

MOTHER INDIA

SEPTEMBER, 1969

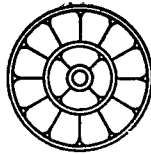
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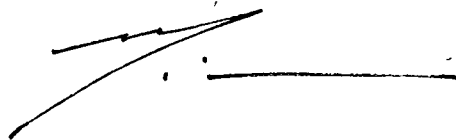


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXI

No. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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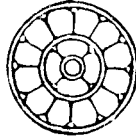
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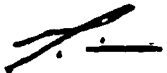
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

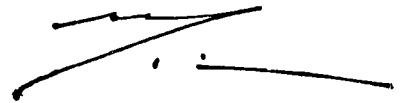


*C'est dans le
Silence
que le vrai progrès
peut se faire.* 

It is in Silence that true progress can be made.

TWO MESSAGES OF THE MOTHER

*Les querelles sont
tout à fait contraire
à l'esprit d'Auroville*



Quarrels are altogether contrary to the spirit of Auroville.

25. 4. 69.

The power of division
is unstable and impermanent

Union works for a steady
power and a harmonious
future.



TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

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

APRIL 4, 1940

IN the morning, radio gave the news that Lord Zetland had declared that no reforms could be given to India unless Congress and Muslims came to a compromise.

SRI AUROBINDO (*looking at P*): So there won't be any more reforms?

P: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: But why does Zetland stop where he does? He can say that even after the agreement between Congress and Muslims there will be no reforms. For there is the Hindu Mahasabha, the Khaksars have to be considered, C. R. and Nyekar, Nehru and the Socialists have to be dealt with, and then the Harijans!

N: There doesn't seem to be any way for Gandhi but to fight.

P: Already Government has started arrests. Ranga Iyer is arrested.

N: That is Defence Act.

P: Others will follow now.

N: Yesterday Nishikanta gave a triplet banana to show to the Mother and ask if he could take it. The Mother laughed and inquired: "Is he starving? He can take it with milk after crushing it sufficiently." This morning NK said he couldn't take the whole. Even then there was some heaviness. I said I would report to Sri Aurobindo.

S: But why does he want to attract Sri Aurobindo's notice? To have pity on him that he can't take even a banana? (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: He seems to be forced into Yogic austerity! (*Laughter*)

N: The vision he had some time back seems to have come true. Once during his sleep he saw a vital being pointing to his abdomen and saying: "That is the source of your strength. I am going to finish it." Then the being struck at the pit of NK's stomach like a bull with his head down. NK groaned and retaliated by suddenly giving a sharp squeeze to the being's scrotum. At this the being fled. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: The being appears to have been right about Nishikanto. The

pit of the stomach is the vital emotional centre, which is the source of his strength. But it would be interesting to know what happened to the scrotum of the vital being. (*Laughter*)

After this, S gave Sri Aurobindo a Bengali poem to see, as requested by Mridu. The poem was written by Jyoti on the presentation copy of her book বঙ্গ গোলাপ (Red Rose) to Mridu.

SRI AUROBINDO: She says that Mridu's business is cooking and hers writing. The শত্রু (friend) finds the cooking sweeter than poetry.

N: Anilbaran was forwarded the letter of an old correspondent of his who is a victim of asthma. In the letter he says he is the worst sufferer: he hasn't seen a single asthmatic patient suffering like him, day and night without any respite.

SRI AUROBINDO: Every sick person says like that of his own disease. He should be made to live with Suren. (*Laughter*)

S: And then it will be seen whose suffering is the worst!

N: The correspondent has asked Anilbaran to write an article on কর্মফল (Results of Karma) on the points about which he himself has asked him.

SRI AUROBINDO: What will Anilbaran write?

N: Whatever he writes will be contradicted.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, Basanta Chatterji will say it is not in accord with Shastra and Meghnad Saha will say it is not according to Science.

N: The questionnaire has many points. The first is: (1) By whom are Karma recorded?

SRI AUROBINDO: By whom? There is our office upstairs.

P: Chitragupta does that.

N: Point (2): Many people die in an earthquake or a train-disaster. Is it to be inferred that all had acted in the same way in their previous births?

SRI AUROBINDO: He means the same way in the past because they all had the same experience now—quaked together? (*Laughter*)

N: Point (3). Sri Aurobindo has said that physical death is followed by vital and mental deaths hereafter.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have never said that. I have spoken of the dissolution of the several sheaths.

S: Why does Anilbaran send all this to Sri Aurobindo? Does he expect Sri Aurobindo to answer it?

SRI AUROBINDO: I have already answered such things in *The Life Divine*. Let the correspondent have a copy of it for Rs. 10.

N: He may ask Anilbaran to lend him his copy. (*Laughter*)

P: Like somebody asking him for train-fare to come here?

N: This must be Anilbaran's Karma-fruit: otherwise why should he come to be in contact with this man?

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps he was taught Yoga by him in a previous birth and now it has turned on him. (*Laughter*)

APRIL 4, 1940

In the morning came the news of C. F. Andrews' death.

SRI AUROBINDO (*looking at P after the sponging was over*): These doctors are wonderful. They had given out the news that the operation was successful. Now Andrews is dead.

P: There is the famous joke that the operation was successful but the patient died.

SRI AUROBINDO: This is not a joke but a reality. This is the second case of late. The other was Brabourne.

N: I don't know why Andrews went to Presidency Hospital. Major Drummonds who seems to have operated on him doesn't have a very high reputation. There were other leading surgeons—even among the Indians.

SRI AUROBINDO: Europeans have a prejudice against Indians but Andrews should have known better. Arjava had a very poor opinion of the I.M.S.'s. He said only third-rate people come here as I.M.S.'s.

N: Why should first-rate people come here when they are well provided for at home?

S: The surgeons sometimes diagnose wrongly and remove an organ only to find that there was nothing wrong with it.

SRI AUROBINDO: And they can't put it back! (*Laughter*)

N: There are also differences among doctors. Venkataraman was told by one oculist that needling was not safe for a second cataract. Another said there was nothing wrong with needling. One said saline injections might be tried, another that they should have been tried at the outset only. One oculist said "A very broad iridectomy has been done; the old-fashioned method was a bad one."

SRI AUROBINDO: And the old-fashioned will say that the modern people are faddists. Who did the operation?

N: A relative.

SRI AUROBINDO: Relatives will do like that. (*Laughter*)

P: The Secretary of the Muslim League states that the Muslims were originally Hindus. Sikander Hyat Khan comes from Rajput stock and the Secretary himself had Brahmin ancestors, and so they can all claim a separate Muslim India.

SRI AUROBINDO: If they were Hindus, why do they claim anything separate?

P: He also says that the British took India from Muslim hands. So they were the more recent rulers. Somebody from Madras has replied that India was taken from the Sikhs, Rajputs and Maharattas. The Muslims were decadent at that period.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is true, though there was some Muslim rule.

P: The Madras man also says that the argument from being rulers is funny.

The Harijans, who are converts to Christianity, may after 50 years claim that because they have the same religion as the British, they were the rulers. (*Laughter*) Somebody else said that if only one district from U.P. was included in Punjab and one from Bihar in Bengal, then the Hindus would become a majority. This present division is fictitious and not natural.

SRI AUROBINDO: In Assam it is like that. Sylhet has been included in Assam only for the Muslim majority there. Some parts of Bengal are included in Orissa deliberately and so also Birbhum and Manbhum.

EVENING

P (*showing some paintings*): Here is the work of a Chinese painter who has come to India.

SRI AUROBINDO (*looking at them*): They are very powerful and very Chinese.

P: A picture, by this painter, of Chinese generals, has been done in European style. It appeared in the *Visvabharati*.

SRI AUROBINDO: Poor imitation of Europe. When the Chinese painters imitate, they produce a very weak result.

P: It is said that the Chinese are the world's greatest artists. Their handwriting is such as to make an artist.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, their calligraphy is a good training for the mind and for art. Arabic calligraphy also is very delicate and thorough in detail. The letters and the writings of other nations are too utilitarian.

APRIL 6, 1940

P: N didn't quite understand how calligraphy...

N: First of all, what is calligraphy? Good handwriting?

SRI AUROBINDO: All good handwriting is not calligraphy. Calligraphy is artistic handwriting. Haven't you heard of illuminated manuscripts?

P: Chinese and Arabic books are very artistic, with beautiful borders. It seems William Morris tried to produce Homer's epics like that.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Roman script is too utilitarian to produce a good effect. In England they are trying oriental calligraphy now.

EVENING

As often, C suddenly burst into laughter, looking at N.

SRI AUROBINDO (*turning in N's direction*): Laughter of Yogic communion?

P: There is an idea that D. M. Sen of Shantiniketan will be reviewing *The Life Divine* in the *Hibbert Journal*. But Jayantilal tells me that he is a scholar in Western

Psychology. He hasn't read much of Eastern philosophy. It will be difficult for him to speak on Yogic psychology and philosophy.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then how can he do the reviewing? Of course there is plenty of mental psychology in *The Life Divine*, as well as Yogic.

P: It is very difficult for these people to grasp Yogic psychology. I once wrote that the seat of the emotions is in the heart, and a critic sarcastically said, "Now we are to believe that the heart is the seat of the emotions!"

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, where then is the seat? Outside the body? Or in some gland?

N: In the mind.

SRI AUROBINDO: Mind is an abstract term.

P: They will say, "In the subconscious."

SRI AUROBINDO: That is psychoanalysis. There is also a gland psychology and another that runs everything together.

P: Jayantilal met Jung in Ceylon. He gave him your books to read, but he couldn't find much in them. Maybe because he considers himself too great.

SRI AUROBINDO: Jung has said India has plenty of psychology.

N: Amal intends to bring out a book of his poems.

SRI AUROBINDO: But he must not expect to be hailed as a great poet or even to have a good sale.

N: No, he expects to sell about 100 copies among friends and realise the cost. He asks if you could write a foreword.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, no.

N: "Foreword" is a misnomer, he says; it is a sort of blessing he wants.

SRI AUROBINDO: A puff of blessing?

P: In order to sell well he must be modern.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, and publish in England and moderns like Spender must recommend.

P: Amal said he listened to Harin's radio talk on the Ashram. If one good statement was made, it was immediately counteracted by something quite opposite. For example, the speaker said, "I hear Sri Aurobindo is busy writing an epic—a very good thing, but what shall we do with an epic when people are starving?"

SRI AUROBINDO: When epics were being written in the past, were there no people starving? And surely poetry was not written only for the proletariat? It is the same type of argument as: "Don't get rich when people are poor; don't be happy when people are miserable."

APRIL 7, 1940

N: Anilbaran wants to bring out a selection from your books and he corresponded with his English publishers, asking if they would publish it. They have said that such a book would have a very small sale in England but they wanted to know

whether it would sell in India.

SRI AUROBINDO: A selection is not much use at present. It may have some sale in India but not as much as a whole book on one theme. Selections are all right if one's books are widely read and appreciated. Selections from either a popular book or a popular writer would have a good sale.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

THE MARVELLOUS WORLD

How can it be unreal—the marvellous world? But vain is dispute;
The Truth is one and many are the ways of distorting the calm seer sight.
Life is indeed a million-sided quest, an adventure of Light,
From the heart of the Inane a gold music-burst of a celestial flute.

A frail picce of strange and floating cloud is thought,
It takes its hue red or green, grey or ashen, but knows not
The how or whence of the flashing beams, the face of the One,
And clings to the passion-gleam of a sunless domain

In the self's closed room where Ignorance mates ever with Death.
If you would possess, O Soul! the deathless vision, be possessed by it,
Drench in God-delight each cell of the body, being's each bit,
Dive into the wonder deeps of a white-lotus Birth.

An unexpected paradise of a ruby-fire-wine
Is now my breast, each rapture-throb a song divine.

VENKATARANGA

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF 1920-1926

(Continued from the issue of August 15)

(These Notes were not taken on the spot. They are recollections of the talks at which their author, V. Chidanandam, was present. Whatever in these talks seized the young aspirant's mind was jotted down the next day. Neither complete continuity nor absolute accuracy could be maintained. But in reconstructing from memory the author sought to capture something of the language no less than of the thought-substance. In places, later editing has been found necessary in order to clarify notations which had served merely as signposts.)

MORAL control is mental control—that is, by the will. It keeps the weaknesses away or rather keeps them down, it does not get rid of them. To get rid of them, spiritual methods are required.

Meditating with eyes open clears the sight and helps in opening the psychic sight between the eyebrows.¹ That is why Yogis concentrate on the tip of the nose and then gradually between the eyebrows.

To give spiritual help to sick persons living the ordinary life is not as easy as in the case of persons practising sadhana. The forces are very obstinate and the giving of help requires constant concentration.

Curing diseases by vital power or any other power is far from easy because the recipient must have the capacity to receive the force. Then there is the question of the plane from which you bring your power and the plane which has to be reached for effective action. If you can reach the very plane where the attack has taken place, you may succeed.

There are degrees and grades among Yogis. There are ranges and levels in the supermind more clear and definite than those that you may mark in the mind. If you talk of the essential Being, there is no difference between you and the ant or the tree. The difference consists in what is put forth in nature, in prakriti. On the mind-plane

¹ The word "psychic" here seems equivalent to "inner" or "occult". Elsewhere in these notes it is mostly used in its common meaning, which refers to subtle or subliminal psychological factors. The special connotation, bearing on what Sri Aurobindo distinguishes in his major books as the "soul", was seldom in mind in 1920 and thereabouts (Editor)

one may say, for instance, that Tagore has a richer development or a greater personality than J.C. Bose. In the supermind also what is put forth through one movement of prakriti need not be identical with that which is put forth through another.

The story of Krishna is a mixture of facts, traditions and psychic experiences. You cannot say that the killing of the Asuras is a physical fact. The poet may have got it from the psychic intuitive plane or from his own imagination, from the psycho-mental level or any other. As long as we find Krishna a divine power on the psychic or spiritual plane and see in inner vision the body he has there, does it matter much whether he lived in a physical body or not?

To supramentalise the physical, the earth-law has to be changed and a new atmosphere created. So long as everything in the lower is not ready, the supermind does not come down. Everything is ready behind, but the doubt is there somewhere on the mental plane, some uncertainty persists. If there had been a certainty on the mental plane, the descent would have been achieved. Where there is certainty, no room for struggle is left. Also, the hostile forces are very strong. That is why the thing has not been done till now. When the Truth comes down to the earth-plane, it will create a special atmosphere in the world and then it will be more easy for human beings to embody that Truth by coming into direct touch with the Guru and opening themselves to him. The intuitive faculty will become more general. No doubt, an atmosphere is there now that was not before, a power also is there that was not at any other time, but the supramental Truth has not yet been made a dynamic factor in the physical..

Supramentalising the physical means bringing into it the two fundamental laws of the supermind: harmony and truth.

