

MOTHER INDIA

JUNE, 1970

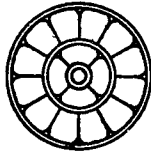
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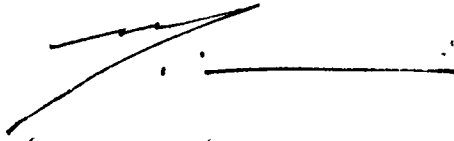
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXII

No. 5

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Mettez-vous tous d'accord.
C'est *la seule manière* de faire
du bon travail.

2-4-70

Pour se mettre tous d'accord
il faut que chacun monte au sommet
de sa conscience: c'est sur les
hauteurs que se crée l'harmonie.

Avril 70

Come to agreement.
That is *the only way*
to do good work.

2-4-70

For all to agree
each one must rise to the top
of his consciousness: it is
on the heights that harmony is
created.

April 70

THE MOTHER ON RELIGION

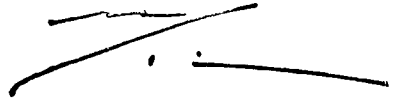
Q. La notion de religion est le plus souvent liée à celle de la recherche de Dieu. Est-ce seulement dans cette perspective qu'il faut la comprendre ? N'y a-t-il pas en effet aujourd'hui d'autres formes de religion ?

Nous appelons 'religion' toute conception du monde ou de l'univers qui se présente comme la Vérité exclusive en laquelle on doit avoir une foi absolue, généralement parce que cette Vérité est censée être le résultat d'une révélation.

La plupart des religions affirment l'existence d'un Dieu et les règles à suivre pour Lui obéir, mais il y a aussi des religions sans Dieu, telles les organisations socio-politiques qui, au nom d'un Idéal ou de l'Etat, réclament le même droit à l'obéissance.

Le droit de l'homme est de poursuivre librement la Vérité et de s'en approcher librement par ses propres voies. Mais chacun doit savoir que sa découverte est bonne pour lui seulement et qu'elle ne doit pas être imposée aux autres.

13.5.1970



Q. The notion of religion is most often linked to the search for God. Should religion be understood in this context only ? As a matter of fact, are there not nowadays other forms of religion ?

We call religion any concept of the world or the universe which is presented as the exclusive Truth in which one must have an absolute faith, generally because this Truth is declared to be the result of a revelation

Most of the religions affirm the existence of a God and the rules to follow to obey Him, but there are some Godless religions, such as socio-political organisations which, in the name of an Ideal or the State, claim the same right to be obeyed.

Man's right is a free pursuit of the Truth with the liberty to approach it in his own way. But each one must know that his discovery is good for him alone and it is not to be enforced upon others.

13.5.1970

THE MOTHER

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of May)

(This new series of answers by the Mother to questions put by the children of the Ashram appeared for the first time in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education but in a somewhat incomplete form. We now give, in a new English translation, the full text as it was taped, with here and there a few special additions or modifications made by the Mother herself at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968.)

January 18, 1956

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: "For all this first period he [the individual] has to work by means of the instruments of the lower Nature."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 97)

What is this work, and how is it accomplished?

There is a positive side to this work and a negative side.

The positive side is to increase one's aspiration, develop one's consciousness, unify one's being, to go within in order to enter more and more into contact with one's psychic being; to take up all the parts, all the movements, all the activities of one's being and put them in front of this psychic consciousness so that they fall into their true place *vis-à-vis* this centre; finally to organise all aspiration towards the Divine and all progress towards the Divine. That is the positive side.

At the same time the negative side consists in refusing methodically and with discernment all influences which come from outside, or from the subconscious or inconscient, or from the surroundings, and stand in the way of spiritual progress. One must discern these influences, these suggestions, these impulsions, and refuse them systematically without ever getting discouraged by their persistence and without ever yielding to their will. One must at the same time observe in one's being all its different elements, obscure, egoistic, unconscious, or even ill-willed, which answer these bad influences, consciously or not, and which allow them not only to penetrate into the consciousness, but sometimes to install themselves there. That is the negative side.

Both must be practised at the same time. According to the moment, the occasion, the inner readiness, one must insist sometimes on the positive, sometimes on the negative, but never forget them, neither the one nor the other.

Generally, all progress made on one side has its counterpart in the attack of the adverse forces upon the other. So, the more one advances, the more vigilant must

one become. And the most essential quality is perseverance, endurance, and a ... what shall I call it? a sort of inner good humour which helps you not to get discouraged, not to become sad, and to face all difficulties with a smile. There is a word in English which expresses this very well: cheerfulness. If you can keep this within you, you fight much better, resist much better, in the light, all these bad influences which try to hinder you from progressing.

That is the work. It is vast and complex. And one must never forget anything.

Sweet Mother, "... The Supreme has laid his luminous hand upon a chosen human vessel of his miraculous Light and Power and Ananda." (Ibid., p. 100)

Is it the Supreme who chooses the being that becomes his instrument, or is it the being which chooses to become the instrument?

You can take it as you like.

One can't tell where it begins! But the two generally take place at the same time.

If you want an order of priority, it is evident that the Divine exists before the individual, so it must be the Divine who has chosen first! But that is a choice prior to terrestrial life. In the order of the ordinary human consciousness it may be this one or that or both at the same time. In fact, it is likely that the Divine is the first to see that this person or that is ready! But he who is ready generally begins without knowing it, so he has the impression that it is he who has decided and chosen. But this is more of an impression than a reality.

And once one has chosen, it is ineluctable, one cannot escape even if one tries.

Sweet Mother, here I would like an explanation: "In the last period there is no effort at all, no set method, no fixed sadhana; the place of endeavour and tapasya will be taken by a natural, simple, powerful and happy disclosing of the flower of the Divine out of the bud of a purified and perfected terrestrial nature." (Ibid., p. 99)

It is put poetically.

But what is it you don't understand? Why he speaks about the bud and the flower?

I am asking this because the bud opens into a flower without any effort, but we have to make an effort, haven't we?

He says that this happens at the moment when one is ready; it is precisely to make you think "but the bud opens without effort", so, when the nature is ready, the same thing happens as with the bud.

"Effort", I don't know what we call effort, it is not certain whether the plant makes an effort or not. And in any case, it has an aspiration; when plants grow it is the result of an aspiration for the light, for the sun, for free air.

And there is a kind of competition. If one goes into a wood, for instance, into a park where there are many different plants, one can observe very clearly that there is a sort of competition between plants to pass across the others and reach the light and free air above. It is indeed quite wonderful to see.

Now, Sri Aurobindo means that when one is well prepared and the nature is ready, then the last movement is like a spontaneous blossoming—it is no longer an effort, it is an answer. It is a truly divine action in the being: one is prepared and the moment has come, then the bud opens.

Is there an aspiration for growth in children also, as there is in plants?

Yes. Even, very often it is conscious: they *want* to grow up.

Does it then depend upon their aspiration,—their being tall or short?

At a particular moment, yes. I have really known children who have grown tall because they had a very strong will to grow tall.

Yes, that has an action even when one is no longer quite a child. I had instances of people who grew tall even at twenty, so very anxious were they to grow tall. And I am not speaking of those who underwent physical training, for that is different, with physical training one can very considerably change one's body; I am speaking simply of an aspiration, an inner will. The body is sufficiently plastic till twenty-five. Later one must introduce more scientific methods, like physical culture; and if that is done in a wise and logical manner, one can obtain wonderful results. But always, behind it, is needed a will, that is very important; a sort of tenacious aspiration, a knowledge, or even a faith that one is not necessarily tied down by atavism.

For evidently, as in plants, one is limited by the original seed, the species to which one belongs. But all the same there is a wide margin. I have very many times seen children who were considerably taller than their parents, for instance, and who had truly wanted to be so. Of course, it was against a certain resistance and within a certain limit, but one can push back the limit a good deal.

And fundamentally, according to the theories of heredity and atavism, they say that heredity can skip generations, and there are few families where at least one member was not tall and so could justify the height of his grandchildren or great-grand children.

Sweet Mother, can a plant grow otherwise than physically?

In plants there is a great vital force. And this vital force acts to a large extent. And there is also the genius of the species, which is a consciousness. There is an active consciousness already, working in plants.

And in the genius of the species there is a beginning—quite embryonic, but still—there is a beginning of response to psychic influences, and certain flowers are clearly the expression of a psychic attitude and aspiration in the plant; not very conscious of itself, but existing like a spontaneous *élan*.

It is quite certain that if you have a special affection for a plant, for instance, if, in addition to the material care you give it, you love it, if you feel close to it, it also feels this: its blossoming is much more harmonious, happy, its growth the best possible, its life prolonged. All this means a response in the plant itself. Consequently, there is the presence there of a certain consciousness; and surely the plant has a vital being.

Mother, does a plant have its own individuality and does it also reincarnate after death?

This may happen, but it is accidental.

There are trees—trees specially—which have lived long and can be the home of a conscious being, a vital being. Generally it is vital individualities which take shelter in trees, or often certain beings of the vital plane which live in forests—as certain beings of the vital live in water. There were old legends like that, but they were based on facts.

Plants serve as home and shelter, but the being is not created by the plant itself!

(Silence)

Can the being which is chosen by the Divine know this from its very birth?

Even before its birth.

Perhaps its birth is the result of this choice; generally it is like that. But at any time at all in its life this can happen. But for those who are predestined it is before birth; generally they come to earth with an intention and a determined purpose.

You would like to know very much if this has happened to you, yes? (*laughter*) Well, try—try to find out: have that inner aspiration, concentrate, and then try. If you get a result, tell me; I shall tell you if it is correct.

(*Looking at another disciple*) He has yet something turning in his head!

Mother, to continue this question on the last phrase. "The Supreme has laid his

luminous hand upon a chosen human vessel of his miraculous Light..."

Yes.

Can this apply generally or is it for one in a million?

What do you mean by "generally"? All men on the earth? Is that what you mean?

All those who aspire and do yoga, or is it one single person?

Oh! now it begins to take shape! (*laughter*) Is it only one individual the Divine chooses to manifest Him or can He choose several?—He chooses several.

But here too there is a hierarchy. One can understand *nothing* of the spiritual life if one does not understand true hierarchy.

Nowadays it is not in fashion. In human thought it is something which does not find favour at all. But from the spiritual point of view, it is automatic, spontaneous and indisputable. And so, if the hierarchy is true, there is a place for everybody; and for each individual in the place where he is, his individual truth is absolute. That is to say, each element which is truly in its place has a total and perfect relation with the Divine—in its place. And yet, as a whole, there is a hierarchy which too is quite absolute. But to understand spiritual life one must first understand that; and it is not very easy.

Everyone can be a perfect expression of the Divine in himself, on condition that he knows his place and keeps to it.

And if they do not know the hierarchy, they cannot know this?

But they do not need to know that they form a hierarchy, it is not necessary to know it. That is only if one wants to organise physically a spiritual society,—it is then that one is obliged to materialise the hierarchy. But generally, in the world as it is, there are so many gaps in this hierarchy that it seems a confusion.

The perfect hierarchy is a total hierarchy, and it is not concerned with time and space. But when you want to realise this physically it becomes very difficult. It is like weaving a piece of cloth with lots of holes everywhere; and the holes disturb the general harmony. Always men are found missing, steps are missing, pieces missing on the chess-board—all this is missing. So it looks like a confusion. But if everything were expressed and each thing in its place, it would be a perfect harmony and a perfect hierarchy.

There is somewhere (not in the material universe, but in the manifested universe) this perfect hierarchy; it exists. But it is not yet manifested upon earth.

