

# MOTHER INDIA

JULY, 1970

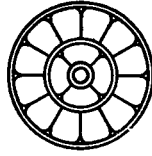
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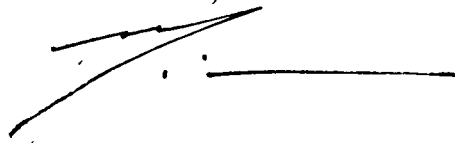


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 6

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Auroville est l'endroit idéal pour ceux qui veulent connaître la joie et la libération de ne plus avoir de possession personnelle.

18-9-1969

Auroville is the ideal place for those who want to know the joy and the liberation of not having personal possessions any more.

18-9-1969

At Auroville nothing belongs to anyone in particular.

All is a collective property.

To be utilised with my blessings for the welfare of all.

14-5-1970

Q. Qu'est-ce qu'il me faut surtout développer?

Qu'est-ce qu'il me faut surtout rejeter?

*Développer* : La sincérité

(c'est à dire une adhésion intégrale aux voies du Divin).

*Rejeter* : Les vieilles habitudes humaines qui nous tirent en arrière."

Q. What do I need to develop most?

And what do I need to reject most?

*Develop* — sincerity

(that is, an integral adhesion to the Divine's way).

*Reject* — the pull of the old human habits.

25-2-1970

## AUROVILLE ET LES RELIGIONS

LA MERE A DIT...

Nous voulons la Vérité.

Pour la plupart des hommes, c'est ce qu'ils veulent qu'ils appellent la vérité.

Les Auroviliens doivent vouloir la Vérité quelle qu'elle soit.

Auroville est pour ceux qui veulent vivre une vie essentiellement divine mais qui renoncent à toutes les religions, qu'elles soient anciennes, modernes, nouvelles ou futures.

La connaissance de la Vérité ne peut être qu'expérimentale.

Personne ne doit parler du Divin à moins qu'il n'ait eu l'expérience du Divin.

Connaissez le Divin, alors vous pourrez en parler.

L'étude objective des religions fera partie de l'étude historique du développement de la conscience humaine.

Les religions font partie de l'histoire de l'humanité et c'est à ce titre qu'elles seront étudiées à Auroville; non pas comme des croyances auxquelles on doit ou on ne doit pas adhérer, mais comme le processus du développement de la conscience humaine qui doit mener l'homme vers sa réalisation supérieure.

### PROGRAMME

La recherche expérimentale de la

Suprême Vérité

Une vie divine

mais

PAS DE RELIGIONS

Notre recherche ne sera pas une recherche par des moyens mystiques. C'est dans la vie même que nous voulons trouver le Divin. Et c'est grâce à cette découverte que la vie pourra réellement être transformée.

Le 2 mai 1970

## AUROVILLE AND THE RELIGIONS

### THE MOTHER HAS SAID...

We want the Truth.

For most men, it is what they want that they label truth.

The Aurovillians must want the Truth whatever it may be.

Auroville is for those who want to live a life essentially divine but who renounce all religions whether they be ancient, modern, new or future.

It is only in experience that there can be knowledge of the Truth.

No one ought to speak of the Divine unless he has had experience of the Divine.

Get experience of the Divine, then alone will you have the right to speak of it.

The objective study of religions will be a part of the historical study of the development of human consciousness.

Religions make up part of the history of mankind and it is in this guise that they will be studied at Auroville—not as beliefs to which one ought or ought not to fasten, but as part of a process in the development of human consciousness which should lead man towards his superior realisation.

### PROGRAMME

Research through experience of the

Supreme Truth

A life divine

but

NO RELIGIONS

Our research will not be a search effected by mystic means. It is in life itself that we wish to find the Divine. And it is through this discovery that life can really be transformed.

May 2, 1970

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of June)

*(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 25, 1956

*"Life, not a remote silent or high-uplifted ecstatic Beyond—Life alone, is the field of our Yoga. The transformation of our superficial, narrow and fragmentary human way of thinking, seeing, feeling and being into a deep and wide spiritual consciousness and an integrated inner and outer existence and of our ordinary human living into the divine way of life must be its central purpose."*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 101)*

*Sweet Mother, will "the divine way of life" be established only when the Supermind descends?*

I think so. There seems to be no possibility of its happening otherwise. But it is a very relative question. Perhaps the way of life could become a little more divine without becoming altogether divine.

*What do you mean by a "divine way of life"?*

We always call "divine" all that we are not but wish to be. All that seems to us infinitely superior, not only compared with all that we have done, but with all that we feel we can do; all that surpasses both our conception and our present possibilities, we call "divine".

I say this not by way of a joke, but because I am quite convinced that if we go back some thousands of years, when men spoke of the Divine (if ever they did speak of the Divine, as I believe), they spoke perhaps of a state analogous to that of the godheads of the Overmind; and now this mode of being of the godheads of the Overmind, who, evidently, have governed the earth and formed many things on earth for a very long time, seems to us much inferior to what we conceive as the Supermind. And this Supramental, which we, precisely, call the Divine and try to bring down on earth,



will probably strike us in the same way a few thousands or millions of years hence as the Overmind does today.

And I am sure that in the manifestation, that is in His self-expression, the Divine is progressive. Outside the manifestation He is something we cannot conceive; but as soon as He manifests in this kind of perpetual becoming, well, He manifests more and more of Himself, as though He were reserving for the last the more beautiful parts of His Being.

As gradually the world progresses, what He expresses in the world becomes what we may call more and more divine.

So Sri Aurobindo has used the word Supramental to explain to those who are in the outer and evolutionary consciousness and who have some idea of the way in which the terrestrial world has developed—to explain to them that this something which is going to be much greater, and superior to human creation, to man, whom he always calls the mental being,—this something which is going to come will be much more and better than man; and so he calls it supramental in order to make himself understood. But we may as well say that it is something more divine than what has been manifested before.

And this he himself says, in what I read today, that it is infinite, that it has no limits.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, there will always be a growing perfection; and what now seems to us imperfect must have been the perfection to which certain ages in terrestrial history aspired.

There is no reason why this should stop. If it stopped, it would be finished. It would be a new “pralaya”.

*Mother, I have not understood this: “It is for this meaningful development of consciousness by thought, will, emotion, desire, action and experience, leading in the end to a supreme divine self-discovery, that man, the mental being, has entered into the material body.”*

*(Ibid., p. 102)*

Why has the mental being entered into the material body? Is that what you want to know?

*Sri Aurobindo says “...leading in the end to a supreme divine self-discovery.”*

The divine discovery is the discovery of the Divine in oneself. So man, that is, the mental being (for what we call man is a physical body with a mental being within, a mental being manifested in a body, a physical body), so the mental being has incarnated and become man in order to find within himself the divine Being, the divine Presence.

<sup>1</sup> “In a certain sense it may be an error to speak of a goal anywhere in a progression which may well be infinite.” (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 102)

Why? Do you ask why? It is a funny way of going about it! (*laughter*)

I don't know if he is going to explain it here, I don't remember now, but one thing is certain, that this marvellous thing, the divine Presence in Matter, which is at the origin of the formation of the psychic being, belongs in its own right to terrestrial life.

So (we have already said this many times, I believe), this terrestrial world which seems to be only a small insignificant planet from the astronomical point of view, in the midst of all the stars and all the worlds, this terrestrial world has been formed to become the symbol of the universe and to be the point of concentration for the work of transformation, of divine transmutation.

And because of that, in this Matter which was perhaps the most obscure and most inconscient of all the Matter of the universes, there plunged and incarnated directly the Divine Consciousness, from the supreme Origin straight into the obscurest Matter, without going through any intermediary, *directly*. Consequently, the two extremes touch, the Supreme and the most inconscient, and the universal circle closes. And thus terrestrial life is the easiest means (if one may say so) or the most rapid, of becoming aware of the Divine.

And it is so true a fact that even the great cosmic Individualities, when they wish to be converted or to unite with the Origin, take a physical body for that, because that becomes easier for them, for it can be done faster and better thus than if they had to progress through all the states of being, from any one of the states of being of the universe to the Supreme Origin.

It is easier to come down into a human body and find the divine Presence there, it goes more rapidly. Imagine the serpent that bites its tail, it makes a circle, doesn't it? So, if something wants to be united with the Divine, it is easier to enter the tail than to go the whole round of the body! For, as the head bites the tail, well, if you enter the tail you are immediately in contact with the head, while the other way you must make the full circuit like this (*showing by a gesture*) to arrive at the head.

(*To the child*) Mark that I am not quite sure if this is what he means, but in any case it is one explanation.

(*Silence*)

The Mother shows the white Champak flower she holds in her hand. This flower has been named "Psychological perfection".

Who remembers this?

(*Counting the petals*) One, two, three, four, five psychological perfections. Which are the five psychological perfections?

For it is possible to change them. And in fact, to tell you my secrets, every time I give it to someone, they are not always the same psychological perfections. That depends on people's needs. Even to the same person I may give at different times different psychological perfections; hence this is not fixed. But the first time this flower was named "Psychological Perfection" (I remember very well it was at a gathering up there where *Prosperity* now is, where I go on the first of the month;<sup>1</sup> there was a gathering and the five psychological perfections were fixed), at that time they were noted, but as for me it is something very fluid (I told you it depends upon circumstances and needs); I don't remember what was chosen the first time.

So, if someone knows it, he can tell us, we shall compare.

*I am not sure.*

You are not sure. Is there anyone who is sure?

*Aspiration, devotion, sincerity and faith.*

That makes only four, so far.

*And surrender.*

Surrender? Someone told me something else.

(*To a disciple*) You, do you know? Well, then, come and tell us.

*In English, Mother?*

Ah! no, my child, this is a French class, not in English!

*Faith, sincerity, aspiration, devotion, surrender.*

But that is what he has just said. (*Turning to another disciple*) You, just a while ago you told me "faithfulness".

*I said that, but it is not faithfulness. Instead of faithfulness there is faith.*

But why should there not be faithfulness? I did not put it because I did not

<sup>1</sup> '*Prosperity*' is the place where, on the first of every month, the Mother used to distribute to the disciples what they needed for the month.

try to recall anything, I wrote simply what seemed to me the most important and most general. But it may be put in various ways.

In any case, that which is always there, in all combinations and to whomsoever I give it, the first among them all is sincerity. For if there is no sincerity, one cannot advance even by half a step. So that is the first, and it is always there.

But it is possible to translate it by another word, if one prefers that, which would be "transparency." I shall explain this word:

I am in front of someone and look at this person; I look into his eyes. And if this person is sincere or "transparent", through the eyes I go down and I see his soul—clearly. But (that is precisely the experience) when I look at somebody and at times see a little cloud, then I continue, I see a screen, and then sometimes it is a wall, and afterwards it is something quite black; and all this must be crossed, and holes bored in order to be able to go through; and even then I am not sure if at the last minute I may not find myself before a door of bronze so thick that I shall never get through and shall not see his soul; so, of such a person I can say immediately that he is not sincere. But I can also say quite literally that he is not transparent. That is the first thing.

There is a second, which, evidently, is as indispensable if one wants to advance: that is, to have faith. Or another word, which seems more limited but is for me more important, because (it is a question of experience) if your faith is not made of a complete trust in the Divine, well, you may very easily keep the impression of your having faith and be on the road of losing all trust in the divine Power or divine Goodness, or the Trust the Divine has in you. These are the three stumbling-blocks:

Those who have what they call an unshakable faith in the Divine, and say: "It is the Divine who is doing everything, who can do everything; all that happens in me, in others, everywhere, is the work of the Divine and nothing else but the Divine", if they follow this with a kind of logic, after sometime they will accuse the Divine of the most shocking misdeeds, for the evils which take place in the world and will make of Him a veritable devil, cruel and frightful—if they have no trust.

Or again, if they have faith, but tell themselves: "Indeed, I have faith in the Divine, but this world, why, I see quite well how it is! First of all, I suffer so much, don't I?, I am very unhappy, much unhappier than all my neighbours" (for one is always much unhappier than all one's neighbours), "I am very unhappy, and truly, life is wicked with me. But then the Divine is divine, he is All-Goodness, All-Generosity, All-Harmony, so how is it that I am so unhappy? He must be powerless; otherwise being so good how would He let me suffer so much?"

That is the second stumbling-block.

And the third: these are people who have what may be called a warped and excessive modesty or humility and who tell themselves: "Surely the Divine has thrown me out, I am good for nothing, He can do nothing with me, the only thing for me is to throw up the game, for He finds me unworthy of Him!"

So, unless one adds to faith a total and complete trust in the Divine Grace, there

will be difficulties. Hence both are necessary; one or the other or both.

Now, we have put "devotion" in this series. Yes, devotion is very well, but unless it is accompanied by many other things it too may make many mistakes. It may meet great difficulties.

One has devotion, and keeps one's ego. And then your ego makes you do all sorts of things out of devotion, and things which are terribly egoistic. That is to say, one thinks only of oneself and not of others, nor of the world, nor of what ought to be done—one thinks only of one's devotion. And one becomes tremendously egoistic. And so, when you find out that the Divine, for a certain reason, does not answer your devotion with the enthusiasm you expected of Him, you are in despair and fall again into the same three difficulties I was just speaking about: either the Divine is cruel (we have read that, there are many such stories, of enthusiastic devotees who abuse the Divine because He is no longer as gentle and near to them as before, He has withdrawn himself: "Why hast Thou forsaken me? Thou hast let me fall, O monster!...") They don't dare to say this, but think it, or again they say: "Oh! I must have made such a serious mistake that I am thrown out", and they fall into despair.

But there is another movement which should constantly accompany devotion... That kind of sense of gratitude that the Divine exists; that feeling of a marvellous thankfulness which truly fills you with a sublime joy at the fact that the Divine exists, that there is something in the universe which is the Divine, that it is not just that monstrosity we see, that there is the Divine, the Divine exists. And every time that the least thing puts you either directly or indirectly in contact with this sublime Reality of divine existence, the heart is filled with so intense, so marvellous a joy, such a gratefulness as of all things has the most delightful taste.

There is nothing which gives you a joy equal to that of gratitude. One hears a bird sing, sees a lovely flower, looks at a little child, observes an act of generosity, reads a beautiful sentence, looks at the setting sun, no matter what the thing is, suddenly this comes upon you, this kind of emotion—indeed so deep, so intense—that the world manifests the Divine, that there is something behind the world which is the Divine.

So I find that devotion without gratitude is quite incomplete, gratitude must come with devotion.

I remember that once we had spoken of courage as one of the perfections; I remember having written it down once in a list. But that is a courage which has the taste of a supreme adventure. And this taste of supreme adventure is aspiration—aspersion which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great Adventure of the divine discovery, the great Adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater Adventure of the divine Realisation; one throws oneself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute, "What is going to happen?" For if one asks what is going to happen, one never starts, one always remains stuck to the ground, there, solidly planted, fearing to lose something, to lose one's balance,

That is why I speak of courage—but truly it is of aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage.

And now, surrender. In English the word is “surrender”, there is no French word which gives exactly that sense. But Sri Aurobindo has said (I think we have read this) that surrender is the first and absolute condition for doing the Yoga. So, if we follow what he has said, this is not just one of the necessary qualities: it is the first indispensable attitude for beginning the yoga. If one has not decided to make a total surrender, one cannot begin.

But for this surrender to be total, all these qualities are necessary. And I add one more (for so far we have only four of them), I add endurance. Because, if you are not able to face difficulties without getting discouraged and without giving up, for it is too difficult; and if you are incapable...well, of receiving blows and yet of continuing, of “pocketing” them, as it is said—when you receive blows as a result of your defects, of putting them in your pocket and continuing to go forward without flagging—, you don’t go very far; at the first turning where one loses sight of the little habitual life, one falls into despair and gives up.

