

# MOTHER INDIA

JANUARY 1971

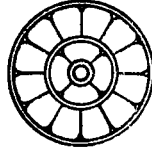
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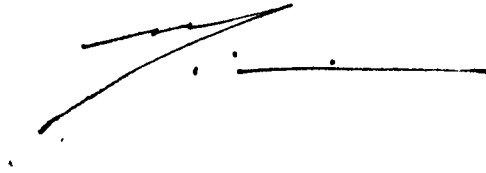
Subscription rates: Annual Rs. 10/-, Sh. 20/-, \$ 3/-  
Single copy Re. 1.00 in India.

All correspondence to be addressed to  
MOTHER INDIA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2, India.

Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.



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. 12

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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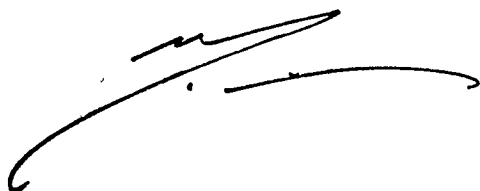
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**THE MOTHER'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE**

1971

Blessed are those who  
take a leap towards the Future



1971

**A SWEET YEAR**

## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Le Matrimandir sera l'âme d'Auroville.  
Le plus tôt elle sera là,  
le mieux cela vaudra pour tout le monde  
et surtout pour les Auroviliens.

15-11-1970

The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner the soul is there, the better it will be for everybody and especially for Aurovillians.

15-11-1970

★

Le Divin est présent au milieu de nous.  
Si nous nous souvenons toujours de Lui,  
Il nous donne la force de faire face  
à toutes les circonstances,  
dans une paix et une égalité parfaites.

Deviens conscient de cette Présence et Tes difficultés disparaîtront.

7-11-1970

The Divine is present among us. When we remember Him always He gives us the strength to face all circumstances with perfect peace and equanimity. Become aware of the Presence and your difficulties will disappear.

7-11-1970

★

*Q: Comment puis-je rendre l'influence de Sri Aurobindo vivante et dynamique dans mes activités quotidiennes ?*

Sois parfaitement sincère et Il répondra à ton appel.

Juillet 1970

*Q: How can I make Sri Aurobindo's influence living and dynamic in my daily activities ?*

Be perfectly sincere and He will answer your call.

July 1970

★

*Q: Qu'est-ce qu'il me faut pour ne pas manquer le progrès que je dois faire ?*

Une aspiration constante et intégrale.

3-8-1970

*Q: What is needed of me that I may not fail to progress as I should ?*

A constant and integral aspiration.

3-8-1970

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1970)

*(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.)*

FEBRUARY 22, 1956

*Sweet Mother, I don't understand "...the strong immobility of an immortal spirit."*  
(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p 117)

WHY don't you understand? That an immortal spirit can have a strong immobility? It says what it means. An immortal spirit is necessarily immobile and strong, by the very fact of its being<sup>1</sup> immortal.

*But then Sri Aurobindo says about the Gita: "Not the mind's control of vital impulse is its rule, but the strong immobility of an immortal spirit."*

Yes. But this is a conclusion, my child; you must read the beginning of the sentence if you want to understand. . . Ah! (*turning to a disciple*) Give me the light and the book. (*The Mother searches*) Here it is, he says: "The Gita . . . aims at something absolute, unmitigated, uncompromising, a turn, an attitude that will change the whole poise of the soul. Not the mind's control of vital impulse is its rule, but the strong immobility of an immortal spirit."

This is clear as daylight. The Gita requires the strong immobility of an immortal spirit—all the rest is secondary. What the Gita wants is that the spirit should become aware of its immortality and consequently have a strong immobility.

For this is a fact, it is like that. When the spirit is conscious of immortality, it grows into an immobility all made of strength. Immobility. That is to say, it does not move any longer, but it is a strong immobility, it is not an immobility of inertia or impotence; it is a strong immobility which is a base for action, that is, all that one does rests upon this powerful immobility,—all-powerful,—of a spirit that is immortal.



But, you know, there is no explanation which can give you that; you must have the experience. As long as one has not had the experience, one can't understand what this means...And it is the same for everything: the head, the little brain, cannot understand. The minute one has the experience, one understands—not before. One may have a sort of imaginative idea, but this is not understanding. To understand, one must live it. When you will become conscious of your immortal spirit, you will know what its strong immobility is—but not before. Otherwise, these are mere words.

You don't understand how one can be immobile and strong at the same time, is that what is bothering you? Well, as for me, I can say that the greatest strength is in immobility. This is the sovereign power.

And there is a very small superficial application of this which perhaps you will understand. There is someone who comes and insults you or says unpleasant things to you; and if one begins to vibrate in unison with this anger or this ill-will, one feels quite weak and denuded, and generally one makes a fool of oneself. But if you succeed in keeping within yourself, and specially in your head, a complete immobility which refuses to receive these vibrations, then at the same time you feel a great strength, and the other person cannot disturb you. If you remain very quiet, even physically, and when violence is directed towards you, you are able to remain very quiet, very silent, quite immobile, well, that has a power not only over you but over the other person also. If you don't have all these vibrations of inner response, if you can remain absolutely immobile within yourself, everywhere, that has an immediate action upon the other person.

That gives you an idea of what the power of immobility is. And it is a common fact which can occur every day; it is not a great event of spiritual life, it is a thing of the outer, material life.

There is a tremendous power in immobility: mental immobility, sensorial immobility, physical immobility. If you can remain like a wall, absolutely motionless, everything the other person sends you, will fall back upon him immediately. And that has an immediate action. It can stop the arm of the assassin, you understand, it has that amount of force. Only, one must not just appear to be immobile and then be boiling within! That is not what I mean. I mean an integral immobility.

*Mother, is this the same as the equality of soul of which Sri Aurobindo has spoken?*

Equality of soul is a way. It is a means, it is a way—it can be a goal also. But it is not the crowning.

For example, there are those who say that everything that happens is the expression of the divine Will (I spoke about this last time, I think), there is an entire manner of looking at life, thinking about life, which is like that, which says:

“All that there is, the world such as it is, all that happens, is the expression of the divine Will; consequently, wisdom requires us (if we want to be in relation with the

Divine) to accept without wincing and without the least emotion or least reaction, everything that happens, for it is the expression of the divine Will, and it is expected that we should defer to it." This is a conception which precisely tends to help people to acquire this equality of soul. But if you adopt this idea without adopting its contrary and making a synthesis of the two, well, naturally, you have but to sit through life and do nothing—or, in any case, never to try to make the world progress.

I remember having read in a class, before our present class started (a class which used to be held also on Wednesdays, perhaps, I don't quite know, but in which I used to read books), I read a book of Anatole France, who had a very fine mind—I think it was the "Book of Jérôme Coignard" but I am not absolutely sure—where he says that men would be perfectly happy if they did not worry about bettering life. I am not quoting the exact words but the idea. Unhappiness begins with this will to make men and things better! . (*The Mother laughs.*) That is his way of saying a thing which is exactly the same as what I was just telling you in another form. If you want to be peaceful, happy, always satisfied, to have a perfect equality of soul, you must tell yourself: "Things are as they ought to be", and if you are religious, you ought to tell yourself: "They are as they ought to be because they are the expression of the divine Will", and we have only one thing to do, that is to accept them as they are and be very quiet, because it is better to be quiet than to be restless. He turns the thing round and puts it in another way; he says life is very comfortable and very tolerable and very acceptable, if men do not begin to wish that it should be otherwise. And the minute they are not content, naturally nobody is happy! Since one finds that it is not what it ought to be, well, one begins to be unhappy—and others also.

But if everybody had the good sense to say: things are as they ought to be; one dies because one has to die, and one is ill because one has to be ill, one is separated from those one loves because one has to be separated, and then, etc. and one is in poverty because one ought to be poor, one, well, there is no limit to this—well, if completely, totally, one says: things are as they ought to be, it would make no sense to suffer or to revolt, it would be a stupidity!. Ah! one must be logical. So we say that misery begins with the will to make things better than they are. Why do you not want to be ill when you are ill? You are much more ill when, being ill, you don't want to be ill, than if you tell yourself: "Good, it is God's Will, I accept my illness!" At least you are quiet, that will help you to recover, perhaps ... And poor people,—why do they want to be rich? And people who lose their children or their parents,—why don't they want it to be thus? If everybody wanted that things be as they are, everybody would be happy.

This is one point of view. Only it happens that perhaps—perhaps, the divine Will is not quite like that. And perhaps it may be as in that story: you all know the story of the elephant and its mahaut?—the elephant, its mahaut and the Brahmin on the road who refused to get out of the way of the elephant and, when the mahaut told him: "Go away", he replied "No, God in me wants to remain there", and the mahaut answered: "Pardon me, but God in me tells you to go away!"

So the reply to Anatole France is perhaps just this that there is a will higher than that of man which wants things to change. And so there is nothing to do but obey and make them change.

Here we are. Is that all?

*Sweet Mother, it is written here: "In the path of works action is the knot we have first to loosen."*

(*Ibid.*, p. 115)

*Why is action a knot?*

Because one is attached to action. The knot is the knot of the ego. You do an action because of desire. Sri Aurobindo says it, doesn't he? The ordinary way of doing action is tied to desire under one form or another—a desire, a need—, so that is the knot. If you act only for the satisfaction of desire (a desire which you call a need or a necessity or anything else, but at bottom, if you go to the very bottom of the thing, you see that it is the impulse of a desire which makes you act), well, if you act only under the effect of the impulse of desire, you will no longer be able to act when you will suppress the desire.

And this is the first answer people give you. When they are told: "Do action without being attached to the result of action, have this consciousness that it is not you who are acting, it is the Divine who is acting", the reply which ninety-nine and a half per cent give is: "But if I feel like that, I don't stir any longer! I don't do anything any more; it is always a need, a desire, a personal impulse which makes me act in one way or another." So Sri Aurobindo says: "If you want to realise the teaching of the Gita, the first thing to do is to loosen this knot", the knot attaching action to desire—so well attached are they that if you take away one you take away the other. He says the knot must be loosened in order to be able to take away desire and yet continue to act.

And this is a fact, it is this which must be done. The knot must be loosened. It is a small inner operation which one can very easily do; and when one has done this operation, one realises that one acts absolutely without any personal motive—but moved by a Force higher than your egoistic force, and more powerful also. And then one acts, but the consequences of action no longer return upon you.

This is a wonderful phenomenon of consciousness, and quite concrete. In life you do something (whatever it be that you do, good, bad, indifferent, that does not count) no matter what it is, it brings immediately a series of consequences. In fact you do it to obtain a certain result, it is for that you act, with a view to the result. For example, if I put out my hand like this to take the mike, I look for the result, you see, to make sounds in the mike. And there is always a consequence, always. But if you loosen the knot and let a Force which comes from above—or elsewhere—act through you and make you do things, there are consequences of your action, but they

don't come to you any longer, for it is not you who started the action, it is the Force from above. And the consequences go above, or else they are guided, willed, directed, controlled by the Force which made you act. And you feel *ab-so-lutely* free, nothing comes back to you as a result of what you have done.

There are people who have had this experience (but these things come first in a flash, for a moment, and then withdraw; it is only when one is quite ready for the transformation that this comes and stays for good), well, some people have had this experience once, perhaps for a few seconds in their life, they have had experience; and then the movement has been withdrawn, the state of consciousness withdrawn; but the memory remains. And they imitate that. And when by chance they happen to be people who know how to give lectures, like certain gurus who have disciples to whom they teach the path, they tell them about that: "When it is the Divine who acts through you and when you have loosened the knot of desire, you have no longer any moral or other consequence of what you do. And you can do anything whatever: you can kill your neighbour, you can violate a woman, you can do everything the Divine wants in you—and you will never have any consequences "

And indeed they do it! There they take the experience as a cloak to cover all their excesses. This is just by the way, to put you on your guard against people who pretend to be what they are not.

But, as a matter of fact, the result is very simple, for they immediately suffer the consequences of their pretensions (they say they don't, but they suffer them)...I had a very striking example of a sannyasin who was furious with someone who did not want to be his disciple (which already proved that he was far from having realised that state) and wished to avenge himself. And indeed he had some powers, he had made a very powerful formation to kill this person who had refused to be his disciple. It happened that this person was in contact with Sri Aurobindo. He told him his story and Sri Aurobindo repeated it to me. And the result was that the formation of that man, who was acting with the so-called divine Will, fell back upon him in such a way that it was he who died!

And it was simply the fact of re-establishing the truth. There was nothing else to do.

So, the moral of the story is that one must not pretend, one must be; that one must be quite sincere and not cover one's desires with fine theories.