Perhaps this will be one of the results of the supramental transformation: the world will be ready for a perfect, spontaneous, essentially true hierarchical manifestation—and without any kind of coercion—where everyone will become aware of his own perfection.

Mother, what does a spiritual hierarchy mean exactly? Because when we speak of hierarchy that implies something graded in a superior and inferior order, doesn't it?

Yes, and that is altogether false. That is to say, materially it is like that. But this is not what I call a hierarchy.

Then what is a hierarchy?

It is the organisation of powers and the manifestation in action of the particular nature of every person.

We have often tried to find comparisons, but they are no good. For none of the things we know physically can answer to that condition. There is always the sense of superiority and inferiority, as you say.... Some have compared a hierarchy to the different functions of the body, for example. But that always gives the impression that the head is at the top and the feet below, so it is troublesome!

Each element is the whole Divine at the same time, then how can we speak of a hierarchy?

Each element has a direct and perfect relation with the Divine.

But can't they become the whole Divine?

Yes, all become the Divine; but not the totality of the Divine, for the Divine is everything. You cannot take a piece of the Divine and say: "This is the Divine." And yet, in his spiritual consciousness everybody has a perfect relation with the Divine, that is to say, everyone is as perfectly the Divine as he can be. But to reconstruct the Divine, the whole Divine is necessary. And it is precisely this that constitutes the very essence of hierarchy. But as everyone is perfect in himself, there can be no feeling of inferiority or superiority.

I don't think the human mentality can understand that. I think it must be lived; once one has lived it, it is very simple, it appears luminously simple. But to understand it with the mind, that is not possible, it seems impossible. Chiefly because the mind, in order to understand anything at all, is obliged to divide everything and contrast everything, else it does not understand, it is in a confusion. By its very functioning it makes itself incapable of understanding.

(Silence)

Sweet Mother, how can one say that a fact is "already accomplished" when it has not yet been manifested—for instance, that the Divine has chosen an instrument, when nothing is as yet apparent?

Yes, within, in the world which is not yet manifested, the decision is there, it is made there; but then it must come to the surface.

It corresponds exactly to what I have already narrated to you so often about the freedom of India. After having gone to a certain plane, I said to Sri Aurobindo: "India is free." I did not say to him "She *will* be free," I said "She *is* free." Well, between that moment when it was an accomplished fact and the moment when it was translated into the material world upon earth, how many years were needed? It was in 1915, and the liberation came in 1947, that is, thirty-two years later. There you are that is the exact image of the resistance.

So, for the individual it is the same thing; sometimes it takes as long as that, sometimes it goes faster.

You say you saw India free...

No, I did not see. I knew.

You said to Sri Aurobindo "India is free": was India free as one whole or cut into two as it is at present?

I meant specially what happened in 1947, that is, the withdrawal of foreign domination, that's all. Nothing else but that, not her moral or spiritual freedom, I did not speak of that at all. I simply said she was free from foreign domination, since even to a question Sri Aurobindo put to me I answered (from the same plane): "There will be no violence, this will come about without a revolution, it will be the English who will themselves decide to go away, for the place will become untenable owing to certain world-circumstances." Hence it was a question only of that, there was no spiritual question here.

And things happened like that. And I had told Sri Aurobindo in 1915, exactly. It was all there. I neither guessed anything nor prophesied: it was a fact.

And so, that gives you exactly the picture of the length of time necessary between the established fact and the inner realisation. And for the individual it is the same thing: he is chosen, he has chosen; and he has chosen the Divine and is chosen; and it is a thing decided; and it will be realised ineluctably, one can't escape even if one tries. Only, it may take a very long time.

Mother, (laughter) I was asking. . You said that India was free in 1915, but was it free as it is free now? Because India is not free as one whole. It is cut up.

Oh! Oh! that's what you wanted to know!

That—the details were not there. No, there must have been a possibility of its being otherwise, for, when Sri Aurobindo told them to do a certain thing, sent them his message¹, he knew very well that it was possible to avoid what happened later. If they had listened to him at that time, there would have been no division. Consequently, the division was not decreed, it was a human deformation. Unquestionably, it is a human deformation.

But then, how can it be said that the decision of the Supreme is ineluctable?

How?

If the Divine chose that India would be free...

No, no, it is not like that, my child! *(laughter)*

It is a *fact*, that's all. It is the Divine who is India, it is the Divine who is freedom, it is the Divine who is subjection, it is the Divine who is everything—then how has He chosen?

(Silence)

I advise you to go up there and see, then you will understand. So long as you have not climbed right up the ladder, this will be difficult to understand.

¹ In 1942, at the time of the "proposals" brought by Sir Stafford Cripps (not yet giving independence to India but leading towards it), Sri Aurobindo took the trouble of sending a special messenger to Delhi to convince certain responsible persons that the proposals *must be* accepted. They did not understand. Had the proposals been accepted, India would most probably have avoided the partition and its accompanying atrocities. (Editor)

TWO LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(The following letters date back to 1923. They are reproduced here from a copy made by V. Chidanandam and his late brother V. Chandrasekharam. The former, while sending us the text, says that it may not be entirely free from small slips. The questions which Sri Aurobindo answered in the letters are not available.)

THE old methods of yoga select intellect, emotion or will, or differentiate between purusha and prakriti, by which we arrive at an infinite of knowledge, an all-loving and all-beautiful supreme or an infinite impersonal will or the silent Brahman beyond the individual purusha. Our yoga does not aim at an impersonal infinite of knowledge, will or Ananda, but at the realisation of a supreme being, an infinite knowledge beyond the limited human knowledge, an infinite power which is the source of our personal will, an Ananda which can't be seized by surface movements of emotion.

Our supreme being is not an impersonal infinite, but a divine personality and to realise him we have to grow conscious of our own true personality—not the inner physical, inner vital and inner mental being whose consciousness is often wrongly described as the true psychic—but our own true psychic being which is in direct communication with the highest. Man has to realise his own divine person which is in the supermind. The old yogas failed to transform life because they did not go beyond mind. They used to catch at mental experiences, but when they came to apply them to life, they reduced them to mental forms, *e.g.* the mental experiences of the infinite or the application of the principle of universal love.

We must grow conscious on all the planes of our being and call down the power by detaching ourselves. The process is easy in the mental and vital planes, but in the physical and physico-vital the powers of ignorance hold their sway and persist in what they believe to be eternal law. They obstruct the passage of the higher light. Then the darkness covers the being and even when the physico-vital is opened, the elements of ignorance come up from the lower levels of the physical being. The physico-vital and the physical don't accept the higher law and persist in their own way, justifying it intellectually, and otherwise deceiving the yogi. Generally, the vital being is very impatient and wants to get things done quickly on the physico-vital and physical planes. But this has very violent reactions, and therefore the mental and the vital being instead of seizing upon the higher light and power should surrender themselves to the light and power. We have to bring the higher power down to the physical plane and govern the most external act by it. This can't be done by the mental power. We have to call down the higher light, power and delight to transform our present nature. This requires utter sincerity in every part of the being, vision to see what is going on

in all the being and devotion to truth. A second condition is that one must grow conscious of his divine personality in the supermind. Surrender and gradual growth of consciousness in all the planes is the most important. One should not be satisfied with mere experiences.

The physical layer is obstinate and needs to be worked out in detail. You think you have done something, but another thing arises, and you have to cover the same ground. It is not like the mind or vital where it is easier for the higher power to work. Besides, there you can establish a general law, working out the details generally. The physical is not so. There is a sense of movement and success in the vital, but the physical denies your achievement and repeats the same thing over again. Before the calm can settle in the entire range of the physical—not in part—in the whole of physical mind, life and body, you must grow conscious in the physical as you have grown conscious in the mind, in the vital being; so the very body must grow conscious. When that consciousness is present, you feel the calm like something solid (substantial) settled like a block (immovable) which can't be shaken even by the most material shock (less so by any mental or vital shock). Violent surprise or accident, action of age or free choice can bring about death. If the body can retain the higher power and delight, the general principle is, the body would be free from death but that also won't do on the physical plane, you must work it out in all its details there. It is just like the political movements in India, where, if you establish a general rule, it is considered sufficient, the details are never worked out. When the vital being has got the calm, it seems as if the body also is immortal, because the vital casts its glow on the physical. The vital purusha is immortal and that creates a sense of immortality in the body, but that is not real conquest. Brahmananda of Chandot lived up to 300 years, practically free from the action of age but one day a rusty nail pierced him and he died of that small wound. In the physical at every turn something you have not worked out turns up and shows that your conquest is only partial. That is why the process takes such a long time. You must establish the higher thing in every atom of the body, otherwise something which escapes our view in the hidden depths of the lower physical being is seized by the hostile forces, and they destroy you through that weak point. The physical is so obstinate because God does not want all to be easily done, which it would be, without the physical. There is the involved process and the gradual process. If you can call down and throw the involved power on the physical, it can reveal and call up *en masse* all your impurities, with a few powerful strokes do away with them and establish the higher principle there. By the other process you are compelled to work out in detail, and slowly purify and transform your nature; in this, as you proceed, the higher power comes down now and then as certain things are ready, and helps to establish the truth. And the more we work in detail, the more the involved power grows in us. The laborious purification itself helps it to come down more and more frequently until that alone will prevail and be the permanent deciding factor.

A yogin in the midst of action is not shown all the things. Only when the universal conditions are ready, are they shown to him. A detached yogi sees many more things. Before the universal conditions are ready, it is all the working of universal forces and the Supreme does not decide every detail. When the conditions are ready, it comes down with imperative force. E.g. a man is by nature prone to some particular disease. When you have worked off one, you find another. You have to take singly and repeat each movement again and again till you are really free. In each detail you can see only possibilities and moral certainties. Not that the Supreme does not know it all the time, only it doesn't interfere till the universal conditions are ready. The decision which the universal forces work out is also the decision of the supreme. Once the general conditions are fulfilled, e.g. in the physical, the material level still remains the same and that is the most dangerous. Because it is solid (compact) and can refuse to give up its own stuff completely for change. (It has the capability to surrender completely or withhold completely.) It is least open to reasoning and intellect. In dealing with it you require the very highest power. Besides, the Sanskara of the whole universe is against you there, and therefore, something from above has to descend and remove the obstacle.

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the ~~I~~ssue of May)

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Mamlal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. 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.)

MAY 17, 1940

EVENING

SRI AUROBINDO: It seems it is not five or six of our people but more than half that are in sympathy with Hitler and want him to win*

P (*laughing*): Half?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it is not a matter to laugh at. It is a very serious matter. The Government can dissolve the Ashram at any moment. In Indo-China all religious bodies have been dissolved. And here the whole of Pondicherry is against us. Only because Governor Bonvin is friendly to us they can't do anything. But even he—if he hears that people in the Ashram are pro-Hitler—will be compelled to take steps, at least expel those who are so. If these people want that the Ashram should be dissolved, they can come and tell me and I will dissolve it instead of the police doing it. They have no idea about the world, and talk like children. Hitlerism is the greatest menace that the world has ever met. If Hitler wins, do they think India has any chance of being free? It is a well-known fact that Hitler has an eye on India. He is openly talking of world-empire. He will turn towards the Balkans, crushing Italy on the way, which would be a matter of three weeks, then Turkey and then Asia Minor. Asia Minor means ultimately India. If there he meets Stalin, then it is a question as to who wins and comes to India.

I hear K says that Russia can come now and conquer India. It is this kind of slave-mentality that keeps India in bondage. He pretends to spirituality. Doesn't he

* EDITOR'S NOTE : It may be mentioned that the pro-Hitler bias was due not to perversity but to ignorance. Most regrettably, the true nature of Hitlerism was not realised in the midst of the animosity against the so-called imperialist powers, the possessors of colonies in Asia and Africa, who happened to be Hitler's enemies. The dangerous ignorance was a wide-spread phenomenon in the East

know that the first thing that Stalin will do is to wipe out spirituality from India, apart from the fact that his own class will be crushed out?

