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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.
"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MOTHER'S REMINISCENCES

21-2-68

The reminiscences will be short.

I came to India to meet Sri Aurobindo. I remained in India to live with Sri Aurobindo. When he left his body, I continued to live here in order to do his work which is, by serving the Truth and enlightening mankind, to hasten the rule of the Divine's love upon earth.

(By courtesy of the All-India Radio, Pondicherry, to which these words were originally given)
IN THIS WORLD

A LETTER OF THE MOTHER

It is in this world that you have to change, and that the change is possible. If you trace away from the world, you will have to come again, possibly in worse conditions, and you will have to do everything all over again.

It is much better not to be a coward, to face now the situation and to do the necessary effort to progress. The help is always with you; you must learn to avail yourself of it.

Love and Blessings.
WHAT WE ARE WORKING FOR

A LETTER OF THE MOTHER

Q. Je veux que mon argent soit utilisé exclusivement pour vaincre les causes de nos souffrances et de nos misères.

C'est à cela que nous travaillons ici, mais non pas de la manière artificielle des philanthropes qui ne s'occupent que des effets extérieurs.
Nous voulons supprimer pour toujours la cause de la souffrance en divinisant la matière par la transformation intégrale.
Bénédictions.

Q. I wish my money to be used exclusively to conquer the causes of our sufferings and miseries.

It is for this that we are working here but not in the artificial manner of the philanthropists who are busy only with outer effects.
We wish to abolish for ever the cause of suffering by divinising matter with the integral transformation.
Blessings.

THE MOTHER
21.2.68

The best way to hasten the manifestation of the Divine's Love is to collaborate for the triumph of the Truth.

29.2.68

Truth alone can give to the world the power of receiving and manifesting the Divine's Love.
TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Q. X wants to approach rich people for money, but does not know how to do it. ... He says that if people are directly approached for money, there may not be any response. His plan is to somehow...make them take interest in our work so that they may themselves offer money without any asking.... He asked me to take your advice in this matter.

A. If it is done in that way, X will have to wait for a result for years together. Even if they are interested, even if they are practising Yoga, people don’t think of giving money unless they are asked, except a few who have a generous vital nature. It is all right to interest people in the work and the Yoga—but of itself that will be rarely sufficient, they must know that money is needed and the idea of giving must be put into them.

13.3.1933

**

Q. X says that he cannot feel your presence during work as he can during meditation. He does not understand how work can help him.

A. He has to learn to consecrate his work and feel the Mother’s power working through it. A purely sedentary subjective realisation is only a half realisation.

23.1.1934
LA, OU SOUFFLE L'ESPRIT—AUROVILLE

Ce matin du 28 Février la baie du Bengale s'éveillait dans un poudroiement d'or.

L'or colorait les toits des maisons de Pondichéry et au fur et à mesure que l'astre éblouissant montait dans le ciel tout le paysage des alentours semblait baigner dans la royale Lumière!

Et c'était bien la fête suprême de la Lumière qui nous attendait sur le lieu, entre tous choisi, pour qu'Auroville y fût construit.

Imaginez non loin de Pondichéry, une sorte d'arène immense aux parois surélevées en gradins; le tout merveilleusement emmenagé pour recevoir des milliers de spectateurs, dont certains, venus de très loin, afin de participer à la cérémonie du jour.

Au centre de l'arène une élévation de terrain, à laquelle on accédait par un chemin circulaire jusqu'à une urne au couvercle stylisé en lotus. Cette urne devait contenir la terre des 124 pays, apportée de toutes parts, sur laquelle s'édifierait la ville future. Après que les hauts parleurs aient recommandé le silence, s'éleva tout d'abord la voix de la Mère, qui parlait au loin, de sa chambre de l'Ashram.

Que disait cette voix? Elle lisait la Charte d'Auroville et, dans le silence solennel, tombèrent tout d'abord les mots sublimes: "Auroville n'appartient à personne en particulier. Auroville appartient à toute l'humanité dans son ensemble. Mais pour sejourner à Auroville, il faut être le serviteur volontaire de la Conscience Divine."—Ce dépouillement absolu et voulu, contrastait si fort tout d'abord avec l'esprit du siècle que l'on ne pouvait qu'admirer et s'incliner bien bas, devant une réalisation de cette amplitude et de cette sérénité. Ensuite le défilé commença.

Le premier couple portait le drapeau de la Mère, sur fond bleu ciel la roue d'or, symbole de Ses pouvoirs occultes transcendants. Les deux jeunes gens sortirent de l'horizon, à pas lents suivirent la route triomphale, bordée de volontaires, et commencèrent à gravir le cône symbolique. Bientôt l'étendard s'y déploya, caressé par la brise, tandis que par leurs soins la terre de l'Ashram et la Charte d'Auroville étaient enfouies dans les profondeurs de l'urne.

A sa suite les couples suivirent, à pas très lents, comme cadencés par une musique en sourdine, pendant que la Charte était lue dans les principales langues du monde. Tous ils arrivaient, couple après couple, surgissant de l'horizon, la jeune fille portant le nom du pays qu'ils représentaient, le jeune homme dans une cassette la terre de ce pays. Arrivés au sommet, près de l'urne, avec un geste pieux la terre était versée sur les autres terres déjà enfouies et ils redescendaient du côté opposé.

Certains couples portaient le costume du pays auquel ils appartenaient. C'est ainsi que l'on put admirer les couleurs des riches costumes d'Afrique. L'immense Russie fut représentée par deux tout jeunes enfants blonds et charmants. Chaque province de l'Inde passa à son tour...
On the morning of the 28th of February the Bay of Bengal woke up powdered with gold.

The gold was colouring the roofs of the houses of Pondicherry and as the splendid orb mounted up in the sky the whole countryside around appeared to be bathing in the royal light.

It was indeed the supreme festival of the light which awaited us at the place, chosen out of all others, for the construction of Auroville.

Imagine, not far from Pondicherry, a sort of immense arena with slopes around rising in grades, the whole wondrously arranged to receive thousands of spectators of whom several had come from great distances to participate in the ceremony of the day.

In the centre of the arena an elevation of earth, where one could reach by a circular way up to an urn with a lid styled as a lotus-bud. This urn was to contain the earth from 124 countries, brought from all parts, on which the future city would be built. After the loudspeakers had called for silence, first arose the voice of the Mother who spoke from a distance, from her room in the Ashram.

What was the Mother saying?...She was reading the Charter of Auroville and in the solemn silence first fell the sublime words, “Auroville belongs to nobody in particular, it belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.” This relinquishment, absolute and deliberate, contrasted so strongly, from the first, with the spirit of the century that one could not but admire and bow down before a realisation of such amplitude and serenity. Then the procession commenced.

The first pair carried the flag of the Mother, the golden wheel on the sky-blue base, symbol of the Mother’s occult and transcendental powers. The two young ones appeared from the horizon, with slow steps they followed the triumphal path lined by volunteers and began to climb the symbolic cone. Soon the flag fluttered there, caressed by the wind while the young ones carefully placed the earth of the Ashram and the Charter of Auroville in the depths of the urn.

Then other pairs followed, with very slow steps, as if cadenced by a low-toned music, while the Charter was being read in the principal languages of the world. All were arriving, pair after pair, surging from the horizon, the young girl carrying the name of the country they represented, the young boy with the soil of the country in a vessel. When they arrived at the top, near the urn, with a pious gesture the soil was poured over the other soil already sunk there, and then they came down the opposite side. Some pairs wore the costume of the country to which they belonged. Thus one could admire the colours of the rich costumes of Africa. Immense Russia was represented by two quite small infants, blond and charming. Then each State
Aucun pays au monde n’est oublié... depuis les terres glaciaées du pôle jusqu’
celles des plus petits États équatoriaux. Le dernier couple portait le drapeau d’Auroville,
un drapeau évolutif de couleur orange ayant en son centre un lotus symbolique.

Le silence, se fit si possible encore plus profond lorsque l’on vit surgir le grand
disciple de l’Ashram, Nolini, le plus ancien et l’un des plus âgés... le disciple de la
première heure du Maître Bien Aimé, Sri Aurobindo. Accompagné de son fils
il vient sceller l’urne....Quand il monte le cône et se détache au sommet, habillé de
ses vêtements immaculés, avec sa figure aux beaux traits graves, on dirait quelque
prêtre Védique des anciens âges officiant à l’autel,y allumant le feu du sacrifice...

Auroville n’est il pas l’autel sur lequel doivent brûler à jamais toutes les passions
mauvaises, afin que l’âme devenue pure, puisse enseigner ce nouvel Evangile à la
Terre des hommes?

YVONNE ROBERT GAEBELE
(SUVRATA)

LA NAISSANCE D’UNE ERE NOUVELLE

Le 28 février 1968. Il était presque 6 heures et demie du matin. Suivant mon habitude
je marchais vers Golconde. J’avais déjà traversé le coin au nord-est de cette grande
maison et fait quelques pas à gauche vers la porte d’entrée quand quelque chose me
tira par derrière. Je me suis retourné et j’ai vu le soleil, rond et rouge, s’éllevant de
la mer, la mer de Pondichéry. C’était le plus magnifique lever de soleil que je n’ai
jamais vu. Quelques secondes passèrent et je me souvins, “Aujourd’hui on fondera
Auroville, on assistera à la consécration d’Auroville, la cité de Sri Aurobindo et de
la Mère, la cité de l’Aurore, la cité de l’unité humaine.” En vérité le soleil semblait
grandir en gloire à cause de l’Ere Nouvelle qui s’ouvrait en ce jour-là.

SHYAM SUNDAR
of India had its turn. No country of the world was forgotten—from the icy lands of the pole up to those of the tiny States of the Equator. The last pair carried the orange-coloured flag of Auroville evolving with a symbolic lotus at its centre.

The silence became, if that was possible, yet profounder when was seen moving forth the noble disciple of the Ashram, Nolini, the earliest and one of the oldest, the disciple from the first days of the beloved master Sri Aurobindo. Accompanied by his son he came to seal the urn. When he climbed the cone and stood at the top, dressed in immaculate clothes, with his face of handsomely grave features, one could say some Vedic priest of the ancient ages was officiating at the altar, lighting there the fire of sacrifice.

Is Auroville not the altar on which must be burnt away for ever all the evil passions so that the soul grown pure may teach the new Evangel to the earth of man?

YVONNE ROBERT GAEBLE
(SUVRATA)

(Translated by Shyam Sundar from the French)

THE BIRTH OF A NEW ERA

28-2-1968. It was about 6-30 in the morning. As usual I was going towards Golconde. I had already crossed the north-eastern corner of this grand building and taken a few steps to the left towards its entrance gate when something pulled me from behind. I turned back and saw the sun, round and red, rising from the sea, the sea of Pondicherry. It was the most magnificent sunrise I had ever seen. A few seconds passed and I remembered, "Today Auroville will be founded, Auroville will be consecrated, the city of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the city of Dawn, the city of human unity." In truth, the sun seemed to grow in glory because of the New Era which would open on that day.

SHYAM SUNDAR
AUROVILLE—A "WORLD CITY" IS BORN

(In reporting in some detail the momentous event that took place on February 28 this year we cannot do better than reproduce with grateful acknowledgements the article written by the "Special Correspondent", Mr. N. S. Ramaswami, of The Indian Express for the issue of that daily from Madras on the very next day.)

“Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole.”

The voice of the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram transmitted from her room in the Ashram about six miles away, speaking in French, the tongue of liberty, equality and fraternity, set the tone for the foundation ceremony of Auroville, the city of dawn and also the city of Sri Aurobindo.

Over three centuries ago Francois Martin had founded the city of Pondicherry. Yesterday the Mother founded Auroville which, while drawing some part of its inspiration from Pondicherry, will be animated by far nobler ideals.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Mother’s project. When the world is torn asunder by suspicion and hostility, when India itself is forgetting its great ideals, she has come forward to set up nothing less than a “world city”, to live in which is needed, not mundane qualifications, but, in her own beautiful phrase, a spirit to be “the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness”.

Auroville is a dramatic extension of the practical working of the ideals of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

The ceremony was at once imaginative and moving. A few miles from Pondicherry town, but in Madras State, a newly laid road takes off from the Tindivanam road. It led to a temporary amphitheatre. In the midst was a tall urn, which looked like a lotus bud. Into this urn was deposited the soil of the 23 States of the Indian Union and of the 124 country-members of UNESCO, which is distinguishing itself by participating in the Mother’s venture.

At the end of 75 minutes of symbolical adding of the world’s earth so that it could form the foundation of the new city, Mr. Nolini Kanta Gupta, a stalwart of the Ashram, sealed the urn.

THE CHARTER

The function was organised with the efficiency one expects of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. On the stroke of 10-30 a.m., as scheduled, the commencement gong was sounded. It was a sweet bar of music. Then the entire gathering was electrified by the message of the Mother as she said in French, “India has become the symbol
AUROVILLE—A "WORLD CITY" IS BORN

representing all the difficulties of modern humanity. India will be the land of its resurrection, the resurrection to a higher, truer life."

This was followed by the Mother reading the Charter of Auroville in French. It deserves to be quoted in full for its noble utterances:

"Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

"Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.

"Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring toward future realisations.

"Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual research for a living embodiment of actual human unity."

EARTH AND BANNER

As the Mother's teachings are nothing if not of universal provenance, the organisers emphasised this in a most striking fashion. After the Charter had been placed in the foundation structure, a procession of young people, mostly in twos, but in threes towards the end, deposited a handful of symbolic earth from their homeland and (in the case of the Indians) from their States into the urn. As the groups, one of the representatives holding a decorated banner with the name of their country or State inscribed on it., advanced in solemn measure towards the urn, translations of the Charter were read in sixteen languages.

The first was a Tamil version by Amrita, a respected member of the Ashram. He was followed by Mr. M.P. Pandit who brought out the spirit of the Charter in sonorous Sanskrit. Then an English version rose and fell in the South Arcot air. Arabic must be a musical language, for the rendering sounded as if it were a poem.

Then there followed translations in Chinese, Dutch, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Tibetan. That is, the languages of Bharathi, Kalidasa, Shakespeare, Goethe, Voltaire, Dante and the Hebrew prophets were brought together in a striking testimony to the universality of Auroville, the city of world unity.

All the while background music specially composed by Mr. Sunil Bhattacharyya added to the impressiveness of the occasion. The music was truly universal in tone.

The ceremony concluded with the sealing of the urn by Mr. Gupta, a solemn moment.

EXPERIMENT IN UNITY

Thus was a great experiment in human unity launched. To judge from the large number of foreigners present, it has evidently set off to a good start. The country-
side near Pondicherry is, to be frank, not very prepossessing; it is not today a land of milk and honey. But, considering what the Ashram has done in Pondicherry, it is reasonable to expect that Auroville would become a model of its kind.

An exhibition at the site showed what striking developments are in store. Auroville will certainly be different from anything to be seen in India today, including Chandigarh, the work of that genius of a Frenchman, Le Corbusier.

M. Roger Anger, the French architect of Auroville, is a man of vision. A student of ‘pan-social architectural forms,’ he intends to utilise the principles of urbanism in Auroville. “Volumetric urbanism” is the ideal. “The town consists of a macro-structure, created with terraces on successive levels, that looks like a real pyramid when stripped to its essentials. The pyramid is fitted on its exterior planes with levels of habitation which give an extraordinary contact with nature.”

“An extraordinary contact with nature”—that is the key phrase. For, that contact, while essential throughout the world, is absolutely necessary in India where most townspeople are still villagers at heart.

In a relatively flat countryside artificial levels are to be built, a “circular macro-structure.” About 25,000 people could live in this “ring”. The ring will be encircled by a canal and it will be the “inter-section of all sectors, the town’s centripetal focus”.

This bare summary of M. Anger’s plans is enough to show that Auroville, notable as an expression of confidence in human destiny, will also be striking in urban architecture. It is a very exciting thing that happened in our country on Wednesday.

It remains to acknowledge the perfect arrangements made for the spectators. In and around Pondicherry the inauguration was something like a public festival. Many tourist buses brought eager crowds. To them and to those who had come from farther afield it was a memorable occasion. It is the chance of many lifetimes to be present at the birth of a city, and of a city, too, that will be in tune with the noblest ideals of India and the world.
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

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

MARCH 1, 1940

N was twisting a letter in his hands. Sri Aurobindo, hearing the faint noise, looked back.

SRI AUROBINDO: What’s that?
N: A’s letter.
SRI AUROBINDO: Again?
N: This time he wants guidance.
P: Any more of D’s stories?
N: No more. He has stopped.

SRI AUROBINDO: His story of my meeting him at Baroda Station may be true, as I used to go very often to the Station. And about his earthen tumbler incident, there may be some foundation to it, but I object to the shooting incident. Ask him the names of those two Mahrathi youths. There was no one I knew who was quite capable of doing such things, going to the Consuls, the Czar, the Kaiser.

P: Does B’s article show any change in B’s attitude?

SRI AUROBINDO (smiling, stretching out both hands in a half-hanging position and then pausing a little): It is difficult to say about B. After having failed in whatever he tried, he may look back now in a different light. He says whatever suits him at the moment. Or there may be some change in his attitude, but how far he has made inner progress it is difficult to say.

P: Change in attitude doesn’t indicate inner progress?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not always, because it may be a simple mental change and it may be due to his having failed in everything after going from here, while the Ashram has grown ever since. That may have impressed him.