The form...how I shall put it? the most material form of this is perseverance. Unless you are resolved to begin the same thing over again a thousand times... You know, people come in despair to me: “But I thought it was done and I must begin again!” And if they are told: “But that’s nothing, you will probably have to begin again a hundred times, two hundred times, a thousand times; you take one step forward and think you are secure, but there will always be something to bring back the same difficulty a little farther on. You think you have solved the problem, you must solve it yet once again; it will present itself looking just a little different, but it will be the same problem”, and if you have not decided: “Even if it comes back a million times, I shall do it a million times, but shall go through with it”, well, you won’t be able to do the yoga. This is altogether indispensable.

People have a fine experience and say: “Ah! now I have it!”... And then it settles down, diminishes, gets veiled, and suddenly something quite unexpected, absolutely commonplace and apparently altogether uninteresting comes before you and blocks your way. And then one says: “Ah! what’s the good of having made this progress if this starts all over again? Why should I do it? I made an effort, succeeded, reached a certain point, and now it is as if I had done nothing! It is indeed hopeless.” For one has no endurance.

If one has endurance, one says: “It is all right. Good, I shall begin again as often as is necessary; a thousand times, ten thousand times, a hundred thousand times if necessary, I shall begin again—but I shall go to the end and nothing will have the power to stop me on the way.”

This is very necessary. Very necessary.

So here’s my proposal: we put surrender first, at the head, that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said: that to do the integral yoga one must first resolve to surrender entirely to the Divine, there is no other way, this is *the way*. But after that

one must have the five psychological virtues, the five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are:

Sincerity or Transparency  
Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)  
Devotion or Gratitude  
Courage or Aspiration  
Endurance or Perseverance.

One form of endurance is *faithfulness*. Loyalty to one's resolution, being faithful. One has taken a resolution, one is faithful to one's resolution. This is endurance.

There you are.

If one persists, there comes a moment when one is victorious.

Victory is to the most persistent.

---

## MENTOR

FOR starving years on end, a wretched crumb  
The gods had fed his mind's omnivorous need  
For answers fathered not by rule or creed:  
"You ask in vain, pale man. Wax mute, wax dumb."  
Do what he would, one query mocked his sleep—  
"Why is it, soul, despite a life's desire,  
No word of mine, no sentence, phrase, is sire  
Of Truth? Why am I dark as dungeon-keep?"  
A separation's miracle one night  
Bestowed the gift his twofold self to see:  
"I am not limb, not thought, I am not—me!"  
And, giving this, it gave in the same sight  
A clear response to his tormented Why:  
Nothing but lies can come from I-am-I.

WILLIAM JONES

# THE YOGA OF SUPRAMENTALISATION

## A LETTER TO SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS ANSWER

*(Sri Aurobindo's answer has already been published, but we are putting it for the first time in its proper context by prefixing to it the letter from a disciple which elicited this pronouncement. The precise terms of the discussion thus become clear and add to the interest and value and pertinence of the Master's reply, which is one of those rare ones that are personal and throw some direct light, however subtly, on the inner reality of the wonderful being that he was in the silent depths of his work as well as in the eloquent wideness of his vision as set forth in his books and in his letters to disciples. We have gone to the original for the present transcript. Apart from a few minor differences from the published version (presumably due to a revision), it fills a small yet significant gap there of an inadvertently omitted word.)*

### A Disciple's Letter

I HAVE been dipping now and then into the Kanai-Nirod controversy and reading your comments also. Kanai is certainly, as you say, rational in denouncing big talk on the part of anybody who glibly claims the supramental without taking even a step towards the psychic. The psychic is, without doubt, our most immediate goal, and whether one wants what is called the Divine Realisation or what you call Supramentalisation, one has to occupy oneself with psychicisation first of all. But there is another point which needs clearing up.

Your aim is to accomplish something special which has never been done, and to accomplish it not only in yourself but also in others who are willing to go with you. Is that a fair statement or not?

If it is, then provided one is sincere and faithful and filled with aspiration, is it not perfectly rational and perfectly practical to expect that one's sincerity, faithfulness and aspiration would lead one ultimately to get what you would like to give—namely, supramentalisation? And when I say “ultimately”, I mean not after many lives but in this very life—granted, of course, that one is not too delapidated in body or otherwise precluded from whatever minimum well-being may be necessary.

Kanai doubts whether you intend to *give* anything special, any consciousness and its embodiment in life other than what has been given in the past. And he says that it is not sober sense, not practical, to expect the supramental in oneself, however sincere and faithful and filled with aspiration one may be.

I hope it is understood that in this point at issue there is no question about big talk yet no endeavour, or about the immediate and the remote. Supramentalisation



cannot be immediate; but is it at present practical or not to hope for it even as an ultimate result of one's truest endeavour to follow you? If, under another guru, it is, as Kanai thinks, practical for a true follower to expect divine realisation—that is, union with the spiritual consciousness—is it not practical to expect here something beyond that even, if you intend to give it and if one truly follows you?

The answer, I believe, depends primarily upon whether it is your intention to give the supramental to others, after achieving it yourself. Surely if you say that you have not achieved it or that it is uncertain that you ever will, it is not practical for anybody else to hope for it, or rather it is practical in proportion to the chances you have for it. But if you have it or are certain of it in the future and wish to impart it, then what about the practicality on the part of a true and not too unhealthy follower of yours to look forward to it as the fixed consummation of his yoga of self-surrender to you?

AMAL

20. 4. 1935

### Sri Aurobindo's Answer

I have no intention of achieving the supramental for myself only—I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (moksha) nor supramentalisation. If I am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that must be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others. My supramentalisation is only a key for opening the gates of the supramental to the earth-consciousness; done for its own sake, it would be perfectly futile. But it does not follow either that if or when I become supramental, everybody will become supramental. Others can so become who are ready for it, when they are ready for it—though of course the achievement in myself will be to them a great help towards it. It is therefore quite legitimate to have the aspiration for it—provided (1) one does not make too personal or egoistic an affair of it turning it into a Nietzschean or other ambition to be a superman. (2) one is ready to undergo the conditions and stages needed for the achievement, (3) one is sincere and regards it as part of the seeking for the Divine and a consequent culmination of the divine Will in one and insists on no more than the fulfilment of that Will whatever it may be, psychicisation, spiritualisation or supramentalisation. It should be regarded as the fulfilment of God's working in the world, not as a personal chance or achievement.

SRI AUROBINDO

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of June)

*(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. Manilal, 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 19, 1940

P: Instead of being on the defensive if the Allies also attacked it would be good.

SRI AUROBINDO: For that one must have superior strength of the army as well as armaments. Otherwise it is dangerous. The Allies are superior in air. It seems their machines are better than the German, and the American ones are still better. If so it would be an advantage.

N: The Allies are trying to cut off the petrol supply by destroying the communications and depots.

P: They may still get it from Rumania according to old contracts.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, Rumania has stopped all supply. By supplying oil she would invite her own invasion.

P: Even without receiving oil, Germany may attack.

S: Then better to be attacked without supplying.

N: A.B. has found out from your own writings what happened to you in your 18th year. You have written in *Aurobindar Patra*: "at 14 the seed sprouted and at 18 it established itself firmly."

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): That is a psychological event, not an outside action.

N: Maybe, but it led to action.

SRI AUROBINDO: At 18, I think we started in London the secret Lotus and Dagger Society.

N: Then it is an event!

SRI AUROBINDO: It lasted only for a day. (*Laughter*)

N: A.B. also says that your 18-year cycle has a close link with his. In 1890 he was born, in 1908 he joined the Swadeshi Movement and in 1926 came here. Nolini's cycle also seems to coincide with it. He joined the Movement in 1908.

SRI AUROBINDO: But what happened to him in 1926?

N: I don't know.

SRI AUROBINDO (*addressing P*): When was the Ashram started?

P: In 1926.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): There you are!

P: It is like Spengler's fitting facts to theories.... I had again a talk with Doraiswamy. He heard from Nolani that the Mother has said that at present the freedom of India would be catastrophic for the country. You have said that the demon of slavery is sucking the life-blood of India. These two statements he does not know how to reconcile. I said that there was no antagonism between the two.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Mother says that two conditions must be satisfied before India gets her freedom. One is unity; the other, defence. If there is no unity, then India will be a prey to another power. We can't afford to have a civil war in India, for that would surely invite another power to occupy her. Even C. R. Das told me that this Hindu-Muslim question must be solved before the British went and he was no less a patriot than anyone else.

#### EVENING

S: What is this flame-throwing business the Germans have started?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a real sign of the Asura. Hitler has many devilish things in store, it seems—works of devilish ingenuity.

N (*addressing S*): Your *Indian Express* prints in headlines that Germany is only 70 miles from Paris.

S: It is from your American correspondent.

SRI AUROBINDO: The French frontier is about 100 or 130 miles from Paris. So 70 miles is nothing alarming. We are accustomed to distances. Madras is more than 100 miles from here, yet considered pretty close. But 70 miles in Europe is quite a good distance. I thought this extension of the Maginot line had been completed before. They say it was done only during 8 months of the war.

P: Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is during Daladier's time. That is just like Daladier. He talks more than he does. So he has been politely pushed out.

P: He did not perhaps calculate an attack through Belgium.

SRI AUROBINDO: Calculations always go wrong. It is said that Russia is panicky and Stalin upset over Hitler's success.

P: Yes, before also there was such a news. There may be some truth there.

S: Stalin thought the Allies would win.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is another calculation. No, he thought both powers would be exhausted and then he would have his chance.

P: Then Dr André's prophecy would come true that he would be the dictator of Europe.

N: After the Finnish war, it does not look possible. That has been a pointer

to the limits to his army capacity and strength.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he has been moderate after that. What happened is no wonder after he has killed all his generals. I suppose he has no such military knowledge as Trotsky had.

P: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: That Finnish war has been reassuring to Hitler. He has seen Stalin's limited strength and thinks, "Let Stalin do now whatever he likes. After the war I will handle him."

MAY 20, 1940

P: Hitler's declaration that before August 15 the war has to be finished and peace agreed upon seems significant.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the sign that he is the enemy of our work.<sup>1</sup> And from the values concerned in the conflict it should be quite clear that what is behind him is the Asuric, the Titanic power.

P: It is strange how he takes his decisions.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not he that takes the decisions. The Being behind him decides.

P: It knows perhaps that, August 15 being your birthday, there is going to be some descent of the Divine on that date.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't think it believes in any such descent. It would say, "I must make some decisive movement before anything decisive happens on that date." This Being comes here from time to time and sees what kind of work is going on.

N: It doesn't believe in any descent of the Divine?

SRI AUROBINDO: It believes in its own descent and is too self-confident about it.

N: But surely it knows that the work here is against its own interests?

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Of course.

P: Is it only one Being or a troop?

SRI AUROBINDO: There are more than one, but this is a very powerful Being. Have you read Paul Richard's *Lord of the Nations*?

P: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: I believe it was not published. He was in communion with this Being, and the plans and methods he has written of in the book are the same as those carried out now.... He said there that the present civilisation was to be destroyed, but really it is the destruction of the whole human civilisation that is aimed at, and already in Germany Hitler has done it: there is no civilisation left there. What reigns there is barbarism supported by science—science meaning physical science. And Hitler has destroyed human civilisation wherever he has gone—as in Poland.

P: Christianity and all religion seem to be his target.

<sup>1</sup> *Editor's Note:* August 15 is the birthday of Sri Aurobindo.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. What he may want is Ludendorf's religion—the Norse religion of a primitive type where primitive instincts are worshipped.

P: Do these Beings recognise that there are higher divine powers?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on the type of Beings. For example, they know that there are gods but they won't admit they are greater than themselves.

P: The fight between the Devas and the Asuras is graphically described in the Puranas. Just as the Asuras are against the human race there must be other Beings who help the human race.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. Human beings by themselves are no match for the Asuras. If it is an influence from the Asuras or other Beings, the result may depend on the influence. Here in Hitler's case it is not an influence but a possession, even perhaps an incarnation. The case of Stalin is similar. The Vital World has descended upon the physical. That is why the intellectuals are getting perplexed at the destruction of their civilisation, of all the values they had made and stood for. They deny the existence of the worlds beyond the physical and so they are bound to be perplexed.

France is calling back her past to defend her present. Weygand and Pétain have been called, haven't they?

P: Yes. It seems there are other military geniuses who are not getting an opportunity because of a religious bar or some such factor.

SRI AUROBINDO: Religious bar?

P: They may happen to be Roman Catholic.

SRI AUROBINDO: But Weygand and Pétain are Catholics. Foch was an ardent Catholic. Nevins, during the last war, wrote strongly against a General who was a Freethinker and who had made a mess. If there was any genius about today, Weygand should know.

S: The Germans have made a great advance in the last 24 hours.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, a rapid advance,

P: They have brought a new kind of armoured tank which seems very formidable.

SRI AUROBINDO: The French anti-tank guns were not effective. So now they have brought up heavy 75 mm. guns. It is because of these tanks that the French were thrown off their balance. Naturally, if thousands of tanks push forward the infantry can't do anything unless supported by strong mechanical weapons. The British Army seems to rely on the air force, but the air force can't decide a war. It can only harass the enemy. The Mother says that the R.A.F. bombers can only act at night while the German bombers operate only during the day.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

# SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF 1922-1926

(Continued from the issue of June)

*(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.)*

WE see life emerging from matter, but it does not emerge as a tree does from a seed; it only appears to do so. The tree is latent in the seed. Neither life nor mind can be said to be latent in matter in that way and then coming out by a process of Nature. Life and mind are rather asleep than latent there. What manifests life under material conditions is the Creative Consciousness that is everywhere. When the material conditions have been prepared, the Pranamaya Purusha, the Life-Being, descends into matter, and life appears. In matter there is indeed the principle of life (the principle of life is not an abstract thing), but life is not organised there, the formations of life come from above the plane of matter. Of course, if matter had no vital principle in it, the descending life would meet with no response and would go back. It is the same law everywhere. The principle of supermind is present in mind and, with the pressure from above it, the supramental can become organised there as intuitive mind.

Not only in the event of the critical jump from matter to life or from animal to man, but at each step in the ladder of ascent it is the same law working. In the force which is at work in matter is the unerring knowledge, the divine knowledge—*chetano achitanish*. The subconscious is obscure, it has not the knowledge. The super-conscious reveals things in matter, life and mind out of the subconscious, from which they arise. The form, the body is only a convenience. The evolution of the consciousness is the cause of the evolution of the form and precedes it. It can be said to follow it only in the sense that, when the form is fit, the organisation of the consciousness emerges.

Evolution does not mean that the animal somehow becomes the man; it means that the animal consciousness evolves up to a certain stage when the mental being descends into it, takes it up and converts it. That is why there are the elements of the animal in man; similarly there is the impress of the sheer physical, which is shown

in the body-consciousness and the quality of *tamas*, inertia, reaching up from below to affect even the higher parts.

According to the theory of evolution, all things are born from matter and return to it. But, actually, only the body of man goes back to matter. The mental being is not dissolved into matter. The mental being itself is not everything—it is just an instrument of the Jiva—the Jiva reaches up to the *chinmaya* and *sanmaya*, the planes of the Supreme Consciousness and Supreme Existence. The Jiva does not evolve in matter in the sense that consciousness evolves. It is a direct portion of the Divine. It evolves only in the sense that the personality evolves...

The brain is only an instrument of communication with the outer world. It is the instrument of the physical mind. Consciousness does not depend on the brain, it is not the result of the brain: the brain is the result of the consciousness in its upward strivings. The brain does not produce thoughts. Thoughts are merely produced in the brain. (Of course there are various kinds of mentality. The mechanical mind which leaps along from thought to thought in idle hours is a part of the physical mind or the vital-physical mind. It is not the mental-physical; the mental-physical is more organised.)

*Q. Do flowers speak to you?*

Yes. When you enter into the Universal Consciousness and still more when you enter into the Truth-Consciousness, you see that these things are formations of consciousness, formations of force; you see the evolution in the flower, the message in the flower.