They say Hitler is applying on the Western front his Poland-method—leading with armoured tanks and following up with infantry. (*Addressing P*) The Americans are waiting and comfortably thinking that the Allies will win.

P: They don't look like joining the war now.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it is very difficult for them unless they are compelled—later on.

P: The American group who came here were talking bitterly against the war and said, "No more of it." They have sacrificed heavily in the past and spent a lot of money. They want peace now.

SRI AUROBINDO: If they want peace they have to help in keeping it. They fled away after leaving Wilson in the lurch.

P: Their loans also have not been paid back and they are bitter.

SRI AUROBINDO: That, of course.

P: Sir Akbar Hydari has got a full set of the *Arya*.

SRI AUROBINDO: How?

P: It seems his own bookseller from whom he has bought many books had a set. As soon as he knew that Sir Akbar wanted it, he gave the whole set *gratis*. Naturally Sir Akbar was very pleased.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, having it *gratis* would be an added pleasure. (*Laughter*)

In the same morning, it seems the Mother also spoke to Nolani to the following effect: "It is treachery against Sri Aurobindo to wish for Hitler's victory. Sri Aurobindo's cause is closely connected with that of the Allies and he is working night and day for it. It is because my nationality is French that the Ashram is allowed to exist. Otherwise it would have been dissolved long ago. There were many attempts to do so. If Hitler or Stalin wins, spirituality is doomed. Stalin will come to India and there will be no chance for freedom for a century."

MAY 18, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO: The Allies seem to have retreated not because of German pressure but for geographical configuration with the French, they say. If they go on retreating in this way, I don't see how they can win. But have the Germans penetrated the Maginot Line?

N: That is not said, but the Maginot Line on the Belgian side seems a scattered fortification.

SRI AUROBINDO: Scattered? Then it may be possible to penetrate it.

P: The Allies also should attack somewhere.

SRI AUROBINDO: The French have been trained so long to be on the defensive. Now that Hitler has changed his plan, they have to take up a new position. The French are very good in attack, they are good also in defence.

N: Amery says that he believes in self-government and wants to keep an open mind as regards India

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he says that he won't have any prejudgment. If he does that, it will be very good. Zetland stuck to his ideas like a leech—just like Congress to its principles.

N: Dilip was very glad to learn what you had said about pro-Hitler sympathy. It has come at the right time, he says. He was being jeered at for being pro-Ally. When he said he was sad at Holland's defeat, they remarked, "You are pro-Ally?"

SRI AUROBINDO: They are glad that Holland was occupied? Very strange, and yet they want freedom for India! That is one thing I can't swallow. How can they have sympathy with Hitler who is destroying other nations, taking away their liberty? It is not only pro-Ally sympathy but sympathy for humanity that they are jeering at.

N: Y was there. He remained all the time glum. He doesn't believe that England will give freedom to India

SRI AUROBINDO: If England gave freedom to Egypt and Iraq, why not to India?

EVENING

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not such bad news. Germany hasn't entered Brussels yet, the morning radio had said she had.

P: No The Allies' aeroplanes seem to be very active. They have ordered for 4000 aeroplanes costing 650 million dollars.

SRI AUROBINDO: That means one plane costs 18 lakhs of rupees, and that is destroyed in one minute!

S: India can't hope to build any armaments. America is putting a huge sum aside for armaments.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they say they must have 50,000 aeroplanes and a standing army one million strong

N: Only one million?

SRI AUROBINDO: One million is a very good number in peace-time. Except in conscripted countries there is no such big army during peace.

P: England has asked all British subjects to evacuate from Gibraltar, owing to Italy's threat perhaps.

SRI AUROBINDO: But somebody says that Italy will have to wait at least a fortnight before joining the war because a big liner of hers is on the Atlantic, which can at once be seized. But nobody knows what Mussolini will do. He is a great bluffer and may keep on bluffing as bluffing is very pleasant to him. (*Laughter*)

P: Italy has a contempt for Germany.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not contempt, but hatred. (*Laughter*)

P: Spengler supports this instinct of barbarism.

SRI AUROBINDO: Does he?

P: Yes, he says that when a race goes down, it is by this instinct that it rises up again. By this instinct, he says, the race tills the soil, ploughs the land and builds houses and slowly builds up a culture but when it progresses from there towards a city-life and towards civilisation its downfall begins. This has been the curve of civilisation all throughout. For instance, a farmer never thinks of how many issues he has, he goes on producing and producing. But a civilised man, after having two or three children, begins to think and as soon as he thinks his decadence begins. So, according to Spengler, culture exists only when man is bound to the primitive conditions of life by his instinct and ploughs land and cultivates it.

SRI AUROBINDO. That is not culture; that is survival of the force of life. And it is from this animal stage of existence that man has progressed into a higher one. What according to him would be progress then?

P: He maintains that humanity will always follow the curve from this primitive stage to the height of civilisation and then to decadence. This has always been so.

SRI AUROBINDO. It may have been but need not be. Such repetition would be the failure of the human race. The human race has risen from the animal and it must push farther. If it does not, it will have to make room for some other species.

P: Hitler's power seems to have started even from Hindenburg's time?

SRI AUROBINDO. Yes. The German army had already made preparations but they were afraid of what the Allies would say. Hitler gave them the first start. Of course the British are responsible for all this. They thought that France would be very powerful, so in order to keep the French in check they helped Germany to power. After this war the same trouble will occur again. Some people predict that after the war there will be a socialistic State, which means that instead of individualistic capitalism, the State will be capitalistic.

P: Yes, like: "Give us your cows. We will give you milk."

SRI AUROBINDO: No, "Give your cows and buy the milk" (*Laughter*). In Russia one has to earn one's very life.

P: There they have now also made a discrimination in wages. And if anyone has more money, he can deposit it with the State and get interest out of it. It is that which makes Trotsky wild and say that Stalin is for capitalism.

SRI AUROBINDO: There nobody can be rich and afford luxury, because then he will be suspected. It seems only the authors are rich in Russia because the masses are being educated to read more. But what will the authors do with their money? Of course they can make a wise gift of it to the State!

P: The Russian Government also gives more wages to the people if their output is more.

SRI AUROBINDO: That again is against communism.

P: One thing in favour of socialism is that it promises to give bread and work to people.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is easy; it only requires a different arrangement. Under the capitalistic system people got work. Only because the circumstances have changed

they are thrown out of it. And the two things that are responsible are machinery and war.

P: Machinery has made the problem of unemployment so acute.

S: The problem of the world remains the same.

SRI AUROBINDO: Under socialism there will be universal poverty. Only the State will be rich. Socialism can become successful only when people have got rid of the egoistic impulse in their actions and movements.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF 1921-1926

(Continued from the issue of May)

(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.)

INTENSITY and ecstasy do not go against the psychic nature. Violence is one thing and intensity another. So too excitement differs from ecstasy. Violence and excitement are vital. But ecstasy is delight: it is that which takes you off from your outer self. Plato speaks of the poetic *enthousiasmos*, the divine inspiration. Unless the poet has the divine inspiration, the ecstasy, he cannot be a great poet. But ecstasy does not exclude self-mastery: it only excludes mental self-control. Self-mastery is different from such self-control. By self-mastery the great poet stands back and allows the divine inspiration to manifest. He is not carried away in the movement, but he feels the ecstasy. Every poet knows that if he is mixed up with what he is writing he cannot do his best. He must stand apart. Shakespeare is never subject to the movement of his work. He was very cool about his poetic business. He was the poet who did not even care about his poetry. He was not like our modern poets who are carried away, who are poets and nothing else. Shakespeare thought very little about poetry.

No doubt, he came to manifest the hurry and violence of the vital world. But his turn of inspiration often comes from a much higher plane. Of course, we do not get in him the sense of calm that is in Indian or Greek drama, because he was not meant to manifest such calm. He is different also from a poet like Goethe. Goethe was a philosopher watching life and experimenting with it, and he never allowed the full play of intense emotion: this is perfectly evident from his poetry.

Shelley threw himself into his poetry. The drive behind it is not vital: it is psychic, mystic and spiritual. But his normal being was somewhat obscure. His vision of Beauty is on the plane of the Intelligence. It is true that Beauty comes from Ananda. But what Shelley saw as Beauty was not true Ananda, but something in the Intelligence.

Music alone of the arts manifests something spiritual directly, for the mind mixes little in it. Real music—not the feverish type—touches us deeply. The tears of joy

that well up when one is deeply touched on hearing music or reading a great work are an expression of the psychic being, they are not a sign of weakness. I am not speaking of vital sorrow or the excitement of vital music or vital literature.

Acting is a more external art. Here there are two kinds of actors: the one who plays with perfect self-mastery and the one who completely forgets himself in the character which he assumes.

When we see a play acted, we share the sorrows of the characters: this is a vital movement. A sadhak has first to look at a movement and see on what plane it is before he lets it pass. At a higher stage he does not feel the vital sorrows but only the aesthetic delight. He acquires self-mastery. But self-mastery does not mean that the Yogi is like a stone, with all emotion dried up. By self-mastery he can stand back and allow the delight to manifest. He can come to appreciate various sorts of delight. I can see what it is that makes people take delight in Kipling. But I see also that his poems do not touch any depths. And while enjoying them I feel them as outside myself: they are something external. Good poetry comes much nearer to us. But I can enjoy everything—I can take the Rasa of each kind of food even: every kind can give delight.

People till now have lived mostly on the vital level. In literature too you often get vital emotions. Extravagance, vehemence, fantasy are all vital. For pure emotion I may refer you to Shelley who has psychic aspiration. In Tagore you have frequently the sentimental vital rather than the dynamic. He has also some intimation of the Vital Heavens, which he tries to embody. His "Urvashi" is Vital Beauty. In all poetry, even in the highest, the vital mind contributes the force for the physical expression.

Aesthetic emotion is, properly speaking, not emotion: it is a feeling, a perception. Aesthetic realisation of God is the perception of the beauty of God.

You have to withdraw from the emotions, be conscious of them in their proper places and not be carried away. You have to transform them. In aesthetic feeling the man seems to become the feeling, but only a part of him is subject to it, and a part of him is conscious of it. We must learn to stand back in wide calm and enjoy each emotion in its proper character. Unless one is established in that wideness, there is no true realisation through the aesthetic emotions.

Psychic feelings, like all others, are a part of evolution. In the animals also there is the psychic element, but it is not so conscious as it can be in man. The psychic feeling is distinct from all others. For instance, the psychic feeling of right and wrong has nothing to do with the moral sense of right and wrong, which is only its deformation. Psychic sadness comes with the sense of the imperfection and ugliness in the world or in one's own being: it is accompanied by an aspiration for knowledge. It must not be sentimentalised. There is another sort of psychic sadness, which is not exactly sadness. It is difficult to describe it. It comes along with a certain delight in Beauty—for example, when we hear a tune. The feeling of sorrow, which we experience when we read or see a play acted, where we sympathise with the sorrows of the characters, is mental and vital. Such sympathy is necessary at one stage for the development of the individual.