P: To realise and say that he has deviated from the path is rather strong for B, I thought.

SRI AUROBINDO: He says whatever is uppermost in his mind, according to his moods, and he says it with force.
N : X is trying to boycott the Calcutta Nationalist papers, especially the *Yugantar*.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : Why ?

N : It seems that this paper criticised X and supported the Working Committee. The editor of the *Hindustan Standard* has been dismissed by his influence.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : What for ?

N : Because the editor made a joint declaration with other editors against X's move to muzzle the press. That is a Leftist paper.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : Is that the only Leftist paper ?

N : I think so.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : Doesn't X talk of democracy and its rights ?

N : Yes, that is when he is flung down, I suppose. Y seems to have said that fair and just criticism is welcome even of people serving the country.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : But anybody can say he is serving the country and then do whatever he likes.

P : X is more serving his personal ambition, I should say.

N : Fazlul Huque gave the same argument when he restricted the *Hindustan Standard*, saying that fair and just criticism is always welcome but when it brings in the name of Allah, then—

**SRI AUROBINDO** : Allah ?

N : Yes, attacking Allah. I believe he means religion. X says that the public have every right to boycott a paper if they find it is going against the national interest.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : The public have also the right to buy any paper they like or to boycott it, but why should anybody advise or dictate to them ? The public are not fools.

N : That is exactly what the *Patrika* says. It declares that the Bengal public are not fools. Let them decide as they wish. Why should X hold meetings from park to park to boycott a particular paper ?

S : He is holding an anti-compromise conference.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : But who is going in for compromise ?

S : It is the impression among the Leftists and of X that Gandhi will compromise. Gandhi said : “I am not against compromise if that is for the good of the national interest. Satyagraha doesn't preclude compromise.” But Gandhi won't betray the country—that is quite certain. Everybody is attacking the Congress : X, the Muslims, the Justice Party.

N : M. N. Roy too.

**SRI AUROBINDO** : And X is attacking M. N. Roy. Such is the universal movement. Look at Europe.

S : Ours is a reflection of that, perhaps.

At this moment, A's letter which was lying open on the bed was blown away and fell in our midst.
SRI AUROBINDO: Ah, the letter! Let’s hear what A says.

N: He says: “I understand that these ideas have come from the mind. Such mental ideas I rejected long ago. They are coming again now at the end of January.”

SRI AUROBINDO: He doesn’t know why? Doesn’t he know their source?

N: You mean people coming for the Darshan? He continues: “The Mother has said it is a year of silence and expectation. For that what is to be done?”

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, observe silence and be expectant. (Laughter)

N: What he is asking is: “I have taken up literary work as a part of sadhana and the Mother has approved. But when anybody misrepresents Sri Aurobindo’s ideas or when Marxism is spreading in Bengal, I feel inspired to write against them. If I go into controversies, is the silence going to be disturbed?”

SRI AUROBINDO: Certainly in his case. I suppose one can do the work in silence and keep the silence intact. But if he engages in controversies, the silence will be disturbed. He has too combative a mind and he fights with people who disagree with him or contradict him. Of course combativeness has its own use, but if one starts controverting and contradicting, it will disturb the silence.

N: But if anybody contradicts him he has either to recontradict or go on in his own way.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should he recontradict? Many people criticise me. I don’t answer them. A can go on saying whatever he has to say without minding whatever other people say about it.

P: Nolini holds the same view. We decided not to controvert anybody in the matter of Vedic interpretation but to go on repeating over and over again our own point.

N: And establish the truth by repetition?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is Hitler’s method. (Laughter)

N: Nobody contradicts Nolini.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, when they find that the opponent doesn’t answer, they lose all interest in him. Now what else does the letter say?

N: It goes on: “Sri Aurobindo has correctly said that I have lost touch with reality. I have been always an idealist and in that sense unpractical. I haven’t kept touch with the outside world, even through newspapers. Perhaps so much excision is not good. Suppose I read the Manchester Guardian and the New Statesman. Are they likely to disturb my silence?”

SRI AUROBINDO: Very possibly. It depends on his mind. If he wants to read these things in order to know what is going on, it is all right. But he shouldn’t allow himself to run away with any idea or programme. “This idea is correct. No. That is correct. Or perhaps the other one is true.” Like that he shouldn’t go on. He must be able to read things with detachment without any attraction for a particular idea. What further?

N: He writes: “Of course I have a fundamental peace and silence which is
never destroyed, but I must bring it into the outer consciousness. How can that be done? Will Sri Aurobindo give some hint?"

SRI AUROBINDO: He must take up the attitude of the Purusha. He has to bring the Purusha-detachment into all activities. The fundamental peace and silence has to be there, but it is not enough.

After this, Sri Aurobindo got up from his chair and lay in his bed.

N: I didn’t know A had such difficulties.
SRI AUROBINDO: You thought he had reached the supreme siddhi?
N: I didn’t go so far, but at least I thought he lived in the Cosmic Consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Cosmic?
N: Well, Brahmic, if you like.
SRI AUROBINDO: I should say, All-India Consciousness! (Laughter)

C (to N): What made you think like that?
S (to N): You feel encouraged now?
N: A bit, as well as—
S: Discouraged?
N: Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO (after a time): You can tell A that he must not enter into controversies. And he must not go out of his way to contradict anybody—for example, Basanta Chatterji. Also, when he reads anything he must stand back in mind and be the pure witness and see from where all the ideas come. If he does not allow his mind to get identified with any ideas he will be able to see their right source and have the full knowledge. He has spoken of the full knowledge. When it comes, of course everything will be clear. But the way to get it is by silent detachment. You are talking of the Cosmic Consciousness. All these ideas are moving in the general mind and life and have equal validity from the point of view of the Cosmic Consciousness. They may be as much true as A’s own ideas. For instance, when Basanta Chatterji contradicts him, there is some truth in what he says: only, one has to see what distortion the mind has made in presenting the ideas. For that one must not attach oneself to any particular set of ideas and take them as the whole truth. Remaining in the Purusha consciousness one has to observe the movement of Prakriti, Nature, and find out what truth it contains and represents.

P: Dikshit also used to have brilliant ideas about common kitchen, cleaning cities, feeding Daridra Narayana, God the Poor. I said, “All right, but where is the Narayana who will pay?” (Laughter)

SRI AUROBINDO: Ideas are always brilliant. It is when you want to put them into practice that difficulties come in.

P: When Joshi started the co-operative movement, it was a success.
SRI AUROBINDO: That is always possible because each finds his own self-interest and the interest of others in it.
N : If A is so much of an idealist, how was he a political leader?

SRI AUROBINDO : That sort of leadership is nothing. He was just beginning his career. If you have the gift of the gab and the power of ideas and the ability to put them into form, you can always be a leader. All politics is a show. In the British Parliament it is the Civil Service people who are really behind everything and these people whose names are never known do the real work. The Ministers are only their mouth-pieces, except for a few rare cases like Churchill and Hore Belisha. The Civil Servants have been at their job for their lifetime and they know everything about it.

The Mother’s brother, for instance, organised Congoland in Africa and did a lot of work. He was one of the best colonial governors and administrators—but all the credit went to the Minister who was only a figurehead at the top. Even when he was an officer in Equatorial Africa, sometimes as Governor and sometimes as Governor-General, the whole job was done by him. He hardly had a bed but used to lie down in an easy-chair. He is nearly 70 now but as soon as the war broke out he went to the office and asked for his work. Now he is working 18 hours a day.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

POSTSCRIPT BY NIRODBARAN

In the preceding instalment there was a reference to Dutt’s review of *The Life Divine*. The review appeared in the *Vishwa Bharati Quarterly*, May 1940. Sri Aurobindo spoke of it in appreciative terms.
THERE SHE IS!

"All in her pointed to a nobler kind."

Ever since my childhood I had been aspiring to realise the Supreme Truth and the Supreme Love.

I was in the darkest night searching for the true person who could lead me to my goal.

I had met many Saints, Sadhus and Sannyasis, I had read many religious books but within me I felt, 'not that, not that.'

Thus years passed by with many ups and downs and I had almost lost every possible hope in my life. My heart cried desperately to the Lord, "Is there any existence of the Divine in this awful world? Is there any Truth here? If not then what am I living for? If my aspiration is true and sincere then reveal to me that Truth, O Lord..."

Then I came to know about the Ashram, about the Divine Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Towards the end of 1954 a few disciples of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo came to our house in Africa and read Savitri, the Epic written by Sri Aurobindo. The very same night I made up my mind to leave the ordinary world. My family members never understood and they knew nothing about my resolution.

Yet I had not seen the Mother. But something within me was really guiding me constantly.

At last, on the 1st of November 1954, in the morning I saw Her—the Mother sitting radiant on a high chair giving blessings to people. My soul and my whole being were simply thrilled—I did not look at Her because I did not know what happened within me except that divine Peace and Joy enveloped me because of Her soothing touch, I was lost completely.

Again in the afternoon I went to Her. She gave me the flower of 'New Birth'. So significant it was! This time I looked at the Mother—Her luminous eyes and Her sweet smile captured my soul and my whole being.

"Suffering was lost in Her immortal smile..." (Savitri)

My heart then whispered, "Yes, this is the Truth and Love I have been searching and aspiring for...

Now my soul was at rest. I recall a few lines from Savitri:

1 The Mother always gives significance to various flowers by entering into their consciousness and getting the vibrations of the flowers. She gives flowers to people according to their spiritual need.
"As might a soul fly like a hunted bird,
Escaping with tired wings from a world of storms,
And a quiet reach like a remembered breast,
In a haven of safety and splendid soft repose
One could drink life back in streams of honey-fire,
Recover the lost habit of happiness..."

Once again in the evening I had Her kind blessings. This time I bowed at Her feet in order to offer myself, and I felt within me that we had known and loved each other for ages. She caressed my head and that very moment I realised and felt the perfect Love, for She is LOVE Itself!

On the 10th I was fortunate enough to have an interview with Her. And within a few moments She changed my whole destiny. She granted my prayer.

After that, on 10th February 1955 I came to Her to remain for ever with Her. She gave me a new name: Huta—"the offered one."

The Mother has done so much for me so far and still there is no end to Her Grace, Love and Compassion. I have no words to express my gratitude. Only my humble prayer to Her is, "Make me worthy of You, O Mother..."

In one of Her letters to me She says:
"My help is with you and will never fail you. My love is with you and will never fail you.
"I am indeed the Friend of the bad days and the Companion in the ascent towards Truth, where the Lord will carry you for ever in His all-mighty arms."

Then who would like to leave Her even for a moment?

It is beyond my capacity to explain here what She is and what She does for us.

I quote a few lines from Savitri so that the vision of the Sacred and the Supreme Soul may be revealed:

"Nowhere She dwelt, her spirit was everywhere,
The distant constellations wheeled round her;
Earth saw her born, all worlds were her colonies,
The greater worlds of life and mind were hers;
All Nature reproduced her in its lines,
Its movements were large copies of her own.
She was the single self of all these selves,
She was in them and they were all in her."

Finally let us pray to the Supreme Mother with all our hearts and souls, as in Savitri:

"Descend, O Happiness, with thy moon-gold feet,
Enrich earth's floors upon whose sleep we lie."

HUTA
THE SUPREME ARTIST

A lifetime were barely enough
To win words
To woo the honey of the soul.
The chrysalis may become a butterfly
Sucking soul-honey.
Even the hundredth part
Of a single drop of honey
Will turn butterflies
Into dancing flowers.
But the honey eludes them
Except in hints and flashes.

More than a lifetime is needed
To make a life
Express the honey of the soul.
Our days flit like passing clouds
Beneath the blazing glory
Of the diamond sun,
A few transparent
But many opaque to that lustre.
And our life becomes
A segregation of vapours.

The many aeons of earth
And the millenniums dreamed by man
Are but feeble words
Or wandering butterflies
That can neither spell nor suck
The honey that lies hidden
In the World Soul.
Our eclipsed days
Hang like a pall
On the chasm that opens
Between that radiance
And the world’s night.

Mother!
You are the artist supreme.
Your words are like winged bees
The incipient light
In their waxen honey-bag
Holds all the soul's honey.
Your days are rainbow-clouds
That conceal and reveal
Your blinding sun-glory.
With a stroke of your golden hammer
You have released the Niagara
Of the Oversoul upon the world
And wooed worlds, like words,
To express eternity
And yield all honey,
Beginning with the city of dawn
And ending with a perfect world.
My salutation to You.

VINAYAK KRISHNA GOKAK

WHEREAS, O GREAT...

If you say we are in the Mother's town
I am afraid you are probably wrong.
However in the meanwhile let us go
To our heart's depth where the gold birds throng.

I hear there is a flight in the morning
When the blooms take delicate mystic wings,
And if we catch this flame of burning will
Surely we shall ride to the wondrous things.

Then as the super-jet will eagle-zoom
Through the rainbow-hued skies of unknown height,
We in our seats fastened with sun-belts
Shall perchance have a look of the infinite.

The Splendour moves into the measureless,
Whereas, O Great, we are but drops of bliss.

RENUKADAS DESHPANDE
"HEAVEN'S VAST EAGLE"

DISCUSSION OF A LITERARY POINT

A CRITIC'S LETTER

In *The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo* (p. 26) you find some small fault with "Like heaven's vast eagle" in the lines from the very early narrative poem of Sri Aurobindo, *Urvasie*:

Like heaven's vast eagle all that blackness swept
Down over the inferior snowless heights
And swallowed up the dawn.

You suggest instead: "Like a vast eagle", which appears reasonable. And then realizing that "heaven" was there for rhythm you would allow "Like some vast eagle", which surprises me for its flatness and inappropriateness.

I'm all the more perplexed because you say that this would "stir the imagination with a clearer and closer touch"—but in your poem "Sri Aurobindo" (*The Secret Splendour*, p. 60) you have

Eagles of rapture lifting, flickerless,
A golden trance wide-winged on golden air.

Would you then not delete "rapture" here for a clearer, closer touch and make up the metre in another way?

This is just a dart from my provocative nature on a vital-pressured day.

THE AUTHOR'S REPLY

Your question is welcome. My answer, to be clear, has to be a little lengthy.

By way of a preambule I may confide that I am not in the habit of sitting in judgment on the inspiration of a poet like Sri Aurobindo. In my book, although I did differentiate between several levels no less than kinds, I could not but recognise the varied excellence of his work. Only in this particular matter I offered a direct, even if passing, criticism. Sri Aurobindo himself saw all that I had written in my book. With his grand impartiality he allowed all sorts of views on his poetry wherever a case could be made out. I cannot definitely claim that he must have seen eye to eye with me in these comments of mine on a very early bit of his poetic output. But
I have a sense that if I had made an entire faux pas in critical estimate he would have been kind enough to guide me. So I may make bold now to put up a defence of my attitude.

First, I must refer you back to the precise reason I give for inclining to pick fault with “heaven’s” in the line: “Like heaven’s vast eagle...” I am not taking “heaven” as an equivalent of “sky” and understanding the poet to imply that the bird known as the eagle, which belongs to the domain of sky, is a vast one. No known eagle can be so vast as to be comparable to the storm that the poet is describing. The poet is alluding to the mythological Garuda of Vishnu. Although the word “heaven” has a value for the metrical rhythm, I contend that the Garuda-allusion will be missed by the general reader and so his imagination will not be stirred sufficiently: a clearer and closer touch is wanted. That touch, according to me, would come with either “a” or “some” in place of “heaven’s”. Now the point of these substitutes is not just to send the reader’s mind to the known bird aquila. If that were the point, the adjective needed would be “the”. The suggestion has to be rather indefinite even while a particular species of bird is mentioned. The eagle has to be “vast” with a vastness beyond any possessed by the big bird of that name. Then alone will there be true competence of comparison, a simile measuring up to the phenomenon described. Both “a” and “some” take us out of mere ornithology into a sphere of suggestion exceeding nature even while borrowing a form from nature.

Now, as between the alternatives I offer, I think at present that “some” is not only rhythmically more strong, inviting a semi-stress, but is also more successful in lifting us out of nature’s repertory to conjure up a real rara avis—an eagle which might have been—a black king-bird huge enough to blot out “the dawn”. The article “a”, for all its indefiniteness, can have still a certain naturalistic individualising import here. Although we need not, we may tend to think of one member of a tribe of vast eagles such as may be existing in the natural world. “Some” sweeps us clean away into a meta-biology of the imagination.

I feel that your sense of “flatness and inappropriateness” with regard to this adjective comes from the loose common usage in which “some” does duty for mere non-specification, as in your letter’s own: “find some small fault...” In poetry it has at times an effective role which cannot be played by “a”. You can see its irreplaceableness in even a simple expression like Wordsworth’s—

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

At a deeper level, we have F. T. Prince’s

And even we must know what no one yet has understood,
That some great love is over what we do...
At an intenser pitch, there are Browning's phrases:

...some interchange
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanleness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

In a more visionary vein, you have Sri Aurobindo's own:

A Splendour is there, refused to the earthward sight,
That floods some deep flame-covered all-seeing eye...

or else:

As some bright archangel in vision flies
Plunged in dream-caught spirit immensities...