The tree is guided in its growth by the subconscious and the subliminal. The subconscious, though it is obscure, has purposive movements, which seem intelligent: the subconscious urge executes what is put into it by the Divine Intelligence. The subconscious is below the active surface consciousness which is like the surface of water. Whatever we put aside or reject is thrown into the subconscious, and you can find in Yoga that it is still there—for example, attachments, *sanskāras*. The subliminal is behind and it is conscious and always sending impulses to the surface consciousness. In the tree also there is the subliminal, it is the subliminal vital, which was perceived by the ancients as the Dryad.

Is Destiny a working of inert, blind, material forces? If it is, there can be no choice in action. And the final outlook is Materialism or Maya. But if Destiny means a Will in the universe, then a choice in action is possible.

Destiny cannot be the work of the individual. It must be the working out of a Cosmic Will. If the Cosmic Will is free, there can't be a blind determinism; and even when there is "no progress", yet that Will is working itself out in evolution.

There is a destiny which is the sum of physical forces. But these forces are not the only determinants. We find that there is something more than physical that can

influence events. Take the rise of the Arabs, a small race, and their unexpected conquest of so many countries. There have been other such inrushes of supraphysical force in History. See how the Greeks in two or three centuries gave almost everything essential to European culture.

There are hidden hierarchies of powers: the Earth-gods, the Life-Gods, etc. The ancients perceived them and tried to appease them. The Life-Gods are often jealous. When a man becomes very strong, they sometimes can't endure it. Above them are the Gods of the Mind. Our sense of Divine Equity comes from them.

The Supreme is beyond description. That manifests as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss). This is triune, but it also forms three worlds. In the world of Sat, the beings are not separately individualised but have a divine universal individuality. There Consciousness-force and Ananda are held back and subordinated in the manifestation. In the world of Chit, Consciousness-force becomes prominent and determines everything. In the world of Ananda, Bliss is the determinant.

Then there is the supramental world, with the four Maha-Shaktis, aspects of the Divine Mother: Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati. Below the Supermind and behind the universe of Mind, Life and Matter is the world of the Great Gods. They receive light from the Supramental. It is they that govern our universe. Hindu culture represented these Gods as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva in the Puranas. What the Puranas describe as the Gopi Rasalila, the play of Krishna with the Gopis who are his devotees, is not a fact of the physical plane but of the higher and deeper planes. In the Puranas we have mental representations of the truths about the Gods, but these representations point yet to the real world of the Gods. These Gods have their Ganas, the hierarchical beings.

Then comes the lower universe and with it the Devas and Asuras—the Devas or Gods leading the manifestation towards its goal, and the Asuras or Demons obstructing it. It is their interaction that is described in the Puranas as the battle between the powers of Light and Darkness.

The Devas and Asuras manifest in man to effect a new principle in earth-life. With them come the hierarchical beings associated with them. The Avatar comes to uphold the Dharma, and he has also his associate beings who have their manifestations. There was, for instance, a being behind Buddha. Other great figures have also had such beings. Sometimes something goes wrong behind these figures. Then from the very beginning the hostile forces use the new teaching and there is also persecution and bloodshed. It is not necessarily an Asura who is here at work: there can be what we may call a warrior of the vital world who brings about persecution and bloodshed. There are warriors of the mental world as well as of the vital. There can be supramental warriors too. But they are different. The other warriors seize only aspects of the Truth.



An *amśa*, a portion of a God, may manifest in a man, and the man may develop, but it does not mean that the Gods develop or evolve. The Gods are not evolutionary: they are typical principles of the Divine. The number of these principles is finite, but together with their various assistants in the mental and vital planes the number is almost infinite. The world of the Gods is above what we call the psychic world. The psychic world has its representation on many planes—there is a psychic world in the mental, and in the vital, and even in the physical.

The Ganas of the Gods are partial manifestations of them. The Gods have also their bodyguards, so to speak. There is a great complexity in the manifestation. One can manifest different godheads in the different parts of one's being. But there is the need of a central Shakti supporting them. The external human personality must not be disturbed.

To go back to *amśa*, Vivekananda was of the Shiva-*amśa* type. Ramakrishna had the Vishnu-*amśa* in him and many other elements. Those whose nature leads to bhakti, devotion, are of the Vishnu type. In poets and artists, generally, it is some mental or vital beings that stand behind and use them as mediums. The external man is often nothing compared to these beings. His mind may be a rambling one.

If the story of Arjuna is true, there was the *amśa* of Indra in him. Indra is one of the lesser Gods, and an emanation of him probably got into Arjuna. The Devi-forms, the goddesses, also manifest in some people. The supramental beings come to make a change in the world and not make a noise like the poets and artists.

I did not speak of many of these things before, for then it was dangerous. Now not to speak anything may be dangerous, for I am pulling down the supramental into the physical as much as I can and several strange things may happen. To pull down the supramental means the coming of the supramental Purusha, the supramental Principle, and also supramental beings and personalities. It can be delayed no longer, and I am talking of these things so that your mind may understand when they happen.

From the highest standpoint the supramental descent has been decided and nobody can resist it. From the standpoint of the conditions in which we are working, we have to see the obstacles, take proper account of them in our minds: this standpoint is useful, for it is an advantage to be aware of the difficulties and thus be prepared to deal with them. From a middle standpoint it may be said that the Supramental is coming and one may make the process less smooth or more smooth.

The whole process is simply a Mahakali movement that has knowledge behind it. It is a silent work. Publicity attracts hostile forces. You can do outside work only when it is in you to do so. When you are doing sadhana in the mind you can do it. I wrote the *Arya* at the time of such sadhana. When I came to the vital plane I had to stop all that.

The Power has no particular consideration for the human *ādhār*, instrument. Where there is openness, it enters. It may get shut out again. The very fact of its coming raises hostile forces. The Power may use these forces for its own end in

spite of themselves. There may be much disturbance and disorder at first before things settle down. Some people may even go the wrong way. I have hitherto been trying to keep the Maheshwari aspect behind and the Mahasaraswati (knowledge of details) in front. Mahakali and Mahalakshmi are too big for man, only some people can pull at them with impunity.

There may be an effect on the whole human race, but that is not the sole aim of the manifestation. The descent is on the earth-plane and, just as there is the subhuman, so too there is the superhuman. The human is not the only consideration in the Creation. The effect on humanity depends on what is thrown out and what is kept in; if it spreads and is established in the midst of humanity, there will be a change. At any rate it is intended high above the movement of forces, but within this movement itself no such intention is evident.

In the Puranas there is mention of a wide manifestation when the Avatar comes: the Gods come along with him. In the tradition of Nammalwar you find the same thing.

Krishna's coming down on the earth made possible the realisation that all is Vasudeva, the Personal Divine. The realisation that all is Brahman, the Impersonal Divine, was already there.

Mahakali does not come from the first as the supramental power: she comes mentalised in the early stages. The Asuras also mark out their men, but their success or failure depends upon the prevailing conditions.

T was pulling and pulling at all the four aspects of the Divine Mother. Perhaps it was necessary. His own mother had a dream that her son would be an *amśa* of Vishnu. It was a sign that some superhuman being had marked him out at his birth, as a possible sadhaka, but the being worked under wrong conditions. It was a grand and magnificent being that was trying to manifest in him. For a short time there was a change even in his physical appearance: it was not the old T at all. But the Asura that was also at work sent to him suggestions of pride; egoism took hold of him. His inner being was awake and conscious of the connection with the world of the Gods. The surface being may not know but it must not stand in the way. T had a raw physical mind and a raw vital being, and with his egoism there came a crash.

*(To be continued)*

V. CHIDANANDAM

# THE NEED OF THE TIMES

## A LETTER

LOOKING at the socio-political history of nations I find good points in most systems as well as points that invite abuse and mismanagement. There is no system that by itself ensures wonderful results or has the inherent power to get the right people into the saddle or keep the wrong people from doing mischief. Many anti-capitalistic enthusiasts thought, when Lenin initiated Communism in Russia, that the path towards the millennium was cleared. But, whatever the intrinsic character of Communism, even the partisans of this ideology today, except the most perverse among them, admit that for all the alleviation of the common man's troubles in several respects the long period of Communist supremacy in Russia under Stalin was one of the most hideous in history. Secure a high level of consciousness, a fineness of human stuff—of course, not mere literacy or technical efficiency—and any system will show to advantage. Even autocracy can be a boon if the autocrat is a really fine being and takes power unto himself in order to overrule unenlightened malpractice and to pull upward the bulk of his fellowmen.

By and large, I suppose it is possible to argue that a system such as the Czechs were recently trying to evolve, combining the best of Marxism-Leninism with the best of Western Democracy, would provide the largest field for satisfying results. But even in such a blend of equality and liberty, State-control and individual freedom, matters could go wrong if the wrong sort of men came to the top, as they well might under any conditions. The master-key to an ideal organisation is neither equality nor liberty—the two methods that have so far been tried—but the third component of the great slogan of the French Revolution: fraternity. But there we pass beyond economics and politics and the outwardly conceived social sphere to a far profounder realm. This realm stretches further even than ethical values. We enter the domain of spiritual values. What beckons us is inward development towards some Universal Self that is no mere collective aggregate, no sum of individual interrelations, but a pre-existent reality of a deeper order than the so-called natural. If such a Self is there, with its infinite underlying oneness, it is the paramount initial goal to be reached. If it is not there, all our perfectionist ideals are chimeras and cannot even begin to be realised. For, short of the realisation of this Self, no economic or political or social system will be on the way to succeeding in a manner that can end the possibility of decline and distortion.

Two points here I should like to make. The first is: what I have said does not preclude economic or political or social activity of the ordinary kind. We have to do the best we can according to our lights. But we have also to possess insight enough to know that until the human material is changed from within outward with the help of some Power greater than our own fallible will and necessarily greater than any

mechanical imposition from outside, all changes and revolutions are essentially a shift from tweedledum to tweedledee.

My second point is that, important and indispensable though the experience of the Universal Self is, it can only be a beginning. You must have noticed the phrases I have employed: "initial goal", "begin to be realised", "be on the way to succeeding". The Universal Self liberates one from the individual egoism, the small self-hood, which pervades all our moods and deeds and which renders even our attempts at altruism a subtle and attenuated play of the same limiting and dividing psychology that is bent on self-satisfaction and self-aggrandisement. In consequence of the liberation, one acquires a vast peace, a wide understanding, an immense sympathy, an abolition of clash-consciousness (whose manifestation, I presume, is in one aspect what is termed class-consciousness). An automatic move towards mutuality and harmony would come about: in short, towards a genuine innate fraternity. But the Universal Self is realised by a psychological discipline of separation from the body-sense, the life-sense, even the mind-sense. Without this separation, how can one be liberated? Across the dividing gulf the light of the Universal Self can be reflected in the instruments of nature, and mind, life-force and body itself can by that reflection act in some spirit of true fraternity. But the separation tends to turn one away from nature and the reflected fraternity is never quite secure, nor is it deep enough to resist the return of the ego-movement in the outer being. Hence there is an other-worldly tendency and what Sri Aurobindo has designated "the old fiasco"—the inner being illumined and free, the outer still the tiger and the ape, even though the tiger may not be as ferocious and the ape as mischievous as they usually are.

So, on this particular ground, I would agree with the critics of the old spirituality in any form; for an inward illumination is obtained while the outward nature continues to remain open to ignorance and falsehood and incapacity. The right foundation is laid, but no means discovered to build a true four-square super-structure. Of course, extraordinary achievers of liberation, like Buddha—to take an example on the grand scale—or like Ramana Maharishi—to take an example of a smaller though still splendid character—may gain sufficient clarification and purity and transmitting power in their outward nature to enable it to function in accord with the inward experience in at least a certain sphere. But how many practitioners of the Yoga of Knowledge can be like them? And even they exemplify a superb withdrawal from earth's problems and their eyes are set on the Beyond. All other Yogas or spiritual disciplines also make a Beyond of some sort their objective. A new spirituality, all round life-accepting, world-embracing, modern-minded, matter-conscious, is wanted—and that is what we who follow Sri Aurobindo are endeavouring to work out.

As long as mind stays at its present pressure, life-force at its present vibration, body at its present poise, there is little hope of the authentic millennium. Even the Self I am speaking of will succeed only in preparing man, it cannot transform his active members. On the basis of that Self we have to reach some power where awaits for manifestation the perfect truth of mentality, vitality, physicality. Sri Aurobindo

says that there is such a Power and it is reachable. I who have lived more than half my life under him and under his co-worker, the Mother, feel (and partly know) he is right and that they have attained this Power, though the complete activation of it in the whole of the nature-being has not been yet accomplished. But the work goes on and we have every hope of final success—and then a new world will be born, with a new social order establishing and fulfilling the fundamental truths of all human ideologies in a mode of natural reconciliation of what seem to us conflicts and contradictions among them.

I may add, apropos of a letter from a friend, that just as I cannot swear by current socio-political systems, so too I refrain from pinning my faith on current systems of religion which to the Western man, disillusioned with the former, seem often the sole planks to cling to in an age of weltering uncertainty. My friend has sent me excerpts from Arnold Toynbee's book, *Experiences*, and warmly commended them. Well, they certainly show insight on Toynbee's part: he has put his finger on a deep ineradicable need of historical man, a need that must be answered today as much as in the past, perhaps all the more today when we are hung inescapably between the possibility of a world-wide discordant destruction and the necessity of a world-wide harmonious re-creation. But I think he extrapolates excessively from the past—an error to which the professional historian would be very prone. The words I have used—"world-wide" and "re-creation"—are deliberate: they point to the central situation of our time. All that has happened in the last fifty years—and particularly in the last twenty-five—makes such an extrapolation misconceived, if not impossible. Religion has had its day, just as philosophy has had its day—and just as even science may be said to have done all it had to do *qua* science. We have now to seize the essential spirit of each of these cultural activities and move on to a new way of living and developing. Not religion, not a revival in any form of past illuminations or ecstasies or prophetic dynamisms can truly serve the soul of the modern world. If we try to revive the past there will be a failure again in spite of whatever temporary salvaging there may be: a power from beyond all the inspirations of the centuries gone is required—inspirations religious no less than those that are philosophical or scientific.

The "hippies" may be fumblers and stumblers, but there is a truth behind their restlessness: we have to get rid of their exaggerations and distortions but not lose the essential drive of what is at their back. This drive is the sense that the past is played out—the best of the past no less than the worst—and the feeling that some supernormal life-experience beyond all creeds is to be searched for. This drive, couched in terms of light instead of darkness or, say, mistiness, is to be found in those challenging words of Sri Aurobindo's, from which I have already quoted one expression when touching on spirituality's other-worldly tendency. The words are: "I have no intention of giving my sanction to a new edition of the old fiasco."

K. D. SETHNA

## SRI AUROBINDO'S ACTION

“ALL things shall change in God's transfiguring hour.”

The hour has struck for India's resurgence and what has been promised will now be fulfilled.

Sri Aurobindo has given us the Word. It will be fulfilled.

This is “Sri Aurobindo's Action.”

India today stands at the crossroads of her destiny. After years of slavery and subjection her soul was stirred in her sleep by the subtle and hidden power of Sri Aurobindo's action and she awoke to political freedom on his birthday of the 15th August 1947.

But the awakening did not bring her to consciousness and, if we look at her now, what do we see?

The bonds of servitude have cut deep and what healing there is seems to be only on the surface. A great deal for the well-being was also attempted on the surface. Factories and mills, dams and canals, mechanical giants levelling the land and ploughing the fields, water power and nuclear energy harnessed into service, a great noise and bustle trying to catch up with those of our neighbours who seem to be better off than ourselves and yet, and yet...she is still suffering deeply.

India is floundering in shallows and miseries. She is confused and distraught. Economically, socially and morally she is in dire straits, politically she is in a mess, spiritually she seems to be lost. She is threatened on all sides and her very talk of the Atom Bomb invites physical annihilation. All her attempts seem to lead her nowhere. Why?

Because all the remedies have been applied only to the surface and not to the innermost depths from where alone can rise a new vitality.

