

MOTHER INDIA

MARCH, 1971

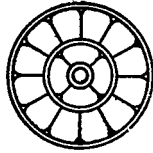
Price : Re. 1.00

All Rights Reserved. No matter appearing in this journal or part thereof may be reproduced or translated without written permission from the publishers except for short extracts as quotations.

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.

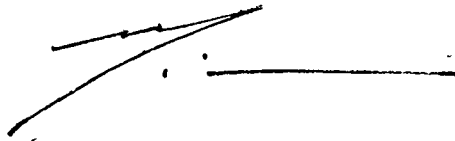


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. XXIII

No. 2

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
WORDS OF THE MOTHER	... 81
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	<i>The Mother</i> ... 82
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Nirodbaran</i> ... 88
SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK	<i>V. Chidanandam</i> ... 94
IN A HUSH-WOVEN SILVER NET (A Poem)	<i>A. Venketaranga</i> ... 97
AN OLD LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO	... 98
AUROVILLE CULTURAL REPORT	
AUSTRALIA'S ABORIGINES AT AUROVILLE	<i>Jobest Mühling</i> ... 99
SOME PERSONAL NOTES BY SRI AUROBINDO	... 100
A TRUE STORY	<i>M. P. Pandit</i> ... 102
ILLNESS IN YOGA:	
LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO	<i>From Nagin Doshi</i> ... 103
LIGHTS ON THE PATH:	
PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES	... 105
"1971—A SWEET YEAR"	<i>Nohmi Kanta Gupta</i> ... 107
A TALK BY SURENDRA MOHAN GHOSH TO THE STUDENTS OF THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION	... 108
DR. M. B. ADISESHIAH ON AUROVILLE: EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW BY GEORGES PITOEFF OF FRENCH TELEVISION, PARIS, ON DECEMBER 14, 1970	<i>Translated by Kailas Jhaveri</i> ... 116

CONTENTS

TOWARDS AUROVILLE:			
AN APPROACH THROUGH SRI AUROBINDO'S BOOK, "THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY"	<i>Madhusudan Reddi</i>	... 118	
TRUTH, SINCERITY, POETRY:			
A READER'S LETTER ABOUT AN ARTICLE	<i>A. Venkataranga</i>	... 122	
THE AUTHOR'S REPLY	<i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 122	
EMPTY HANDS (A Poem)	<i>Aube</i>	... 125	
RISHABHCHAND:			
SOME REMINISCENCES	<i>Raghunandan</i>	... 126	
GOD AND THE WORLD—THEIR INTERRELATION	<i>Kamalendra Ray</i>	... 131	
"LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL"	<i>Narayan Prasad</i>	... 134	

FORM IV
(See Rule. 8)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Place of Publication: | Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry |
| 2. Periodicity of its publication | Monthly |
| 3. Printer's Name: | Amiyo Ranjan Ganguli |
| Nationality | Indian |
| Address | Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-2 |
| 4. Publisher's Name: | P. Counouma |
| Nationality | Indian |
| Address | Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2 |
| 5. Editor's Name: | K. D. Sethna |
| Nationality | Indian |
| Address | Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2 |
| 6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital. | Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust,
Pondicherry-2 |

I, P. Counouma hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date 24th March 1971

P. Counouma
Signature of Publisher

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers under No R N. 8667/63

THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE TO ALL-INDIA RADIO

TRUE liberty is an ascending movement, not yielding to the lower instincts.
True liberty is a Divine manifestation.

We want the true liberty for India so that she may be the right example for the world as the demonstration of what humanity must become.

13-2-1971

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

TRUE spirituality is in the service of the Divine work.

The refusal to work for all is only an egoistic manifestation and has no spiritual value.

The first thing to do to be able to live in Auroville is to accept to liberate oneself from one's ego.

24-2-1971

There is a Supreme Divinity Witness of all our actions and the day of consequence will come soon.

1-3-1971.

CORRECTION

In *Words of the Mother*, "The Mother's Blessing-Packet", in the issue of February 21, Please read "them" for "then" in line 2.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1971)

(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.)

March 7, 1956

Sweet Mother, what form of sacrifice is it where animals are slaughtered upon altars?

CERTAINLY it is one of the obscurest and most unconscious. And the sacrifice spoken about here, and in the Gita, is the sacrifice one makes of oneself, not of others.

Because here it is written: "Whoever the recipient, whatever the gift, it is the Supreme, the Eternal in things, who receives and accepts it."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 124)

Happily for the poor beast which is sacrificed! Perhaps it goes straight to the Divine.

It would be very interesting to see this.... Imagine a man wanting to gain the Divine's favour, or that of some god or other, some deity, in order to obtain something very egoistically personal, something he wants and finds it hard to get; and so he takes hold of a chicken from his yard and goes and cuts its throat before the deity, with his prayer, perhaps for a good harvest or a good sale of his harvest, or for a child if he doesn't have one, or that his wife may recover from her illness—any such thing. And then imagine that this psychic particle in evolution, already like a tiny spark in semi-consciousness (not even semi-consciousness), the rudiment of consciousness which is in the chicken, goes straight to the Divine who magnifies it; whilst the man who has offered the chicken to obtain some benefit or other is not even heard.

This is what happens most likely. So the one who has truly gained in this business is the chicken, not the man!

Sweet Mother, there are people who make sacrifices and offerings to hostile forces. Are these also received by the Divine?

You mean sacrifices like those I just spoke about, people offering something for altogether personal interests?

No, people who offer sacrifices to hostile forces.