I now come to your last point. You ask me why I write

Eagles of rapture lifting, flickerless,
A golden trance wide-winged on golden air—

instead of deleting "rapture" in order to have a clearer, closer touch, just as I have asked for the deletion of "heaven's" in Sri Aurobindo's "eagle"-line. After the explanation I have given about the mythology of "heaven", you will perceive that my "rapture" belongs to a different universe of discourse. It would be comparable if "heaven" signified "bliss". Actually "heaven" stands for "Vishnu" and Vishnu's eagle is brought in not because of any rapture-association but because of its supposed immense size. No experience-concept of the spiritual life is here. My "eagles" are rapture turned aquiline, ecstasy mightily upborne, ample-poised, steeped in truth-light.

I may have been rash in wanting a more seizable figure from Sri Aurobindo in that line out of a poem shot with Indian imagery; but aren't you a little more rash in darting a *tu quoque* at me for my metaphor? When I speak of "a clearer and closer touch" I do not desire something more earthly, something nearer home, passing more directly to men's bosoms and businesses. I only have in mind what is poetically more realisable, imagatively more kindling, emotionally more intimate or penetrating. Were my eagles to cease being rapture-substanced, rapture-formed, rapture-motioned, would they touch you more clearly and closely in the sense I have indicated?

By the way, your letter pictures me as "realizing that 'heaven' was there for rhythm". I do appreciate the metrical-rhythmic weight of the word, but surely I
don't think Sri Aurobindo was going by the ear alone? He had his eye on the traditional vāhana (vehicle) of the chief Hindu deity. My reference to the rhythm served merely to direct attention to the expressive value, the suggestive strength, brought by the stress which a word like "heaven" would take in the line.

K. D. Sethna

SEEING THE PAINTINGS OF HSU

Nature is wide in her robe of calm and peace,
Amid her woodland-hush, her mist-laden hills,
Her silent bamboo groves, her pine's delight
Climbing twisted towards an ethereal sky. 
Life is not laden with flaming hues that thrill
To external vision of luminous felicities—
But wonderful, hid and lone in grey and black,
Reveals a grandeur greater than hues can unfold...
Behind all stands the omniscient voicelessness
Regarding beauty's scene with eyes of bliss.

Romen
THE IMPACT OF GREEK TRAGEDIES

(Continued from the January issue)

V

POWERFUL and profound, the Greek tragedians are at once an awe and a marvel. With dreadfully delightful spells they wake the human soul to the vision of the Omnipotent, the Dance of the most Terrible, thereby opening our eyes to the truth: if we do not tread the path of chastened emotions, do not check our savage passions, if we abuse the laws that govern the universe and society, the Gods, who maintain an extremely keen interest and a constant watch over our actions and never fail to give judgment, will crush us down, raking our heart, our mind, all our senses and all that is most dear to us. It is thus they show us the way to purification and salvation and whither lie the ‘shapes of joyance mystical’.¹

To give a few examples:

Magnificent, royal even in a state of demoniac fury, Clytemnestra relates exultantly the murder of her victorious husband, King Agamemnon,—‘If it is writ, yea, even he of all kings most mighty, ‘shall go: Through blood for blood spilt long ago’².

Look: this is Agamemnon,
my husband, dead, struck down by my right hand,

Long years ago I planned. Now it is done.

I stand here where I struck. So did I.
Nothing do I deny. I flung around him,
a cloak, full folds, deadly folds. I caught him,
fish in a net. No way to fly or fight.
Twice did I strike him and he cried out twice
and his limbs failed him and he fell. Then—then
I gave him the third stroke—
So there he lay and as he gasped, his blood
spouted and splashed me with black spray—a dew
of death, sweet to me as heaven’s sweet raindrops
When the cornland buds.³

Is not the madness too loud in her heart, being drunk with death?⁴

¹ Euripides: The Trojan Women, p. 34.
² Aeschylus: The Agamemnon, p. 60.
⁴ Adapted from The Agamemnon, p. 65.

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And yet 'tis all as Zeus hath willed,  
Doer of all and Cause of all;  
By His Word every chance doth fall,  
No end without Him is fulfilled.¹

Indeed, no 'end without Him is fulfilled', even though

......to and fro the chances of the years  
Dance like an idiot in the wind!²

Another, of those terrible visions:
Medea, the victim of betrayed love, through excess of the wildness in her is seized by the devouring fever of vengeance. But now she has made up her mind: she shall murder her own children by her disloyal lover, Jason. Thus will she avenge herself upon him, that his memories of her be bitter to the last end. But before she can commit this horrible deed, a most nerve-shattering battle goes on within her: the battle of maternal love against her thirst for vengeance. Says she as she beholds her children for the last time:

......my strength is gone,  
Gone like a dream, since once I looked upon  
Those shining faces...I can do it not.  
Good-bye to all the thoughts that burned so hot  
Aforetime!³...

But the struggle resumes:

And yet,  
......Would I be a thing  
Mocked at, and leave mine enemies to sting  
Unsmitten? It must be. O coward heart,  
Ever to harbour such soft words!⁴

Again, her courage loses the name of action;

Oh, darling hand! Oh, darling mouth, and eye,  
......  
May you be blessed, but not here!...

....

...Ah God, the glow
Of cheek on cheek, the tender touch; and Oh,
Sweet scent of childhood. ...

......
Mine eyes can see not, when I look to find
Their places.¹...

Enough; now she is resolute, being sure that she and her children are doomed:

......Howso’er I strive
The thing is doomed; it shall not escape now
From being.²...

...Yea, howso’er I shield them, die
They must. And, seeing that they must die, ’tis I
Shall slay them, I their mother, touched of none
Beside³....

It is only by killing them that she will wound Jason most bitterly and, in so doing, obtain her savage joy—‘this tigress, red/With children’s blood’.⁴ No doubt, hereafter she will herself suffer no less. But our present care is with the present:

...Let there be naught
Of softness now: and keep thee from that thought,
“Born of thy flesh”, “thine own beloved.” Now,
For one brief day, forget thy children: thou
Shalt weep hereafter. Though thou slay them, yet
Sweet were they.⁵

Oh God, oh God of Love, how cruel is your promise, where man thought there would be many shapes of happiness!

...whatso man they call
Happy, believe not ere the last day fall!⁶

Great treasure halls hath Zeus in heaven,
From whence to man strange doom be given,
Past hope or fear.
And the end men looked for cometh not,
And a path is there where no man thought:
So hath it fallen here.⁷

¹, ², ³, ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61, p. 60, p. 68, p. 70.
⁵, ⁶ Euripides: *The Medea*, p. 60, p. 80.
⁷ Euripides: *The Trojan Women*, p. 36.
Or again, we get a blazing glimpse of Dionysus’ destructive ecstasy, when the messenger in *The Bacchae* recounts the horrible tale of how, in the glen of mount Kithaeron, Agave and her Bacchant sisters, seized by the blind fury of Dionysus, tore into shreds her own son, King Pentheus—a ghastly disaster wrought by the God through them, because both, mother and son, had denied and derided Him!

"...’Twas his mother stood
O’er him, first priestess of those rites of blood.
He tore the coif, and from his head away
Flung it, that she might know him, and not slay
To her own misery. He touched the wild Cheek, crying: ‘‘Mother, it is I, thy child,
Thy Pentheus, born thee in Echion’s hall!
Have mercy, Mother! Let it not befall
Through sin of mine, that thou shouldst slay thy son!’”
But she, with lips a-foam and eyes that run
Like leaping fire, with thoughts that ne’er should be
On earth, possessed by Bacchios utterly,
Stays not nor hears. Round his left arm she put
Both hands, set hard against his side her foot,
Drew...and the shoulder severed!—Not by might
Of arm, but easily, as the God made light
Her hand’s essay.¹

Space and Time, thought and sense seem to be very often out of bounds, and the frame of things out of joint. What men, then, think is not what they think, and what they behold is not what they behold.

Blinded Agave, having killed her son, now carries in her hand his head (which she takes to be a lion’s head), and exultantly asks the members of her Royal Citadel to see the wondrous deed she and her Maenad sisters have wrought. Being still in the trance of this Bacchic ecstasy, she asks them to call her father Cadmus and her son (who is dead) to feast their eyes too on her glorious spoil—a most poignantly ironical situation matched no in other literature for its gruesome horror and its pathos brought about by unrequited vengeance—and a God’s at that!

......Look upon this prize, this lion’s spoil,
That we have taken—yea, with our own toil,
We, Cadmus’ daughters! See, these palms were bare
That caught the angry beast, and held, and tare
The limbs of him!...Father!...Go, bring to me

¹ Euripides · *The Bacchae*, p. 63.
My Father!...Aye, and Pentheus, where is he, 
My son? He shall set up a ladder-stair 
Against this house, and in the triglyphs there 
Nail me this lion’s head, that gloriously 
I bring ye, having slain him—I, even I!1

Yes, one does feel at times that such deadly resentment can dwell in heavenly minds. 
There are moments too when the absence of thought or the ‘foam of madness’ is most undesirably desirable. For in that ignorant or semi-conscious happy state of mind, the chaos one brings about or the disasters one causes do not hurt the self, as we have just seen in the case of Clytemnestra and Agave who, having wrought unimaginable horrors through demoniac fury, are happy and vain, and do not realise the utter seriousness of their gory deeds. 
But the clear light of reason and sanity and dispossession grieve us all the more, exposing to us how black and foul our passions are, how morbid the bad dreaming of our thoughts. Hence sometimes the natural and spasmodic wish that the light of Reason had never been, so men would be free from ‘the tides of pain’ that hound the spirit. Therefore Prometheus’ regret.

Ah, not to know were happier than to know.2

And Phaedra, when come to reason and awakened from her wild blind love for her step-son Hippolytus, realises that such an abominably unlawful and sinful union cannot take place against the age-old social conventions. Hence her strong desire for an instantaneous dissolution:

Aye, but it hath a sting, 
To come to reason; yet the name 
Of madness is an awful thing.—
Could I but die in one swift flame 
Unthinking, unknowing.3

VI

Through all these tales of sound and fury, of crime and punishment, of war and peace, love and hatred, and tears of horror shed; through this ‘sad music that lieth hid in lamentation’4 ‘This throbbing of terror shaped to melody’,5—through all these

1 Ibid p, 60  
2 Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound, p. 40.  
4 Euripides: Iphigenia in Tauris, p 11  
5 Aeschylus: The Agamemnon, p. 5.
brain-reeling happenings born of the laws defiled through excess of some evil elements in man, the Greek tragedians seem to suggest to us one master message. And the message, as I understand it, is this:

Sons of the Earth,
Suffer, suffer while you live.
For 'tis God's decree that he who would learn must suffer.\(^1\)
Suffering alone swings us towards elevation.
Only in his capacity to suffer infinitely lies the magnitude of man,
And forbearance is human yet divine.

We may, if we must, make men our enemies but not God Almighty.\(^2\)
Let us, therefore, fear Him,
Obey and surrender to His inflexible Will;
Else the Furies with their avenging wrath
Shall make of our mind a cauldron of scorpions
And a medley of harrowing visions and voices,
And drive us mad;
And in the affliction of this blindness
Force us to horrible murders and burning sins.

Surely there's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
But let us not rough-hew them too much,
Lest the occult rhythm of things broken
Bring us unappeasable pain.

'For all is vain
The pulse of the heart, the plot of the brain,
That striveth beyond the laws that live.'

Wounds are everywhere. But amidst this "Moaning of evil blent with music high"\(^3\), this "bitter thrilling music of...pain",\(^4\) our deepest and one constant prayer is:

Sorrow, sing sorrow! but good prevail, prevail!\(^6\)

VII

Initiates though these Seers be into the mystery of things, and tread the sunlit heights, will all their wisdom and unveiling of Truth help us solve the Mystery of

\(^1\) "Zeus the Guide, who made man turn
Thought-ward, Zeus, who did ordain
Man by Suffering shall Learn." (The Agamemnon, p. 84)
\(^2\) Let all men hate thee rather than the Gods (Adapted from Aeschylus' The Choephoroe)
\(^3, 4\) Aeschylus. The Agamemnon, p. 51.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 6.
those thoughts that wander through eternity? It seems the riddle of this world will elude us for ever. As Iphigenia very touchingly says to her brother, Orestes:

...For to none is given  
To know the coming nor the end of woe;  
So dark is God, and to great darkness go  
His paths, by blind chance mazed from our ken.¹

 Somehow, somewhere, something seems to be amiss. So that the Last Analysis ends with the inexorably poignant question as the finale:

WHY?...

Even so, a decoy of light enters our mind. An intimation of the existence of an unstained shining Truth is given us, as a result of which an unextinguishable desire to possess It rises from the depths of our being.

O would that Zeus might show to men  
His counsel as he planned it;  
But ah! he darkly weaves the scheme,  
No mortal eye hath scanned it.  
It burns through darkness brightly clear  
To whom the god shall show it.²

All is not lost. There is Hope yet. For It shall also be given to him who can wrest It from the gods.

...he who strives  
Will find his gods strive for him equally³

And Phoebus...  
Again doth shed in sunlit song  
Hope unto all things mortal.⁴

So that even if the Mystery remains a mystery, and life hard and painful, ours it is to take it as a happy boon, a wonderful occasion for the Spirit’s self-finding and self-fulfilment. Then indeed we shall have found our Heaven.

And men in their millions float and flow  
And seethe with a million hopes as leaven;  
And they win their will, or they miss their will,

¹ Euripides: Iphigenia in Tauris, p. 23.
² The Suppliants (Aeschylus, trans. by J. S. Blackie).
³, ⁴ Euripides Iphigena in Tauris, p. 51, p. 79.
And the hopes are dead or are pined for still,
  But whoso'er can know,
    As the long days go,
That To Live is happy, hath found his Heaven!¹

However crushing and arbitrary the Laws of Heaven may be or may appear to us, ours it is to live by them with an unquestioning mind and a heart full of submission and love untinged by the touch of hate. For

What else is Wisdom? What of man's endeavour
  Or of God's grace so lovely and so great?
To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
  To hold a hand uplifted over Hate;
And shall not Loveliness be loved for ever?²

Since now our tortured brain is somewhat appeased, the Greek tragedians point to us that somewhere, unseen, beyond the railroad of Reason, the unerring, peaceful, sunlit ways of the Spirit exist; that somewhere lies a Magnetic Mountain riveting heaven to earth.

But a better land is there
  Where Olympus cleaves the air,
The high still dell where the Muses dwell,
  Fairest of all things fair!
Desire is there, and the Crowning of Desire,
And peace to adore thee, thou Spirit of Guiding Fire!³

Bibhas Jyoti Mutsuddi

¹, ², ³ Euripides · *The Bacchae*, pp. 52-53, p. 52, p. 24.
THE HOMELY IN THE TRAGIC

I

Many are the tributes paid to
Shakespeare,
Who with a steady blaze of heaven-lit Imagination,
Empathied into the hidden springs of human motives,
Became one with men's corroding dreams and their roars of laughter,
Observed and enjoyed their varied roles,
And sang the Inimitable Ecstatic Word.

No more have I to offer.
He, the thousand-Men-in-One,
Created a thousand deathless characters
And a world of his own,
Leaving us awe-struck—
Teased out of thought
We become
Dumb figures of delightful wonderment.

But the Greek Tragedians,
The high Souls of lofty Visions,
Show us the dire consequences when the occult rhythm of things is abused;
They give us, too, poignant touches of homely joys—
Made more acute through disastrous separation,
Through Crimes and Punishments of those most dear—
The many touching and endearing joys of family reunion,
Those heart-rending nostalgic joys
That weighed so heavily upon every Greek—
Inspiring him at all times,
Love,
Love that binds us closer to each other,
Love that gives a meaning to our life otherwise empty,
And makes us bear the burden of our cruel dreams.

II

An Odysseus is drawn back from all wander-lust and the irresistible Sirens
Only by the magnetic call of his native land—his wife, his son,
his dog and the lovely trees above the roof.
Even a murderess Clytemnestra,
To save her life,
Vainly evokes before her matricidal son, Orestes,
The sweetness of his past forgotten childhood days,
Reminding him of all the motherly love she bestowed on him,
Of the ravishment when he slept safe upon her breast,
Till at last she exposes to him
The very breasts that gave him suck.

To avenge herself upon her false awe-stricken lover, Jason,
A savage Medea murders
Her own children by him
Because of her intense but wild Love's shattered dream,
For whose sake she gave up her homeland where the Sun shone so placidly,
And whose unshakable reminiscences now oppress her abandoned spirit.
The mad Maenad, Agave, Dionysus-drunk,
Has torn asunder her own poor child, King Pentheus;
But when freed from this God-sent frenzy,
She cries out her grief whose unfathomable depth pierces our heart:
"...Oh, if I wrought a sin,
'Twas mine?—What portion had my child therein?"  

Pentheus thus dead, his grandsire, Cadmus,
The old wise unfortunate King, all heart-sore, deplores:
"Never more, then, shalt thou lay
Thine hand to this white beard, and speak to me
Thy 'Mother's Father'; ask 'Who wrongeth thee?
Speak, and I smite thine injurers!"  

A majestic Hecuba, with bleeding heart, head high aloft,
Unyielding to the last,
Recalls the sweet prattle of her grandson, Astyanax;
And when comes the news—the boy is hurled down
From Ilion’s tower by the conquering Greeks,—
She contemplates the ironical situation—as the boy often used to tell her:
"...‘Grandmother,
When thou art dead, I will cut close my hair,
And lead out all the captains to ride by
Thy tomb’.  