It is to this inner being that Sri Aurobindo has spoken and he has shown the way for it to rise to the surface and make India strong and healthy and fit to take her destined place in the comity of nations.

The resurgence of India is necessary for the world and so the first task for India is to recover her true self. To achieve this, the words of Sri Aurobindo have now come to a new phase of action.

25 years after her first stirring to political freedom, India must awake to consciousness and rise to assume her full stature. The 15th August, 1972, the date of Sri Aurobindo's Centenary, must mark the day of a definitive accomplishment of this resurgence.

This is what Sri Aurobindo's Action has to achieve. The time is short, a bare two years; so the Action must be swift and sudden. The force of this Action has already come down and is operating with great intensity. It must be seized and used to the fullest extent.

"Sri Aurobindo's Action" is a society registered at Pondicherry with just this objective: to take Sri Aurobindo's words and messages which relate to the full awakening of India and carry them to the uttermost corners of the land and set them in action throughout the country.

Membership will be open to all who understand and support this aim and who want to contribute to this great mission.

Centres, groups, individuals will be woven into a wide network all over the country for this purpose. Personal tours throughout the country, distribution of pamphlets, films, records, all methods of communication will be used for the widest dissemination of his words and messages in the most effective way. For not only must they reach the people but they must strike with the full content of his Force, so that the people may feel: "This is it. This is what we have been waiting for. Now we have hope. Now we know that our time has come."

For the practical application of Sri Aurobindo's words in the daily life of the people and the nation, what he has shown will guide and assist individuals and groups with the experience and dedicated interest of its members. The people will be led to base their lives and their efforts on the true guidance of their awakened inner selves and not their surface and largely animal natures. It is only in the development of the individuals that the country itself can be developed.

Then shall India rise to the full majesty of her height and the land of the spirit shall emerge out of the darkness in which she has been so long submerged, rise towards the light of tomorrow and take with her the rest of the world into the glorious dawn.

This shall be the result of

"SRI AUROBINDO'S ACTION."

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(For Membership Form, please see the first advertisement page.)

## E. M. FORSTER

### A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

It was August 1954. I was paying my first visit to Cambridge as a Delegate of the School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham, to the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists to which the University of Cambridge was playing host. I was to read a paper on 'Mukti and Salvation'. As is my normal practice, I had not actually written a paper but was going to lecture extempore. The appointed day arrived and when I entered the lecture hall, I found that Dr. W. Norman Brown, the famous American Indologist, was my Chairman and that contrary to my expectation there was also a large and distinguished audience including Professor (later Sir) H. W. Bailey, the then Professor of Sanskrit, University of Cambridge, Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, now National Professor of Humanities and President of the International Phonetics Association, Dr. Betty Heimann, the well-known Jewish writer on Indian philosophy and religion and former Professor of Philosophy, University of Colombo, Dr. A. C. Bouquet, Lecturer in Comparative Religion, University of Cambridge, and many other scholars of repute. I delivered my piece and there followed a fairly long exchange of questions and answers. During the discussion I noticed even in the midst of that eminent company a gentleman of great distinction sitting at the end of the hall with an interested yet detached expression on his serene face. He was simply but neatly dressed and wore a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. He seemed very alert and to take in all that was going on, the debate and the exchange of repartees, but there was a calm and gentleness about him which impressed me very much. At the end of the meeting he rose slowly and left the room, alone. Somehow he left a mark on my mind and I could not forget him; something within me told me that he must be someone quite distinguished.

Quite distinguished! It was E. M. Forster, one of the greatest among the contemporary novelists. How did I discover his identity? Well, the day after my lecture I met Mr. Ian Stephens, a Fellow of King's College and formerly editor of the *Statesman*, the leading English daily newspaper in India. The meeting took place in front of King's where Sri Aurobindo had been an undergraduate and a scholar. "I say, Basu," he said, "it seems you were a great success yesterday." "How do you know, Sir?" I asked him; "were you there?" "No, I wasn't, and I'm sorry," he replied, "but you won't guess who told me..." "No, I won't," I interjected, "because I hardly knew anybody there." Mr. Stephens's face wore an expression of puckish humour but it was also at the same time serious. "Well, what do you know," he said with a touch of pride in his face, "no less a person than E. M. Forster is my informant. Apart from the lecture itself he also liked the way you dealt with the questions. I really could not believe my ears. It was such a pleasant surprise and such an encouragement. How very generous of a man of Mr. Forster's calibre to speak well of a lecture given by a young and unknown Indian!"



"Was he sitting at the end of the hall?" I asked; "I noticed someone who looked very distinguished." "Yes, you're right, that was Forster. Well, I must push on. Keep up the good work!" said Stephens as he sauntered away on his long legs. For a few minutes I was a bit confused and could not decide whether I should seek out Mr. Forster and pay him my respects. But I decided against it, because I felt it would not be in keeping with British custom and also because I did not know whether he would like it. When I returned to Durham, Sir James Duff, the then Vice Chancellor of the University, saw me at a meeting, called me aside and spoke very kindly of my Cambridge lecture. He and Mr. Stephens were great friends and the latter had written about it.

It was not till March 1957 that I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Forster personally. I was at Cambridge again, invited by the University to give four lectures. I was staying at King's as a guest of Mr. Stephens. On the first night of my stay on this occasion, I was invited to dine at the High Table with the Provost, the Fellows and the other members of the staff of King's, and I found myself seated beside Mr. Forster. I am sure it was arranged by Mr. Stephens so that I could meet the great writer and talk to him. I found him an extremely interested conversationalist, keen to listen to what his companion had to say, only occasionally asking a question for further information and clarification of what had been said. Of course I did not do all the talking myself but asked my distinguished table-companion whether he was writing anything and about his experiences in India. He briefly spoke of his life in Dewas of which his *Hill of Devi* is a brilliantly picturesque and humane description.

Next morning I was settling down in the shade of a giant oak in the Fellows' garden to dictate a short article on the Hindu idea of the after-life, as an invited contribution to a series on "The Mystery of the Life Hereafter" which the *Sunday Times* (London) was then publishing. I saw Forster at a short distance away. As our eyes met he walked up to me and asked smilingly: "Are you writing your masterpiece?" "Well, this is journalism. I've to ...." "I know, Stephens has told me," he said softly. "Have you read Russell's article?" (Bertrand Russell was also a contributor to the series.) "Yes, I liked it very much, it was very well written." He slowly walked away leaving me to my meditations on the mystery of the life hereafter.

When the article came out next week, Forster read it and made favourable comments on it to common friends at Cambridge. This also spoke of his kind appreciation and encouragement and of his interest in things connected with India.

Two days later I invited him to have luncheon with me and he readily accepted. He asked me many questions about India, especially regarding education and the youth. He also inquired about contemporary fiction in India and whether I thought there were really any creative writers after Tagore and Sarat Chatterji. It was a pleasant occasion and I learned a great deal about the man and his outlook on life.

The next time I met Forster was on the first night that a dramatic version of his *A Passage to India* was presented in London. It was dramatised by Srimati Shanta

Rama Rau, the well-known Indian writer. The play was a great success and its presentation and performance were highly appreciated by the audience. At the end of the play the author was called to the stage. This is always a custom on an opening night but Forster was so modest that he had to be persuaded to make an appearance. When he did go on the stage he praised Srimati Rau profusely as if all credit had been due to her and none to him.

I sent Forster my cordial greetings and respects, when he completed eighty years. He replied in his own hand, neat and tidy like himself, and was kind enough to say that he looked forward to seeing me at Cambridge on my next visit there. I think it was about six months later that I went to Cambridge and had tea with him in the elegant and beautiful Combination Room. I could not spend much time with him on this occasion but he did very kindly ask me about my work in Durham and whether I had paid a visit to India recently.

The last time I met him was just over two and a half years ago, again in the Combination Room, where in spite of his advanced age he had come to have his afternoon tea and was standing in the queue for his turn. I went up to him and asked him to take a seat and let me bring him his tea. The perfect gentleman that he was, he thankfully accepted my offer but not without saying that it was not really necessary. I don't think that we discussed anything serious during the brief time I was with him. But I took away with me the indelible impression of a man infinitely gentle, kind and humane, modest and truly civilised.

Forster was what I would call a sattwic man. He was an intellectual in the right sense of the term, that is to say, he lived from the refined *buddhi* and had his emotions under perfect control. His personality was a shining example of refinement, balance, order and scrupulousness. In this respect he had something of the best of the ancient Greek character in him. System, proportion, rationalising of instinct and impulse, gentleness, refinement, a cultivated character and taste: this was Forster. Not that he did not feel intensely. He was very deeply moved by all kinds of injustice and man's inhumanity to man. And these qualities are eminently evident in his novels, especially *Howard's End* and *A Passage to India*. And his general understanding of and sympathy for India, her traditions and values are also obvious.

Forster was a great humanist who believed that man was capable of being reasonable, tolerant and charitable. Whether he was a spiritual man or at least believed in spiritual realities and values cannot be easily gathered from his writings. But I am glad to put on record one very significant thing he told me. I asked him very humbly and hesitatingly: "Sir, the kind of man that you seem to imply is an ideal person. Do you think that there is something in man which already has these near-spiritual qualities inherent in it?" "I don't know," he said very softly, almost inaudibly, "if you mean something like a spiritual soul. But I suppose it must be there. There seems to be a penumbra of something more than human surrounding man."

## KAVI CHAKRAVARTI KAMBAN

### CAUSERIES ON TAMIL NAD'S GREATEST POET

*(Continued from the issue of June)*

#### XV

##### THE REDEEMING FEET

RAMA, Lakshmana and Sita leave the Chitrakuta hill and go to the forest called Dandakaranya. On the way they encounter a monstrous giant called Virada, who threatens to swallow the two Princes. Rama and Lakshmana cut off both his hands. Then Lakshmana digs a deep pit into which Rama kicks the mutilated giant. At the touch of Rama's feet, the giant recovers his former form and recounts how he had been Tumburu, a musician in the court of Indra, and how Indra had punished him for his lust by cursing him to become a demon and recover his old form at the touch of Rama's feet. Recalling this curse and his redemption from it, Virada sings some beautiful hymns in praise of Rama's grace:

If these are thy feet,  
    which the scriptures expound  
    and which spread throughout the Universe,  
how vast and lovely  
    must be thy total form!  
If thou shouldst indwell  
    in the ceaselessly clamorous ocean  
    and in the other Elements,  
    which are at loggerheads with one another,  
how could the warring Elements manage  
    to bear thy load?

##### THE LAW OF RECIPROCITY

God resides not only in inanimate Nature but also in the life and consciousness of all animate beings. But it is a mystery that these beings know Him not. The law of reciprocity does not seem to govern the relationship between the Maker and the made.

There's no calf  
    which knows not her mother  
and the mother-cow  
    knows her calf as well;

Oh! Lord,  
 thou art the Mother of the Universe  
 and thou knowest thy children,  
 everyone of them,  
 but, alas! how comes it about  
 thy children know thee not!  
 What magic Ignorance blinds their eyes?  
 Tell me, thou  
 that canst come without coming.

God lives in the hearts of all, the ignorant and the wise. But He is perceived only when divine wisdom dawns upon the ignorant. It cannot be said that He comes in only at the moment of perception. He is already in the heart even before He is perceived. It is this truth that the Poet presents in a profoundly paradoxical form by making Virada say, "Thou, who canst come without coming." Objective presence of God, according to the Poet, precedes the subjective perception thereof.

#### THE COSMIC BACKGROUND

After the departure of Virada, the trio move towards the Ashram of the great sage, Sarapangar. At the threshold of the Ashram, Rama sees the insignia of Indra, the King of the Celestials, and guessing that Indra is on a visit to Sarapangar Rama asks Sita and Lakshmana to stay behind and goes into the Ashram to find out if Indra is inside. In the Ramayana of Valmiki, as soon as Indra sights Rama, he hurriedly leaves the Ashram, without meeting Rama lest the meeting should delay the fulfilment of Rama's mission. But Kampan makes Indra meet Rama in order that he might express his gratitude to the Lord for having condescended, at the instance of the Celestials, to take birth as Man for the purpose of destroying the forces of Evil. The meeting thus contrived gives the Poet an opportunity to explain earthly events against a cosmic background and thereby widen the earth-bound perspective of Man.

Indra sings the praise of Rama:

"Thou art the Light  
 that penetrates and stains everything  
 and yet remains unstained;  
 Thou art the Kinsman of those  
 that cast aside Ego's attachments;  
 Thou art the ocean of all that Infinite Grace,  
 which cannot be grasped,  
 nor crossed,

Thou art the consciousness behind  
 the methodical seeking of the Vedas

and behind the awareness resulting from it.  
 Harassed by the Enemy,  
     we sought refuge at thy feet  
     and implored thee;  
 and in fulfilment of the boon thou gavest,  
     thou hast arrived, Oh, Lord!  
 Imagine thy twin lotus feet  
     now planted on the Earth!

#### BEARING THE CROSS

Indra is moved by God's compassion for his devotees, by His renouncing of his multi-dimensional world and his choosing to imprison Himself in Time and Space, subjecting Himself to human weal and human woe—just for the redemption of Man. He continues his hallelujah:

There's none,  
     who's out of touch with thy God-stuff,  
 and none,  
     who's fully in touch with it;  
 It's neither Light nor Darkness,  
     neither Above nor Below;  
 It's not without ageing  
     nor does it age;  
 It has neither beginning, middle nor end,  
     neither Afore nor After:  
 Lord! if such be the condition of thy Being,  
     who could blame thee,  
     if thou wouldst refuse to redeem us  
     by coming upon the Earth,  
     bearing the burden of a bow  
     and treading the ground  
         with thy crimson feet  
         reddening with pain?  
 Oh, the One that sleeps  
     in the black sea of Infinity,  
     what recompense dost thou get  
     for redeeming us from sorrow?

#### MEASURING INFINITY

In the tenderness of his devotion Indra fabricates a fantastically huge cup of

imagination in order to measure Infinity, but he realizes that the cup is infinitely inadequate for the purpose. He says:

Let Brahma, the Creator of the worlds,  
     mould out of the stuff of all the planets  
     an immense cup of measurement,  
 and standing agile,  
     let him measure thee for aeons and aeons.  
 Thy immeasurable grace would still remain  
     undiminished and unmeasured.  
 With the Earth as the Bowl,  
     the Ocean as the Curd  
     and Mount Meru as the Churner,  
 thou hast churned the ocean  
     with thy lotus hands aching  
     and given us immortalizing nectar.  
 How, then, can the Rakshas help  
     becoming thy slaves?

*(To be continued)*

S. MAHARAJAN

## THE STATUE

I will carve you a face  
     Out of time and weeping,  
 But all the sorrow of the world  
     will not pay for it.  
 My face is the Image  
     man sees when all else dies  
 And out of it is born anew  
     the Mother of the worlds.  
 See, it is sculptured out of living  
     in the dim ghettos of the earth  
 And lives on Itself, a New Birth  
     in the long vistas of thought—  
 its white marble features  
     silent and serene,  
 framed in the green  
     Garden of Eternity.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

# ON "CORRESPONDENCE" WITH SRI AUROBINDO

## A TALK TO STUDENTS

LAST week I read to you the life story of a remarkable Yogi, which all of you enjoyed and cherished—Mahatma Krishnashram's story. It seems that our photographer Vidyavrata has met this Yogi and that much of the story is true. He has a lady disciple (Bhagvat Sarup), he doesn't talk with visitors and, to the chagrin of Vidyavrata, doesn't let himself be photographed! He was a witness to the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857; so you can calculate his age!