To hostile forces? But they don't know they are hostile! Or as they do here, when they take round the deity of cholera, for example, or the deity of small-pox: it is taken round with songs and beating of drums, and then all sorts of offerings are made to it. This is to satisfy it so that it may not kill too many people.

One should first be sure that this deity exists, that it is not just a doll sitting there on one's altar.

In any case, in instances of this kind, I think it is people's faith, above all, which saves them. When they have performed their little ceremony properly, they have confidence: "Oh! now it will be over, for she is satisfied." And as they have confidence, it helps them to react and the malady disappears. I have seen this very often in the street. There may possibly be a small hostile entity there, but these are very insignificant things.

In other cases, in certain temples there are vital beings, more or less powerful, who made their home there.

But what Sri Aurobindo means here is that there is nothing, not even the most anti-divine force, which is not in its origin the Supreme Divine. So, necessarily, everything goes back to Him, consciously or unconsciously. In the consciousness of the one who makes the offering it does not go to the Divine: it goes to the more or less big demon whom he addresses. But through everything, through the wood of the idol or even the ill-will of the vital adversary, finally, all returns to the Divine, for all comes from there. Only, the one who has made the offering or the sacrifice receives only in proportion to his own consciousness and to what he asked. So one could say that theoretically it returns to the Divine, but that the response comes from that which he addressed, not from the supreme Origin for he was not in contact with it; one is in contact only with the next step, the next intermediary, not higher.

It is quite certain that if the movement is altogether unconscious, the result will also be quite unconscious; and if the movement is quite egoistic, the result is also quite egoistic. It is as in that story I read to you one Friday, the first story by Sri Aurobindo¹, in which he explained Karma, saying that evil has for result evil, and good results in good. Evil begets evil, and good begets good, that is Karma; it is not a punishment or a reward, it is something automatic. Well, if your sacrifice is an egoistic and obscure sacrifice, it will necessarily have an obscure and egoistic result.

¹ The reference is to the tale, *A Dream*, written originally in Bengali.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "The vulgar conception is that sacrifice is an act of painful self-immolation, austere self-mortification, difficult self-effacement....But the Gita discourages any excess of violence done to oneself; for the self within is really the Godhead evolving, it is Krishna, it is the Divine; it is not to be troubled and tortured as the Titans of the world trouble and torture it, but to be increasingly fostered, cherished, luminously opened to a divine Light." How can one be luminously open?

If you like you may replace the word "luminously" by the word "sincerely," or "transparently," like something which is not opaque or does not deform; something clear, transparent, sincere, which gives no trouble.

You may take the image of a window open to the light. If your panes are of blackened, dark or opaque glass, what comes through turns naturally sombre and opaque, and little passes through. And if these are quite transparent glasses, then it is luminous light which comes. Or if your glasses are coloured, the light will get coloured in one way or another when it reaches you. Whilst if they are absolutely pure and transparent, it will come through pure and transparent.

Mother, the Gita speaks of the true essence of sacrifice, and Sri Aurobindo says: "Its method is not self-mortification, but a greater life; not self-mutilation, but a transformation of our natural human parts into divine members...."

(Ibid., p. 123)

Isn't it physical transformation we aspire for?

When Sri Aurobindo speaks of "integral transformation," he speaks of physical transformation, naturally. But the Gita does not speak of integral transformation (I don't think so). Because, for the Gita, the idea of physical transformation does not exist. As I was explaining to you the other day, the world is as it is and you have but to take it as it is, and not be affected by what it is. For you enter a higher consciousness, you liberate yourself from outer forms, but they remain what they are. There is indeed some mention, not much, of changing the character, but there is no question of changing the material world.

Sweet Mother, I have not understood this: "This spirit's inner enemies...have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker."

(Ibid., p. 123)

Haven't understood? This has never happened to you? Never? When, for instance, you have a movement you do not like (a movement of anger or spite, all sorts of things like that, or an insincerity or something else you don't like), when you reject it, throw it out from yourself, when you want to make an effort not to have it

any more, it hurts you, doesn't it? It gives you pain, it is as though something was being pulled out. Well, it is about this pain he is speaking; he says that it is the bad thing you throw away from you which, while going, gives you a gentle little blow as a parting gift. That's what he says.

For one is always under the illusion that pain belongs to one. This is not true. Pain is something put upon you. The same event could occur *exactly* alike in all its details, without its casting the shadow of a pain upon you; on the contrary, sometimes it can fill you with ecstatic joy. And yet it is exactly the same thing. But in one case, one is open to the adverse forces one wants to reject, and in the other, one is not, one is already sufficiently far from them to be affected by them any longer, and so, instead of feeling the negative side they represent, one feels only the positive side the Divine represents in the experience. It is the divine Grace which makes you progress, and with the divine Grace one feels the divine Joy. But instead of identifying oneself with the Grace which makes one progress, one identifies oneself with the ugly thing one wants to get rid of; and so, naturally, one feels like it and suffers.

That is an experiment you can make, if you are just a little conscious. There is something in you you don't want, something bad—for one reason or another you don't want it, you want to pull it out—, well, if you identify yourself ever so little with that thing, you feel the pain of extraction; if, on the contrary, you identify yourself with the divine Force which comes to liberate you, you feel the joy of the divine Grace—and you experience the ecstasy of the progress you have made.

And this is a sure sign for you, sure indication of that with which you identify yourself. If you are identified with the forces from below, you suffer; you are identified with the forces from above, you are happy. And I am not speaking about pleasure; you must not think that when one jumps about, dances, shouts and plays, one is identified with the divine forces (one may not be, one may be also). It is not of that I am speaking. I am speaking of the divine Joy, the inner Joy which is unalloyed.