As Hecuba and Cassandra forever part with each other,
   And with Troy, their motherland,
   Their last cries
   Rise up in the murky air and roam
   Like a phantom
   Whose unrequited pain
   Vainly yearns for rehabilitation.
Thus Cassandra parts:
   "Mother, farewell, and weep not! O my sweet
   City, my earth-clad brethren—"1
As Hecuba, her mother, chimes in:
   "Farewell, farewell!
   O thou whose breath was mighty on the swell
   Of orient winds, my Troy!
   ...O, in thine agony.
   My Troy, mine own, take me to die with thee!"2

A mighty self-blinded Oedipus
Searches with groping hands the touch of his pure but damned daughters,
   Bears the unbearably cruel joke the conspiring stony Gods
   Played on him and his issue,
   And roams the earth through sun and storm,
Sin-haunted by an outrageously innocent deed,
Groaning beneath the crushing weight of foul curse and disgrace,
   As Antigone, the jewel of a daughter-sister sister-daughter,
Leads him on through the dark days—their only light.
   But a paragon of an Antigone,
With the alchemy of her irrepressible Love,
   Floods a lost humanity in a lost world,
Redeeming the one clotted Red of innumerable Crimes
   Into a soothing dazzle of pure White.
Out of her vast breast
   A Sun of Love rises unclouded,
   A Sun that is more life-giving and hate-consuming
Than all the Gods in Heaven can dream of or the Powers in Hell can expect.

Bibhas Jyoti Mutsuddi

1, 2 * Ibid., pp., 34, 74.
TRANSLATION, says Sir Walter Scott, is the noble alchemy, which converts gold into lead. Some hold the more cynical view that all translation is treachery. A distinguished English writer has gone the length of defining poetry as that which escapes translation. These statements are merely angular presentations of a half-truth. While they may warn us against the intrinsic limitations of the medium of translation, they ought not to blind us to the achievements of translators in the past.

Many Persian scholars regard Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat as third-rate verse, but we know how Fitzgerald has, with his sovereign touch, turned it to immortal poetry. This illustrates the reverse alchemy of a translator making gold out of lead. The admirable translation of Tagore's Gitamali from Bengali into English is a striking instance of the achievement of the translator's art.

Having gone through the travail of translating Hamlet, King Lear and Macbeth into Tamil, I wish to share, with my co-translators, my experience of the difficult terrain and the pitfalls we have to guard against. It is my claim that within the limitations of my faculties I have found it possible to put across in Tamil 99.9% of the contents of Shakespeare, 60% of his moods and about 20% of the power of his poetry.

Fortunately for the translator, Shakespeare offers through his plays not only untranslatable imponderables but also other things, which are worthwhile translating and which are susceptible to translation, such as his presentation of the great panorama of life, the motive-springs of human action, the grand cross-currents of impulses and emotions, the march of Destiny, his reflections on the incongruities between life and death, between human weal and human woe, between finitude and Infinity. As an incomparable story-teller, as a psychiatrist, as a philosopher, as an artist and as a mystic, he conveys many things, which can be caught by the translator. His tricks as a playwright, his technique of dramatization, his architectonics, his crafty resort to angle characters and back-narration equally lend themselves to translation.

Ideals of the Translator

The supreme purpose the translator should constantly bear in mind is that the spirit of Shakespeare should, at any cost, be put across in Tamil. In fulfilling this purpose, the translator may permit himself certain freedoms. He must not fetter himself with the exact word and letter of the original. The curse of literalness has vitiated
many a translation of Shakespeare, turning life into death and poetic dynamics into ludicrous insipidity. On the other hand, the translator should not, under the pretext of distilling the pure essence of the original, abuse the admissible freedoms. Such liberty as he may take with the original shall be directed solely towards achieving essential fidelity to the original and shall not degenerate into an adaptation or an irreverent adulteration of the original.

Faithfulness to the original frequently makes the translation outlandish and unreadable. A readable and powerful translation may prove faithless to the original. The translator is constantly in the awkward predicament of that puzzled bridegroom, who is forced to choose between a charming wife and a faithful wife. Charm without fidelity is as tantalizing as fidelity without charm, if not more. It is by unsleeping vigilance and constant self-restraint and self-scrutiny that the translator can hope to adhere to the strict and narrow path of translating Shakespeare, charmingly and yet truthfully.

LIBERTY OF OMISSION

In some cases omission to translate certain words occurring in the original may not impair the functional efficiency of the translation and may in fact be called for in order to convey better the general mood of the original. I shall illustrate this proposition with reference to the most vituperative passage in Shakespeare, which is to be found in Scene II of Act II of King Lear. Oswald, the Steward of Goneril, is accosted by Kent in the following words:

A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking knave; a whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch.

I think it is needless to religiously translate all these words. It would serve the purpose of the original if the mood of the vituperation is transported. I make the tentative suggestion that this passage may be translated as follows:

This is certainly not a word-for-word translation of the original, for some of the words in the original have been omitted and a new combination of the words of abuse
has been effected, but I think the freedom of omission has not compromised the spirit of the original.

LIBERTY OF ACCLIMATIZATION

I may next refer to what may be called the Liberty of Acclimatization. Occasionally it would be necessary to adapt certain Shakespearean sentiments and ideas and turns of language to the Tamil climate.

After all, words are symbols and they are conditioned by the culture, speech-habits, traditions and even the geography of the people who use the symbols. The translator must, therefore, be constantly aware of the difference in the entire range of culture represented by two languages, which are so alien to each other in temperament and genius as English and Tamil.

Loose masses of snow are known to Englishmen as white flakes and, as flakes are of frequent occurrence in the climatic conditions of England, they naturally play a large part in the linguistic “repertoire” of a great poet like Shakespeare. The problem of the translator is how to translate, into Tamil, metaphors and similes involving objects totally unknown in the climatic conditions of Tamil Nad. Flakes are as un-translatable as “Iddlies”. I think the translator may be permitted in these circumstances to use a homelier metaphor or simile, in order that the mood of the original might be truthfully conveyed. Take, for instance, a passage from Lear, Act IV, Scene VII, where Cordelia, after learning of the cruel treatment meted out by her sisters to King Lear, is moved to exclaim as follows:

Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be exposed against the warring winds?

Perhaps, this passage may be translated into Tamil as follows:

“பதினுடன்”, I admit, is a far cry from “white flakes”, but I can offer no better solution to the problem on hand. Acclimatization in this sense is regrettable, but the only alternative is dismal unintelligibility.

Take, again, a passage from Macbeth—Act I, Scene V. Lady Macbeth is tuning herself up psychologically and physiologically for the murder of the King and invokes the evil spirits to unsex her and fill her with cruelty. She exclaims:

Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief!
“Woman’s breasts” do not perhaps sound as indelicate to the English ear as the raw Tamil equivalent would to the Tamil ear. The translator has, therefore, to choose a less sexy word like “திருமலை” or even a loan-word from Sanskrit like “शिवराव”. But the right word “துரு” loses its vulgar sexiness in a particular company as in “துருமுரு”, in which context it becomes a symbol of maternal love.

This translation of the original illustrates the need for acclimatization in the manner of expression.

The need for a third kind of acclimatization may next be indicated. There are numerous mythological references in Shakespeare and there are very few Gods and Goddesses in the Tamil or Hindu Pantheon corresponding to those mentioned by Shakespeare, but when there is close correspondence between the two, I think it permissible and even necessary, from the evocative point of view, to use the corresponding Tamil God or Goddess. Consequently I suggest the translation of Neptune into “Varuna” and of “Cupid” into “Mannada”. In matters of religious culture the problems of translation are the most perplexing.

**Liberty of Inversion**

In the matter of syntactical structure, there is great dissimilarity between English and Tamil. In narrating the temporal sequence of events, English is illogical, as for instance in the sentence: “This morning I met the man who came from Singapore yesterday.”

Though the coming of the man from Singapore yesterday is an event which has taken place anterior in point of time to the meeting of the man this morning, the sentence puts the later event earlier and *vice versa*. Tamil, on the contrary, preserves inviolate the time-sequences—e.g., “ஏனெனில் இரவில் இருந்ததை காண்பது முதல் தொடங்கி கூறுவது”.

The Tamil translator, who fails to invert the syntax of the original, will produce something hideous and unacceptable.

**Untranslatability of Puns and English Institutions**

The clowns of Shakespeare are chronic punsters and it is impossible to translate their puns into Tamil. I have been trying my best to find a Tamil equivalent for “lying”, which could connote at once a physical posture and the uttering of untruth. I have given up the attempt in despair.

Similarly, the translator has to give up finding Tamil equivalents for peculiarly English institutions like boots, shoes, socks, stockings, garters, cakes, beer, ale, Duke,
Marquis, Earl, etc. The Flora and Fauna peculiar to England do not lend themselves to translation either.

**VERBAL INVENTIONS OF SHAKESPEARE**

A libertine critic said of the English Language that it is like a woman who will not love you unless you take liberties with her. Shakespeare has not only taken liberties with this lady, but has also molested and outraged her, as no other man has done, and yet this chary maid has unmasked her beauties to Shakespeare, as she has to no other English-speaking man, since or before. Shakespeare intimidates nouns into performing the function of verbs as in: "He childed as I fathered" (Act III, Scene VI, *King Lear*). He mixes and compounds words with incredible and audacious inventiveness. Take, for instance, the ingredients that boil and bubble in the Witches' Cauldron (Act IV, Scene I, *Macbeth*):

Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips  
Finger of birth-strangled babe,  
Ditch-delivered by a drab...

It is an open question whether the translator's art can rise equal to the inspired inevitability of these words.

**SPLITTING UP OF SHAKESPEAREAN SENTENCES**

Shakespeare, by a strange aerial magic, weaves complex sentences together with the aid of long parenthetical clauses, without at the same time sacrificing lucidity. Here is a passage taken at random from *Hamlet* (Act III, Scene II), where the Prince of Denmark gives advice to actors:

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest and—as I may say—whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise.

Such long-winded passages constitute a puzzle to the translator, who will get into a breathless mess if he tries to convey in Tamil the involutions and nodosities of the sentence-structure of the original. The only way in which the problem can be solved is by boldly splitting up the sentences, rearranging the pieces in a different rhythmic
pattern, and communicating the intensities of the original by adopting a different syntactical structure. The following draft translation illustrates my suggestion:

Uninhibited translation of this kind is subject to many criticisms. A distinguished critic complains that this mode of translation is guilty of over-simplifying Shakespeare. There might be some truth in this charge, but the illusion of over-simplification might be the result of converting 16th Century English blank verse into 20th Century Tamil prose. To a Tamilian, the former is more opaque and obscure and the latter is more direct and lucid. There are two kinds of obscurity in Shakespeare. One is there by the necessary intendment of Shakespeare, who uses obscurity as an artistic symbol for those spiritual experiences which can only be half-revealed. It is wrong for the translator to attempt to remove such obscurities, for he would thereby succeed only in blurring the half-occult visions of the great Master. But there is another kind of obscurity in Shakespeare, which is due either to the slovenliness of hasty improvisation or to the words, current in his times, having become obsolete and, therefore, opaque. There is no sanctity about this kind of obscurity and it is the duty of the translator, as an interpreter of Shakespeare, to remove these opacities.

Another charge against this mode of translation is that it indulges in disreputable colloquialism. The obvious answer to this charge is that Shakespeare would not have achieved much of his dramatic appeal but for his deft handling of live, pulsating colloquial words. His main merit is that he raised the common speech of his people to undying literary status. Any translator of Shakespeare, who fights shy of colloquialism, may, therefore, turn his prudish gifts to the translation of heavier, more respectable and less popular poets like Milton.

One other criticism against uninhibited translations of the kind quoted above is that they contaminate the Tamil language by impure foreign words. Importation of a foreign word, which is not current among the Tamils, is certainly to be abhorred, not even because it contaminates the Tamil language, but because it has no connotative significance to the Tamils. If, on contrary, the foreign word has acquired by long use among the Tamils a power of articulation, which a pure Tamil equivalent does not possess, it is the duty of the translator to employ it unblushingly. As has been
already observed, communication of the spirit of the original to the Tamil-speaking people must be the paramount consideration of the translator and any other consideration, which is ineffectual from this point of view, must be discarded as irrelevant. Emphasis must, therefore, be laid on the difference, not between an indigenous word and a foreign word or between a reputable word and a disreputable word or between the spoken word and the written word, but between a live word and a dead word, between a word that puts across the flavour and aroma of the original and a word that does not.

(To be continued)

S. Maharajan

I HAVE MADE MY WORLD

WHOEVER made it of old I have made my world
Of silver laughter's mould and unshed tears of gold.
In the happy hush-fields the coiled serpent light
Unfolds the fiery wings of lidless sight.

The dreamy winds of blue distances smite
The murmuring star-lust of my flickering heart.
The high and heaven-roofed Temple the bards throng
The lonely valley closed dim ages long

To the wide song and smile of sun and rain.
Sleep now no more, awake, O Soul! For, Dawn,
The daughter of Sky, Usha unseals the door
Of spirit's shoreless deep and blazing core.

The prayer-strung rapture-rose garlands my days,
My earth's each call a leap of purple paradise.

VENKATARANGA
VIGNETTES IN VINGT-ET-UNS

I

‘Disguised the Lover seeks and draws our souls.’


**

A Master-Player is my Lover, indeed!
In vain I plead my innocence of ways
And modes and codes of play: He will not hear:
Smiling as though to say He’ll teach it all,
He spreads the chess-board, ranges pieces, leads:
So, half for Love and half for love of fun,
I bend unto His Will—and we begin!...
Ere long I learn all starts and stunts of play;
And, waxing strong in craft of learned lore,
I now seek one thing, one and one alone—
To pay my Master back in mating skill,
To bear my Partner joy of full-equal play,
To discomfit my Lover, if for once!...
In vain, in vain! A hundred vantage-grounds
And time to plan afresh my Lover gives,—
And yet I fail—sore fail! My pride is piqued;
At last I raise my dew-lit shame-smit eyes
Unto those Eyes—and lo! they, smiling, say:
“Well-done for love! For Love’s dear sake, now rest!...
And when thou donnest thy innocence again,
We'll play once more and—surely—thou shalt win that time!...

*
II

'The spirit rises mightier by defeat.'

_Savitri_: VI-2

**

Player Superb! Well hast thou played thy part,
With unerring skill and perfect marksmanship!
Thou hast won the game no doubt, checkmating 'Me',
But with what gain or loss—we players know!
Yet gifted as Thou art with spirits galore
And keenest sense of sporting irony,
Thou thankest thy partner—and even pitied him?
Well, he accepts thy thanks and returns the compliments,
But he spareth thee thy pity; he needs it not,
Though he lie beaten, bruised, all done to death!
Knowest Thou not how even a losing game
He played with sense of honour—from first to last?
He played not calm and steady—like Thy high self?
He only gambled? Alas, "Queen lost, all lost"!
But Thou hast taught him the lesson of his life;
So now he'll keep his King in stronghold fast
And leave field clear for Thy offensive vast:
And Thou shalt have much ado with Thy Queen,—
God bless thee if she now forsake thy side!...
Why fold the chess-board and put the pieces back?
Fearest Thou to lose thy hard-won victory, my Love?.

*  

CHIMANBHAI
CAN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD BE PROVED?

(This is a discussion between three philosophers: (1) an Anselmian (A) who believes that the existence of God can be rationally and strictly demonstrated; (2) a Kantian (K) who holds that all arguments that claim to demonstrate God's existence are fallacious; and (3) a Critical Philosopher (C) who agrees with K, but at the same time holds that the proposition 'God exists' is self-evident to the wise.

The argument here discussed, popularly known as the Ontological Argument (the name was given by later writers, especially Kant), was first expounded by St. Anselm (1033-1109). Anselm presents the argument in two different ways. In his first formulation of the argument in Chapter II of his Proslogium he seems to base the proof of God's existence on the assumption that existence is a predicate. It is this form of the argument which is the better known and has been criticised throughout the centuries. In the second form the argument, it is claimed, does not lay itself open to the charge brought against it (or against Descartes' version of it) by Kant.¹ The argument as presented in Chapter III of the Proslogium may be summarized thus:

1. By definition, God is a being than which nothing greater can be conceived.
2. We may think of God as a being whose non-existence is inconceivable or as a being whose non-existence is conceivable.
3. A being whose non-existence is inconceivable enjoys a superior manner of existence than a being whose non-existence is conceivable.
4. God, by definition, cannot possess an inferior manner of existence, for then a greater would be conceivable.
5. Hence God is a being whose non-existence is inconceivable.
6. Therefore God exists.

(Q.E.D.)

A. The Fool sayeth in his heart 'There is no God.'
K. Maybe, but it's what the wise man, the philosopher, sayeth in his head that we are concerned with. Unlike your Fool, my heart believes in God but my head says that there is no cogent argument to support the dictates of the heart. All the traditional arguments for the existence of God are, in my opinion, invalid. Further, I believe God’s existence cannot be rationally demonstrated.
C. Do you admit the possibility of His non-existence being rationally demonstrated?
K. No, I believe that human reason, when it confines itself to strict logical arguments, is powerless to demonstrate either the existence or the non-existence of God.
A. Does that not make you an agnostic?
K. No, I believe that my distrust of Theoretical Reason is really in the service of Religion. My aim is to destroy knowledge to make room for faith.
A. But wouldn't that leave your faith without any rational support, and to that extent wouldn't your faith be irrational?