The Devas, the Gods, were always defeated by the Asuras, the Titans, because there is always a doubt in their minds about things. They want to know whether a thing is true or not, while the Asuras simply strike and are quite sure of their own thoughts. The Devas can get the victory when something from above descends and helps them.

On the Vijnana plane—which is the plane of supermind—there is no Asura. The Asura is on the mental plane. The Vedic Asura is different from the Puranic. The name “Asura” in the early Veda is given to all the Gods; thus Indra is called “Asura”. Originally it indicates puissance. The mental Asura is a mistranslation of the puissance that is in the supermind.

A common error of the European thinker about India is that he takes Buddhism for the whole of the Indian Spirit. Tagore too seems to have furthered such an idea. We find it also in Romain Rolland’s book on Gandhi. Rolland is a good writer, but

European thinkers are rather airy and wander on and do not have sufficient grasp of the realities of life.

There is talk about Buddhism and Christianity. But Buddhism and Christianity will ever remain without being given a trial. Giving them a trial means that everybody must be non-violent—and that is never going to be, so long as man is what he is.

You have mentioned Gandhi's advice to repeat "Ram Nam" when bad things arise in the mind. Well, it is not possible to stick to one's mental prakriti, mental nature-force, and master the mind with it. Mastery cannot be obtained when there is hardly any idea of the division which Indian spiritual practice achieves between purusha and prakriti, self and nature. To take things from the West and put a touch here and there from India is not to get really Indian things. The advice in question seems akin to the use of external and mechanical prayer as found in England.

There is also the advice to non-cooperators not to bequeath property to their sons. This ideal of poverty was never the Indian ideal, not even for the Brahmin. It is the Christian ideal that one should be poor. You find the Indian ideal in the Ramayana, where civic life is described: there was no man who did not have a garden. Even in Buddhism the monks had communal property and the householder had his own. We must not mix up the ideal of poverty with the ideal of non-attachment. The former was never ours. The latter is a different matter altogether.

"Internationalism" is all right on its own plane. But we must have nations first, before there is internationalism. Many people make some sort of mental construction without any idea of the reality and the limitations which reality imposes on them. They injure the very cause for which they stand. Surely, you should be on good terms with your neighbour, but that does not mean that you should allow him to come into your house and occupy it!

Talking to Mira¹ in Japan about the spiritual truths set forth in the *Arya* Tagore said "They are all right but do you think a man can realise them?" Mira replied, "They are of no use if they cannot be realised." Tagore said, "It is impossible to realise them. You can mentally feel the vague Infinite and imaginatively weave out something and have a sort of poetic meditation." But Tagore also wrote to Barindra, "Your brother has the Vani, the Word, that can awaken the country."

The Yogic experience of floating in the ocean like a fish or flying like a bird in the sky is all on the mental plane.

In the experience of Sushupti, deep sleep, you do not project yourself into the external or the internal being. Ordinarily, Yogis use Sushupti to go into the super-conscious. They make no gradations above the mind; from the mind they jump

¹ In 1920 the Mother was known in Sri Aurobindo's circle by her own name only.

straight into Parabrahman. But in the Upanishads you find the various stages in a general non-rigid way: for example, intuition and revelation.

In Ramakrishna you clearly find intuition and revelation of a high order—but within a limited area. They are not of the universal kind.

While I was in jail, all the conventional ideas were broken in me. For 8 or 10 days all sorts of thoughts—thoughts of cruelty and hatred—the most disgusting thoughts—came till the mind ceased to give any reaction to them and then all the old constructions were shattered. You cannot have the higher things unless your mind is very elastic and open. You have also to accept the Asuric and Rakshasic things, you must get the knowledge of them, know what they are and then throw them away: otherwise the ascent would be narrow and limited, not rich and varied...

Ramakrishna, we are told, was averse to exercising his Yogic power on the external plane. But the vital and physical being must be prepared to go in for all kinds of things.

In jail I got an intuition of the Yogic power called "Anima". This is a sense of subtlety in the physical body, by which one can throw away all oppression, fatigue, discomfort of heat and cold, and disease. As one advances in sadhana he feels a greater and greater subtlety in himself but it does not stay nor does it come in its fullness at first. If the fullness came, the whole work of dealing with the physical would be done.

Lele had extraordinary powers. He had a great power of opening his disciples to the higher consciousness very quickly. I got three things from him. First, the silencing of the mind and, as a result, the Silent Brahman, the vast, wide infinite being that is not at all shadowy but quite substantial. I kept this always afterwards. Secondly, the power to speak and write without using the brain. Thirdly, though this was not a strong element with Lele at the time, the putting of myself under a higher guidance.

Many who came to Lele were instantaneously opened. Barindra took three days to open. Upendra did not believe this. Lele called him, made him sit down near him and then in five minutes he opened him and Upendra felt peace. Barindra was given Kamananda, delight of sex-sensation. He told Lele that he did not want it. But Lele said, "You do want it, there is impurity in your being," and he asked Barindra to put on a belt (bandhini) so that he might hold his desires up above the navel and not allow them to go below. Lele asked him to eat only rice and ghee.

Probably Lele was at that time on the psychic and spiritual plane and had not come down to the vital; he might have lost his power on the vital, for in his vital being he was a very ordinary man. He was not a strong intellect, either. There was some narrowness there.

It is said that whoever heard Chaitanya repeating the name of Hari shared his Ananda and imparted it to others. This kind of ecstasy is like a wave. It produces an effect on many individuals—and they may remain better after the experience.

Protestantism is mostly arid and shallow. The Catholics have more religious sense, some genuine ritual and symbolism. Some of them know that the Virgin Mother stands for Nature who by union with the Supreme, the Holy Ghost, gives birth to the Divine Man, the Christ. The raising of Christ to Heaven is symbolic of the raising of human nature into the Divine.

The senses are not restricted or merely localised, and the power behind them is psychic in character. The centre of the senses is at the meeting-point of the vital and physical beings and from there you can use them anywhere and for anything. The Westerners are finding out these truths now because the subtle planes are approaching the earth-plane. Cases of eyeless sight are either purely psychic or psycho-physical. Mira in her childhood was able to see even in the dark; she had developed this sight. Now her physical eyes are a little weaker and she sees with what may be termed the general sight. Thus she is able to see from behind—that is, from the neck, when it is open. This general sight works more accurately than the particularised physical and it sees best when the eyes are closed or when it sees from behind, because then there is no mixture due to the physical sense. The psychic vision is between the eyebrows in front; there can also be a vision above the head; you can see both up and behind with closed eyes. Broadly, all these sights can be called psychic.

The centres of eyeless sight are: (1) near the forehead, cheeks and nose for seeing colours; (2) the chest; (3) behind the head; (4) finger-tips. At the beginning one sees colours, lights, and then a mist and, when these disappear, one sees the object.

If you take a person and hypnotise him and ask him to see an object through the hand and chest, he will do so. If you take away the object he will not see it. But he can be made to see through a piece of paper or a cardboard or even a wall.

It is possible to feel the touch of different persons a great distance away and also how they must be feeling. The case of the Yogi feeling the blows given to a bullock and showing the marks on his own back is due to the psychic sense but the intensity of it, with those strong results on the body, is due to something else.

My sadhana works by a concentrated process gradually preparing and organising a physical mould for the inner experience. In Mira's case a certain preparation goes on behind the surface and at once the thing is put forth from behind, and once it is brought to the surface it is there for good, it is permanent and imperative. This is the "involved process", nothing visible on the surface but suddenly everything comes up.

In the knowledge by identity, you know the one essential thing, by knowing which everything necessary is known. What is the use of knowing all sorts of details? Even God, in a certain sense, does not know everything. He need not bother to do so. He manages things by means of His Deputies.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

THE MASTER AND THE DISCIPLE

Is it possible for one to lead a spiritual life and yet be a lawyer by profession? Does not arguing and pleading for a plaintiff which is not strictly true conflict with the demands of sadhana? This is a question that is often raised and a sincere seeker like Kodanda Rama Rao could not but ask Sri Aurobindo. And here is Sri Aurobindo's reply reproduced in a frank and faithful book of reminiscences by Rao.¹

"It is true that the lawyer's profession as practised by many in India is full of things which are not what they should be but it is not a necessary character of the legal profession. Even here many carry on the profession with a scrupulous honesty in all respects like Duraiswami and succeed. A lawyer has to do his best for his client and make every point he legitimately can in his favour—to bring out the weak note of the case is the other party's function, not his; but it is his best to which he is bound, he is not bound to do what the client demands as the best. It is a question of establishing an honourable but practical and commonsense standard for the profession."

Kodanda Rama Rao, it may be mentioned, came under the influence of Sri Aurobindo during the days of the *Arya* when he was yet a student in his teens. He came to Pondicherry along with a friend in the Christmas holidays of the year 1920 to see him. The meeting was made possible, he records, owing to the intercession of Paul Richard. Describing his first meeting, the author writes:

"Sri Aurobindo was seated behind an oblong table covered with a blue cloth in the verandah and was glancing through the morning newspapers. We stood before him and saluted him with folded hands and he made a sign asking us to sit in the chairs before him. An effulgent personality he was...he looked deep into me and I felt a thrill passing through my being, and I became speechless. My friend asked some questions about Yoga and whether we should appear for the final B.A. degree examination, which was to come off in the next three months or give up our studies and join the political fray, or take to Yoga. He advised us to appear for the examination remarking that the question of Yoga or politics could be finally decided afterwards. I asked whether Pranayama was quite necessary and whether Yoga could be practised without it. He replied in the affirmative and asked me to surrender everything to the Divine and call in the Higher Power to do the Sadhana. Several doubts I had disappeared on seeing Him and so I could not further question him. After a short silence, he blessed us as we took leave of him. When departing I prayed for permission to see him whenever I wanted, which he granted graciously.

"Sri Aurobindo had a dynamic force which could be felt in his presence, as he was radiating it all round and into those that could hold it. He...awakened the aspir-

¹ *At the Feet of the Master*. Pub. Sri Aurobindo Society Centre, Arvindnagar, Anantpur (A.P.). Pp. 48. Price: Rs. 1.50.

ing soul in me to go forward, more by his will than words, in the manner of the great Rishis of old, who worked wonders through their silence and look and will-power."

A year and a half later, the young student completes his graduation course and comes to stay with Sri Aurobindo for sadhana, for a year to begin with. How did he begin? What course was he asked to follow? How was he led?

"Sri Aurobindo did not impart instructions or give initiation through a mantra or a set code of spiritual practices, such as doing japa or Pranayama or bhajan, or other methods of concentration or meditation. No rules were laid down to be followed, and no philosophy or religion to be accepted or studied. There was therefore full freedom for a sadhaka to pursue any method or all methods congenial to his or her nature ... The Divine Master's experiences in the shape of philosophy were to be found in his immortal writings in the *Arya* for our theoretical and practical guidance. His divine personality was before the sadhaka like a full-blown lotus, radiating peace, power, light and bliss, to draw from. The only practical rule of sadhana was to surrender one's entire being to the Divine and invoke the Divine Shakti to purify and lighten up the being and transform the same from top to toe by ardent and sincere aspiration, rejecting all lower suggestions. 'All life is Yoga,' declared the Master. These are very simple rules indeed, but when one enters the path all the difficulties of the nature appear, and the divine cows representing Light have to be rescued from the tenebrous caverns in us where they are imprisoned and thereafter we have to yoke the divine horse representing Power to our chariot, win the battle against the Dasyus, representing evil forces, and drink the ambrosial Soma juice, after great labour and victory, at the completion of the sacrifice (Yoga-Yagna).

"The Sadhana chalked out by Sri Aurobindo consists of an ascent to the highest plane of consciousness and a descent from there with the superconscient Light, Power and Ananda, to the conscient, subconscient and inconscient lower levels of mind, life and body, to effect a change of the lower being. It is a very hard endeavour and only rare souls can achieve the complete victory of the supramentalization of the whole being as envisaged by the Divine Master. The plan was there before me and it had to be worked out patiently in all its details. The task seemed to be tremendous when I thought of it slowly. But, having made a choice, there was no going back."

Among the many interesting and informative items that find place in the slender book are a description of Sri Aurobindo meditating while walking up and down his verandah for more than 6 hours a day, an account of the evening meetings with disciples when no topics were barred and Sri Aurobindo joked and laughed with them with disarming simplicity, the story of the poltergeist phenomenon that took place in 1921 and the way in which it was handled by the Mother.

There are, in these pages, brief accounts of the various experiences the author had during the course of the sadhana under the direct guidance of Sri Aurobindo. He was given a taste of the realisations recorded in the *Rigveda* and the *Gita* (including the *Viswa Rupa*). In a remarkable passage he writes:

"As I sat before the Master for meditation, the whole being used to become

numb as his Force began to work in me and fill my nerves with light and force. I felt as if he was transmitting his divine force and light into me. In his presence, the Force was felt intensely and it began to work in the body day and night and was omnipresent.”

After a stay of three years, Kodanda Rama Rao had to change his sphere of sadhana and he settled down in Andhra Pradesh where he has built up for himself a special niche. He has been quietly responsible for reaching the message of the Master to many a needy soul.

The author concludes with a moving narration of the experience he had when the Master withdrew from his physical body. “On account of a serious bronchial trouble, I could not attend the Nov. 24, 1950 darshan. My disease worsened, and it struck me that I must see the Master, and so I started for Madras on the 2nd of Dec. 1950. I got myself X-rayed and consulted my physician friend. He advised me to go back home and not to proceed to Pondicherry in my bad condition then. I hesitated and at last wended my way homewards, on the 4th. I prayed to the Master for my recovery. That night I had a dream about the passing away of a great and effulgent being, taking into himself the poison of the earth and devouring my illness also, and a bright goddess appeared by his side shedding peace and Light on the world. Next morning the papers announced the passing away of the Mighty Master and I was free from my ailment.”

M. P. PANDIT

THE ADVENTURE OF THE APOCALYPSE*

THE poet who is not merely idealistic or religious but has a direct mystical sensitivity and of whom it may be said that his adventure is of the Apocalypse—what species of poetry would he particularly aspire to write? In general answer to this query we may begin with some remarks on production from the dream-consciousness, the phenomenon now loosely known as Surrealism.

The ordinary notion about the dream-consciousness is very restricted and, though Freud and Jung have interestingly and ingeniously explored certain layers below the mind's threshold, they have not driven home the fact familiar to all practitioners of Yoga that behind the normal waking mind there is an immense range of being, with several strata or planes, each a universe in itself with objects and creatures as real as any we meet from day to day. These objects and creatures interact with our universe, pressing upon it their forms and potencies and moods. We are usually touched by them in our dreams in the midst of a welter of memories and wish-fulfillments, but even at other times there is constant communication between them and our life. Psycho-analysis skims only the surface, so to speak, of this communication; nor has it any concrete sense of the cosmic actuality, the world-substance, of what works behind. So it achieves nothing more than a fragmentary probing of the subconscious—mostly the individual subconscious and occasionally the general and collective, which is then labelled as "the collective unconscious", but even that is felt to be just a play of the similarities lying at the base of the variations of individual psychology. Often there is a stress on primitive impulses as being basic, and the more developed and subtle velleities are interpreted as refinements of these impulses. Sometimes the primitivism is avoided: "drives" that assume higher aesthetic or religious significances are seen in symbolic forms deep down within us and called "archetypes". We hear also of a "Self", from which the ego is a mere bud. Still, everything is "found" merely psychological—even God is but a psychological pattern.