Emotion, in the case of friendship or love, however intense, is still human. Ultimately it must be freed from the human element altogether and turned towards the Divine. Dante's love is said to be the sublimation of physical passion. We cannot understand what physical passion really means until we know the origin of the sex instinct. The truth of the sex instinct is above, and it must be referred up there to its real home, not merely to the mental level. Dante has made it much too mental

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

LIGHTS ON THE PATH

PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES

(Continued from the issue of May,)

(It was the year 1931. At that time there was a special Soup Distribution by the Mother in the late evening in the place now known as the Reception Room. About an hour before it, the Mother used to come to the Prosperity Room, the General Stores, just above. A fixed number of disciples would collect there, and the Mother would spend the time giving talks (later put together by a disciple present and published as the Third Series of the Mother's Talks) or she would play "guessing-games" in which the disciples' powers of intuition would be tested and developed. At a certain period there was a reading of passages from Sri Aurobindo's works. Each day one or other of the disciples would concentrate a little and open a book anywhere with his finger or with a paper-cutter and strike upon a passage for reading. The Mother herself did the same. This procedure went on from March 18 to May 2. A copy of the passages remained with the Editor of Mother India who was one of those attending the happy soirées. We are now publishing them in a series, both for their intrinsic value as lights on the path of Yoga and for whatever subtle side-lights they may throw on the inner movement of those who found them.)

THIS is the entire definition of the aim of integral Yoga. .the conversion of the human soul into the divine soul and of natural life into divine living.

The surest way towards this integral fulfilment is to find the Master of the secret who dwells within us, open ourselves to the divine Power which is also the divine Wisdom and Love and trust to it to effect the conversion. But it is difficult for the egoistic consciousness to do this at all at the beginning and, if done at all, it is still difficult to do it perfectly... It is difficult at first because the egoistic habits of thought, of sensation, of feeling block up the avenues by which we can arrive at the perception that is needed. It is difficult afterwards because the faith, the surrender, the courage requisite in this path are not easy to the ego-clouded soul. The divine working is not the working which the egoistic mind desires or approves; for it uses error in order to arrive at truth, suffering in order to arrive at bliss, imperfection in order to arrive at perfection. The ego cannot see where it is being led; it revolts against the leading, loses confidence, loses courage. These failings would not matter; for the divine Guide within is not offended by our revolt, discouraged by our want of faith or repelled by our weakness; He has the entire love of the mother and the entire patience of the teacher. But by withdrawing our assent from the guidance we lose the consciousness, though not the actuality of its benefit. And we withdraw our assent because we fail to disting-

wish our higher self from the lower through which He is preparing His self-revelation. As in the world, so in ourselves we cannot see God because of His workings and especially because He works in us through our nature and not by a succession of arbitrary miracles. Man demands miracles that he may have faith; he wishes to be dazzled in order that he may see.

The Synthesis of Yoga, Arya Vol. I, pp. 374-5.
(Found by Datta, March 23, 1931)

What is demanded of us is to turn our whole life into a conscious sacrifice or continual devoted self-giving to the Divine. All our actions, the smallest and most ordinary as well as the greatest and most uncommon, we are to perform with the consciousness of consecration and of a giving to That which is beyond our ego. When we give, no matter what the gift or to whom offered, we must have the consciousness that we are giving to God, to the one and divine Being in all. When we eat, we must be equally conscious that we are offering to That and the sense of mere physical gratification must pass from us. When we undertake any great labour, high discipline or noble enterprise for ourselves, for others or for humanity, we must go beyond the idea of ourselves, of others or of humanity and we must realise the thing that we are doing as a sacrifice of works offered to the One and Divine in all, to the Infinite and Most High by whom alone all labour and aspiration are taken from us by Nature and offered on His altar. And even in those things in which Nature herself is obviously the worker and we ourselves only witness and support her works, there should be the same constant memory and consciousness; our very inspiration and respiration, our very heart-beats we must regard as also such a sacrifice.

The Synthesis of Yoga, Arya, Vol. I. pp. 560-1.
(Found by Amal, March 24, 1931)

"All this personal effort and self-discipline will not in the end be needed, all following and limitation of rule and dharma can at last be thrown away as hampering encumbrances if thou canst make a complete surrender to Me, depend alone on the Spirit and Godhead within thee and all things and trust to his sole action. Turn all thy mind to Me, make thy every action whatever it be a sacrifice and offering to Me. That done, leave Me to do my will with thy life and soul and action; do not be grieved or perplexed by my dealings with thy mind and heart and life and works or troubled because they do not seem to follow the laws and dharmas man imposes on himself to guide his limited will and intelligence. My ways are the ways of a perfect wisdom and power and love that knows all things and combines all its movements in view of a perfect eventual result; for it is refining and weaving together the many threads of an integral perfection. I am here with thee in thy chariot of battle revealed as the Master of existence within and without thee and I repeat the absolute assurance, the infallible promise that I will lead thee to Myself through and beyond all sorrow and evil. Whatever difficulties and perplexities arise, be sure of this that I am leading

thee to a complete divine life in the universal and an immortal existence in the transcendent Spirit."

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, pp. 442-3.

(Found by Dyuman, March 24, 1931)

The soul goes to the Mother-soul in all its desires and troubles and the divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.

The Synthesis of Yoga, Arya, Vol. IV, pp. 672-3.

(Found by Amrita, March 25, 1931)

Accept thyself humbly, yet proudly, devotedly, submissively and joyfully as a divine instrument.

There is no greater pride and glory than to be a perfect instrument of the Master...

Let thyself drive in the breath of God and be as a leaf in the tempest, put thyself in His hand and be as the sword that strikes and the arrow that leaps to the target. Let thy mind be as the spring of the machine, let thy force be as the shooting of a piston, let thy work be as the grinding and shaping descent of the steel on its object. Let thy speech be the clang of the hammer on the anvil and the moan of the engine in its labour and the cry of the trumpet that proclaims the force of God to the regions. In whatever way do as an instrument the work that is natural to thee and appointed..

The sword did not ask to be made, nor does it resist its user, nor lament when it is broken. There is a joy of being made and a joy of being used and a joy of being put aside and a joy too of being broken. That equal joy discover.

"Delight of Work", Arya, Vol. II, pp. 52-3.

Know last the Master to be thyself; but to this self put no form and seek for it no definition of quality. Be one with That in thy being, commune with That in Thy consciousness, obey That in thy force, be subject to That and clasped by it in thy delight, fulfil That in thy life and body and mentality.

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The joy of the Master possessed, there is nothing else for thee to conquer. For He shall give thee Himself and all things and all creatures' gettings and havings and doings and enjoyings for thy own proper portion, and He shall give thee that also which cannot be portioned.

"Delight of Works" Arya, Vol. II, pp.52-3.

(Found by the Mother, March 25, 1931).

(To be continued)

MONEY

He is a considerable figure in the spiritual world of today. One day a number of devotees, who had come for his darshan, laid before him some currency notes by way of offering, in keeping with the age-old custom that one should not go empty-handed to elders worthy of respect. After the visitors went away, I learn, the Swami pushed aside with his foot the money lying in front and asked an attendant to remove it. Another Swami would not condescend to touch money-offerings even with his foot. He had a broom brought to clear the pedestal on which they had been heaped.

Both the incidents came to me with something of an unpleasant shock. For it is a time-honoured ancient tradition in our land to look upon money as goddess Lakshmi and cherish it as such. This is not a mere superstition to be given a go-by as one grows into the ways of the world or gains enlightenment of the Spirit. It is a spiritual truth that money represents a power of the Divine in this Creation. It is one of the main powers and it is intended to be used for the furtherance of the Divine Manifestation. Maybe it is at present—like some other powers—in the hands of the Anti-divine. But, like them, it is meant to be won back from its present possessors and laid exclusively at the service of the Divine. No one, least of all a seeker of God, has a right to look down upon this money-power. The fact that money tends to draw one away from God by creating an exclusive greed for itself in its possessor is no reason why it should be shunned. Does not all power corrupt? It is the duty of the awakened man to learn to use power—in the present context money-power—in the right spirit, put it to the right use without getting deflected from its central purpose. It is only so that this power can be claimed back from the hostile agencies and utilised for the purpose for which it has been released into this Manifestation. It is the enlightened and the awakened who have to set an example and give a lead in the proper use of money. If they shy away, then a great power for the betterment of material conditions of the world continues to be lost.

In the present conditions of the world, money-power controls the working of the material forces to a great extent. Like all powers in Nature it moves and is drawn more towards those who cherish it. Where money is respected, received and tended with sincerity, there it tends to flow. An affinity is created. This is an occult truth which is behind the well-known phenomena of the rich getting richer. This is not to say that money always goes into the right hands. There are no ethical rules governing the movement of money. It is drawn wherever a magnetic field is created for it. Hitherto, under a certain ascetic inspiration, money has been looked down upon. That is why most spiritual causes have been denied help by this power. It is time that one learns to look at things in the proper perspective and make full use of the resources placed by the Divine at the disposal of man.

The fault lies not in the things that are abused, *e.g.*, wealth (money is a power of wealth), material power, woman, etc., but in those who raise a hue and cry against them in the name of spirituality. It all depends really upon the attitude with which one approaches them. Commenting once on the old foolish adage that woman is the door to hell, Sri Aurobindo remarked that it is so only with men in whom the door is wide open in themselves. All depends upon the spirit one brings to bear on these things. I remember a devotee once asking the Mother if marriage would be a hindrance to her future spiritual life. The Mother replied that it depended on her attitude to marriage. Whether a thing is a help or a hindrance depends upon the attitude one takes towards it.

A healthy respect for money, for the control it exercises in the material domain, a becoming humility in the use of it as a trustee for the Divine who is the ultimate possessor of all money, is the right spiritual attitude in the matter.

“Do not despise Matter; cherish Matter; increase Matter.” This is the injunction of the ancient seers to the son of earth.

Money is a Force in the material organisation of the world. It should be drawn, nourished and put to the use for which it is meant—the service of the Divine Manifestation. It must not be denied or bottled up or misused. A seeker of the Divine has a special responsibility in the acquisition and right use of it without the taint of ego, desire or greed.

M. P. PANDIT

THE FETISH OF THEORY

I AM sometimes asked what my "theory" is about the writing of a poem. The question finds me at a loss how properly to understand it. For, about the writing of a poem I have no theory if by that term is meant any notion that a poem should be in a certain style and make use of a particular type of words and concern itself with a limited field of themes. I know a poem to be just this: intensity of vision, intensity of word, intensity of rhythm plus the act of being a harmonious whole. The language may be common or kingly, the style simple or complex, the thought plain or picturesque, the emotion day-to-day or once-in-a-blue-moon. It does not matter what theme is chosen, what level of consciousness explored, what personal bent followed in manner of expression. No doubt, a certain type of poem may appeal to me more—but not for purely poetic reasons: the substance may be more in tune with my mood of the moment, my general character or my outlook on life. As art, all types are for me enjoyable and legitimate so long as those three intensities fuse and work out a harmonious whole. I should be just as hard put to it to limit my aesthetic enjoyment of the "fairness" of the fair sex. How can I bind myself, say, to admire merely this or that shape of the feminine nose and feel that other shapes cannot be formed by an equally poetic line of bone and flesh? I can stir to an aquiline swoop upon my attention as well as to a straight thrust at my heart or a breath-taking beauty that goes to my head with a *retroussé* leap!

Nor have I any theory to the effect that true poetry is what is written effortlessly and without toiling and moiling. Poetry is often supposed to be born perfect at one stroke, a flawless uninterrupted outburst. The result of striving and straining is declared to be no poetry. But what does Dante say about his *Divina Commedia*? "*Sì che m'ha fatto per piu anni macro*"—which means that his poem made him "lean through many a year." If even a master-singer found that climbing Parnassian heights left hollows in his cheeks, what about less gifted folk? And the principal point is not how much you labour but what you produce thereby.