I have met many people who claimed they had perfect equality of soul and perfect freedom, and hid themselves behind these theories: "All is the divine Will", and who, in fact, in their thought, substituted their will for the divine Will, and were very far from realising what they claimed. They were idlers who wished to make no effort and preferred keeping their nature as it was, rather than working to transform it. There!

*Sweet Mother, do these people have powers?*

Yes! There are some who have great powers. But these are powers which come from the vital and from an association with vital entities.

There are all kinds of powers. Only, those powers don't hold out in the presence of the true divine Power—they can't stand that. But in relation to ordinary human beings they have much power.

*Then, they can do harm?*

Much. Not only can they: they do it. They do much harm. The number of people who are tormented because they had the misfortune of meeting a so-called sannyasin,<sup>1</sup> is considerable, considerable. I am not telling you this to frighten you, because here you are sheltered, but it is a fact. While receiving initiation these men have received the imposition of a force from the vital world which is the most dangerous of all things... This is not always the case, but most often that is what happens.

Because sincerity is so rare a virtue in the world, one must bow down before it with respect when one meets it. "Sincerity", what we call sincerity, that is to say, a perfect honesty and transparency: that there be nowhere anything which pretends, hides itself or wants to pass itself off for what it is not.

<sup>1</sup> Of course, this alludes only to those who put on the orange robe with the sole aim of hiding their egoistic passions behind the veil of a dress which is generally respected. There can be no question about those who have a pure heart and whose costume is simply the outer sign of their integral consecration to the spiritual life. (The Mother)

## AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

4 Rue de la Marine, Pondicherry, 16-2-1926

I RECEIVED this morning your letter about T. I shall try to explain to you T's condition, the reasons why I have been obliged to send him away from Pondicherry and the conditions which are necessary for his recovery from his present abnormal state of mind.

Some time ago T began to develop ideas and methods of Yoga-sadhana which are quite inconsistent with the ideas and methods that underlie my system of Yoga. Especially, he began practices that belong entirely to the most extreme form of Bhakti Sadhana, practices that are extremely dangerous because they lead to an excited, exalted, abnormal condition and violently call down forces which the body cannot bear. They may lead to a break-down of the physical body, the mind and the nervous system. As soon as I became aware of this turn, I warned him of the danger and prohibited the continuance of these practices. At first he attempted to follow my instructions, but the attraction of his new experiences was so great that he resumed his practices in secret and in the end openly returned to them in defiance of my repeated prohibitions. The result was that he entered into and persisted in an abnormal condition of mind which still continues at times, rises to an alarming height dangerous to the sanity of his mind and the health of his body.

The following are the peculiarities of this condition.

1. There is a state of mind in which he loses hold to a great extent of physical realities and lives in a world of imaginations which do not at all belong to the terrestrial body and the physical human life.

2. He conceives a great distaste for eating and sleeping and believes that the power in him is so great that he can live without sleep and without food.

3. He is listening all the time to things which he calls inspirations and intuitions, but which are simply the creations and delusions of his own excited and unduly exalted state of mind. This exalted state of mind gives him so much pleasure, so much a false sense of strength and Ananda and of being above the human condition that he is unwilling to give it up and feels unhappy and fallen when he is brought down to a more ordinary consciousness.

4. In this condition he has no longer enough discrimination left or enough will-power to carry out my instructions or even his own resolutions, but obeys blindly and like a machine these false inspirations and impulses. Everything contrary to them he explains away or ignores—that is the reason why he ignores my orders and puts no value on my telegrams or letters.

5. Also he feels in this condition an abnormal shrinking (not any spiritual detachment) from physical life, from his family, from his friends—for some time he withdrew even from the society of his fellow-sadhakas—and considers anything that comes from them or turns him from his exalted condition as the prompting of evil forces.

Please understand that all these things are the delusions of his own abnormal and exalted state of mind and are *not*, as he falsely imagines and will try to persuade you, signs of a high spiritual progress. On the contrary, if he persists in them, he will lose altogether such spiritual progress as he has made and may even destroy by want of food and want of sleep his body.

To allow him to remain here would be quite disastrous for him. He would count it as a victory for his own aberrations and would persist in them without any further restraint with results that might be fatal to him. And the intensity of the spiritual atmosphere here would prevent him from coming back to his normal self. Besides, when in this condition he brings about here a state of confusion and perturbation,—the one thing to be absolutely avoided in this way of Yoga,—which if prolonged would make the sadhana of my other disciples impossible and would spoil my own spiritual work altogether.

His one chance is if he can settle down in V for a considerable time and in the surroundings of his old physical life return to a normal condition. Please therefore do not send him back or give him money to return to Pondicherry. It will be of no use and may do him great and irreparable harm. He promised, when he went from here first, to eat well and sleep regularly, and he has now promised on my refusing to see or receive him on account of his disobedience of my orders, to remain quietly at V, to cease listening to his false inspirations and intuitions and to obey my written orders. I had already written to him to that effect and also to throw away his shrinking from life and from his contact with others, but he came away without waiting for my letter. If this time he carries out my instructions, he may yet recover. He must eat well, he must sleep regularly, he must do some kind of physical action, he must resume normal contact with life and others. If he returns to his erratic movements, the remedy is not to let him leave V, but to remind him of my instructions and his promises and insist on his carrying them out. Only you must do it in my name and remind him always that if he does not obey me, I have resolved not to see him again nor to receive him. This is the only thing at present that can make him do what is requisite.

I consented to an arrangement by which he could live quietly by himself because that was what he asked for; but the best would have been that he should live either with his family in their house so that his needs could be looked after or with someone who would see to his needs, someone *with a strong will* who will quietly insist, always in my name, on his doing what he has promised. But I do not know if there is anyone who could do this for him or whom he would consent to have with him.

You should not understand by what I have written, that he should live as a householder, resume his relations with his wife etc., or that he should not be left mostly

to quiet and solitude, if that is what he likes. What I mean is that he must come gradually, if not at first, to deal with those around him as a human being with human beings, without his present nervous shrinking and abnormal repulsions. The spiritual attitude I have told him to take is one of calm freedom from attachment (*āśakti*), not of an excited shrinking. It may be that after a time this will seem more possible to him than it does at present.

It will be best if you let me know fairly often what he is doing and whether he is carrying out my instructions, as it is likely that he will not write himself to me all the truth when he is in the wrong condition.

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## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1970)

*(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 25, 1940

SRI AUROBINDO (addressing S): Have you read of the retreat of the Allies?  
S (smiling). No!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they have got away safely from Boulogne. The Allies means, of course, the British. (Laughter).

S: What do they lack? Why are they giving way like that?

SRI AUROBINDO. I don't understand. The German advance-troops are not numerous and still the Allies can't tackle them. They can only hold out for a while and then retreat. For two or three days the French have been saying that they are in the suburb of Amiens, as at Narvik—closing round.

S: They don't now say "according to plan". (Laughter)

SRI AUROBINDO: They go according to their old order and schedule while Churchill speaks of assault and attack.

S: Order and schedule don't come to much.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a new method of warfare now. If they stick to their old method, then they can't hold on. It is like the football game. When one party makes a rush, the other can't say, "Let us wait to put the field in order." They can't go and occupy an unassigned place because it is unassigned. (Laughter) It is the famous story of Government House being on fire. They wrote to the Headquarters what they should do. The H.Q., after some time, wrote back, "Put out the fire". (Laughter)

N: The Germans intend to attack England, they say.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is why they are capturing the ports. Otherwise they would have turned towards Paris.

P In the course of a talk, Schomberg was telling me that volunteers are not of much use now as it is a mechanised warfare for which much training is needed.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but it is not that the Allies have no mechanised troops. Besides, mechanised troops operate in open fields. In cities like Amiens they can't. There it is the infantry that has to lead the attack and France has a big army though England has a B.E.F and is now calling up reservists.

S: America is proposing to send all her planes for the defence of the Allies.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not all—only as many as she can spare. One senator has said that America's frontier is the Rhine. But even the limited proposal has been turned down.

S: The frontier is shifting. Now it is Boulogne.

SRI AUROBINDO: Still the Rhine is also there.

S: The new English law has not come into force yet, against private property.

SRI AUROBINDO: Private property? That would be the last thing to be touched.

P: At present their aim is control of labour and industries to prevent profiteering.

S: And facilitate manufacture of armament.

SRI AUROBINDO: England has never gone so far before. They are arresting M.P's even. In France it is quite traditional to arrest suspects in times of stress and revolution. Liberty is in a bad state everywhere in spite of Chamberlain and Roosevelt.

#### EVENING

SRI AUROBINDO: The Germans have passed through that convenient gap of 30 miles.

S: Not 30, but 25.

SRI AUROBINDO: Now they have narrowed it to 25.

P: The B.B.C. says it won't give news any more. The public gets scared. But they will be still more scared by the German news.

SRI AUROBINDO: They will give news of Norway, perhaps. (*Laughter*)

S: It seems the two contingents of Germans have separated the B.E.F. from the French. In that case they will be sandwiched by the Germans. One will come from the North and the other from the South.

SRI AUROBINDO: From the North? The Germans are in Antwerp, that is north-east. They can't make a flank movement from there. They can only attack from the front. And it is only the advance troops of the Germans that have passed through the gap. The main body is behind. If they bring the main body, there will be a great strategical danger of the French making an attack on their flank. This gap must have been left by the B.E.F during their wonderful "strategical retreat" from Namur. It could not have been there at the beginning. If it had been, the Germans would have rushed forward at that time.

N: If it is only the advance troops occupying, they can't be numerous. And how could they occupy the ports?

SRI AUROBINDO: There was no defence in the ports.

N: Churchill says that the Germans rushed through the breach in the French army and attacked the B.E.F from behind.

SRI AUROBINDO: That was earlier. Later it was through the gap left by the British army.

P: Udar says that there is much anti-British feeling outside.

SRI AUROBINDO: Dara writes from Hyderabad that except for himself and Sir Akbar everybody is anti-British.

N: Why are the Muslims anti-British?

SRI AUROBINDO. Why not? They don't want British Raj, they want Muslim Raj. I would not mind that if it were not for Hitler. Even Mussolini would not matter if he defeated the Allies, because he is not a man to conquer the world. Stalin is serious, not for himself, but for his communism. Huque says he wants to forget that he is a Muslim Leaguer and asks the Congress, and Mahasabha to forget their own parties and merge for a common object. The trouble is: as soon as the danger is over, they will start again. You have seen what the Raja of Mahmudabad has said?

N: No.

SRI AUROBINDO: He wants to have separate Muslem provinces and to impose Muslim laws on all. He says there are very good laws in Islam. No usury, prohibition, and so on.

N: That shows what they will do if they have their way, and they blame the Congress!

SRI AUROBINDO: They will start civil war at once. But I don't see how their Pakistan scheme can be successful if the Frontier, Baluchistan and Sind don't want it. In that case only the Punjab and Bengal remain. In the Punjab the Sikhs and Hindus won't stand being Muslimised, I suppose.

N: The Sikhs won't.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Hindus will, you mean? And in Bengal, I don't know what they will do. Perhaps they will wail like Sotuda.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

## SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

*(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.)*

SEX in the physical world is a diminished manifestation of a higher truth, the truth of creation. There are two sides to creation, one masculine, the other feminine (to borrow words from the physical world)—the Purusha who acts and the Prakriti who is acted upon and becomes the executive energy.

Woman is more practical than man. While man knocks about from idea to idea, woman with her true pragmatic instinct gets down to business at once. If she is given the opportunity—and this means leaving the whole thing to her for some generations—I believe she will succeed in politics. She will go straight to practical politics. Man loses himself in abstractions, he is intellectual; woman is psychic and intuitive. She is directly creative, being more in touch with the vital world than man is. Man moves more in the mind. The idea that woman inspires man is the idea of woman as Shakti, the Force that dynamises the mind of man.

There is a tendency in nature by which a man will continue to be a man in future lives, and a woman to be a woman. I do not recollect any past female lives of mine. Sikhandi, in the old tradition, prayed to be born as a man and was able to take birth as the son of Drupada.

Sexual force is a great basic force. It is one of the strongest forces on the vital plane. Instead of allowing it to descend into the physical, if we know how not merely to restrain but to control and then transform it into *ojas*, it would be a powerful all-round creative energy, helpful in the ascension of consciousness. All the forces of the being are there in the seed. Sexual force, changed into *ojas*, is the force which transforms the cells of the body.

The notion that the vital force pressed upon matter and all the species of forms at once arose has no truth in it. Facts prove the theory of a gradual evolution of forms. Inconscient matter must hold life latent in it but the emergence of life

from matter depends on a pressure on it from the vital world. Forms slowly evolve, and along with them there is the evolution of consciousness.