Surrealism in the West, guided by the findings of Freud and Jung, does not escape the psychological taint and, with it, the limitations of a shallow and sporadic awareness of the dream-regions. One of the worst limitations is the fitful, confused, inconsequential imagery. Yoga serves to join the outwardly wakeful to the inwardly wakeful, the physical world to the supraphysical principalities and powers, the visible formulations to the occult structures of the one substance of Spirit from which everything has emanated. The symbols of the Yogic surrealist are transcriptions of inter-related occult realities: either they are adapted, though never quite subdued, to the normal mind's manner of perception and conception, or presented "neat" with the

* This title echoes that of a book of poems by the author, to which there is "A Personal Preface" and for which the present article may serve as "An Impersonal Appendix."

normal mind acting the interpreter as little as can be helped. The latter course is the rarer creativity. When it is followed, the reader is called upon all the more intensely than in the ordinary type of poetry to see and feel instead of understanding. Understanding, of course, does come ultimately, but as a fiery intuition that breaks out through seeing and feeling and reveals the coherences and significances in a total comprehensive sweep which cannot everywhere be analysed into a system of progressive parts. The particularity and precision without which no poetry can live is not ignored: the particular and precise steps are vividly realised: they, however, cannot be throughout marked as orderly phases of imaginative thought developing into a definable mental scheme. Rather, the steps seem often to be self-sufficient and there is for the normal mind some lack of connectivity: the parts, though interrelated, do not always piece together, they are harmonised mainly by an intuitive "whole view" flooding the interspaces between the parts with a subtle cementing light which does not need the labour of thought in order to know.

The Yogic surrealist's explorations of the dream-consciousness are revelatory as well as profound, and they are both profound and revelatory by being done with the occult sight directly. But there is one other characteristic: they use the occult sight not for its own sake. It is the Supreme Divine who is sought, and the occult worlds are penetrated in order that they may yield strange thrilling tangibilities of God's sweetness and grandeur by which the earth-consciousness may grow more alive to its own evolutionary purpose. The Yogic surrealist is activated by the deepest of all the occult planes, the plane of the World-Soul where the Supreme Divine has His most luminous delegate power in the subliminal, the plane in rapport with which the true soul-centre within us functions from behind the emotional heart. This centre is God's nucleus in the evolutionary process of the individual, round which the mental and vital and physical personality is built and organised. But the secret soul is not by itself the plenary inspiration of God-discovery. It has to open the subliminal upwards to the supraliminal. The planes of God's free and full being are "overhead"—answering to the innate sense we have of His living high up in the sky. The inspiration which descends from there is no longer surreal in the strict connotation of the term, unless we take the term broadly as signifying all that is beyond the reality of which our normal waking mind is aware. The ancient Upanishads distinguish two divisions in what is beyond: the dream-consciousness and the sleep-consciousness. We enter into the former through subtle centres or *chakras* which have some sort of corresponding plexuses in the physical body. We enter into the latter by going beyond the system of the inner and the outer through a *chakra* that has no corresponding physical plexus, though it is said to be in contact with the top of the head: this is the traditional "thousand-petalled lotus" above the brain. When first we break loose from both the subtle and the gross we have the experience of an infinite void, a featureless self-liberation without end, a sublime superconscious sleep. Really there is no vacuity here, cosmos on glowing vibrant cosmos is disclosed, but there is an underlying indefeasible unity through all the divine multiplicity—a single

boundless Selfhood that is perfect peace, within which and upon which perfect power is at play. From this peace and power the Yogic poet has to catch his inspiration if he is to be the apoclypt *par excellence*.

Poetic visitations from the "overhead" planes come with a vast powerful ease of illumination and harmony, for now there is no translation of the Divine into terms near the human formula: there is the original and authentic self-expression of the Spirit, the Divine uttered in the Divine's own way. A fine hierarchy climbs from intensity to greater intensity of divine substance and divine form, Spirit's matter and Spirit's manner—until the top is reached where abides what the Rishis named the Mantra, the divinest of all poetic words—sovereignly luminous and miraculously rhythmised expression like that stanza of Sri Aurobindo's, summing up his own Integral Yoga:

Arms taking to a voiceless supreme Delight,
Life that meets the Eternal with close breast,
An unvalled mind dissolved in the Infinite,
Force one with unimaginable rest.

In lines like these there is at the same time a sheer exceeding of the normal waking intelligence and an absolute fulfilment of it. For, while realities before which human logic stands dumbfounded are disclosed, a tremendous clarity rules everything, the Truth is seen face to face and the omniscient consciousness pervading all plunges right through to the very essence of our being and wakes a power of identifying ourselves with whatever is spoken of or shown. Of course, reader and reader will differ in response and some may kindle up more than others. But amidst the extremest oddity and alienness of the revelation a grip will be felt even on our whole waking consciousness and the intelligence will stir with an immense philosophical joy of ineffably understanding what yet "passeth understanding." Not only symbol at its most living and most intimate but also philosophy at its most far-reaching and most synthetising is the apocalypse of "overhead" poetry, especially when the vision and language and rhythm are of the Mantra.

We have described the supraliminal and the subliminal as two divisions of the Beyond. They are, however, not cut off from each other. They can combine and get mutually coloured to various degrees and sometimes fuse inextricably. Both are at play in all poetry that is inspired. But poetry is not always written with its eyes directly turned on them. It is written mostly with a look on the physical universe—and through the forms and scenes of this universe the subliminal and the supraliminal are glimpsed. Mystical poetry reverses the process. It does not reach the greater through the smaller but the smaller through the greater. It goes from a sense of the within to the without, from a sense of the above to the below—it catches up what are called nature and life into the light from which they are narrow projections, it is not limited by them, nor bound to their fixed terms: it does not use them to make vivid what is vague to the consciousness but rather finds them vague in comparison to what is vivid to it and suffuses them with that vividness in order to bring out what

has been vague in them. It does not compare God's infinite Self to the blue sky: it compares the blue sky to God's infinite Self. I am talking of the essential movement of mystical poetry: actually it may phrase its comparisons in the ordinary way, but the way will only serve to express a direct feel of the superhuman and the divine and a feel of the human and the natural as obscurities to be lit up by the former instead of as lights by which the mysteries of the latter are brought nearer to our understanding.

"The direct feel of the superhuman and the divine": the phrase must be taken in its proper meaning. We not merely grow aware of a secret existence greater than the human and the natural: we know this existence in terms of sensation as concretely as the objects we usually perceive. Thus God's infinite Self to which the blue sky is compared can be felt in its own right as an expanse of luminous azure. There is the blue sky of our common experience because the mystical origin of it is a divine existence that can be experienced as a never-ending blue of absolute bliss and because between that ultimate being and our ordinary firmament there are amplitudes of sapphire expressing grades of happiness intenser than our world can hold. It is precisely the sense of such actual concrete stretches that marks the difference between ordinary verse talking of God's infinity and mystical poetry doing the same. Ordinary verse employs similes and metaphors about that infinity as if they served to concretise what can never be sense-experienced. Mystical poetry knows that the superhuman and the divine can be seen, heard, touched: out of some seeing, hearing and touching of them in the recesses beyond normal waking life its words are caught, and that is why by the significances which they bear and the suggestions which they breathe we are given the impression that no similes and metaphors are here but the emergence of strange realities through the striking imagery. The imagery is not the face and figure put on the Unknown in order to awaken us to what is hidden and remote: it is the face and figure shown us by the Unknown of itself, awakening us to its own living closeness and to the pale distance of earthly things, poor derivatives from mighty miraculous terms of occult and spiritual sensation.

Here a word of warning is necessary lest every mystical poet should be credited with achievements of mysticism because of his achievements of poetry. The dream-conscious or the overhead poems he writes are certainly a transcript of occult and spiritual actualities, but they do not imply that in each instance he has had the experience his poetry embodies. Poetic mysticism is not identical with personal mysticism: the poet is indeed a mouthpiece of the Gods and is in touch with them through some part of his being, yet he may not in his personal consciousness have risen to the heights or delved into the depths. Thus, for instance, when he says, "I have seen the inmost truth behind man's form", he must not at once be taken to mean that in sheer fact he has beheld this inmost truth as he beholds man's form. Personal mysticism can do this marvellous beholding with a direct sense-faculty of a non-physical kind: poetic mysticism need not have exercised this faculty—all that it need have exercised is a sympathetic imagination by which the inmost truth directly visible to personal

mysticism is projected for him as on a cinema screen. The cinema screen can bring very vivid impressions and call forth responses as though to concrete things: still, we cannot deal with its figures and scenes as we do with men and women and natural objects in the world which the film represents. There is, on the screen, realism without reality. The sole difference between the screen's realism and the realism of mystical poetry is that at any time the latter may merge in reality and become mystical experience. Although the difference endows mystical poetry with a strange trembling on the verge of the real, we must not forget that often the verge remains uncrossed and that always to attribute to the man the adventure of the apocalypse belonging to the poet is a naïveté fruitful of many confusions. In a Sri Aurobindo the man and the poet are one. Every mystical poet, however, is not a Sri Aurobindo, not even a full-fledged Yogi. No doubt, if mystical poetry in glorious abundance is to take birth, the man must be in some sort of powerful rapport with the superhuman and the divine: true mystical experience must be his, but our notion of this experience should not be packed with every amazing detail recorded in the poems: the experience may serve merely as a centre of attraction by which words are drawn, as it were, from the wonder-crowded vastnesses of the Unknown—words charged with the realities of those vastnesses but probably bringing to the man nothing more than an exalted and intense imaginative sympathy spontaneously generated, effortlessly sustained. The poet is primarily an apocalyp of revelatory words: whether he is also an apocalyp of the realities whose life-throb comes in the shape of these words cannot be decided straight away and the decision is not required for assessing the authenticity of the poetic inspiration.

K. D. SETHNA

(Reproduced, with some enlargement, from Sri Aurobindo Circle, Seventh Number)

TELEVISION FOR THE NEW AGE

FIRST REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, AUROVILLE

IN a recent issue of *Time Magazine*, Marshall McLuhan was quoted as saying, "Psychic communal integration, made possible at last by the electronic media, could create the universality of consciousness foreseen by Dante when he predicted that men would continue as no more than broken fragments until they were unified into an inclusive consciousness. Mysticism is just tomorrow's science dreamed today." This might be interpreted as a friendly cry from the West to the East for collaboration . a cry from the intellectuals of the world to the men who live in the spirit to let them take part in unifying the experience of earth. All men all of a sudden need one another. Technology needs spirituality... the new media need a dimension of depth. Spirituality needs technology to get rid of its onerous tag of exclusiveness. We have entered the electronic age and what used to be exclusive pockets of advanced, seemingly selfish, spiritual experience can now be shared with the rest of the world through television. At Auroville we will not only be interested in our own adventures into spiritual experience but want to share them with earth man in evolution. To make this sharing possible when the time is right, we have already begun the study of television art and science. We are just about at the point where we would like to start putting our theories into practice. Our theory is that television will become, inevitably and soon, the artistic medium of our age. It is already fast becoming the world's most powerful political, educational, and sociological tool. The Indian satellite which is scheduled to go up in 1972 (or Intelsat-III scheduled sooner) will be the last link in the chain of complete, live world communication. At Auroville we hope that television will come into its own as the full, free expression of our present age and of the age to come. It can become here an unhindered messenger of truth without vested interest. Through a deep understanding of this new medium Auroville will be able to planetize its concern for a more perfect consciousness for man and its concern for human unity.

In the art department we are aware of the complicated challenge ahead of us. We realize that television has risen out of the fast changing, frenetic world in which we live. We realize that television has its own electronic being as an art form but that it is also a combination of all the traditional art forms that have gone before. Our approach has been to look quietly and in depth at each traditional art medium, to see what it really is, and to see what rich contributions it can make to our television art when we actually do begin to produce it. We look at literature and realize the symbolic power of words. We see the power of words to analyze, to separate, to split but we also realize their power as mantra, a force which, if used properly on a sound track, can put back together, synthesize, unify and deepen. We look at painting and are faced with the

extraordinary phenomena of color and form. We see color as part of the cosmic aura called light. We have defined color as the spectrum within the spectrum and we see that each color has particular meanings which have become universal throughout history. Beginning to understand this we can begin to understand the strong effects that color can have on the large television audience. We have defined forms as concentrated structures, visible centers of being, consciousness and bliss. We have begun to see the deeper meanings of forms in themselves and of forms relating to each other. We learn from painting that great compositions of color and form can shock the viewer into new awareness of the universe. We see that attention to the compositions of color and form must be steady, even constant for the production of great television. We have examined the arts of sculpture, architecture and interior design and been faced with phenomena of volume and space. There is solidity, depth, in the beings we can see and touch, invitation to depths beyond the senses. We see that each solid form has a place where it stands, where it is supported, where it has its being. This place is called space, the mysterious something which seems to be nothing. We begin to see that in sculpture the marble chipped off is just as important as the marble left. What is chipped off does not just do a negative thing like make a hole in space. The seeming holes in space are really holes *of* space. We notice that by creating harmonious volumes in space the sculptor can activate our awareness of space infinity. We see that the contemporary architect has become the important contemporary sculptor. He is a sculptor with many new exciting materials at his disposal. As an architect, however, he is also concerned with function for human life. If his work becomes truly functional and truly beautiful it will increase outer efficiency while it is increasing inner peace. We see interior design as the finishing touch on architectural space, as the completion of an atmosphere filled with light and peace, the completion of a place to be present, a place where we can be ready to experience the fullness of self. We begin to see that all of this—volume, space, and function—should be used with awareness when the time comes to build our background sets for television. We listen to music and are faced with the phenomenon of sound, the mystery of vibrations which push and permeate the atmosphere to reach the little sympathetic drums inside our ears. We realize with Sri Aurobindo that “music goes directly to the intuition and feeling, with the least necessity for the using of the thinking mind with its strongly limiting conceptions as a self-imposed middleman”. We have become aware that music can have a direct and strong effect on the inner vitality of man, even on his psychic life, and on the very soul itself. The Mother has said that, even though it be in flashes, music can “produce in a few seconds results that are obtained with so much difficulty and so many years of Yoga”. If this be true of music we suspect that it will be more true of music combined with the other sounds of earth and used as a profound audio background for our presentations on the video screen. We look at great dance and are faced with the gamut and power of human gesture...the slump in sadness, the jump of joy, the lovely deep expressiveness in human eyes, of human hands, of the whole human face. We see the close-up on the intimate medium of television as a

tool of enormous power. In photography we find the power to capture moments in time, like cross sections of one of the infinite cables of light. We learn to look through a camera and we become aware of new demands made on the proper use of light and the use of creative composition in this new way of seeing. We learn from the dark room countless new techniques like control of color and focus, the use of more than one negative at once, the blow-up. In the blow-up we can see each small dot as a smaller cross section of one of the myriad light waves hitting us gently always like a subtle spiritual embrace. Through photographic machinery and chemistry new worlds of impressionism and expressionism are opened to us. In the motion picture we see the possibility of capturing nature and man moving through time, a series of moments transformed into a much larger cross section of human life and experience. We are introduced to the art and power of editing, of joining many things together in creative ways to produce a stream of consciousness which can thrill us, transfix our attention, and lead us through the 20th Century catharsis. Lenin has said that "if the public mind is ever to be affected by an art medium it will be through the motion picture". The film combines sight and sound and begins to add the new dimension of time. Through film we move closer to a dynamic kind of art experience which is totally absorbing and proportioned to our present age.

