difference lies the whole distinction of the East's attitude to life from the West's. In more simple terms we may bring the difference to a point by asking : How do Easterners and Westerners regard time ? Time, as Kant has taught us, is a category of the human mind, it is one of the modes or frames into which our consciousness by its own nature puts reality during the act of apprehension. According as one consciousness varies from another, the time-sense varies. Time for the bee and the fly cannot be the same as time for the elephant. Time in India has a very different feeling from time in Europe and America. The East feels time as a circle, the West as a line running from future through present into past. The line is like a river with some breadth : fishes of opportunity swim in it and we cast nets in it to catch them. If the fishes are not caught, they seem to us to have been lost for ever. Hence the idea we get of not having done what we should have, the idea of sin and its consequence of remorse. A keen responsibility keeps our nerves on edge, a tension comes into our minds and there is serious neurosis. Our feverish desire to make use of the passing moment, our strickenness of conscience if we do not succeed—these are connected with the metaphysical picture we have of time as a line.

The Indian picture of time, which makes of it a circle, implies that time comes back again and again. What you do not finish now, you can finish later. There is no morbid hurry or pang of devastating irrevocableness. No opportunity is reckoned to be lost for good. And when there is a sense of return, it is exceedingly natural that there should be a belief in transmigration and reincarnation. The notion of rebirth is organic to the Eastern time-picture. But it would be out of tune with the Western. Rebirth must seem a miracle and a mystery when time is felt to bring everything only once and then to make it vanish beyond capture. Protagonists of karma and reincarnation in the West commit the folly of wanting people to take to the belief in them without first changing the Western time-sense. Christian missionaries commit an analogous folly on the other side : Western eschatology, the Western concept of the soul and its brief sojourn on earth and its passage to a permanent heaven or hell, they try to fit into the midst of India and China without altering the time-metaphysics and the time-psychology of these countries.

ACADEMIC AMERICA IGNORANT OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

As a result of a more enlightened definition of the East-West problem a large amount of interest has grown among present-day Americans in Indian philosophy. I must, however, make the sad statement that this interest is not reflected in American

University programmes. The dons and professors are very ignorant about India and hardly realise the significance of Indian thought. In Europe the case is not so hopeless. When that great student of civilization, Deussen, began writing on the world's thought-movements he devoted his very first volume to the philosophy of India. No American has followed in his steps. Our treatment of Indian philosophy is desultory in the extreme. I am lucky to be able to teach Indian philosophy at Stanford University in California. Perhaps ours is the only place in the U.S.A. where Indian philosophy gets its due.

Why this tremendous lack of academic appreciation ? Sanskrit is being taught everywhere : six chairs are occupied by first-rate scholars who have made important contributions to Sanskritology. But all this study is purely linguistic ! When the mighty scriptures written in Sanskrit are taken up, attention is paid to their syntax and sentence-structure and not to their inspired meaning, their revelation of profound truth. Grammatical subtleties are expounded, but little notice is taken of the luminous shades of thought. No life-stimulating use is made of the intellectual and spiritual force within the Upanishads and the Gita. I am reminded of the man who bought the latest model automobile and kept it locked in his garage. When asked why he had bought it, if he did not wish to use it, he answered : "I have nowhere to go. I just enjoy having it. I look at its design and mechanism and its ingenious gadgets." This is a deplorable situation, and its cause is traceable to the climate of philosophical thought prevalent in America for the last thirty or forty years. If you study philosophy in America you come under men who have been trained either by John Dewey or by his followers. Dewey is the master of the academic American mind today. And Dewey is the American edition of what is known in Europe as Logical Positivism, the doctrine developed by the famous Vienna Circle. The Logical Positivists have built up a philosophy of modern science which relies only on physical facts, facts observable by means of physical instruments, facts within the reach of ordinary people equipped with scientific apparatus. Logical Positivism rules out the validity of introspection, self-examination, inner experience—all psychological discoveries that cannot be subjected to laboratory tests. It rules out also all metaphysical statements, all pronouncements on a reality beyond physical observation, a reality which goes beyond scientific instruments and cannot be measured by them. So Indian philosophy, which is full of a looking into psychological depths and of a vision transcending the surface appearances and the observations possible to the common man, finds no response among the established intellectuals of American Universities.

Indian philosophy gets subsumed under Indian philology and the wonderful religions of the East are classified as Asian studies. Buddhism, for instance, is knocked off the philosophical curriculum because it has a tinge of religion in it and if one wants to study it one has to take up what is called Mental Anthropology of the East ! Under that title it becomes quite safe and cannot put up a philosophical claim against Logical Positivism.

THE STRANGE IDEALISM OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

In America, if you want to know what interest is taken in Indian philosophy, you must look not at the University faculties but at the students. I have dealt with thousands of College students of 20 years or so. The metaphysics of the Vedanta is of extreme interest to the American youngster. The younger generation is quite opposed to the older in mental attitude. You must not judge America by its elderly intellectuals nor from the temper of the old commercial adventurers. The American youngster is not a materialist like them. Of course, materialism in a proper sense is not something to be avoided. If it means a denial of supraphysical realities, it is an error, but if it means a right appreciation of the world of matter it is necessary for a balanced life. The young American would be much better orientated, were he more of a materialist in the sense of paying attention to the sweet wonders of the earth—the sublimely soothing influence of the sunset or the innocent enchantments of forests or the calm happy utilities of common natural things. He has little of such materialism and a great deal of misapplied idealism. There is a strange fever in him to dedicate himself to arduous toils for high achievements. The dollar does not attract him, he cares not for comfort or luxury, like the older commercial generation : it would be the easiest thing to enrol his allegiance for any difficult ideal. Mostly he is drawn to the cause of advancing creative science. If he can strike on a new line in nuclear physics or jet-propelled motion, he will sacrifice all creature-comforts, make light of even his life. One split-second increase in speed, for instance, would be enough of an excuse for him to live strenuously and be a prodigal with his energy. This is a species of idealism, a straining beyond ordinary satisfactions of physical life, but an idealism that is unhealthy and perverted because it makes an absolute and an ultimate of something which is not of primary importance.

The last World War has been a significant factor in keying up the mind of young America to idealistic exertion. The G.I. returned home disillusioned. The old world had crumbled with both its commercial and intellectual complacences. The eyes of Logical Positivism, fixed always on the immediate, the experimentally accessible, the present surface of material phenomena, seemed to him deliberately averted from final truth. His head was full of questions which can hardly be called materialistic. "O shucks !" he cried, "what is all this about ? Why are we here ? What is the purpose of life ? Am I just what I appear to be ?" The G.I. was not content with mere money-making or with mere success in technics. The triumph of technics—the Atom Bomb—has disconcerted young America as much as people anywhere else. The only thing that technics can still provide is not an answer to a desire for physical well-being but a fuel to a passion for achieving the acme of scientific creativeness. Modern technics has given rise to a pseudo-religion which Gerald Heard terms the religion of "gadgetry". He tells us that people not only are glad to have new gadgets but also worship them. If a new model of an automobile with a dizzier speed per hour is put on the market, they yearn for it out of no actual desire to rush so fast through space

but just for the high-speed gadget itself as if it were some godlike power deserving devotion and adoration merely for being above common capacities. Heard is right in reading in the modern American mind a religious fascination for the gadget, and he is also right in declaring that such a pseudo-religion cannot satisfy the soul. The strongest symptoms of dissatisfaction with it are in the recent American interest in Indian philosophy.

YOUNG AMERICA'S KEEN INTEREST IN INDIA'S WISDOM

This interest takes various forms, since variously is Indian thought active in America. And the interest is not confined to bare thousands : hundreds of thousands and millions of men are eagerly seeking the wisdom of India and the East. Theosophy is one of the prominent influences, but there are several other movements deriving from different sources. Kahlil Gibran who wrote the subtle and beautiful book, *The Prophet*, has a following. Rabindranath Tagore is another light from the Orient which has entered both literature and life in the West. Somerset Maugham manifests in *The Razor's Edge* a religio-spiritual strain from India which has had a wide popularity. Then there is the penetrating work of Aldous Huxley and some others who have found inspiration both in Gerald Heard and in the Missions from India. Christopher Isherwood has been a devotee of Swami Prabhavananda. The Vedanta is a living message in artistic circles of the U.S.A. Poets and painters and musicians turn to it for their motifs and themes. You will be surprised to learn that Vivekananda Symphonies have actually been composed.

There are eleven swamis of the Vedanta preaching all across the country and their classes are overcrowded. Not only old men looking for an end-of-life consolation are hungering for the message of Indian philosophy : young men, full-blooded and with life's opportunities lying before them, are the most enthusiastic. You are grossly misinformed if you believe that America is a materialistic nation running after the dollar. America is bewildered, anxious to plumb life's depths, asking fundamental questions and eagerly seeking for answers.

I once circulated a questionnaire among University students, asking them to write down for my satisfaction why they had taken the Indian Philosophy Course, what they thought of God, whether they believed in immortality. A most interesting cross-section of the American mind was obtained. Very many answers may be summed up in the following words : "I went to Sunday School when young. My parents separated. I found Sunday School no good and ran away. Christianity did not appeal to me. But now when I am doing Senior Studies I want to give religion a trial. I want to find out whether it holds something for me. My aunt was a theosophist. My mother went for some time to a Yoga School in 52 Street, New York."

DEMAND NOT FOR CHRISTIANITY BUT INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Generally there is some influence of the women members of the family, leading

the young man to give religion a trial. And as a rule it is oriental religious thought that attracts him and opens his eyes and makes him feel also that Christian dogmas are not meaningless. The magnetism of oriental religions is very great indeed in America. During the war I remember how soldiers used to crowd round me in trains if it got somehow known that I had studied Indian philosophy. A Christian priest in the same compartment would be reading the New Testament to just a handful. The majority would leave him alone. Give a spiritual truth a Sanskrit name and young America grabs it with both hands. Christian terms they tend to edge away from. Ramakrishna's word they will take at once, while their own ministers "cut no ice" with them, though frequently the same truth is being offered in different forms. The American youth arrives at the religion his nature needs, his *swadharma*, not directly but in a roundabout way. It is perhaps a pity he cannot appreciate the large amount of wisdom Christianity has to give, but the fact that he cannot get the right answers from it is there and must be faced, just as we must face also the other fact that the purely scientific mood and the purely scientific view of perplexing problems are matters now of a past generation.

The sceptical mind is on its way out, and the spiritual Indian attitude towards life is coming in. As interest in Indian spirituality increases, the influences of the Yogi will gradually become greater and that of the Logical Positivist will wane. I can foresee a day when the teachings—which are already making headway—of the greatest spiritual voice from India, Sri Aurobindo, will be known all over America and be a vast power of illumination. An approach to fundamental reality not by mere logic but by a direct perception will establish itself. After all, the logical mind is not necessary when one has the straight Yogic perception. The ultimate Being of Brahman can be touched intimately by our own self-substance. Logic may not grant that a fire is burning unless there are signs of smoke. But the soul's deep intuition requires no such signs. What need have we of observed smoke to serve as a condition for our inferring fire, when in the very front of us the fire itself is aglow ?

A MODERNIST AMERICAN POET ON SRI AUROBINDO

SEER

If God is the secret sum of our Ignorance,
You breathed a new calculus into my shadows.
When you learned to hurdle mind and man, the incense
Of stars quickened and drenched a guarded rose.

I reel to think that you toured a universe
When men get no further than their drugstores.
You sailed strange mystical seas, aboard with the curse
That dissolves only on the outermost shores.

Will your dream pulse into my sleep
When the moon strikes midnight in my heart ?
My sea is red and your blood is deep.
A stormed and silent craft awaits a master chart.

Seer, if you live again I may go willingly
To drink even the dregs of immortality.

“SAVITRI”

Light smiles and aches through smoky chambers of my brain
Where lost moons blend to catch a soundless refrain.
Prosaic suns of memory burn hard
And fail my void, forgotten as the mantra's bard
Silters a way over almighty abysses
To epic a world behind the soul's paroxysms.
The words are stars shooting across a mind
More vast than galaxies of the blind
Who may touch one day after time's long famine
The rare and occult flesh of Savitri and Satyavan.
I pause. Die and love. It windows through my jail
And rhythms out a strange New Vale :
Not stranger than how this "luminous sea"
Is a modern Yogi's gift to Englishry.

D. R. CAMERON

O SPLENDOUR OF INFINITY!

THE ages pass and still Thou watchest
This fleeting futile phantom play,
But when at last Thy strength Thou matchest
With hidden forces of the clay,

In a moment breaks the passion-slumber—
Turbulent waves of dark desire,
The pathway loads that still encumber—
And cease the promptings of the mire.

All eyes are fixed on Thee alone,
Dispeller of all earthly bane:
Thou art the All and yet the One,
Found here Thy sun-world's luminous reign!

Reveal Thy form of Truth and Light,
O Splendour of Infinity !
Bring down the gods with Love's soul-might
To live midst men in amity.

PRITHWI SINGH

“THE SUN DOES NOT SET ON THE BRITISH EMPIRE”

—Old History Books

The Sun does not set...
The claim stands yet,
But not as it was made.
Men's ambitions fade,
Having played their role;
God achieves His goal.

The Common-wealth ! The tongue
In which bards have sung
All over the globe
Is now the Empress-robe
Of the World's Sole Mother
Uniting brother with brother.

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

Apparently a *jeu d'esprit*, a piece that is a play of wit, this little poem brings really a touch of *esprit* in a deeper sense, the sense of Spirit, the underlying Power whose play of wisdom no less than of wit is the many-strained universe with its subtle and unexpected patterns. English, the language *par excellence* of poetry in modern times “all over the globe”, was the language of Sri Aurobindo's self-expression and truth-expression. Using it for his high purposes in both poetry and prose with a rare inwardness of literary art, he has set a seal of destiny on its future, in India no less than in the wide world. Professor K. B. Sitaramayya of Annamalai University, South India, has seen it as the true gift of Light left by the old British Empire, a “common wealth” for all its old members who are now free participants in a fresh world-venture, The centre of this world-venture he discerns in the movement initiated by Sri Aurobindo himself for a universal brotherhood new-born from One whom the poet hails as “the World's Sole Mother”—again a phrase of happy double significance pointing to not only the originative unity of the Divine Shakti but also the “Soul” nature by which and in which that highest Force unites the many that meet and part and meet again in the earthly manifestation—or shall we in the author's own style say “many-festation” ?