*Q: Does the evolution of consciousness follow or precede that of forms?*

First forms evolve, and then the organisations of consciousness emerge.

*Q: Is there an evolution in the vital world?*

No. Evolution is only in the world of Matter.

*Q: What does the Upanishad mean when it says that the Devas killed the Asuras in the Mukhya Prāṇa?*

When the Devas establish concord and peace on the planes (vital, mental), the Asuras come with their opposition and disturb the order. Mukhya Prāṇa is the chief vital force: the Asuras were seized there in the vital world and slain.

Not all the forces or beings in the vital world are hostile. There are Gods too on that plane.

*Q: According to Jagadish Chandra Bose's discoveries, there are different reactions of plants to different people.*

Yes, if we can enter into the consciousness of the plant—the vital consciousness—we see that the plant feels the presence of men near it. It can, for instance, feel our affection for it. This is an ancient sentiment in India: you find it expressed in Kalidasa's play, *Sakuntalā*. There is an organised surface consciousness (nervous) of the plant; of course it is conscious in its own and not our way. There are also beings in plants, what the Greeks called Dryads. In the mineral kingdom too, when there are formations, there are beings, though naturally not as organised as in plants. Beings in mountains are quite palpable. There are beings everywhere on the earth—in water, air, fire. At times some beings push at us, and we feel the push—not physically but with a subtle sense we experience the driving intention of the push. There are small beings who go about for their own amusement. If you are harmonious in your movements and self-controlled, they cannot do anything to you. Even rain and other things like that can be controlled by us through the beings at work in them. Nature herself is a great being. Movements in Nature are to all appearances mechanical—like the falling of a stone—but except when we impose a mechanical action upon Nature, as by throwing a stone, no natural action is really mechanical. There are beings behind. All is a play of forces and beings. We too are the instruments of some forces. But we can be a power ourselves.

If you want to be subject to ill-omens, you can be so. Small beings are there who are interested in man's concerns; several of them are mischievous. The former know what hostile forces (vital, physical) are at work, and they intimate to man what is going to happen. They do it by means of portents. Some people can listen to these beings.

Premonition is another thing: the subliminal self knows beforehand what is about to happen.

When I was in Alipore Jail I got a prophecy of the Great War.<sup>1</sup> Mira had a prophecy of the Chinese Revolution.<sup>2</sup> Prophecies indicate that something is already decided above and that it realises itself in some form down below.

During certain hours of the day, during the moonlit portion of the month, and during the Uttarayana or the season of the sun's northern path in the year, there is a time suitable to meditation. This is what Indian tradition says. According to this tradition, evening is the time of the Rakshasas—giants of the vital world. There is an essential truth in these beliefs, but not an absolute truth.

The moon expresses the God of the Sense-Mind. Another aspect of it is the expression of the Soma Godhead, the expression of Ananda. The Sun represents the God of Knowledge.

Fear is of many kinds. There is mental fear that something may happen or may not happen; another kind acts directly on the nerves. The rate of the heart-beat is an effect of the nervous reaction. The fear comes as if it were in the bowels—anger also acts similarly. Even if a Yogi has put away all fear from him, sometimes it comes up from the subconscious, though there is no fear in the mind; and it acts there near the bowels. Soldiers who are brave, who have no fear in the mind, still get that sort of fear.

Fear of ghosts attacks you in the spinal column; for ghosts attack from behind. The emotion of fear weakens the legs. Under the stress of fear you can't run.

Science allots many functions to different parts of the body. The spleen stores up blood and sends it where necessary: for instance, in the case of an injury. Science even claims that the pineal gland at the base of the brain is the receiver and transmitter of telepathic communication.

The subtle third eye between the eyebrows is said in the Taittiriya Upanishad to be the seat of Brahman; this means that it is the seat of communication for spiritual forces.

According to science, the brain is the seat of mind. This only means that mind communicates with the physical world through the instrument of the brain.

There is a lot of dramatic representation in the vital world. You must get rid of the drama and settle down to hard work: you must concentrate on the change of the vital being.

<sup>1</sup> World War I

<sup>2</sup> The one connected with Sun-Yat-Sen.

In a large number of temples and other religious houses, it is mostly the vital forces and the vital atmosphere that you meet.

Occultism deals with ceremonials of the supra-physical. In the hands of those who know, it can bring down subtle forces. Nine out of ten of these forces are vital.

A mantra may be misused. All depends on you. You may bring down higher powers or lower vital forces. A mantra may produce results even if one is not sufficiently pure.

There are subtle forces at work behind many human movements: for example, there is one at work in India behind the Non-co-operation Movement. In the largest sense there is only one Power everywhere. From that point of view, there is no inherent good or evil in forces, whether they are vital or any other. But speaking of particular manifestations we can say that the forces are of a good kind or not.

In the Veda, Agni is the inner fire; the sacrifice is a battle and a journey of the being; it is an offering to the Gods. By offering our desires as a sacrifice we gain in expansion of consciousness. In the sacrifice, Agni is kindled with will. You must establish the higher will in you. There must be no personal desire in the will.

God takes various forms, some quite peculiar. There are any number of Christs who appear to people. The power you bring down depends on you.

Aesthetics first starts with an appeal to the vital being. Then the mind takes it up. Religion likewise is connected with the vital being. Culture and Art are not in themselves spiritual. They are of all levels—mental, vital, etc. Only Religion consciously aims at directing the soul Godwards. Of course, even in Art one may have a religious feeling of worship of Beauty, there can also be a religious seeking of knowledge. At a certain stage, everything can be made an element of the spiritual life. But a Yogi can take up these elements and give them an expansion which carries them beyond aesthetic or mental forms.

In ancient India there was the atmosphere of each *varṇa*, caste—a Brahmin atmosphere, a Kshatriya atmosphere—so that there was a tendency of Brahmin or Kshatriya souls to incarnate in the right family. Now all that is gone and caste has become absurd.

Democracy is an idea of the reasoning mind. Originally it meant that all people are equally fitted—only they have not the opportunity to develop themselves, but if you give them equal opportunity they will all be equal. Now the democrat concentrates simply on asking for equal opportunities for all. In India the idea of hierarchies (classes based on *adhikāribheda*) was always dominant. Only a few have the true spiritual capacity to rise above the level of man. The rest of mankind always move in a circle. Nothing permanent has been done since man began his career on the earth.

Vivekananda was influenced by European democratic thought when he said that everybody is Brahman. Of course, there are all possibilities in everybody but only some of them can be formulated.

Law is a formulation of force that acts in certain habitual movements. The so-called laws of science are not absolute. One may be able, for instance, to resist the burning of fire. Where then is a fixed law such as physical science speaks of? The ancient Vedic Rishis knew the true nature of law and that is why they called laws *vratāni*.

*(To be continued)*

V. CHIDANANDAM

## TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

I WEAVE no dreams round any hope,  
All thoughts of mine revolve round Thee;  
Desires I have are not my own,  
It is Thy Will at work in me.

Thou art there in that human form  
Shedding Thy gold mysteriously,  
Transforming all that meets the glow,  
Revealing hidden divinity.

Thy face in each form, every thought—  
Thy Hand in all that seek and strive—  
This cosmos, Thy divine play, Lord!  
Mother! in Thy Grace let me dive!

M. P. JAIN



## LIGHTS ON THE PATH

### PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES

*(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1970)*

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

ALL Yoga is only a means by which we can come first to some kind of union and finally, if we have the full light, to an integral union with the Master and supreme Soul and Self of our existence. The greatest Yoga is to take refuge from all the perplexities and difficulties of our nature with this indwelling Lord of all Nature, to turn to him with our whole being, with the life and body and sense and mind and heart and understanding, with our whole dedicated knowledge and will and action, *sarva-bhāvena*, in every way of our conscious self and our instrumental nature. And when we can at all times and entirely do this, then the divine Light and Love and Power takes hold of us, fills both self and instruments and leads us safe through all the doubts and difficulties and perplexities and perils that beset our soul and our life, leads us to a supreme peace and the spiritual freedom of our immortal and eternal status.

*Essays on the Gita, Second Series, p. 440.  
(Found by Rajangam, March 29, 1931)*

Only when the mind is...entirely still, like clear, motionless and level water, in a perfect purity and peace of the whole being and the soul transcends thought, can the self which exceeds and originates all activities and becomings, the Silence from which all words are born, the Absolute of which all relativities are partial reflections manifest itself in the pure essence of our being. In a complete silence only is the Silence heard; in a pure peace only is its Being revealed. Therefore to us the name of that is the Silence and the Peace.

*The Synthesis of Yoga, Arya, Vol. II. p 409.*

(Found by Nolini, March 30, 1931)

The Divine and not you will enact his own will and works through you, not for your lower personal pleasure and desire, but for the world-purpose and for your divine good and the manifest or secret good of all. Inundated with light, you will see the form of the Godhead in the world and in the works of Time, know his purpose and hear his command. Your nature will receive as an instrument his will only, whatever it may be, and do it without question, because there will come with each initiation of your acts from above and within you an imperative knowledge and an illumined assent to the divine wisdom and its significance. The battle will be his, his the victory, his the empire.

This will be your perfection in the world and the body, and beyond these worlds of temporal birth the supreme eternal superconsciousness will be yours and you will dwell for ever in the highest status of the Supreme Spirit.

*Essays on the Gita, Second Series, pp. 499-500.*

(Found by Chinmayi, March 31, 1931)

The soul's faith, not a mere intellectual belief, but its concordant will to know, to see, to believe and to do and be according to its vision and knowledge, is that which determines by its power the measure of our possibilities of becoming, and it is this faith and will turned towards all that is highest, most divine, most real and eternal that will enable us to reach the supreme perfection.

*Essays on the Gita, Second Series, p. 345.*

(Found by Rajangam, March 31, 1931)

Spirit sees spirit, the divinised consciousness sees God as directly and more directly, as intimately and more intimately than bodily consciousness sees matter. It sees, feels, thinks, senses the Divine. For to the spiritual consciousness all manifest existence appears as a world of spirit and not a world of matter, not a world of life, not a world even of mind; these other things are to its view only God-thought, God-force, God-form.... The spiritual consciousness is aware of the Godhead with that close knowledge by identity which is so much more tremendously real than any mental perception of the thinkable or any sensuous experience of the sensible.

*Essays on the Gita, Second Series, p. 161.*

(Found by Tajdar, April 1, 1931)

There is a supreme consciousness through which it is possible to enter into the glory of the Transcendent and contain in him the immutable Self and all mutable Becoming,—it is possible to be one with all, to exceed world and yet embrace the whole nature at once of the cosmic and the supracosmic Godhead.

*Essays on the Gita*, Second Series, p.200.

(Found by Dyuman, April 1, 1931)

## SYLVAN SAMADHI

A SHADOWING grove, a jonquil evening sky;  
A statued body, back made firmly one  
With ancient cypress trunk still warm with sun—  
“O silent Soul, O all-transcending I .”

“Rapt man, confide in your arboreal friend:  
When That which you have wooed, at last gave all  
Its summoned self, made you its yogic thrall—  
What was it like, your busy mind’s bright end?”

“Fraternal tree, this metaphor is best:  
My immobility became a tomb  
Of massive grey-veined marble; incense bloom  
Of rose and jasmin dreamed upon its breast;

A gold embrace of boughs a golden vigil kept;  
Close by a sacred body’s sleep, my thinking slept.”

WILLIAM JONES

# SHADOWS OF THE TRUTH

## AN IMPRESSION

ONE morning I found a group of new faces at the Ashram gate, and with these strangers there were some Ashramites obviously directing the traffic. I pointed vaguely to the sempiternal chit in my hand, mumbled something about my mission, unintelligible even to myself, and there I was past the roadblock walking towards the noticeboard. Everything looked somehow different and unfamiliar, which might mean either that I was dreaming, or that the Force was working very rapidly, or that I was in one of my frequent joyous but unconnected conditions. By the time I reached the telegram-board I remembered: Indira Gandhi was coming that day. This also explained the figures in sports uniform everywhere.

Should I press on to Madhav's office? I had intended to ask him, or to leave a note asking him, to send a copy of Satprem's book *The Adventure of Consciousness* to an overseas friend undergoing a spiritual crisis. Better press on, I told myself: if it was not done now, it might remain undone. But I never did get to Madhav's office that morning. The shock of an unfamiliar tableau suddenly stopped me. The Samadhi wore an almost austere look. Instead of being surrounded by the usual figures, kneeling, sitting in meditation or tranquil repose, it was flanked by rows of young people in sparkling white shirts and shorts. They stood at attention, not rigidly so, but backs straight, shoulders square and most of them in silence. I had the strange impression of having been brushed by the future. The figures had somewhat undefined contours, like those that have been promised in time to come.