Now that we're in this mood of story-telling and you children like nothing better, I intend to serve up to you another story, albeit with a little sense of guilt for pushing the Master away from our midst by such a digression; but he won't mind for he has a sense of humour. The story is about a half-baked sadhak, like the bun you sometimes receive in the dining room, unshapely, charred, crusty (like this sadhak's own physical crust which, Sri Aurobindo has said, is remarkable) but with some soft stuff in the centre. He is a very ordinary person, as I've said, like anyone of you. He doesn't live in close oneness with Nature, he is fond of good dress, laughs, sometimes weeps, eats, sleeps, has a good taste, a sense of humour, enjoys good food and tea. When invited by generous ladies, he is ready to taste their *rasagullas* and *pantuas*—but rarely, rarely comes that phantom of delight! He also enjoys good company, likes sweet faces, sudden graces. He has a bit of a poet in him, lifts his eyes to the stars at night and saying Amen goes to bed.

Now you see that he's like anyone of you. "Then why bother us with his story?" you may ask. But I believe that one's life is very interesting if one can look at it with some detachment; it even appears quite comic, especially when this sadhak, like M. Seguin's chèvre, cries out in temptation "Il faut du large", or, when "magic case-ments" are "opening on the foam of perilous seas", then the Voice of the Master can be heard from behind the rocks: "Behave, behave, don't make a fool of yourself. Beware!"

Well, now I'll tell you about the Master and his asinine disciple. Yes, he has hurled many such affectionate epithets at him—"Don't be an ass, a fool, a blockhead," etc. It'll be a little sentimental and personal but as we have grown into a close and intimate circle, meeting as we have been for three years within the nimbus of the Master's presence, the sentimentality and personality will be permitted.

Correspondence, Correspondence, Correspondence!—this book you see in my hand, second edition just come out, has made history. The younger generation will still take time to appreciate it, but friends here who have a background of culture and experience look at it more lovingly. An American friend wrote to me after reading the *Correspondence*, "I have been to the Ashram twice and stayed for sometime. How is it that I didn't come to know you?" I wrote back: "I am known only by my Correspondence, I carry no other sign of recognition."

This is the one book that has made me what I am now, and promises what I want to be in this or other lives. It runs to about 356 pages and at least 350, leaving out the preface, are letters written to one person. Except another sadhak, nobody else has received so many letters. It started in 1934, first in a meagre and matter-of-fact manner and later went on in full swing and ran into 350 pages in a few years. But, mind you, not from a sense of pride do I say this, but rather from utter shame—though I used to walk in the air when I received the letters, and life was a song—it's still a song, but a sad one, I am really ashamed of having taken so much of his precious time asking questions sometimes silly, sometimes superfluous when most of the answers could be found in his works: in a human way you can see how much time has been wasted in satisfying one single person's curiosity! But on the other hand it was in humouring him out of constant depression and all for his soul's development, as if that was the writer's sole responsibility!

The book is in the form of questions and answers, and gives no idea of what and how much I used to write. The questions ran to the length of 8 or 10 pages and he used to read all that at night. The only consolation I have for these abundant youthful effusions is that he found my letters interesting (but "interesting" has many meanings!). "I don't mind your correspondence. It is a relief. But when people write four letters a day in small hand running to some ten pages without a gap anywhere and one gets twenty letters in the afternoon and forty at night (of course, not all like that, but still!) it becomes a little too, too...." But sometimes he remarked—a bit piqued perhaps?—"your soul-stirring communications!"

When the correspondence was suspended due to too much work or the Darshan, I was naturally dejected and used to lament. He made an exception for me and, to avoid others' grudging objections, taught me an innocent divine trick—to hide my private book under the cover of the medical report book. These are his very words: "Correspondence suspended till after 21st Feb. [1935] and resumable only on notice. But under cover of your medical cloak, you can carry on. Only mum about it! otherwise, people might get ideas and give you a headache." I whispered it to one or two persons, and as nothing in this world remains a secret—this too became a universal secret! There used to be indignant protests from other devotees against my blasphemies. Why does this fellow, who doesn't even accept Sri Aurobindo as an Avatar, get still so much favour and leniency from him? They used to fret and couldn't understand why I had such a shower of grace and why Sri Aurobindo treated me like the Prodigal Son. I didn't care a fig. My caravan was going on and I didn't bother if there was barking behind it! On another occasion, in January '35, when I volunteered to stop my correspondence for what reason I don't remember now, he wrote: "Not necessary to stop. Unless you are afraid of word punctures in the skull. My indignations and oburgations are jocular and not meant to burn or bite." Lastly in 1936, he returned my notebook almost with an apologetic tone for his forced inability to answer my queries, saying, "Sorry, but your luck is not brilliant. Had a whole night—that is after 3, no work—was ready to write. Light went off in my rooms only, mark—



tried candle power, no go. The age of candles is evidently over. So 'requests, beseeches, entreats' were all in vain. Not my fault. Blame Fate. However, I had a delightful time, 3 hours of undisturbed concentration on my real work—a luxury denied to me for ages. Don't tear your hair. Will be done another day with luck." Reading the letter, one didn't know whether to weep or to smile or do both like Lamb's "chimney sweep" seeing Lamb slip and fall down in the street.

You will see from the content what freedom has he not given me! Once he said: "I am trying to intellectualise you"—but he found that I had a wooden head. But it is not so much the content that is important, though all my knowledge of Spirit and Matter doesn't go farther than this book. He has given me more than intellectuality, something else, something precious which no words can describe. It is the tone, the attitude in which he wrote all this, that is the most important thing for me, for all of you here and others outside, for the tone was a revelation to all those who had never seen Sri Aurobindo in this mood.

Some people ask how I used to stand in front of him for Darshan. Didn't my knees tremble? "We can't even look straight at him who is so grave, solemn, austere, with hardly a smile on his face," they said. But I forgot everything when I bowed at his feet, he seemed so gracious! Would I tremble when he had never even used a harsh word? When had he not forgiven me?

What tenderness, indulgence, encouragement, sympathy, the divine patience and above all his sun-like humour, to chase away my Man of Sorrows! He rescued me from the slough of despond by his sparkling wit and humour. He sought every little occasion to make me laugh and how all of us laughed and laughed over even a small exclamation mark, an eloquent interrogation, or some tiny oversight of mine! For instance, when I wrote Ambala, instead of Ambalal, he assailed me with "I say, Ambala is the name of a place!" Or when I had a cold, he wrote "What a pussy cat of a nose!" Instances are galore from the serious to the comic, Shakespeare, Molière, even Rabelais were locked together. Once in a dream I saw a beautiful woman looking at me with wistful, plaintive eyes. When I asked him naively what it could at all mean, he replied "...plaintively asking, 'Will you, Won't you, Will you?'" When it comes, you have to say, 'Get thee behind me, plaintive Satan.' Reading this reply, Dilip roared with a Rabelaisian laughter and said, "I can never imagine that a guru can make such a joke with his disciple! O Nirod, we are so lucky in having such a Guru!" He seemed to have been waiting to pour out all his pent-up humour to someone and found me an excellent butt! On the other hand, how he has tried to widen my narrow medico-material outlook on things by supralogical beating, so that ultimately my outlook became an inlook!

Intellectually, I was not poorly rewarded, either. Whatever knowledge of spirituality, philosophy, literature, etc., I've gained is mainly from this correspondence. I knew that there is not only science but super-science too. How I fought with him against Homoeopathy, then, but now I can confirm its value while my medical colleagues cast a Voltairean sneer at it. And how I fought with him for giving his own

example in proof of a point, but to no avail. He said, "I'll keep on beating you and bantering you, till you accept." From the literary point of view also, the gain was immense. Often new words, new turns of phrases, superb style, literary allusions, anecdotes, above all keen humour developed in my medical brain-box a sense of *rasa* that later burst out into literature. Yet "Correspondence" is only one side of the story. What about the enormous trouble he took over making me a poet, in Bengali as well as in English? Not by simply sending Force, but by actually teaching me metre, correcting the poems, giving suggestions, explanations, etc., etc. And if I was not satisfied with the results of my "creations", and almost fell flat, how often with god-like patience he raised me up and set me on the poetic pilgrimage! That Correspondence, if and when published, will bear further testimony to the heavenly gold he lavished on this earthly receptacle. I don't know if any single average person has received such bounty from the Divine in the midst of his thousand cosmic activities.

There is a kindness and sweetness that can crush. His unaccountable divine largesse has crushed and reshaped me his eternal servant, however unworthy! But he was not in want of servants! Why then on quite an average human being did he shower a pearled rain of love and blessings? Was it for some previous *punya*? That could never be, I could not have merited so much! Was I an impenitent sinner (like Jagai and Madhai) in a past life or else am I a high Yogi in prospect? I have been neither, that much common sense God has given me to know! Why then, I used to ask myself, such unlimited bounty to an ordinary person like myself? Baffled, I put to him this question only to get the cryptic reply, "Find out for yourself." And I've tried to find, to search, seek and discover—I could not find. I do not know that in this life or others to come, I will. It is still a mystery but the slow, undeniable effect has wrought a sea-change. Whatever I am today, and hope to be in other lives, is due largely to these letters. They always remind me of his grace and compassion and has made me for life or for death an eternal servant of the Lord.

I came here I don't know why. I didn't have any spiritual seeking; yet I was lured by him and was caught in his 'luminous net.' Now whenever there is a black cloud or my feet want to go astray, he holds me back. Whenever unwholesome thoughts or movements sway me, this Correspondence reminds me how much he has done for me and it keeps me steady. This is the eternal debt I owe him. And I can swear that I will be here till my last breath, and that breath should be as pure as possible. This also I am able to assert on the strength of the promise he graciously accorded to me when, like the clerk of our College to the Principal, I wrote to him, "Cut me or beat me, Sir, but don't leave me." He simply wrote back, "Never! but beat a lot." Unexpected, short, the answer came with the force of a mantra to the question humorously asked and thrilled my whole being and I actually felt like dancing. However, to be doubly sure, I wrote next day, "Is everything above board?" His reassuring voice echoed "Everything above board!" Ah, what a solace and what a solid support it has been through many ups and downs of this chequered pilgrimage! I know that I cannot repay even a tiny fraction of what he has done and is still doing. Human kindness

can be repaid, ladies and gentlemen, but you *can't* pay back the Divine Grace—the Divine who gives without measure, without thought.

He left no stone unturned to bring out my soul to the Light. His external manner was the reflex of the inner way of his working (and in his working was also hers, the Mother's). He began by trying to make me a poet and he succeeded—though not all at once: my initial attempts in Bengali as well as in English would have put off any heroic heart and several friends advised me to turn my love elsewhere but he persisted. He had to do lots of corrections, with many marginal notes; finally he succeeded—he said, “The poet is born! What about the yogi?”.

Since the Lord has done so much for me, I should serve him as best I can, and do whatever he has prepared me for. To sing of him to you and to others, however awkwardly, like Goldsmith playing with his tawdry flute across the continent, more to please myself than to please others is my self-chosen job. The rare opportunity he gave me to serve him personally in my little way (“Nirod is not a doctor, he has come to serve me,” he said. Alas, how poor and petty was the service!) reminds me always of this other correspondence about which I shall speak to you another day. Meanwhile to be true to him in every manner is my constant aspiration and spiritual endeavour.

NIRODBARAN

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## THIS HAND

THIS hand, small hungerer for infinities,  
 Craving the whole future of earth's flowers, outstretching  
 Five fingers to the million-lustred sun,  
 Praying that invisible breasts of goddesses  
 Shape it to a dream that wings beyond all deeds—  
 This hand is ever empty, ever open  
 Lest there be an end to the mystery in life's heart,  
 The beating of a rhythm without a name,  
 Call of a deep that shakes the silent stars.

10.6.1970

AMAL KIRAN

# EYE EDUCATION

*(Continued from the issue of June)*

## EYE HYGIENE

ACCORDING to the accepted ideas of eye hygiene it is important to protect the eyes from a great variety of influences which are often very difficult to avoid, and when people are under these influences they are thought to be ruining their eyes. Bright lights, artificial lights, dim lights, sudden fluctuations of light, fine print, reading in moving vehicles, reading lying down, etc., have long been considered "bad for the eyes".

These ideas are diametrically opposed to the truth. When the eyes are properly used, vision under adverse conditions becomes an actual benefit, because a greater degree of relaxation is required to see under such conditions than under more favourable ones.

It is true that the conditions in question may at first cause discomfort, even to persons with normal vision; but a careful study of the facts has demonstrated that only persons with imperfect sight can seriously suffer from them, and, if such persons practise central fixation, seeing best at one point and constantly changing the point, they quickly become accustomed to them and profit from them. Hence persons of defective eyesight ought to be educated to use the eyes properly with gentle blinking under adverse conditions and the old notions of eye hygiene may be disregarded to develop greater efficiency.

1. Expose the eyes to the sun for a few seconds daily to make the eyes strong.
2. Go to the movies to accustom yourself to sudden fluctuations of light. This will prove very useful.
3. Reading in a bright light and a dim light alternately, or going from a dark room to a well-lighted room, and *vice versa* are a great help.
4. Reading fine print daily is extremely beneficial.
5. Reading in moving vehicles helps in improving the sight.
6. Reading in a lying posture is very delightful. Anyone who can read lying down without discomfort is not likely to have any difficulty in reading under ordinary conditions.

The fact is that vision under difficult conditions is a good mental training. The mind may be disturbed at first by the unfavourable environment; but after it has become accustomed to such environments, the mental control and the eyesight are both improved.

*(To be continued)*

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

THE SCHOOL FOR PERFECT EYE SIGHT

## AUROVILLE AND EDUCATION

*(This material, consisting of three parts, is compiled from the following books of Sri Aurobindo · The Life Divine, The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self Determination and The Foundations of Indian Culture. There are also excerpts from the Mother's writings—her messages to the students and the teachers of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, as well as other works of hers apropos of education and Auroville, including the Auroville Charter. These excerpts are either woven together with the passages from Sri Aurobindo or stand in a body on their own. Some introductory or connective sentences have been added here and there by the compiler to make the whole a running text appropriate to the theme.)*

### COMPILER'S INTRODUCTION

BASICALLY, we may say, "Auroville is Education"; for, the educational future of the world is bound up with this growing City of Dawn where a new consciousness is to be variously "educated". But, for convenience's sake, we have three sections in the material compiled here. A paper on Auroville and its *raison d'être* precedes that on Auroville University, and one on Education and Research in Auroville succeeds it.

The first paper shows how Auroville with its ideology and the background of cultural pavilions of all nations of the world offers the right and unique conditions for a free search after the Truth and hence serves as a necessary basis for the fulfilment of the aims and objectives of the kind of university envisaged in the second paper.

This paper on Auroville University indicates its lines of researches, the vision behind them and the programme; its ideals and aspirations; its aims and objectives; its own unique contribution and its necessity for humanity. It is an attempt to sketch in brief the crisis of our age, the basic issue, the proposed solutions, the reason of their failures to end war and revolutions and to bring about peace, order and unity by systems of international law and control of armaments, education, ideal of brotherhood, religion, etc.; the true solution of all problems and the unique role of Auroville University, which to state very briefly—adapting some words of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's—is as follows :

A perfected world cannot be created or composed by men who are themselves imperfect. The conditions under which men live are the results of their state of consciousness. ("Wars are made in the minds of men and it is therefore in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." We go a step further and call for a change of consciousness which alone, we believe, can transform not only the mind, but all the other members of one's being, including the body itself.) To seek

to change conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera. For man is not a machine and cannot be changed by any machinery of laws, social, political, economic, religious, or moral. However, a change of consciousness can only be brought about by a conscious evolutionary process and an attempt at self-finding, self-perfection and self-transformation.

To be or to transcend and become something or to bring something high and noble into our being is the whole labour of the Force of Nature. Knowledge, thought, action, whether social, political, religious, ethical, economic or utilitarian cannot be the essence or object of life. They are activities of the powers of being or the powers of becoming, the dynamis of the Spirit and its means of discovering what it seeks to be. To be and to be fully is Nature's intention and the necessity in Man. To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight being and to live in its integrated completeness is the perfect living. To be fully is to of be universally, to be one with all .