THE MOMENT

(G. Sankara Kurup, the famous poet in Malayalam, has sent us the English translation of some of his works. He was born on June 3, 1901. His first poem was printed when he was 17 in the magazine Atmaposhni. He came into special prominence recently when winning the Bharatiya Jnanpith award of one lac of rupees for his book Auttk Kcshal (Flute). In the poem below we see various reflections of "the sweet yearnings of the soul". And in every stanza the writer spotlights each moment, each "ephemeral moment," as important for attaining the needed life-realisation. The fine translation is by a promising poet-friend of the poet—T. K. Balakrishnan.)

EPHEMERAL Moment !

Thief,

Who suck the honey off the life-flower

And gently float away—

How my fancy, elegant and simple,

Longs to trap your tissue-wings in her tremulous finger-tips !

Do not deceive her, who yearns

To crush you by kisses to her heart !

Let her with words—silk-soft threads—

Painlessly bind your fragile feet.

Let her in all innocent impatience

Scrutinize your tender wings.

Was not

This infinite variety of colours on your tear-wet wings mixed

From the numerous passions'

Pigments to mortal minds ?

On your rainbow-wings are projected

The transient moods of human heart,

The sweet yearnings of the Soul,

Vibrant with desires.

These tiny moments !

Before me they come

And vanish behind

With lightning-surpassing speed

These tiny moments,

Each unique, varied !

Whence do they come and whither go so quick,
 Whilst my fancy gazes dumbfounded, deceived,
 Now through smiles, now through tears,
 At the scale-dust of remembrance off their wings, sticking soft on her
 finger-tips?

Ephemeral Moment !
 Unless you fly flapping your tiny wings,
 Would there be,
 On Earth or in the Heavens,
 These innumerable pulsations of life ?
 Actions ! would they search
 For their own reactions, like a cow her calf,
 To embrace them ?
 Let the fear in the sinner's heart, fanned by your tiny wings,
 Spout like a giant flame !

Ephemeral Moment !
 When you flap your tiny wings,
 The infinite—the universe—moves forth with immense speed.
 Each flap echoes differently
 In different hearts
 And, like distant drums rolling,
 Provides
 Incidental music to the March of life,
 Trudging along Karma's path,
 Trampling births and deaths.

Fluttering Moments !
 You come so swift
 Each in the wake of the other, almost touching.
 Is not this wondrous firmament
 But the shadow cast by your wings ?
 What we see as True, Real, Stationary,
 Ah ! it is but a bewitching illusion.
 The stars, like a forest, tremble
 When you flap your tiny wings.
 And the hoodlum empire of Pride, built by human might,
 Shudders and sways in the wind like some ragged cobweb,
 When you flap your tiny wings.

What
 If the withering flowers of life fall, when you flap your wings ?

For a hundred thousand beauties are evolved
and put forth their buds.
What
If the Sun, who brightens the Sky, burns out ?
The creative cosmic Force would strike
Fire out of cinders burnt black.
And in this light and warmth
Life would spark anew !

Ephemeral Moment !
Adieu !
Speed you; now do my tears, long suppressed,
Wet your wings numb.
But before you go, let me scribble on your wings
A message for Beauty
Whose embrace I painfully yearn for :
“How long, how long,
Must I await in dreamy imagination
Your realization ?”

G. SANKARA KURUP

(Translated by T. K. Balakrishnan from the Malayalam Original)

THE CONCEPT OF MAN

Dr. K. M. Munshi

(Dr. K. M. Munshi, President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, whose name needs no introduction in the world of Culture as well as in the sphere of constructive Nationalism, has written this special article for us, expressing in his habitually effective clear-cut style his own enlightened views on some fundamentals of a true cultural renaissance.)

THE concept of man is not an academic subject, but a vital matter of urgent importance in the present condition of the world.

When we discuss this matter, several questions strike us : Why is such a concept essential ? How has the concept been changing due to the conditions created by science and technology ? Is there a concept based on the enduring elements in human nature ?

The problem is important, for no organised society or group, however small, can function effectively without having a clear concept of what man is.

When such a concept is creative, it gives hope, strength, dignity and peace to the individual. Without it, he is lost in the wilderness of uncertainty, unable to find self-fulfilment.

WHAT IS SELF-FULFILMENT ?

At the outset, let me define self-fulfilment. Self-fulfilment is not self-satisfaction. Equally it is not a definite goal which can be reached all at once. It is a continuous effort to renew ourselves by trying to be more of ourselves than what we are. This effort alone brings a satisfying sense of having lived to a purpose.

If a man has no urge to make such an effort, he can never develop his own potentialities or discover himself; nor can he acquire or retain his own self-respect.

This effort, to be creative, must have a firm base to operate from. It can only be man's faith in his idea of himself and of his world.

From the earliest times, the Moral Order, governed by God, provided a firm basis for the concept of man. In modern times, however, wherever the influence of the West has spread, this firm base that man is a divine essence is being shattered. In consequence, the concept has lost its creative energy to ennoble the individual or social life.

Let us look at how this change has been brought about. In the West, Christianity had placed man at the centre of the universe as the Lord of the creation. This concept was exploded by modern science by discovering that man was only an

insignificant denizen of a tiny planet revolving round a small star, one amongst countless stars, each having planets of its own.

Emphasis was then shifted to the external world as distinct from the individual. Good or evil was considered to arise exclusively from external conditions. Man's faith in himself as the architect of his making or the centre of inherent goodness, was shaken.

With this starting-point, the view found favour that man's nature would change if we changed only his material conditions. Give him nylon to wear, dams to provide water and reactors to supply atomic energy, he will become the embodiment of truth, love and beauty.

Poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance have to be removed, for they come in the way of self-fulfilment. But that is not the same thing as to say that if man wallows in material comforts, he will automatically become truthful, unselfish and noble. But that is what the social architects of the scientific age assert.

THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR GENERATION

What has been the experience of our generation ? In the 20th century, science provided the concept of man as a sort of near-perfect product of an evolutionary process. But the two World Wars have proved that the process has only made him more egoistic, more ruthless and infinitely more brutal.

Recently, mass media of communications, which have made of indoctrination a fine art, have deprived man of the opportunity to think for himself and of his world independently.

Ingenious forms of mass coercion through violence frighten men out of their wits, disabling them from taking a fearless view of themselves or of the world.

Socialistic thought has been coloured, consciously or unconsciously, by the economic determinism favoured by Marxists. It claims to be scientific. It presents both moral values and religion as illusory—as an unnecessary part of a superstructure based on production and distribution. Man, according to this theory, is not a creative, self-generating agent. Neither truth nor love, neither compassion nor beauty, has any intrinsic validity.

The prophets of modern Europe, the scientists and other specialists, like the statisticians, economists and behavioural scientists, have been applying methods appropriate to the physical world to the spheres which are beyond their reach—to motives and conflicts, to aspirations and human goals.

In his book, *The Crisis of Our Age*, Sorokin refers to the attitude of the scientists, that the scientific picture of the world is the only real picture.

Planning is all the rage. Man is treated as an economic, wealth-producing unit. His noble emotions and high aspirations are treated not as urgent problems of life.

The modern 'progressives' have placed all their hopes in science and technology.

Their favoured dogma is that, with its aid alone, man can bring heaven on earth; God is unnecessary; the Moral Order is a myth.

It would be foolish to deny that science has been the distinct achievement of our times; that it has brought swift development in the externals of life. But the heaven on earth, at one time looked forward to by the scientists, has not come. With material progress and prosperity have come greed, fear and hate in rising intensity. Excessive mechanisation of life has debased higher values. Material comforts have made life artificial, shallow and hedonistic. The inner life of man is full of tension, anxiety, unrest, frustration and insecurity.

At the same time, advanced science has given up its effort to provide a firm base to the concept of man.

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

When I was at school, we were told that there were 64 elements, no more nor less, and not one was transmutable into another. Now there are no elements; only energy.

Bergson's theory of time has established that time, as we conceive it, does not exist. Einstein's theory of space and energy has made everything relative. Heisenberg's theory of indeterminacy has added an element of uncertainty to scientific laws. To put it in a few words, the phenomenal world, once viewed by science as real, is now on shifting sands.

Some time back, Dr. Glenn T. Seabord, Chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, forecast the picture of the world as seen in the next 75 years. Among other things, he said that during this period, nuclear-powered rockets would become the accepted means of transportation between earth and the moon. Rockets propelled by nuclear fission energy would also be used for manned exploration of the near planets. However, he had a sad confession to make. He said :

“We are now in the throes of a period of transition, discarding many old forms and, I believe, emerging into a new democratic scientific society. The awesome potential of science has slowly been recognised. It is inherently neither a potential for good nor for evil. It is a potential to be harnessed by man to do his bidding. Man will determine its direction and its effect. Man, therefore, must understand science, if he is to harness it, to live with it, and to grow with it.”

But how will man determine the direction and the effect if he is as selfish, greedy and full of hatred as he is now ?

Those who gave the atom bomb to man endeavour to contain the Frankenstein by mechanical contrivances and organizational rearrangement, by nuclear deterrents, Arms Control and World Government. It does not strike them that no such efforts

by themselves will succeed in transforming the animal instincts, which have now been magnified a hundredfold, into truth, love and beauty, without which peace will never come.

Not content with raising the Frankenstein, the scientists—at any rate most of them—have declared war on religion. It is one of the most futile, meaningless and perhaps dangerous controversies which divide men.

SCIENCE, RELIGION, MORALS

Science has not destroyed the need for religion, nor can religion flourish by relying upon scientifically proved facts. The outlook of science and religion are fundamentally different.

The scientist looks upon the universe objectively. The man of religion looks emotionally upon creation as a living and throbbing universe in which he wants to feel at home. Only if it is so viewed, can it fulfil his aspirations, bring him what he wants—reverence, awe, peace, harmony and beauty, and make him responsive to truth and love. Not all the World Governments, not all the U.N. Resolutions, not all the Disarmament Treaties, not all the scientific discoveries can possibly satisfy man's aspirations.

We all want a Welfare State. But what will be the nature of the Welfare State brought in by corrupt politicians, bribe-taking bureaucrats and dishonest businessmen? To cure human ills through the medium of amoral and a-spiritual devices would be as easy as growing a flower garden in an arid desert without the aid of water.

In spite of the futility of applying to man's deeper aspirations the methods applicable to the physical world, the so-called scientific theories of morals, developed during the last century, have to a large extent broken down man's faith in himself.

The Utilitarian theory of morals has for its criterion the greatest good of the greatest number. It is based on the assumption that reason is an infallible guide common to all individuals. In substance, it has deified collective selfishness. This has provided a charter for power-mad groups to drive huge masses to the polling booth, without their bridging the gulf between egoism and altruism.

Darwin, the father of the evolution theory, attempted to apply biological laws to moral life. The test that he applied was the survival of the fittest. He thereby introduced the law of the jungle as the only guide to govern man's aspirations.

The Dialectics of Hegel, the father of modern totalitarianism, gave a subsidiary place to personal ethics, subordinating moral conduct to the demands of the State.

From these Dialectics flows the Communist theory of Soviet morality. According to it, truth cannot be absolute. "Our morality is wholly subordinate to the interests of the class struggle," says Lenin. Its criterion is: What is expedient for the consolidation of Communism? And what is so expedient has ultimately to be

decided by the Communist Party, more particularly by its leaders. What is moral today might be the immorality of tomorrow. And the other way about.

Man's faith in his position as the creative centre has disappeared. Uncertainty is woven into the texture of the modern world.

Extreme specialisation and enormous expansion of the social structure, without the binding force of the creative concept of a Moral Order, have isolated man, rendered him helpless.

Auden rightly calls this an "Age of Anxiety". It may more appropriately be called the "Age of Uncertainty". It has deprived man of his position as the centre of the intellectual, moral and spiritual power. Man's organic relation with the world is disrupted.

All this has brought about a 'Crisis of the Spirit' in the nations of the Western world. And, like poor relations, we have come to believe that as they are powerful and prosperous in spite of this bankruptcy, we should hasten to bring it about for ourselves.

And this has made man a prey to two attitudes, depriving his life of a sense of direction and purpose. One is dilettantism, a superficial view of life which ignores reality : the other is hedonism, through which the inner urges of human nature are drowned in pleasures of the senses.

In this uncertainty is it possible to re-discover a firm basis which would give us a creative concept of man ?

BASIS FOR A CREATIVE CONCEPT OF MAN

It must be realised that a man's concept of his world is but a reflection of his concept of himself. We cannot have the concept of a noble, heroic world if our concept of man is that of a helpless victim of the society or the State, or of an animal lost in the pursuit of self-indulgence. The world becomes a place worth living in only when the creative approach of the individual gives it shape, colour and beauty.

To discover a firm basis, therefore, we must go to the enduring element of individual nature. What is a man ? Certainly he is not a lump of matter operated upon by the laws of physics and chemistry.

It is true that he is basically an animal, driven by the instincts of greed, fear and hate. However, he is not merely an animal. What distinguishes him from the other animals is the irrepressible urge to be better than what he is.

As an intellectual being, he observes, compares, judges and draws inferences. But these intellectual powers are mere instruments. They have no positive content. They can magnify animal instincts. They can give scope or edge to brutality in man. They have no positive, ennobling content unless they are charged with the urge to make him more of himself than what he is.

This urge—the word "aspiration" is a more appropriate word—takes diverse forms :

The aspiration to achieve;
 The aspiration to love and be loved;
 The aspiration to lead a contented life;
 The aspiration to seek and realise beauty;
 Finally the aspiration to find harmony.

Satisfying these aspirations in some way or other gives a sense of self-fulfilment.

These aspirations are universal to human nature. They exist in all men in one form or another. They have so existed at all times and all the world over. Attempts to fulfil them have given a sense of self-fulfilment.

The message of Sri Krishna, Buddha and Jesus evoke these aspirations perennial in all human hearts in all places at all times.

They do not come from the chemical compounds which constitute bones, muscles and blood. Nor do they come from the animal instincts of greed, fear and wrath. Not even from the intellectual processes.

These aspirations are different in quality, origin and direction to all other urges in man. They follow no law known to the physical world, but are governed by a law of their own. Their end is something above and beyond material needs. They are radiations from a distinct source.

If we are science-minded, we may call this source the "Subconscious." But the source is not individual; it is common to all men in all ages; it projects itself to future generations. I would, therefore, prefer to call it the "Spirit."

It is the energy emanating from the spirit which converts the animal, that man would otherwise remain, into the god which it is his privilege to become.

This spiritual energy is highly creative. When it works in the individual, it creates a creative society.

The evolution of a better man—a man feeling more of himself than he is—and a better society go hand in hand. The conversion of a predatory band of savages functioning through hunger, fear and lust, into a society with faith in the higher values of life, has only been rendered possible through a process of individual, moral and spiritual uplift which accompanies the forces of social cohesion.