Then, standing there, the paper with the address of my overseas friend flapping in my hand, I focused the scene. Those figures were all girls, the long braids wound round their heads and pressed down by black nets. The starched shirts hid the roundness of their forms. They were the guard of honour lining Indira Gandhi's way to the Mother. The lines continued right into the Ashram building.

But though I had now got the facts of the situation straight, my mind continued in an irrational sphere, for it seemed that this garland of figures had sprung from the ground around the Samadhi, summoned there by the Mother's vision. A dreamed reality.

There was a soft breeze and the dapples from the Service Tree moved over the white uniforms. I was seized by that same stillness that I had known when, after travelling several thousand miles and an eternity of longing, I had finally stood before the Samadhi for the first time, one afternoon, many years before. I had read the Mother's plaque about Sri Aurobindo and it had been as though all the sorrows of

the world were dissolved by those words and by all the hope of the future contained in them.

Now once again time hovered while the message conveyed by a living tableau filtered through to me. A crow, ignorant of the occasion, settled on a branch of the Service Tree and, looking down, gave a squawk of astonishment, an echo of my reaction, the meaning of which was suddenly released in me: surprise at seeing these two integral, but usually separate-in-space, parts of the Ashram in close juxtaposition. And now it was as though something was suddenly transmitting, trying to give me a living demonstration of what it was all about, what the Samadhi was about, what our effort was about.

I had seen the Samadhi at all hours of the day, in all seasons, in its various moods of enchantment; at dawn when the ladies in their white saris are still wiping the Samadhi, at lunch time when the young boys and girls sweep the golden rain of flowers away, late at night when, all but deserted, one last figure bends its forehead to the Samadhi-rim. One figure at least there always seemed to be in devotion, meditation or simply mental repose. Now there was none. Even if I had ever seen the Samadhi completely deserted, I don't think I ever brought it together in my mind with physical exercises; whereas these young athletes, hair bound, feet together, poised as though ready to run or vault the horse, did bring to mind the discipline and aspiration of the body.

And suddenly the two seemed very obviously to belong together here. It was as though the various aspirations had fused.. for me. In reality they had been one since the beginning of time, the single hunger of all creation to be reunited with its origin. Strange, I had always thought that I had absorbed what the Mother had said about the falsehood being the belief that body and spirit are two and not one. They have both said it so often, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. And yet, if this juxtaposition could produce such a feeling of novelty, I must somewhere have been keeping the devotion of mind and emotions and that of the body carefully segregated. Perhaps, if I had been able to, I would have left poor Brother Donkey at the gate and floated into the Ashram.

Spirit and body are one. I wondered if these young athletes were conscious of this, more conscious than I. They looked as though they were, this morning. Some of them did. Goodness knows they must have forgotten it at times in the sportsground gruelling, and perhaps most of the time, but this morning they looked to me as though they knew what they stood for: the first generation of beings who have known that the body is divine, that it is not only a disposable temple for the Divine but is itself permeated by a residue of the Divine, and on its way back to the full power and knowledge of its origin.

I caught these bodies in a suspended moment in the slow but inevitable transformation of the terrestrial form, crude shadows of the far-off truth-form, some fragment of humanity painfully climbing back out of its involution. The golden day no longer seemed so impossibly far off. It was no longer preposterously out of reach. It was

here, now, happening under my eyes and in our hidden cells under the eternal eye, only so imperceptible as to provoke a graceless squawk from me for all my professions of faith and understanding.

When the tangible and undeniable signs of the truth-consciousness are realised in the body three hundred years from now, or three thousand, or whenever it is, probably nobody will remember that day when those young people, not looking quite like girls nor quite like boys, stood under the Mother's window along the Samadhi.

But if my consciousness retains any shape at all and any sense of the past, I will remember, no matter how far ahead that day.

MALI

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## THIS OFFERING

Do not reject this offering of mine,  
This shapeless, empty vessel unadorned.  
Clay it is, so the better you can mould;  
Empty, no doubt, but you can fill it up;  
If unadorned, own it and it shall shine.  
Though men have thrown it off as a useless thing,  
Will you not take this humble offering?

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

## CRITICS' COMPLAINTS

Not all can sup with satisfaction on poetry and when poetry is mystical the stomach and the palate are still more disgruntled. Even good critics come out with various complaints. I happen to be addicted to the mystical Muse and have received quite an assortment of criticisms, a part of which it might be of interest to consider in brief for the literary or psychological questions raised. They were apropos of my book *The Secret Splendour*, published in 1941.

### THE REGRET ABOUT "PRECIOUSNESS"

There was the English professor who, though giving fair praise, regretted "the tendency to be precious and not simple enough". But can mystical and spiritual poetry that is deeply dyed in the unknown be ever simple? No matter how bare and straightforward the style and ordinary and current the words, will not a certain lack of simplicity result from the very nature of the experience embodied—an experience which is a play of figures and values remote from ordinary vision, rare and elusive to normal thought, sublime or subtle in a way that is not seizable by common perception? The precision of mystical and spiritual poetry is intuitive and not intellectual, its exactitude is "revelatory" and does not make always a clear-cut mental picture. Even where a directness is practised and images are subdued, a difficulty will be felt not so much in understanding the meaning of individual words or phrases as in grasping in a living manner the insight that is uttered. The difficulty grows when imaged spiritual poetry is written—and spiritual poetry has to be imaged and symbolic if the veiled opulence of mystical realisation is to be caught in speech. To suit that opulence and be faithful to the atmosphere and light and contents of the strange inner "planes" a particular type of artistry is demanded, words with a certain aura or suggestive glow are required. This brings, on top of lack of simplicity, an element of preciousness. I for one have found both unavoidable—especially when I have tried to write with a word-vision and word-vibration drawn straight from what I have called inner planes without the normal poetic intelligence serving as paraphraser or interpreter. Sometimes an interpretative light may be present, but it is not the light of imaginative thought: it is something that appears like imaginative thought when really it is another mode of consciousness of which swift and wide-flashing thought is an imitator. That mode of consciousness acts even more by a suggestive quality in the rhythm-tone than by cast of vision or mould of speech; but in any case it does not yield its significance immediately to the mind and tends in its cumulative effect to produce an impression of "preciousness" because it has an aloofness, a rarity, a far-away flame calling for a style that must be at once vivid and fastidious.

## THE CHARGE OF BEING VAGUE AND ABSTRACT

Then there was another professor, an Indian, who too showed admirable comprehension of several points connected with mystical verse and who even absolved me from a possible charge of preciousness and said that words like "gloriole", "side-real", "alchemy", "nectarous" were consistent with the atmosphere of the inspiration and with the nature of the experience I sought to embody. But he suggested that the kind of vision I brought was vague and that I was inclined to be abstract. I should think abstractness does not arise, as my critic declared, from the use of expressions like 'vastnesses', 'omnipotence', 'agelessness'—so long as the poetry is profoundly felt, and especially when there are touches of vision accompanying the emotion. Nor is vision necessarily vague because it is too unfamiliar to be quickly grasped. My critic offered me phrases from Francis Thompson as examples of vivid mystical vision. But, to be authentic mysticism, one's images and metaphors have to be alive with a subtle inner reality. Francis Thompson has that "aliveness" in many of his poems, but I am afraid the phrases quoted to me were poor mysticism: theirs is a vividness that holds nothing subjective or subtle. To call the stars "the burning fruitage of the sky" is to convey no spiritual height or depth, no hint of the Divine—it is only a beautiful and concrete image, a vision no doubt, yet not any glimmer of the beatific vision—it is merely a poetising of the ordinary man's wonder without even an appreciable quiver of the ordinary man's worship. "Tellurian galleon" and "coerule pampas" belong to the same category. A mystical vision of "the Infinite with its associations of grandeur and awe" calls for a different style: sight, sense, sound, all these have to be brought from deeper centres of one's being than the imaginative intelligence—as done by Vaughan in

I saw Eternity the other night  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light.  
All calm as it was bright.

Here a profound metaphor is used and the rhythm is mystically "inward". But there is no need of direct metaphors even, provided that tense "in-tone" is present. The suggestion of true mystical and spiritual states is in such lines as Wordsworth's

The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

or

The light that never was on sea or land.

In directly imaged verse, a rare mystical and spiritual atmosphere is reached in his

The wind comes to me from the fields of sleep

and the very acme of it in

Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

There is here something in the way of seeing and feeling, in the mould of phrase and above all in the stir of the rhythm, that goes deeper than the imaginative intelligence,



the verses plunge to the rapt psyche within us and break it open to the amplitudes of the Divine. In the last two instances the metaphors are perhaps clear enough, but in this type of poetry the basic suggestions are very often of a wideness and a lordly light or else an immense masterful mystery that are not easily vivid to the normal imagination and cannot etch a picture immediately on the mind. The consciousness has to train itself to receive the unusual impact, the uncommon vibration before a "certain abstract quality in the tone" reveals itself as a subtle concreteness, a living intensity. Warmth there is, but not always drawn from "nature and human life"; rather, I should say that the warmth is drawn from natural and human life but is not invariably directed to familiar objects, it moves out into unknown ethers and there envelops realities and not abstractions, but realities which are not generally felt by the reader at the first blush. Mystical and spiritual poetry of this kind is not intrinsically bare or even as a rule austere, though its style tends to compactness: it is an exploration of undiscovered countries and both eye and ear have to get accustomed for the hues and harmonies of those regions to come home to the heart.

Perhaps these four verses of mine could serve as an example:

Beyond themselves her clay-born beauties call:  
Breathing the rich air round her is to find  
An ageless God-delight embracing all,  
The mute unshadowed spaces of her mind.

#### THE CENSURE ON COMPOUND WORDS

Another censure passed on mystical poetry such as I had attempted was on the repeated employment of compound words. Particularly, the compound of abstract nouns was condemned. Well, even such compounds may be quite living in their context but appear half-dead when torn out of it. The concrete is preferable on the whole to the abstract; yet all words in poetry cannot and need not be concrete in connotation. Abstract compounds must not be judged by a comparison with concrete ones nor must they be asked to impart by themselves any colour to the poetry—they must be taken *sui generis*, and in their own class what counts is point, power, sonority, rhythmic subtlety. Although a frigidity, a vitreous quality may be a possible danger, the frigid and vitreous is frequently felt on first impression and dissolves in the general flow of vision and emotion and remains only when the compound is exhibited *in vacuo*. "Passion-prayer", for instance, has an intensity of significance as well as sound in a context where two peaks lifted like two hands in prayer are spoken of—prayer that is passionate not only because it is keen but also because those two peaks are regarded as "companion-crests", "a mystic parenthood", and their combination, their union which is figured within one halo formed for both of them by a full and perfect moon behind them, is seen as an act of spiritual passion that is occultly creative. Again, "truth-glory" may not appeal if looked at in isolation, but take it in the phrase:

Truth-glory naked in the immortal Mind—  
and the word “naked” gives at once a concrete and visual suggestion to the compound noun and evokes the suppressed “sight”, the implication of brightness, of light, in the word “glory”.

Some compound epithets from Keats and Thompson were quoted by my critic as of the right poetic sort. They were fine; but Thompson’s “tawny-coloured”, though poetic enough, does not strike me as anything subtle when applied to a desert—it belongs to the effective outward style of poetry and even so it brings out vividly and precisely what everybody sees about a desert and does not lay bare a new aspect: there is no surprise of significance in it as there would be, say, in a compound of noun and epithet like “lion-coloured” or “tiger-tawny”. A compound of any kind must not only represent, it must reveal, in order to be of paramount quality. A fair instance is in a line I found the other day,

The tiger with his fire-whipped flesh,  
where the urgent ferocity of the beast is suggested no less than its tawny colour and striped appearance. In mystical poetry the subtle nuance is all the more requisite in a compound. And so long as it is there, either in the paired words themselves or by association with their context, the frequency of compounds must not be objected to. Of course a plethora of them is hardly advisable, but it is not always easy to cry “Too much!” with justification when one is confronted by a poetry where elaborateness of expression, however beautiful, might be less true to its spirit than a running revelation of many brief lights or else a quick piling up of restrained richnesses.