All this implies that the function of the university in Auroville will not stop with providing conditions and facilities for the development of all the powers of one's being through the study of arts, humanities and sciences and their researches, which are a necessary part of the disciplines of university education. Through them all and above all, the true function of this university will be to bring forth from the inner potentialities of its students a new creation, the creation of a divine race.

The distinguishing feature of Auroville University will therefore be not only the researches into all that was and even all that exists and their synthesis—synthesis of all knowledge; synthesis of all aspects of the Truth; synthesis of all ideologies; synthesis of all realisations of the Past, Present and Future; synthesis of all cultures; synthesis of all nations, paving a way for the realisation of human unity in diversity, peace, development and progress in all parts of the world; a bridge between Matter and Spirit or Science and Spirituality; a bridge between man's external realisations and his highest aspirations, etc. The unique contribution of Auroville University will be a new creation with a new culture that will be integral and universal, thus changing the whole life of the earth-consciousness and bringing about a new world order.

The aim of Auroville University will be always to move forward ceaselessly towards greater and greater perfection by an endless education, constant progress and a youth that never ages.

We are confident that Auroville will provide the right and necessary conditions to make a full and free enquiry into the glorious future of the human race by a rich and vast synthesis of all our gains on the material and spiritual planes which will fulfil the highest and most noble aspirations of humanity everywhere.

## I

**AUROVILLE : ITS RAISON D'ÊTRE**

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man's ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and diviner spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being, but it is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggressive expansion of the collective ego.

Science has put at his disposal many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken

up by a creative harmonising light of the spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life. Man has harmonised life in the past by organised ideation and limitation; he has created societies based on fixed ideas or fixed customs, a fixed cultural system or an organic life-system, each with its own order; the throwing of all these into the melting-pot of a more and more intermingling life and a pouring in of ever new ideas and motives and facts and possibilities call for a new, a greater consciousness to meet and master the increasing potentialities of existence and harmonise them.

Reason and Science can only help by standardising, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanised unity of material life. A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life. A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being is the only truth of life that can successfully replace the imperfect mental constructions of the past which were a combination of association and regulated conflict, an accommodation of egos and interests grouped or dovetailed into each other to form a society, a consolidation by common general life-motives, a unification by need and the pressure of struggle with outside forces. It is such a change and such a re-shaping of life for which humanity is blindly beginning to seek, now more and more with a sense that its very existence depends upon finding the way. The evolution of mind working upon life has developed an organisation of the activity of mind and use of Matter which can no longer be supported by human capacity without an inner change. An accommodation of the egocentric human individuality separative even in association, to a system of living which demands unity, perfect mutuality, harmony, is imperative. But because the burden which is being laid on mankind is too great for the present littleness of the human personality and its petty mind and small life-instincts, because it cannot operate the needed change, because it is using this new apparatus and organisation to serve the old infraspirtual and infrarational life-self of humanity, the destiny of the race seems to be heading dangerously, as if impatiently and in spite of itself, under the drive of the vital ego seized by colossal forces which are on the same scale as the huge mechanical organisation of life and scientific knowledge which it has evolved, a scale too large for its reason and will to handle, into a prolonged confusion and perilous crisis and darkness of violent shifting incertitude. Even if this turns out to be a passing phase or appearance and a tolerable structural accommodation is found which will enable mankind to proceed less catastrophically on its uncertain journey, this can only be a respite. For the problem is fundamental and in putting it evolutionary Nature in man is confronting herself with a critical choice which must one day be solved in the true sense if the race is to arrive or even to survive. The evolutionary nîsus is pushing towards a development of the cosmic Force in terrestrial life which needs a larger mental and vital being to support it, a wider mind, a greater wider more conscious unanimsed Life-Soul, Anima, and that again needs an unveiling of the supporting Soul and spiritual Self within to maintain it.

A rational and scientific formula of the vitalistic and materialistic human being and



his life, a search for a perfected economic society and the democratic cultus of the average man are all that the modern mind presents us in this crisis as a light for its solution. Whatever the truth supporting these ideas, this is clearly not enough *to meet the need of a humanity which is missioned to evolve beyond itself* or, at any rate, if it is to live, must evolve far beyond anything that it at present is. A life-instinct in the race and in the average man himself has felt the inadequacy and has been driving towards a reversal of values or a discovery of new values and a transfer of life to a new foundation. This has taken the form of an attempt to find a simple and ready-made basis of unity, mutuality, harmony for the common life, to enforce it by a suppression of the competitive clash of egos and so to arrive at a life of identity for the community in place of a life of difference. But to realise these desirable ends the means adopted have been the forcible and successful materialisation of a few restricted ideas or slogans enthroned to the exclusion of all other thought, the suppression of the mind of the individual, a mechanised compression of the elements of life, a mechanised unity and drive of the life-force, a coercion of man by the State, the substitution of the communal for the individual ego. The communal ego is idealised as the soul of the nation, the race, the community; but this is a colossal and may turn out to be a fatal error. A forced and imposed unanimity of mind, life, action raised to their highest tension under the drive of something which is thought to be greater, the collective soul, the collective life, is the formula found. But this obscure collective being is not the soul or self of the community; it is a life-force that rises from the subconscious and, if denied the light of guidance by the reason, can be driven only by dark massive forces which are powerful but dangerous for the race because they are alien to the conscious evolution of which man is the trustee and bearer. It is not in this direction that evolutionary Nature has pointed mankind; this is a reversion towards something that she had left behind her.

Another solution that is attempted reposes still on the materialistic reason and a unified organisation of the economic life of the race; but the method that is being employed is the same, a forced impression and imposed unanimity of mind and life and a mechanical organisation of the communal existence. A unanimity of this kind can only be maintained by a compression of all freedom of thought and life, and that must bring about either the efficient stability of a termite civilisation or a drying up of the springs of life and a swift or slow decadence. *It is through the growth of consciousness that the collective soul and its life can become aware of itself and develop*; the free play of mind and life is essential for the growth of consciousness; for mind and life are the soul's only instrumentation until a higher instrumentation develops; they must not be inhibited in their action or rendered rigid, unplastic and unprogressive. The difficulties or disorders engendered by the growth of the individual mind and life cannot be healthily removed by the suppression of the individual; *the true cure can only be achieved by his progression to a greater consciousness in which he is fulfilled and perfected*.

An alternative solution is the development of an enlightened reason and will of the

normal man consenting to a new socialised life in which he will subordinate his ego for the sake of the right arrangement of the life of the community. If we inquire how this radical change is to be brought about, two agencies seem to be suggested, the agency of a greater and better mental knowledge, right ideas, right information, right training of the social and civic individual and the agency of a new social machinery which will solve everything by the magic of the social machine cutting humanity into a better pattern. But it has not been found in experience, whatever might have once been hoped, that education and intellectual training by itself can change man; it only provides the human individual and collective ego with better information and a more efficient machinery for its self-affirmation, but leaves it the same unchanged human ego. Nor can human mind and life be cut into perfection,—even into what is thought to be perfection, a constructed substitute,—by any kind of social machinery; matter can be so cut, thought can be so cut, but in our human existence matter and thought are only instruments for the soul and the life-force. Machinery cannot form the soul and life-force into standardised shapes; it can at best coerce them, make soul and mind inert and stationary and regulate the life's outward action; but if this is to be effectively done, coercion and compression of the mind and life are indispensable and that again spells either unprogressive stability or decadence. The reasoning mind with its logical practicality has no other way of getting the better of Nature's ambiguous and complex movements than a regulation and mechanisation of mind and life. If that is done, the soul of humanity will either have to recover its freedom and growth by a revolt and a destruction of the machine into whose grip it has been cast or escape by a withdrawal into itself and rejection of life. *Man's true way out is to discover his soul and its self-force and instrumentation* and replace by it both the mechanisation of mind and the ignorance and disorder of life-nature. But there would be little room and freedom for such a movement of self-discovery and self-effectuation in a closely regulated and mechanised social existence.

There is the possibility that in the swing back from a mechanistic idea of life and society the human mind may seek refuge in a return to the religious idea and a society governed or sanctioned by religion. But organised religion, though it can provide a means of inner uplift for the individual and preserve in it or behind it a way for his opening to spiritual experience, has not changed human life and society, it could not do so because, in governing society, it had to compromise with the lower parts of life and could not insist on the inner change of the whole being; it could insist only on a credal adherence, a formal acceptance of its ethical standards and a conformity to institution, ceremony and ritual. Religion as conceived can give a religio-ethical colour or surface tinge,—sometimes, if it maintains a strong kernel of inner experience, it can generalise to some extent an incomplete spiritual tendency, but it does not transform the race, it cannot create a new principle of the human existence. *A total spiritual direction given to the whole life and the whole nature can alone lift humanity beyond itself.* Another possible conception akin to the religious solution is the guidance of society by men of spiritual attainment, the brotherhood or unity of all

in the faith or in the discipline, the spiritualisation of life and society by the taking up of the old machinery of life into such a unification or inventing a new machinery. This too has been attempted before without success; it was the original founding idea of more than one religion: but the human ego and vital nature were too strong for a religious idea working on the mind and by the mind to overcome its resistance. *It is only the full emergence of the soul, the full descent of the native light and power of the Spirit and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental supernature that can effect this evolutionary miracle.*

At first sight this insistence on a radical change of nature might seem to put off all the hope of humanity to a distant evolutionary future; for the transcendence of our normal human nature, a transcendence of our mental, vital and physical being, has the appearance of an endeavour too high and difficult and at present, for man as he is, impossible. Even if it were so, it would still remain the sole possibility for the transmutation of life, for to hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition; it is to ask for something unnatural and unreal, an impossible miracle. But what is demanded by this change is not something altogether distant, alien to our existence and radically impossible; for what has to be developed is there in our being and not something outside it: what evolutionary Nature presses for, is *an awakening to the knowledge of self, the discovery of self, the manifestation of the self and spirit within us and the release of its self-knowledge, its self-power, its native self-instrumentation.* It is, besides, a step for which the whole of evolution has been a preparation and which is brought closer at each crisis of human destiny when the mental and vital evolution of the being touches a point where intellect and vital force reach some acme of tension and there is a need either for them to collapse, to sink back into a torpor of defeat or a repose of unprogressive quiescence or to rend their way through the veil against which they are straining. What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many toward the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance. To that call in the being there must always be some answer in the Divine Reality and in Nature.

The conditions under which men live upon earth are the result of their state of consciousness. To seek to change conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera. All who have had the perception of what could be and should be done to improve the situation, in the different domains of human life, economical, political, social, financial, educational or sanitary are precisely the individuals who have developed their consciousness more or less to an exceptional degree and put themselves in contact with higher planes of consciousness. But their ideas remained on the whole

theoretical; or, if an attempt was ever made to realise them practically, it always failed lamentably in the long or short run: for no human organisation can change radically unless human consciousness itself changes. Prophets of a new humanity have followed one another, religions, spiritual or social, have been created, their beginnings were at times full of promise: but, as humanity was not transformed at heart, the old errors arising from human nature itself have reappeared gradually and after a time it was found that one was left almost at the same spot from where one had started with so much hope and enthusiasm. In this effort, however, to improve human conditions there have always been two tendencies, which although apparently contrary to each other should rather be complementary and together work out the progress. One seeks a collective reorganisation, something that would lead towards an effective unity of mankind: the other declares that all progress is made first by the individual and insists that it is the individual who should be given conditions in which he can progress freely. Both are equally true and necessary, and our effort should be directed along both the lines. Collective progress and individual progress are interdependent. Before the individual can take a leap forward, it is necessary that something of an antecedent progress be achieved in the collective life. A way has therefore to be found whereby the twofold progress can go on simultaneously.

It is in answer to this pressing need that the township of "AUROVILLE" is proposed as a Centre of Universal Education and Culture, so that the élite of humanity may be ready who would be able to work for the progressive unification of the race and who at the same time would be prepared to embody the new force descending upon earth to transform it.

The unity of the human race can be achieved neither through uniformity nor through domination and subjection. A synthetic organisation of all nations, each one occupying its own place in accordance with its own genius and the role it has to play in the whole, can alone effect a comprehensive and progressive unification which may have some chance of enduring. And if the synthesis is to be a living thing, the grouping should be done around a central idea as high and wide as possible, and in which all tendencies, even the most contradictory, would find their respective places. That idea is to give man the conditions of life necessary for preparing him to manifest the new force that will create the race of tomorrow.

All urge of rivalry, all struggle for precedence and domination should disappear giving place to a will for harmonious organisation, for clear-sighted and effective collaboration.

To make this possible, children from their very early age must be accustomed not merely to the idea but to its practice. The cultures of the different regions of the earth will be represented here in such a way as to be accessible to all, not merely intellectually, in ideas, theories, principles, and languages, but also vitally in habits and customs, in art under all forms—painting, sculpture, music, architecture, decoration—and physically too through natural scenery, dress, games, sports, industries and food. A kind of world-exhibition has to be organised in which all the countries will be

represented in a concrete and living manner; the ideal is that every nation with a very definite culture would have a pavilion representing that culture, built on a model that most displays the habits of the country: it will exhibit the nation's most representative products, natural as well as manufactured, products also that best express its intellectual and artistic genius and its spiritual tendencies. Each nation would thus find a practical and concrete interest in cultural synthesis and collaborate in the work by taking over the charge of the pavilion that represents it. A lodging house also could be attached, large or small according to need, where students of the same nationality would be accommodated; they will thus enjoy the very culture of their own motherland, and at the same time receive at the centre the education which will introduce them as well to other cultures existing upon earth. Thus the international education will not be simply theoretical, on the school bench, but practical in all details of existence.

A general idea of the organisation is only given here: the application in details will be gradually carried out as the Township develops.

The first aim then will be to help individuals to become conscious of the fundamental genius of the nations to which they belong and at the same time to put them in contact with the modes of living of other nations so that they may know and respect equally the true spirit of all the countries upon earth. For all world organisation to be real and to be able to live, must be based upon mutual respect and understanding between nation and nation as well as between individual and individual. It is only in the collective order and organisation, in a collaboration based upon mutual good-will that lies the possibility of man being lifted out of the painful chaos where he is now. It is with this aim and in this spirit that all human problems will be studied in "AUROVILLE".

## II

### AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

*I become what I see in myself.*

*All that thought suggests to me, I can do.*

*All that thought reveals in me, I can become.*

A university by its very origin and nature is a universal institution, its boundaries conterminous with the boundaries of the universe.

But there are no boundaries to man's insatiable thirst for Knowledge, his inexhaustible and ceaseless search after the Truth, his deep seeking for Beauty and Love, his secret aspiration to expand and become one with the universe, to touch, to feel, to experience and to enjoy the Infinite, to meet, to clasp and to possess the Eternal,

## Progress

### Towards the Synthesis of Science and Spirituality

Progress is the very heart of the significance of human life, for it means our evolution into a greater and richer being, and this our present age, by insisting on it, by forcing us to recognise it as our aim and our necessity, by making impossible hereafter the attempt to subsist in the dullness or gross beatitude of a stationary self-content, has done a precious service to the earth-life.

An unbiased view will regard this age of civilisation as an evolutionary stage, an imperfect but important turn of the human advance, where great gains have been made which are of the utmost value to ultimate perfection, even if they have been made at a great price. There is not only a greater generalisation of knowledge and the more thorough use of the intellectual power and activity in multiple fields; there is not only the advance of science and its application to the conquests of our environment, an immense apparatus of means, vast utilisations, endless minute conveniences, an irresistible, machinery, a tireless exploitation of forces; there is, too, a certain development of powerful, if not high-pitched ideals and there is an attempt, however external and therefore imperfect, to bring them to bear upon the working of human society as a whole. Once restored to its true movement, the inner life of man will find that it has gained in materials, in power of plasticity, in a new kind of depth and wideness, a salutary habit of many-sided thoroughness and a sincere endeavour to shape the outer collective life into an adequate image of our highest ideals.