This transformation is beyond the scope of science, statistics and economics. Neither professional politicians nor social workers can bring about a change in man on which alone a real Welfare State may be founded.

We have, therefore, to turn to the seers, prophets, saints and mystics, who, by their unerring perception of the spiritual laws operating in the universe, have provided us with a firm basis for man's true concept of himself.

THE VISION OF SEERS, PROPHETS, SAINTS, MYSTICS

According to them, man is not just a struggling worm which lives and dies and is no more. He is neither the creature nor the victim of forces, either physical or chemical. He is certainly not the creature of his environment. He is the radiating centre

of spiritual energy, with a creative power, which he can perfect and mobilize through self-discipline.

He can exercise this creative power to alter not only the course of his own life as well as his own future lives, but to change the shape of social and material environments. If, for instance, the rulers are corrupt, inefficient or power-mad, the people whom they rule will take to sin and wickedness.

This energy flows from the unity which prevails throughout material, moral and spiritual life. It is informed and upheld by the Cosmic Order which expresses itself in the orderly working of the universe. Spirit is not alien to Matter. Man is not alien either to Matter or to Spirit.

The Cosmic Order, in its expression, is all-pervading, omnipotent and ineluctable. It operates alike in the field of Matter and of Mind and the Spirit. The seeming conflict in the universe is due to our inadequate knowledge of the Cosmic Harmony.

The ethical process—man's continuous effort to be better than himself in order to find self-fulfilment—is an integral part of this Cosmic Order. It is fulfilled in the individual by the release of spiritual energy. That is the way in which the Cosmic Order is transcribed into the alphabets of human conduct.

This spiritual energy, like any other form of energy, can be generated, conserved or wasted; intensified or lowered; stored or directed; and, when harnessed properly, it can be transformed into end-products which lead to self-fulfilment. It has its own way by which it could be intensified, directed or harnessed.

The way cannot be externally manipulated; it can only be through internal discipline.

THE WAY THE SPIRITUAL ENERGY WORKS

Let me trace the way this spiritual energy works.

If the aspirations in which the energy expresses itself in us are associated with animal instincts, as they generally are, they take lower forms :

- Wanting success for ourselves;
- Gaining the admiration and loyalty of our fellow-men;
- Seeking riches to secure ourselves against want;
- Indulging in sex-satisfaction;
- Acquiring possessions to feed self-conceit.

A man anxious to improve his lot hungers to fulfil these ambitions, and no other. This hunger creates the concept of man idolised by modern society : *the successful man*. A successful man is ordinarily understood to achieve results, to evoke friendship, to possess riches in the shape of wealth, to indulge in sex-satisfaction at will and enjoy power through possessions.

Has the multiplication of such successful men in the world led us anywhere ? Have they been symbols of a happy, noble and heroic individual life ? Have they

been embodiments of self-fulfilment, leading other men to self-fulfilment ?

Some day or other, we must learn to face the facts.

Most of the miseries, frustrations and uncertainties of the present age arise from the ways of successful men who foul the stream of spiritual energy with greed, fear and hate.

If, on the other hand, the aspirations in the individual are progressively purged of the animal instincts, lust, fear and hate, the result, following the law governing spiritual energy, will be different. We shall not have the successful man; we shall have the unified man—the heroic or the saintly man.

This is not a matter of theory. Anyone can press the appropriate button, release the spiritual energy and see whether it works or not.

According to the law, enduring achievement is the end-product of the process of giving unity to thought, word and deed in the individual; in other words, of developing absolute sincerity. When absolute sincerity is intensified into complete dedication, the effort will be transmuted into achievement, not otherwise.

Similarly, when the process of giving love unasked, regardless of response, is intensified, the energy will be transformed into happy and loving human relations. 'Give love and love shall be given unto you; hate and hate shall be returned in more than a full measure.' These are not mere moral aphorisms. They describe the way the spiritual energy works.

The word "Love" has been so degraded in the vocabulary of modern men that one has to be warned against its being understood to mean farmyard attraction. Love in the true sense of the word is surrendering one's ego to a person, to a cause, to an idea, to something beyond one's sordid self, to all men, to God. Gandhiji called it "Ahimsa"; Jesus called it "Love".

Similarly, again, when an effort is made to give up appropriating to oneself more than what one actually needs—that is, trying to be absolutely honest—spiritual energy is released which will be transformed into happy contentment. The insatiate demand for more and more riches will disappear. Whoever gains wealth will then remain its trustee.

Again, creative vigour, the most essential for generating power through spiritual energy, is the end-product of controlling sex energy through conservation, regulation and sublimation. Sex energy, as Manu says, is the source of all creative energy in the body—animal, moral and spiritual. If spent in indulgence, it runs waste. If properly channelled, it is transformed into creative vigour. If wisely controlled, it will flower as life beautiful.

Similarly, when spiritual energy is released by imposing austere poverty upon oneself, that is by giving up possessions, the end-product will follow; an abiding sense of being in harmony with oneself, the highest sense of self-fulfilment.

THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL ENERGY

To summarise the working of the law : We will get enduring achievement, only through absolute sincerity; affectionate relations, only through unselfish love; richness of life only through absolute honesty; creative vigour, only through sex control; peace and harmony, only through austere poverty.

These results follow by the operation of the law which governs spiritual energy with the same inevitability as when, according to the law of gravitation, an apple falling from the tree drops down to the ground and does not fly up in the air.

How to gain the requisite intensity for spiritual energy ? How can we purge it of dross ? There is a well-tried art to achieve these ends. But that is a different subject into which I will not go for the moment.

But this gives us the true concept of man, man as the radiating centre of spiritual energy who, by his very effort, attains results which will lead to self-fulfilment in himself and others.

When a large number of sensitive men become active centres of spiritual energy the human race will be rescued from the grossness and frustration which Materialism—the matriarch of “isms”, Fascism, Communism, Socialism, etc.—has brought to man.

"THE CREATIVE PROCESS"

AN APPROACH TO INTEGRALNESS IN PAINTING

S. Gene Maslow

(An American painter, now a resident sadhak in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, is S. Gene Maslow. His works have been exhibited in many parts of the United States, most notably in the Museum of Modern Art in Los Angeles, Princetown and New York. This subtle and searching article is prompted by his personal experience as an artist towards obtaining "integralness" in painting and in incorporates the views of the Abstract-Expressionist School which recently changed the course of Art-writing.)

THE contemporary painter's approach to unity in the work has recently come to resolve some of the halting limitations of the creative act. This has been accomplished by considering the canvas as an organic whole; each concentrated touch applied and every area formed without a loss of consciousness of the entire ground being worked on.

Rather than a step-by-step rote of building detail first in one spot, then on to another, the artist can address the canvas with an unbroken sense of evolving the painting by a central consideration of keeping *equal tensions* throughout its progress. By moving over the canvas here and there, back and forth, with a kind of wide, constant breathing in all parts, he allows shape, form, color and contrast to develop integrally. A more actively alive totality is achieved, maintained to completion more easily and is certainly more consistent than the choppy and often unequal results of developing one part of the canvas excessively before turning the attention elsewhere. Based on this over-all, unified approach the painter has then an integrated view. He is also brought into a wider, poised condition alert to a greater range of intuitive possibilities. Already in active motion, free from a narrow burrowing, he is now plastically prepared to be motivated by the intuition's creative urge.

In this wider or double view the painter is stepped-back within, conceiving the movement as an *organic totality* while attentive to the stroke of the moment which requires its concentration in order to meet the canvas with immediate force or right placement in the growing design. This procedure usually will result in a physical surface that is 2-dimensional and equal in intensity across the face of the picture plane. The so-called flat surface of the painting is interchanged with the in-and-out, push-pull considerations of depth development creating the sense and feel of a constant *breathing* rhythm, an aliveness, brought about by the interchange. Previously, the artist ordinarily "forced into the canvas" a constant out-breath of action without

the balancing in-breath of the stepped-back view also making itself felt and seen in the painting. This functioning in tandem brings to the picture an ever-present quality of freshness (a breath-motion sense) intrinsic to the creative act, independent of pigment quality. It is by this synthesis of a general *and* specific functioning that a fusion occurs in the creative act, unifying the various parts of the painting, building in it the strength and harmony necessary to an integral work of art.

Developing the painting by building and inventing freely in one area then another, doubling back again in places and dancing fresh thoughts over, through, into and around other areas, appropriately moulding the new forces coming through, succeeds in by-passing a stiltedness which an over-anxious care intent on perfect-doing timorously allows to creep in. That a narrow obsessiveness often stilt the work, by holding in abeyance that flowing impulse of the intuition, is seen in pictures where the artist may bring about some fine or brilliant passage but does not cohesively carry the daedal spirit throughout. ("Perfection is not a maximum or an extreme. It is an equilibrium and a harmonisation."—The Mother.)

It was at the turn-of-the-century in France that Cézanne first developed this integral manner of approaching the idea to what a painting, as a statement of the artist's view, should be. He challenged the very process of painting in order to have it reflect his unified view of material life. Rather than follow the accepted method of placing an object in the foreground and then creating a schism between it and the background, he sought a wedding of the entire picture plane. He organised landscapes and still-life paintings with light and shade and colour to build the harmonic equality, the unity and oneness, matching his inner vision of things. A more subtle sense of form evolved. The mind's ability to encompass and express nature's hidden ways was unveiled. This new comprehension of the creative act has turned artists to follow new paths of self-expression.

During the 1950's, American artists accepted the demands of creating a total unity as the prime condition and mark of an accomplished act of painting. They saw in this process of working the potentials of vast inner explorations freed from the physical concerns of realism, impressionism and cubism. They reframed Cézanne's discovery to suit the new impulsion towards recording the abstractions of life's inner worlds.

The result here was a freedom of powerful, self-expressive forces—all too frequently abandoned to the self with a small 's'. The intention of these artists was to probe and express a vision, spirit, emotion, aesthetic, psychology, drama, play and some, even willy-nilly, idiosyncrasies. Frequently in pursuit of 'personality' they hunted for the most telling and inventive idiom possible which would describe or approximate the individual's life and movements this side of physical reality.

Because one observes that the ego of some artists can distort their sense of beauty, by the justification of a technico-mental obsession, others were not prey to this inversion of the truth. From a more enhanced seat of consciousness, many artists worked on the premise of these new procedures of approaching the canvas without the erratic intrusion of the lower nature. And it is among these painters and sculptors that the

higher intuition released the lights of a new era in art history. Separated from the confusion and anxiety of the times they too could work with a daring and abandonment. For them, however, it was a liberation on a higher order of latitude and free play rather than a compulsive subjection and discharge of their afflictions.

During this period the painting was conceived as having its own reason for existence. That is, *the subject of the painting was the painting itself*, as a free opportunity for self-expression. No spiritual ideal was invoked to guide the new avenues opened; and concepts, at best, by mental equations, perverted what might have been a transcendental manifestation. This left the artist bound to mind and emotions and even there without much discrimination between different levels of consciousness. For most, the inspiration or force had but one coat of delusion to remove the outer physical. With that done whatever appeared along the lines of their need to record and declare was accepted as their daemon of truth. Deluded by "slipping glimpses", as the painter Willem de Kooning calls his muse, even some artists of great ability and comprehension were enslaved by the lowest vital urge unenlightened man can be the vehicle of.

But, again, we should realize that the misuse of existing processes of the creative force should not blind our view of their available attributes to perform splendid marvels of self-realization. No more so than we would refuse wealth or the practice of Yoga because in it is a power which can be used egocentrically.

In addition to the *over-all* harmonic unity which develops by approaching the painting in an organic spirit there are residual effects which take place in the growth of the artist as a person. To comprehend the nature of these attendant workings in his development we must see the considerations of his task, which of course the intellect can only touch on. The process of an organic growth of the painting implies that there is a binding integration of all parts, embodying an inherent germinator which will resolve the potentials in evolution as they arise. So in the creative action when one keeps a sense of the essential flow the specific parts are seen to move into place with a dynamic right-being. Whatever adjustments may be required are ready to be arranged and are easily assimilated by the system's prior regard. By "function in tandem", which we spoke of earlier, shapes, forms, colors, etc., find their way into an organic forming. And so too with the artist these workings and discoveries of order and harmony leave their mark. He grows and develops in the hand of the Master-Painter.

We can now see that, by this method, there are no finical, finishing touches or afterthoughts. The picture has progressed in a vivified fashion and there is nothing left to be done because completeness was an integral procedure. In lieu of a finale filled with struggle to "bring it all together" *synthesis comes along by the way*.

The very concept of an integral working infers that it is nothing alone and by itself. And during the creative act performed along these lines, unity is not the only thing that takes place. It comes, one may say, as a result of other profound happenings without which integrality could appear as a dull ideal. These are the

things which bring maturity to the soul of the artist. For it is one thing to paint a fine, charming or ordered picture according to a principle of esthetics and something else entirely to explore the mysteries of form and shape and color or relate by experience to divine harmony and create symbols of life-forces or make palpable the subtle abstractions of a truth behind the veils of limitation. Painting is more than a created fact of the imagination or someone's talent. It is an act of faith. It is a willingness to dare great voyages into the Unknown. It is a living thing made living by an unfolding of the being within, by its stretch to encompass a truth beyond itself. It is a challenge to open the fountains of one's heart and mind, to be a vehicle for the Sublime. To face a blank canvas is to call up the strokes of change and invite the erasure of previous notions and being again with calm, fresh vigor, resolute to front the issues boldly on a battlefield laid before the peaks of self-discovery. It is the adventure of mountain climbing and the rewards of attainment, offered to pioneers of the spirit. It is a promise of the moment and its meeting within and without the being. Above all, it is a privilege of entrance onto sacred ground where God's act is offered in play and earth is redeemed by the union of vision and the stuff of life-forces, bound in love and given wherever is seen its heart exposed. Art is a dance of delight performed under a golden sun etching footprints in the sands of beauty...the tracks found behind is the painting.

To bring about these multiple actions, which help make the art of painting a way of integral self-realization, attention to this twofold approach must be emphasised to those who would make painting a greater voyage of discovery and resolve the problems of unity in the work. In the stepped-up times we live in, moving on a new bridge in the forces of change, all areas of life, science, art, etc., seem to require more dynamic solutions and actions than we have previously commanded. Art is usually the forerunner of these trends of change and for the creative individual to ignore entirely its recent soundings can be a recalcitrant obstruction.