#### THE SUSPICION OF HEAVY ORNAMENTATION

There was criticism also of a certain way of putting things. The line,

Roses of heaven rooted in sapphire hush,  
indicating what we, despite our soul being “a paradise blown down,” have the potentiality to surpass, was said to limn no picture in the reader’s mind and to be not more beautiful than a simpler locution like: “the shining stars in the stillness of the blue sky.” The defect of this criticism is that the *raison d’être* of the line is missed. I admit there is not greater beauty here—but there is certainly more force running through the beauty. It is not, however, for its force as such that the expression is moulded thus: it is for its appropriateness, its organic place in the poem where it stands, its verbal point. The chief mistake in judgment is that the line is taken to be merely about stars. These roses of heaven are not shining stars nor is the sapphire hush the still blue sky. I was not rhetorically referring to the constellations and saying that the fully realised human spirit will be greater than all the lights of the firmament. Would not stars more appropriately be lilies than roses, and the night-sky black or at least indigo than blue? These discrepancies by themselves should be eye-openers. Actually, I am speaking of an order of spiritual existence—the unfallen high powers of the supernatural world, call them gods or angels

or seraphs or what you will. Unlike the human soul which is like "a sun deflowered, a leprosy of light", these are luminaries in full bloom, unwithered uncrumbling splendours that have not got dislodged from the quiet and fathomless height of divine bliss but are still "rooted" there. The word "rooted" is extremely significant and also most apt when throughout the poem the imagery has been of flowers of fire. "Roses" also is therefore organic and is no decorative term: it suggests a glowing plenitude of beauty and bliss as no other word would in this particular context of spiritual symbolism. The epithet "sapphire" too holds a sense of richness, a glowing preciousness, that is in tune with the terms used in another line:

The shredded silver and the shrunken gold.

It is absurd to suspect a stiff, heavy, roundabout, recondite ornamentation here.

### THE MISCONCEPTION ABOUT MYSTICISM

Each of the critical opinions I have so far referred to, errs in one respect or another in its bearing on the values of mystical poetry. None, however, betrays a serious lack of the soul's subtle senses. But there was one critic who found himself utterly at a loss in a domain where Nature and Supernature fuse in vision, familiar shapes and colours are moulded by unknown modes of being. And though he talked of the unconquerable will that could keep the Spirit alive even when the body was battered and broken, it was only in connection with the poetry that could be written about the heroism shown in the desperate writhing wrestle of World War II between the forces of freedom and those of tyranny. He did not realise that if the Spirit could be a burning beauty even when the physical form was overwhelmed it must be a substance and a power greater and more lasting than what we commonly look upon as the concrete world and that a poetry which penetrates to the deeper places of the Spirit touches reality in an intenser and more perdurable form, brings forth images and archetypes out of spheres of consciousness that are a finer harmony of shape and significance than the data of experience offered us by the outer mind. The Spirit is more substantial, more concrete than Matter which is one of its aspects and all that is in the so-called real world is but a poor reflection of what is dynamic in the Spirit, waiting there to be released upon earth. The Spirit is not a dream or an abstraction: it is the prime stuff, the basic world into which the mystic enters and out of which he brings creative light through the doors of worship, self-surrender, concentration, meditative vision, Yogic practice. Not only is the critic in question unaware of the Spirit's depths and heights that are more real than "the grimness and horror of the war as waged in Europe and China" but he is also unaware that if the Spirit is the prime stuff and the supreme Archetype it is not a denial of things that are here but their essential truth, not an ascetic emptiness or a passionless purity but living light, throbbing colour, intense shape, rich movement, concrete ecstasy. Sense and emotion do not die in it, vista and vision are not lost in it: the Divine is not a remote inanity, the Divine is both personal and impersonal, coming to us in various ways, meeting us as the indefinable yet most

living Vast at one time and at another as a personal centre of that vastness, the Lord, the Lover, the Avatar, the Guru.

Mysticism is not "morbid" or "neurotic" or "erotic" if it speaks in terms of love and passion and sensuousness; rather, what is ordinarily felt as sensuous and passionate love is only the outer, incomplete, fragmentary form of the deep heart's intensity that turns to the Divine and touches it everywhere. Emotional and sensuous love of God is not repressed sex breaking out in a region where it has no place: it is the basic urge in man for ideal beauty and perfection finding its true and illumined outlet—all through the ages the human heart has found its fulfilment in a Krishna, a Buddha, a Christ or in the worship of the supreme Creatrix, the World-Mother—Mahashakti, Isis, Alma Venus, Kwannon. Face and figure are not strangers in the realm of Spirit—the Divine is heard, seen, touched, and if any Yoga is to be fruitful it must yearn with sense as well as soul, the whole complex of human nature must be bent on the Divine, for then only can the Divine be experienced in its fullness and its luminous substantiality. Unless the Spirit is loved concretely as if it were physical and material without the imperfections of such things, there can be neither mystical life nor mystical art. No mystic has lived or written poetry without that concrete full-blooded love; for this alone can contact and incarnate the stuff of Spirit—all else floats as mere concept and speculation. It may be clever to call it "the irrepressible copulative urge camouflaged" and to see in its literary expression thwarted desire finding "an outlet in a neurotic love-poetry in which the object of true worship which the poet dare not name openly is masked by a philosophical concept of Ultimate Reality". May I point out that the mystical urge is never dry philosophy or ascetic puritanism? It is a leap of the soul, a whole-hearted desire for union with Eternal Beauty, a kind of sexless sex, a passion based on continence. Nothing arid or barren here—everything a fire that purifies without destroying the senses and the emotions. Until one understands this fire burning intensely in an atmosphere of peace, one will not understand either mysticism or mystical poetry.

K. D. SETHNA

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## A PRAYER

THESE are the currents of my life,  
Engulf them in Thy sea:  
The tangled threads of daily strife  
Reweave to image Thee.

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

## TO KNOW THE GREATER NAME

I HAVE witnessed ceremonial murders  
and casual masquerades.  
I have witnessed the discovery of sea-birds  
in the white-breaking sea.  
I have witnessed the construction of elaborate ships  
and the embarkation of great armies.  
I have witnessed the proliferation of fishes,  
the phenomenon of fleas.  
I have witnessed the contagion of sparrows,  
the daily conflagration of parrots.  
I have witnessed the awakening of great lizards  
in the fire of summer daybreak.  
I have witnessed the opening of the earth  
and the eruption of distant stars.  
I have witnessed wild horses standing  
in the river under the elms....

I have witnessed these things,  
but alone I have witnessed nothing.

I have tasted the fruits of strange trees  
and the fragrance from winter blossoms:  
I have gathered them in wide baskets  
and set them beside my door in poor weather.  
I have heard the sound of the black singing night  
and the slow beating of the great heart.  
I have stood on the moon and touched the planets,  
and have known the felicity of angels.  
I have welcomed the crowds of golden children  
who come sailing from the sun.. .

Yet, alone, I have heard nothing,  
have tasted nothing, gathered nothing,  
touched nothing, welcomed no one.

I have known the wolf which dwells with the lamb.  
I have known the leopard which lies with the kid,

I have known the calf with the young lion, and the fatling together.  
 I have known the little child who leads them.  
 I have known the holy mountain.  
 I have known the waters covering the sea....

I have known these things,  
 but alone I have known nothing.  
 I have completed the great chain  
     and used the great key.  
 I have caught the great fish,  
     tamed the great snake.  
 I have quarried the great rock,  
     brought down the great tree.  
 I have walked the great night,  
     achieved the high place.  
 I have proclaimed the great word  
     and freed the great love.  
 I have won the great love,  
     O have won the great love....

I have done these things,  
 but alone I have done nothing.

I am the lover and the loved.  
 I am the killer and the killed.  
 I am the mother and the child.  
 I am the fool and I am his folly.  
 I am the silence and the listening stones.  
 I am the rain and the windy weather.  
 I am the snowfields and the coloured waters  
 I am the clouds and the mists and the shady places.  
 I am the light and the dark.  
 I am the yes and the no.  
 I am this, I am that.  
 I am joy.  
 I am wonder.  
 I am peace.  
 I am love.

Am I these things?  
 I am all these things.  
 But alone I am nothing.

NORMAN THOMAS

## THE FOURTH PERSON

### A PARABLE FROM TAMIL NAD

THE sun is set and night is spreading its dark carpet over the earth. Rain clouds are gathering and it may start raining any moment. Flashes of lightning span the sky from end to end making the darkness darker by the intermittent blazes, and peals of thunder rend the sky.

It has started to rain. A saintly-looking pilgrim goes to a house in Thirukoilur and begs for a little space to spend the night in. The pious householder shows him a small corridor and retires into the house. The pilgrim stretches himself down to sleep.

The rain and wind gather force. Another pilgrim appears and enquires of the first one if he can have a little shelter from the wind and the rain. The first pilgrim answers, "You are welcome! There is enough place here for one to sleep in and for two to squat."

The wind and the rain worsen into a violent storm when a third pilgrim comes to the same house and asks if he can have a little space. The other two cheerfully welcome him saying that there is space there for one to sleep and for two to squat and for three to stand.

The pilgrims are Poigaiwar, Buthathalwar and Peyalwar, the three great Bhakta yogis celebrated among the Vaishnavas of the South as the First Alvars. Poigaiwar hails from Kancheepuram, Buthathalwar from Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) and Peyalwar from Mylapore in Madras. Historians place them in the 5th century A. D. although tradition would take them back to the Dwapara Yuga.

The preliminary introductions over, the conversation of the saintly pilgrims turns on the contemplation of the divine attributes of the Lord. Suddenly the three Bhaktas feel a pressure as if a fourth person has come into their midst. But there is scarcely place for the three of them to stand. Then how does the intruder come in and who may he be? It is dense darkness and they have no lamp.

Now Poigaiwar gets an idea. What if they have no lamps? Are there not other and better forms of light? He starts to sing:

With earth itself as the container  
And the wide sea as the ghee that feeds the flame  
And the powerful-rayed sun as the fire  
I lay my song-offerings at His feet  
Who wields the disc burning bright;  
Let the sea of suffering cease!

This brightens up Buthathalwar who chants:  
Love is the container and aspiration  
The ghee that feeds the flame;

The mind that melts in joy the wick;  
 With these I kindle the light of knowledge  
 To Him whom I serve with my muse.

He has not finished and lo! who is that resplendent Purusha flaming like a million  
 suns and yet with a face cool and sweet as ambrosia? The mystery of the intruder is  
 solved. It is Narayana, the Supreme Person Himself who has come down to bless  
 His devotees with his darshan.

Peyalwar bursts forth in ecstasy:

I behold the Goddess of Beauty,  
 I behold the Body of Gold,  
 And the colour-splendour of the resplendent sun;  
 I behold the shining disc battle-thirsty,  
 I behold the spiralling conch,  
 All in my Beloved the ocean-hued.

S. MAHALINGAM

## IN SPRING — ESPECIALLY THE LEAVES

(FOR PAUL)

In spring — especially the leaves —  
 nipped in the bud — the old  
 gardener

can't afford to leave the new shoots  
 untended.

In the old world  
 plants & propagation made the man; but  
 we turn in our own circles & the distances are mere  
 explorations, orbital currents — messages always  
 returning to their source — as:  
 the world goes thru us, goes  
 each to the other (messages that mean more than  
 the intention, which itself can never be pushed  
 beyond its own means)

— arrows are fired  
 and their arcs followed.

IAN ROBERTSON



## ASPECTS OF THE MOTHER

*(Continued from the issue of October, 1970)*

EVEN the Mother's smallest action bears a meaning not evident to a new eye.

Memory goes back to the year 1934 when the Mother gave to X, in his first interview, two flowers named by her "Prosperity" and "Health".

X's career began as a store supplier. The very next year prosperity smiled on him and he bought a car. Now he is the owner of seven cars. Fifteen years after his coming to the Ashram X started a factory, the yearly turn-over of which now runs to lakhs. His life is an example of what eminence one can rise to in the eyes of the world by the gift of grace. All depends upon one's opening and receptivity.

His wife Y didn't know English at the time. To have the joy of talking with the Mother she learnt English.

Not to let the income-tax pile up, some people resort to the device, which is not illegal, of making their wives and daughters directors of their firms and factories. Y too was made one. As a rule, a director must have some knowledge of the working of his concern. Once women directors were called by the authorities but many of them did not turn up. Y didn't feel the least nervousness and gave appropriate answers to questions put to her, keeping the Mother in her heart. She actually felt the Mother at her back. Her answers covered three pages. Greatly surprised, the officer asked about her academic career but she had had none.

One of the two flowers given to X was "Health". Once he was attacked by pleurisy. The doctor declared his case serious. When the Mother was informed of this, she said, "It's nothing serious."

Contrary to the usual practice in such cases, thirty-six ounces of water were extracted from his body and it did him much good. Doctors had predicted that it would take him two years to be restored to normal health but he recovered in five months. To the surprise of all he got himself insured. The insurance doctor certified that there was no trace of disease in him. Radical cure is said to be impossible in such cases.