Aureoled flowers grow on the peaks of paradise: it is these that poets pluck, flowers that seem shining perfections born without a moment's pain; but do you think they can be reached without the prodigious effort necessary to scale those peaks? To a few lucky ones the amaranthine blooms drop of themselves: the poet has only to open his palms and catch the glimmering charity. Others are not so blessed; but it is the same miracles they manifest, and these miraculous rhythms of beauty have to be considered, not the easy or arduous means employed to achieve them. Besides, some poets—especially those who receive their raptures easily—are content if their song-flowers come from heaven, and do not worry whether they bring the full freshness and integrity of the altitudes. Though made of light, the petals in the act of being brought down to earth may bear stains and shadows left by the contact of mortal regions. No

cheap sweat of the brain can wash them clean. The soul must travail and shed tears in order to restore that pristine perfection; and not many poets are willing to pass through this experience. Hence so very few create each time a living form of the highest radiance—a moulded flame without one flaw. Even Homer has his proverbial “nods”, Shakespeare the “unblotted” roughnesses bewailed by Ben Jonson, and Milton the wooden sublimities he puts into the mouth of his Jehovah—yes, even Milton the arch-artist, for unfortunately his sense of art often proved stronger than his sense of inspiration and he was satisfied if his blank verse rolled majestic word and rhythm without all of it having the same fire of life. This fire, this animating breath is what the poet has to cherish; but, to make each atom throb and kindle, a sleeplessly creative self-criticism is called for, a luminous labour of heart and mind.

“Creative” and “luminous”—that is what striving and straining have to be. Poetry cannot come of intellectual effort. But all effort is not intellectual: one can endeavour to plunge into the ultra-intellectual “inwardness” from which poetry seems mysteriously to emerge: one can toil and moil to curb the mechanical and manufacturing intellect and make oneself a receptive instrument for “inspiration”. Such toiling and moiling is often more than merely excusable: it is the *sine qua non* of the uniformly perfect, the necessary finishing touch that renders a piece of art supremely inspired everywhere.

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Inspiration is not easy to “crib, cabin and confine” in a rigid theory. Even as one may approach it variously, so too one may manifest it in various shapes. A clever friend of mine remarked once, apropos of the multiply-wrought character of certain poems, that to him the idea or the thing was paramount and that he preferred natural and spontaneous speech to literary expression. I could not see eye to eye with him since I felt he theorised too rigidly and made a number of arbitrary assumptions. In the correct sense, to be literary is to use language for creating vision, evoking emotion, building rhythm, in order to give a concrete state of being. To be literary is not to kill the stuff of an idea or a thing, but to set it living on our pulses. To be literary is not to be the opposite of “natural and spontaneous”: on the contrary, it is to turn speech warm and winged. Warmth and wingedness are not the attributes of simplicity alone: they belong just as much to complexity. Whether one elects to be simple or complex should depend on what one’s state of consciousness is. Either mode can be “natural and spontaneous”. Complex richness or grandeur becomes stiff and artificial only when the idea or the thing is itself *not* complexly coloured or stupendous. There must be equivalence and correspondence between sense and speech: that is the true meaning of naturalness and spontaneity in the first place. In the second, the true meaning is an unforced freshness, so that nothing, however intricately opulent or massive, appears heavy and laboured. Poetry may mix Ormuz with Ind, but it must work with a hand that is born regal. Poetry may heap Pelion upon Ossa, but it must

bring an energy intrinsically gigantic. In short, its designs, formed swiftly or slowly, must bear the look of having been executed with sovereign ease. That look, accompanying limpid effects or effects that are elaborate, is the consequence of the poet's tapping ultra-intellectual springs of creativity and that look is what proves naturalness and spontaneity. It has nothing essentially to do with writing without multiply-wrought ornament or magnitude or in a plain and straightforward manner.

There is no use in quoting in this connection Milton's dictum, "Poetry must be simple, sensuous, passionate" and underlining the word "simple" with the purpose of confuting me. We must not set the simplicity Milton had in mind at loggerheads with the complexity under discussion. Decoration, richness, pomp, magnificence, multi-foliate beauty—all these are not tabooed by Milton. the ban falls only on the pedantic and the ponderous—intellectual dead-weight, logical mazziness—what is formed by putting parts together with an external constructive faculty instead of by a flowering out of the manifold from a vital creative centre. In short, simplicity is a synonym of the unforced freshness I have already spoken about. A contrast with complexity would come rather ill from Milton whose language no less than sentence-structure was far indeed from being plain and straightforward. It would come ill also because Milton was scholar enough to know that neither Aeschylus nor Pindar could be termed transparent or uncomplex. And he was too near the Elizabethan age to forget how gorged with metaphor linked to metaphor and how dazzling with picturesque piled-up epithets was the work of its supreme dramatists. Then there was, almost contemporary, the devious depth of Donne and the ingenious radiance of Crashaw. Had Milton lived in modern times he would have known and appreciated the whole Romantic Movement which, while markedly simple and direct on one side, was on the other luxuriant if not labyrinthine too. And he would have never been so foolish as to deny the *furor poeticus* to Francis Thompson in a passage like the following from *Sister Songs*:

Oh! may this treasure-galleon of my verse,
 Fraught with its golden passion, oared with cadent rhyme,
 Set with a towering press of fantasies,
 Drop safely down the time,
 Leaving mine isled self behind it far
 Soon to be sunk in the abysm of seas
 (As down the years the splendour voyages
 From some long-ruined and night-submerged star),
 And in thy subject sovereign's havening heart
 Anchor the freightage of its virgin ore;
 Adding its wasteful more
 To his own overflowing treasury.
 So through his river mine shall reach the sea.

Here is diction multiply-wrought in the extreme to a little masterpiece, effect added to exquisite and purple effect, a massing of rich details to disclose a single yet many-faced meaning, a running together of mutually illuminating images in a vivid complexity in which nothing is superfluous or awkward but everything apt and alive in conveying the poet's prayer that the verse to which his love for the child Viola Meynell had given substance and shape might survive his own death and, finding a place in the devoted heart of the man to whom she would belong in marriage, deliver its message to her most intensely and intimately.

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Mention of images brings me to another bit of rigid theorising: recently a critic condemned a book of poetry as "jejune and claptrap" on the sole score that the writer was using "cheap and much-flogged symbolism and metaphor". The criticism, without definite quotations to prove the point, is shallow, for what is important is the *way* symbols are employed and explored, the novel depths caught out of particular metaphors. The angle and power of sight have to be estimated—the moved precision with which the words carry their suggestive glow has to be weighed—the rhythm-lift by which the expressive effect goes home to the heart has to be measured. Once these things are found satisfying, we need make no bones about the symbolism being an old one, the metaphor familiar. If we read the *Iliad* at the present day, with nearly three thousand years in-between crammed with poetic literature, we shall not find many new images in it—nor, I suspect, did the ancient Greeks themselves, for all the similes were borrowed from familiar experience and were current in the unrecorded minstrelsy out of which the *Iliad* rose like a culminating blossom. But on that ground Homer does not become "jejune and claptrap": the splendour and nobility of his words, the swiftness and largeness of his rhythmic tone as well as the "high seriousness" of his mind of which both his word and rhythm were the expressive body remain great poetry for the good reason that they are sufficient to constitute great poetry.

By a process of abstraction—that is, pulling an image out of its context—it is possible to make out even the most striking vision-effects to be "jejune and claptrap". In poetry, the rose is an ancient symbol, both sacred and profane—it is also an ancient practice to talk of stars. I myself would advise a poet to avoid roses and stars because it is not easy to get new revelatory flashes out of them and one needs exceptionally superb language to make old revelatory flashes come through again today. But I would also advise a poet never to hesitate mentioning roses and stars if he could turn them to a new revealing significance, for the most profound test of originality is the distilling of such a significance from an ancient image or idea, just as the most astonishing feat of imagination is the sudden disclosure of a novel fact in scenes and experiences that are most familiar. A critic who is oblivious of this test has no acumen—he looks only at the superficies and judges poetry with the abstract intellect

and not the concrete understanding. To the abstract intellect, fire and flame, flower and fragrance, bird and bird-song, sea and wave are all stimuli to cry "Chestnut!" Yet these phenomena can be as bright and fresh today in poetry as they were when the first poet spoke of them, provided, of course, genuine insight catches them up into lovely and harmonious language. The whole haunting music of Yeats's early verse could be dismissed as "jejune and claptrap" on the charge that it is chockful of mystic roses and dim dreams and pale stars. But the fact stands that no more beautiful poetry has been written in the last seventy years. Yeats's verse is lyricism of the highest order because he has conjured up his vision with a new poignancy of profound emotion, a new witchery of revealing atmosphere, a new evocativeness of exquisite sound. One would be mistaken in considering any image *per se*, without the subtle tone and "slant" and penumbra given it by the poet in his dealing with the theme in hand.

Criticism is a difficult and delicate affair, demanding a lot of plastic self-adjustment. Catholicity of taste and sympathetic acumen are indispensable and to make a fetish of any fixed theory is to maim one's own mind.

K. D. SETHNA

KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN

CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET

(Continued from the issue of March)

XIV

THE SUN'S BATH

THE wives of the Sages took bereaved Sita to a stream nearby, bathed her and brought her to the comforting company of Rama.

At this juncture, Minister Sumantra escorted Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi into the presence of Rama. Eyeing the Queens in widows' weeds, Rama is overpowered with grief again.

Shedding tears from his reddened eyes
at the holy feet of the mothers,
Rama lamented,
"Tell me, Oh! tell me,
Wheresoever is my father gone?"
Thus wept the One,
who was more ancient
than ancient Brahma.

The mothers crowded round Rama and, clasping him lovingly, mourned aloud.

The Sun,
presiding as he does
over the Solar Dynasty of Rama,
immersed himself in the Sea,
as if in performance
of funeral oblations.

It is a Hindu custom for the bereaved to have a bath as soon as a message of death is received. Sorrow and its repercussions are usually assuaged by a bath. The relief obtained by the bereaved from a bath is brought home by the picture of the Sun's immersion in the western sea.

FILIAL DUTY

After the night's rest, urgent affairs of State are discussed the next day. The visitors surround Rama, as he remains seated. Turning to Bharata, Rama says:

"The gracious King is dead;
 By his command
 the realm has become yours.
 Pray, tell me why
 you have spurned the Crown
 and donned the hermit's attire."

Trembling as he heard these words,
 Bharata rose to his feet
 and, saluting him with folded hands
 and casting a long lingering look at Rama,
 he said,
 "Who but you
 Can rest anchored in Virtue?
 Would you too,
 Stray from it?"

Revealing the total transparency of his mind, Bharata continued:

"You must take over the sceptre again,
 and right the wrong done by *your* father
 and redeem the Earth from the agony
 inflicted by *my* mother—an agony
 the Earth has never suffered before."

The unshakable resolve behind these words moved Rama, who wondered, "Is this the way his mind functions?" Rama, who saw the totality of things, told Bharata, "Valorous boy, listen and pay heed to what I say." And he went on:

"What is filial duty?
 To perform acts
 Covering parents with glory?
 or
 to crown them with eternal infancy?
 Tell me!"

Rama gives his final and considered decision:

"I will, *at my father's command*,
 live in the jungle
 for full fourteen years
 and you will, *at my command*,
 rule the given Kingdom faithfully,
 all those years."

"I agree," said Bharata:
 "If, my lord,
 at the end of those fourteen years,
 you fail to return to the city,
 and take over the rulership of the Earth,
 I will fall into the fire and perish—
 I swear thus in your name."

He uttered these gallant words with such sincerity that he suddenly became free from all grief and, looking at his grief-free and beaming face, Rama declared in words of melting love:

"So may it be."