We feel, however, that for the age to come we must face the added challenge of the new medium of television. Much more than film, television is the medium which seems destined to be shared by all men. It is geared for all men and geared for an age when we shall perhaps move beyond catharsis to a consciousness which no longer needs escape, which no longer depends on total absorption in art to unify and elevate human emotion. The medium which is geared for all men should have a lower definition, be less overpowering, it should offer the large audience the opportunity to participate, to become involved. In fact television in the West does this now. It can present man to man, live, as he is, capable of greatness, capable of mistakes, not edited. In the future it might be possible to present man to man as he reaches, before our eyes, new heights of consciousness. We would like to experiment with this medium here at Auroville at the same time that we are trying to find in the truth itself the full reality towards which all artistic experience has been leading us. We are aware of the tremendous power of the artist using this new medium in a new age of leisure and spiritual adventure. We are aware, too, of the impossibility of meeting the challenge without the constant help of a new consciousness and a much larger Force. We are confident because at Auroville our preoccupation will always be the attainment of this consciousness and to respond to a Force much larger than our own.

WILLIAM T. NETTER

KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN

CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET

(Continued from the issue of July)

X

AFTER getting the two boons from Dasaratha Kaikeyi slept in peace and, on waking, hurriedly sent messengers to Kekaya to fetch Bharata. She gave the messengers to understand that it was Dasaratha's desire that Bharata should return to Ayodhya. The messengers started before they knew of the punishment of Rama or the death of Dasaratha.

The loyal messengers went
speeding across night and day
and, reaching Bharata's mansion,
told the men at the gate:
"Guardsmen,
announce our arrival
to the Prince."

Love-spurred Joy filled Bharata's thoughts
as he heard it announced,
"Messengers have come with word from your father."
"I'll myself go out to receive them,"
he said; by then
the entering messengers saluted him
and he asked them,
"The King—
Is he hale and hearty?"

The messengers did not know that Dasaratha was dead.

"Yes, strong and healthy,"
they said,
and Bharata rejoiced;
"As for my lord Rama,
I hope he is in good health?" he asked.
As they replied, "Yes,"
he lifted his folded hands overhead
in reverent salutation.

Then he made enquiries about all his kinsmen and was pleased to learn of their good health. The messengers handed him the royal epistle which was enclosed in, earthenware casket painted with sandal paste. Bharata joyously received it and placed it reverently on his head; he then opened the casket. After reading the epistle he showered the messengers with numerous gifts. Smiling ecstatically, his hair rising on end and love swelling in his heart, he visualized the feet of Rama and in his imagination sprinkled flowers upon them as the desire to see Rama inspired him. He commanded his army to get ready for the journey; he saluted the King of Kekaya and left with his permission, taking along with him Satrugna, his younger brother. Mounting his chariot, he started without caring to ascertain the auspicious day and hour for his departure.

As soon as the Prince boarded the chariot,

The elephants thronged around,
the clamorous chariots
drew near;
the kings surrounded him in clusters.
sword in hand,
the encircling infantrymen stood,
the conchs sounded,
and the drums rattled,
thunderingly like the sea.

Farewell music was played to see the Prince off. The brave beat of the *mridan-gam* (drum) permeated the music and vivified it, even as the soul permeates the flesh-covered body and vivifies it. The songs of the minstrels flowed into the sky like honey turned into sound.

The chariot started. Crossing mountains and rivers for seven days, it reached the fertile Kosala country, where copious sugarcane juice would break field-bunds and overflow into the green beds of paddy seedlings. Bharata found the entire countryside unusually desolate and forlorn.

The fields had given up the ploughs;
young men's necks
their wonted garlands of flowers;
the gardens and paddy lands
their accustomed supply of water.
The lotus-dwelling Goddess
had given up the Realm
even as she had formerly given up her lotus abode,

Kamban said in Balakanda that the Goddess of Wealth had preferred the King's mansion to her lotus abode because she had been eager to wed Rama. With a sense of balance the Poet suggests now that Lakshmi has abdicated the King's realm and preferred to go into exile with her consort.

What about dance and music in Ayodhya?
Sweet song-chasing flutes
had abandoned all song;
the dancing halls
stood untrodden by dancing feet;
the temple towers
had thrown off their floral wreaths;

the ornamental balconies
had renounced
their ballads of hope and mirth.
Bright faces had lost their smiles.
Incense no longer issued from palaces.
Lamps remained unlit.
Maids wore no flowers.

These sights filled Bharata with feelings of evil premonition.

Looking at such a city
Bharata grieved,
he knew nothing
of what had occurred;
and he was lost in thought;
he said,
"There is something evil
which I am going to hear."
He stood sobbing
and, standing, he sobbed.
He dashed into the palace
yearning to see the King;
but the King
was not to be seen
in the usual places or anywhere.
"This is no small matter," he said.
The one, whose towering shoulders
would put the mountain to shame,
was now filled
with doubts apprehensive.

Though the father was nowhere to be seen, the son lifted up his clean hands in salutation and went in search of him. A maid of honour, whose shoulders were curved like the bamboo, appeared before him and said, "Mother is calling you. Please come at once." Bharata went to Kaikeyi and saluted her.

As he came and saluted her feet,
the mother locked him
in a hearty embrace, and asked:
"Is my father hale and hearty?
and my mother? and my sisters?"
"Yes," replied the one of virtues unlimited.

The laconic "Yes" of Bharata showed that his heart was elsewhere than in the anxious and pardonably selfish enquiries of Kaikeyi. Bharata was overwhelmed by an eagerness to see his father.

With love upsurging and leaping forth
Bharata said excitedly, with hands folded in veneration:
"I have come longingly
to see his lotus feet—
and my heart is aching to see them.
Where is the King of kings,
the wearer of the towering crown?
Pray tell me."

Kaikeyi was insensitive to the anguish of Bharata. The callousness of her reply could hardly have given solace to eager Bharata. She said:

"The one
whose strong army
had vanquished the giants,
has gone to Heaven,
escorted by the gods;
Grieve you not."

These unfeeling words shocked Bharata.

As the savage words reached
(as if flung) into his ears,
the one, whose wavy hair
was kept in ordered array,
fell down with a crash;

he knew naught,
 nor did he breathe;
 he fell aground
 like a stately tree
 struck down by a thunder-clap.

Recovering consciousness a little later, Bharata lamented over the death of Dasaratha.

“Have you sought the cool shade
 of Kalpaka—Heaven’s stately tree—
 to the dismay of the multifarious souls
 that stood secure and for long
 under the protective shade
 cast by your regal umbrella?
 Oh! King of kings,
 whose broad shoulders would open wide
 for the Spirit of Wrestling to emerge!”

Kamban catches in the last two lines the very essence of Dasaratha’s prowess by a single bold stroke of imagination.

Bharata, in his great sorrow, addresses the departed King:

“You have from this earth departed;
 Is it because the gods, dislodged from Heaven,
 fell at your feet and sought refuge in you?
 Do giant warriors like Samparan and his ilk
 still haunt, Sire! the precincts of Heaven?”

As Bharata was uttering his grief in such outcries, those around him comforted him.

They gave comfort of a sort
 to him
 who inconsolably wailed and grieved,
 his anguished eyes a springlet of tears;
 his grief mitigated a little,
 he spoke—
 the one whose bow was Death-like in severity.

The reference to the Death-like bow in the hands of Bharata is meant to emphasize that there are moments even in the lives of epic heroes when great sorrow afflicts them with a sense of loneliness and despair. In this mood Bharata’s thoughts naturally turn

to Rama for consolation and he says:

“It is Rama of boundless virtue
who is my father, mother, brother and lord.
Unless I prostrate myself at his sacred feet
my mind will not be rid
of this tyrant woe.”

Bharata's reverence for Rama angered Kaikeyi, who, in a thundering voice, replied:

“Companioned by those two—
wife and brother—
he's now a forest-dweller.”

The casual manner in which she uttered these words made Bharata start, feeling like one who had swallowed fire. He asked:

“And what more plots
are there
to uncover?
And what more griefs
to inflict
on my ear?”

Catching his breath convulsively in distress and heaving a sigh, Bharata asked:

“The departure of the warrior Prince,
was it due
to punishment for an evil deed,
or to the rage of the gods
or to Fate inexorable
or aught else?

“Were Rama himself
to commit a crime,
would it not be
an act of the mother
in the eyes of the people?
And his going—
was it after father's death
or before?
Pray, tell me, pray.”

Kaikeyi replied that Rama had left for the forest while Dasaratha was yet alive. Why, then, had the son gone to the forest? And why did the King die? In tender anguish Bharata put these questions and Kaikeyi replied with verve:

“With the boons I got
I caused Rama to be banished from the Realm
and procured the Realm for you.
Unable to bear it all
the King gave up his ghost.”

Before these words were uttered the folded hands of Bharata had remained upstretched in salutation, but

Scarcely had these words been uttered
when his folded hands
came down to stop his ears;
his eyebrows jumped up and down
and danced a fierce dance;
Gleams of fire mingled with his breath
and ran in and out,
blood flushed his eyes and flowed forth.

In this stanza Kamban dramatizes the very physiological symptoms of indignation. The anatomy of anger has by no poet been more vivaciously described.

Bharata's wrath was such that it would vent itself in the bloodiest acts of violence. What restrained him was certainly not the relationship between him and the target of his anger, but something else.

The raging lion
cared not
that the savage woman was his mother;
he restrained himself out of fear
that he might provoke the ire of Rama.
In words that pealed like thunder
he made a speech:

“Dead is my father,
and my elder brother has embraced
the ascetic life.
If all this has happened
because of your savage intrigue,
and if, after hearing all this,

I stand lethargic
 without tearing your mouth,
 should I not be deemed
 to have usurped this kingdom
 and ruled it indeed
 out of avarice?"

Annexing Rama's crown out of cupidity would be an unholy act of sacrilege in the eyes of Bharata; the omission to kill wicked Kaikeyi on the spot appears to him equally unholy. In his bitterness he laments that failure to kill the woman would be as bad as clutching at his brother's crown.

In his despair, Bharata thinks that all values have collapsed in this sordid scheming world. But later, recollecting in tranquillity these great events, his confidence in Virtue is restored. Despair gives place to a burning hope in the Verities and this despair is not untouched with bitter self-disdain as he exclaims:

"If here is a King
 who would lay down his life
 to keep his pledged word;
 if here is a hero,
 to return from the exile
 thrust upon him
 by a heartless word;
 And if here is a Bharata
 to rule the Kingdom
 that has come his way;
 the blame lies with the stars
 but not with Virtue,
 which shines undimmed."

Bharata's conviction that the whole of life is sustained by the higher laws of Virtue is expressed by Kamban in words of singular force and grandeur. The Poet's mastery over the choice of words and sonorities is uplifting and his marvellous blending of sound and sense makes him the most untranslatable of Tamil poets. The lofty disdain with which Bharata refers to his own self in the third person gives his holy name the contextual meaning of sinner. Kamban contrives such dramatic situations and puts such eloquence into his living characters that he is able to sustain in the reader a feeling of passionate intimacy with things that count.

(To be continued)

S. MAHARAJAN

NAME GLOSSARY TO SRI AUROBINDO'S *ILION*

(Continued from the issue of August 15)

Danaan: a resident of Argos (descendant of Danaus, *q.v.*).

Danaus: forebear of the Danaans, the men of Argos.

Dardamid: an epithet of Aeneas, a descendant of Dardanus.

Dardanus: a forebear of Priam and a son of Zeus. He was the founder of Dardania, a territory in Mysia (*q.v.*). The Dardani were a warlike tribe of Illyria (*q.v.*), whose eastern parts intermingled with the Thracians.

Deidamia: daughter of Lycomedes, king of Scyros. She united with Achilles and bore him Neoptolemus.

Deiphobus: a son of Priam.

Delian: of Delos, a small island regarded as the center of the Cyclades and the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis, and sacred to Apollo.

Delphi: on the southern slopes of Parnassus, some 2,000 feet above the Gulf of Corinth. It was the most ancient and sacred sanctuary in Greece. An oracle of Apollo had her seat there.

Demeter: the corn-goddess; the last two syllables of her name mean "mother." She is the goddess of the fruits of the earth. Her daughter Kore was carried off by the god of the underworld to be his bride. As a result of her mother's efforts to get her back, Kore is permitted to spend six months of the year on earth (spring and summer), and must return to Hades for six months (fall and winter). Kore is also known as Persephone.

Diomedes: son of Tydus and Deipyle; one of the Greek warriors.

Dione: consort of Zeus at Dodona and mother of Aphrodite.

Dionean: an epithet of Aphrodite (daughter of Dione).

Dis: in Roman mythology, a name of Pluto, and hence of the lower world.

Ditis: a sister of Penthesilea, the Amazon.

Dodona: seat of a very ancient oracle of Zeus in the mountains of Epirus.

Dolopes: ancient people on the borders of Aetolia and Epirus, notorious for their cruelty. They were reduced to being vassals of the Thessalians. In the Heroic Age, an army of theirs, led by Phoenix, fought at Troy on the side of the Greeks.

Dorians: last of the northern invaders into Greece, who settled especially in, among other places, Argos, Corinth, and Agina, and Crete and Asia Minor. They spoke a Greek dialect.

Dryad: A wood nymph.

Dus: a Trojan warrior.

Echemus: a Hellene warrior, son of Aëtes.

Elysian: of Elysium; see *Isles of the Blest*.

Enceladus: One of the giants who waged war against the gods; a son of Uranus and Ge. He was hurled down by Athena and buried with the other giants beneath Mt. Aetna in Sicily. When he stirs, the mountain shakes, and when he breathes, there is an eruption.

Enna: in Sicily, the site of the rape of Kore (Persephone). For which see *Demeter*.

Eoan: relating to the dawn or the east; here, it is an epithet of Penthesilea's forces.