On her very first visit, more than 30 years ago, S was given a room in one of the Ashram buildings. On her asking what she would have to pay, the Mother made the answer quietly:

"The general rule is Rupee one a day: annas eight for board and annas eight for lodging. But this is not for you."

In her very first interview the Mother told her, "You can come whenever you like; not necessary to take permission. The door will remain always open for you". Since then once or twice a year she has been coming to the Ashram to get her spiritual battery charged.

On a certain day in the year 1962 she spoke to the Mother feelingly: "How lucky

are they who are near you and at your feet and how unlucky I am that you are still keeping me far away!" We should take note of the Mother's reply:

"Do you think all those who are staying here are near me? Their bodies are here but their minds may be wandering somewhere. Your body is there but you are near me. There is always my Presence in your heart."

With her heart pulsating with gratitude she said, "Since the day I had the fortune of having the Mother's exhilarating touch I have never entertained any fear of calamities. Mortal life and body have ceased to be a burden. There is a perfect harmony in the family which consists of forty to fifty members."

A day before the marriage of her daughter, there occurred a cyclonic storm in her home-town. Everybody got frightened. A suggestion was made to her to put up a camp or have a tarpaulin suspended.

She sank into herself and after a moment's reflection said, "Nothing will happen." And it proved true.

There is something very interesting in how this marriage took place.

Sometime in April 1961, in an interview the Mother asked S when she would come next. And without waiting for a reply, the Mother herself wrote in her diary: September 2, 1961, 10 a.m.

Then she asked:

"How is Aruna? And what is she doing?"

"Just appeared for the Matric."

"What about her marriage?"

"She is only sixteen, Mother."

"That was the age of marriage formerly."

Be wildered S said, "It will demand a lot of labour and time to hunt out a suitable mate for her. Mother! You are in my heart. You have taken your seat at the root of my life. It is your human sweetness that fills the breath of my life." Her eyes glistened with unshed tears of gratitude.

Reaching home, S got so much entangled in her home affairs that she thought it would be impossible for her to be at the Mother's feet exactly on the date fixed by her. Before it, a surprise awaited her.

One day in the smooth tranquillity of the morning her daughter threw out a hint, in a hesitating tone, about her choice of a youth as her life companion.

S agreed but she added: "The proposal must find favour with the Mother and must be graced by Her full approval."

"Very well," replied the daughter, "I will have nothing to do with the boy if the proposal fails to obtain the Mother's benediction."

All the problems that had proved baffling got resolved and S stood before the Mother exactly on the date noted by the Mother in her diary six months earlier.

When she placed the photo of the boy before the Mother, the Mother looked at it for a considerable time with the help of a magnifying glass to ascertain his latent qualities, and then said:

"This is the blessing flower for your future son-in-law". And the boy turned out to be more than a son to S.

In contrast, let me cite another instance:

Z, a shopkeeper in Calcutta, was one of the ardent devotees of the Mother. He wished to get something from the Mother's hand and preserve it as a souvenir. Once it so happened that everything was settled about the marriage of his daughter. All were extremely happy with the choice but when an approach was made to the Mother, the proposal could not receive her approval.

This created a big stir in the family. All felt very sad. No one seemed willing to miss such a grand opportunity. But the father of the girl refused to budge an inch." "Without the approval of the Mother I will have nothing to do with the marriage", said he in a firm tone.

Some time later the boy died in a motor accident. The marriage, if it had come about, would have been a misfortune.

There is nothing unusual in a holy man reading the past and the future of a devotee, casting the rays of his eyes on him, but the Mother often reads the destiny of a man merely by looking at his photo. Formerly no-one was admitted either to the Ashram or to the Centre of Education until the Mother had seen him personally. Since the time she has been in seclusion she calls for a photo. Glancing at it she gives her decision.

At times simply by hearing the name of the person she passes her opinion.

Once a visitor sought the Mother's permission to join the Ashram. The Mother is reported to have said that he must not be allowed to enter the gate of the Ashram. When he left, it was known that during his short stay he had played tricks and duped not one but several persons.

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The story of the Mother would be singularly incomplete if it contained no mention about her life work, the Ashram.

A German professor who was in the Ashram in 1959 and stayed with us for four months said, "Well, I am not new to the Ashram. I have been a sadhak, as you are, for the last sixteen years though away from here. I have come here to know how the supermind is working and how things are taking shape. I want to learn much more than what I have learnt from books.

"The Ashram is a comprehensive institution. It is very difficult to form an idea about it in a day. Every day a new vista opens before the eye. The more you move about its manifold activities, you at once see that the opinion you had formed was quite different from the one you have now."

In his address to The Sri Aurobindo Society Conference held on November 23, 1963, the then Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, Mr. Silam, said: "Because of the Ashram, Pondicherry is known all over the world. A day may come when Pondicherry will be named Sri Aurobindo Ashram."

In the third International Conference-Seminar on Tamil Studies held in Paris in July, 1970 Mr. Farook Maricar, the Chief Minister of Pondicherry, said:

"The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo has travelled all over the world. It is a glorious privilege for Pondicherry to have been his centre."

*(The Indian Express, Madras, July 16, 1970)*

In my make-up Vaishnavism has a big hand. When the principal of a Mathura college visited the Ashram, I greeted him:

"Blessed are you to have been born in Mathura, the birthplace of Sri Krishna."

"I feel blessed when I come here," he replied feelingly. His only son, is having his higher education in our institution. One of his daughters who is a Ph. D. in Sanskrit is on our teaching staff.

Past the age of ninety R came from Bhagalpore to see his ailing brother, who had been thrice elected M. P., once unopposed. On his return home he was requested to say what he had seen in the Ashram. His words were:

"The joy that wells out from the heart does not lend itself to expression. The Gita is not taught but lived there. No one is seen there doing anything to serve his selfish end, all is done for the Mother."

Only those who have some preparation, some aspiration for the higher life can feel what charm is there in the Ashram atmosphere.

In the silence of dawn R sits for three hours in serene silence telling beads. And when the sun declines and light fades he repeats the practice. Thus he has been doing for the last forty years. There is no break in the routine even though he needs someone to help him sit down, so weak he has become. It is the force of this habit that keeps him free from the curse of age. Though his body is weak, his mind is awake because of his seasoned character.

Such are the people whose next life is in their own hands.

All in the Ashram is yet in a state of preparation "that the diviner force might enter life."

*(To be continued)*

Narayan Prasad

# NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN INDIA'S HISTORY

(Continued from the issue of October 1970)

(3)

## THE UNDATED CENTURIES (*contd.*)

### "ARYAN INVASION"

To answer adequately the arguments in support of the invasion theory would need more space than is available here. We shall touch on the main points.

There are two quite distinct issues : were the authors of the Vedas rude barbarian invaders of a "Dravidian" India, and what was the approximate date of composition of the earliest Vedic hymns? It would be best to keep the issues separate.

The answer to the first question would depend ultimately on how we understood the Vedas.

It is an unfortunate fact that the Vedas have been misunderstood almost from the dawn of history. The authors of the Brahmana works which reflect something of the symbolic mentality of the Vedic seers were already at a loss to know what to make of these sacred hymns; their true import had been lost and they had to invent myths to explain their significance. The seers of the Upanishads seem to have grasped the mystic character of at least some of the R̥gvedic hymns—not all of them belonging to the "late" philosophical speculations of the tenth Book—but there was no attempt at any kind of systematic exposition. By the time of Yaska's Nirukta, the Vedas had become practically unintelligible. Sayana gave the *coup de grâce* and paved the way for the modern scholars, who, armed with the dangerous weapons of Comparative Philology, the "petty conjectural science" of Renan to which Sri Aurobindo deridingly refers (in his "Origins of Aryan Speech"), gave an altogether fanciful rendering of these sacred hymns and perpetrated an error that persists. How fanciful the modern rendering can be would be apparent to anyone who cares to study Sri Aurobindo's book, *On the Veda*.

The key to Vedic interpretation lies, as he has shown in this book, in the symbolic use of certain commonest terms like cows, horses, waters, rivers, clarified butter, wine, etc., which as in the Sufi and Vaishnava phraseology bore consistently a distinctive spiritual or occult meaning grasped by the initiates alone. The sense of the Veda becomes clear though not always so easy to grasp once we know the true meaning of these key-words. The Veda is then revealed as a record of the deepest

spiritual aspirations of a handful of seekers after the Immortal Beatitude, which became fixed for all time as the ultimate quest of India; no barbarian worshippers these, but the inheritors of a long earlier tradition and pioneers of a new age to come. The "stammerers" and "spiritless ones" (*anāsa* is not "noseless"), the "robbers" and "low-born slaves" whom they fight are no human aborigines or indigenous Dravidians; they are the inner enemies of man's spiritual advance, adverse powers and personalities real enough to all who tread the spiritual path. The "seven rivers" are no earthly streams flowing through the land of five rivers or any other land; they are the streams of Consciousness that inundate the being of man when he opens himself sufficiently to the Power above.

Mother India, Pp. 68-70, (Sp. 23), Sudha

"We have seen," says Sri Aurobindo, "not once but repeatedly, that it is impossible to read into the story of the Angirasas, Indra and Sarama, the cave of the Panis and the conquest of the Dawn, the Sun and the Cow an account of a political and military struggle between Aryan invaders and Dravidian cave-dwellers. It is a struggle between the seekers of Light and powers of Darkness.... It is perfectly certain that in the R̥gveda at least, it is the spiritual conflict and victory, not the physical battle and plunder of which they [the R̥shis] are speaking . " (*On the Veda*, p. 255)

To quote Sri Aurobindo again: "The now settled rendering of Veda which reigns hitherto because it has never been critically and minutely examined, is sure before long to be powerfully attacked and questioned. One thing may be confidently expected that even if India was ever invaded, colonised or civilised by northern worshippers of Sun and Fire, yet the picture of that invasion richly painted by philological scholarship from the R̥gveda will prove to be a modern legend and not ancient history .." (*ibid.* p. 641)

Indian tradition, from the time of the Brahmanas onwards, knows of no such invasion. It would be improbable in the extreme that no memory of such a memorable event should be left in the mind of the race, considering that the English and in later times the Americans of north and south have been keenly aware of where they came from, in remote times, the Sumerians similarly preserved the memory of their early home in Dilmun, the Jews of their migration from Egypt, the Carthaginians from Phoenicia. Indians alone for some wholly unexplained reason have been allowed to forget their ancestry! On the other hand, there is distinct evidence, both in Indian records and in historical records elsewhere, that there have been, from the earliest times, sporadic movements of groups of people from India towards the west, into Mesopotamia, Iran and farther, across the Sea of Marmora into Constantinople and the Danubian basin.

As noted by Basham in his book, *The Wonder that was India* (p. 19), "a number of typical Indus seals and a few other objects from the Indus Valley have been found in Sumer at levels dating between about 2300 and 2000 B.C.... The finding of Indus seals suggests that merchants from India actually resided in Mesopotamia..." Our Puranic records mention the migration of 'certain north-western peoples, the

Druhyus, moving "northwards" from the western Punjab, beyond the hills. As ancient Indian writings never made fine distinctions between the adjoining degrees of the compass, the "northward" migration could easily refer to a movement in the north-westerly direction, into Afghanistan and thence to Iran and northern Mesopotamia, where we find the Mitanni people worshipping Indian (Vedic) gods, Indra, Varuna, etc., under their Indian (and not Iranian) appellations. These gods may well have been taken by the Druhyu emigrants who may have settled there. Otherwise it becomes impossible to explain their presence in the Boghaz-koi tablets; for it is extremely difficult to accept the "orthodox" theory that the Aryan migrants to Iran and India should have been worshipping Vedic gods in a small pocket of Mesopotamia before the Vedas were supposed to have been composed, changed over to their Iranian forms as soon as they reached Iran, and again reverted to the Indian names on arriving in the Punjab! It is well to note here that the Mitannian kings, or at least some of them, had Indian names, like Dasaratha; this is clearly explicable on the Druhyu hypothesis.

Basham (*op. cit.*, pp. 513-15) makes a valuable contribution, though perhaps unwittingly, to our thesis, in connection with the Gypsies of Europe. "Philologists have shown," he says, "by the comparison of Romani [the language of the Gypsies is known by this name] with the Prakrits and modern Indian languages, that the Gypsies originated in the Ganges basin, which they left before the time of Asoka to reside for several centuries in North-Western India. According to Firdausi [in his *Shah-namah*, 11th century A.D.], the 5th century Sassanian king Bahram Gur invited ten thousand Indian musicians to his realm [these could have been no other than the Gypsies of North-Western India] ...that they might settle in the land and entertain his poorer subjects...But the musicians refused to settle ..and wandered about the land like wolves or wild dogs...." Thence they moved on through Byzantium to the Danube. The affinities of the Romani language with north Indian vernaculars are clear enough from the instances given: *ek*, *đui*, *trîn*, *stâr*, *pañci*, etc.; *bâl* (hair), *kân* (ear), *nāk* (nose), *kālo* (black), *caco* (truth), etc.