Less like a restrictive principle of art and more as a rewarding access to wider opportunities for the release of the spirit in man, this outlined method of functioning in an *over-all and specific* way is merely a form of approach. Whichever centers of the being the artist chooses to enlist, the appeal to his tastes and the result of his effort will change or remain intact depending on his willingness to see himself and his intentions while engaged with the forces at play. If he cares to he will open to the forces of the higher intuition and be guided freely towards purity of self-expression. Avenues of the inner nature will be invoked and with the conscious equanimity of a spiritual adept it can be the dropping away of old boundaries, bringing him closer to the sacred status of the awakened psychic being alert to the delight and beauty of the spirit of Truth.

TOTAL EDUCATION

Dr. Sisir Kumar Ghose

(Dr. Sisir Kumar Ghose, attached to the English Department at Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan (West Bengal), has an established reputation in academic circles both in India and abroad. His works of literary scholarship, Aldous Huxley: The Cynical Salvationist and The Later Poems of Tagore have been well received. His latest publications are Metaesthetics and Other Essays and Tagore for You. In preparation for the press is the book, Mystics and Society, which with a Foreword by Aldous Huxley was first serialised in the pages of Mother India. The present article is distinguished by the same blend of deep learning and a fluent glinting style, which is characteristic of his books.)

MOST people would agree that we are passing through a crisis, be it a crisis of civilization or, as some fear, of evolution, or both. But as to the nature of the crisis, its causes and cure, the doctors are not agreed. In spite of the split among specialists, it is a safe guess that in order to meet the challenge, or impending collapse, which is all around us, we shall need a new strategy or weapon, a new understanding. Ultimately, all failure of action is a failure of thought. Briefly, we shall need a new theory and practice of education. It will be education in a new key, what we may call Total or Integral Education. Unfortunately, for some minds the phrase has acquired awful associations. They confuse it with Totalitarianism's violent experiment with untruth. What Herr Hitler and his stooges were trying to do was to throttle human growth and freedom, in the name of the Almighty State. Total Education, one might say, is the exact opposite of what the Hitlers have tried to do. It is education for fullness and freedom. Total education is part of our predicament as well as the way out, *if* there is a way out. No "patchwork conceptions and piece-meal practice" will do. With regard to the education of children—and where education is concerned we are little better than children—it has been said that we must introduce the child to himself. It must be the same with Total Education, which will introduce man to himself, to the whole range of relationships and purposes in terms of which man defines or creates himself. In the divided world of today Total Education or education of the whole man is "an *obligation* imposed by the nature of things; it is a mission in which every man or woman who knows the difference between true and false, between what has a right to be and what has not, is called to be teacher and learner both in one." In our present predicament Total Education is the summary imperative which we must obey or be damned for disobeying. Educate or perish.

TOTAL EDUCATION DEFINED

Essentially a social institution or enterprise, education is concerned, very often in an unconscious and haphazard fashion, with the transmission of skills and values, with know-why no less than know-how. Some idea, vague or clear, right or wrong, of purpose and personality, some Aim of Life is implicit in education anywhere and everywhere. But most historical cultures have been obliged to work within a narrow range of limited ideas, limited by rigid, regional or time-barred notions and they have been ultimately destroyed by corrosive conflicts and contradictions. Everywhere some aspect or capacity or manner of adjustment has dominated. A full and happy flowering of the whole human personality, of *all* its possibilities, has been rarely attempted, much less achieved. In the Existentialist phrase, we are all broken mirrors. We are not one but many. The idea of wholeness, with which is connected the idea of holiness, if not wholly absent, has not been the chief aim of education or of civilizations. Some kind of functional efficiency and adaptation is all that most cultures have cared for. But today the physical drawing together of the world, and our common destiny, have forced upon us a common approach to the problem of education. We need a philosophy of total or world education. As Borsodi (*The Education of the Whole Man*) has pointed out : "A new programme of education is what the crisis of the times calls for." More than an expediency, that way lies our salvation, the only hope.

It is this that the modern age, or the future, must provide. There are indications, East or West, of such a revision of goals, a change in the air. Obviously a change of this nature will involve criticism, even radical criticism, of most of our current values and practices. For our safety and continued development it may be necessary to scrap all, or almost all, of our existing false values. The Gods that failed. It is not surprising that both Vinoba Bhave and Robert Hutchins are agreed that our scale of values needs to be revised.

Of this revision—or Total Education—only an indication can be given. For instance, the emphasis of Analysis will have to give place to a new need for Synthesis. Extreme specialization, knowing more and more about less and less, the logical end of the analytical approach, carries its own danger. Also, the overall commercialism of the age has to submit to more human purposes, the era of competition has to yield to the idea of welfare and mutual aid. The impersonality of Science and Organization has to be set right by a new idea of personality and inter-personal relationships. Men are not equations, or figures in statistics. The dichotomy of Knowledge and Wisdom must be got rid of. Dogmas of every kind, religious and scientific, have to be replaced by a more liberal inclusive attitude towards truth: it will not be Either Or but Both. It must not be science versus spirituality, but science and spirituality, spirituality as the science of unity, *ekavidyā*. Instead of part, or specialized, education, education for particular jobs or functions, we shall need "the co-education of both body and mind". *Śarīramādyam khalu dharmasāadhanam*. There is a wisdom of the body which the wise have always known and respected. This will be something more than physical culture

or gymnastics. One of its results will be to end the isolation of action from contemplation. In *The Future of Education* Livingstone pointed out: "We lead a life of action without thought; or we think in a vacuum, without the realities and problems of the world. Neither form of isolation is satisfactory." For all this to end, we shall need new loyalties, and for that instead of regimentation, or the narrow view, we shall follow freedom, whatever the risk. It is needless to say that the militant Nationalist formula will have to be replaced by a growing International idea. The obsession with parochial histories has to give place to a saner philosophy of universal history. As Arnold Toynbee has said, "The peoples of the world cannot learn to understand each other if they confine their attention to the present surface of life and ignore the historical depths." It is out of historical necessity that we must change our ways, and educate ourselves anew.

This will involve a revision or modification of present as well as ancient ideals and practices. For instance, the age-old conflict of civilization versus asceticism, Caesar versus Christ, has to be resolved in terms of "the United Kingdom of Heaven and Earth." In place of Two Worlds, or Two Cultures, we shall need one. For this the individual must find his centre of unity of being. And where else is that unity to be found except in the hidden unity of his soul? It is this that he must discover and express in all his activities, in all the ranges of his activities and interests. The soul or "the psychic being is also a great discovery to be made requiring as much fortitude and endurance as the discovery of new continents".¹ But the true individual is not a fragment, not an isolated unit. No man is an island, he includes all else, at least in sympathy and imagination. For the One World to be we shall need a new centre or concept of World Personality, Universal Man, or, as Tagore described him, *Viśva-mānava*. Only that will survive which is consistent with the universal, this was—one of his favourite ideas. In the ways of the spirit, the poet is a pioneer.

The remedy or list of requirements is far from complete. But this or something like this will be needed before Total Education can come into its own. It is a task of our times, above every other, in which we are all *engaged*. The revolution in education for which we plead is not only urgent but, happily, it can be started anywhere. And by anyone.

THE INTEGRATED PERSON

The change will naturally begin with the individual, or individuals, before it can be actualized in the life of the group or the community. Now, what is the image of the Integrated or Balanced Person to be? What is he like? Of course he will not be cut according to any mental formula, or strict pattern, for freedom from formula is his very *raison d'être*. Yet a certain broad indication or general description may or can be given. In defining a completely educated man, it has been said, we are in

¹ The Mother, *On Education*.

fact defining a god, though, alas, all the gods have not been remarkable for their I.Q. Also, since we are not to repeat past patterns, many of the godheads of the future will shed their beards. Life for ever creative is life for ever young, *puer eternus*. The creation of ever-new potentialities and dimensions of the being, a more than Greek *paedeia*, will mean a new centre of personality, of goals and activities hard even to imagine.

In the words of Lewis Mumford who has thought long and anxiously on the subject : "Man's principal task today is to create a new self, adequate to command the forces that now operate so aimlessly and yet so compulsively. This self will necessarily take as its province the entire world, known and knowable, and will seek, not to impose a mechanical uniformity, but to bring about an organic unity, based upon the fullest utilization of all the varied resources that both nature and history have revealed to modern man. Such a culture must be nourished not only by a new vision of the whole, but a new vision of a self capable of understanding and co-operating with the whole." Be thou whole, the ancient injunction of Christ, comes home to us with added meaning.

Mumford's of course is not the only voice. The vision of universal education, or the education of the whole man, is itself not so new. But never perhaps was the need for it greater. Many forward-looking thinkers in different parts of the world have said or are saying much the same thing. There are throughout the globe people, an invisible brotherhood, who know that a "kind of mutation of the ideas which govern the world" is about to take place. One of the key ideas which will change man and society is Total Education. We cannot deal with these ideas, systems or schools of thought except to record that they are there, a growing consensus. Even the Existentialists, experts in despair and nothingness, have been known to talk of *Totalit tendenken*, which comes perilously close to Sanskrit *samyakdr ti*, or synoptic vision.

INDIA

What about India ? The thinkers of modern India—significantly all of them non-academic, that is not belonging to any of the many universities or colleges—bring their own evidence. On the strength of these visionaries Ralph Borsodi has paid us a compliment, which may seem excessive to some bewildered by our present limitations, when he says : "History seems to be setting the stage for a drama in which the leading role may be played by India." This instead of lulling us into complacency ought to rouse us to renewed responsibility. While in present-day India confusion rules the land, it is a fact that, among others, Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhiji and Sri Aurobindo have all been, in their own ways, pioneers of total education. All of them have essayed the inevitable journey from nationalism and traditional values towards universalism and the freedom of new being, futurebound. A brief account of their educational thought is all that can be given here.

Swami Vivekananda, as is well known, was a bitter critic of the de-nationalized and de-vitalized education doled out to Indians of his days, what he called "getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university examination". Instead what he insisted upon was Man-making, that single phrase summing up all his thought on the subject. A strong body was needed and he made no bones about it. "Be strong, my friend. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the *Gita*" was his unorthodox way of putting it. As western thinkers too have said, there can be no A1 mental culture with a C3 body. The Swami also emphasized the role of positive ideas. But above all, psychologist that he was, he put the greatest emphasis on Concentration. "If I were to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and then, with a perfect instrument, select facts at will." Based on experience and experiment, this idea of his has yogic affiliations. In Swami Vivekananda's view, the right view, Yoga is "one of the grandest of sciences". But this is a subject in which, one might add, the interest of our universities and university-trained pandits is *nil*. All the same the Swami was not a revivalist, an ascetic only. He drew pointed attention to the lot of the masses and wanted the privileged educated minority to behave responsibly. Also his thoughts moved easily towards Universal Religion and Brotherhood. Equally revealing, and uncompromising, was his idea that "the imparting of knowledge has always been done through men of renunciation, and that the charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of renunciants" or *tyāgis*. The religious bias of his thought is obvious and he does not hide it.

Rabindranath Tagore's Poet's School was a sensitive protest entirely in keeping with his genius and temperament. He knew, from bitter personal experience, how education operated without any reference to the child's real needs; how divorced, for instance, it was from Nature; how all creativity was destroyed by book-learning. "We gained geography and lost our world" is his vivid way of putting it. It is also remarkable that he should have keenly felt the limitations of the culture of cities and preferred a "rurban" synthesis. Tagore began with a school for children; moved, by stages, to the idea of an Eastern University; and, with maturity, thought of the University as a centre of international fellowship. Contrary to public misunderstanding and whatever might have happened to the institution that bears his name, he has given us both roots and wings. His greatest contribution has been the contribution of a legend and his institution will, one hopes, always retain the appeal of a dream, a perfectionist dream.

Not many know that Gandhiji, Mahatma and politician, had elected to be a teacher early in life in South Africa. In his own way he was a teacher and student all his life. His Phoenix School is now a forgotten name. But Tolstoy Farm, Sabar-mati, Sevagram are proof of his lifelong experiment. Some of his ideas echo Swami Vivekananda—the same emphasis on character and sturdy denial of the primacy of book learning. Among the special features of Gandhian—what has come to be called

Basic—Education are : being village-oriented, craft-centred; the emphasis on truth and non-violence, including religious instruction; and learning to think, which, he believed, could not be done through a foreign medium. All the same, in spite of his apparently modest aims, he too was working his way towards Total Education. For instance, the emphasis on village, or the masses, and crafts was meant to correct the imbalance of a purely academic training. As for the religious bias this was meant not to fortify dogma but provide a liberal outlook in a world divided by creeds. It must, however, be admitted that basic education as it exists cannot be an answer to our complex needs today. Its utility is limited, it minimises both the role of intellect and history in human affairs. Basically reformist, it is geared to a pre-industrial order. Whatever the dangers and problems of modern living—and these are many—these have to be faced. There can be no putting the clock back and the fact that even the administration that swears by him has failed to give his ideas a shape or trial is comment enough. But the ethical polytechnic, to give it a name, had a philosophy of wholeness behind it. In the words of the Mahatma : “Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all these is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education.”

As for Sri Aurobindo, politician turned yogi, even during his hottest political days he found time to write on “The Brain of India” and “A System of National Education”. As always with Indian thinkers he sees the aims of education as one with the aim of life. So he insists (Preface to *National Education*) that “at no time will it lose sight of man’s highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being”. This is the *summum bonum*, what he has elsewhere called the only true education, and it is this that will dictate its methods. In the Aurobindian view spiritual living is not to be equated with ascetic withdrawal, a grey monotone or a sterile flower, but a gathering up or integration of all else. Later the content of integration changes and comes to include the perfection of the body, a divine body, as part of divine life. On less elevated levels the emphasis, from the beginning, is on the study of the human mind and the complexity of the human whole. Some of his views are startling : for instance, “The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught”.—“The second principle is that the mind must be consulted in its own growth.”—“The third principle is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which should be.” That which should be, that for which we are perhaps set here, is a unity of opposites, or epiphany, the divine body reflecting or reproducing here in a divine life on the earth something of the highest greatness of the self-manifesting Spirit.

Briefly, then, through their religious, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual emphasis, the ideal, vision or glimpse of wholeness suggested by the Indian thinkers cuts across all narrowness and moves towards an unvalled horizon, the boundless sky of human becoming. A promise of better days, could we but live it !

THE WORLD'S UNBORN SOUL

Perhaps the simplest, yet most comprehensive statement of the New Learning has come from the Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, who must be considered as one of the greatest unacknowledged teachers of today. With dazzling clarity she has suggested the way out and the ideal to be followed. Underlining the need for greater consciousness for all who seek perfection she mentions a fourfold discipline (into the method we cannot go) : physical, vital, mental, and psychic and spiritual education. These four aspects of the discipline "do not exclude each other, one can follow them all at the same time, indeed it is better to do so". And, as we rise higher, we shall perceive, she tells us, "that the truth we seek is made up of four major aspects : Love, Knowledge, Power and Beauty. These four attributes of Truth will spontaneously express themselves in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and a perfect harmony." If all problems of existence are problems of harmony, it is only superior insight that can achieve it. It is a fact—let us rejoice—that the insight is available for such as care—for the elite at least. Of course the why of total education is easier to explain than its how¹.