Epeus: here, one of the Greek chieftains. There were two men involved in the Trojan War on the Greek side, with the same name: Epeius. One was the maker, with the help of Athena, of the Wooden Horse; the second was the son and successor of Endymion, king of Elis. It is not clear if Sri Aurobindo had either in mind, but the latter would better fit the description he gives.

Ephialtus: a Greek warrior.

Epyrote: of Epirus, an area in the northwest of Greece. Dodona (*q.v.*) was located there.

Erebus: the son of Chaos and brother of Nyx (night); also, the husband of Nyx and father of Day. The name is applied to that part of the underworld through which the souls of the dead pass to reach Hades. It also signifies "darkness" itself, and in particular the darkness of the west.

Erinnys (Erinyes): spirits of punishment, avenging wrongs done to kindred, especially murder within the family or clan, but also lesser offenses, even against those who are no kin but have a claim on one's sympathy.

Eryx: Monte San Giuliano, a commune in Sicily, on a mountain. It had a temple to Aphrodite.

Eumachus: Creusa's brother.

Euphrates: river in southwest Asia Minor.

Eurotas: river in the southern Peloponnesus. Sparta was on its banks.

Eurus: Polydamas' son. Polydamas was a son of Panthous, but here (page 55) Eurus claims to be a grandchild of Antenor. A possible explanation is that Antenor was his maternal grandfather.

Furies: the Erinnys.

Gades: the oldest extant urban settlement in Spain, on a promontory south of the Baetis (Guadalquivir) estuary. Founded by the Tyrians, it was a one-time rival of Phoenicia. Modern name: Cádiz.

Ganges: sacred river of India, rising in the Himalayas and emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

Gnossus (Cnossos): ancient city and capital of Crete.

Graces: the three Charities, the daughters of Zeus and Hera: Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia.

Hades: one of the sons of Kronos; lord of the underworld. The name eventually

came to be applied to the underworld itself.

Halamus: a son of Antenor and one of the leading Trojan warriors.

Hamte: an ancient North African.

Hector: the eldest son of Priam and Hecuba; husband of Andromache and father of Astyanax. His name means "holder" or "stayer". When *Ihon* opens, he has already been slain by Achilles (one of the best-known episodes of the *Iliad*).

Hecuba: chief wife of Priam; daughter of Dymas, king of the Phrygians; mother of Hector and 18 of Priam's 50 sons.

Helen: daughter of Zeus and Leda (or Nemesis); wife of Menelaus and later of Paris.

Helenus: a son of Priam; a warrior and prophet.

Helios: the sun-god. He is conceived as a charioteer who drives daily from east to west across the sky. Here, the name refers to Apollo.

Hellenes: the national name of the Greeks. Originally confined, as well as the territorial name of "Hellas", to a small tribe in southern Thessaly.

Hellespont: narrow strait dividing Europe from Asia at the final exit of the waters of the Black Sea and the Marmara into the Aegean; the modern Dardanelles. A strong current flows from Hellespont into the Aegean.

Hephaestus: god of fire and especially of the smithy fire, hence of craftsmen. He was the maker of Achilles' armor and Agamemnon's scepter. A son of Zeus and Hera, he is usually depicted as lame (craftsmen in ancient times were usually the handicapped who were unable to fight).

Hera: wife and sister of Zeus: goddess of marriage and of the life, especially sexual, of women. She was a daughter of Kronos and Rhea. Throughout the Trojan War, she is, of course, hostile to Troy, because of Paris' kidnapping of Helen, a married woman.

Hesperus: the Evening Star, shown in art as a boy carrying a torch. He was the father of the Hesperides, who guarded the Golden Apples.

Hyllus: a Greek warrior, possibly from northern Greece he is described as "fair." He is killed here by Surenas.

Hyperion: a Titan (*q.v.*), husband of his sister Theia and father of Sun, Moon and Dawn. His name is also often an epithet of Sun himself.

Hyrtamus: a Hellene killed by Penthesilea.

Ida: a mountain in northwest Asia Minor, southeast of the site of ancient Troy. It was the abode of the gods.

Idomeneus: leader of the Cretan contingent against Troy. He was of Minos' race and one of Helen's suitors.

Ilian: of Ilion.

Ihas, Ilion: names for Troy. The name is actually derived from the Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic "Ilium," founded by Ilus, the son of Tros and father of Laomedon (both *q.v.*), who was guided to the site by a cow and received the Palladium (*q.v.*) from heaven.

Iliones: a Trojan senator.

Illyria (Illyricum): according to the Greeks, it was bounded by the Adriatic, the eastern Alps, the Danube, the Shar-Dagh, and the Ceraunian Mountains.

Ilus: in mythology, (1) the son of Dardanus; (2) his grand-nephew, son of Tros, father of Laomedon and founder of Ilium.

Indus: a river of India, rising in Tibet and emptying into the Arabian Sea.

Ionians: a section of the Greek people, important after the central part of the west coast of Asia Minor became known as "Ionia." They were descended from Ion, who settled in Athens.

Isles of the Blest: Elysium, situated at the ends of the earth, to which favoured heroes exempted from death were taken by the gods.

Ithaca: name given by the Greeks in historical times to the small island east of Cephallenia (modern Thiaki). However, this conflicts with Homer's Ithaca, which is described as the outermost and westernmost of the Ionian isles.

Itylus: a Greek warrior killed by Penthesilea.

Jaxartes: river (modern Syr Darya) flowing into the Aral Sea.

(To be continued)

ERIC HUGHES

HYMNS OF THE RIGVEDA

(An attempt is being made to translate, according to Sri Aurobindo's Vedic interpretation, all those hymns that were not rendered into English by Sri Aurobindo himself. Vedic scholars are invited to give suggestions bearing on the individual words or phrases as well as on the significance of the whole.)

Mandala 1, Sukta 2

(Rishi: Madhuchchhandas. Vayu, 1-3. Indra, Varuna, 4-6. Mitra-Varuna, 7-9. Vayu=God-Life. Indra=God-Mind. Mitra=God-Love. Varuna=God-Might.)

1. O God-Life, who art conspicuous, come; these Soma-pressings are suitably prepared; drink of them, hear our call.
2. O God-Life, the singers who have pressed out the Soma-juices and who know the periods of Light that visit them, sing of thee with their words.
3. O God-Life, thy wide and delightful and all-bestowing stream of speech follows its course for the drinking of Soma-wine and for the giver of the offering.
4. O God-Mind and God-Life, both of you, come; these pressed-out Soma-juices, the moon-powers of the wine, desire you with delightful feelings.
5. O God-Life and God-Mind, awaken in our consciousness the plenitude of the flowing riches of the Soma-wine; come swiftly, you two.
6. O God-Life and God-Mind, hasten to perfect the new workings of the Soma-possessor by the joint participation of your thought, O you Gods.
7. I invoke God-Love of purified strength, and God-Might, destroyer of our foes, accomplishing a bright understanding.
8. God-Love and God-Might, Truth-increasing and Truth-touching, you two by Truth enjoy a vastness of work.
9. For us, God-Love and God-Might, multiply-born, wide-housed, uphold the strength that does the work.

C. NARAYANA REDDI

ART AND YOGA*

ART and Yoga, as ordinarily understood, have nothing common between them. They are worlds apart in value, purpose, and profess widely divergent ideals. This is the usual outlook of the West which the East also is now more and more adopting by contagion, and deeper realities are either forgotten or else ignored. Today there is everywhere a tumult of revolt in the field of art, and values and conditions of art-creation are fast undergoing a rapid alteration, which is a sign of unrest, disequilibrium, a blind urge to discover a profounder truth which the ordinary utilitarian mind fails to realise. Yoga too has gained considerable prominence in the modern world and even in the West it is now not looked down upon as something quaint or unnatural. And yet the gulf between Art and Yoga continues to exist. We shall examine both issues along parallel lines and attempt to discover their meeting-point, or a point where they become complementary pursuits. For, the opposition between the two is created by a superficial understanding of their true nature and function. We have to go behind and beyond this façade of opposition and discover the inner unity.

Art and Yoga are two expressions of man's urge to exceed the limits of his lower nature. They represent two aspects of his being's attempt to escape the shackles of his animal past by the aid of aesthetics and askesis. This attempt is fundamental because the yearning for transcendence is basic to man's nature; he cannot, at any given stage, remain satisfied with what he is and what he has achieved. That yearning is the key to all progress and perfection.

If we gaze back at our earlier history, we shall discover religion and spirituality to be at the centre of man's art-expression. Religion has urged man to carve statues of anthropomorphical deities, to build temples and cathedrals of worship which symbolised the infinite by tapering flame-like structures and were abodes of the Eternal Presence. It urged him to paint in fluid and rhythmic lines depicting a Buddha, an epic subject or a love idyll of Krishna. Or else massive but articulate with power, majesty, poise, statues were built by him, representing cosmic Presences, deities and godheads with all their spiritual significance. If we look at Chinese and Japanese paintings, we are struck with the calmness, the serenity, the mystic poise, which the artists deliberately and significantly ingrained in them by singular concentration and inspiration. The effect of Zen Buddhism on Japanese art cannot be underestimated. In India the lore created by *Shilpa Shastra* and *Sadanga* reveals the effect of spiritual vision on art, specially the art of painting. Bharata wrote a voluminous treatise on Indian music, dance and dramatics and the whole opus gives ample evidence of the spiritual influence on Indian art revealing the presence of deep

* A speech delivered at the Fifth Annual Conference of the New Age Association held on the 16th August, 1968.

intuitive audition, a perfection of inner harmony and grace which became manifest as *Gram Ragas*, as *Talas*, as *Mudras*, as the intricate pattern of tones, notes, rhythms and physical movements: all of these had behind them a cosmic or soul character.

In the West the spiritual accent is less marked. There the form has ruled. In sculpture, painting and both sacred and secular architecture the western artist unlike his eastern brother followed the outer model, be it in Greece in the time of Pericles or in Italy of the Renaissance. But now the West has discovered the meaninglessness of mere form divorced from the truth of spiritual substance behind: the modern revolt in the guise of impressionism, dadaism, expressionism and in various other forms is the most obvious result of this discontent. India too, having lost for long her spiritual heritage in her external life, follows on the heels of this western insurgence, oblivious of the greatness of her past legacy and its potentiality for future creation.

This shows that it is the presence of spirituality that gives to art its highest character, substance and value. And the acquisition of spiritual vision and outlook require a conscious effort: the effort of Yoga. The revolt in art today is there because the artist has lost trace of his soul, his deeper being of truth; he has forgotten the legacy of askesis, of the inner quest, of the profound spiritual realisations that stand behind all lasting creation.

The process of art creation has three elements: the original source of inspiration, the dynamic life-force which gives it intensity and form and the outer transmitting instrumental nature of the artist. The common artist is unconscious of the various subtle planes from which the inspiration comes. His sensitive nature draws inspiration from a plane of consciousness to which his unawakened and unchanged nature has the most affinity. Sometimes there is a block and the inspiration ceases to flow. But the artist, driven by his urge, pursues his course, creating trivial painting, meaningless poetry, and worthless works of art in general. Sometimes he strives to create something unique, but his lack of capacity to open to a greater source of inspiration compels him to produce something futile and insignificant. But had he purified his life and emotional elements, silenced his mind, and consciously and deliberately opened to a greater range of consciousness, the inspirational surge would have swept over him like a tidal wave and his process of creation would have been an intense delight and the result highly significant.

The dynamic life-force imparts its living impetus to the inspiration. It is also this life-principle whose conversion to a greater life of the spirit enhances the progress in Yoga. The common artist is ignorant of this part of his psychological formation and the role it plays in his artistic venture. Often he is driven by impure elements of pride, ambition, his desire to gain esteem by some extravagant device, such as creating something odd, bizarre, or likely to bring him notoriety. He may have a *penchant* for the grotesque, or his lower nature may crave for satisfaction by lewdness and obscenity. All these cloud the creator in him and he fails to produce something noble or of value.

Inspiration and the life-force by themselves are not sufficient to effect a great

creation. The artist's outer nature must also be a perfect instrument for transmitting them into effective expression. This instrumental perfection includes mastery over the technique, the language, the keen sensibility of the ear and the eye and all other things that are essential for art creation.

The path of Yoga is initially a path of self-purification. With art as a means of widening the range of our consciousness, we can make Yoga an adventure of both purification and creation. For art lifts us up into the higher planes of luminous felicity and the dry and fruitless periods of yogic askeſis become luminous with the touch of light, of sweetness and harmony.

Thus, instead of approaching the Spirit with a cold, austere and dry attitude, one can approach it with joy, sweetness and beauty, through art. Of course, it must not be concluded that the approach through art is the only possible path. We are here only attempting to show the fallacy of some of the popular misconceptions. In fact art has been a path of self-dedication in the past. The rock-temples of Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh, Sīrīgīya, the temples of Konarak, Khajuraho, and at various other innumerable places all over India, all reveal man's attempt to unveil the secrets of the Spirit with the chisel, the brush, the mason's tools as the medium. He has left behind his discoveries ingrained in rock, in murals, which yet live on as a music that is born in his soul and a dance that is an outflowering of the eternal rhythm.

If the artists who produced these works had harboured any other motive than self-dedication, their works would have revealed something base or common, instead of the intense devotion and sincerity they breathe and the height of achievement they bring to us.

The motive of art is self-expression and the aim of Yoga is self-discovery. But a true and authentic self-expression is not possible unless there is behind it some element of self-unfoldment. Can it be said then that all great artists were great yogis? Well, it cannot be denied that dissipation, aimlessness, frivolousness have never been the basis of great creation. There has always been sincerity, concentration and entire dedication to art, which are also elements of Yoga. Only it is the motive which causes the difference.

The motives in art have undergone radical changes from epoch to epoch. The earliest motives have been the religious and the spiritual, which have given us great epics, great sculptures and great works in all other spheres of art. The renaissance banished religion as the motive in art, enthroned life in its place, altering the whole turn of artistic creation. And moving in the same stream of trend, in modern times we made "art for art's sake" our fulcrum of artistic endeavour. This made art personal and intimate. At the same time it gave the artist unlimited license which he often abused and which resulted in poor or indifferent creation. This abuse became more prominent due to the common man's looking up at the artists as a race apart who deserved special privileges and whose faults were always condoned. Their motives were considered to be beyond question and their way of existence always unique. The result of this attitude has been that **hedonism**, carelessness, shallow-

ness, irresponsibility have now become the hall-mark of the artist's character. He obliges humanity by offering it his trivial works which he produces either for commercial gain or to satisfy his caprice. And even if an artist does possess a true talent he now often wastes it for personal gain or achievement. These falsify the true aim of art.