Each time a shadow passes, with what may be just an uneasiness, or what may become a deep pain or an unbearable suffering, through the whole range, from the smallest to the biggest, as soon as it appears in your being, you may tell yourself: "Ah, surely the enemy is there!" under one form or another.

Sweet Mother, what is the experience of the being which has given itself completely to the Divine?

But...do it, my child, you will know!
It is not the same for everybody.

Mother, "the intention. .and the spirit that is behind the intention,"¹ what does that mean, is it not the same thing?

¹ "The fruit also of the sacrifice varies according to the work, according to the intention in the work and according to the spirit that is behind the intention,"

What?

The intention...

Yes, I know.

.. and the spirit that is behind.

To me it is clear as crystal, I don't understand your question. What is the difference between intention and the spirit of intention?

The spirit that is behind.

There isn't a spirit behind all things? No ?

There is always a spirit behind them.

Well, yes, and that is all he says, nothing else, that you must know what kind of spirit is there behind your intention.

He says the result is different.

But naturally! According to the spirit in which you do things, the result is different.

But the spirit and the intention are not the same thing?

What do you want me to tell you? If you don't feel the difference between the two, I can't explain it to you.

There are forces at work all the time, which put people into motion, make them move. In the individual being this is translated by exact intentions; but behind the intention there was a force acting which is not individual.

Do you understand?

Yes.

Ah!

I think one of the greatest difficulties in understanding things comes from an arbitrary simplification which puts spirit on one side and matter on the other. It is due to this foolishness that one understands nothing. There is spirit and matter—that is very convenient, of course. So if one does not belong to spirit, one belongs to matter; if one does not belong to matter, one belongs to spirit. But what do you

call spirit and what matter? It is an innumerable crowd of things, an interminable ladder. The universe is as it were an infinite gradation of worlds and states of consciousness, and in that gradation of growing subtlety, where does your matter come to an end? Where does your spirit begin? You speak of "spirit"—where does this spirit begin? With what you do not see? Is that it? So you put into "spirit" all the beings of the vital world, for instance, because you do not see them in your normal state—all this belongs to "spirit"—and they may indeed be the spirit behind your intention—and it isn't up to much! It is that.

It is like those people who say: "When you are alive you are in matter; when you are dead, you go to spirit. There, then! So, liberate spirit from matter, die, and you liberate your spirit from matter." It is these stupidities which hinder you from understanding anything at all. But all this does not correspond to the world as it is.

For the human consciousness as it is, there are certainly infinitely more invisible things than things visible. What you know, things which are visible to you and of which you are conscious,—these are almost like the skin of an orange compared with the orange itself—and still more, with oranges of a very fine skin, not thick-skinned ones! And so, if you know only the skin of the orange, you know nothing about an orange.

And this is what happens more or less. All that you know of the universe is just a thin superficial crust—and even this you know poorly. But that is all you know of it, and all the rest escapes you.

(To be continued)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1971)

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Mamlal, Dr. Becharlal, Puram, 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. We are interrupting the sequence of the talks with a few that were somehow left out. Once these have been published, we shall return to the usual series.)

OCTOBER 26, 1939

P: Seizure of the American ship 'City of Flint' may create some change in America.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't think so, because it was carrying contraband. I am not quite sure, but I think that, according to International Law, contraband goods are not allowed.

N: Fazlul Huque has come out with some grievances now, one of them being the muffling of the press by Congress Ministers.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is to suppress Communalism. What is he himself doing in Bengal?

N: C.R.'s statement seems very fine. In a few words he has expressed the whole thing.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but if he is going to call Jinnah into the conference the unity he speaks of seems improbable. And I don't know what he means by a 'gesture'. If he wants that Indian leaders should be included in the War Committee it is most unlikely that Government will consent as they know nothing about warfare.

P: They may be able to formulate a scheme for non-violent warfare.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, as in Poland. Gandhi calls the Polish resistance almost non-violent. By non-violence he means, I suppose, a heroic defensive resistance and a heroic martyrdom ending in surrender. But the Poles didn't wait till they were all shot, they surrendered long before.

How does he take to the Congress shooting, putting into prison, etc.? They are not non-violent.

P: No, once he publicly denounced these as violent means,

SRI AUROBINDO: But application of force in any form is violence. Prohibition by force is also violence. Has he ever thought how he will rule by non-violence?

P: He will persuade and convince people by peaceful means, I believe.

SRI AUROBINDO: Will the Parsees come round by that? Human nature is non-violent till one doesn't get power.

EVENING

P: Sir Akbar asks if you could change "seven crores" into 'thirty crores' in your translation of *Bande Mataram*.

SRI AUROBINDO: That has been done.

P: And if "Durga" could be also changed?

SRI AUROBINDO: That I can't change.

N: Muslims take "Durga" as a Hindu Goddess and say that in this poem there are plenty of Sanskrit words.

SRI AUROBINDO: But here the country is spoken of as "Durga", so a Hindu Goddess has nothing to do with it. The Christians may also object to Greek Gods and Goddesses being represented in literature. As for the other point, the Muslims have plenty of Persian words in their writings. Let these be removed also.

P: Yes, they don't see that the country is being addressed as "Durga".

SRI AUROBINDO: At last I have found some fine modern poets. This anthology *Recent Poetry* is more characteristic and this woman Alida Monroe has a finer poetic sensibility than Yeats. But Auden I can't make out. He speaks of 'two black rocks' someone dying there, 'we two', etc. Who are these 'we'?