K. No, because it is supported by Practical Reason. The existence of God, human freedom and immortality are the necessary postulates of our moral life, but this does not amount to a theoretical proof, because there is no way of demonstrating the validity of the moral Ought.

C. I suppose by 'demonstration' you mean a process *more geometrico*, that is, in the way one demonstrates a geometrical theorem?

K. Yes.

C. I am inclined to think that not only the existence or non-existence of God, but no proposition in philosophy can be rationally demonstrated, that is, demonstrated *more geometrico*.

K. I wouldn't go so far.

A. I think both of you hold very odd views. I would say, however, that C's position seems more consistent than K's, though I agree with neither of you. After all, isn't it the business of philosophy to offer rational proofs in support of its assertions?

C. I wonder.

A. I'll be glad if sometime you explain your point of view more fully. There is, however, one point on which, I think, we are all agreed, that is, that one can and—may I add?—should believe in God in advance of any actual demonstration of His existence.

K. Yes, if one is a theist. I do not know if C is a theist.

C. I am, but it seems to me that if it is true, not only that one may believe in God prior to rational demonstration, but, as A suggests, also that it is desirable to do so, then the rational demonstration becomes superfluous, at least in the sense that it is not required either to generate the belief in God or to bestow on it the value which, according to A, it has.

A. If you mean that the good or even the saintly life is independent of philosophy I agree, but, according to me, the intellect too requires to be satisfied. That is why there is philosophy.

C. But on your view the life of faith and the life of reason are independent of each other. There seems to be no organic connection between belief in God and the rational demonstration of His existence.

A. I think there is, though I confess I am not very clear on this point. The pre-philosophical belief in God is the soul's perception of a truth and the philosophical argument is only the rational dress which the intellect gives to this inner illumination. That is why I spoke of the Fool of the Psalms who says in his heart that God is not.

C. I still don't see what, according to you, the connection is between the soul's perception and the strictly intellectual demonstration which the intellect claims to give of the existence of God.
A. Aquinas, as you know, makes a distinction between what is self-evident in itself and what is self-evident to us. I would like to make a similar distinction between what is demonstrated in itself and what is demonstrated to us, and I think that without a pre-existent faith the rational demonstration of God's existence somehow fails to click, or, at best, it silences the doubter but does not compel assent.

K. Does this not mean that the so-called demonstration is, from the logical point of view, fallacious or question-begging, and that it convinces only the converted?

A. The latter part of your statement is true, but not the former. The argument itself does not appeal to faith; it is purely logical and, I think, quite conclusive. One who is not convinced by it will not, I think, be able to point out any logical fallacy in the reasoning.

K. To me it sounds very odd that a rational demonstration should depend, not for its validity but for its demonstrability to us, on a pre-existent act of faith. For instance, one does not require faith to be convinced by the demonstration that the internal angles of a Euclidean triangle are equal to two right angles.

A. Perhaps that is because God is not a mathematical theorem! I admit I cannot explain satisfactorily why a belief which is admittedly non-rational is required to exhibit or manifest to us the rationality of a purely logical argument; but there it is! I have always been intrigued by the condition laid down by St. Augustine for proving the existence of God.

K. What is the condition?

A. First believe in the existence of God!

C. I agree with A that a pre-existent belief in God is a necessary condition if the rational argument concerning God's existence is to serve its purpose, but I still think that A has not shown that there is an organic connection between faith and reason, but only postulated a de facto connection between belief in God and the demonstrability to us of the proposition 'God exists', which, A says, is demonstrable in itself. The connection seems purely psychological and even from the psychological point of view it is not explained.

A. As I claim to demonstrate the existence of God from the idea of God—and in spite of Aquinas I don't think that any other mode of demonstration is possible—it is necessary to have an adequate idea of God. Pascal distinguishes between the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob from the God of the philosophers and the wise. I think this is a false distinction. The God of the philosopher, if he is really wise, should be the same as the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. It may be that one who is not convinced by my argument does not have an adequate idea of God, and it may also be true that (psychologically speaking) no one can have an adequate idea of God without believing in God.

C. That, I think, is a very interesting explanation, and it may well be true. But I still hold that one cannot show the organic connection between faith and reason if one believes that it is possible to give a rational demonstration more geometrico of the content of faith, e.g., the existence of God,
K. What do you mean by an organic connection between faith and reason?
C. I mean a connection which is not merely psychological and de facto, but also logical. That one who has an adequate idea of God believes in God is, if true, at best a psychological truth. The demonstration of God’s existence is a purely logical process. What is the connection between the two?
A. I confess I don’t know.
C. Perhaps we can show the intimate relation between faith and reason if we do not look upon the rational argument as a way of providing a demonstration of the truth of what is held in faith.
A. But I can’t agree to that. I am of the view that a rational demonstration of God’s existence is not only possible but can be given in a few simple steps. I see that both of you are sceptical about this claim.
C. You say you can demonstrate God’s existence from the idea of God. I am sceptical, precisely because I think that one who has an adequate idea of God must see that his existence cannot be demonstrated in the manner in which you propose to do it.
K. I am sceptical on purely general grounds. ‘God exists’ is an existential proposition, and I think that no existential proposition can be shown to be necessarily true.
A. Why do you say that?
K. The proposition ‘A exists’ can always be denied without self-contradiction.
A. That, I think, would be begging the question against me. I believe there is one and only one existential judgement which cannot be denied without contradiction, namely, ‘God exists.’
C. What about ‘I exist’?
A. I do not think that ‘I exist’ is a judgement if one says that to oneself; and if one says that to another, the other person can well deny it without self-contradiction, i.e., he can say, ‘You do not exist.’
K. Very well, I shall keep an open mind and listen to your alleged demonstration that the proposition ‘God exists’ expresses a necessary truth.
A. Let us start first with the definition of the term ‘God’. God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived. Would you grant that whatever else we may mean by ‘God’ we mean at least this?
K. and C. Yes.
A. Now there are two ways in which we may think of God. We may say either that God is a being whose non-existence is inconceivable or that he is a being whose non-existence is conceivable.
C. I smell a rat here, but go on.
K. To shorten your statement, could we say that we may think of God either as a necessary being or as a contingent being?
A. Yes, a necessary being is one whose non-existence is inconceivable and a contingent being is one whose non-existence is conceivable.
K. Very well, go on.

A. My next step is to lay down the proposition, which appears to me to be self-evident, that a necessary being enjoys a superior manner of existence than a contingent being does.

K. Ah, now here you are saying that God with existence is superior to God without existence. And this you can say because you are making existence a quality of God. One can say, a man with wisdom is superior to a man without wisdom, but this is because wisdom is a quality; but I deny that existence can be treated as a quality. In other words ‘existence’ can never be a predicative expression. This rules out the possibility of ‘A exists’ ever being treated as an analytic proposition. Hence I deny the premise of your argument, namely, that a necessary being enjoys a superior manner of existence than a contingent being.

C. What do you mean by an analytic proposition?

K. A proposition in which the predicate is openly or covertly a part of the connotation of the subject term; e.g. Rational animals are rational, and, Matter is extended, when Matter is defined as an extended substance.

A. I think you have misunderstood the point. I am not treating existence as a quality, for my contention is not that an existing God is superior to a non-existing God, but that a being whose non-existence is inconceivable enjoys a superior manner of existence than a being whose non-existence is conceivable. I am comparing, not two kinds of object, but two kinds of existence, and I am suggesting that the former is superior to the latter. Further, I am not treating the proposition ‘God exists’ as an analytic proposition. By ‘God’ I do not mean ‘an existing being than whom no greater can be conceived’. I agree with you that existence can never be a part of the definition of a term. I regard the proposition ‘God exists’ as synthetic, as ‘existence’ is not part of the meaning of ‘God’, and also as necessary. Hence it is like the proposition ‘$7 + 5 = 12$’ which, I think you would say, is both synthetic and necessary.

K. I would. Some philosophers, of course, regard this proposition as analytic, but I think they are mistaken. By ‘the sum of 7 and 5’ we can never mean ‘equal to 12’. It is patently wrong to suggest that when we say ‘$7 + 5 = 12$’ we are merely recording our determination to use the phrase ‘$7 + 5$’ to mean ‘equal to 12’.

But what I object to are not synthetic necessary propositions as such but those which are existential.

A. But that was your earlier objection, and I think you agreed to keep an open mind about the possibility of there being an existential proposition whose denial is self-contradictory.

C. You are saying, I think, that one who calls himself a theist may say either (1) God necessarily exists or (2) God happens to exist, and further that necessary existence is superior to contingent existence.

A. Precisely.

K. Well, what follows?
A. Since by definition God is a being than whom nothing greater can be conceived, of the two kinds of existence, necessary and contingent, we cannot attribute to God the lower. We cannot say, God is a being whose non-existence is conceivable. We have no alternative but to say, God is a being whose non-existence is inconceivable. Hence God necessarily exists. Am I permitted to add Q.e.d.?

K. Not yet. You are overlooking a third alternative which is precisely the alternative which an atheist would accept. You say that, by definition, we must think of God as existing necessarily and not contingently. But this only means that if God exists, he exists necessarily. The atheist or non-believer might say that he is not compelled to choose between two types of existence but between existence and non-existence; and he chooses the latter.

A. If you'll excuse my saying so, it doesn't make sense to say 'if P exists, it exists necessarily'. We can only say, P exists, either necessarily or contingently, or, we can say, P either exists or does not exist.

C. I agree it is not permissible to say something exists necessarily if it exists; but I am inclined to suspect that A's 'proof' commits him to just this kind of absurd statement. I shall bring up this point later.

K. I would still say you have ignored a third and obvious possibility. I may grant that necessary existence is a superior manner of existence, but that does not show that God exists, unless you add a further premiss, namely, a being which exists is a greater being than a being which does not exist. But, in that case, you would clearly be treating existence as a quality and consequently your argument would collapse. Secondly, it would be quite superfluous to talk of necessary existence being superior to contingent existence. Your argument would simply be: God with existence is greater than God without existence. Therefore God, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists. And this argument is fallacious, because existence is not a quality.

A. I think you will agree that you do not wish to show that my argument is inconclusive because, as a matter of fact, God does not exist.

K. Certainly I agree, all I wished to show was that your argument leaves out the possibility of God's non-existence. And if we can say, God may not exist, that is enough to show the inconclusiveness of your argument.

A. The possibility of God's non-existence implies the possibility of his existence. Do you agree?

K. Yes, but only the possibility.

A. That is, God may exist. Now if you grant that we can conceive God as existing, my next question is, shall we conceive Him as existing necessarily or as existing contingently?

K. We could conceive him either as existing necessarily or as existing contingently.

A. This brings the argument back to what I had hoped I had already shown. My point is that to conceive God as necessarily existing is to conceive Him as enjoy-
ing a superior mode of existence than we would conceive Him to enjoy if we conceived Him as existing contingently. I am afraid this sounds a little complicated.

C. It could be stated a little less abstrusely. Will it do to say: Since God, by definition, cannot possess an inferior mode of existence, if we conceive God as existing we must necessarily conceive Him as possessing the superior mode of existence, i.e., we must conceive Him as existing necessarily?

A. Exactly! And your way of putting it also brings out the final, inevitable conclusion. We cannot conceive God as a being that might exist; we must conceive Him as existing necessarily. Ergo, God necessarily exists. To put this point differently I would say that in the case of God the merely possible is the impossible. And hence, 'the not impossible', which K has admitted, is really equivalent to 'necessary', or the 'not' being impossible.

K. Hm! I'm not yet convinced, though, offhand, I cannot point out any fallacy in your reasoning.

A. Fair enough.

C. I am also not convinced, and I think I can point out at least two fallacies in the argument. But before I attempt to criticize your argument I think there are two other possibilities which you should consider. I do not accept either of them, but, to make your argument completely satisfactory to yourself I think you should consider these two possibilities and show that they rest on confusion.

A. What are they?

C. First, someone might say that even if it is true that we must conceive God as necessarily existing, and so necessarily conceive God as existing, this still does not show that God exists. We cannot conceive P except as Q, yet P may not, as a matter of fact, be Q. Thus even if it is true that we cannot conceive God except as existing we still have to prove that God necessarily exists. The scholastics distinguish between existence ut signata (that is, existence in the apprehension) and existence ut exercita (that is, existence in act or actual fact or in rerum natura). To conceive God as necessarily existing is still to conceive His existence ut signata, and we require further proof to show that this existence is also ut exercita.

A. This is an amazing way of arguing! If this argument were valid, we could never prove or assert anything at all. For if one proves that P is Q it would always be possible for someone to say, Ah! P is Q ut signata, but how can you show it is so ut exercita?

If we can show that God cannot be conceived except as existing, what further proof is required to show that God exists? To say, we cannot conceive P except as Q and yet P may not be Q is to posit an impassable gulf between thought and existence. And this would lead to sheer scepticism. The distinction between existence ut signata and existence ut exercita is valid only when we are considering the question of the existence of something. Does P exist? Here we are thinking of P's existence, but the existence is still ut signata (in apprehension). But when
we say definitely, ‘P exists’, or ‘We cannot think of P except as existing,’ existence here must be regarded as ut exercita (in act).

K. If X says, ‘P exists’, and Y says, ‘You may be mistaken, P may not exist’, does it not imply that P’s existence is still ut signata and not ut exercita?

A. That is from the point of view of Y. When one says, ‘P may (not, does) exist,’ P’s existence is undoubtedly ut signata and not ut exercita, or rather, it is not yet known to be ut exercita. But from X’s point of view P’s existence is necessarily to be regarded as ut exercita, i.e., as in actual fact. And when an argument for P’s existence amounts to a demonstration, it would be palpable nonsense to suggest that though to us P’s non-existence is inconceivable, i.e., though we must conceive P as existing, P’s existence may, after all, only be in our apprehension.

C. I couldn’t agree more. I think you could even go farther and point out that what the objector says is self-contradictory. When he says that though we must necessarily conceive P as existing, P may after all not exist, he is claiming to conceive the very thing which he says cannot be conceived. He is claiming to conceive God as non-existing after saying that he cannot conceive except as existing. And so he contradicts himself.

A. Yes, indeed he does.

K. I too agree that the objection is not valid. I wanted to see how you would deal with it. Now C, what is the second alternative to A’s conclusion that God necessarily exists?

C. This is an alternative in which one accepts A’s premisses and demonstration right up to, but not including, the last step; and, instead of saying, ‘therefore God necessarily exists’ it asserts, ‘therefore God does not exist’?

A. How can one draw this strange conclusion from my argument?

C. Not validly, I think, but still it may seem plausible to some. The argument may be stated thus: As A has put it, the merely possible in the case of God is the impossible. That is, if we say that God’s existence is possible we must say that God necessarily exists. There cannot be a merely possible necessary being. This is modus ponens. Now someone may turn the tables on A completely by putting forward a modus tollens with the same premiss. Thus: if we say that God’s existence is possible we must say God necessarily exists; but it is not and cannot be true that God necessarily exists; therefore God’s existence is not even possible. i.e., God necessarily does not exist!

A. One has to show first, independently of the modus tollens, that ‘God necessarily exists’ is not and cannot be true. That God can exist contingently is ruled out by my argument as self-contradictory; hence if it can be shown that necessary existence is not possible in the case of God, I would agree that it would follow that God does not and cannot exist.

C. Perhaps you are conceding too much. I have a suspicion that this ingenious argument overreaches and destroys itself. You are, however, right in saying that the denial of the consequent of the hypothetical major premiss must first be shown to
be true, and an attempt is made to show that 'God necessarily exists' cannot be true. First there is the general objection to the necessary existential judgement. The existence of nothing whatever can be regarded as necessary unless we make existence a quality of that thing, and this we cannot do. This objection was raised by K earlier on, but I think you have already disposed of it by saying that it merely begs the question against your view.

A. Yes, indeed. While admitting the general rule that existential judgements are contingent I suggest that there is one and only one exception to this rule, viz., 'God exists'. This proposition, I say, cannot be denied without contradiction. To say that this proposition cannot be necessary because of the general rule would clearly be to beg the question.

C. The other argument is that an existential proposition cannot be necessary because 'existence', which is concrete and actual, cannot possibly follow from a mere definition or a predicate which is necessarily abstract. What follows from the abstract must itself be just as abstract. Hence we cannot pass from the idea of God to the existence of God.

A. Good Lord! Whoever suggested that the idea of God produces the existence of God! When I said, the existence of God follows from the idea of God, I meant obviously that, given the definition of God, it follows necessarily that the proposition 'God exists' is true. Thus what follows from the abstract idea of God is the equally abstract idea or proposition that God necessarily exists. My argument proves, but does not claim to produce, the existence of God.

K. It does appear to me that this objection misses the point altogether. But I would like to know why C thinks that even if the consequent of the hypothetical major (God's existence is necessary) is not true, it does not follow from the argument of the objector that God does not exist. You had said, C, if I remember aright, that A was conceding too much when he conceded this.

C. Well, it seems to me that the argument either tries to suggest that the concept of God gives rise to an antinomy, or that the concept of God is a pseudo-concept, either because 'God' is a self-contradictory notion, or the word 'God', if taken to refer to something metaphysical and transcendent, is meaningless. It cannot, I think, claim to demonstrate the non-existence of God. I think also that it cannot show that the concept of God is a pseudo-concept, and if it does claim to show this, then it would follow that the objector's argument itself becomes a pseudo-argument, i.e., it would be nonsensical.