ON WHICH SIDE ?

If the human animal is teachable—which it is possible to doubt—and if the challenge of our times is to be met we shall have to change our ways, that is our values, our aims and methods of education. The task is tremendous. But, as Alexis Carrel put it so well, we must liberate ourselves from blind technology and grasp the complexity and the wealth of our own nature. Crisis is both a test and an opportunity. In any case we cannot afford to shy away from it or to exclude any part of the human race from its scope. Walls have given way and there is no separate destiny or hiding place for the human race. Like peace education is indivisible. Total Education is a united front, in which nothing will be achieved unless all is achieved. It will be education of, by and for all, all of us and all in us. Without such an education, at least the first steps towards it, without a change of consciousness, or transformation of our present-day society, its concepts and practices, our personality and culture, nothing will have been done. But with the ideal of transformation before us, there will always be work to be done world-without-end. We shall never be unemployed.

Around the creators of values, said Nietzsche, revolveth the world, invisibly it revolveth. In the noble words of L.P. Jacks : "The conception of education which

¹ A attempt to translate into manifold practice the ideals of the New Learning set forth by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is the institution which the Mother founded at Pondicherry about fifteen years ago · Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.—*Editor*,

I desire to bring before you is the conception of a New World, just discovered by pioneers... We are standing on the fringe of a vast continent, stored with unimaginable riches waiting to be explored...Before us lies the great romance of the future.”
A romance which it is our duty and destiny to make real.

THE STUDENTS' PRAYER

Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become.
May we fight successfully the great battle of the
future that is to be born against the past that seeks
to endure; so that the new things may manifest
and we may be ready to receive them.

THE MOTHER

YOGA AND CULTURE

Dr. R. R. Diwakar

(Dr. R. R. Diwakar, by his deep sympathy with the Spiritual India of history and his keen sense of the Modern Age, can well be regarded as the accomplished representative of a Culture that breaks through the limitations of time and place. This article, specially written for the present issue, reflects ably the many-sided capacity of one who could pen that fine popular study of Sri Aurobindo, Mahayogi, as well as participate constructively in the country's day-to-day life as Member of the Indian Parliament.)

It is not a very happy thing that the word yoga has become too familiar and too popular in a somewhat denigrated sense. The Government of India has included it in physical culture. In the West, though there are some exceptions, yoga is considered to be almost synonymous with some peculiar physical postures which are supposed to make for physical fitness, longevity, and energy. It would have been a matter for some satisfaction if yoga there had been at least associated necessarily with *Prāṇāyāma* (not mere deep breathing but breath-control) or with the full technique of Hatha Yoga as presented by *Hatha-yoga-Pradeepikā*, a well-known text.

WHAT IS YOGA ?

Let it be clearly understood that yoga, even the Asanas or posture aspect of it, is not a mere system of physical culture, nor can it be included ordinarily in courses of physical fitness. Radically and in essence the Asanas differ in their aim as well as result from the several systems of physical culture. The reason is obvious. All recognised systems of physical culture and physical fitness aim at exercising and strengthening the muscular apparatus of the body along with stimulation of blood circulation, etc. The yogic Asanas mainly aim at exercising and stressing the nervous and the glandular systems of the body, and relaxation is one of the essential exercises. The yogic Asanas are never to be resorted to within one hour of any other kind of exercise or strain on the body. There is a clear injunction not to mix up the other physical exercises with yogic exercises.

Hatha Yoga is far more than only yogic Asanas. It includes *kriyās* like *nauli* and *dhauti*, *mudrās* and, most important of all, *prāṇāyāma*. *Prāṇāyāma* is not mere deep breathing, it is the establishment of full control over our breathing system. Hatha Yoga is a complete system by itself leading to Samadhi or communion with the Supreme Spirit through Asanas, *kriyās*, etc., and breath control. While the aim of Hatha Yoga is the same, namely Samadhi, as in other yoga systems such as Bhakti Yoga and so on,

the instruments used are the physical and vital powers which are responsible for the birth, upkeep and functioning of the human body as such.

Fortunately in recent years some writers in the West have been trying to explain the full significance of the yoga system as the culture of the whole integrated human being. Caustovild has said, for instance, that compared to the yoga system which aims at the culture of the whole human being, Western systems of psychological discipline seem elementary. Earnest Wood's books on yoga attempt at explaining the comprehensive nature of yoga. Douglas Hunt in his book, *Exploring the Occult*, says that most people in the West consider yoga as just a system of physical training—something like Swedish Drill ! He says, integration in every department of life is the aim of the yogi. This science and art of yoga is four thousand years old, avers Hunt. There are other writers of this class such as Sir Paul Duke. What the West has begun to call Depth Psychology may be said to be one of the aspects of yogic psychology.

One may say that this introduction is superfluous, but unless we fully grasp the uttermost significance of yoga in its essence, it would be difficult to relate it with the comprehensive concept of culture. It is this underlying idea which was at the root of Sri Aurobindo's definition of yoga as 'Conscious Evolution'.

'CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION'

Yoga, the simple, two-syllabled Sanskrit word, is derived from the root 'yuj' to join, to unite, to be one with, to yoke, and so on. The Sanskrit language in the course of its five thousand years of development has invested certain key words with very rich connotations. Yoga is one of them. To cite one more example, there is 'yajña'. 'Ātman' is a third one. Ultimately yoga today means and includes every systematically and scientifically developed technique and discipline for reaching the highest condition of human consciousness, an ecstatic beatitude where the individual is one with the universal, and in which state, being and becoming are one and indivisible. It is described as at-one-ment with *sat-cit-ānanda*, Being-Consciousness-Joy. It is also described as Brahman which is *satyam* (Reality), *jñānam* (Intergal Knowledge), and *anantam* (Infinity). Sometimes the person who has attained such a state of consciousness is called *yoga-ārūḍha* or a Siddha, the accomplished one, one who has reached the end.

A human being in the course of his biological evolution has developed certain faculties, powers of perception, and instruments of action. All these normally help him in mastering his environment and in manipulating all things and natural forces and laws in order that he may live a life of convenience, comfort and pleasure. His limbs, his senses, his nervous system, his brain, the power of thinking, feeling, willing and acting serve the one aim of living well and happily. But there is something more to it, and that is the development of self-consciousness in man. It is this faculty which marks him off from the animal kingdom. It is on account of this power of self-introspection that man is capable of being witness to the working of his own mind. It is

this that makes it possible for him to discriminate between good and evil and it is this which leads to the growth of a special faculty in him called the conscience or the Super Ego.

The ancients in India classified the different functions and faculties of man into five categories : (a) The physical body informed by Prana or vital powers; (b) the faculty and power of feeling or the emotional power, the power to love and hate; (c) the faculty of thinking and discrimination; (d) the faculty of willing and acting, the power of action; and (e) the power of concentration. These powers and faculties are by no means exclusive of one another and they find their co-ordination and interrelationship in the total being of man or his personality.

There are as many yogas or disciplines and techniques of reaching the highest stage of human development as there are faculties and powers of man mentioned above. In fact, there are even more, either by combination of one or more faculties or by synthesis of two or more of them. But in all of them, the technique or methodology is the same and for every one of them the preparatory discipline, namely *yama* (control of the senses and the mind) and *niyama* (certain regulations about conduct) are compulsory. All these yogas are collectively called the yoga system of discipline.

The principal yogas as per faculties and powers stated above may be mentioned as follows : Hatha Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga. Sri Aurobindo has described what he calls the synthesis of yoga in which Bhakti, Jnana and Karma are combined into an inseparable amalgam. His special contribution to this science, however, is Integral Yoga. The main characteristic of this yoga is that it begins with complete surrender to the Divine, where practically other yogas end !

After the preparatory discipline of Yama and Niyama, every Yoga has to go through five stages according to the faculty or power adopted as the instrument. Let us take Bhakti Yoga for which the emotional power is the main instrument. Purification of the instrument comes first. The Bhakti Yogi has to purge his emotional power of all selfishness, of all downward sensuous tendencies and make it ready for use as a ladder to climb up. The next step is conservation of the purified emotional power, the power of love. The third step is concentration of this power on Truth, Reality or God as the case may be. This concentration has to culminate in complete surrender at the feet of Truth or God : that is the fourth step. Finally there is Communion which is the fifth step.

There are other yogas also mentioned in yoga books, such as Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga and so on.

From what has been stated above, it is clear that all yogas collectively as well as severally aim at the elevation of man to a higher, nobler, happier, more harmonious and integrated state of living. Yoga is a conscious effort at evolving and reaching a better stage of life by studying the laws of evolution and applying those laws to our ways of living, thinking, feeling, willing and acting.

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Now if in a similar manner we analyse the concept of culture, we shall be able to see easily the relationship between yoga and real culture.

Like yoga, culture has different meanings for different people. Several attempts have been made to define the concept. Many writers include civilization in culture. Some say they are two different aspects of development. A large number use both the words indiscriminately.

I would like to give here a very simple interpretation to the concept of culture.

Man is an animal. There is no doubt about it. Every man is born like any other mammal. He is then trained to be a man by a very laborious process of education. So, man is an animal and yet distinct from any other animal because of the built-in capacity to become what we call a man.

It is exactly this built-in potentiality which marks off a man from any other living creature. Thus it is this 'animal +' which makes it possible for man to acquire something which animals cannot, cultivate something which they cannot, build and create something which they cannot. It is the utter lack of this built-in potentiality which has stunted and condemned the animal world to a dead uniformity of repetitious life while man has created a new world for himself.

The animal never produces its own food, it only seeks it. The animal never makes fire nor does it use fire. The animal never makes any tools. The animal never develops its language and so on. There is in fact a base-line of animal life which no animal has crossed for millions of years but which man, though an animal, has not only crossed but has gone beyond to traverse vast areas in the field of life, thought, emotion and action. Man is a creator in his own right though his creation is always a manipulation of the laws of nature while he is in a position to study, understand, and apply for his own purposes.

All that man has done, achieved, acquired, and created after crossing the base-line of animal life is really his culture ! Culture in this sense is the result of the concentration of the built-in potentiality of man and the application of it to things and to his environment in terms of his needs, ambitions, and natural tendencies.

But man as man is a bundle of varied tendencies and elemental animal urges, often selfish, destructive and one-sided. These tendencies and urges can broadly be classed as (a) 'tamasic,' full of inertia, slovenly, selfish and unable to distinguish between good and evil, high and low, noble and ignoble; (b) 'rajasic', full of ambitious activity, lustful of power, more destructive than constructive, incapable of controlling animal instincts and tendencies; and (c) 'sattwic', fully developing a conscience, a will to control evil and do only good which paves the way for progress towards a higher type of living.

GUIDE TO A HIGHER CULTURE

It is here that yoga can step in and guide the human race. It can help man to control his tamasic and rajasic tendencies and urges. It can lift him to the sattwic stage and then even higher. Man no doubt learns by trial and error. But yoga which is the science and art of attunement with the primal urge of evolution can not only chasten the spirit of man in quest of a higher life but can quicken the pace and enlighten the path.

Yoga believes in the power of consciousness, in its capacity to conquer all obstacles in the path of human evolution, in the higher destiny of man and in its capacity to commune with the forces of evolution and quicken the advance of man to a nobler life. Yoga has the power to awaken the inner conscience, to open the doors of subtler perception, to give access to the springs of inspiration and to enable us to catch a glimpse of the flashes of intuition which flit across the mind.

There is no doubt that man, individually as well as collectively, is progressing and is accumulating and acquiring fresh gushes of culture in all fields, in science and technology, in humanities and arts and aesthetics and what not. But he is erring in a hundred ways, fumbling once and often, stumbling over self-created obstacles; sometimes he strikes us as a tragic figure who may end in a total disaster. But yoga and its practice can save him from many pitfalls, can purify his motives and enable him to reach the goal with far greater economy of energy and in far less time. While yoga is conscious evolution in a higher sense and with a wider significance, it is the best guide to a higher culture which will help man in his destined march, from beast through man to god.

USHASTI CHAKRAYANA

CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

Nolini Kanta Gupta

(In this age generally the Upanishads mean religion, philosophy and spirituality. But there was a time in India when their teachings were a basis for life as well, leading to an all-round Culture. The same creativeness for the future is aptly suggested by the present Talk, at once lively and penetrating, which forms part of a series delivered by Nolini Kanta Gupta of Sri Aurobindo Ashram to the inmates of that institution. Nolini Kanta Gupta is a shining name in Bengali literature for a prose combining clarity and weight. In English also he has several significant books to his credit, like Poets and Mystics, The March of Civilisation, Quest and Goal.)

THIS is the story of Ushasti Chakrayana, Ushasti the son of Chakra. But could it be that the name means one who drives a wheel, like Shakatayana, the driver of *śakaṭa*, the bullock-cart ? Or is it something similar to Kamalayana, one who tends or enjoys a *kamala*, the lotus, *lotus-eater* ? The Chakra or wheel here might be the potter's wheel, or it might as well be the spinner's wheel or Charkha. Does the name then mean something like one who owns or plies a Charkha, just as we term Kamliwalla an ascetic with a Kambal or blanket ? However that may be, here is the story.

The Kuru country where Ushasti had his abode was hit by a natural calamity. Homeless, he wandered about with his young wife in search of food. On reaching the village of Ibhya, he found someone belonging to the village busy eating mouthfuls of beans. Goaded by acute hunger he begged a few grains of this man. The man said, "Some leavings still sticking to my pot are all that I have." Ushasti said in reply, "I will be happy to have even that little", and he took what the villager offered him. After he had finished eating, Ushasti was asked, "Would you have some water ?" To this he replied, "But that would mean drinking your leavings." The villager said, "But you have already eaten the beans, they too were my leavings." Ushasti answered, "Those I took for the sake of my life, or else I would have starved to death. The water is another matter, one can do without it yet."

Ushasti had not eaten up all the beans. He had kept some and with these he returned to his wife and handed them to her. The wife was more clever or perhaps more lucky. She too had in the meantime been out begging and obtained a few things. To these she added what the husband gave and kept them all away.