P: Perhaps you will find some more good poets as you go on.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know, because these are the poets they speak of. (*To N*) Eliot is undoubtedly a poet. Why the devil does he go in for modernism when he can write such fine stuff as "La Figlia che Piange." When he plunges into irregularity he makes a mess by lack of rhythm.

OCTOBER 27, 1939

N: In an old essay in a now-defunct periodical named *Orient* Amal wrote that because you were embittered and disillusioned you gave up poetry and politics.

SRI AUROBINDO: Nonsense. I gave it up and took to the spiritual life because I wanted force for my action. People make the mistake that whatever a poet writes must be of his personal experience. I can write of universal experience. I can feel the experience in me and write about it¹.

¹ EDITOR'S NOTE The peccant phrase of the *Orient*-essay had in fact been seen by Sri Aurobindo before publication. Somehow he had passed it. The protest voiced in the Talk came apropos of a shorter version of the essay, which had been prepared for a paper more than 18 years after the ori-

N: Gandhi will now have to consider the door closed, after Hoare's speech.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, not only closed but jammed and he must be prepared to expect the worst.

N: When Hoare was made the Government Speaker, it was—

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it was a foregone conclusion.

N: He has also indicated the line the Government should pursue, saying "with strength and justice."

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the Hitlerian euphemism for repression, almost the same tone as of Ribbentrop. The Under-secretary, O'Neil, tried to cool it down but with no effect.

NOVEMBER 12, 1939

SRI AUROBINDO (*apropos of Buddhadev's article*): I have never heard that Shakespeare was popular even among peasants. His popularity was due to his power of speech. Everything he said was said with force and energy and that appealed to people. But he is not so successful in his sonnets. His dramas alone have that quality. Shelley has that gift only in rare places, Wordsworth also, and those are the things that become popular but not to the peasants. Shakespeare easy? And he was enjoyed by all? That is news.

It is true that *dhvani* (rhythmic suggestion) is an important element of poetry but it is not everything. There must be something that appeals to the mind, man being mental.

Poetry to be popular must be good poetry.

NOVEMBER 19, 1939

N. You have said in your *Synthesis of Yoga* that all love and adoration is good—it is a preparation and aspiration, even a partial realisation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not for a Yogi.

N. No, I mean in ordinary human life how can it be preparation and aspiration?

SRI AUROBINDO: I meant true love, not vital love with desire and possessiveness, or physical love. That of course can't be—though Blake says the physical act of love is part of Divine Love or its fulfilment.

If it is true love with a psychic or higher element in it, then it helps to awaken the Divine in oneself or bring a high uplifting of one's nature. I said there 'love and

ginal. The challenged words have been dropped from the reproduction of the original in the author's recent book, *Sri Aurobindo—the Poet*.

It is gratifying to observe that Sri Aurobindo's protest confirms the central point made in the same writer's article, "A Poet's Sincerity", published in the *Mother India* of August 15, 1970—the point touched upon again in his contribution to the present issue—"Truth, Sincerity, Poetry"—in answer to an objection raised by a reader

adoration'. Love, adoration and desire for union are the three features of that love.

N: Sometimes even when there is a true spark, that gets lost afterwards by vital mixtures, sometimes with disastrous consequences to the parties concerned.

SRI AUROBINDO: In so far as there is truth in the love, it will have its reward in the evolution of the being.

N: If that love helps to turn one towards the Divine, can it be said it was an unconscious seeking for the Divine?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes or it may be a seeking for love itself and its realisation or fulfilment.

N: I have read a novel where the hero—an artist—has been depicted as unconsciously seeking for the Divine through human love but every fresh contact or relation seems to disillusion him because he finds jealousy, pettiness, etc. coming in. Could it be said it was really a seeking or was it merely a vital play?

SRI AUROBINDO: Can't say, depends on a particular case of psychology. Which novel was it?

N: Jyoti's. There the hero has been represented in that light and turned towards the Divine at the end.

SRI AUROBINDO: That's all mental.

NOVEMBER 20, 1939

N: I have a few more questions on yesterday's topic. Firstly it seems that so long as love can be kept more or less psychic and mental it tends to remain high, noble and constant. But if it is brought down to the physical, it tends to be vitiated and get lost. So the physical relation seems to be predominantly responsible for the breaking of the union.

SRI AUROBINDO: The vital can also be responsible for it without any physical element. You can't say the physical is predominantly so. Blake and others actually say that spiritual love should be sanctified by vital and physical action. They are part of divine love.

N: In woman, people say, a moment comes of complete surrender to the beloved of everything. The physical being is a part of that surrender.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the attitude of submission of the female to the male. Real surrender is a different thing, more psychic in character.

N: In a psychic relation, when sex action takes place, is it only for procreation.

SRI AUROBINDO: The psychic element may be extended into the physical.

N: But is there not a danger of the psychic element being lost?

SRI AUROBINDO: That depends on the strength of the psychic. The psychic relation is itself very rare but it can get overclouded.

N: If a person has been disappointed in love in the world and that element is not satisfied, and after turning to the Divine he finds somebody whom he loves and adores, can it be called a need or necessity of the being?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not need or necessity. All depends on the particular case. If there is the psychic element in it, it can help. The Vaishnavas brought in even sexual relations into their yoga in order to sublimate them. The result in their case was a failure.

N: But in spite of the psychic element, there is a risk. The 'thing' may be lost.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know what this 'thing' is as I don't know the case.

S: N is speaking very guardedly!

NOVEMBER 21, 1939

S: N has a few more questions to ask; he is trying to formulate them, it seems.

P: Schomburg is a great woman-hater, it appears. On every occasion he brings in the question of woman's shortcomings.

SRI AUROBINDO: Is yours also a misogynist question?