This raises the intriguing question: if some wandering minstrels like the Gypsies could take their language from India as far west as Hungary, and keep at least many of the commonest words intact, why could not some other bands—Druhyus or any others of which we have lost trace—take *their* language, a primitive form of Indo-Aryan perhaps, into Iran and farther west, and infuse some of their vocables into the languages of Europe? Vocables for some common terms—not all the commonest words, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out in his "Origins of Aryan Speech"—are about the only proofs of their common origin adduced by the philologists. Granting for the sake of argument that the Indo-Aryan speaking peoples of the ancient world did have a common home before dispersal, as the philologists suggest—and this, as Sri Aurobindo has shown (*loc. cit.*), stands on very flimsy ground—what would prevent one from supposing that this common home was in India and not elsewhere?

Two other arguments based on language need consideration, namely, the presence of a Dravidian-speaking pocket in the Brahui hills of Baluchistan, and the supposed contamination of Vedic Sanskrit with the "Dravidian" sounds *ṇ*, *ḷ*, and other cerebrals not found in the Indo-Aryan languages. The Brahui pocket may easily be explained as a colony of Dravidian-speaking people who for some reason have not given up their old language even when surrounded by Indo-Aryan-speakers, just as the Bengalis in Uttar Pradesh form little colonies of their own and continue to use Bengali in spite of their Hindi-speaking environment, or as the Israelis use Yiddish in an Arabic-speaking area or, for that matter, as the Gypsies stick to their Romani wherever they may be in Europe. The Brahui hills are an isolated area; the original colonists may have come even from Sumer, whose language is supposed to have affinities with ancient Tamil. We cannot dogmatise on the basis of language, unless we know the history.

The other point is equally untenable. It is a commonplace of philology that languages are apt to drop particular sounds in the course of time or according to the regions where they are spoken. None of the modern vernaculars that are indubitably derived from Sanskrit preserves the ancient *ḷ*, except Marathi. Bengali does not have the *ṇ* sound. The earlier Prakrits dispensed with many of the Sanskrit consonants. French and Italian and Spanish do not have the cerebral *t*, *th*, *ḍ*, of English or German. Yet all of them—the Indian and the European languages alike—are supposed to have a common origin. It is not therefore necessary to hold that Vedic borrowed the cerebrals from Tamil. Indeed, as Sri Aurobindo has shown (*loc. cit.*), "pure" Tamil and Sanskrit have as much affinity with each other as any of the Indo-Aryan languages.

*(To be continued)*

SANAT K. BANERJI



# THE SECRET SELF AND THE YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

## PART II: THE SECOND LIBERATION

### V. SINCERITY

THE word “sincerity,” like many abstract nouns, is used variously according to time, custom, usage and the state of consciousness of the author. The most fatuous use that has been made of this word is probably its usage at the end of letters. Without a second thought people have got into the formal habit of concluding their letters with “Yours sincerely”, when actually they have been loading the letter with the clichés and platitudes expected of formal letter writing. It is only very recently that the formal use of such phrases as “I beg to remain your most obedient servant”—when really the writer has no intention whatsoever of being an obedient servant—has fallen out of our letter-writing phraseology.

There really can be no compromise with a word like “sincerity”. The very origin, in fact, precludes any half measures with its meaning. The Latin *sincerus* meaning “clean” derives from the combination of two words: *sine* and *cera*, meaning “without wax”. In early classical times when a plethora of sculptors competed to sell their statues in ancient Rome, there were those whose greed and impatience exceeded their art, so if a statue was at all chipped or damaged it was their practice to fill in the flaw with wax which, rubbed over with marble powder, would for a time escape detection; *sine cera* became a term, in the art world, for a genuine work of art—that which was pure, unmixed, unfeigned, unadulterated, free from pretence, the same in reality as in appearance. This became the meaning extended to other fields of work, thought, and human behaviour.

The Mother tells us that humility and sincerity are the best safeguards in Yoga sadhana. “Without them each step is a danger; with them the Victory is certain,” she says.

Man is, generally throughout his life, falling into danger, slipping into chaos, or halted by suffering and grief. He does so usually by his own stupidity, error or pretence. Sometimes by stupidity, often by error, but more often by pretence. In the ordinary way of life only the very young child or the very old man can afford to be truly himself; otherwise man has to build up an image acceptable to his teacher, his boss, his friends, his society. He fails to understand that every human being has a particular role to fulfil in life—a work to do, a place which he alone can occupy. No, he would rather take his cue from others whom he admires or to whom his ego aspires. The vital mind finds it so much easier to ape another or form a pattern from observation, rather than give way to the introspection of the mental mind, to seek the inner truth of one’s own being. Introspection does not come easily to most people because it needs

a certain patience and perseverance. It may take many years before one has truly achieved the basic concentration to 'go inside' and today's preoccupation with sensual pleasure for happiness and with material possession for virtue makes it almost impossible for an average human being to know what his role is in life, what his true vocation should be, what place he and he alone should occupy. The Mother says: "It is better to be than to seem. We need not appear to be good if our sincerity is perfect."

"By perfect sincerity we mean," says Sri Aurobindo "that all our thoughts, feelings sensations and actions should express nothing but the central Truth of our being."

Sincerity is the key of the divine doors.

*(To be continued)*

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

## WHEN I AM OUT

WHEN I am out with the blue sky above,  
I see all walls around me breaking down;  
A Some-one faces me with eyes of love,  
The quarters four become my spirit's gown.

A more than universal Being is there,  
His nearby breath enlivens all I am,  
And lifts me up into a brighter air  
Where nothing crowds the buoyant soul to jam.

The greenly waving trees, the hymning birds,  
The butterflies enclasping flowers, their friends,  
The passers-by with all their fleeting words  
Speak of the One who watches all our ends.

He leans down from above on days and nights,  
He closes His embrace around all space,  
From depths He rises up, the Might of mights,  
To closed but burning eyes reveals His face.

His presence meets us wheresoever we go,  
His smile delights, His touch awakes the soul  
That like an arrow from the mystic bow  
Straight shoots forth aiming at our distant Goal.

PUNJALAL

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo: SAVITRI— A Legend and a Symbol**, 816 pp. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2. Rs. 20'—

It is a most exhilarating experience to have the opportunity to review this master epic of a spiritual odyssey appearing in a superb new edition after a lapse of full fourteen years. The volume impeccably edited and chastely produced gives the palm to Sri Aurobindo Ashram for the excellent standard of its publications. We have here perhaps the only publishers who have not allowed their previous publications to fade into limbo, but have been meeting the ever-growing demand for Sri Aurobindo's works by bringing them out in new editions. Beautifully printed and bound, this new edition of *Savitri* furnishes an example of the developments in the art of book production. The binding with the levelled spine, the superior quality of the paper and especially its soft and muted bluish hue and the size of the print and the general typography all combine to lure the nympholepts of the spiritual Muse to a sedulous quest. And the strong and firm binding assures us that this most inspiring book will retain its charm and withstand constant handling for many years to come.

The present edition scores some important points over its predecessors. The first edition appeared in two separate volumes. The next combined the two volumes into one and also appended more than a hundred pages of Sri Aurobindo's letters spelling out the spiritual philosophy bodied forth in the poem, the new dimension in aesthesis gained by its "overhead" inspiration, and many important matters of technique with which the reader must equip himself before he applies his critical mind to it. The present edition has all the advantages of the previous one but excels it in the quality of printing and paper. The publishers have already brought out *The Life Divine* and *Essays on the Gita* uniformly with this volume.

Threading his way through the book the reader will heave a sigh of relief on discovering that certain lines which refused to yield any sense in spite of his pertinacious wrestling with them have proved to be so because of the printer's devils. For instance, in the previous edition on page 51 the last two lines are printed as:

Feeling earth's smallness with their boundless breadths,  
He drew the energies that transmute an age.

In the new edition we find 'filling' instead of 'feeling' on page 44, and we immediately get the right sense of the world-redeemer's mission on earth, for, if an age has to be transmuted into a greater existence then someone has to bring down the Light, Love, Wideness and Power of the higher spiritual planes and fill with them our sordid, ego-centric existence.

Similarly, in the old edition, on page 100 towards the end we find:

Ascending and descending twixt life's poles  
The serried kingdoms of the graded law  
Plunged from the Everlasting into Time...

'Serried' in the sense of crowded and compact as 'serried ranks of soldiers' robs the passage not only of its truth—the vision of the ascending and descending order of planes of consciousness—but its verbal felicity and charm. In the new edition on page 88 it has been corrected and made 'seried'.

On page 445 of the last edition a printer's devil seems to have ruined a line typically Aurobindonian in its fusion of the abstract and the concrete or in its disclosure of the magic which makes the invisible permeate and shape the visible. It is printed as:

Freedom's imperious beauty curbed his limbs.

On page 393 of the new edition it appears as:

Freedom's imperious beauty curved his limbs.

Another instance occurs on page 448 of the previous edition. The poet is describing how a transforming flame is kindled in the virgin heart of Savitri on her first encounter with Satyavan and how 'In that flame to new things she was born'. The description is printed as:

Haled, smitten erect like one who dreamed at ease,  
Life ran to gaze from every gate of sense ..

But now on page 395 of the present edition the first line turns out to be:

Haled, smitten erect like one who dreamed at ease...

It is remarkable how phrases and words echo and re-echo in a work of structural and thematic unity. Towards the close of Book Two Canto Seven Aswapathy is shown as being sucked into the vortex of the forces of dark night:

Haled by a serpent-force from its warm home  
And dragged to extinction in blank vacancy  
Life clung to its seat with cords of gasping breath...

A careful examination of this passage with the one just quoted will reveal how, as Francis Thompson says,

...all man's Babylons strive but to impart  
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart;

for a wonderful effect is created by these contrasting parallels. In Aswapathy the life-force is being dragged by diabolical forces whereas in Savitri it is being captured by a divine beauty and wisdom.

Quite a few missing commas have been rehabilitated and wrong marks of punctuation corrected with the result that many ambiguities have got clarified. For this painstaking editorship the lovers of *Savitri* can never be too grateful.

Having done these chores of clearing the decks we can now trim our sails and launch forth on the endless voyage that is Sri Aurobindo's theme.

Affranchised from the net of earthly sense

Calm continents of potency were glimpsed,  
 Homelands of beauty shut to human eyes,  
 Half-seen at first through wonder's gleaming lids,  
 Surprised the vision with felicity,  
 Sunbelts of knowledge, moonbelts of delight  
 Stretched out in an ecstasy of widenesses  
 Beyond our indigent corporeal range.

(*Savitri*, Book I Canto V)

(*To be continued*)

RAVINDRA KHANNA

**PHILOSOPHY OF EVOLUTION: WESTERN AND INDIAN** (Special Lectures) by *Thakur Jaideva Singh*, published by Prāsārāṅga, University of Mysore, in 1970. Price Rs. 2.

THIS little volume of three Special Lectures will prove a welcome addition to the material of any student of philosophy, academic or not. It furnishes many interesting glimpses on the subject of Evolution as seen by a range of thinkers with widely differing views.

Among masters of Western thought we have Lamarck, Darwin, Spencer, Weismann, Hegel, Lloyd Morgan, Alexander, Bergson, Smuts, Whitehead. Here the omission of Nietzsche strikes the reader strangely, considering that of all Western philosophers the evolution of mankind was one of Nietzsche's main themes. Perhaps Thakur Jaideva Singh does not regard Nietzsche as sufficiently systematic—and in this he has a point, for Nietzsche is often more a poet and prophet than a philosopher.

Whitehead, one may feel, has been treated rather lightly, whereas Hegel is given quite an ample treatment in a book of limited length: he gets 15 pages. Possibly this is too much of a lion's share, but I am not surprised that the author should have found him the most impressive, so far as the Western aspect of the evolution-issue is concerned. I am personally partial to Hegelianism and I agree with TJS that Hegel has made a few definite contributions to philosophy which deserve extreme attention. I should pick out two in particular from TJS's perceptive list: (1) "The whole is more than the sum of the parts and is logically prior to them"; (2) "Reality is not something static but it is a living dynamic movement".