*We, of the coming day, stand at the head of a new age of development which must lead to a new and a large synthesis of all truths everywhere.* To entrench ourselves within the bounds of any one ideology or system of thought, to adhere to any one theistic religion or social and political creed would be to limit ourselves and to attempt to create our life out of the being, knowledge and nature of others, instead of building it out of our own being and potentialities. A mass of new material is flowing to us from all sides. The luminous secrets of the Past, long lost to the consciousness of mankind, too, are breaking out again from behind the veil. We have not only to assimilate the influences of the great theistic religions of the world and recover their true meaning, their stuff of permanent truth constantly reshaped and developed in the inner thought and spiritual experience of developing humanity so that they may be of a living importance to mankind, but also we must take full account of the potent revelations of modern knowledge and seeking and equip ourselves with the advantages of science and technology.

### Towards the Synthesis of Past, Present and Future

*The Past is our foundation, the Present our material, and the Future our summit.* We should be the children of our glorious Past, possessors of the Present, and creators of

the Future. We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the Future. In Auroville University, *it will be our attempt to evaluate the totality of the Past in relation to the potentialities of the Future.* All this points to a new, very rich and vast synthesis. A fresh and widely embracing harmonisation of our gains is therefore both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity of the Future. "Taking advantages of all discoveries from within and without," Auroville aspires "to boldly spring towards future realisations," thus building a bridge between outer external realisations and the highest inner aspirations.

### **Towards the Synthesis of All Cultures**

The aim of Auroville will be to promote research in order to enrich all cultures, and raise the level of spiritual and material life in all parts of the world and create a climate of understanding and appreciation of the values of all cultures and civilisations. But *Auroville anticipates a new creation with a new culture that will be synthetic and universal* and will therefore, include in its study and research at its University all the latest and future possible achievements and experiments of Science and Technology with an equal importance and emphasis on the revelations of spiritual research. And thus combining the two—Science and Spirituality—it will hew a new path for the Future of Peace, Knowledge, Unity and Progress. *East and West will meet from two opposite sides and merge into each other and found in the life of a unified humanity a common world culture and a common world order, obeying the law of the Truth.*

### **Towards Change and Reconstruction**

It is one of those vast critical moments in the life of the race when all is pressing towards change and reconstitution. The ideals of the Future, especially the ideals of freedom, equality, commonalty, unity, are demanding to be brought from their limited field in the spiritual life or the idealism of the few and to be given some beginning of a true soul of action and bodily shape in the life of the race. But banded against any such fulfilment there are powerful obstacles, and the greatest of them come not from outside but from within. For they are the old continued impulses and obstinate recalcitrance of mankind's past nature, the almost total subjection of his normal mind to egoistic, vital and material interests and ambitions which make not for union but for strife and discord, the plausibilities of the practical reason which looks at the possibilities of the day and the morrow and shuts its eyes to the consequences of the day after, the habits of pretense and fiction which impel men and nations to pursue and forward their own interests under the camouflage of a specious idealism, a habit made up only partly of the diplomatic hypocrisy of politicians, but much more of a general half-voluntary self-deception and finally, the inrush of blinder unsatisfied forces and crude imperfect idealisms to take advantage of the unrest and dissatisfaction prevalent in such times and lay hold for a while on the life of mankind.

## Peace

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

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

The idealist, the thinker, the philosopher, the poet and artist, even the moralist, all those who live much in ideas, when they come to grapple at close quarters with practical life seem to find themselves something at a loss and are constantly defeated in their endeavour to govern life by their ideas. But even the man who is capable of governing his life by ideas, who recognises, that is to say, that it ought to express clearly conceived truths and principles of his being or of all beings and tries to find out or to know from others what these are, is not often capable of the highest, the free and disinterested use of his rational mind. As others are subjected to the tyranny of their interests, prejudices, instincts or passions, so he is subjected to the tyranny of ideas. Indeed, he turns his ideas into interests, obscures them with his prejudices and passions, and is unable to think freely about them, unable to distinguish their limits or the relation to them of other, different and opposite ideas and the equal right of these



also to existence. Ideals and idealists are necessary; ideals are the savour and sap of life, idealists the most powerful diviners and assistants of its purposes. But reduce your idea to a system and it at once begins to fail, the ideas themselves are partial and insufficient; not only have they a very partial triumph, but if their success were complete, it would still disappoint, because they are not the whole truth of life and therefore cannot securely govern and perfect life. *Life escapes from the formulas and systems which our reason labours to impose on it*; it proclaims itself too complex, too full of infinite potentialities to be tyrannised over by the arbitrary intellect of man.

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

We of today have not the excuse of ignorance since we have before us perfectly clear ideals and conditions. Freedom and unity, the self-determination of men and nations in the framework of a life drawn together by co-operation, comradeship, brotherhood if it may be, the acceptance of a close interrelation of the common aims and interests of the race, an increasing oneness of human life in which we cannot deny any longer to others what we claim for ourselves,—are things of which we have formed a definite conception. The acknowledgement of them is there in the human mind, but not as yet any settled will to practise.

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

The hopes, the ideals, the aspirations that are abroad in mankind are themselves so many severe and pregnant questions put to us, not merely to our intelligence but to the spirit of our being and action... and the gain they will bring to humanity depends on the spirit which governs us during the time of their execution. For these ideals stand and they represent the greater aims of the spirit in men which through all denials, obstacles and imperfections of his present incomplete nature knows always the perfection towards which it moves and the greatness of which it is capable. Circumstances and force and external necessity and past nature may still be too strong for us, but if the light of the ideal is kept burning in its flame of knowledge and its flame of power,

it will seize even on these things and create out of their evil its greater inevitable good. At present it may seem only an idea and a word unable to become a living reality, but it is the Idea and the Word expressing what was concealed in the Spirit which preside over the creation. The time will come when they will be able to seize on the Force that works and turn it into the instrument of a greater and fairer creation. The nearness or the distance of the time depends on the fidelity of the mind and will of man to the best that he sees and the insistence of his self-knowledge, unobsessed by subjection to the circumstances he suffers and the machinery he uses, to live out its truth within himself so that his environment may accept it and his outward life be shaped in its image.

## Unity

### Internationalism

The idea of humanity as a single race of beings with a common life and a common general interest is among the most characteristic and significant products of modern thought.

It is founded on a view of things which looks at man in his manhood only and casts away all those physical and social accidents of birth, rank, class, colour, creed, nationality, which have been erected into so many walls and screens behind which man has hidden himself from his fellowmen ..

The height and nobility of the idea is not to be questioned and certainly a mankind which set its life upon this basis would make a better, purer, more peaceful and enlightened race than anything we can hope to have at present. But as the human being is now made, the pure idea, though always a great power, is also afflicted by a general weakness. For man at present lives more in the outward than in the inward, is governed principally by his vital existence, sensations, feelings and customary mentality rather than by his higher thought-mind, and feels himself in this to be really alive, really to exist and be, while the world of ideas is to him something remote and abstract and, however powerful and interesting in its way, not a living thing; the pure idea seems, until it is embodied in life, something not quite real; in that abstractness and remoteness lies its weakness... Life accepts it as a partial habit, but not completely, not quite sincerely.

In the crises of life it is the primary vital necessity which tells, while the other and remoter element betrays itself to be a mere idea not yet ready for accomplishment; it can only become powerful when it also becomes either a vital or a psychological necessity... A living sense of human oneness in thought, feeling and life must always remain the injunction of the Spirit within us to human life upon earth. The saving power needed is a new psychological factor which will at once make a united life necessary to humanity and force it to respect the principle of freedom.

## Possibilities of Unification and their Shortcomings: Ego—the Chief Obstacle

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

Individual and group harmonies of a comparative and qualified completeness are created, a social cohesion is accomplished; but in the mass the relations formed are constantly marred by imperfect sympathy, imperfect understanding, gross misunderstandings, strife, discord, unhappiness. It cannot be otherwise so long as there is no true union of consciousness founded upon a nature of self-knowledge, inner mutual knowledge, inner realisation of unity, concord of our inner forces of being and inner forces of life. In our social building we labour to establish some approach to unity, mutuality, harmony, because without these things there can be no perfect social living, but what we build is a constructed unity, an association of interests and egos enforced by law and custom and imposing an artificial, constructed order in which the interests of some prevail over the interests of others and only a half-accepted, half-enforced, half-natural, half-artificial accommodation keeps the social whole in being. Between community and community there is still worse accommodation with a constant recurrence of the strife of collective ego with collective ego. This is the best that we can do and all our persistent readjustments of the social order can bring us nothing better than an imperfect structure of life.

## Brotherhood

Brotherhood is the real key to the triple gospel of the ideal of humanity—liberty, equality, farternity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. *But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else.* For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital asso-

ciation or of intellectual agreement. Only when man has developed not merely a fellow-feeling with all men, but a dominant sense of unity and commonality, *only when he is aware of them not merely as brothers—that is a fragile bond—but as parts of himself*, only when he has learned to live, not in his separate personal and communal ego-sense but in a large universal consciousness, can the phenomenon of war, with whatever weapons, pass out of his life without the possibility of return. Meanwhile that he should struggle even by illusions towards that end is an excellent sign; for it shows that the truth behind the illusion is pressing towards the hour when it may become manifest as reality.

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

### Change of Consciousness—the Solution

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

### Inner Perfection

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

removed by the suppression of the individual; *the true cure can only be achieved by his progression to a greater consciousness in which he is fulfilled and perfected.*

Man's true freedom and perfection will come when the Spirit within bursts through the forms of mind and life and winging above to its own gnostic fiery heights of ether turns upon them from that light and flame to seize them and transform into its own image.

### **Difference between the Methods of Religion and Spirituality**

*Human society itself never seized on the discovery of the soul as a means for the discovery of the law of its own being or on a knowledge of the soul's true nature and need and its fulfilment as the right way of terrestrial perfection.* So far as it saw in religion a means of human salvation and perfection, it laid hands upon it at once to mechanise it, to catch the human soul and bind it on the wheels of socio-religious machinery, to impose on it in the place of spiritual freedom an imperious yoke and an iron prison. It saddled upon the religious life of man a Church, a priesthood and a mass of ceremonies and set over it a pack of watchdogs under the name of creeds and dogmas. *The supreme truths are neither the rigid conclusions of logical reasoning nor the affirmations of credal statements, but fruits of the soul's inner experience.*

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

The spiritual consciousness, the spiritual life reverses this principle of building; it bases its action in the collective life upon an inner experience and inclusion of others in our own being, an inner sense and reality of oneness. *Spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul, because it is itself fulfilled by freedom; and the deepest meaning of freedom is the power to expand and grow towards perfection by the law of one's nature.*

### **Freedom and Mutuality**

Man does not actually live as an isolated being, nor can he grow by an isolated freedom. He grows by his relations with others and his freedom must exercise itself in a progressive self-harmonising with the freedom of his fellow-beings. *The law of our self-determination has to wed itself to the self-determination of others and to*

*find the way to enact a real union through this mutuality.* But its basis can only be found within and not through any mechanical adjustment. It lies in the discovery within by the being in the course of his self-expansion and self-fulfilment that these things at every turn depend on the self-expansion and self-fulfilment of those around us, because we are secretly one being with them and one life. Each being has his own truth of independent self-realisation and his truth of self-realisation in the life of others and should feel, desire, help, participate more and more, as he grows in largeness and power, in the harmonious and natural growth of all the individual selves and all the collective selves of the one universal being.

That which we are has expressed itself through the individual, but also through the universality, and though each has to fulfil itself in its own way, neither can succeed independently of the other. The society has no right to crush or efface the individual for its own better development or self-satisfaction; the individual, so long at least as he chooses to live in the world, has no right to disregard for the sake of his own solitary satisfaction and development his fellow-beings and to live at war with them or seek a selfishly isolated good...

For the only things that we can really call our rights are those conditions which are necessary to our free and sound development, and that again is our right because it is necessary to the development of the world and the fulfilment of the destiny of mankind.

The law for the individual is to perfect his individuality by free development from within, but to respect and to aid and be aided by the same free development in others. His law is to harmonise his life with the life of the social aggregate and to pour himself out as a force for growth and perfection on humanity. *The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards the finding and expression of its highest aspirations and perfection taking full advantage of the free development and the gains of all individuals and nations and groupings of men, to work towards the day when mankind may be really and not only ideally one family.*

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

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

talities to a small minority, it nourishes in its bosom a tremendous mass of ignorance, a multitude, a proletariat.

### **Towards World Union**

*Humanity is one, but different peoples are variant soul-forms of the common humanity. When we find the oneness, the principle of variation is not destroyed but finds rather its justification; it is not by abolishing ourselves, our own special temperament and power, that we can get at the living oneness, but by following it out and raising it to its highest possibilities of freedom and action. The nations should therefore become conscious not only of their own but of each other's genius and soul, and learn to respect, to help and to profit, not only economically and intellectually but subjectively and spiritually by each other. For the final end is a common world-culture in which each national culture should be, not merged into or fused with some other culture differing from it in principle or temperament, but evolved to its full power and could then profit to that end by all the others as well as give its gains and influences to them, all serving by their separateness and their interaction the common aim and idea of human perfection.*

The peoples of humanity must be allowed to group themselves according to their free-will and their natural affinities, no constraint or force could be allowed to compel an unwilling nation or distinct grouping of peoples to enter into another system or join itself or remain joined to it for the convenience, aggrandisement or political necessity of another people or even for the general convenience in disregard of its own wishes. *Unity would be the largest principle of life, but freedom would be its foundation-stone.*

Man's communities are formed not so much by the instinctive herding together of a number of individuals of the same genus or species as by local association, community of interests, and community of ideas; and these limits tend always to be overcome in the widening of human thoughts and sympathies brought about by the closer intermingling of the races, nations, interests, ideas, cultures. Still, if overcome in their separatism, they are not abolished in their fact, because they repose on an essential principle of Nature,—diversity in unity. And so, a free world union must in its very nature be a complex unity based on diversity and diversity must be based on self-determination.

*A spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness not dependent upon any intellectual or outward uniformity and compel a oneness of life not bound up with its mechanical means of unification, but ready always to enrich its secure unity by a free inner variation and a freely varied outer self-expression, this would be the basis for a higher type of human existence.*

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

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

The indwelling deity who presides over the destiny of the race has raised in men's mind and heart the idea, the hope of a new order which will replace the old unsatisfactory order, and substitute for it conditions of the world's life which will in the end have a reasonable chance of establishing permanent peace and well-being. This would for the first time turn into an assured fact the ideal of human unity which, cherished by a few, seemed for so long a noble chimera; then might be created a firm ground of peace and harmony and even a free room for the realisation of the highest human dreams, for the perfectibility of the race, a perfect society, a higher upward evolution of the human soul and human nature. *It is for the men of our day and, at the the most, of tomorrow to give the answer*

### **The Central Aim: New Creation**

#### **A Race of Gnostic Beings — a Race of Gods**

*A perfected human world cannot be created by men or composed of men who are themselves imperfect.* Even if all our actions are scrupulously regulated by education or law or social or political machinery, what will be achieved is a regulated pattern of minds, a fabricated pattern of lives, a cultivated pattern of conduct; but a conformity of this kind cannot change, cannot re-create the man within, it cannot carve or cut out a perfect soul or a perfect thinking man or a perfect or growing living being. For soul and mind and life are powers of being and can grow but cannot be cut out or made, an outer process or formation can assist or can express soul and mind and life but cannot create or develop it. One can indeed help the being to grow, not by an attempt at manufacture, but by throwing on it stimulating influences or by lending to it one's forces of soul or mind or life; but even so the growth must still come from within it, determining from there what shall be made of these influences and forces, and not from outside. This is the first truth that our creative zeal and aspiration have to learn, otherwise all our human endeavour is foredoomed to turn in a futile circle and can end only in a success that is a specious failure.