N: Misogynist means woman-hater?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

N: No, my question is not so. Someone asked me: "If love is a seeking for the Divine, why does one seek human love after taking up yoga?"

SRI AUROBINDO: But is the man conscious of the Divine? If he is, either of two things may happen. All human relations may fall off or, keeping the divine love, he may keep human love as an appendage trying to raise it towards the Divine. I am not speaking of sex relations.

N: He may have faith that here is the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO: Faith is not consciousness. It is a preliminary element.

N. And if he is unconscious?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on particular types. Some persons, as I said, after being conscious of the Divine don't want any other relation with anyone else; at the same time they can keep a universal love for everybody. Others may keep a special relation with some, keeping it pure and trying to centralise everything towards the Divine.

N: It should be then predominantly psychic?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, it can be higher vital, free from all desires, attachments, etc.

S: There is the other extreme also. People here say that there should not be love for anyone else except for the Divine!

SRI AUROBINDO: As I said, it depends on the type. It does not mean that one should give up friendship with somebody for the sake of the Divine.

N: But friendship with the other sex involves danger.

P: There his Schomberg is coming in!

N: If you mean I am a woman-hater, no! Besides, we are speaking from two platforms.

SRI AUROBINDO: He is speaking from the platform of fear!

N: A last question: When people have united by love and come to lead a divine life but their relation breaks off after taking up the Divine Life and each goes his or her own way, is it because the purpose of love has been served that there is the separation?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not necessarily. There are cases where their old lower nature has dropped away and they are going side by side. In other cases it may be that one has not entered the path. There are also examples where one has come for the Divine and the other hasn't or has formed fresh attachments after taking up yoga.

N: Could it be said that in their union with the Divine, there may be a mixture in such cases?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, there may be a mixture and, under cover of the Divine call, they may satisfy the vital.

(To be continued)

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1971)

(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.)

THE Soul is not a part of nature-activity.

It is probable that in the course of evolution at a certain stage Souls begin to inhabit the vital and mental formulations of nature, and start using them. They are tied down to their instruments and gather experience from life to life. It is owing to the fact of this central being inhabiting every formulation of mind and gathering experience, that man, though identified with his mind, which is a part of nature, feels he has the power of initiating action. Though man is not conscious of it, the initiation of action comes all the while from the Soul. The action which the Soul initiates may not be effectuated, for it is done through the instruments—mind, life and body. Mind and life oppose the central aim or, if they do not oppose, still the very fact that action has to be done through them shows that there is limitation. The very presence of the instruments is a limitation, one cannot do anything without them. In that sense, therefore, the Soul has no absolute freedom so long as it is not one with the Ishwara, the Lord. But inasmuch as the initiation is effected and the action done, however little he may succeed, man has real if not full freedom. So the man in the street who says, "I am free", speaks more truth than the philosopher in the chair who establishes determinism, though both are incomplete statements of the truth. Of course the Soul can be fully free, in the sense of being the lord of nature, only when it is awakened; but even now, though bound to the instruments, it has a certain freedom.

The answer to the determinist is this: "If you say nature does everything, what is nature? It is only the power of yourself. It is only in the details of the process that nature works. You are the directing power and she is the executrix. You are eternally free in your essential being."

Our mental being is a certain organisation of mental consciousness which has

evolved from the lower consciousness, of course having been first involved in it and then rising with the help of the upward pressure. This organisation puts in front a certain activity—what we call our mind (the mind of which we are conscious). Mental beings existing on the mental plane are a different kind of beings, just as are vital beings existing on the vital plane. When a man dies, it is said that he passes on his way to the place of rest through the vital plane, becomes aware of his vital consciousness—not of the whole vital plane. Then, after a time, he goes away, leaving his vital body to disintegrate. This vital body of his may be used by vital beings.

In seances and spiritualistic experiences it is always either the vital consciousness of a dead person or his physical-vital taken up by a vital being that is experienced.

The Soul returning from the place of rest does not live in the vital plane, it only picks up suitable vital and physical material.

The Egyptians had a great deal of occult knowledge. The vital double in the physical body after a man's death was protected, so that no harm may come to the vital body. The pyramids are said to explain the passage of a man's soul after death, also to predict events, etc. There was not much spirituality in the Egyptians' religion but there was no dogma in it as in Christianity and Mahomedanism. The knowledge of the Ancients was direct. There were not many forms of science, but the knowledge of the Ancients was vast and deep.

Countries, like all living things, grow of themselves. No one can make a greater India, no one in the past made it. The India of the past grew of herself. The powers are there above, and they manifest themselves in fit instruments, organise themselves in them and in life. The thoughts and actions of the individual are but part of the movement. They do not make a greater country. It is the Truth that creates, it manifests itself in a certain form. That one can make a country as one can bake a loaf of bread is a crude mechanic idea. No individual ever made a country. France, England, India—it is all a creation of Truth or self-manifestation of the powers. The individuals are but instruments.

I have no desire or ambition now. My one aim is to bring down the Supermind, allow it to organise itself in my being and life. Politics or other work belongs to a lower plane, it uses up much energy. Men of action, called upon to act by the Ishwara within them, may do Yoga in the work itself. They must have faith in the work. This is Karma Yoga. Others, though they may take up work in the beginning as a part of Yoga and on a certain plane of it, may have to give it up and devote themselves entirely to the concentration on the higher consciousness. Their one object will be to bring down the higher consciousness and if they take up work—*e.g.* politics—they not only come to a lower kind of work but also to a lower consciousness.