K. Let us take these points one by one. First, why do you say that the argument suggests that the idea of God gives rise to an antinomy?

C. Well, I think the argument has a tendency to show that, looked at one way, the idea of God implies that God necessarily exists — this is the thesis; and looked at another way it compels us to say that God cannot conceivably exist — this is the antithesis. From the idea of God it follows, both that God necessarily exists and that he does not exist!
CAN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD BE PROVED?

K. Could you clarify this a little more?

C. The whole argument is that if we are to conceive God adequately we must conceive of him as necessarily existing. This proves the existence of God. But, the argument continues, there is no such thing as necessary existence; therefore God does not exist. This disproves the existence of God. Now even assuming this argument is valid and there is a genuine antinomy, there is no reason why we should choose the antithesis rather than the thesis.

A. Quite so; and further, the antithesis rests for its validity on two arguments, both of which we have considered and discarded, namely, a necessary existential proposition must be analytic, and a concept which is abstract cannot yield existence, which is concrete.

C. I think there is even a worse confusion of which the argument is guilty. This is that the antithesis cannot even get started till the thesis is established. The argument of the antithesis is that since necessary existence is not possible, God does not exist. But why should we think of God as necessarily existing? Because, says the argument, the idea of God is such that we must think of him as necessarily existing! And this is the thesis. Hence given that the thesis is true, and only if the thesis is true, the antithesis is true; but the antithesis is true; therefore the thesis is false! Could there be a richer confusion?

K. C. also said that either the argument tries to show that the idea of God gives rise to an antinomy or that it argues to the conclusion that the concept of God is a pseudo-concept. How does it do that?

C. If the argument succeeds in showing that the concept of God is a pseudo-concept that would be just as fatal for A’s theory as the alleged proof that God does not exist.

A. I don’t think I need have any apprehension on that score!

C. Let us see. The argument may be stated thus in a slightly altered form: If we have a clear notion of God we shall see that we must think of God as necessarily existing. But nothing can exist necessarily. Therefore—well, what follows? It follows that we do not and cannot have a clear notion of God, and not that God does not exist. Now to say that we cannot have a clear notion of God is the same thing as to say that ‘God’ is a pseudo-concept. This again can mean one of two things: either that the notion of God is self-contradictory, like the notion of a square circle, or that being a metaphysical and transcendent concept it is, as such, unintelligible.

A. Indeed! And how can it be shown, to take the first alternative, that the notion of God is self-contradictory?

C. The contradiction, it would be said, is not apparent at once. The notion of God is seen to be self-contradictory when we analyse the notion and draw out its implications. It is then seen that it simultaneously implies two propositions which are in conflict with each other, namely, God necessarily exists and God cannot exist. This antinomy, it may be said, shows that the notion from which it
springs is self-contradictory.
A. But we have already examined the so-called antinomy and I think C has shown quite conclusively that the whole argument resulting in the antinomy is confused and self-contradictory.
K. So let us explore the other alternative: the notion of God is a metaphysical and hence an unintelligible notion.
A. It will require something other than the so-called antinomy to show this. The objector should say simply that the concept of God is meaningless to him; and that he does not understand what we are talking about when we talk about God.
C. Quite so. Nowadays nobody is foolish enough to lay down an a priori criterion of meaning to rule out as meaningless a whole realm of discourse. We cannot prove that a given concept is a pseudo-concept just because in its reference it transcends sense-experience. Nor, of course, can we prove that the concept is a genuine concept.
A. I agree, either the objector understands what we are talking about, or he does not. In the latter case we wish him well, but must tell him that we can, as far as our discussion is concerned, have nothing more to do with him. Am I now allowed to say that, according to me, the case for theism has been completely stated?
K. According to you and if you grant that metaphysical concepts are genuine concepts, perhaps, yes. I still have a feeling that you have somehow done the trick by surreptitiously treating existence as a quality.
A. Not consciously, I can assure you.
C. I think that now you are entitled to say, not 'the case for theism has been established', but 'the case rests'. But before I take this point up I think you ought to pursue further the last objection and show that it is riddled with contradiction.
A. I thought that that objection had been killed.
C. Yes, but perhaps not past resurrection!
A. Then proceed.
C. The argument was that from the idea of God there follows a consequence or there follow two consequences which, in their turn, show that the idea of God is unintelligible.
A. Wait a minute. I think I can see what you are driving at. I think you were going to point out that if an idea is truly unintelligible it is logically impossible that any consequences could follow from it.
C. Exactly. And conversely, if an intelligible consequence follows from an idea, it can only do so if the idea is intelligible. The self-contradictory or the unintelligible cannot harbour the coherent or the intelligible. Now having agreed with you so far I fear I must part company. As I said, I think that there are at least two fallacies in your argument. One of them is, you will be surprised to hear, the fallacy which K. has tried, rather unsuccessfully, as he himself admitted, to pin onto your argument, and that is that you are covertly treating existence as a quality.
K. I am glad to hear you say this; but I think that as we have already had a long, though very interesting, session we should now adjourn and consider C’s objections to A’s clever argument when we meet again.

C. Yes, I too would like some time to think over the argument and the objections I have in mind.

(To be continued)

J. N. CHUBB

NOTES

1. See Charles Hartshorne, Anselm’s Discovery. The author says, “I see myself as combating nine centuries of error piled on error about Anselm.”

2. This argument is presented by J. N. Findlay, in his Article, “Can God’s Existence Be Disproved?” published in Mind (1948).

3. A hypothetical syllogism in which by affirming the antecedent we may affirm the consequent, or by denying the consequent we may deny the antecedent. Thus: If P then Q, but P, therefore Q (Modus ponens); and if P then Q, but not-Q, therefore not-P (modus tollens).

4. A contradiction arises when two contradictory conclusions are shown to be both true by arguments which are apparently valid, e.g., “The world has a beginning in time and is also limited in space” (thesis); and “The world has no temporal beginning and no limits in space” (antithesis).

5. The point is that God must be regarded as an object of worship. A being that merely happens to exist and may not have existed is not a fit object of worship.

6. In the thirties the Logical Positivists tried to eliminate Metaphysics as nonsensical by laying down a criterion of meaning in the Verification Principle, according to which all meaningful propositions (apart from “tautologies”) are verifiable in sense-experience. The metaphysicians immediately pointed out that, on its own showing, the Verification Principle is itself meaningless since it is neither a tautology nor verifiable in sense-experience.
THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

THE VISION AND THE REALISATION IN SRI AUROBINDO’S YOGA

(continued from the January issue)

CHAPTER IV

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY:

THE REAL ISSUE

Abolishing death and time my nature lives
In the deep heart of immortality.

Sri Aurobindo, More Poems, p. 72.

The sons of Death have to know themselves as the children of Immortality.

Sri Aurobindo, The Life Divine, p. 610

The Wise One is not born, neither does he die: he came not from anywhere, neither is he any one: he is unborn, he is everlasting, he is ancient and sempiternal: he is not slain in the slaying of the body.

Katha Upanishad, 1.2.18.1

...Standing on Eternity’s luminous brink
I have discovered that the world was He;
I have met Spirit with spirit, Self with self,
But I have loved too the body of my God.

Savitri, Book X, Canto IV.

If manifestation is of any use, then it is worthwhile having a perfect manifestation rather than an imperfect one.


To live in the Divine and have the divine Consciousness is itself immortality and to be able to divinise the body and make it a fit instrument for divine works and divine life would be its material expression only.

Ibid., p. 337.

1 In Sri Aurobindo’s translation.
THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

We have ventured to state that the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has for its ultimate goal the realisation for man of a radical victory even over the process of physical death, achieved here in the conditions of terrestrial life. But be it noted that this seeking after physical immortality is in no way related to the finite being's blind and egoistic attachment to body and bodily life, or to the limited self's fearful shrinking from the mystery of death and from the prospect of his physical dissolution.

For, with either of these dark disabilities of nature still present in the being of man, it is absolutely impossible to realize the ideal of a victory over death. In fact, even the slightest attachment on one side and a trace of fear on the other will render man an easy prey to the Adversary. In this connection we may recall the categorical statement of Sri Aurobindo:

"As for immortality, it cannot come if there is attachment to the body, for it is only by living in the immortal part of oneself which is unidentified with the body and bringing down its consciousness and force into the cells that it can come."

Hence is the command upon every sadhak of the Integral Yoga to overcome all attachment to life in the body and renounce "the repulsion to the death of the body which is so strong and vehement an instinct of the vital man.... Thrown away it must be and entirely. The fear of death and the aversion to bodily cessation are the stigma left by his animal origin on the human being. That brand must be utterly effaced."

And, so far as the fear of death is concerned, the Mother's injunction is equally categorical. For, as She says, "one can conquer that alone which one fears not, and he who fears death has already been conquered by Death."

As a matter of fact, in one of Her articles She has luminously analysed the source and nature of this general fear of death and recommended a number of methods for effectively combating and finally conquering this burdensome complex. To quote Her own words: "Generally speaking, the greatest obstacle perhaps that hinders man's progress is fear, a fear varied, numberless, self-contradictory, illogical, unreasonable and often irrational. Of all kinds of fear the most subtle and the most clinging is that of death. This has roots deep in the subconscient and it is not easy to dislodge it from there. Obviously, it is made up of several intermingled elements: the spirit of conservation, the concern for self-preservation so as to ensure the continuity of consciousness, the recoil before the unknown, the unease caused by the unexpected and the incalculable and perhaps, behind all that, hidden in the depths of the cells, the instinct that death is not an inescapable thing and that, if certain conditions are fulfilled, it can be conquered; although, as a matter of fact, fear itself is one of the greatest obstacles to that conquest."

4 Ibid.
But how are we to get rid of this fear of death? There are of course different methods that can be used. But the most potent of them all is to grow in the consciousness of the immortality of soul. In the inimitable words of the Mother:

"Beyond all the emotions, in the silent and quiet depths of our being, there is a light burning constantly, the light of the psychic consciousness. Go in search of this light, concentrate upon it; it is within you. With a persevering will you will surely find it. As soon as you enter into it, you awake to the sense of immortality. You feel you have always lived, you will live always. You become wholly independent of your body; your conscious existence does not depend upon it. The body is only one of the many transient forms through which you have manifested yourself. Death is no more extinction, it is only a transition. Fear vanishes forthwith and you march forward in life with the calm certitude of a free man."\(^1\)

Indeed, as someone has so aptly pointed out, when man *knows himself*, and dares *be himself*, the fact of physical death appears but a slight episode, or perhaps a shadowy myth, along the radiant orb of immortality. Can we forget the beautiful description of this memorable experience as given by Goethe in "The Confessions of a Beautiful Soul" in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*:

"During many sleepless nights, especially, I had some feelings so remarkable that I cannot describe them clearly. It was as if my soul was thinking unaccompanied by my body. It looked upon the body as something apart from itself, much as we look on a dress... the body will rend like a garment, but I—I am."\(^2\)

This citation from Goethe reminds us of the memorable words of Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita*:

"Finite bodies have an end, but that which possesses and uses the body is infinite, illimitable, eternal, indestructible. It casts away old and takes up new bodies as a man changes worn-out raiment for new; and where is there in this to grieve at and recoil and shrink?"\(^3\)

Incidentally we may touch upon two insistent questions that have been raised by the mind and heart of man throughout the ages and which have been sought to be variously answered on metaphysical, theological and scientific grounds:

(i) what is the meaning and content of soul immortality?

(ii) and, to be more searching, what evidence and proof is there to suppose that a soul-entity as distinct from and independent of our body and bodily organisation exists and endures?

The restless yearning of man for the continuity of his personal existence beyond the dissolution of his bodily frame, the insistent conviction of his heart that there is something in him that is eternal and immortal,—may this not be a mere psychological transcription of the material instinct of self-preservation which is common to all biological organisms?

\(^1\) *Ibid.*

\(^2\) *Vide*: H. Carrington and J.R. Meader, *Death*, pp. 170-72

\(^3\) *Gita*. II 20-22 (Sri Aurobindo’s translation).
To answer the second point first: it should be made perfectly clear even at the very outset that this is not a question of external observation or mentally cogitated evidence at all. The awareness of soul immortality comes from a domain of knowledge beyond the ken of our mind. As a matter of fact, in the course of the heightening and deepening of our consciousness brought about by the pursuit of spiritual sadhana, there arises spontaneously a trans-mental knowledge of our true being which is then realised as a consciousness altogether independent of the bodily vehicle, as a spiritual entity possessed of a continuous soul-life perpetually developing and determining its own becoming.

About this spiritual knowledge, not at all ideative but felt in the very depths of our true being, Sri Aurobindo says:

"The soul needs no proof of its rebirth any more than it needs proof of its immortality. For there comes a time when it is consciously immortal, aware of itself in its eternal and immutable essence. Once that realisation is accomplished, all intellectual questions for or against the immortality of the soul fall away like a vain clamour of ignorance around the self-evident and ever-present truth. Tato na vichitsate. That is the true dynamic belief in immortality when it becomes to us not an intellectual dogma but a fact as evident as the physical fact of our breathing and as little in need of proof or argument. So also there comes a time when the soul becomes aware of itself in its eternal and mutable movement; it is then aware of the ages behind that constituted the present organisation of the movement, sees how this was prepared in an uninterrupted past, remembers the bygone soul-states, environments, particular forms of activity which built up its present constituents and knows to what it is moving by development in an uninterrupted future."^1

This quotation from Sri Aurobindo has already met by implication our first point. For, we see that immortality in its fundamental sense does not mean merely some kind of personal survival after the dissolution of the body. "The Self always survives the dissolution of the body, because it always pre-existed before the birth of the body. The Self is unborn and undying."^2 This eternity of our self-existence, the spirit's timeless existence, constitutes our true immortality. "By immortality is meant the consciousness which is beyond birth and death, beyond the chain of cause and effect, beyond all bondage and limitation, free, blissful, self-existent in consciousness, the consciousness of the Lord, of the supreme Purusha, of Sachchidananda."^3

But corollary to this true immortality, our spirit's timelessness, there exists as a natural consequence "a perpetual continuity of our temporal existence and experience"^4 from life to life, from world to world after the dissolution of the physical body. "The realisation of timeless immortality comes by the knowledge of self in the Non-birth and Non-becoming and of the changeless spirit within us: the realisation

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^3 Ibid., p. 107.
^4 *The Life Divine*, p. 568.
of time-immortality comes by the knowledge of self in the birth and Becoming and is translated into a sense of the persistent identity of the soul through all changes of mind and life and body; this too is not mere survival, it is timelessness translated into Time manifestation.1

As a matter of fact, in the midst of our aspiration for a physical immortality, we must never for a moment lose sight of the fact that the real and true immortality for the individual would always and fundamentally be this eternity of the spirit and the immortality of the soul; “the physical survival could only be relative, terminable at will (icchâmytyu), a temporal sign of the spirit’s victory here over Death and Matter.”2

Not only that; this too must be borne in mind that the essential prerequisite for any attempt at a physical conquest of death to be at all feasible is to fully grow in the consciousness of this spirit-eternity and the immortality of soul. For on this twofold realisation alone can man base his free and masterful activity over his being and nature. “By the first realisation we become free from obscuring subjection to the chain of birth and death, that supreme object of so many Indian disciplines; by the second realisation added to the first we are able to possess freely, with right knowledge, without ignorance, without bondage by the chain of our actions, the experiences of the spirit in its successions of time-eternity.... In either realisation truly envisaged as side and other side of one truth, to exist consciously in eternity and not in the bondage of the hour and the succession of the moments is the substance of the change: so to exist is a first condition of the divine consciousness and the divine life. To possess and govern from that inner eternity of being the course and process of the becoming is the second, the dynamic condition with, as its practical outcome, a spiritual self-possession and self-mastery.”3

Thus, after having effected a total release of the being from all sense of egoistic identification with the body and the heart and the mind, after having achieved the double realisation of timeless eternity and time-immortality, the sadhak of the Integral Yoga does not want to stop at that alone, nor does he contemplate a withdrawal from the field of terrestrial Becoming. Indeed, what has been termed ‘the Lure of the Night and eternal Repose of Sleep’, albeit spiritual,—the fana-al-fana or the ‘absolute Disappearance’ of some Sufis, the Nirvanic Extinction of our Buddhist India,—has been for many a seeker the motivation of his spiritual pursuit None has expressed so forcefully the absolute repugnance to all existence as the great Buddha who, according to tradition, felt sore at heart and went out on his Nirvane quest when he, a young and happy prince, met for the first time with cases of destitution, decrepitude, disease and death. Buddha’s contemplation led him to assert the uncompromising principle that ‘to exist itself is to suffer’; not only sickness, old age and death are forms of misery, birth and being alike are in themselves wretchedness. To cease to exist, to withdraw from the field of Becoming is thus the ultimate goal of the aspirant.