Listening to this voice of love, Kamban whispers to the reader,

Thus declared the One,
 Who was greater far than his glory.

The idea of the Poet is that the glory of God is incomprehensible and His intrinsic nature is even more incomprehensible.

BHARATA'S CROWN

As Bharata mused over the fourteen long years that lay ahead, grief gripped him again and his mind turned towards the feet of God, which symbolize Divine Grace, the Grace that moves the whole Universe and all events within it.

"Pray," he said,
 "Give me the blessed sandals
 You wear on your holy feet."
 And Rama handed over the sandals
 which could bless Bharata with the bliss
 of the Here and the Hereafter.

Once Man sheds his ego and surrenders himself to the grace of God, his grief comes to an end. This is the mystique behind the gift of the "padukas", which the poet underlines with appropriate reverence.

The One with the weeping eyes
 placed the footwear on his head
 with ritualistic devotion,

thinking, "This is my crown."
He prostrated himself at Rama's feet
and left,
his frame dazzling with the dust
on which Rama's feet had trodden.

The mothers left,
 and so too the kinsmen;
The elders left,
 and so too the sages.
Surrounded by the huge battalions,
 left the Rishi,
on whose shoulders lay the triple thread.

This reluctance of the visitors to part with Rama is reflected by the slow-moving metre of the poem. Rama used to revel in the company of scholars versed in ancient lore and those scholars left; so did the citizens of fertile Ayodhya; with reluctant feet the celestials, gathered on this momentous occasion, dispersed. Even Guha, the most reluctant of them all, left, says the Poet, by the special command of Rama.

With the departure of the visitors, the curtain is rung down on Ayodhyakanda and rises upon Aranyakanda, the book of Forests.

(To be continued)

S. MAHARAJAN

WORDSWORTH AND SHELLEY

SOME COMMENTS ON THEIR CONCEPTIONS OF NATURE

I ENJOYED the article on Wordsworth in the January and February issues of *Mother India*. Apropos of the second instalment I may recall the contrast between Wordsworth and Shelley which Whitehead drew in his book, *Science and the Modern World*. He takes the intuition of deep-rooted endurance and stability to be central in Wordsworth's conception of Nature. The frequent appearance of hills and mountains in Wordsworth's poetry is interpreted as a sign of this element in his thought. Shelley, on the other hand, is obsessed with the mutability of things.

It seems to me that we have here a fundamental contrast of intuitions. Shankara, Buddha and Plato—all like Shelley—all emphasize the evanescence and ultimate insubstantiality of the world. This does seem to be the characteristic experience of the intensely spiritualized mind, even though it has been expressed in different ways. But Sri Aurobindo corrects this intuition by a deeper insight into the age-old pervasiveness and durability of the world-foundations. It is precisely the Supermind which guarantees this aspect of cosmic existence—without, of course, altogether denying the validity of the experience of the pure Spirit. For how else could the tremendous evolution of the Divine take place, unless there is a firmly-established basis to build upon? However, the sheer transcendence and freedom of the Absolute is also not neglected in Sri Aurobindo's vision as many of his Shankarite critics are inclined to ignore.

In a similar vein, an insight into the substantiality of Nature (not in a narrow material sense, of course) seems to be at the bottom of Einstein's references to "cosmic religious feeling". For him, the intuition of universal Laws of Nature as absolutes in the physical realm, and a belief in their at least partial comprehensibility to the mind (he was amazed at their "simplicity"), are the underlying motive of pure science. Incidentally, it is interesting to notice that Wordsworth's line about "voyaging through strange seas of Thought" was a reference to Newton—the full quotation being:

And from my pillow, looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone

This is a remarkably penetrating insight into the springs of Newton's genius (note Keynes' essay on "Newton the Man", in which he is called, not the first modern

scientist, but the last Chaldean Mage). Einstein's intuitive grasp of the unity and lawfulness of Nature was reinforced by his reading of Spinoza ("Spinoza's God is my God"), and this perhaps led him to overstress in his work the "determinism" of the world. But it is all of a piece with his quasi-metaphysical approach to the task of theory-construction. Thus we can see that Einstein's cosmic religious feeling was much more than a vague emotional response to the visible universe (cf. *Mother India*, Nov-Dec 1969, p. 677). It is too bad, though, that he did not study the Vedantic view that "Matter is Brahman," and then go on to a fuller conception of reality.

Admittedly, what is lacking in both kinds of intuition (mutability and durability of Nature) is the Aurobindonian principle of the Supermind which completes and integrates their separate lines of thought and experience; but, as far as the "darkly seeing" intuitive powers of the human mind can go, it certainly seems that Wordsworth, Einstein and Spinoza (and even Newton, if we distinguish him from his "Newtonian" followers) are squarely within Sri Aurobindo's camp—at least in a way that Shankara, Buddha, Plato and Shelley are not.

ROBERT KLEINMAN

TWO POEMS

FRAGMENTS of a plan concealed from Mind
 Whose glimpses see a part as whole and sum,
 Come wandering through groves of thought in silent
 Rays as sunlight sheds through quivering leaves
 Its miracle of fire-laugh and the lightning
 Of its pure and fearless self-sustaining
 Majesty of truth.

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In a limbo pregnant with the seed of soul
 I wait to hear Thy silent steps
 A symbiosis I of lofty aims
 And dull desires downward dragging,
 Each at war within this house of breath
 Calm and chaos, surge and silence
 Battle on in bitter clash
 And somehow standing back I watch
 With naked joy and smile at Thee.

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

HOW TO SEE A PICTURE

(On May 1, 1970, on the Ashram Playground at 8.30 p.m. Miss Rutty Patel showed coloured slides of some of her latest paintings. The originals had been exhibited with great success recently at the Taj Art Gallery in Bombay, winning praise from various quarters for their strangely moving suggestive artistry. Before showing the slides the painter gave an interesting talk providing some guide-lines towards getting intimate with works of art.)

IN the process of seeing and studying a work of art—particularly of a spiritual inspirational type—a very dynamic, but equally subtle, imperceptible quick movement takes place.

The first meeting with a work of art is a matter of one's personality and background which may either bar the way or throw wide open the gates of an endless voyage of discovery. One needs to be selective in order to appreciate the value of art. It is not only the physical eye that sees. One can meet a work of art through one's heart.

How to see a picture? How to receive a work of art? The physical eye collects the image which is strange and unknown. The eyes rove around, gathering lines, making out forms, recognising colours. A visual search for establishing previous recollections to form comparisons is a mere habit, for one instinctively hesitates to accept anything new. If this hesitation is overcome then the eye becomes curious and looks out for more. Now the interest comes in to make something of this image which is sent to the mind for verification. It creates an impact and some meeting-ground is established with the artist. A communion is formed. The mind is filled with questions—busy with reasoning, trying to inquire—trying to make the work of art speak, to reveal, to suggest. There is a dialogue where the mind is trying to ask and draw out answers. It is seeking for affinity because at some point the mind has been lured to go further. It cannot reject outright what so far it has collected. Now it awaits an emotional call to sound out the play of forces and vibrations to feel and to experience.

So far the physical eye, the mind and feelings have played at verification and formations of thoughts. Again all this is projected to the intellect for analysis. The mind has passed on these collective data to a higher level of thought, for the intellect needs to seek its own affinity with the work of art. It cannot be only with the physical eye in its visual aspect—or with the mind to satisfy its mental ideals. But the intellect bringing into gear the higher emotions tries to probe and go behind the work of art and its early beginning and the personality itself of the artist, the hand of the artist, the level of the being and the purpose of the work. The mental image thus gets analysed, categorised and one then becomes ready to arrive at a decision.

What is behind the work of art and what does it relate? What is the background of the work and the artist? At what level is the work executed and what is the quality of the aim which is reflected in it?

Thus begins the seeking and the work of art becomes a personal revelation. At this stage one sheds the limitations of one's own temperament and personality to merge into the work of art and delve deeper. A proximity of thought glides in. More understanding comes and the form, line and colour take a different concept. The work of art becomes vivid, it begins to grow and give more. Once again the visual elements become more perceptive and gather more mental impressions. Now the eye, the mind, the intellect and emotions all go into action—separately and together. When the image is thus revolved, it is projected to the inner senses which bring in a deeper, different kind of working and it creates what can be called a feeling whereby the work of art becomes appealing. It either appeals to the mind or to the heart—but definitely a strong bond of appreciation and a more subtle working begin. It becomes a psychic process. This is the assimilation or testing or relishing of the work of art and its emanations of harmony and joy.

When one becomes aligned or tuned in to the deeper perception of the work of art seen with the inner eyes and felt with subtle emotions and senses, then we have what can be termed a personal experience of delight and enlightenment. It is an instinctive acceptance of one's true being and it is then a profound experience gained not alone through the physical vision and senses but from the core of one's self.

RUTTY PATEL

A MUSICAL AFTERNOON AT THE SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

(The author of this little piece is a lecturer in English at Jadavpur University and the Scottish Church College, Calcutta, and the author of a number of distinguished Bengali books on art and literature.)

OF all Fine Arts music may be given the pride of place at least for one reason, namely, its power to attract even the uninitiated. For the enjoyment of other forms of art, for example, painting, sculpture, architecture, etc., some amount of knowledge in the particular field is necessary. It is not so in the case of music. One can enjoy music without being a musician himself or knowing anything about its technique or the intricacies of the ragas. If in the midst of his work a tiller of the ground is invited to a picture gallery or art exhibition he would not respond as enthusiastically as he would do if asked to come and listen to a Baul singing on the village green. Without a moment's delay he would leave for the spot where the saffron-robed singer has already drawn an eager crowd round himself, a crowd of men, women and children who are seen nodding their heads and beating their feet to the tune of the song that holds them spell-bound. The legend of Orpheus is a verity indeed. The appeal of music is universal.

And that is because there is a music in every soul. Deep down in every individual self there is a hidden music. It sleeps somewhere in the dark corner of the unknown region of the human heart. In the din and bustle of life, amidst a thousand discordant notes it is lost; and, busy with his mundane affairs, man has little time to hark to that which is within him. But when somebody sings, the music within shakes off its slumber and gradually responds to the singer's notes till at last the man singing and the man listening become one in spirit and both are wafted to a world of joy and beauty. A musician who is worth the name can achieve this miracle with his art in respect of a layman who has music in his heart though not in his tongue.

I write this because this was exactly what I felt when listening to Tinkari Banerjee's songs one mellow October afternoon at Pondicherry, sitting in his room at the feet of the life-like portraits of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother with flowers and incense scattering fragrance all around and the shades of evening slowly descending outside. There was absolutely no preparation for a musical performance. There was not even an accompanist for the singer and the number of listeners were only three—myself, my wife and my friend Dr. Barin Ray, an eminent orthopaedic surgeon whose business is with broken human bones but who nevertheless has not allowed his heart to go dry. We were just talking when suddenly Tinkari Banerjee drew his harmonium from the corner in which it was lying, and said: "Let me sing."

It appeared that music just came into his soul and it must find expression. Without waiting for our consent he began and soon it was a flood of harmony that inundated our souls. When music is real music it penetrates our inner being. This is true even in the case of highly technical classical music which few of us understand and in the enjoyment of which the crude mannerisms of the ostads often stand in the way. In the case of Tinkari Banerjee's songs the advantage was their language which was familiar to us, their feelings and emotions which we could easily share, their deep spiritual content which opened before us a new world and stirred us to our inmost depths and their lyrical quality which charmed our ears and touched our hearts. These songs have been included in one of the books of notations composed by him, along with many others of similar quality and their appropriate tunes have been indicated in a simple manner for the benefit of those who are willing to learn.