Certain people cannot perceive the Truth directly by themselves. They may

need the touch of a Guru or they may profit by sitting in common meditation and reflecting the movement of others, and then following it up. Unfit people may be attracted to Yoga, but in the nature of things they cannot receive properly.

Now there seems to be a general awakening in the world, an upheaval, an opening up: the old things are called in question, there is a demand for higher things. Such an awakening is a sign that the higher powers are seeking to manifest themselves in the world. The manifestation depends on the conditions here, on the opening up, and the opening up begins when the higher things seek to manifest: both go together. When Christianity first came, there was such an awakening, but the Christians compromised with the vital forces, set about converting people to their religion, and the result was a failure. At the present time, the vital forces are more rampant in the world, they are abroad everywhere and unless we are sufficiently pure we cannot be fit instruments for the manifestation of the higher powers. Unless now we bring down the higher powers here in India, the chance may go to some other country. There must be sufficient preparation and purification. If people merely go on with their vital aims—*e.g.* patriotism, political work—Truth will not simply follow them into the legislative councils.

Q: Do not the vital and physical forces assist in the bringing down of the Truth?

The physical forces have only a blind feeling, the vital forces are mostly hostile. Even the general movement has behind it a vague feeling which it does not clearly know....On the supramental plane there are no hostile forces. Spiritual force is a very concentrated force. Humanity easily listens to the vital forces.

The physical beauty in a person is an excess of the glow of the vital worlds. There may be beauty inside, but in actual experience, whatever the theory, we may not see physical beauty. Socrates, for instance, had the most ugly face. Of course, beauty does not mean mere fair complexion, it means beauty of form and feature. Tagore's face shows the glow of the vital (aesthetic) world. The vital world is rich in beauty—I mean not the diabolic vital world but the true vital. The beauty of Nature is of the physical world, but the vital world is behind it. The beauty that comes of the psychic has a certain charm, but it may not bring beauty of form and feature. The highest beauty comes from the Ananda plane. In Ramakrishna the light began to manifest itself through his body and his body became luminous. He covered up his body with a thick cloth to hide it from the glare of all and when it was no use he prayed to the Goddess to go within!

In the consciousness of the Universal Beauty, three elements enter: (1) the essence of the being flowing out in manifestation, (2) the guna or the quality, (3) the adaptation or expression. When we rise to that consciousness, the aesthetic falls into

its place. Our beauty, truth and good are not absolute. What is beautiful to one is not so to another. Similarly with truth and good. Our conception of Beauty comes from the vital (aesthetic), affecting the mind and throwing out its forms, our conception of good from the moral faculty working or dynamic on the vital being, our conception of truth from the seeking of the mind. That is why there is such a terrible clash of opinions in aesthetics, morals, philosophy.

The visions of Christ, which some painters have, need not correspond to the actual physical form of Christ. There has been a traditional form which is seen again and again or else the mind presents a certain form according to the nature of the one who is seeing the vision.

Generally, people's seeing of distant scenes comes of a seeing through the vital-physical envelope things that affect the physical being. The consciousness that sees them is also vital. Its results are not to be mistaken for the higher Vision. It is in this vital consciousness that visions of Christ are also seen by painters. The psychic does not usually enter into the aesthetic feelings of men; the aesthetic in general is of the vital.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

IN A HUSH-WOVEN SILVER NET...

In a hush-woven silver net of solitude,
A vibrant vacancy, a luminous void
Swallows the self up; a swift serpent light
Smites the being's star-scattered grey folds of night.

A sweet nothingness is all, a flowing fragrance
From the ocean-depths of trance — a presence
That uplifts the dust to a smile of the Infinite,
The jewelled gleam of the Vast, the Truth, the Right.

The flickering self's low murmuring gulfs hushed ever
To the rain of God, life is a leaping river
Towards the griefless sea of Grace, the plenary
Song of the One, Mother of all ecstasy.

A. VENKATARANGA

AN OLD LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

Pondicherry, February 5, 1926.

THERE are certain things that it is absolutely necessary for X to realise in a sincere and straightforward spirit, without veils and self-justifications if his sadhana is not to turn about in a constant circle to the end or else fail and fall into pieces.

First, it is necessary for him to have a truer understanding of the Yoga than he seems to have had either in the past or now. This Yoga is not turned towards renunciation of the world or an outward asceticism, but neither is its aim Bhoga, nor what... people call "Life-realisation" which means nothing but the satisfaction of one's own magnified vital ego. The aim is an opening to a higher Divine Truth beyond mind, life or body and the transformation of these three things into its image. But that transformation cannot take place and the truth itself cannot be known in its own unmistakable spirit, perfect light and real body until the whole of the *ādhār* has been fundamentally and patiently purified, and made plastic and capable of receiving what is behind the constructions of the mind, the desires of the body and the habits of the physical consciousness and physical being.

His most obvious obstacle, one of which he has not in the least got rid of up to now, is a strongly Rajasic vital ego for which his mind finds justifications and covers. There is nothing more congenial to the vital ego than to put on the cloak of Yoga and imagine itself freed, divinised, spiritualised, siddha and all the rest of it or advancing towards that end, when it is really doing nothing of the kind, but [is] just its old self in new forms. If one does not look at oneself with a constant sincerity and an eye of severe criticism, it is impossible to get out of this circle.

Along with the exclusion of self-deceiving vital ego there must go that which accompanies it usually in the mental part, mental arrogance, a false sense of superiority and an ostentation of knowledge. All pretence and all pretensions must be given up, all pretence to oneself or others of being what one is not, or of knowing what one does not know and all vain idea of being higher than one's own actual spiritual stature.