1 The Life Divine, p. 658
2 Ibid., p. 733.
3 Ibid., p. 658.
Did not Gautama, the Buddha or the Illumined, exclaim after his great Illumination:

"Through countless births have I wandered, seeking but not discovering the maker of this mortal dwelling-house, and still, again and again, have birth and life and pain returned. But now, at length, art thou discovered, thou builder of this house of flesh. No longer shalt thou rear a house for me. Rafters and beams are shattered, and with the extinction of tanha\(^1\) deliverance from repeated life is gained at last."\(^2\)

Yes, even if we do not go so far as to assert with Buddhism that a transcendental Nirvana or Extinction should be the ultimate goal of Sadhana, the fact remains that, dissatisfied with the ‘Vale of Tears’ that our earth-life is, many a seeker on the path of the Spirit has endeavoured to convert the body’s death into a unique event to be experienced once and for all so that the seeker may not have to repeat in future ad nauseam the sorrowful cycle of birth-death-birth-death.... The young Nachiketas’ quest after the knowledge of the mystery of Death began with this observation:

"Look back and see, even as were the men of old,—look round!—even so are they that have come after. Mortal man withers like the fruits of the field and like the fruits of the field he is born again!"\(^3\)

To arrest this great cycle of repeated births and deaths, this Brahmacakra of the Svetasvatara Upanishad, has been the traditional goal of most of Indian spiritual sadhanas. And in order to realise this goal, one has to transform the act of the body’s death into a varvasvata mṛtyu ('the luminous death of the Wise') and for that again one has to grow into the sense of one’s spirit-eternity while still in the body. For an aspirant thus made ‘ripe’, the advent of physical death is indeed a welcome event, for with this terminal event the cycle of transmigration will be absolutely ended. It is for this that Sri Krishna said: “Ripe souls meet death as their most beloved guest (Kṛtā-Kṛtyah pratiksante mṛtyuḥ priyam ivātithin).”

But certainly this type of world-disgust cannot be the attitude for a sadhak of the Integral Yoga. For him, death has to be transcended in order that life may be divinely fulfilled. Ihaiva, ‘Here itself’, is his motto. Thus, with divine detachment coupled with a spiritual mastery, he seeks to come back to the task of founding the life divine in the field of ignorance and division and matter, to complete the Being's victory in the realm of Becoming. After all, this Becoming being progressive and evolutionary on the terrestrial plane, the present spectacle of earth-life afflicted with its load of suffering and death cannot in any way represent the unalterable last act of the drama. As the Mother has so beautifully put it:

“All things considered, looking at the world as it is and as it seems it must be irremediably, the human intellect decreed that this world must have been a mistake on the part of God and the manifestation or creation can be only the result of desire, desire for self-knowledge, desire for self-manifestation, desire for self-enjoyment and

\(^1\) thirst
\(^2\) Dhammapada, Chapter XI (Translation by De La Vallée Poussain).
\(^3\) Katha Upanishad, I. 1. 6 (Sri Aurobindo’s translation).
the only thing to be done is to put an end to this mistake as soon as possible by refusing consent to desire and its evil consequences.

"But the supreme Lord answers that the comedy has not yet been wholly played out, and He adds, 'Wait for the last act, maybe you will change your opinion.'"

The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo seeks to hasten the day of the advent of this glorious earthly manifestation that is still preparing behind the veil and the sadhaks of this yoga aspire after the conquest of the body's death viewed as a sure sign of this final and total achievement. For, as the Mother declares:

"There are those who are born warriors. They cannot accept life as it is. They feel pulsating in them their right to immortality, an integral immortality and upon this earth. They possess a kind of intuitive knowledge that death is only a bad habit; they seem to be born with the resolution to conquer it."

In order to obviate a possible chance of misunderstanding let us forthwith state that the attainment of physical immortality as envisaged by the Yoga of Integral Transformation does not mean in the least that one will be tied down forever to a particular body and willy-nilly one has to suffer an indefinite prolongation of life here upon earth. The conquest of death does not convey that implication at all. It means that "(The body) would no longer be subject to decay and disease...it could not be subject to ordinary processes by which death comes. If a change of body had to be made, it would have to be by the will of the inhabitant. This (not an obligation to live 3000 years, for that too would be a bondage) would be the essence of physical immortality."

This then is the true import of the elan towards the conquest of physical immortality, because "immortality beyond the universe is not the object of manifestation in the universe, for that the Self always possessed. Man exists in order that through him the Self may enjoy Immortality in the birth as well as in the non-becoming." And the secret sense of the cosmic Becoming is that "...here in the material body it (this Immortality) is to be worked out and enjoyed by the divine Inhabitant under circumstances that are in appearance the most opposite to its terms..." This then is the attitude of the sadhak of the Integral Yoga towards the perfection of the body and bodily being (Kāyāsiddhi), including as its last term the physical conquest over death.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

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2 The Mother, "The Fear of Death and The Four methods of Conquering it."
3 Sri Aurobindo, On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 335.
4 Sri Aurobindo, Isha Upanishad, p. 107.
5 Ibid., p. 116.
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE


Drawing inspiration from his purposeful study of Sri Aurobindo’s massive writings like *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, and other smaller but not less important works like *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, *Ideals and Progress*, *The Ideal of the Karmayogin*, etc., Professor A.V. Sastri has brought out a concise but very readable account of the saga of Indian Nationalism from the times of the ancient Rishis to the present day.

Nationalism in the West developed along lines vastly different from India’s. There it took an external, mechanical turn tending towards an “emphasis on objective criteria of language, race, territory, religion and civilization, citizenship in a state, etc.” This social and political evolution which began in the organised City States of Greece has passed through many phases: broadly speaking, feudalism, monarchism, bourgeoisie, dictatorship of the proletariat. We have also recently seen an extreme and virulent form of it in the organized state of Hitler’s Germany. The efficiency of the political machinery is matched by an almost total neglect of the inner value of life of the people. The tragic outcome of this imbalance and disharmony is nowhere more evident than in Western civilization today.

The structure of Indian society, culture and nationalism, on the other hand, proceeded from a recognition of an Omnipresent Reality as the basis of all creation. This Reality infuses and informs everything at every level of manifestation. In fact, creation is looked upon as a double movement of the One—an involution or descent of the Spirit into Matter and the evolution or ascent of Matter into Spirit through successive stages: Matter rises into Life, Life into Mind and Mind into something higher and more puissant, Supermind. The learned author points out that the Rishis, who were the founders of Indian culture and nationalism, were seers who had attained the highest truth of the Spirit. They realised the Transcendent, but they knew the world too, here, with its millions of inhabitants in various walks of life, at different stages of development. In this diversity and differentiation they saw the evolutionary hand at work. The direction of the evolution is forward, but each individual sets his own pace and conditions of advance. There are those who are in the forefront and those who make up the rear. Unfettered freedom is the rule. Further, the individual and the collective fulfill each other. The collective is the base on which the individual grows and through which he progresses, though in the process he has often to meet and overcome resistance from the collectivity itself, and as he advances the collective too moves forward though tardily. The Rishis had perceived this truth and sought means to establish an ordered society.
and rules for its governance under which each man, each group or class was assured of an unrestricted scope for development and expression in the life of the world, according to its svabhāva and svadharma, this external development and expression eventually leading to a larger life of the Spirit. As the author succinctly puts it: "they (Rishis) founded a religio-philosophic culture directed} to the realisation of the Highest and based on the subtlest understanding of individual and social psychology. The motives of life were not ignored nor their complexity underrated or lost sight of, but boldly envisaged and integrally woven into a scheme of graduated perfection."

Tracing the historical beginnings of Indian nationalism to the predominantly agricultural and pastoral village communities of yore, the author shows how with the development of multi-sided activities of its members these simple units merged into larger units; later, either by conquests or coalitions, these larger units became a principality or a kingdom, small kingdoms were formed into larger ones, and these at a later time became one or two empires. The king or the ruler, who was assisted by a council, was only a political sovereign and ruled according to the tenets of the Dharma established by the Rishis. It was not for him to initiate social changes affecting the community. "A greater sovereign than the king" was the Dharma which was the sheet-anchor of the religious, social and political framework. Prof. Sastri significantly points out: "The social hierarchy was not at the same time a political hierarchy..." It is the same synthetic turn as that which in all parts of the Indian socio-political system tended to fuse together in different ways the theocratic, the monarchic and aristocratic, the plutocratic and democratic tendencies in a whole which bore the characteristics of none of them nor was yet an accommodation of them or amalgamation by a system of checks and balances but rather a natural outward form of the inborn tendencies and character of the complex social mind and temperament."

The Rishis not only established the spiritual and cultural unity of India but also strove for her political unification. Their conception of a cakravarti, king of kings, the religious sanction they accorded to the performance by powerful kings of Aṣvamedha and Rājasūya Yajnas were aimed at bringing about a confederation of kingdoms "uniting but without destroying the autonomy of India’s many kingdoms and peoples from sea to sea." While the spiritual and cultural unity came to stay, the political unification did not, so that when the Indian frontier kingdoms of Gandhara and Vahlka fell to the Persian hordes the flood gates of invasion were opened and waves of hostile armies swept into India beginning with Alexander, continuing with the Sakas and Hunas, the Pathans and Moguls, and ending with the British. Thus, after centuries of rich and opulent living, with many-sided developments and achievements India entered into a dark period of Tamas (Inertia) and fell an easy prey to foreign conquest and domination. It was necessary that she should catch up with certain lines of development which she had overlooked during her long period of evolution, and a period of servitude was enforced on her.

The British brought with them their Warren Hastings, Macaulays and missiona-
ries and also their social and political philosophies which latter cast a powerful spell for a time on the intelligentsia of the day, notably in Bengal. It was the time when the higher values of Indian culture had touched their nadir. The younger generation took to imbibing English education and English culture avidly and soon emerged into an articulate political body looking up to England as India's saviour and benefactor. But the English glamour soon wore away, the spell of British supremacy was broken, the sleeper that was India awoke, the Tamas of the centuries was shaken off. A mighty beginning was made in the national front; Bengal produced a galaxy of patriots, poets, social and religious reformers, spiritual giants. A clarion call went forth reverberating through the length and breadth of this vast land, echoing and and re-echoing the cry of nationalism, the cry for national emancipation from the yoke of foreign rule.

The author gives a restrained but glowing account of the birth and growth of India's emergent nationalism—the launching of the liberation movement, the storms and stresses it passed through, the impetus given to the movement by Tilak the hon-hearted ("Swaraj is my birthright"), the historic role played by Sri Aurobindo to whom India was not just a geographic location but a living Mother whom it was our privilege to serve and for whom it was our privilege to die, the inspired leadership of Gandhiji who brought a novel weapon of non-violence in his battle with Britain, and finally the triumph of Indian nationalism in the emergence of a free and independent India.

What of the future? India did not lose her freedom in a previous century simply in order to get it back in the present one. The period of her serfdom has been not only a period of revaluation and repossession of her spiritual heritage and culture but an opportunity for reception and appraisal of certain evolved values of the social and political development in a characteristically western mould. To gather so much of the material gains of the present as will endure and to integrate them with her recovered spiritual possessions is the need of the hour, and only with her rich background of Divine Knowledge and world knowledge can India fulfil this great task both for herself and for humanity. "Sri Aurobindo envisages a future for the Indian nation for which there is no example or exact parallel in history, a new type of people lifting nationalism to a new pinnacle justifying the separate existence, separate effort of a whole people in fundamental unity with entire humanity" (p.55).

This book which breathes Sri Aurobindo's spirit and thought throughout is invaluable for all students of Indian history.

Keshavmurtti
Dear Friends,

Let us first remember with gratitude that we have the immense privilege to live at the threshold of a New Age, the privilege to assist in the birth of a new world, and to witness the emergence of a new race, the race of the Sons of God.

In the words of the Mother: “We are in a very special situation, extremely special which has had no precedent. We are attending on the birth of a new world, altogether young, altogether weak—weak not in its essence, but in its external manifestation—not yet recognised, not yet felt, denied by most; but it is there, it is there endeavouring to grow and quite sure of the result. Yet, the road to reach there is a new road, that has never before been traced; none went by that way, none did that. It is a beginning, a universal beginning. Therefore it is an adventure absolutely unexpected and unforeseeable.”

The birthday of this new world was February 29th 1956, when the Mother announced: “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.”

Man has now the opportunity to outgrow his ignorant and fumbling humanity and to manifest progressively the supramental or the God-consciousness, which sees things in their totality and Truth and does not depend any more on analytical reason as the governor of life.

Few might have noticed the advent of the new age, for which a refined occult perception is at present still necessary, but I think every rational individual will agree that man and his world have to change if they want to survive. Material Science has advanced much quicker than the consciousness of humanity, with the result that the Damocles’ sword of self-destruction hangs constantly over our heads. The way out

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of this impasse is a change of man’s consciousness, i.e. the development of his hidden soul-potentialities. The Mother has told us bluntly:

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

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

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

Pessimists, knowing only man and not God, might look at the birth of the new world or the kingdom of God on earth as a vain chimera or an utopian dream. However, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have told us repeatedly that the supramental creation will follow the present one as inevitably as day follows night, and that this change is being enacted now. But one might still ask:

“If a world-war breaks out, it may not only destroy the major portion of humanity but even make living conditions for those who survive impossible due to the effects of the nuclear fall-out. ...Will it not affect the advent of the supramental Truth and the New Race upon earth?.”

To this question the Mother replied:

“All these are mental speculations and once you enter in the domain of mental imaginations there is no end to the problems and their solutions. But all that does not bring you one step closer to the truth.

“The safest and most healthy attitude of the mind is like this one: We have been told in a positive and definite way that the supramental creation will follow the present one; so, whatever is in preparation for the future must be the circumstances needed for this advent whatever they are...and as we are unable to foresee correctly what these circumstances are, it is better to keep silent about them.”

So let us remember that the New Age or, in other terms, the Supramental Creation, the Kingdom of God on earth, is already born and is bound to manifest more and more until the Victory is reached, whatever may happen. On the 21st February 1967 the Mother gave us the following assuring words: “The world forces will act toward the supramental Manifestation from now onwards.” On another occasion she said: “It [Supermanhood] is no longer a hope, it has become a certainty. Only the time necessary for the realisation will be more or less long according to our individual effort, our concentration, our good will—and the importance we attach to the fact.”

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In the second part of this talk I would like to introduce you to Auroville, the planned international city of dawn, the beacon and example for the coming of the spiritual age. To give you technical and material details about the Auroville project would

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1 Message to the World Conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society, August 1964.
be outside the scope of this Seminar, and I shall therefore give you simply a short spiritual background history of the project:

Already in 1912 we note in the Mother's writings the idea of an ideal town. I quote: "This, therefore, is the most useful work to be done: ...Collectively, to establish an ideal society in a propitious spot for the flowering of the new race, the race of the Sons of God." In 1930 the Mother said: "Once, however, the connection [between the Supermind and the material being] is made, it must have its effect in the outward world in the form of a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world."

The New Year message which the Mother gave for 1959 indicates that this connection is now a fact:

"At the very bottom of the inconscience most hard and rigid and narrow and stifling I struck upon an almighty spring that cast me up forthwith into a formless limitless Vast vibrating with the seeds of a new world."

So at the end of 1964 the Mother informed us that work on the project of a model town, which she named Auroville, could be started. At the beginning of 1966 she said: "Auroville is going well and becomes more and more real, but its realisation does not advance in the habitual manner, and it is more visible for the interior consciousness than for the exterior vision."

Now the project has progressed to such an extent that a simple and moving inauguration ceremony could be held on the 28th February 1968. During the ceremony I could feel a very special atmosphere of peace, concord and unity. In fact I am convinced that this strong presence of the Consciousness made the ceremony the success it was. Symbolic earth from 124 countries and 23 Indian States was deposited in a lotus-shaped urn, and representatives from 63 countries participated. The Mother read out in her mantric voice the French text of the Charter of Auroville and of her inauguration message.

What are the conditions for living in this city of universal culture?

"From the psychological viewpoint, the required conditions are:

(1) To be convinced of the essential unity of mankind and the will to collaborate towards the material realisation of that unity;

(2) To have the will to collaborate in all that favours the future realisations. The material conditions will be worked out gradually according to the realisation."

I myself have come to the firm conviction that the growth and realisation of Auroville is in the hands of the Divine who will direct the progress of His town mainly through a guiding body of a small number of enlightened individuals, perfect instruments open to the Divine only, having an exceptional power of realisation.

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1 Words of the Mother, p. 2.
2 Words of the Mother, Third Series, p. 90.
4, 5 The Mother's messages to Auroville workers.
Let us conclude with a glimpse into the future—the Mother’s words on an ideal town:

“The plan came in all the details, but it is a plan which in its spirit and consciousness does not at all conform to what is possible terrestrially now; yet in its most material manifestation, it was based on terrestrial conditions. It is the concept of an ideal town which would be the nucleus of an ideal country and which would have contacts, purely superficial and extremely limited in their effects, with the outside world. One must then already conceive—that however is possible—of a power sufficiently strong to be at the same time a protection against aggression or bad will (it would not be a most difficult protection to have) and against infiltration and admixture. But that one can conceive, if absolutely necessary. From the social point of view, from the point of view of organisation, from the point of view of the inner life, those are not problems. The problem is the relation with what is not supramentalised, to prevent the infiltration, the admixture, that is to say, to prevent the nucleus from falling back into a lower creation—the question is about a period of transition.

“All those who have given thought to the problem have always imagined something unknown to the rest of humanity, like a gorge in the Himalayas, for example, a place unknown to the rest of the world. But this is not a solution; it is no solution at all.