Next morning, on getting up from bed, Ushasti said to his wife, "I am feeling awfully hungry. If there was something to eat, I would get some strength, and then

I could present myself before the king. He is celebrating a sacrifice and might perhaps get me a place among the chanters of the hymns." The wife was not a person to be confounded, she said with a smile, "Well, here is some food for you, eat it up." Thanks to his wife, Ushasti had a good bite and, feeling hale and hearty, set off for the place of sacrifice. There he sat among the chanting priests, listened to them for a little while in silence, then he called the Prastota, the priest who chanted the introductory hymns, and said, "O Prastota, if one chants these introductory hymns without knowing the divinity that presides over the hymns, the head falls off." The same words he repeated to the Udgata, who recited the *udgītha* or hymns of the middle : "O Udgata, if one recites the *udgītha* hymns without knowing the divinity who presides over those hymns, he too loses his head." Finally, he called the Pratiharta as well, the one who uttered the *pratihāra* or concluding hymns, and said, "O Pratiharta, one who utters the *pratihāra* hymns without knowing their presiding divinity loses his head in like manner." All the priests accepted with bowed heads in due reverence these words of Ushasti.

The performer of the sacrifice, on whose behalf the sacrifice had been arranged, was struck by the wisdom of Ushasti, and he said, "Lord, who are you ? I want to know about you." Ushasti replied, "I am Ushasti Chakrayana." The sacrificer now exclaimed, "Then it is you I have been looking for ! These men had to be engaged because I could not find your whereabouts. Now be pleased to take charge of the chanting." Ushasti said, "Very well, it will be as you say. Let them now chant the hymns according to my directions." In this way, Ushasti agreed to take charge of the chanting, but he added this proviso, "Now that I have taken charge of your work, you would not forget about my fees I hope. You may give me whatever amount you would have given to these priests, I do not want more." The sacrificer gladly accepted this proposition.

Then the first of the chanting priests, the Prastota, came up to Ushasti and asked him, "Lord, you said that one who recited the introductory hymns without knowing their deity would lose his head. What then is that deity ?" Ushasti replied, "That deity is Prana—the Life-force. Life is the origin of all, in it they all dissolve. Life is the godhead of the introductory hymns; if one does not know what Life is, and utters these hymns, his head is bound to fall off." Next the Udgata came to him and put him his question : "Lord, you said that one who recites the *udgītha* hymns without knowing their presiding deity loses his head. Tell me, O Lord, who is that divinity ?" "Aditya, the Sun is that deity. The whole creation raises a paean to Him as he ascends the skies. This Aditya is the godhead of the *udgītha*. If you sing the *udgītha* without knowing Aditya, then, as I have warned you, your head will surely fall off." Finally, the Pratiharta priest came to him and said, "Lord, you said that if I performed the concluding rites without knowing the divinity who presides over them, then my head was certain to fall off. Lord, I want to know who is that deity ?" Ushasti replied, "Anna—Matter—Food is that deity. All these creatures find their sustenance by gathering food. Hence Food is the presiding deity of the concluding rites. If you

recite the concluding hymns without knowing what Food is, your head will certainly fall off."

In this manner Ushastī gave the teaching about the Triple Principle, the Trinity represented by Life, Mind, and Body; Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, that is, Earth, Sky and Heaven. He gave an indication of these three levels of manifested being, the triple world of this universe, spoke of the divinity that presides over this Triplicity. First of all comes the God of Life. This is the deity that is invoked at the outset, has to be so invoked in every act, in all ceremonial function, even in the effort at an inner perfection. He is the Creator, all that is manifested has Him for its driving power, *sarvam ejati niḥsṛtam*. Creation begins with a vibration of this Life-Force. The first thing necessary is to infuse Life into things. When we worship a divine image, we begin the rites with an invocation to this Life-force to enter the image; what was just an idol is awakened to life by the infusion of this Force. Life and Life-force, this comes first. Next comes consciousness, knowledge, light, that is, the Sun-God, Aditya, and ordinarily, mind is His field. But by itself force is not enough, knowledge is not enough; this force and this light have to be embodied and given a form, they have to take physical shape with matter as the basis; they have to become an integral part of this earth of matter. Force and Light and Being are the three cosmic Principles, and they have three Deities presiding over them. In establishing them in their unity in his awakened being man finds his entire and all-round fulfilment.

You may notice here one thing. Many of these Rishis in the Upanishads are found sometimes using a threat that if anything or anyone deviated from the truth or the accepted norm, "the head would fall off". It seems to mean this. If one commits an error or there is a fault in the course of one's spiritual effort and if one continues on the wrong path without acknowledging the error or shortcoming, then it implies a movement, a gesture against the Truth and the Right, and this default carries in itself the possibility of a derangement of the head. The actual physical calamity befell an ancient seeker, Shakalya; we already know that story. In this age we do not perhaps come across an actual physical instance of such a mishap; but we are certainly familiar with something analogous, a derangement of the brain instead of the physical falling off of the head. As the Mother has said, the spiritual force is a kind of fire, to play with this fire without an inner devotion and sincerity invites dangers of this sort.

Let me here draw your attention to another—a rather interesting—aspect of this story; it is both amusing and instructive. Ushastī is the example of a man who, though a Rishi with a true knowledge of the Reality and a powerful realisation, is in other respects, in normal life, a perfectly incapable and helpless man; his capacity for an inner life seems to be matched by his incapacity in the outer. He had to bring himself down to the level of an abject beggar in his ordinary life; at every step he had to depend on his wife's assistance, without her co-operation he found it an unmanageable affair to procure even a grain of rice for the maintenance of life. It would not of course be logical or proper to conclude from this that the Rishis had need of their

wives for this as the sole or primary purpose : the word “life-partner” used for the spouse does imply a help-mate or means for the sustenance of life, but it carries no derogatory sense.

In those days there was in many cases an indifference towards the things of worldly life. This led to a certain weakness and poverty in this respect. Perhaps it was due to the necessity of an exclusive preoccupation with and concentration on the inner life. Only one or two Rishis like Yajnavalkya for instance had demanded an equal fullness and power in the outer as in the inner life. Yajnavalkya’s great dictum that he had need for both, *ubhayam eva*, was indeed uttered in no uncertain terms and without hesitation in the presence of all. The first and foremost aim of the Rishis was to acquire an inner mastery, what they called the realisation of self-rule, *svārājya-siddhi*. But a certain fullness of the outer life as well was not entirely beyond their ken; this they called the realisation of outer empire, *sāmrajya-siddhi*. These two, the rule over self and the domination of the outer life, *svārājya* and *sāmrajya*, would constitute the integral realisation of the integral man.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

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

THE URGE FOR A TOTAL REDISCOVERY

THE IRRESISTIBLE UNDERTONE IN CURRENT REFLECTIONS

Manoj Das

(Manoj Das, resident of Sri Aurobindo Ashram and professor at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, is a name on the lips of all who are acquainted with Oriya literature, the winner of an Academy award. He is coming into prominence also as a writer of sensitive short stories in English, one of which was published in the Mother India of last month. We welcome his brief but thought-provoking piece, with its pointers to a depth behind modern moods.)

“MODERN philosophy once and for all seems to assert that the human being and his world are inseparable,” says Herbert Kohl in his excellent treatise on 20th century philosophy, *The Age of Complexity*.¹

Naturally, this assertion has a background of separation between man and his world. Man’s feeling of being alienated from his world has culminated in many cases (according to evidences in our literature and philosophy) in a strange mistrust of one’s own self, the self itself appearing a nightmarish existence ! Though the culmination is a recent post-War development, the feeling of alienation has become distinct only through a prolonged process. Reviewers of social developments have pointed out that it was with the Renaissance that man had felt gradually alienated from “all that makes up his life”. Copernicus destroyed our private cosmos. The long-established intimacy with the planets, the congenial faith that they existed only for our little ills and cures were all shattered (reminds a line from Wallace Stevens : *The human who has no cousin in the moon*), and with Einstein heralding the mystery of the expanding universe, the process was complete.

But, according to Martin Heidegger whose name is indispensably associated with *existential* themes, the seed of separation was sown with Plato. It was Plato who clearly questioned the validity of the conception of *being* that was conventional in the pre-Platonic age—a grand total of all that existed. However, today that comprehensive natural attitude to our being is lost and, to quote Carl Gustav Jung, “The decisive question for man is : Is he related to something infinite or not ? Only if we know that the thing which truly matters is the infinite can we avoid fixing our interest upon futilities and upon all kinds of goals which are not of real importance.”

But does not yet another problem remain ? Supposing we had nothing to do with infinity, could we happily fix our interest upon futilities and trifles ? The very relevant

¹ A Mentor Book, published by The New American Library of World Literature Inc., New York. 1965.

question of the futility of a thing being determined only in relation to something Real (*i.e.*, the knowledge of the *Real* in us) apart, why should we at all indulge in futilities in spite of our knowledge of the futility of the thing ? If we know a thing to be futile, we necessarily know that the *Real* exists, even though faintly, and since we have already crowded our finite self with futilities, the *Real* must be somewhere spread along the infinite. Jung's words, highly sincere as they are, contain the implied discovery that man is related to the infinite.

The feeling of being foreign comes out of a failure to fit into the environment. There may be two reasons : the environment may be inferior to us, or we may be inferior to the environment. It is a paradox and a reality that both the factors are there. To illustrate the situation : with many an expedition into the hitherto unexplored areas of mind and life since psychology and psycho-analysis assumed great importance, we have been aware of the vastness of our consciousness, yet the very shock of the sudden awareness has made us shrink before ourselves. Man has not been thrilled with his potentiality, rather he has felt guilty with the exaggerated darkness within him, which has not been revealed to him along with the splendour of light in him. So also with science, which has opened many a new horizon, and brought many a promise of pure adventure, yet which in its highest practical manifestation has forged the sure passage to doom, however entreatingly its pioneers may plead for science to be looked at as only a 'neutral force'.

Thus man in general, always superior in terms of his progressive evolution to all that he was, feels inferior with the cognisance he has taken of his darker self and the ultimacy of his most brilliant of endeavours. And in order to appreciate many a philosophy and its impact on the literature of our time, we must always remember this paradox. Existentialism in its various branches with always the uncompromising stress on the *existence of the individual*, sympathetically scanned, is a very emotional complaint against an alien environment—against a freedom which is empty, *where man is condemned to be free* (Sartre). Freedom is a state of experience which cannot be empty. The real crisis lies in the fact that we have recognised freedom, the vast unprecedented experience of freedom that is dawning upon human comprehension, and we are afraid to stand up to the demand of the dawn. We think we are incapable, and the only escape we can find is in dismissing the freedom, or the vision of the same, as empty.

If the existentialists make man lonelier in a world with which communion is absurd, then a novel dose of solace comes from a group of French novelists whose works are described as *nouvelle vague*, who are striving to restore man to strength by making him completely independent of the world. "Man looks out at the world, and the world does not return his glance."¹ Hence the experience of tragedy. If so, "by

¹ From *Old "Values" and The New Novel* by Alain Robbe-Grillet, first published in *Evergreen Review*, No. 9, Summer 1959. Translated by Bruce Morrisette. Reprinted in *The Age of Complexity* by Herbert Kohl, A Mentor Book, published by The New American Library.

refusing communion, he also refuses tragedy".¹ If such a refusal of communion is to be possible in any form, then that would be possible in a very different way—in a spiritual way, by developing that detachment or enlightenment resulting from a serious spiritual undertaking, not by any amount of philosophical reflection. But this certainly stresses man's new strength within himself, a possibility of keeping himself emotionally reserved. His aloneness, if he could develop that, would be, unlike that of the existentialists, dignified.

We can mark what the existentialists and Alain Robbe-Grillet have read in common; that is, the world is trying to absorb the man (at the cost of the latter's sacred ego), and man must strive to uphold himself. But what we must recognise is : the intimate world of the era of myths has not by itself sprung to an aggressive mood. Only we have expanded our horizon to recognise the world in its hitherto unknown vastness and mystery, and yet we have not sufficiently enlarged ourselves to absorb the new world, which would be the real freedom from all the horrors of being devoured by an alien world. We can develop ourselves to absorb the world if we believe that man is a basically growing consciousness and not a static stock, that he can qualitatively grow and not merely spend from the stock of a quantity of the same stuff. Julian Huxley is nearer to this recognition in his *Essays of a Humanist* where he writes, "Human potentialities constitute the world's greatest resource, but at the moment only a tiny fraction of them is being realised. The possibility of tapping and directing these vast resources of human possibility provides the religion of the future with a powerful long term motive." The present experience of man can be adequately explained in these words of Nietzsche : "The more he strives toward the heights and toward light, the more powerfully his roots strive earthward, downward, into darkness and depth—into evil."

However, all the reflections of our time, outwardly warring often among themselves, only make obvious man's urge to assert himself anew, in a new light of which seldom is he aware by himself.

¹ *Ibid.*

TOWARDS A WORLD PHILOSOPHY

Dr. K. C. Varadachari

(In this thought-loaded and multi-tracked article one of our well-known philosophical thinkers, Dr. K. C. Varadachari of Madras University, surveys a wide field of speculative problems and directs us to some basic concepts that have value to the future for which we are working.)

PHILOSOPHY DURING THE AGES

EVERY serious thinker during the ages attempted to intuit the nature of Reality. He attempted not only to have a single vision of the Whole but also to communicate that vision in terms of thought and feeling and action. The whole was perceived to be One yet distinguished by manyness : indeed it was precisely this multiplicity that seemed to have been the problem for most of those who had tried to express their single experience or vision of Reality not merely to themselves but to others as well. In fact the second was much more difficult to do unless the others to whom this vision was communicated or described could in some measure go beyond understanding what was being communicated or described and be helped to recover or attain that vision. The need to have vision and the further need to communicate it to others and also help them to attain to it—these three seem to be essential to any philosophy, understood as the love of wisdom or knowledge that is Ultimate.

The Nature of Reality has been elusive in a sense because of the further considerations of the knower, the known and the knowing which differ according to what is to be known and who is the knower . If the knower belongs to a level of being lower than that of what has to be known, the known eludes his grasp. The adequacy of each to the other is the measure of the possibility of knowledge. This means that sensory knowing can only give the known of a certain quality and not that which is different or higher than it. It is precisely because most speculations on the theory of knowledge do not perceive this ill-mated adventure into philosophising that there has resulted diverse philosophies not independent of each other as they ought to be but mutually accusing each other of inadequacy if not erroneousness or falsity. The solution to this situation is not to be found by developing a theory of hierarchical or relative truths leading up to that ultimate truth which will contradict absolutely all that is below it in the shape of knowing. Extraordinary logics have been developed by logicians belonging to different levels of cognitivity which have been most amusing on the one side in so far as they have led only to the determination of error rather than to comprehension of reality, and on the other side tragic in so far as they have all been shown to confound reality with their reasoning.