Over against the vital Rajasic ego there is a great coarseness and heaviness of Tamas in the physical being and an absence of psychic and spiritual refinement. That must be eliminated or it will stand always in the way of a true and complete change in the vital being and the mind.

Unless these things are radically changed, merely having experiences or establishing a temporary and precarious calmness in the mental and vital parts will not help in the end. There will be no fundamental change; only a constant going from one state to another, sometimes a quieting and sometimes a return of disturbances, and always the same defect persisting to the end of the chapter.

The one condition for getting rid of these things is an absolute central sincerity

in all the parts of the being and that means an absolute insistence on the Truth and nothing but the Truth. Then there will be a readiness for unsparing self-criticism and vigilant openness to the Light, an uneasiness when falsehood comes in, which will finally purify the whole being.

The defects mentioned are more or less common in various degrees in almost every Sadhaka, though there are some who are not touched by them. They can be got rid of if the requisite sincerity is there. But if they occupy the central parts of the being and vitiate the attitude, then the Sadhaka will give a constant, open or covert support to them, his mind will always be ready to give disguises and justifications and try to elude the searchlight of the self-critical faculty and the protests of the psychic being. That means a failure in the Yoga at least for this existence.

AUROVILLE CULTURAL REPORT

AUSTRALIA'S ABORIGINES AT AUROVILLE

A ONE-MAN exhibition of sculpture, brought from the Australian forest by truck and boat, to be shown in a congenial environment dedicated to the cause of human unity, was inaugurated at "Aspiration", Auroville, on January 31, 1971. Fired by the indomitable spirit of an all-embracing reverence for Life, diminutive energetic William Ricketts, creator of the Australian wild-life sanctuary "Mountain of Remembrance", presented a remarkable cross-section through his devoted work as sculptor and spiritual patriot of his country's pre-civilised life.

Life and work of the artist revolve around his central experience of the unity of Creation, a unity in diversity brought home to him by his deep identification with the Australian aborigine in his natural surroundings. Through powerfully condensed transcriptions the exhibition speaks of Man evolving from the Alchera, the Void before Creation, into the dignified aborigine of the Australian wild-life scene. A dynamic flow of life-energy harmoniously blends symbolic representation with sublimated realistic imagery. A contact with worlds long forgotten is re-established, but the magical spell is felt to be transformed into love.

In view of the success of this exhibition, it is to be hoped that a special building will be designed for cultural activities in Auroville.

JOBST MÜHLING

SOME PERSONAL NOTES BY SRI AUROBINDO

(Girija Shankar Roy Chaudhuri, a Bengali literary critic, wrote a series of articles on Sri Aurobindo in the Bengali journal Udbodhan. When some points from the issue of June, 1944, were brought to Sri Aurobindo's notice, he dictated some notes as well as wrote a letter to a disciple about them. These comments have been published in Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother (pp. 92-99). Extensive corrections by Sri Aurobindo of other references by Girija Shankar were taken down by A.B. Purani and published at the end of his Life of Sri Aurobindo. Some further matter from Sri Aurobindo has come to light bearing on a number of statements in the issue of Vaisakh, 1941. Girija Shankar made the following assertions:

1. *Between 1880 and 1884 Sri Aurobindo attended the Grammar school at Manchester.*

2. *Sri Aurobindo owed his views on Indian Nationalism to the influence of his grandfather Rajanarayan Bose. Even Sri Aurobindo's bent towards philosophy may be attributed to the same influence*

3. *Sri Aurobindo's intellect was influenced by Greek philosophy.*

4. *Sri Aurobindo wrote a poem on Parnell in 1889, which shows Parnell's influence on Sri Aurobindo.*

5. *According to a report of Sri Aurobindo's sister Sarojini, Sri Aurobindo was playing cards at his London residence when he was to have gone to appear for the riding test.*

The answers given by Sri Aurobindo exist in two forms. One consists of brief typewritten remarks, the other of remarks at some length written in his own hand. The latter deal with the first three of the Bengali author's assertions and they show a small gap at one place. We are reproducing them and appending for the last two assertions the shorter typewritten answers. Neither of the two forms was subjected to final revision.)

1. I never went to the Manchester Grammar school, never even stepped inside it. It was my two brothers who studied there. I was taught privately by the Drewetts. Mr. Drewett who was a scholar in Latin (he had been a Senior Classic at Oxford) taught me that language (but not Greek, which I began at Saint Paul's, London), and English History also; Mrs. Drewett taught me French, Geography and Arithmetic. No Science; it was not in fashion at that time.

2. I don't think my grandfather was much of a philosopher; at any rate he never talked to me on that subject. My politics were shaped before I came to India; he talked to me of his Nationalist activities in the past, but I learned nothing new from them. I admired my grandfather and liked his writings "Hindu Dharmer Sresthata"

and "Sekal O Ekal," but it is a mistake to think that he exercised any influence on me. I had gone in England far beyond his stock of ideas which belonged to an earlier period. He never spoke to me of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

3 Very little. I read more than once Plato's Republic and Symposium, but only extracts from his other writings. It is true that under his impress I rashly started writing at the age of 18 an explanation of the cosmos on the foundation of the principle of Beauty and Harmony, but I never got beyond the first three or four chapters. I read Epictetus and was interested in the ideas of the Stoics and the Epicureans; but I made no study of Greek philosophy or of any of the...