If a Yogi turns an artist, he makes art creation an act of sacrifice. The vastness of the spirit leans down on him and expresses itself in his work. This is the true meaning of the concept of "art for the Divine's sake". It is also true self-expression, for by Yoga a man comes in contact with his soul and his soul finds a receptive instrument for its expression. He has no manifest aim before him, except what comes to him by revelation from his soul and his higher nature. The external world, circumstances, ways and changes do not affect him. He is not like the common artist moving on the waves of his unsteady passions, moods or sentiments, his violent likes and dislikes, but, calm and open to a greater source, he manifests and expresses what comes to him from within or from above.

Today the world of art is in a chaos. That is because the artists have lost trace of deeper realities and higher truths. External revolts will not bring in the genuine change; what is needed is some fundamental change in the consciousness of the artist himself. He is seeking without what he should seek within. If the artist really turned to Yoga, a new possibility would become manifest with its vision, its intensity, its variety and truth. The yogi on the other hand need not shun any artistic venture. On the contrary his Yoga can become a direct path, a highway of light, the road to Beauty. He learns to become the worshipper of the Divine in His aspect of Beauty which is one of His essential aspects, for the Divine reveals Himself as Beauty in the physical world.

We have before us two examples of this truth.

The Mother has made music and painting a revealing channel of luminous experience. In fact all her life is one great and harmonious art-expression of the Spirit. Sri Aurobindo has made poetry and literature vibrant mediums to embody the large, opulent and thrilling accents of the Spirit. Therefore we cannot say that Yoga and Art are contrary elements. They can become the complementary aspects of the same aspiration: an urge for perfection which is also an urge for beauty.

ROMEN

POE'S *EUREKA*

THE name of Edgar Allan Poe is now familiar throughout the world. Perhaps there is no literate person who does not at least know him to have been a poet and a writer of stories. But the fact is apparently still obscure, that he also aspired to philosophy, and that he wrote a work in which he considered himself to have elucidated the secret of the universe, and which he called, in accordance with that consideration, *Eureka*.

Nothing would be easier, for the man sophisticated in philosophy, than to smile or snort at Poe's callowness in this regard, and to dismiss him out of hand. Poe was not well acquainted with the work of his philosophical predecessors. He was indeed not a very well read man at all, as the circumstances of his life never gave him the leisure to become one. But he was a man of genius, and that makes more difference than many "hard headed" thinkers (including Kant himself) are willing to admit, or perhaps able to see. Poe had a kind of intuitive or non-rational insight, and he did his best to present it in a logical form: like the spider he spun out of himself, and he created a web which is perhaps not unworthy of contemplation.

Though he thought that his work presented truth, he said that he wished to have it accepted as a poem—which both obscures that fact that Poe thought poetry to be truth, and throws some light on the different opinion prevalent in the United States of America, where of course few if any showed themselves disposed to accept such a work at all.

Bernard Shaw, in one of his flashes of unexpanded insight, has remarked that Poe did not live in America: he died there. Anyone who is acquainted with the facts of Poe's life can hardly dispute this statement. This man who was a rarely melodious poet and who had such a large influence on Baudelaire (and thence on aesthetic theory in France, and by reflex in America), the man who summed up two civilizations in the lines,

To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome,

wrote only so much poetry as can easily be collected in fewer than a hundred pages—for, as he said, poetry was a passion with him, not a business, and he had very little time for it. Most of his time he spent in the Sisyphus-labor of barely staying alive, which he managed to continue doing until the age of forty. He was condemned to popular journalism, and to writing what would sell—albeit for a pittance—and his having invented the tale of ratiocination (which has had such a flourishing history, but has perhaps not again reached the heights on which Poe set it at the beginning), his having achieved some of the finest and purest English prose that we have, and his now being accepted as a classic of our literature, was of no help to him in the fourth and fifth

decades of the nineteenth century, one of the most impenetrably philistine periods of American history, a period that moved Dickens to a frenzy of vituperation, he being a man who was passably well acquainted with the fact that things were bad enough in his native England.

It seems now to be pretty firmly established that the rumors of Poe's drunkenness are insubstantial. A man who was not sober most of the time could not have engaged in the continuous writing and rewriting by which Poe made his best stories models of clarity and form. Though he wrote prose for money, and was responsible for several "potboilers", he was by nature a man to whom literature came first, and who was concerned with doing his very best; and the majority of his stories are genuine literature—which is perhaps not so common an article as some suppose. In a country of hard drinkers, Poe seems to have been quite an abstemious man. His excesses, as one might put it, were chiefly in aesthetic and intellectual matters. And so he slowly died (though perhaps more quickly than all the drunkards and gluttons) in a country that even now prides itself on "putting first things first"—that is, on "getting on with it", and being concerned only with whatever the market will bear—that is now in such a commendable flurry about "culture", which it thinks of as something that can be packaged and sold, and that is continually talking about the "cultural explosion"—a country that is never more complacent than when it contemplates the difficulties of a "misfit" like Poe.

Not that America is the sole sinner among nations. Wherever the superficial mind prevails, under whatever political and economic "ism", the genuine artist must suffer in one way or another. The larger the scale of its prevalence the crasser the casualty. And, until true values are recognized, the slogan of neither "liberty" nor "equality" will prevent the "misfit" of genius.

But Poe kept writing, and among other things he wrote *Eureka*. In this anomalous and neglected work, he attacks logic, both inductive and deductive, and yet makes much of being very logical, he will have it that intuition is both beyond logic, and a subtler logic of superior swiftness; he in short is ambiguous if not confused, and is continually trying to come to terms, as it were, with terms that he rejects. He is trying to present a vision at which he arrived by "unthoughtlike thought" and "soul reverie", and do it by such thoughtlike thought as shall recommend it to the most rationalistic and least dreamy minds. He is not content simply to present a vision, because he is convinced that his vision is the Truth: and yet he does call it a "prose poem," and invite the reader to take it as he will, since it was not written, after all, for those who cannot take it in the right way. It is a product of a brilliant but ill-trained mind, of a man who blusters and hedges because of a nagging feeling of inadequacy, of a man conscious of being superior, and of not being able to develop his superiority in a full and healthy way, and really to find and accomplish that which he feels himself to have found and accomplished even so.

In the matter of trying to present something non-logical or super-logical in logical terms, of course Poe is by no means unique. It is what all the mystical writers have

tried to do, and it is even what Spinoza was trying to do, according to Bergson. And the not overly appreciative world now has by far the greatest example before it, that is, Sri Aurobindo and *The Life Divine*. In this company, Poe is at a considerable disadvantage. For he did not have the decisive spiritual experience of a mystic, and he did not have the philosophical training of Spinoza. And his achievement is far indeed from that of Sri Aurobindo, who really knew the Truth, and was a master of the philosophical approach without having to study it.

But, still, Poe is not negligible. He was a poet, and something of poetry does get into this vision of his which filled him with such awe, and which he was at such pains to impart to the world.

The vision is one of unity, but unity as seen by the mind, that is, without differentiation. It separates the One and the many by an impassable gulf, and sees the former as being negated by the presence of the latter. It sees the universe as a product and process of differentiation that must ultimately return to the primal unity, that is, be annihilated. It calls the unity God, and the unstable multiplicity an expression of inscrutable divine purpose. The vastness of the complexity is a manifestation of the perfection of the simplicity—which must nevertheless destroy the multiplicity, or wait for the destruction of the multiplicity, to be truly itself-in-itself.

And what of the mind that can think above thought, and the soul that dreams? What of the fact that, though the human consciousness wants to comprehend, and tries to, it can never do so fully, without being God Himself? Poe does not shrink from what is, to him, a staggeringly daring solution: but the solution he vitiates by making it a purely mental thing, without even an apparent glimmer of spiritual illumination.

To Poe, anything that was not material, that is, perceptible to the five senses, was "spiritual". (Here of course he was by no means original: such a notion is still a commonplace in the Western world, except among the many who deny that there can be anything non-material.) The spiritual, moreover, was immortal, and was the cause and impetus of the universe, the force, the volition that gave it the greatest multiplicity before it returned to Unity. That is, all that was not matter was God, who created out of nothing a matter that He destined by His volition to put on a brave show before it returned to nothingness.

Poe has little to say about this God of his, except that He is One; and almost the whole of *Eureka* is concerned with cosmology. Here Poe shows himself to be acquainted with the astronomy of his time, and he puts a great emphasis on quantity, complexity, distance and vastness. But all this is seen solely in physical terms; there is nothing of soul-distance and soul-magnitude, and when the physical comes to its end in the dissolution of the universe, the end of the book very soon follows.

But the destiny of man is adumbrated: his soul-mind-vitality—his immaterial part—remains being spiritual, that is, being God. For, says Poe by a kind of "ontological argument" (though he insists that no argument is necessary), no thinking being can believe that anything can exist greater than his own soul: he revels in the thought, indeed, that he can be anything less than his own creator.

"In this view," Poe continues, "and in this view alone, we comprehend the riddles of Divine Injustice—or Inexorable Fate. In this view alone the existence of Evil becomes intelligible; but in this view it becomes more—it becomes endurable. Our souls no longer rebel at a *Sorrow* which we ourselves have imposed upon ourselves, in furtherance of our own purposes—with a view—if even with a futile view—to the extension of our own *joy*."

And what may the state of this Creator be conceived to be when the universe returns to Unity, that is, ceases to exist? Poe does not tell us much on this score; he seems to have found it beyond the capacity of thought and even of poetry and, in what he does tell us, his clarity deserts him. He says, "We walk about, amid the destinies of our world-existence, encompassed by dim but ever present *Memories* of a Destiny more vast—very distant in the bygone time, and infinitely awful." And again he says that "all is Life—Life—Life within Life—the less within the greater, and all within the Spirit Divine." But, for all that Poe seems even to try to tell us, this Spirit is a blank, or a monotone, or a kind of superior nothing; except insofar as it or He is creating a universe, and is involved in the creation, or the process which it sets in motion. It seems that His Happiness is the general sum of human sensations: and that eventually the individual identity is merged in the "general consciousness", and Man will triumphantly cease to feel himself Man. He will have been reconstituted, that is, by the regathering of the diffusion, in which all condition will disappear in the unconditioned, and he will be supreme in his pristine status. But (perhaps fortunately) he will not long remain so; for God is unceasingly projecting universes and drawing them back to Himself (metaphorically speaking). In fact, it is not only God who does this: there are infinite Unities, each throwing out diversities and drawing them back again. But only those of God are at all knowable to Man. As Poe says, the "law of periodicity" is the law of laws, and there is "a novel universe swelling into existence, and then subsiding into nothingness, at every throb of the Heart Divine". And this Heart is our own.

One may readily believe that Poe's having so little to say about the existence and state of this Man-in-Himself may arise from some other cause than the inability to convey an ineffable experience. And those who are not unacquainted with the Indian spiritual and philosophic tradition may find it interesting to see here, in the mind of a man who was unacquainted with it, certain distorted reflections, as it were, of some features to be found within its generous compass. It may also be easy for some to dismiss *Eureka* as the maunderings of a drunkard or a madman.

But I do not doubt that Poe was not mad; though he probably had a vivid enough conception of what it might be to be so, and though his poem *The Haunted Palace* is perhaps the classic portrayal of a mind destroyed by madness. He was tending toward a genuine intuition or inspiration of spiritual truth, but his acutely developed mind was too much in the way, and insisted on dominating; and his environment gave him no pointers, and was in no way conducive to spiritual development.

Eureka is the product of a sober and logical mind; a mind, in fact, that was too

exclusively logical for such a subject. It is not the work of a drunkard; and neither is it the work of a man under the influence of a drug. If Poe occasionally took opium, he took it as an anodyne, and not as a stimulus to composition; for him it was a means of relieving pain, and not a means of finding truth. His soul-reveries were not drug-reveries. Even his most magical and hypnotic poems are not the fruits of drugging. They are consciously wrought creations of the artistic mind, always well under control. His approach to poetical composition was more that of Valéry (who indeed derives from him) than that of the Coleridge of *Kubla Khan*. He always knew what he was about, and he always finished what he started.

He was a man given to forming very definite and precise opinions, and he had quite a good opinion of himself and his abilities; and it is not improbable that he was occasionally visited by touches of megalomania, and that he was not altogether a stranger to a desire to withdraw from a society into which he could not fit, and a world in which he never felt at home and in which he found little but sorrow and suffering. Indeed Poe was always alone, and terribly alone, not having the mystic's self-sufficiency. As he said,

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.

There was a demon in his view, and he was probably never very far from those days of which he speaks, when his heart was

Volcanic

As the scoriac rivers that roll—
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole.

It is not hard to see him frozen in a polar solitude, the volcano still a threat, trying to be a solipsist and make a god out of his debility. It is probable that he saved his sanity only by the preponderating development of his logical mind.

But he did save it, and his *Eureka* is not the preposterous effusion of a megalomaniac. It is a serious attempt at profound philosophy by a man who felt that humanity was greater than it knew, that in essence it was indeed the transcendent and immanent Divine. The attempt may be considered a failure, but a failure that is not without a certain glory.

His object, as he said, was not to *prove*, but to *convince*: and this he sought to do by presenting a consistent and harmonious whole that would not be too unworthy of the stupendous consistency and wholeness of the universe; a work so beautiful that one could not doubt that it was essentially true. The work he considered to be his chief legacy to mankind, or to the "fit though few", and he died not long after it was completed.

He was not a flawless man, and one cannot blame his misfortunes altogether

upon his environment ; but still, when a man is given no air to breathe, one may take pause before maintaining that he ought to have been able to breathe whatever was available. And one who loves poetry may perhaps be permitted to maintain that a world in which a man of Poe's ability was granted an opportunity to devote himself more fully to the art, might have been a better world. But before he died, Poe had won through to the conviction that life did have a divine meaning which it was irrational to repine against and which, whatever the difficulties, the heart should accept with joy; and perhaps his abortive career was less a misfortune to himself than it has been to posterity.

But, whatever the reasons for a particular man's having been born in a particular place and done or tried to do a particular work or kind of work there, it can hardly be denied that some places are better for certain kinds of work than others; and even if we maintain that Poe did more important work and even better work in nineteenth century America than he would have done, say, in eleventh century Persia (if "Poe" can at all be conceived as being born then and there)—still it was in America that he did not live but died and, for its part in this, America is not to be commended.

It has been a matter for some comment that among American literary men abortive careers have not been a rarity. It is not only such exotics as Poe who have come to grief. Even so *American* a writer as Mark Twain has been considered (by Van Wyck Brooks) to have been maimed by his environment, so that he never developed into the great satirist and social critic he should have been—and certainly Mark Twain himself, whose best books are such intimate and understanding portrayals of boyhood, did seem to have a feeling that he had never developed fully. That America itself is an adolescent society, that will grow up to genuine greatness, is perhaps even yet the best hope that the world can have for it. And may we hope that even a spiritual greatness will not be beyond its capacities? Though these too have been abortive, there have been many movements in America toward spirituality, or at least toward living in more refined communities—the famous Brook Farm of the Transcendentalists being only one of them. And today cults and movements are flourishing as never before. And surely it was not fortuitous, that the first publication of Sri Aurobindo's "key works", outside of India, was in America. It seems that something above the dominant kind of "pragmatism" has been continually trying to break through there. May it succeed and eventually create genuinely spiritual people, and even an environment in which spiritually oriented people can flourish, and spiritual orientation will be encouraged.