The compositions of Ashram poets and the tunes to which they are set breathe the sanctity and the spiritual richness of the Ashram at Pondicherry where the Great Sage in his blessed mood and inner illumination had the vision of the Eternal and lived a life "true to the kindred points of heaven and home". The songs are the outpouring of a heart seeking to express the inexpressible, touch the intangible, see the invisible—and hence a treasure to be cherished for all time to come

SUSHIL KUMAR MUKHERJEE

THE REVOLUTION SUPREME

(Continued from the issue of April 24)

It should be no mystery as to why youth, and many others in many countries, have been erupting into violent demonstrations. Democracy generally, the world over, has degenerated into party-machine politics in which the overwhelming majority of citizens are taken for granted as puppets of party-bosses, units of election statistics, mere tax-payers, and betimes sufferers in sundry ways at the hands of the bureaucracy.

The greatest wasted potential on earth is the poor quality, the low vitality of the average citizen's exercise of his citizenship. Ordinarily it is on a minimal basis of a chance to vote once or twice in four or five years, with often no choice that commands conviction or enthusiasm, as to who shall "represent" us, plus taxes of one sort and another—a pitiful minimum standard of citizenship that leaves power over the lives and fortunes of the people in the hands of too many self-pushing politicians and bureaucrats of limited outlook.

But meanwhile, with mounting momentum for the past few decades, these same citizens have seen and heard and felt the tremendous impact of the mass media of communication, including radio, and specially TV in more developed countries, until the people have undergone a drastic psychological revolution; they have been made over into *very participatory beings*. Far from being content to be anybody's political puppets, they resort to drastic and often violent self-assertion over grievances and public issues.

So the obvious choice before us is between near-chaos, veering towards the abyss and a new, *highly participatory, creative democracy to come*, which we call "the New Citizenship", plus the new True Statesmanship which it will inevitably develop. Nothing could therefore be more timely and imperative than this New Citizenship Awakening and Mobilisation.

Instead of the ordinary petty, partisan, propagandistic, self-seeking political approach, the New Citizenship will stand for the bold, creative, scientific, moral and spiritual statesmanship, with its truth-minded, co-operative, self-giving spirit. This means, not anti-party but above party, whenever the larger national or world interest demands it—and that may be frequently in such a world crisis!

It is high time for a penetrating X-ray, a deeper diagnosis, a radical stocktaking by the sovereign people of this nation and this planet, in the light of the incredible fact that, despite the twenty-five years since we were given that ultimatum at Hiroshima, "Unite or Perish", twenty-five years since the founding of the "United Nations", the human family is still suicidally divided, still on the brink of the abyss.

In the process of our deeper diagnosis we have taken the help of Sri Aurobindo, and we find a key to that true reading of our condition in what the master spiritual statesman, with his mahayogic sociological X-ray, has revealed to us concerning the *dangerous weaknesses* of those to whom we, the world's people, have entrusted the treasures of civilisation and the making of a saving peace, our respective governments and our politicians.

Sri Aurobindo has an entire chapter in *The Ideal of Human Unity* on this timely theme. He observes:

"Theoretically, it is the subordination of the individual to the good of all that is demanded; practically it is his subordination to a collective egoism, political, military, economic, which seeks to satisfy certain collective aims and ambitions shaped and imposed on the great mass of the individuals by a smaller or larger number of ruling persons who are supposed in some way to represent the community. It is immaterial whether these belong to a governing class or emerge as in modern States from the mass, partly by force of character, but much more by force of circumstances; nor does it make any essential difference that their aims and ideals are imposed nowadays more by the hypnotism of verbal persuasion than by overt and actual force. In either case there is no guarantee that this ruling class or ruling body represents the best mind of the nation or its noblest aims or its highest instincts.

"Nothing of the kind can be asserted of the modern politician in any part of the world, he does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations. What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him, and these he represents well enough, as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionality, timidity and pretence. Great issues often come to him for decision but he does not deal with them greatly; high words and noble ideas are on his lips, but they become rapidly the clap-trap of a party. The disease and falsehood of modern political life is patent in every country of the world and only the hypnotised acquiescence of all, even of the intellectual classes, in the great organised sham, cloaks and prolongs the malady, the acquiescence that men yield to everything that is habitual and makes the present atmosphere of their lives."

Sri Aurobindo stresses "the inadequacy" of governmental and political machinery throughout the modern world in general. "Inadequacy" is a dangerous, indeed an intolerable thing, in such a supercrisis as has the human family by the throat today. It means that we, the sovereign people, must *take our fate into our own hands*, exercise our primary responsibility, and in lawful and orderly fashion (wherever the laws are worthy of our respect, or changeable) set about creating a really new order in which the State comes to represent truly the best which a vigorous New Citizenship movement can produce.

The need of this fateful hour is *The New Citizenship* which can grow into the new True Statesmanship, to replace, as rapidly as possible, the old inadequate, because self-seeking, divisive, superficial blundering and wasteful politics, the world around, and the old bureaucracy in which it is entrenched, not sufficiently flexible and resourceful for creating and maintaining a new world order.

The present minimal type of citizenship is a carryover from a passing age and an anachronism in the age of jet and TV and space flights. Social and political participation can be direct and universal in the coming electronic and communitarian society.

So it is high time for all of us, fellow-world-citizens, to wake up to our new high potential, and to rally and mobilise to save the situation. The great Awakening, using

to the full all the mass media, must now come within every sufficiently free nation.

Sri Aurobindo has himself given us a living example of spiritual realistic statesmanship. And most significant, in our day when nationalism is still a dominant force in the human family, Sri Aurobindo sees that the antidote to *egoistic* nationalism, the enemy of human unity and too dangerous in this world of the H-bomb, is *the discovery and the development of the nation-soul*, and not the abandonment of nationalism, as many idealists are inclined to assert.

He strongly stressed, in one of his last writings in the year of his passing, *the urgency of the present crisis*, saying (we must repeat it for utmost emphasis!):

"It is for the men of our days and, at the most, of tomorrow to give the answer. For, too long a postponement or too continued a failure will open the way to a series of increasing catastrophes which might create a too prolonged and disastrous confusion and chaos and render a solution too difficult or impossible; it might even end in something like an irremediable crash not only of the present world-civilisation but of all civilisation."

Auroville, dedicated to the collective realisation or fulfilment of mankind in the Light of Sri Aurobindo, and therefore to human unity and world peace, *as he sees it*, must see as its basic and urgent work in the world the fostering of the awakening to the nation-souls and their development into full masterful vigour and therefore the awakening of all the people to a soulful New Citizenship and the development from it of the new True Statesmanship. Unless Auroville serves this Truth, it will be dangerously unfaithful.

One way in which Auroville can readily foster the awakening and development of the nation-souls is to see that the pavilions of the world family of nations in Auroville use this nation-soul motif to the maximum. The promising, highly potential Auroville-Unesco partnership can develop the nation-soul emphasis in many other ways.

The beauty of it is that this *nation-soul approach* to the problem of the imperative great change in human society and public affairs is the creative, winsome, *positive* approach, *appealing to the better side of every man and every nation*, and it is a providence that it comes at a time when the people, the world over, have shown vivid signs of being fed up with the old order and often impelled to violent and destructive protest, for want of a clear, adequate alternative.

A second strong emphasis of Auroville, as the rallying centre for a saving human unity and the Revolution Supreme, must be on TRUTH, so insistently stressed by the Mother in her messages of recent years. *Truth unites*, and we have here, in Sri Aurobindo's work, the most powerful concentration, yes, *mobilisation* of Truth that human history has ever seen, a unique and dynamic synthesis of the fulness of truth for the *individual* and his *inner* fulfilment, with the fulness of truth also for the *collective* and *outer* fulfilment of mankind.

(To be continued)

JAY HOLMES SMITH

THE SECRET SELF IN THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of May)

CHAPTER VI

HUMILITY

THERE IS NO apology, no pleading or supplication in the Humility before God; rather does it spring from Gratitude.

Humility cannot be acquired but only aspired for. One grows into Humility, or it settles in the being as an experience which may first come and go for years and then at last agrees to stay as a "guest" and finally becomes an accepted part of the consciousness.

To see oneself in relation to the rest of creation, to see oneself in relation to the whole manifestation of Nature; to see and feel oneself in relation to the earth and the sea and the sky and the whole universe is to know something of one's measure before God.

When man forgets God, he becomes absorbed by the external life around him. The physical and vital life movements make demands upon him. He then knows and understands himself only through contact with these universal movements acting on his physical and vital being; he is concerned only with this aspect of consciousness and reacts consciously only to these movements and their forces.

To forget the Divine is to be divided in purpose; it is due to a division in the nature. One part of the nature is not in agreement with the other. If one is aware of this division which creates a disharmony, then something can be done about it. But the average man is not at all aware of such partitioning in his nature; at each moment he thinks he is what he is at that moment, not what he can become. The true self may look always towards perfection, but the egocentric self is absorbed in and by the immediate life-movements of the moment, carried away on the flood of universal forces, it has very little to say which way it should go. It is swept on through life in the habitual stream of "quiet" unconsciousness, contented to remain in its own ignorance, "happy" to remain part of the amorphous whole that has not to make any effort of its own. It is satisfied to continue to die rather than enter upon any adventure to "live."

There is no doubt that man learns Humility only through experience.

Being preoccupied only with the externals, he is conscious only of his external nature, he is preoccupied only with his vital and physical self. His mental, psychic and spiritual consciousness is left void of activity, empty of expression, this creates a

top-heavy state of being which brings about, eventually, dissatisfaction, dullness, depression—the unhappiness of a living death upheld by the behaviour pattern of habit that lends itself to forces over which it has no control.

There comes a time when the true Self asserts itself against this condition. When the ego-self has had enough, is satiated with this negative experience it bows down before the weight of its adversity—then comes the possibility of a moment of true Humility, of acknowledgement of defeat, of surrender to a Higher Power when the true Self can come forward to lead the being to a wider plane of consciousness where all the parts of the being can cooperate in a synthesis of endeavour towards the Harmony of Life and Truth and Bliss.

(To be continued)

NORMAN C. DOWESTT

THE CONQUEST OF DEATH

THE VISION AND THE REALISATION IN SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

(Continued from the issue of April 24)

CHAPTER XIV (Continued)

THE CONQUEST OF MORTALITY

WE have investigated the law of Death, a law not at all immutable, absolute or inexorable inhering in the very substance of life itself, but a law altogether relative and germane to a particular stage of incomplete manifestation of Sachchidananda. And, as Sri Aurobindo has warned, "there is no more benumbing error than to mistake a stage for the goal or to linger too long in a resting-place."¹

After all, laws are nothing but the "habits of the world,"² and the divine soul has taken its birth in the field of its apparent negation in order to accept laws for the moment and discard them when their necessity is over.

And it is in this high and noble spirit that the sadhaks of the Integral Yoga would like to tackle the problem of Death. It is not out of any sense of ignorant attachment to terrestrial life nor because of any pusillanimity before the prospect of their bodies' death that they seek to abrogate the stringency of the Law of Death. In fact, the attitude they should bear *vis-à-vis* the phenomenon of death has been clearly delineated by the Mother in one of her talks addressed to the young inmates of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram:

"After all, if one has to leave his body for some reason or other and have other bodies, would it not be better to make of death a magnificent, glad, enthusiastic thing than to make of it a disgusting defeat? The people who stick on, who try in every possible way to put off the end even if by a minute or two and who give you an example of frightful agony, do so because they are not conscious of their soul.... After all, it is perhaps a means—you may change this accident into a means; if you are conscious, you can make of it a beautiful thing, a very beautiful thing, as with everything. And note, people who have no fear of it, who do not care, who can die without any sordidness about it, are the people who never think of it, who are not haunted by this 'horror' ahead from which one must flee, and that one tries to push as far away as one can. Those people, when the time comes, may lift their head, smile and say 'Here I am.'"