“No, the only solution is the occult power, but that already implies, before anything can be done that a certain number of individuals must have reached a great perfection of realisation. But it can be conceived that if this can be done, one can have a spot isolated in the midst of the outside world (there are no contacts, it is understood), a spot where everything would be exactly in its place, as an example. Each thing is exactly in its place, each person exactly in his place, each movement exactly in its place—and in its place in an ascending progressive movement without a relapse (that is to say, quite contrary to what happens in ordinary life). Naturally, that presupposes a kind of perfection, that presupposes a kind of unity, that presupposes that the different aspects of the Supreme can be manifested; and necessarily, an exceptional beauty, a total harmony and a power strong enough to hold the forces of Nature under submission. For example, even if this spot were surrounded by the forces of destruction, they would not have the power to act, the protection would be sufficient. All that requires utmost perfection in the individuals who would be the organisers of such a thing.”

OSCAR

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

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1 Bulletin, November 1961, pp. 25-27
Q. What is fine print?
A. Fine print is the smallest type used for printing in a good press. It is called 6 point or diamond type.

Q. My eyes are sensitive to light, what should I do?
A. Every morning for a few minutes face the sun with eyes closed while moving the head and body from side to side.

Q. Why is it bad for the eyes to look at the sign-boards in the marker-place or in other busy places?
A. Usually one looks at the sign-boards while in fast movement and this gives strain to the eyes. Also, the letters of the sign-board are quite big, the eye tries to see the big letters all at a time and in such an attempt loses central fixation.

Q. I want to know something about the construction and functioning of the eye. And here how does Dr. Bates’s view differ from the orthodox?
A. Have you seen a photographic camera? There is a diaphragm with an opening, a lens and a film. The eye is like a camera but it is an animate camera; it has the iris with an opening called ‘pupil’, the lens and retina. You adjust the focus in a camera by a change in the length of the body; the eye also adjusts its focus by a change in the length of the eyeball, and this change is made by the action of the outside muscles called ‘oblique muscles’. (According to the orthodox view the eye changes its focus for vision at different distances by altering the curvature of the lens; this theory is not able to stand experimental proof and clinical observation.) The outside muscles function under the control of the mind.

But in one respect there is a great difference between the camera and the eye. The film of the camera is equally sensitive in every part; but the retina has a point of great sensitiveness, called central spot or ‘macula lutea.’ The eye with normal sight, therefore, sees best where it fixes itself. That is why the object or part of the object regarded appears best. This quality of the eye is called central fixation.

The images received on the retina are carried through a nerve, called ‘optic nerve, to the back part of the brain where the mind interprets these images and vision is the result.

This act of seeing is passive. Things are seen just as they are felt, heard or tasted without effort on the part of the person. The eye with normal sight never tries to see, and the moment it tries to see it ceases to be normal.
Q. In myopia or short-sight, does the eyeball get elongated laterally or vertically or both ways?

A. In myopia the eyeball is lengthened from the front backward; that is why the parallel rays from distant objects do not focus on the retina. It is in hypermetropia that the eyeball is too short from the front backward due to lengthening in the vertical and horizontal direction: that is, the eyeball is flattened.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

OASES

Your dateless dates and nightingales
That are the lasting light of your soul,
Your waters mirrored in the tales
Of travellers rarely knowing a goal,

Your skies that loose a loving force
Governing our many-coloured earth,
Your breeze that blows from a divine source
Bringing a promise of new-birth—

All these charge seekers from afar
With vigour for the journey ahead,
Befriend them to the Sun and Star,
Assure their hearts that Love's not dead.

Yet if none sought you, would you cease?
The wise declare: 'Delight for ever is.'

K. B. SITARAMAYYA
Communications and T.V.

All media of communication are of paramount importance today to every nation aspiring to a greater progress and enlightenment for its people.

We are entering the New Age of learning where education is programmed for discovery rather than the acquiring of data or the passive receiving of instruction. The thirst and need for knowledge is already spread beyond the walls of schools and colleges so as to make the whole world a university and all life a means for integral growth and progress.

This clamour for knowledge, this thirst and need for progress seems to be at odds with the many abnormal expressions of much of today's student youth groups who appear to be solely content to break all forms of direction and discipline. But this would be a misreading of the reaction for the cause.

What, then, is the cause of so much student revolt and youth unrest? Is it not the very reaction we should expect if we look at the matter wholly and honestly? We see clearly that a 'great stimulus to human consciousness' has come about in the last fifty years. Scientific and technological advances would alone be enough proof that the human mind has taken a great leap forward. Perhaps only twenty years ago it was possible for a parent or teacher to bluff or bamboozle the innocence of a child but every parent and teacher knows that this is not possible today. Should we be so surprised then if the modern child or student refuses to accept the archaic methods of teaching and the worn out lectures of old men we insist on thrusting upon them?

The most important thing we have to understand seems to rest with our comprehending two chief factors of the problem: the growth and impetus of the mental consciousness and the manner in which this growing consciousness is stimulated and fed through the many and various channels of communication.

The average human being accepts his physical, vital and mental growth through the years almost without question as to whether it is a growth in the right direction. A large number of people believe they have no control over the manner or direction of their growth.
The manner and direction of the growing consciousness of the youth of the nation would normally be the responsibility of teachers, professors, and those who delegate educational authority from the ruling heads of state. But, in the cybernetic world we are entering, industry and Big Business have a major voice in communicating modern trends of scientific discovery and technical know-how.

The man in the street is constantly being subjected to the influence of minds other than his own through the medium of modern channels of communication such as advertising in all its many forms subjective and objective; the telephone, the radio, the cinema and, in most countries today, television.

The question that comes immediately to mind is: Should the direction and control of communications media be the responsibility of the state? Should it be a question for state or government legislation? Or should it be left to flourish only in the hands of those who can afford to pay for its usage as a means to acquire more money, more power, more arbitrary control?

The television age will be a very important period in the future history of India. We live in an age that challenges the errors of the past and the truths of the future. India sees herself today standing in the position of a possible exemplar for the whole world and her responsibility is not only to the youth of India but to the growing souls of all mankind.

If India allows the TV medium to fall into the hands of those who consider it only as a means to make more money, irresponsible as to the manner of its influence on the youth of the nation so long as that influence sells the patent medicine or soporific they advertise, then India will turn away from its responsibility and the opportunity to make the best and most effective use of this extremely valuable medium of communication.

TV has low visual orientation as against a high involvement potential. Its influence will take into its orbit the very lowest intelligence groups as well as the highest levels of intelligence. Therefore it will have the power to influence (for good or evil) the largest section of the nation in the quickest time for the longest and most constant periods of its daily life.

It hardly bears thinking about that such power and influence should be in the hands of persons without the vision and imagination to make of it a bright tool forged for the benefit of a nation struggling to find its true place in the world.

Marshall McLuhan, in his Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, says: "The threat of Stalin or Hitler was external. The electric technology is within the gates, and we are numb, deaf, blind, and mute, about its encounter with the Gutenberg technology, on and through which the American way of life was formed. The spiritual and cultural reservations that the oriental peoples may have towards our technology will avail them not at all."

It is imperative that governments consider the moral, educational, cultural and spiritual reaction to widespread TV communications before it gets out of their hands into the control of the private sector who will have only one consideration—that of
increasing their bank balance. India does not have to copy the West in its use of this powerful medium of communication. If the children of India are subjected to the commands of the TV image as we have seen happen in Western countries one can only expect an even greater disaster to emerge from the psycho-mimetic skill with which they carry out such commands. The TV medium is in most countries only an extension of the comic-book iconography and may soon be carried to such lengths as to alienate children from all genuine interest in study. This in any developing country would be a tragedy of the first magnitude.

The wisest course to follow would be for the government to be advised by the educationists of the country—the experts in employing the most up-to-date methods in schools, colleges, technical institutions, and universities. Needless to say it will be most important as to who actually controls the medium, because, in McLuhan's words, 'the medium is the message' or the basic source of effect that influences outlook and action in all further growth of education, moral standards, cultural excellence and those inner and outer aspirations man might have for a wider view of life, a higher and brighter vision of human consciousness beyond the limitations of our present animal nature.

Once TV begins to be accepted as a major medium of communication in India one can imagine the widespread effect its influence would have on the growing population of town and village striving to equate its agricultural needs with the developing competition of science and technology.

If this powerful influence is used to raise the overall consciousness of the people so that its values, skills, and knowledge are expanded and elevated to higher standards, then India, as the major developing country in the world, fulfills her swadharma and justifies her birthright in the sacred soil of the nation and the truth inherent in her soul.

**Thought of The Month**

"The constitution of man consists of three principles of nature, sattva, rajas, and tamas, the comprehensive, active and passive elements of universal action,... This conception of the knowing faculty made the removal of tamas, the disciplining of rajas and the awakening of sattva the main problem of the teacher. He had to train the student to be receptive of illumination from within."

—SRI AUROBINDO *The Brain of India*, pp. 20-21.

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February 21, 1968

**Psychology in Education**

Any theory of psychology in education has to be assessed in relation to the individual application of the theory. It is no longer tenable to imagine that theory and
practice proceed in a natural sequence of statement and action. The practice of psychology or the application of any behavioral science in relation to children at school is so fraught with dangerous pitfalls of consequential ignorance that it is better in most cases to allow natural environment, instructive common sense, and good will to deal with the various difficulties of children.

The psychologist of the future will have to be nothing less than a yogi. It is not enough for a doctor to have read Freud, Adler and Jung, or even to have collected a vast amount of case-histories and relevant data to qualify as a school psychiatrist or a psychiatric counsellor to children in their formative years of education. The student counsellor of the future will have to have entered into the inner parts of his own being, experienced the subconscious and subliminal levels of his own growing consciousness if he is to advise another human being on those very states of consciousness.

On what basis of psychological knowledge does the professional psychiatrist understand and approach the mental and emotional difficulties his patient expresses? Is it not merely an extension of the physical sciences in their limited field of observation and investigation? Even the recounting of a ‘dream’ may have various interpretations which can be endlessly futile if the psychiatrist does not know the first simple, but quite-difficult-to-ascertain, fact: from where the patient speaks. Unless he can first answer this fundamental question he can only depend upon precedent, case-histories and the data from the behaviour pattern often based on an autocratic tradition evinced from a too-possessive parent or an over-intense teacher, who have also read something on child psychology.

Sri Aurobindo says in the chapter on the Three Modes of Nature in The Synthesis of Yoga:¹

The idea of the three essential modes of Nature is a creation of the ancient Indian thinkers and its truth is not at once obvious because it was the result of long psychological experiment and profound internal experience. Therefore without a long inner experience, without intimate self-observation and intuitive perception of the Nature-forces it is difficult to grasp accurately or firmly utilise.

These modes or gunas are given the names sattwa, rajas, tamas. Sattwa is the force of equilibrium and translates in quality as good and harmony, happiness and light; rajas is the kinetic force and translates in quality as struggle and effort, passion and action; tamas is the force of inconscience and inertia and translates in quality as obscurity and incapacity and inaction. These distinctions are used not only for self-analysis but are to be found in all aspects of evolving Nature. Even in physical Nature the dynamic form of these qualities acts and interacts to determine the various structures of things. The very poise of atomic structure is maintained or not by this interaction of the three gunas. Human nature formed of mind, life and

¹ The Synthesis of Yoga, Ch. X, p. 227.
body is determined by a combination of these interacting modes and their forces. In
the reception to ecological contacts and the reaction to them, the three modes
determine the temper of the recipient and the character of the response.

Western psychology understands very little of the working of these gunas and has
even less actual inner experience of them. For example, it is not generally under­
stood that there are three minds in the being: the mental, vital and physical minds,
each having its own mental function and response centres. When the average person
says: "I think I would like an orange," there is no mental function, but rather a
mixture of vital desire and physical hunger or sense reaction to the sight of an orange.
In fact the average human being rarely thinks at all on a purely mental level; his
behaviour responses follow a certain pattern which is usually determined by a very
complex mixture of ecological contacts, parental influences (genetic or hereditary),
social mores and traditions, inherited or congenital fears, environmental instincts
and latent animal defense responses, interwoven into the overall fabric of his outer
and inner life.

This vast universal ocean of consciousness can be entered only by the initiate, the
adept, the yogi, and then only by practice and personal experience, not by any theory
of "magic", metaphysical conceit or intellectual insight; and certainly not by any
psychological measurement, whether I.Q., M.M.Q. or any other quotient.

Ralph Hodgson writes:

I've looked as far as I can see,
And that's not far down into me...
Tell me it's a pretty sight!
Look again and take a light!

I. A. Richards in his Forenote to "The Art of Letters", Lu Chi's "Wen Fu,"
A.D. 302, says:

Much depends on the kind of light. The lights of the Western tradition show
us things to be supremely afraid of; knowledge, if it can be achieved, is condem­
nation. Chinese lights, by contrast, are reassuring. There is nothing much to
fear and no good reason to doubt.

The Western world would do well to heed the lights of Asian wisdom today
The psychology of the three gunas and the yogic experience of the inner parts of the
being and the recognition of universal forces was already old when most of the Western
world was in the cradle of civilization To venture ignorantly into these inner states
of the being without true guidance, to delve into the subconscious without the know­
ledge of the subliminal or the sanction of the psychic being is to court dangers enough,
but to attempt to correct or even deal with the inner life of another human being
without one's own inner knowledge of the self is nothing less than a crime. It is even
more of a crime when it is practised under the auspices of a doctor of science, a
professor of psychology or under the aegis of any academic degree which bases its

1 M M Q = Multi-Media Quotient.
knowledge on books, traditional learning and examinations rather than on the light of individual inner experience.

Psychological investigation had already been done by our remote forefathers, for we read in the Aitareya Upanishad that, entering upon possession of the material world and the body, the Purusha, the Conscious Soul, asks himself, “If utterance is by speech and life by the breath, vision by the eye, hearing by the ear, thought by the mind, then what am I?” Yet in the end, it goes on to say, “He beheld this conscious being which is Brahman utterly extended and he said to himself, ‘Now have I really seen.’”

Sri Aurobindo says in *Evolution*:
Modern psychological experiment and observation have proceeded on two different lines which have not yet found their point of meeting. On the one hand psychology has taken for its starting point the discoveries and the fundamental theses of the physical sciences and has worked as a continuation of physiology... The other line of psychological investigation is still frowned upon by orthodox science, but it thrives and yields its results in spite of the anathema of the doctors. It leads us into by-paths of psychical research, hypnotism, mesmerism, occultism and all sorts of strange psychological gropings.

Both of these lines of investigation talk of an Inconscient or Subconscious Self. Is it not obvious that Western psychology is still asking the first question of the Aitareya Upanishad, and is yet to ask the ultimate question and so come to know (see) that the Conscient therefore, and not the Inconscient, was the Truth at which the ancient psychology arrived?

*Thought of the Month*

“Science is a right knowledge, in the end only of processes, but still the knowledge of processes too is part of a total wisdom and essential to a wide and a clear approach towards the deeper Truth behind.”

*Sri Aurobindo, Evolution, p. 29.*

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*The Ideal of the Synthesis*

Mankind, in his climb out of animality and ignorance, has come to the point where his conscious effort has to become aware of the Divine Power above leaning down to help him. The more he grows into the faith It is there, the more he learns to rely on Its ‘participation’ in his life, the more sure and quick will be his realization of the Divine Synthesis, the Swabhava of his being, the truth of his individual purpose in the universal scheme of things.

Man is fast growing tired and unsatisfied with learning merely to earn money;
that must still be the first consideration of those masses who have yet to acquire the
first necessities of life so as not to be worried by them. But man, being man, does
not live by bread alone. There are other foods necessary to his growth. Other stimul
and pabulum which more rightly guide his longing towards the ideal for which he is
intended. It is the “few”, the pioneers of the race, who take the initiative into their
hands and point the inevitable Path mankind must ultimately take to journey on the
Way of the soul’s destiny, the teleological urge in life, the purpose for being on this
planet at this time and in this particular form.

To go on living as a vegetable or as an animal is now unendurable to the soul
in man. Man is in revolt against all status quo formulae keeping him tied to a past
that is quickly dying. Instinctively and intuitively the youth of the age, the man of
tomorrow, knows that he need not die—knows that death is a habit linked with the
vegetable and animal life of the past and that future dawns call to That within him,
deep within him, which recognises the truth of immortality.

We have said before in these Newsletters that man today is confronted with the
compelling need to find some basis of identification between what he does and what he
is. He has to find a new dimension of morality, not one of prohibition but of creativity
—the outer must recognise the inner and the occult power of which the inner is ca­
pable. The synthesis of inner and outer is the immediate necessity of man’s learning
today. Unless all our efforts are directed to prepare for this new and urgent need,
all experiments in new methods of teaching or instructing or guiding young
people towards the golden future which is their inheritance will be of no avail because
it will be contrary to the Truth which is here waiting to manifest, in all its grandeur,
the Supramental Glory of a New World. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have long
testified to this Synthesis. They have embodied it in Their own example, if the world
of man could only see. Now it is the oestrus to goad mankind into a new way of life,
of feeling and thinking and being. We are witnesses to the birth of a New World
which will come into being in spite of all man’s ignorance, stupidity and arrogant
violence—because it is the Divine who is the arbiter of Man’s Destiny and He knows
what He is doing. But why should we not be conscious instruments and glory in the
joy and Ananda of great participation?

Thought of the Month

“Through the apparent chaos of today a new and better order is being formed,
but to see, one must have faith in the Divine Grace.”

Words of the Mother

NORMAN C. DOWSETT