The universities lag, literature has become little more than a capitulation to the lower vital, and philosophy a futile manipulation of categories and conceptions or a game of words: and dissatisfaction, on many levels, grows more and more acute. Youth revolts, and while in the growing confusion it is often a "rebel without a cause", it too is often a rebel with at least very definite grievances. The more highly developed are genuinely concerned about the poor, mechanized "education" they are getting, and the meaninglessness and terrible vulgarity of the society that it is designed

to prepare them for; while the noisier accept eagerly enough the lower influences now rampant, and seek to oppose and destroy just for the sake of opposition and destruction. Many are enamored of the thought of being infused with Oriental wisdom, and delight in playing with their ideas of being a Yogi. They are the embodiment of a really splendid Enlightenment, if one may believe all that one hears: an Enlightenment so full that it does not even require discipline and purification, aspiring to spirituality and turning away from the ego and its desires. They are "anti-intellectual", but it is not the Spirit that rushes into the vacation of their minds. They are "free"—to be slaves of darkness. Anything purporting to be quick and easy is eagerly adopted, and certain drugs are in the vanguard here: figures of the "underground" think that they are liberating themselves when they are disintegrating themselves, and I hear that it has been discovered that Shiva is the god of marijuana.

But there are a few sincere and well-directed seekers; and many more, perhaps, who have it in them to be, if their environment gave them the slightest encouragement and support. One may at least be permitted to hope that the New Age will succeed in getting itself established in America, without too tremendous a disruption.

And perhaps if Poe were living at present, in touch with the pioneers of the New Age, he might bring to deeper fruition both in literature and in life whatever seeds of light he sought to foster in his *Eureka*.

JESSE ROARK

THE ETERNAL LURES

WHEN mid the crowds I moved and laughed care-free,
 When I had everything to feel all gay,
 In the happy busy streets She ambushed me
 And lured me slowly to a lonely way.

With Her smiling gestures and Her touch sublime,
 Lone She was there for me to look up to,
 In Her laughter I lost all sense of self and time,
 My heart loved only Her, Her only knew.

And then She left me in that wilderness,
 I longed for Her touch, Her gestures and Her smile,
 I wandered breathlessly in soul-distress
 Hankering for my Snarer's sight awhile.

Lo, yonder on the hill-top smiling bright
 She is calling me by Her gestures towards that height.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE LOGICAL FATALIST

(With apologies to Professor G. Ryle whose sentence, "He tried to flag my cough with a Q.E.D." in his Dilemmas, Chapter II, "It was To Be", p. 24, inspired this verse. In that Chapter Professor Ryle examines and rightly rejects the argument of the logical fatalist based on the consideration that what is true is always true. It is meaningless, says the fatalist, to ask when something which is true becomes true. Now if it is true that a person coughed, then since it is always and hence antecedently true that he would cough, the person who coughed could not but have coughed when he coughed. On the same grounds it is argued that whatever we do, it was fated that we should do it. This argument, with the cough as an illustration, is no doubt, as Professor Ryle shows, logically fallacious, but it is not to be lightly sneezed at!)

ON Saturday morning at the stroke of ten
I coughed a gentle cough, 'twas then
The Fatalist declared, "It had to be!"
He flagged my cough with a Q.E.D.

"It's true that you coughed," he explained his view,
"So 'You'd cough' was also antecedently true."
"But the will!" I cried, "Is the will not free?
You can't flag my cough with a Q.E.D."

He smiled with pity, "Oh can't you see
That if anything happens It Was To Be?
For if 'You'd cough today' was always true
You couldn't help coughing today, could you?"

Perplexed and confounded, I still held out.
"That I coughed is true, but I surely can doubt
That 'twas true, *before* I coughed, I'd cough,
So my cough was a cough I could have put off?"

"Temporal predicates," he replied with a frown
And a Logic that bore dissension down,
"Cannot be ascribed to truth, so you
Must admit what's true must always be true."

"Or rather," he added, "'tis *timelessly* true
That you'd cough today, so whatever you do
You couldn't have not coughed; that's why, you see,
I flagged your cough with a Q.E.D."

Baffled, I hit him over the head.
"This happening, it had to happen," I said;
"'Twas timelessly true, so it could not but be."
I cracked his skull with a Q.E.D.!

J. N. CHUBB

GIFTS OF GRACE

(Continued from the issue of July)

ILLNESS IN YOGA AND CONQUEST OF FEAR

I HAD no idea that it was almost a crime to entertain fear. It was fear that invited illness. To me it appeared something natural, unavoidable. So, instead of throwing it off, I laid myself open to it unconsciously.

The one fear from which I suffered the most was that of physical pain. A little pain anywhere in the body would unnerve me and almost every time the trouble would grow in intensity. Despite Sri Aurobindo's advice never to entertain fear, I was helpless and I did not know how to exert my will to reject it. I remember only one instance of the exercise of my will-power to conquer pain. It was a year before my coming in touch with the Mother.

Inspired by the example of a great devotee who had refused to be chloroformed for a major operation in the stomach, I could calmly bear an operation on a finger of mine. To the surprise of the surgeon there was not a start or a wince.

As with a child, I persuaded my mind to bear the pain quietly: "Whatever hue and cry you raise is not going to reduce the pain; then why not endure it calmly?" The effect was marvellous. This helped me to know what is meant by will-power.

During my stay in the Ashram, whenever I could concentrate and separate my consciousness from the body I was able to isolate the pain and keep it fixed to one spot: thus the trouble got greatly lessened. But no concentration or detachment was possible for even a minute during the nights.

In the Ashram I suffered the most from eye-trouble. I used to have regular half-yearly relapses. And then there was not an hour's respite. Time and again a needle appeared to be piercing the eye-ball. Before coming here I had no eye-trouble. God knows why the hostile forces chose my eyes as the target of their attack. The eyes became so weak that even after being cured I was not able for ten years to read or write for more than half an hour at a time. I had just turned to Yoga without any worthwhile knowledge of it and was put to such tests.

But though the forces wanted to shove me out of the path at the very beginning, I found to my surprise that not a single contrary suggestion could colour my mind.

In the following letter of Sri Aurobindo's I can trace in general an explanation of the causes of my half-yearly relapses:

"These things were violent and obstinate in you for a long time and you were indulging them—hence they acquired a great force to return even after you began rejecting them, first because of habit, secondly because of their belief that they have acquired a right over you, thirdly because of the habit, assent and passive response to

them or endurance of them that has been stamped on the physical consciousness. This physical consciousness is not yet liberated, it has not begun to be as responsive to the higher force as the vital, so it cannot resist their invasion. So these forces, when thrown out, retreat into the environmental consciousness and remain there concealed and at any opportunity make an attack on the centres accustomed to receive them (external mind and the external emotional) and get in. This happens with most sadhaks. Two things are necessary—(1) to open fully the physical to the higher forces, (ii) to reach the stage when even if the forces attack they cannot come fully in, the inner being remaining calm and free. Then even if there is still a surface difficulty, there will not be these over-powerings.”¹

During the course of six years’ suffering from iritis I do not remember having had any spiritual experience connected with the eyes except on two or three occasions. One night, before dawn, I felt an acute pain in my right eye. But along with it began the action of the Mother’s Force exactly on the eye-ball. It was the pouring in of a healing Grace and I recovered at once.

Long after, in 1962, it once seemed that the eye-ball was going to have a relapse of its old complaint. Of a sudden I felt a shower of the Mother’s Force there and it gave me instantaneous relief. Indeed it brought about a radical cure. And as a result of this cure I need no glasses even in my present advanced age.

A third experience may be mentioned, but it is of a different sort. In 1959 I was given, for a time, gardening work in the Lake Estate. When I was pruning a tree and naturally looking up, a lopped branch fell upon my face. It brushed past my right eye, which was just saved from the sharp-pointed end of the branch. I attribute this escape to the action of the Mother’s Grace.

Pain in the lower parts of my body was always followed by the intervention of the Yogic Power and by various experiences from the very beginning.

On one occasion, in the evening meditation pain started in the lower part of my right leg. This part seemed merged with the earth and in my vision I saw it emitting sparks. Then I felt the Force working there for half an hour. Next, the pain shifted to the left leg. There I saw a star of diamond light. A vision arose of somebody plastering the loins with white cement. All looked white. The mind felt exceptionally quiet. When the experiences were referred to the Mother, the Master wrote:

“They seem to be all symbols of the force of consciousness working in the place of the illness.” (July, 1936).

In August 1963 I felt a pain in the right thigh. “Why this pain?” I wondered. Then I said to myself: “No, this body is for the Divine, nothing must enter it. Reject the pain. Don’t allow it to come.” Immediately the pain was gone.

Formerly I had pain there from twenty to thirty times and every time I had to suffer for days together. So this was the first experience of my body’s victory.

On September 29, 1963, while about to sit on the floor I got a pain in the region of

¹ *Letters*, Vol. IV, p. 535.

the waist. On previous occasions, during several years, this kind of lumbago had been a source of great trouble. A suggestion came floating in the air: "You are all alone; if the pain increases as before, how will you go down from your room to open the gate? Someone then will have to break open the door and come in."

Suddenly my mind flew to some words of the Mother about fear and it said to the body: "These are foolish suggestions. Body, you must not heed them. Has not the Mother recently written to you, 'Do not fear any adverse force—if you keep a sincere faith nothing can harm you.'?" At once my body became free from fear.

Once in the morning the body hesitated to go out for its exercise but the mind said: "Do try. If you cannot continue, you can come back." And once I started I kept on running till I had done a mile and there was no trace of pain. The pain returned almost daily for four or five days in the evening but as the mind was free there was no sense of suffering.

Once pain appeared in the right knee. It aroused old thoughts of month-long confinement to bed and also a fear. As I prepared for a short rest I felt a descent of the Mother's Force like a shower exactly upon the affected spot and its action continued for over an hour and off went the pain.

The difference to note is that in 1958 the pain in my knees had continued for months on end; not for a second had the Mother's Force touched the troubled part. Due to the intensity of the pain I could neither bend my knees nor have a wink of sleep.

(To be Continued)

A DISCIPLE

WHENEVER I TOUCH THY FEET

COME, O Sweet Mother, O Guru Divine,
On this day of my birth,
Grant me Thy Love incarnadine
And flood me with God-mirth.

For Thee alone my life is fresh,
To Thee I offer my all,
To Thee my mind, my body of flesh
And nerves uplift their call.

My everything I give to Thee,
Thou grant me Knowledge complete;
Open my doors of destiny
Whenever I touch Thy Feet.

9-8-1969

SAVITRI AGARWAL

(Translated by Har Krishan Singh from the Hindi Song)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Evolution of India: Its Meaning by Sisirkumar Mitra (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1968). Pages X + 157; Price Rs. 4. (Also available at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Publication Department, Pondicherry.)

PROF. Sisirkumar Mitra is a historian but with a significant difference. He is more a historian of the Spirit's march and self-unfoldment in time and space than a mere chronicler of facts or for that matter an adroit analyst of the superficialities of life. To Mitra, "the inner, that is to say, the truer definition of history is the story of man's pilgrimage from the ancient Dawn to the High-noon of the future" (p. 43). Thus it is no wonder that any contribution from his pen touching upon the historical evolution of our ancient land should blaze new pathways and grip the attentive interest of sensitive readers.

The title under review seeks to interpret Indian history from the standpoint of Sri Aurobindo's "vision of the India of the ages and of the India to be" (p. vii). Thus, instead of limiting itself to the task of matter-of-fact narration of political events, Prof. Mitra's slender but richly documented book seeks to cast a searching regard into the "inwardness" of India's history. For, to quote his own words:

"It is time the history of India was rewritten from a deeper understanding of the 'inwardness' of her culture which inspired, motivated and sustained the organic process of her evolution through the ages, stressing the meaning of that evolution, the purpose it seeks to fulfil in the life of the race, the forces that have ever worked to help forward the progressive realisation of her destiny" (p. 32)

This approach very evidently calls for a new philosophy of history which posits the working of the Mother Mahashakti, overt or veiled, in all historic forces.

To the vision of Mitra hailing from Bengal, the land of the Shakti-cult, India's history in particular has all along been a living process through which the Divine Mother has been leading this sacred land, *devabhūmi tapobhūmi*, on to the glorious Day when the Divine Shakti descends upon earth in an incarnate form and chooses India as the centre of Her new Manifestation of which the keynote will be man's ultimate perfection here upon earth itself.

The reader cannot but thrill to find how, to the reconciling Shakta-consciousness of Mitra, three beings become one and the same: (1) the Mother of the Universe, Mahashakti Jaganmata; (2) Mother India who is much more than a poetic appellation and whose Presence and Personality permeates her soil; and (3) the Mother about whom the Master-Seer of Pondicherry said, "Her embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it and to undergo the transformation necessary for that to be possible"

In conclusion, we have no hesitation in stating that Prof. Mitra has succeeded eminently in offering to the readers in the short compass of 150 pages or so a luminous exposition of the graph of India's cultural evolution, attempted in its true perspective

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

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FOCUS

10. 'New Lamps for Old'

"Indu Prakash or Moonlight" was a Marathi-English bilingual weekly and was published from Bombay during the last quarter of the 19th century. It used to have 6 pages in a big newspaper format with 8 columns per page. In this weekly Sri Aurobindo wrote two series immediately after his return from England. The following passage occurs in *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (pp 26-27, 1953 edition) regarding the first series, *New Lamps for Old*:

"The facts about the articles in the *Indu Prakash* were these. They were begun at the instance of K. G. Deshpande, Aurobindo's Cambridge friend who was editor [of the English section] of the paper, but the first two articles made a sensation and frightened Ranade and other Congress leaders. Ranade warned the proprietor of the paper that, if this went on, he would surely be prosecuted for sedition. Accordingly the original plan of the series had to be dropped at the proprietor's instance. Deshpande requested Sri Aurobindo to continue in a modified tone and he reluctantly consented, but felt no farther interest and the articles were published at long intervals and finally dropped of themselves altogether."

This series was published from 9th August 1893 to 6th March 1894 and had only 9 articles in all. But the last one was numbered *XI* instead of *IX* and due to this misprint it was thought two articles, namely the 9th and 10th, were missing. This obvious mistake stood until recently and it was also carried over by Dr. Karan Singh, Prof. Haridas and Uma Mukherjee and some other authors when they quoted this series in their respective works on Sri Aurobindo.

At present, the Ashram Reading Room has these articles in typewritten form copied down years ago from the original *Indu Prakash* issues. The copy has many apparent mistakes, even omissions of phrases sometimes, and checking with the original became inevitable. A wide search was then made to locate the *Indu Prakash* files and luckily they were found in The Asiatic Society Library of Bombay. The checking and comparing was done last June. Not only were these articles thoroughly rectified, but while scrutinising the files we found some other valuable material to our pleasant surprise.