When the great thinker of the Vedanta Sstras stated that the Ultimate cannot be reached or established by *tarka*, he meant that dialectical logic, or logic that tries to reduce all propositions to absurdity, cannot establish the existence of Reality. But since the meaning of the word *tarka* itself has been forgotten it was thought that all reasoning belongs to the logic of *reductio ad absurdum*. No wonder the whole of philosophy became impossible with the help of reasoning.

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE DIFFERENT MEANS OF RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

Sri Aurobindo has clearly perceived the necessity for different means of right knowledge adequate to different levels of experience. This is in line with the ancient metaphysical thinkers. But it needs the proper presentation of the nature and limits of each *pramāṇa* or measuring of experience and this unfortunately the ancient thinkers did not always clearly perceive. In the important translation and elucidation of the Kena Upanishad, Sri Aurobindo pin-pointed the need to discern the different kinds of *pramāṇa*. He showed that man's knowledge of the reality can proceed from either the grasping of the difference by means of difference, or by means of identity and difference. The first kind of knowing is what we are all aware of when we perceive objects. We distinguish particulars and understand other things by means of particularised comparisons or sheer particularities. This means we use firstly enumeration (*saṅkhyā*) and then comparison (discrimination of identical qualities). Thus Samkhya is the discriminative procedure of knowing which knows by means of identity and difference. A third step may be seen when one tries to grasp the nature of an object by means of identity alone. This is knowledge by identity which discards the difference. There are grades of course in these ways of knowing. In the world of Philosophy we know that a different method of classification of the ways of knowing has been available. Thus we have the sensory way of knowing called *pratyakṣa*. The second way of knowing is called *anumāna* or inference based on invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*): because things occur together invariably they belong to one another. The third way of knowing is inference based on partial identity (*upamāna*), whereas the fourth way of knowing is stated to be intuition (*śabda*). Revelational knowledge is something that breaks in from above the sensory and the rational (*anumāna* and *upamāna*). It has not been demonstrated that *Sabda* is knowledge by identity, though intuitive knowledge is explained as knowledge by identity.

In fact a very important question in philosophical speculation is the confusion that usually prevails in respect of the *pramāṇa* and *prameya*, the way of knowing and the object known. Do we know an object as characterised by the way of knowing? Or do we make an appropriate adjustment of the way of knowing to the object that has to be known? Further, are there not objects which require special means and ways for knowing them? These are questions which have been critically considered by philosophers all over the world. It is true that as is the means so is the object. The means limit if not distort the object and as such give false knowledge of objects. The

subjective approach through duality or difference makes the object distinguished and diversified or atomically particularised. Knowledge by difference as if difference were the characteristic of reasoning, or analysis as the way of knowing, becomes defective sometimes, especially when the object cannot be analysed or broken up into parts.

So also if the means or way of knowing is through identity then the object even if diversified or distinguished would appear to be one whole without diversity at all. Thus identity becomes the object of the means called knowledge by identity, even as knowledge by difference grants only diversity. Similarly if the approach is from the point of view of knowledge by partial identity and difference the object grasped would have the characteristics of partial identity and difference which make comparison and analogy a fruitful explanation of the objects.

MECHANISTIC, VITALISTIC, MENTALISTIC PHILOSOPHIES

We know that there have been philosophies based on the mechanical modes of explanation as in science today, especially in physics and chemistry and in other allied branches. The whole universe or reality is conceived in a mechanistic manner or, in other words, mind and life are reduced to the level of mechanisms subject to the laws of mechanics. Similarly vitalistic or biological sciences have begun to explain all phenomena on the lines of biological laws and evolution based on the higher organisational powers of the organic over the mechanistic. However much materialism may attempt to bring all life and mind under the concept of mechanism, slowly we are having a new type of materialism which could be called biological materialism. Still earlier, attempts have taken place to bring all mind under the materialistic and mechanistic hypothesis. Reversely we have mentalistic philosophies which try to bring all materialism under the mental concept of idea and ideas or experience as such. Epistemological idealism is irrefutable when it reduces all experience as the real and the real as experience. Yet there is a surplus, inexplicable X, which goes beyond the particular mind and mental experiences and this, though beyond most human beings accustomed to sensory experiences and inferences, is a transcendent reality, obtained by intuitive self-evidence. But there is an epistemological situation which grants existence to that which transcends the human ways of knowing.

THE SENSUOUS AND THE SUPER-SENSUOUS

From very ancient times we have had the second struggle, the struggle between the veridicality of the super-sensuous and that of the sensuous, between the human consciousness of practicality or the pragmatic test of truth for man and that which is transcendent to his purposes and consciousness as well. All philosophy is an attempt to have a view of Reality as a Whole, either as one undistinguished bare identity or a differentiated unity varying from organic integrality to a mere confluence or mechanism or clock to which Leibnitz compared it, and a bare plurality without any rational mode or permanent possibility of unity other than aggregation. A world

philosophy is the aim of the human mind in its highest flights of intuitive awareness. That this may be beyond the modern capacities of man can be admitted. But that philosophy should never go beyond these capacities, else it should cease to be a philosophy, cannot be as easily admitted or accepted. The greatest Seers of the East have gone beyond the humanistic self-imposed limitations when they affirmed the truths of mysticism and religion as transcending the regions of pure intellection of the human mind.

IS HUMANISM A SUFFICIENT PHILOSOPHY ?

Humanism, however practically useful and intelligible, is not capable of being a real world philosophy. Or if the word 'world' refers to the current evolutionary conception of man alone, the reality which transcends man and his faculties would forever be refused the name of philosophy. In fact, that this is not so strange a conclusion can be seen from the enormous seriousness with which the pragmatic materialistic and mentalistic speculations about Reality have a larger hearing than the call to understand this world in terms of spiritual conceptions beyond the range and ability of the human consciousness as it is. The trend that registered itself as important in recent times was the linguistic analysis of sentences which condemned outright all metaphysical statements as meaningless because they were not current in daily speech and verifiable in the sensory or emotive way. This has found favour also among some Indian thinkers who have held that philosophy must be expressed in the language of the people, *loka*, the only world of discourse that merchants and common people know and live in. Perhaps the technical jargon of philosophy as of other sciences is sheer nonsense, more so for a philosophy going beyond the sensory and emotional intellectual universe which uses the way of knowing by difference rather than by transcendence and spiritual oneness. This criticism is unassailable but false.

There are more things in nature than philosophy dreams of. Reality is more than human thought. One of the most adventurous things or enterprises for man himself is to attempt to go beyond himself. Religion and mysticism show the way towards transcendence of the human even as society shows the way to transcendence of the personal and the private and particular. That modern theories of knowledge have recognized the social theory of knowledge as well as the personal theory of knowledge shows that Reality has more dimensions even within the humanistic views than it recognizes. Similarly in regard to the reduction of religion to the service of humanity there can be quite a distortion of the very basis of religion which is the attainment and experience of the Divine or Godhead who is recognized as transcendent to the human and his values. Modern philosophies so intricately and inextricably wedded to socialistic human patterns of behaviour or humanistic goals could hardly make themselves sensible to religious consciousness and much less to spiritual consciousness. It is the lesser way of knowledge dictating the boundaries and verities of the higher than the human.

Though a World Philosophy as the consensus of human philosophies may turn out to be humanistic in general it would yet reveal its imperfect apprehension of Reality. Humanism urges its own transcendence when it confronts the experiences known as the mystical and spiritual. That is why we cannot accept humanism as a sufficient philosophy.

OTHER INTELLECTUALISTIC PHILOSOPHIES

Mechanistic and humanistic philosophies having been found inadequate it behoves us to consider whether we should accept other equally intellectualistic and philosophies taking their stand on vitalism or life principle or on mentalism or mind principle as more ultimate. A recent book of distinctive merit, Professor Errol Harris's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Science*, has projected a comprehensive account of the whole field of science as a serious rival to philosophy. He has been able to discover that the mystic truth, 'As in the macrocosm so in the microcosm', is verified in each one of the sciences. He has also been able to show that the higher laws or laws of superconsciousness, more fully understood and interpreted, would very much help towards understanding of the microcosm and even sub-atomic structures. A mind is at work at every level and is the principle or energy that organises even as it provides the constant and continuous re-organization of units of existence or being. This is perhaps the most important work which would illustrate the approach taken up by Sri Aurobindo in his attempt at enunciation of a world philosophy or rather a philosophy that will be all-embracing and adequate to explain experiences of all levels of being in a unitary conception.

The question that might arise at this point would be whether we are not assuming that the most important philosophical category is not Monism (*Advaita*), for that is indeed what all thought is impelled to arrive at. The scholastics always felt that a Philosophy must arrive at a One or Oneness which allows or permits or suffers a many-ness within it. All problems of philosophy centred upon the need for a oneness of the many or a many-ness in the One. It has been easy to dismiss either oneness or many-ness but not both : but this too was attempted by the transcendentalist nihilist who abolished both, and claimed to have reached the summit of philosophy by going beyond it. It appears that the real problem of Philosophy was almost by-passed when the monistic and pluralistic mathematical modes of looking at Reality were seriously accepted as philosophical explanations. Thus the Advaita-Dvaita dialogue in Philosophy was extraneous to the real concern of the human individual, which is Reality.

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE REAL

It is one of the merits of the Aurobindonian approach to have realized the entire unsatisfactoriness of explanations based on this neat patterning and classification of

philosophy in terms of Advaita-Dvaita and the in-betweens of varying degrees of Advaita and Dvaita or oneness and plurality or multiplicity. The true world philosophy should not get bogged up by this simplicity of mathematical oneness and manyness, but go beyond towards the apprehension of the dynamics of the process of creativity and perfectibility of the categories of being and non-being, mortality and immortality, darkness and light, so to speak. The real is the relative according to some, whereas the real is the rational according to others, to still others the real is the Absolute to which all tends. To Sri Aurobindo the Real is that which infiltrates and perfects the relative and grants to each status of the relative the perfection of itself. The creative evolution of Bergson provided the ascent of spirit to a more-than-human status, the emergent evolutionists revealed how in the process of evolution new characters or emergents arise, revealing creative novelty. But in the Aurobindonian evolutionary explanation the significance of the descent of the Perfect into the multiplicity of statuses and individuals is to uplift them to the perfection of the perfect in them and for them and by them. Perhaps it expresses the process called the 'transformation' of the imperfect into the perfect or the divinising of the undivine in the multiplicity itself. Thus the meaning of existence or being for each individual, which is explained as the liberation of the individual from his individuality or individualness in other systems, is exceeded by explaining that true liberation lies in the realisation or the fulfilment of the Perfect in the individual and through him alone. The abolition of the individuals or multiplicity is avoided by showing that there is nothing wrong in aiming at being individuals but only in attempting to avoid the incarnation of the Perfect in him or the perfectibility of the individual or the multiplicity. Thus in a sense Sri Aurobindo goes beyond the walls of reason based on intellect and explores the infinite possibility of the Infinite as it realises itself in and through the individuals or multiplicity. In a sense it is not enough that the individual lives and moves and has his being in God, it is necessary for the Godhead to live and move and have His being in the multiplicity.

The philosophy of intellect or divisive or dialectical reason is superseded and made to function if at all in terms of the higher supermind. The life of man is lifted up to become the life in the Divine. The spiritual incorporates the mental and the vital and physical in an integrative way. The Integral Philosophy becomes more truly synthetical than the usual synthetical philosophies that juxtapose the multiplicity.

THE INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY

The Integral Philosophy is more truly capable of being a World Philosophy than the humanistic and dialectical materialist philosophies which claim to be truly representative of the pluralistic individualistic aspirations of the many-phased Reality. Democratic imperfectionism would be overcome only when there is a spiritual One operating in and through each of the manynesses so as to realise its

own perfection and fullness in each of them. But such a Spiritual One is transcendently perfect as well, even in the most imperfect gross many. This is a mystery of the Spirit that cannot be equated with any entity or reality already known to philosophy, eastern or western; perhaps it is nearest to the description given in the Veda as Purna, Brahman, Para that is described by the Agama as sustaining and supporting all its other statuses, and enjoying itself in and through the all without diminution.

Compared with the synthetic philosophies of the modern thinkers and with the synoptic thinkers of the past like Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, Sri Aurobindo provides a clear and dynamic account of Reality, more integral and holistic than any. Nor have modern thinkers been anywhere near providing an organon of philosophy which could cope with the magnitude of scientific and spiritual knowledge available. Partial in their approach, fragmentary and dialectical in their method, profoundly prejudiced in their mental structure and elevation in favour of humanistic traditions both existential and axiological, modern thinkers have been frittering away their philosophical heritage. With rare exceptions like Whitehead and Errol Harris, we have men who are hardly aware of the existence of the problems of philosophy as such. Whilst in the climate of India men yet are trying to knead all new knowledge into the ancient vessels of dialectical and superdialectical Vedantas, Sri Aurobindo sees clearly the goals (*puruṣārthas*), the means of approach and attainment (*sādhana* or *yoga*) and the possibilities opened up to man's evolutionary ascent into Divine Nature. It must be a matter of satisfaction to all philosophers that a new dimension to philosophy has at last been opened up by Sri Aurobindo in his classic works.

MODERN EUROPEAN CIVILISATION

ITS ORIGIN AND GROWTH

Sanat K. Banerji

(Sanat K. Banerji of Sri Aurobindo Ashram provides us with an acute and stimulating sketch—originally written for the Higher Course students of History in Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education—of the birth and progression of the Modern Age in Europe. A deep understanding of this Age can help us realise some of the essentials of the ideal which we have before us of Integral Culture. With his background of Consular Service and wide acquaintance with both Orient and Occident, Banerji has been an outstanding guide in the study of World Events.)

INTRODUCTION

AN attempt is made in this survey to assess the work and results of five centuries of efforts, from about 1450, when the Italian Renaissance was just beginning to find itself, to our own day when modern Europe seems to have reached a point of crisis. These centuries have been among the most fruitful in all history. They have been so, first because during this period the nations of Europe, freed from the domination of the medieval church, the feudal organisation and an outworn social and economic system, have asserted their right to separate existence and profited from a close mutual interchange of ideas. And, secondly, it is the first period in the history of man when he has at last got rid of the apron strings of authority and started on a bold adventure on uncharted seas of thought and experiment, mainly with the help of his intellect. The intellect has not always been his sole guide, as we shall presently see. But the right of the individual to think and act on his own has been asserted more than at any earlier period. Progress has been the watchword. This progress has not all been on a straight line; there have been many relapses and failures, revolts have marred the course. But there has throughout been an expectation that some day, somehow, the mind of man will find the ultimate solution. These have been centuries of secular hope and of faith in a millennium on earth, just as the medieval centuries had been living on an otherworldly hope and faith.