"It is they who have the will to make of their life the maximum they can make of it. It is they who say, 'I will remain here as long as I must, till the last second, and I

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 732.

² *Thoughts and Glances*, pp 33-34

will not lose a single minute to realise my goal.' It is they, when the necessity arrives, who show the best figure. Why? Very simple, because they live in their ideal, according to the truth of their ideal, because it is the real thing for them, the very reason of their being, and in all things they can see this ideal, this reason of being, and never do they descend to the sordidness of material life.

"So the conclusion:

Never wish for death

Never will to die

Never fear death.

In every circumstance, will to exceed yourself."¹

Yes, the unflinching and ever-ascending will not to remain content with the achievements of the past but to proceed to earn ever new laurels of victory for the manifesting Spirit in this field of Becoming. And since the obligation of physical death is the principal symbol of imperfection to which the embodied being is at present subject, also since death and dissolution are no necessary attributes of life but have rather been introduced as a temporary expedient to serve the purpose of life itself, the Integral Yoga of Self-Perfection has set for its ultimate goal the annulment of this doom of physical mortality.

But does this mean that a siddha of this Yoga has perforce to keep the same physical body for ever and for ever? Evidently not, and this we have pointed out already in Chapter IV ("Mortality and Immortality: The Real Issue"). What we seek to achieve in our Yoga is not the irrevocable continuity of a particular physical form serving indefinitely as the vehicle of manifestation for the indwelling Spirit, but rather the elimination of the elements of inevitability and forceful dissolution in the process of death. A complete liberation from all possible attacks of illnesses and the power to prolong life at will (*icchā mṛtyu*) are the two essential insignia of this figured victory over death.

And this is what is now being effectively done in the sphere of our terrestrial existence, through the descent and the concomitant emergence of the divine Gnosis, Supermind, here in the midst of the evolutionary Becoming. For, the true and radical solution of all the difficulties that the embodied life has to face and battle against, and that culminate in its ultimate dissolution, lies in this divine principle, Supermind, "of which Immortality is the law"² and about which one can say: "there alone is the conscious unity of all diversities, there alone will and knowledge are equal and in perfect harmony, there alone Consciousness and Force arrive at their divine equation."³

It is through the supramental transformation of our actually limited and rigid existence, down to the very cells and functionings of the material body, that the law of

¹ *Bulletin*, Vol. XVIII No. 3, Pp 73, 75

² *The Life Divine*, pp 198

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 198.

death at present inevitable owing "to the law and compulsion of the All-Life in the material universe, to its law of supply of the material of form and demand on the material, its principle of constant intershock and the struggle of the embodied life to exist in a world of mutual devouring,"¹ will be abrogated and our earthly and mortal existence will flower into the immortal Life Divine

For, in the divinely transfigured bodily existence, the physical being of man would be "made so plastic and progressive in its structure and its functioning that it would answer to each change demanded of it by the progress of the inner Person; it (would then) be able to keep pace with the soul in its formation of self-expressive personality, its long unfolding of a secret spiritual divinity and the slow transformation of the mental into the divine mental or spiritual existence"²

Thus will be made possible, nay, inevitable, the consummation of a triple immortality—to which we referred in the beginning of our essay—"immortality of the nature completing the essential immortality of the Spirit and the psychic survival of death."³

But to a mind bound to its actualities this may very well sound like an impossible prospect. Indeed, as the Mother has pointed out in one of Her articles on death, the very first battle that the embodied soul aspiring after physical immortality has to engage in, is against this "suggestion that is collective, massive, overwhelming, compelling, a suggestion based upon thousands of years of experience, upon a law of Nature that does not seem yet to have had any exception. It translates itself into this stubborn assertion: 'It has been so always, it cannot be otherwise. Death is inevitable and it is madness to hope that there should be anything else.' The concert is unanimous and till now even the most advanced man of learning has hardly dared to raise a note of dissidence, or of hope for the future. As for religions, most of them rely for their power of action upon the fact of death and they assert that God wanted man to die since he created him mortal. ..In spite of all this, the mind must remain *unshakable in its conviction* and sustain *a will that never bends*. But for one who is resolved upon conquering death, these suggestions have no effect and do not touch the *certitude based upon a profound revelation*."⁴ (Italics ours.)

As a matter of fact, for "man [who] is God hiding himself from Nature so that he may possess her by struggle, insistence, violence and surprise,"⁵ the sense of impossibility is the beginning of an eventual possibility. For, "impossibility is only a sum of greater unrealised possibles. It veils an advanced stage and a yet unaccomplished journey."⁶

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

¹ *The Life Divine*, p. 179.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 732.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 732-733.

⁴ *Bulletin of Physical Education*. Vol. VI, No. I, pp. 69-71.

⁵ Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Glances*, p. 15.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

EIGHTEENTH SEMINAR

23RD NOVEMBER, 1969

THE Eighteenth Seminar of the New Age Association was held on the 23rd November 1969 from 8.30 to 9.50 a.m. in the Hall of Harmony of the Centre of Education. The subject given by the Mother was:

*The salvation of the world lies in union and harmony.
How do you conceive this union and this harmony?*

The following four members of the Association participated as speakers:

Anand Reddy, Debranjana, Mounnou, Romen.

At the beginning a short piece of the Mother's recorded music was played. Then Kishor Gandhi, the Chairman, made the following introductory remarks:

Friends,

The paramount importance at the present juncture of the subject, which the Mother has given for this Seminar, is quite obvious, for the forces of division and violent conflict have at the present moment swelled to such menacing proportions all over the world that unless some drastic measures are undertaken to curb them effectively and to establish adequate unity and harmony on a secure basis, there is every possibility that humanity may suffer a catastrophic disaster "Unite or perish"—this is the imminent warning held up before humanity by the Time-Spirit which will not brook any delay if humanity still continues to turn a deaf ear to it.

But though the need for unity is imminent, there is hardly a clear understanding of its true nature and the proper means to realise it effectively, even among those who bear the responsibility of leading humanity in this crucial hour. Many conceptions and formulas are advocated, offering solutions which eventually prove to be failures or at the best palliatives because they fail to tackle the problem at its very roots.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to have a clear conception of the true unity and harmony that is at present required for the salvation of the world. For us this has a special significance because the realisation of world-unity forms an essential part of the life-work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. World-Unity was one of the

cherished dreams of Sri Aurobindo as mentioned by him in his birthday message of August 15, 1947, and also of the Mother as explained by her in her short writing entitled "A Dream". In fact our International Centre of Education and Auroville have been started in order to give a concrete form to this "dream."

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother called their endeavour to achieve world-unity a "dream" because all great ideals appear to the average ordinary mind like unreal imaginations impossible to realise in practical actual life. But how many such "dreams" of the past which were considered impossible by the past humanity have become commonplace facts of the present day!

Also we must remember that a "dream" of Sri Aurobindo cannot be put in the same category as the dreams of other idealists. Let me remind you here of an answer which the Mother gave to a questioner who expressed doubt about the success of the Auroville project because of the great difficulties involved in its execution. The Mother said: "You say that Auroville is a dream. Yes, it is a 'dream' of the Lord and generally these 'dreams' turn out to be *true*—much more true than the human so-called realities!"¹ (29-5-1966).

To this I would like to add Sri Aurobindo's own assertion about the success of his world-action which applies with equal force not only to his "dream" of world-unity but also to the other four "dreams" mentioned in his birthday message of August 15, 1947:

"I have never had a strong and persistent will for anything to happen in the world—I am not speaking of personal things—which did not eventually happen even after delay, defeat or even disaster."²

Those who have faith in Sri Aurobindo should therefore remember that his "dream" of world-unity carries with it the invincible realising power of his Will, the Will of the Supreme Lord, and that therefore it is bound to be achieved whatever may be the obstacles standing in the way.

But our faith in Sri Aurobindo must be accompanied by a clear understanding of his conception of the true world-unity and of the right means of effectively realising it.

It will be our endeavour in this Seminar to explain Sri Aurobindo's vision of world-unity and the resultant harmony as delineated by him in his works. Four members of our Association will try to do this according to their capacity. After they have done, I shall read some extracts from Sri Aurobindo's writings on the subject and the Mother's comment on them after they were read to her.

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After this the four members delivered their speeches and then Kishor Gandhi read out the extracts on the subject. Some of these speeches and the extracts will be published in the coming issues of *Mother India*.

¹ *White Roses*, Part Three, p. 8

² *Sri Aurobindo on Himself*, p. 242.

EYE EDUCATION

THE prevailing methods of treatment for the errors of refraction is by means of compensating lenses. But very little has ever been claimed except that these contrivances neutralize the effects of the various conditions for which they are prescribed, as a crutch enables a lame man to walk. In the case of myopia Dr. Sidler Huguenin expresses the opinion that glasses and all methods at our command are "of but little avail" in preventing either the progress of the error of refraction or the development of the very serious complications with which it is often associated.

This incurability of errors of refraction is based on the theory that the eye changes its focus for vision at different distances by altering the curvature of the lens. And both myopia and hypermetropia are supposed permanent conditions.

While examining thirty thousand pairs of eye, Dr. W. H. Bates, one of the pioneer ophthalmologists of New York, observed many cases of defective vision who recovered spontaneously, or changed their form of ailment. Dr. Bates was unable either to ignore these facts or to satisfy himself with the orthodox explanations. It seemed to him that if a statement is a truth it must always be a truth. If errors of refraction are incurable, they should never recover, or change their form spontaneously. In seeking for light Dr. Bates undertook a series of observations upon the eyes of human beings and lower animals, the results of which convinced him that the lens is not a factor in accommodation. The eye adjusts its focus for different distances just like a camera, by a change in the length of the organ, and this alteration is brought about by the action of the external eye muscles called oblique muscles. We mention here some very important discoveries of Dr. Bates regarding the refractive error. The modern ophthalmologists should study these discoveries and if necessary repeat Dr. Bates' experiments and subject his work to further investigation.

We may list the discoveries :

1. Myopia and hypermetropia could be produced at will.
2. Myopia was not caused by reading but by a strain to see distant objects.
3. Strain at the near point caused hypermetropia.
4. No error of refraction was ever a constant condition.
5. Lower degrees of errors of refraction were curable while higher degrees could be improved.
6. Reading fine print when it can be done without any discomfort proves extremely beneficial.
7. Preservation of good eyesight is almost impossible without eye education and mental relaxation.

The most remarkable discovery of Dr. Bates is :

FINE PRINT IS A BENEFIT TO THE EYES WHILE LARGE PRINT IS A MENACE The reason is that while reading fine print one sees a tiny area at a

time, while in reading large print one has to see a large area at a time and the eye feels strain in such an attempt. Reading of fine print, when it can be done without discomfort, has invariably proved beneficial—and all the more if good light and candle light are used alternately.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL
The School For Perfect Eyesight

A PROOF-READER'S LAMENT

Where are you now, the happy dream,
When all things glowed in rosy gleam?
For now within my deepest slumber
There creep in comma, colon, number,

O how I waver, shrink and shake
Whene'er I ponder what's at stake:
Alas! if readers one day stumble
Upon a dreadful footnote jumble,

Or glimpse a sudden burst of "heaven"
Out of an undetected "leaven";
Again, far worse if they should find
An oversight in "Overmind"!

Ah, was our galley-slaving vain
If proofs of slips like these remain?

SUBILLAM