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SIXTEENTH SEMINAR

23RD FEBRUARY 1969

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1969)

II

ASCETICISM AND TRUE AUSTERITY

NOTHING has been so much misunderstood as the subject of askesis and nothing yet is more important than to get the full understanding of what this is, for upon our understanding of it depends our whole outlook upon our spiritual destiny and our place in the universe.

Asceticism has always been held up as the royal path to spirituality and it has been considered so sacred that during the past ages it has come to mean the same as spirituality, almost to all people; but this is a wrong identification—and yet, there is a certain truth in the relation between the two. It is our task to elucidate what might be wrong and what might be right in this relation.

First of all, there is the ordinary and widespread idea that a spiritual man, a yogi, a saint is always a man who has renounced everything in order to pursue his own liberation without the burden of his lower undivine nature dragging him down into the ignorance time after time. Such a man, according to this general idea, must always be poor, without possessions of any kind, except the minimum materials necessary for the maintenance of his bare physical existence, like food and clothes. Moreover, the saint, the god-seeker is always living in a solitary hermitage in the forest far away from all worldly turmoil and clamour, mostly absorbed in meditation while sitting immobile in a fixed position.

As an actual fact this may be true, for that has been and still is the general characteristic of a God-seeker. Yet it was not always so, as can be seen when we turn our gaze to the remote past—to the Vedic and Upanishadic times. We just need to think of Yajnavalkya who possessed huge herds of cows, and King Janaka who could revel in unsurpassed riches and plenitude, without the least harm being done to their spiritual attainment. And these are not the only ones combining worldly abundance and spiritual opulence. Remind yourself also of all the other sages mentioned in the Upanishads.

nishads and all the rishis in the Vedas, all of whom actively associated with life in the world as teachers, not only as gurus but also as preceptors in skills like archery and grammar, just to mention two so-called unspiritual activities.

Such was the life of saints in olden times, but with the decline of true spiritual vision and intuition and with the growing development of the critical inquiring intellect, this happy union between world and spirit became totally disrupted and the ascetic attitude towards life had its sway.

The real light from the past was lost but what was retained was one of the means for realising the true spirit, as we shall see when asceticism as a method has been put in the right place in the process of sadhana.

It is true that asceticism has a part to play in the quest for the spirit, but if it wants to remain a truth we should properly understand what is the motivation and the psychological mechanism behind it.

One of the main reasons in favour of asceticism is the heavy impediment of the body and the vital nature which the fervent devotee and God-seeker feels as an immense hindrance to his spiritual growth and expansion. And the only solution he immediately perceives and to which he is irresistibly pushed by his impatient urge is to quell vigorously these dangerous opponents, to reject life, mortify the body, silence the mind and as quickly as possible escape into the immutable and pure spirit which he feels to be the only reality. The motivation behind this recoil from the world is in itself sound because the aim is to overpass the hold of the bodily nature upon the consciousness, and for the ascetic the one thing needful is to establish his own spirit in the pure spiritual consciousness at any cost; so if Nature refuses to submit to the demands of his zeal the only way out is to withdraw from her. But this way of renunciation is indeed extremely difficult and even dangerous and in most cases it foils its own purpose.

First, it must be noted, it is impossible in this way to escape from the clutches of Nature. "For none stands even for a moment not doing work, everyone is made to do action helplessly by the modes born of Prakriti," says the Gita.¹ What has happened is that the ascetic has only substituted one kind of action for another; he controls the organs of action, but with the mind he remembers and dwells still upon the objects of the senses. And even if he has succeeded in silencing his mind altogether, still he does works, or rather consents—because he cannot do otherwise—to Prakriti's working in his body, though he may be sitting motionless like a stone pillar. Thus he has deluded himself, and his formally regulated method of control is a false and vain method.

Moreover, it happens in most cases that the ascetic extremist loses himself completely in the labyrinth of mortificational practices never to get out again. In itself it is futile to engage in a violent wrestle with Nature in order to conquer her, because she is infinitely more powerful and her resources of strength are illimitable; so in

¹ III, 5.

this battle man is bound to lose. If he wants to master her, he should acquire the appropriate knowledge of human nature so that he may know the source and character of the frailties and impurities which hamper his spiritual progress. But unfortunately most men are too weak both in their intellect and in their will, so that they are unable to endure and detach themselves from the vehement insistence of the senses and their objects, even while continuing to move freely amidst them.

Another reason why this endeavour defeats itself is that the wrestle with Nature goes on indefinitely and in the long run all these practices of systematic repressions, self-tortures, self-immolations tend to establish themselves firmly in a dull groove of fixed habit from which it is impossible to escape. Also one can be sure that after a decade of mortification of the flesh one's most precious instrument and the basis of the sadhana—the body—is completely disabled beyond hope of restoration. Even Buddha had to pay heavily for his years of immoderate austerities and he realised that to achieve anything of definite value one should keep the middle path, avoiding the two extremes.

But many people cannot do otherwise and they have to follow the trend of their nature before it has developed sufficiently to stand the pressure from the environment. Until then it is legitimate for them to retire to the forest or to the hill-top where they would be able to create an atmosphere of their own, away from the weakening and seducing vital vibrations of other human beings.

This procedure—to suppress the problem by suppressing the possibility of the problem—is not the right thing to do and far from the genuine and true mastery, because it mistakes the effect for the cause of all the troubles.

The solution of the problem depends upon right knowledge, and what is needed is not only right intellectual knowledge but also true spiritual vision.

The greatest spiritual men and the genuine God-lovers always had the true perception of the causes of deviation and fall. They knew that these are within and not without and that the surest means to get rid of these impediments is to have inner renunciation—detachment—and to be equal and unaffected in all situations.

It should be understood thoroughly that the objects of the senses are not the causes of our bondage. The cause of all attachment is the insistence of the mind upon them. Sri Aurobindo says concerning this: "The body's actions, even the mind's actions are nothing in themselves, neither a bondage, nor the first cause of bondage. What is vital is the mighty energy of Nature which will have her way and her play in the great field of mind and life and body; what is dangerous in her, is the power of her three gunas, modes or qualities to confuse and bewilder the intelligence and so obscure the soul."¹

The first requisite is to rise above the workings of the three gunas. If we can detach ourselves completely from them then there is no need for us any more to denounce actions as the vilest thing upon earth. Now actions can continue, as they must

¹ *Essays on the Gita* (1959), p. 146.

continue, because inaction in itself is impossible for human beings. To achieve this the intelligent will must use its instrument—the mind. Here the Gita says: “He who controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, without attachment engages with the organs of action in Yoga of action, he excels. Do thou do controlled action, for action is greater than inaction.”¹

But this is not enough, for the mind is itself under the subjection of the gunas and this kind of self-control can only be a palliative, never the full and complete self-mastery which we aspire for. Even the sage of discerning perception finds himself carried away by the senses. “Perfect security,” says Sri Aurobindo, “can only be had by resorting to something higher than the sattwic quality, something higher than the discerning mind, to the self,—not the philosopher’s intelligent self, but the divine sage’s spiritual self which is beyond the three gunas. All must be consummated by a divine birth into the higher spiritual nature.”²

If we do not want to retire altogether from Nature but fulfil our part in the cosmic dynamic play without being pushed between the dualities and without being their constant plaything, then this is the only remedy: to withdraw inwardly, to live silent in the silence of the impersonal and universal Self, to be one with the Eternal in His God-nature.

What is the truth behind this total reversion from the lower nature to the higher divine nature?

Sri Aurobindo explains: “When we live tranquilly poised in this self of impersonal wideness, then because this is vast, calm, quiescent, impersonal, our little false self, our ego of action disappears into its largeness and we see that it is Nature that acts and not we, that all action is the action of Nature and can be nothing else.”³

Still, the full solution of the problem of action has not been gained. It is not enough to have the realisation of the impersonal Self, because this in itself cannot stand as a guarantee for a continuance of actions in the world. The experience of this state of consciousness separates itself trenchantly from that of life with all its dualities; and the seeker after liberation may remain content with that experience and say that now he has obtained the aim of all his aspirations, that all actions are burned away and that from now on he can dwell forever silent and blissful in the supreme featureless Self.

This, indeed, would be the sole solution for ascetics of the Sankhya and Mayavada doctrines. The highest secret for them can only be the immutable, impersonal Self, called in the Sankhya the witnessing Purusha, the giver of consent to Prakriti, but not partaking actively in the play to which he consents, and named in Mayavada the Nirguna Brahman, the static qualityless Self, without any connection at all with Nature and with the Saguna Brahman, the active qualified self embracing Nature.

But this perception is due to a lack of the full spiritual vision, a lack which can only be remedied by ascending to a higher status where one is able to realise that these

¹ III, 7-8

² *Op cit*, p 268

³ *Ibid*, p 513

two apparently irreconcilable concepts do not correspond to any real division in Reality. In fact, these two, the status and immutability of the self and the action of the self and its mutability in Nature, actually coexist. And it is the great merit of the Gita, amongst other ancient scriptures, that it was able to reconcile these two in the highest reality of the Supreme Self, the Purushottama. The sages in the Upanishads also arrived at a complete synthesis when they stated that "all this is the Brahman" after they had affirmed that Brahman was "one without a second". Brahman is not only nirguna but also saguna—with qualities. Also the Shaivas and the Shaktas confirmed that Shakti, power in action, was inseparably associated with Shiva, the static inactive principle, and that these two actually were one.

Thus the God-seeker has to ascend to that higher poise of the Purushottama which contains and transcends the statuses of both the active and the inactive selves. They are aspects of the Divine Being in His universal manifestation, yet the Divine Himself is not bound by His manifestations but eternally beyond and master of His universal workings—ever free in His equality of self-possession. It is to this supreme status that we are asked to climb. This is the poise of the liberated man, the sovereign master of his divine nature.

In the Gita Sri Krishna gives the example of himself when he tries to convince Arjuna why he has to fight. In the same example he also cuts away the ground from under the ascetics pleading for inaction as the highest good. He says: "O Son of Pritha, I have no work that I need to do in all the three worlds, I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain, and I abide verily in the paths of action. For if I did not abide sleeplessly in the paths of action, men follow in every way my path, these peoples would sink to destruction if I did not work and I should be the creator of confusion and slay these creatures."¹

We have seen now that the crux of the whole matter is essentially a change of consciousness. What is most urgent and needful is that the aspirant after perfection has to ascend to the consciousness of the highest Divine Being and try to open himself to the light of Truth that is descending by the Divine Grace from above. The path of true austerity consists of aspiration to unite with the Supreme, rejection of all the obstacles that impede the progress toward that union and an unquestioning surrender to the Lord. In the initial discipline a certain asceticism is advisable, but it must be a seeing and sane rejection of those energies of Nature that cannot be converted into the Divine Nature. Also it is necessary to detach and dissociate oneself from worldly activities, but only to arrive at a greater mastery in the end when the whole being shall be organised harmoniously around the Divine Being in perfect self-consecration.

But true austerity can only be had when there is perfect surrender from the aspirant, when he is treading the "sunlit path" as Sri Aurobindo calls it. From then on there shall not be any more austerities to endure for the God-seeker.

¹ III, 22-24.

Sri Krishna says: "Become my-minded, my lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow thyself to Me, to Me thou shalt come, this is my pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to Me. Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve."¹

HENNING

¹ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 65-66.

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE Sixth Annual Conference of the New Age Association was held on Sunday, the 17th August 1969, from 8.30 to 10.00 a.m., in the New Hall of the Centre of Education.

The proceedings of the Conference began with the Chairman's reading of the Mother's following message given for the Conference:

Above all words,
above all thoughts
in the luminous silence
of an aspiring faith
give yourself totally,
unreservedly, absolutely
to the Supreme Lord
of all existences and
He will do of you
what He wants you
to be.

After that the Chairman made some introductory remarks. Then the following six members of the Association spoke on subjects which they themselves had chosen:

Ananda Reddy — On Human Progress.

Gauri Gupta — Is Man Free?

Karuna Mukherji — What is Consciousness?

Romen — Science and Spirituality in Human Evolution.

Surendra Chauhan — Superman.

Tarun Vishnu — The Fallacy of Mayavada.

EXHIBITION OF EYE EDUCATION AT THE SCHOOL FOR PERFECT EYESIGHT 14, 16, 17, 18 August 1969

THE exhibition of eye education was opened on the 14th August by Shri Nolinikanta, the Secretary of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. On the 16th at 4.30 p.m. the Lt. Governor Shri Jatty visited the exhibition and greatly admired the simple methods of relaxation as demonstrated through various diagrams.

It was towards the end of the nineteenth century that in America Dr. W. H. Bates was born. He was a distinguished pioneer in Ophthalmology and developed a new system of eye education.

Some of the pictures show how the eye should be used while reading, writing, sewing, spinning, in the cinema and during various activities of life. In other illustrations in this group Dr. Bates recommends three most important things:

1. Reading fine print is a benefit to the eye while large print is a menace.
2. Reading in dim light or in candle light is very useful.
3. Reading at a closer distance is beneficial.

Dr. Bates admits that India has many secrets: for example, Sun Treatment as shown in a picture. Facing the sun with eyes closed for a few minutes gives health and vitality to the eyes. Palming is a sort of meditation which brings wonderful relaxation to the mind and to the nerves and helps to improve the eyesight. Children respond very well and usually give surprising results.

In one picture Dr. R. S. Agarwal is giving a demonstration on eye education. Recently a teacher of the Centre of Education, whose left eye was blind from childhood, got cured. A doll represents the blind eye case and tells others to join the one year training course in eye education. Now we enter into the classroom where the furniture has been fitted in the form of the Mother's symbol—in the centre a flower-stand, four tables around it complete the circle, twelve chairs are around the tables. On the book-rack about 12 publications by Dr. Agarwal in English and in Indian languages indicate that much work has been done in India on the lines of Dr. Bates.

In the first picture here the structural condition of the eyeball is shown when the eye is Hypermetropic, Normal and Myopic. In the second diagram is shown the construction of the eye and how the eye looks from inside when examined by an instrument called the Ophthalmoscope. The illustrations on Accommodation are very interesting. One of them proves that focussing at a near point is brought about by the action of the oblique muscles of the eye and not by increased curvature of the lens. The other picture shows that the eye and the camera are alike in structure and functioning. The last painting illustrates the vision of the inner eye.

Now we come to the practical side. The two dolls show what blinking is, how gently their lids move in blinking which should not be mistaken for winking. In the dark room one is taught how to read in dim light and in candle light. The sun-lamp is meant for sun treatment when there is no sun. The palming pillows help in Palming. In the medicine room patients learn how to apply Resolvent 200 to improve eyesight. In the end we come to the reception room and the Doctor's consulting chamber.

INDRA ARYA