Apropos of these two statements one may note in passing that Teilhard de Chardin, like Lecomte du Nouy, among the recent moderns, has fallen outside TJS's large and fine-woven net except for a brief reference towards the end, and that the points in question might serve as good *points de départ* for an *exposé* of Teilhardism. It would be very helpful to read what TJS might have to say on Teilhard in some detail

and with a link-up to Nietzsche, and have from so analytic a mind as our lecturer's a short comparative study of Nietzsche's conception of Superman and Teilhard's of Super-Humanity.

To come back to the positive side: the 37 pages after the first 55, constituting the second Special Lecture, lay before us the vision of evolution through the eyes of Indian Philosophy. In a swift packed survey, several aspects are found not quite so markedly dissimilar to those in Western thought, but a momentous aspect which is one of the greatest gaps in that thought is rightly stressed. Rebirth or Reincarnation, which is considered the *conditio sine qua non* of evolution.

The fact that TJS's approach is both precise and popular, general and personal, makes the book all the more appealing. A student—of any age—who had so far no opinion on the problem might feel induced to read up all the relevant matter, and those who have cherished their own opinion or espoused somebody else's might feel compelled to reconsider their position here and there, if not altogether, under the influence of our author's clear presentation.

TJS evidently aims at being impartial, putting before us the pros and cons of the various systems, but the very tolerance, the very equality of the tone leads one to surmise that his deepest sympathies have not really been engaged by any of the philosophers. And this surmise is confirmed in the third and last Special Lecture concerning "Evolution as conceived by Sri Aurobindo". There the essential TJS stands out—in his *amor intellectualis* of the Aurobindonian Revelation. It is unthinkable how anyone can read Sri Aurobindo in some depth and remain unaffected. To read him on the subject of evolution means to have one's former views systematically taken to pieces; and so the survey of earlier philosophers finds its true *raison d'être* as no more than a study of precious curios of the past, showing us a direct example of evolution, a developmental process in the thinking capacity of the human mind at its best. Indeed the human mind itself is bound to be evolutionary until the basic truth is touched: what was totally inconceivable in the far past becomes the dream of the recent past and grows the concrete certainty of today.

To return once more to the lectures: the very first phrase of the discourse on Sri Aurobindo is, for all its noble intention, a misnomer. TJS says: "Sri Aurobindo is a new star that has appeared in the philosophical firmament." As the next sentences prove, TJS certainly means a star of supreme magnitude. But the image conjures up the picture of a tiny light, however brilliant, in the vast nocturnal sky. Such a picture might well apply to the thinkers treated earlier. For each has brought forth just one spot, large or small, of illumination in a striking way, such that it keeps bright for ever. Yet when one shifts one's gaze, one finds not only that there is darkness around but also that there are thousands of other shining spots poised in their own right. The call on the wise observer is to a sort of synthesis. Even so, what one would get is a cluster of constant complementary scintillations, and the total light would still be insufficient, no matter how multiform. Surely, Sri Aurobindo is not a star in any sense. As TJS himself remarks, he englobes the best of all and goes so far beyond any of them

that we might more profitably concentrate our minds on his works and catch from them answers to every serious question, until the Aurobindonian Supermind takes possession of us and transforms our mentality into truth-sight.

I hail from the West and I appreciate the understanding which TJS extends to the intellectual luminaries who used to be my centres of attraction. But my heart too is with him in his *grand finale* of Aurobindonian philosophy.

All in all, a valuable little compendium is TJS's book and I recommend it to all whose leisure is exiguous.

CARMEN NEVILLE

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# Students' Section

## A CRUCIAL PROBLEM

*(Stan Anderson, the writer of this essay, is one of many students engaged in the study of Sri Aurobindo's works at Mesa College, Arizona, U.S.A., under the tutorage of Sarasvati (Miss Joan Price) who has introduced the books of Sri Aurobindo as the culminating summit of her Advanced College Class in Ethics. Sarasvati is in regular correspondence with the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry.)*

THE world today is in a state of widespread and intense desire for reform and revolution (both violent and non-violent) unlike any other period in the history of mankind. Having been born into a place which has centered me more or less in the heart of this social, political, and economic rebellion and at a time that I am just beginning seriously to question and contemplate the infinite problems and aspects of man, I find myself faced with a major dilemma. It is simply this : In order to better serve mankind as a whole, which I am now resolved to do, shall I enter into a political and social life with a view to bring about reform in America and the world on that level, or shall I turn my entire life and energy to the Supreme Master of all life, so that one day perhaps I may be able to execute the Divine Will on earth, performing those tasks which God sees fit? \* Obviously one choice is much more immediate and external, while the other may take decades to accomplish and is highly internal in nature. I suppose that a third possibility exists in this situation. Perhaps these two forms of faction need not even be separated, and if that is true, then I shall try to find out in what ways they might be related.

In coming to a possible conclusion in this essay, I shall draw on a few of the writings of the twentieth century master of Divine Wisdom, Sri Aurobindo.

Today's dissenters are young as a rule (as they have been in the past), if not chronologically then at least spiritually. The motivating cause behind the majority of the members of this crusade is a dream of a better future for all men. The youth of the world, and of America in particular, have seen that they are living in a tremendously crucial period. They have seen that our society could be headed towards some form of a totalitarian type of government, or worse still that man might be on the verge of the total annihilation of life on this planet, either by an atomic war or by the hideous pollution of his very environment. These young dissidents have realized that the time

\* Tutor's Note: "This serving mankind rather than the Divine is evident in our country. But I have faith that here is merely a moral attitude and the consciousness will rise to serving the Divine."



to act is now, before it becomes too late. And they are beginning to act and to react; some violently, some non-violently, some rationally and many emotionally.

Again following the pattern of history, the opposition to this movement is of course in the form of the older, ideally wiser and more mature members of society, both individually and, in the forms of big business and government, collectively.

These individuals and groups have either not been acting fast enough to suit the young "radicals" or they have been totally resistant to any type of change whatsoever, preferring the security of their established and more stagnant ways.

Just as the challenge of bringing about these changes, some of which are astronomical, others relatively small, has been attractive to so many of today's young, and some who are not so young, I find myself strongly drawn in this direction. I feel that it would be quite easy for me to totally dedicate myself to this movement in general and to one or more functions of that movement in particular. The whole philosophy behind this sea of change is ideally so dynamic, so alive and so revitalizing that I have the urge to become involved in this revolution as an individual from both an emotional and, I think, a rational point of view. In fact, to ignore it seems almost inhuman (but, as I shall point out, Sri Aurobindo is not concerned with the "human" but with the superhuman). I might add here that should I actually become involved in any sort of direct revolutionary action, my methods and energies would ideally be directed towards *pacific* and *non-violent* means for the achievement of peace and harmony for all beings, human or otherwise.

A number of problems immediately arise when one commits oneself to a cause such as this. Looking at the situation objectively, I am forced to see the matter in a somewhat philosophical and perhaps ethical perspective. One of the major conflicts which arises is : Once I have actually chosen this life of striving for reform, how would I, insignificant and ignorant as I am in the Universe, even be able to propose that I know what is best for mankind as a whole or in part? And if I could be absolutely sure that my intentions were valid, what would possibly give me the right to attempt to overrule the collective and separate wills of others with my own views of what is right and good, no matter how highly I may regard my opinions or how apparently necessary my reforms might be? In other words, bringing this question down to a more practical level, could I really perform this work, being sure all the while that what I would be doing is right, and could I justify to myself imposing my will on others? It would seem to me that if the answer to this question be any other than a positive "yes", neither I nor anyone else has any right whatsoever to be involved in this type of work.

If I am to be truthful with myself, I must certainly say, "No, I do not possess this knowledge and insight and therefore am unfit for public service by my own reasoning." I cannot, however, speak for those individuals already involved in the political game, for perhaps they are more conscious than I. Thus, having backed myself into a corner, I have nowhere to go but straight up, with the guidance of some of Sri Aurobindo's thoughts.

The one safety for man lies in learning to live from within outward,...for by this inwardness we shall best be able both to see the truth of the high things which we now only speak with our lips and form into outward intellectual constructions, and to apply their truth sincerely to all our outward living. If we are to found the kingdom of God in humanity, we must first know God and see and live the diviner truth of our being in ourselves; otherwise how shall a new manipulation of the constructions of the reason and scientific systems of efficiency which have failed us in the past, avail to establish it?<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that the ultimate solution to the problems of forcing one's will into others is, according to Sri Aurobindo, to transform the smaller egoistic self into the true Self, and to become a part of the Divine, thereby serving as a tool through which the Divine manifests its will. The Mother, spiritual partner of Sri Aurobindo, offers a similar but different statement.

Governments succeed governments, regimes follow regimes, centuries pass after centuries, but human misery remains lamentably the same. It will always be so, as long as man remains what he is, blind and ignorant, closed to all spiritual reality. A transformation, an illumination of the human consciousness alone can bring about a real amelioration in the condition of humanity. Thus even from the standpoint of human life, it follows logically that the first duty of man is to seek and possess the divine consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

However, the problem is still unsolved. The question now arises, what is the seeker of the divine consciousness supposed to do during the time prior to his realization? How is one, desirous as he may be of receiving the Divine, to act in the world of his ignorance utilizing only those faculties available to him at the time? The answer would appear to be in this excerpt taken from Sri Aurobindo's *Synthesis of Yoga*.

To remain in works without desire is to act for the good of the world in general or for the kind or the race or for some new creation to be established on the earth or some work imposed by the Divine Will within him.<sup>3</sup>

The difficulty which now becomes apparent is that of actually putting this ego-transformative work into effect. Sri Aurobindo recognizes the problem when he says:

Always to remember by an effort of the mind is too difficult; but if you get into the consciousness in which you feel always the Mother's force in you or supporting you, that is the true thing.<sup>4</sup>

It therefore appears that if one is capable of working without desire and without looking to the fruit of his works, one would be justified in the eyes of Sri Aurobindo in entering into and involving oneself in a political or a social life.\*

\* Tutor's Note: "Good!"

For myself, the question remains yet unanswered, for until one has attained the Divine Will within himself, he has no other basis on which to act, other than his vision of what his work will hopefully accomplish. This would seem especially true in the political realm; for, the purpose, supposedly, of this type of endeavour is service to humanity, either as a whole or on a smaller scale. The decisions made by a nation's ruler must be well thought out as to the results they will produce, in contrast to an individual who performs a routine task, a relatively menial one.

Be that as it may, I should now like to consider some of Sri Aurobindo's thoughts on service to mankind. Time and again he warns against any sort of egoistic involvement by an individual in a social and or political sort of life.

Nothing must be attempted for ourselves as a separate existence; nothing done for others, whether neighbours, friends, family, country or mankind or other creatures merely because they are connected with our personal life and thought and sentiment or because the ego takes a preferential interest in their welfare...<sup>5</sup>

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes that for the aspirant of the Divine Consciousness, *i.e.*, the Sadhak, a desire to serve others for their own sake is detrimental to the inner work.

To grow in the spirit is the greatest help one can give to others, for then something flows out naturally to those around that helps them."<sup>6</sup>

It can thus be seen that a careful and honest examination of motives is necessary when one does become involved in some form of human service, to make certain that the work is truly being offered to the Divine, and not to the ego, or even to his fellow beings.

But Sri Aurobindo is concerned not only with the realization of the Divine Will by each and every individual, but rather with the total transformation of the entire being.

Ours is neither a political nor a social but a spiritual goal. What we want is a transformation of the individual consciousness, not a change of regime or government. For reaching that goal we put no confidence in any human means, however powerful, our trust is in the Divine Grace alone.<sup>7</sup>

All aspects of service to humanity, whether social, political or whatever, shall remain in a state of ignorance and confusion until the Divine Consciousness is brought into the work itself. Above all else, Sri Aurobindo is concerned with the manifestation of the Supramental Consciousness on earth, for the purpose of establishing a new culture based on the governing of all life from that realization.<sup>8</sup> All else is subordinate to that goal, and in the long run it matters little what type of work is done while still in the ignorant and egoistic state of being. The important thing is to be constantly striving to receive the Divine.

The whole heart and mind of man must be changed, but from within, not from without, not by political and social institutions, not even by creeds and philosophies, but by realization of God in ourselves and the world and a remoulding of life by that realization.<sup>9</sup>

A fitting summary and close for this essay is provided here by Sri Aurobindo from *The Practical Guide to Integral Yoga*.

"The Divine Life and the transformation of the lower human into a higher divine nature must be made the sole aim of all life".<sup>10</sup>

STAN ANDERSON

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination* (Pondicherry, India, 1962), p. 833.

<sup>2</sup> Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga* (Pondicherry, India, 1965), p. 400-401.

<sup>3</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry, India, 1965), p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga*, p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 418.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Yoga and Its Objects* (Pondicherry, India, 1968), p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga*, p. 6.