#### **Self-transcendence and Self-fulfilment**

*To be or become something, to bring something into being is the whole labour of the force of Nature; to know, feel, do are subordinate energies that have a value because they help the being in its partial self-realisation to express what it is and help it too in its urge to express the still more not yet realised that it has to be.* But knowledge, thought, action,—whether religious, ethical, political, social, economic, utilitarian or



hedonistic, whether a mental, vital or physical form or construction of existence,—cannot be the essence or object of life; they are only activities of the powers of being or the powers of its becoming, dynamic symbols of itself, creations of the embodied spirit, its means of discovering or formulating what it seeks to be. The tendency of man's physical mind is to see otherwise and to turn the true method of things upside down, because it takes as essential or fundamental the surface forces or appearances of Nature; it accepts her creation by a visible or exterior process as the essence of her action and does not see that it is only a secondary appearance and covers a greater secret process.

*To become ourselves is the one thing to be done; but the true ourselves is that which is within us, and to exceed our outer self of body, life and mind is the condition for this highest being, which is our true and divine being, to become self-revealed and active.*

To be and to be fully is Nature's aim in us; but *to be fully is to be wholly conscious of one's being*: unconsciousness, half consciousness or deficient consciousness is a state of being not in possession of itself; it is existence, but not fullness of being. To be aware wholly and integrally of oneself and of all the truth of one's being is the necessary condition of true possession of existence. This self-awareness is what is meant by spiritual knowledge: the essence of spiritual knowledge is an intrinsic self-existent consciousness; all its action of knowledge, indeed all its action of any kind, must be that consciousness formulating itself. All other knowledge is consciousness oblivious of itself and striving to return to its own awareness of itself and its contents; it is self-ignorance labouring to transform itself back into self-knowledge.

But also, since consciousness carries in itself the force of existence, *to be fully is to have the intrinsic and integral force of one's being*; it is to come into possession of all one's force of self and of all its use. To be merely, without possessing the force of one's being or with a half-force or deficient force of it, is a mutilated or diminished existence; it is to exist, but it is not fullness of being. ...Power of self is the sign of the divinity of self.

Lastly, *to be fully is to have the full delight of being*. Being without delight of being, without an entire delight of itself and all things is something neutral or diminished; it is existence, but it is not fullness of being. This delight too must be intrinsic, self-existent, automatic; it cannot be dependent on things outside itself: whatever it delights in, it makes part of itself, has the joy of it as part of its universality. All undelight, all pain and suffering are a sign of imperfection, of incompleteness; they arise from a division of being, an incompleteness of consciousness of being, an incompleteness of the force of being. To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight of being and to live in this integrated completeness is the divine living.

But again, *to be fully is to be universally*. To be in the limitations of a small restricted ego is to exist, but it is an imperfect existence: in its very nature it is to live in an incomplete consciousness, an incomplete force and delight of existence. It is to be less than oneself and it brings an inevitable subjection to ignorance, weakness and

suffering: or even if by some divine composition of the nature it could exclude these things, it would be to live in a limited scope of existence, a limited consciousness and power and joy of existence. All being is one and to be fully is to be all that is. *To be in the being of all and to include all in one's being, to be conscious of the consciousness of all, to be integrated in force with the universal force, to carry all action and experience in oneself and feel it as one's own action and experience, to feel all selves as one's own self, to feel all delight of being as one's own delight of being is a necessary condition of the integral divine living.*

But thus to be universally in the fullness and freedom of one's universality, one must be also transcendently. The spiritual fullness of the being is eternity; if one has not the consciousness of timeless eternal being, if one is dependent on body or embodied mind or embodied life, or dependent on this world or that world or on this condition of being or that condition of being, that is not the reality of self, not the fullness of our spiritual existence... But one must transcend not only the individual formula but the formula of the universe, for only so can either the individual or the universal existence find its own true being and a perfect harmonisation... Otherwise the individual may remain subject to the cosmic movement and its reactions and limitations and miss his entire spiritual freedom. He must enter into the supreme divine Reality, feel his oneness with it, live in it, be its self-creation: all his mind, life, physicality must be converted into terms of its Supernature; all his thought, feelings, actions must be determined by it and be it, its self-formation. All this can become complete in him only when he has evolved out of the Ignorance into the Knowledge and through the Knowledge into the supreme delight of existence; but some essentiality of these things and their sufficient instrumentation can come with the first spiritual change and culminate in the life of the gnostic supernature.

### **Adventure of Consciousness and Living**

*Education in Auroville will not be a mere acquisition of knowledge, of inert ideas and information, nor only the knowledge of the why and wherefore of the facts surrounding and pertinent to life, but an art of utilisation of knowledge, a living experience and an art of becoming. And so, at Auroville University, life will be studied, experienced and experimented upon too, in its multifarious activities and its possibilities of infinite relationships. Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress and a youth that never ages.*

To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilight or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of

Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.

*For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony.* They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually, even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unilluminated compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour.

Science itself begins to dream of the physical conquest of death, expresses an insatiable thirst for knowledge, is working out something like a terrestrial omnipotence for humanity. Space and Time are contracting to the vanishing-point in its works, and and it strives in a hundred ways to make man the master of circumstance and so lighten the fetters of causality. *The idea of limit, of the impossible begins to grow a little shadowy and it appears instead that whatever man constantly wills, he must in the end be able to do; for the consciousness in the race eventually finds the means.*

*Education is life in pursuit of the Truth in all its manifold aspects and a constant research for the harmonisation of these aspects, however disparate, opposite, contradictory or contrary. And life is an endless adventure of consciousness unto the Unknown, probing into its mysteries to constantly renew and enrich itself.*

*The Unknown is not the Unknowable*; it need not remain the unknown for us, unless we choose ignorance or persist in our first limitations. For to all things that are not unknowable, all things in the universe, there correspond in that universe faculties which can take cognisance of them, and in man, the microcosm, these faculties are always existent and at a certain stage capable of development. We may choose not to develop them; where they are partially developed, we may discourage and impose on them a kind of atrophy. But, fundamentally, all possible knowledge is knowledge within the power of humanity.

### Evolution

#### Supramental Consciousness and New<sup>1</sup>Faculties

There is an ascending evolution in Nature which goes from the stone to the plant,

from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Evolution continues and Man will be surpassed. For man is a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but having the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious.

*One of the most important researches in Auroville will be regarding the principle and the process of evolution, which will be scientifically studied and will be used to expedite the next step of the evolution of the human race, to bring forth the latent faculties of Man and a change of consciousness.* For the future of humanity depends upon this change of consciousness. In this connection, the psychological discipline of the Yoga as developed and perfected by Sri Aurobindo will be studied as one of the primary and essential methods for a conscious evolution and a change of human consciousness, transcending the present limited and divisive, ego-centric mental consciousness of man. The new consciousness, which Sri Aurobindo terms the supramental consciousness or the Truth-consciousness, is consciousness creatrix of the world, a state of Knowledge and Will at once, with a clear vision of the totality and Power to effectuate its vision. It is the unifying consciousness because it views all things in a multiple unity.

To see things steadily and see them as a whole is not possible to the mind, but it is the very nature of the transcendent Supermind. The mind sees only a given time and space and views many possibilities pell-mell as all more or less realisable in that time and space; the Supermind sees the whole extension of Time and Space and can embrace all the mind's possibilities and very many more not visible to the mind, but without any error, groping or confusion; for it perceives each potentiality in its proper force, essential necessity, right relation to the others and the time, place and circumstance, both of its gradual and its ultimate realisation. There is a spontaneous harmony and unity of all knowledge and truths in this consciousness, because it is the Truth-consciousness with an inherent and self-existent Knowledge and Power to realise its vision.

Since the primary aim of Auroville is to establish the supreme harmony everywhere,—within the individual, in his relation with his fellow-beings, and his surroundings, the community, the nation and the world, between all aspects of the Truth, between Man, Nature and God, between the two poles of existence, Spirit and Matter, —and *to bring about a new creation and a new world order with a new culture, changing the whole life of the earth-consciousness*, this study and the possibility of the conscious advent of the new consciousness its application to all problems of life, and its manifestation in all the activities and the manifold relationships of life, will be the most crucial research and the salient contribution of Auroville University.

## III

## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN AUROVILLE

The education of a child in Auroville will begin with the education of his mother. For the nature of the child depends very much upon the mother, her aspiration and will and upon the material surroundings in which she lives. In order to be able to educate the child, the first thing to do is to educate oneself, to be master of oneself, and to be oneself what one wants the child to be. One must always be very patient, and never be arbitrary, despotic or ill-tempered. The part of education that the mother has to go through is to see that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible.

In his formative years, the child in Auroville will grow through all sorts of work in play and play in work in an environment of love, understanding, freedom and flexibility, and through all that may interest him he will be guided i) to observe, to concentrate, to question and to experience; ii) to master a few languages which he can speak, read and understand with ease, including classical and international languages; iii) to develop the capacity to learn and to use the documentation. What is most important at this stage is for the child to develop the power of concentration and identification, self-confidence and readiness to learn more and more, the qualities of endurance, self-poise and persistence against difficulties and obstacles, truthfulness and courage, goodwill, generosity and nobility, sensitivity, right attitude and response to the light of the Truth.

He will not be stuffed therefore with academic courses and factual knowledge which he can always acquire later according to his aspiration and needs. As he grows, he will find for himself—or with the assistance of an adult who will be more of a friend than a teacher—what are his natural aptitudes and interests and what are the possibilities of widening the vistas of his knowledge and consciousness. He will develop the ability to reflect, to seek and discover for himself the truths by which he will live, and he will be helped to grow in him a tireless capacity for experimentation and innovation. He will also be aided by spiritually awakened persons who may, more by their example and living than by instructions, awaken him to the existence of the Divine Reality within him, his soul, to whom he can refer for true guidance in dealing with the problems of life. For ultimately, it is the soul which is the true teacher and Guide.

All efforts will therefore be directed to help the individual to become conscious of this true Guide within so that he may learn to follow as he grows an inner discipline proper to the aspirations of his soul, and not the discipline of others imposed on him by the conventions of the ordinary institutes and the society. The only indispensable quality required of a student as well as of a teacher—and of all Aurovillians—is the constant aspiration and the will to learn and to progress endlessly without fatigue towards a greater and greater perfection with a spontaneous joy in the effort for progress, not for obtaining a result, but for the love of the effort. This joy is realised and

the energy for such an endless effort is obtained only when the soul is made the leader of the march. For the soul is ever in contact with the inexhaustible energy and the splendours of the Superconscious from which it derives its origin. All that one needs to do is to sincerely aspire and to open oneself to its influence in faith and with sincerity and confidence.

The centre of all education, of all teaching and training, of all learning, is Man, Man in all his glory, in his divinity. It must be the aim of education to make him the master of his destiny and the lord of his universe. All that is vital to the glorious Future of Man, he will learn in Auroville so that he may become Man the god, from Man the animal and Man the thinker.

Each human being has in him something divine, something his own and unique, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere. But it is only when man rises at the summit of his ascent into a spiritual being that he can realise his divine manhood and manifest the Divine in all its glory of Love, Knowledge, Power and Perfection—the highest that he can dream of—whatever be his field of action. So, the fundamental aim of education in Auroville will be to put the individual in contact with his soul and then help him to find, in the light of his soul, his own indispensable place in the orchestra of the whole. Auroville hopes to provide the right conditions and environment as well as the full facilities to help the individual to bring out all that is best in him and to make it perfect for a noble use so that he may fulfil his unique role and his mission on earth.

The primary discipline necessary for this is for the individual to observe and become conscious of himself, conscious of all the instruments of his being—physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual—and their workings, to develop, transform and organise them around the divine centre of his being. It is through the psychic presence that the individual comes into contact with the truth of his being. In most cases, this presence acts, so to say, from behind the veil, unrecognised and unknown. However, it is only when it comes forward and takes the lead that the individual goes through life with an assurance and a certitude all his own and becomes the master of his destiny. This is the psychological discipline of the integral Yoga, which is absolutely indispensable if one wants to know and express the highest truth of one's being, and if one aspires that all one's actions, thoughts and feelings, even the very sensations and impulses may manifest the supreme beauty and splendours which one so often receives in one's awakened thoughts and visions when one opens oneself to the light of the Superconscious.

The education in Auroville will be therefore integral, aiming at the development, transformation and perfection of all the parts of one's being so as to build an all-round personality which is beautiful, harmonious, sensitive, supple, luminous and powerful in all its movements of mind, life and body, and selfless, heroic and noble in its actions. For this an individual may be required to go through the study of all arts, aesthetics, humanities and sciences which each can choose according to his capacities and needs of self-perfection, self-expression and self-fulfilment.

It is evident that there will be no fixed courses or curricula, nor tests, degrees and diplomas which have value only if one wants to earn money or a good name and position according to the standards and values set by the conventions of the ordinary world. In Auroville which aspires to build a new world of the Future, individual value and sincerity of the person would have a greater importance than the worldly cleverness or material wealth and social position. Since Auroville aspires to be the place of eternal youth, of an endless education and a constant progress, degrees and diplomas, giving a false sense of satisfaction of having completed one's education will have no value and will be naturally out of place. Education in Auroville will be for the joy of knowledge and for the joy of becoming, for the joy of self-perfection and self-transcendence, for the joy of self-fulfilment and world-fulfilment.

The chief aim of education in Auroville will be to help each man to seek for and to manifest the Divine in every way of his being, and to so find it and live in it that however—even in all kinds of ways—he lives and acts, he shall live and act in the Divine, in the Spirit, in the eternal Reality of his being, manifesting its truth and its law; and to discover the truth behind the veil of forces in the universe, to disengage the divine Reality behind everything and to work for its full manifestation.

Some of the programmes and projects of research and education in Auroville will be: to know the secrets of Nature and of life; to know oneself and to be the master of oneself, of life, of Nature; to seek after the Truth and perfection; to surmount within oneself all weaknesses, in capacities and the falsehoods of Ignorance; to conquer the causes of sufferings, illnesses, war and miseries; to vindicate the rights and the dignity of Man by helping him to transcend his half-lit humanity and fumbling mental-ethical consciousness and its conflicting laws; to eradicate Ignorance and the divisions of the ego-centric consciousness by a change of Consciousness which is the inevitable further step in human evolution; to enrich the existing faculties and bring forth new ones; to triumph over one's limitations, narrowness, rigidity of views and prejudices by constantly widening one's horizon of comprehension in the light of the Truth-Consciousness; to harmonise all the parts of one's being, integrate the personality and to be the whole Man of the Future, embodying the new consciousness, which transcends the limited and divisive consciousness of the present Man; to perfect and transform all the instruments of one's being into powers of the spirit so as to manifest the divine Reality within; to perfect and synthetise knowledge in each field and to integrate all fields of knowledge; to perfect each culture and to unify all cultures; to discover the particular genius and the role of each nation in the comity of all nations and to integrate the human race; to develop and use the resources, experiments and benefits of science and technology for the amelioration of mankind; to march unto the Unknown by constantly searching and making new discoveries on the spiritual and material planes so as to find new ways of enriching life; and thus to progress always towards ever more perfection and a more noble and truer life, the higher and vaster life of the Future, the life of Truth, Knowledge and Power, of Love, Unity and Bliss, making the whole life of the earth beautiful, divine.

All of Auroville in its entirety and in its details of all activities and organisation will engage itself in this educational process and will be a laboratory for this experiment, where no problem of life and its manifold relationships on all levels of action will escape the scrutiny and the study of its citizens. Auroville, being dedicated to the whole of humanity, will naturally seek all ways and means for the fulfilment of its highest aspirations, and will be a training institute for the whole of humanity, a fully equipped, intellectually alive and spiritually inspiring home for all men, women and children, who will learn together to live in oneness and who will live together to learn all the time, at each moment of their life. Education in Auroville being a conscious experiment of living and an adventure of consciousness, the scope of its research being as wide as the universe, its aim being an advent of a new race of gnostic beings, it will naturally embrace the Infinite in its infinite aspects and move towards a progressive universal harmony. The cultural pavilions of all nations of the world will not only provide a right setting for this purpose, but also afford the unique opportunity and the facilities for its manifold researches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity.

*Compiled by KAILAS JHAVERI*

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