MAIN PHASES

It has long been customary to divide this period into certain well-known epochs : Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and Revolution, The Ages of Romanticism and Realism and Disillusionment. This division does have a certain justification, in that each of these epochs had distinct features which characterised it. Neverthe-

less, one cannot cut out history, and especially the history of civilisation, into watertight compartments. Besides, what we are interested in primarily is the spirit that animated each of the main phases of European civilisation in the modern age. A new classification is therefore possible.

During these five centuries, Europe seems to have passed through three main phases. First there was a period mainly characterised by revolt : this was the period when the Renaissance came and ended in a religious Reformation—the period roughly from 1450 to 1650. The second phase started with a new forward-looking belief in the possibilities of man and his reason; this was a period of new creation usually known as the Enlightenment—the period approximately from 1650 to the end of the 18th century. The 19th century was in a sense a prolongation of the phase, with this difference that now the urge to new creation was based not so much on the *a priori* assumption of the supremacy of reason as on a detailed examination of the facts of life and of man's nature, and a new earth was sought to be created not out of utopian dreams but on the basis of sound science. The third and last phase covers the present century; it has been a period of doubts and increasing questionings, an era in which the old values seem to be slipping from under our feet and no one seems to know what will come ; this is a phase of scepticism and reaction which, let us hope, will give place to an age of sounder new creation and an assured line of progress. We shall now examine in brief the characteristics of each of these phases.

It will, however, be well to remember that each presents characteristics which are found in the others. Thus the Age of Revolt was not devoid of new creation, nor was an element of revolt absent from the ages that followed. Similarly, it would be wrong to describe the 18th and 19th centuries as an age of reason, for faith and unreason had their votaries in this period, just as in the 20th century all certitudes have not been lost. We are concerned here with salient features.

THE AGE OF REVOLT (1450-1650) : ITS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the age when the mind of Europe seemed to turn away in disgust from all that savoured of the immediate past—medieval Latin and scholastic philosophy, gothic architecture and the conventions of medieval art, the refusal of the ascetic and all assertion of dogma, feudal barony and the old anarchic polity. At the same time and almost in the same breath, there was an eager acceptance of all that had been in a remoter antiquity, in ancient Greece and Rome and in far off Israel. Classical Latin became the language of value to all philosophy, painting and sculpture adopted classical poses, epicureanism became the accepted philosophy of life, the old idea of the all-powerful state was revived after centuries. Is there an explanation for these contradictory attitudes ? The explanation probably lies in the fact that whilst the mind of Europe was ripe for a change—and hence the revolt from the immediate past—it was not yet mature enough to carve out a new line for the future, and hence the imitation, often a servile imitation, of the distant past. We shall meet with a similar

set of contradictions in the succeeding ages, but the explanation there may have to be sought elsewhere.

The revolt of the Renaissance began first with language; thence it proceeded to literary expression and finally to thought, religion, art and life; polity was the last item of change.

THE PRECURSORS

Dante in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries — his dates are from 1265 to 1321 — may truly be regarded as the forerunner of revolt. He was the first great writer in the Italian language, indeed he was the creator of Italian literature. He had the courage to accept Virgil as his guide nor did he hesitate to place some of the renowned popes in his hell. His was a religion of purity and love, he was a worshipper of beauty, he was also among the first to have advocated (in his *De Monarchia*) the establishment of a supreme political authority on the model of the Roman empire in place of the anarchy of medieval Christendom.

Petrarch (1304-74) and Boccaccio (1313-75) kept alive the literary tradition of Dante and gave a new impetus to the revival of classical Latin and Greek scholarship. Both wrote in the Florentine dialect that Dante had used and helped to make it the literary Italian of today. Both stressed the need of classical learning.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The fourteenth century in Italy, the Quattrocento, was the great age of classical scholarship. With the coming to Italy early in this century of several scholars from Constantinople—long before, it must be remembered, that city fell into the hands of the infidel—there began a craze for Greek and Latin studies based on the great writers of antiquity. There soon came a time when no man was to be considered an educated man unless he could write as the ancients did and speak in the old Roman accents. This led on the one hand to a copying of stereotyped models and on the other to a disdain for Italian as the language of rustics. It was not surprising therefore that the Italian Renaissance proved practically barren of first-rate writing, except for the epic of *Orlando Furioso* by the poet of the Cinquecento, Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533), who had the courage to write in the language of Dante. Machiavelli (1469-1527) too did something for Italian drama; his work in Italian entitled *Mandragola* has been called the ripest play in the Italian language.

The literary works of the Italian masters, especially Petrarch and Boccaccio, were soon being read in France and Spain and inspired in course of time a similar break with the immediate past in those countries. Rabelais (1490-1533) wrote *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* to satirise the accepted standards; it was a declaration of France's revolt against the literary conventions of the recent past. It also set in fashion a new style of writing that was later to end in the naturalism of Rousseau and the modern

masters. Cervantes (1547-1616) did in Spain exactly what Rabelais had done in France.

His *Don Quixote* satirised the medieval nobility and the mock chivalry of the medieval knight; it too started a line of literary tradition that was later to flower into the modern novel. Vernacular literature did not find congenial ground in the northern lands unless we consider Luther's German translation of the Bible as a work of literature. If not entitled to that distinction, it was certainly a great landmark in the evolution of German prose. We have to look for a true literary renaissance in the writings of Chaucer (1340-1400) in England and much more so in the work of the great Elizabethan dramatists that included such names as Marlowe and Shakespeare.

THE NEW THOUGHT

As in literature, so in thought the break with the recent past was complete. The Italian humanists—the name is usually given to those scholars of the Renaissance who turned to the ancient classical writers for their inspiration—rejected the medieval interpretations of Aristotle around which the great systems of scholastic philosophy had been built. They turned instead to the thought of Plato and the Neo-Platonist teachings of Plotinus. Pico della Mirandola went a step further and sought a reconciliation between Platonism, Christianity and the Jewish Kabbala.

The new thought was much more powerful and distinct across the Alps, and particularly in Germany and England. There it led to the religious reform of the sixteenth century. By the beginning of the sixteenth century the new humanism had taken firm root in the older universities of Germany and England. Johann Reuchlin of Heidelberg started a battle of wits when he supported the study of the ancient scriptures of the hated Jews and dared to criticise the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament. Ulrich Von Hutten (1488-1523) joined the fray with his deadly satires in his *Letters of Obscure Men* parodying the ignorance of the medieval religious orders; one of these "Obscure Men" was made to say, for example, that Julius Caesar could not have found time to learn the Latin language because he was too busy fighting the Gauls.

Thomas More (1478-1534) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the one trained at Oxford, the other a self-educated man of wide interests, may be taken as representatives of the new thought in England. More's *Utopia* (1516) sketched the outlines of a new society in which poverty and religious persecution would not exist and men would be made moral and thoroughly perfect through their intellectual pursuits and their faith in the immortality of the soul—ideas so very reminiscent of Plato. Bacon marked a new advance and prepared the way for the next age by his insistence that in order to clear the obstacles to true knowledge we must get rid of the scholastic logic and learn our facts direct from the book of Nature and take as our guide the inductive method and the repeatable experiment. His *Novum Organum* is a landmark in the progress of the modern mind.

Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) in France did what Bacon was to do in England. His *Essays* not only gave a finished form to a new genre in literature. They enshrined a philosophy of life that was in direct contradiction to the medieval view. In Montaigne's view faith, that is blind faith as it is enjoined by the medieval church, is the worst enemy of man. Truth, he declares, cannot be the exclusive possession of any body of saints, nor is Christianity the only possible form of belief. Man's salvation, he claims, lies in an open scepticism that is ready to question all. Nor is there much point in negating the life of the world, for however high we may rise we still retain our links with the earth. This, as we shall see, was to be the dominant note of later European thought.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (born 1466, died 1536), "the most civilised man of his age", is also perhaps the most representative of the Age of Revolt. He had imbibed all the religious learning that an Augustinian monastery and later the University of Paris could give. He devoured all the ancient classics and delved into the Greek Bible. He travelled widely and most of the great humanists were his personal friends. He could almost speak for all of them. He discarded the main tenet of medieval Christianity, namely, that man is born in sin. He was convinced of the inherent goodness of man, and he relied on a gradual enlightenment of the human reason to eradicate all evil from human life. His *Praise of Folly* exposed the hollowness of contemporary religion, but, unlike Luther and Calvin, he looked askance at any kind of violent change. His religion was based on the simple teachings of Jesus, on his gospel of love for one another. Erasmus thus marks the transition between the humanism of the Italian Renaissance and the later pietism of the northern Reformers.

RELIGIOUS REVOLT

It is well to remember in this connection that there was in this Age a Renaissance in religion as well as in literature and thought. As early as the fourteenth century, the writings of John Wycliffe in England, of John Huss in Bohemia, and in the fifteenth century those of Thomas à Kempis (1379-1471) of Germany—his *Imitation of Christ* was more widely read than any book except the Bible—had prepared the atmosphere for the coming revolt against the authority of the Roman Church. The humanists were deeply religious in their sentiment and had even suggested a change in the existing system. It was, however, left to Martin Luther (1483-1546) to declare openly for an immediate breach. Luther's revolt led to the birth of innumerable new sects. the Anabaptists, the Socinians and countless others, who all agreed in their intolerance of the Roman Church but differed among themselves in most other details of dogma and ceremony. Out of these sects, the one headed by Jean Calvin (1509-64), the founder of the Puritanic variety of church discipline, survived longest and had the greatest effect.

The religious revolt had one thing in common with the revolt in other spheres, in that it sought to break away completely from the medieval tradition, from its

faith in the saints and relics, from its colourful ceremonial, from its reliance on the word of authority. It too, like the humanist revolt, harked back to texts of ancient origin, to the Bible in the original Greek and Latin, sometimes even to the Hebrew. It too produced changes in the European mind that were to survive to our own day : a diminishing importance given to church organisation as an instrument of social welfare, a growing reliance on individual judgement in matters religious, a slow almost imperceptible turning away from religious things, even from the necessity of worship and prayer. Here also there was an attempt to enthrone reason as the presiding deity. But religion being in its very nature not wholly amenable to reason, there had to be certain compromises with faith, the introduction of an irrational element or perhaps rather its persistence from medieval times, which survived through the succeeding centuries.

THE FINE ARTS

It was in the arts, especially that of painting and sculpture, that the Age of Revolt showed best its true spirit. Here there was an almost complete repudiation of the medieval tradition, a slavish imitation of the classic models.

The Italian Giotto (1276-1336) did for the new painting what Dante had done for the vernacular. He was the first to separate the art of painting from architecture and make it more than a mere adjunct. He too showed the path to naturalism, the insistence upon action. The Quattrocento artists of Florence, Fra Lippo Lippi and Sandro Botticelli (1447-1510), broke away from the immediate past by taking as the models for their religious themes men and women of their own day whom they painted more as sublimated portraits than as representatives of divinity. This tradition of realism, borrowed from ancient Greece and Rome, was continued by the great masters of the Venetian School where the break away from the medieval tradition seemed to be the most complete. Giorgione (1478-1510), Titian (1477-1576) and Tintoretto (1518-1594) were the representative artists of this school. They boldly discarded the old religious motif, concentrated largely on painting the rich bourgeoisie of their cities and the gorgeous palace life and, even when they turned to other themes, it was the old classical mythology—as in the famous “Birth of Venus”—that supplied to them the theme.

Michel Angelo (1475-1564) and his younger contemporary Raphael (1483-1520) represent the high-water mark of Italian painting. We are excluding here for the present the work of Leonardo da Vinci who stands in a class apart. In their hands, painting acquired a new grandeur and depth of feeling, a touch of Christian piety combined exquisitely with the freedom of the old paganism, which laid the basis for the future. For here we stand on the verge of two ages, the age of revolt which saw the break-away from the recent past, and the new age of creation which was to add to the riches of antiquity.

As in painting, so in the art of sculpture, the work of Michel Angelo marks the

parting of the ways. Not only does he free himself entirely from the bonds of medieval tradition, both in the selection of theme and in the treatment and modelling of his figures. He works in stone as the old dramatists of Athens dealt with the written word : he puts into his statues the grandeur of tragedy. And what is still more significant for the future, he imparts an intellectual meaning in his compositions, a line of development that was to find an increasing recognition later.

THE NEW LIFE

The new freedom in art and literature and thought found an echo in the life of society. Gone was the restraint of medieval morality. The virtues held dear in the earlier age, the virtues of humility, resignation, modesty and candour, were now thrown to the winds. For a time, license seemed to run riot in the great cities of the Italian renaissance, in Florence and Rome and Venice. Riches were flaunted as in ancient imperial Rome. Dresses were extravagant for both women and men. Epicureanism became fashionable. Women received education and could hold their own against cultured men; they were no longer denied a mind. Life became joyous again after the long dreary asceticism of the medieval centuries. Europe was already on the way to "modern living", in spite of the Puritans.

POLITY

In the polity of nations too there was a well-marked change. In medieval Europe, the Pope claimed to rule all Christendom as the Vicar of God; the Emperor too demanded obedience from all within the Empire. But neither had really the power to enforce his will as an absolute monarch, and feudal anarchy continued. The Age of Revolt not only saw the gradual rise of absolutist national states in England and Spain and France. There was also formulated now for the first time after a lapse of ages a definite theory of absolute government. Two names stand out in this field.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) of Florence wrote a book, *The Prince*, which marked a complete break with the medieval tradition. The state in his view owed no obligations of morality to any of its citizens; its will was supreme and against its decisions there could be no appeal. It was of course expected to act in the interests of citizens, but it alone was the judge as to what constituted the good of the state. In its relations with other states too, it had no other considerations except those of self-interest. In other words the old Graeco-Roman pattern of state behaviour was again to be enthroned in political science.

Jean Bodin of France (1530-96) in his *Traite de la République* expressed practically the same views. The state was the only sovereign authority in the land, against it there was no appeal. The ruler of the state derived his rights from God, hence there could not be any rebellion. As a partial concession to medieval sentiment Bodin granted there was such a thing as the "law of God". But that was a matter between the ruler

and his God; the people had no voice in the matter. Here we find old Lycurgus speaking to his Spartans.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus equipped, the Age of Revolt ran its course for nearly a couple of centuries. It had not only broken away from the immediate past and harked back to a remoter antiquity. It had also contained within itself the seeds of new birth. Some of these we have noticed above. The most important was perhaps its attitude to Science. We shall discuss this aspect under the next heading : The Age of New Creation.