I made in fact no study of metaphysics in my school and College days. What little I knew about philosophy I picked up desultorily in my general reading. I once read not Hegel, but a source book on Hegel; it left no impression on me. Later on in India I read a book on Bergson, but that too ran off like water from a duck's back. I remembered very little of what I had read and absorbed nothing. German metaphysics and most European philosophy since the Greeks seemed to me a mass of abstractions with nothing concrete or real that could be firmly grasped and written in a metaphysical jargon to which I had not the key. I tried once a translation of Kant but dropped it after the first two pages and never tried again. In India at Baroda I read a "Tractate" of Schopenhauer on the six centres and that seemed to me more interesting. In sum, my interest in metaphysics was almost null, and in general philosophy sporadic. I did not read Berkeley and only [dipped] into Hume; Locke left me very cold. The general ideas only remained with me.

As to Indian Philosophy, it was a little better, but not much. I made no study of it, but knew the general ideas of the Vedanta philosophies, I knew practically nothing of the others except what I had read in Max Muller and in other general accounts. The basic idea of the Self caught me when I was in England, I tried to realise what the Self might be. The first Indian writing that took hold of me were the Upanishads and these roused in me a strong enthusiasm and I tried later to translate some of them. The other strong intellectual influences in India in early life were the sayings of Ramakrishna and the writings and speeches of Vivekananda, but this was a first introduction to Indian spiritual experience and not as philosophy. They did not however carry me to the practice of Yoga; their influence was purely mental.

My philosophy was formed first by the study of the Upanishads and the Gita; the Veda came later. They were the basis of my first practice of Yoga; I tried to realise what I read in my spiritual experience and succeeded; in fact I was never satisfied till experience came and it was on this experience that later on I founded my philosophy, not on ideas by themselves. I owed nothing in my philosophy to intellectual abstractions, ratiocination or dialectics—when I have used these means it was simply to explain my philosophy and justify it to the intellect of others; the other source of my philosophy was the knowledge that flowed from above when I sat in meditation, especially from the plane of the Higher Mind when I reached that level; they came down in a mighty flood which swelled into a sea of direct knowledge always

translating itself into experience, or they were intuitions starting from an experience and leading to other intuitions and a corresponding experience. This source was exceedingly catholic and many-sided and descents of ideas came in which might have belonged to conflicting philosophies but they were here reconciled in a large synthetic whole.

4. It only shows that I took a keen interest in Parnell and nothing more.

5. Sarojini's memory is evidently mistaken. I was wandering in the streets of London to pass away the time and not playing cards. At last when I went to the grounds it was too late. I came back home and told my elder brother Benoy Bhushan that I was chucked. He with a philosophic attitude proposed playing cards and so we sat down playing cards. Manmohan came later and on hearing about my being chucked began to shout at our playing cards when such a calamity had befallen.

A TRUE STORY

It is Sunday today. Two children, brother and sister, 3 and 5 years old, are playing.

The girl calls out to her brother from the sand-pitch where she is busy. But he declines, saying:

"I am preparing a car."

"For whom?"

"For Douce Mère and Sri Aurobindo."

"What name will you give to your car?"

"Of course, Douce Mère and Sri Aurobindo."

"Oh, it is a big name. Take *La* for Sri Aurobindo, *Lee* for Douce Mère. *La* and *Lee* are the best names."

"But who will drive the car, my little *Sraddhalu*?"

"Sri Aurobindo will sit quietly; Douce Mère will drive the car."

"No, both will drive the car. Then the car will run at a high speed."

"Oh, I need to put a roof on the top of the car; there will be sun and rain!"

"No. As if they are afraid of sun and rain!"

Meanwhile the car is ready with its four wheels. The boy shouts:

"Come, come, the motor-car is ready but the push is to be given for the start."

"But all have to come, support the car and give the push. Then only will the car run."

M. P. PANDIT

ILLNESS IN YOGA

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Q: What is the inner character of the illness that has come over me?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is an attack on the body, with probably something in the vital accepting it and allowing it to increase. 29-3-1934

By detaching yourself you must make it easier for the Mother's force to work on the body—that is the object. 29-3-1934

Reject the movement of the vital physical and affirm the principle of health. The vital desires to be ill—throw out the desire. 31-3-1934

It was the mind that did not want it; this vital when left to itself often wants illness, it finds it dramatic, thinks it makes it interesting to others, likes to indulge in *tamas* etc., etc. 31-3-1934

Q: There was a stomach-ache in the evening. Could it be due to taking some dal?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a bad habit of the stomach, I suppose. A stomach with good habits would digest *dal* without thinking it necessary to ache. 5-4-1934

Are you really so ignorant of the simplest things? You do not know that the body can form habits of its own independent of the mental will? You are not aware that even the cells of the body have an action of their own, a life, habits, way of reaction of their own? 5-4-1934

Q: I have a cold in the head. In itself it is not particularly troublesome; what is troublesome is this movement that brings in all sorts of foreign influences and I cannot react against them. The subconscious seems to invade one.

SRI AUROBINDO: What movement? What you describe happens very usually during a cold in the head, as ordinarily one depends upon the brain cells for the transmission of the mental thought. When the mind is not so dependent on the brain cells, then the obstruction by the cold does not interfere with clear seeing and thinking and one is not thrown back in the mechanical mind. 19-5-1934

Q: How did I get N's pain? When I heard about his disease the mind stupidly thought that if the Mother transferred it to me I could easily shake it off from me and he would then have to suffer no longer. This, I think, is what is called a greater "yogic ego."

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. Of course it can be and often is done like that but that is not the proper way. 3-9-1934

Q: Some people seem to have stupid notions. They pray: "Mother, give us pain or sickness in order to test us!" I believe it is just the contrary, the hostile forces impose such things upon us against the Mother's wish.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. A very stupid prayer. And very often they get the illness and throw it on the Mother. 3-9-1934

Food does not make much difference. Diminution of food does not help in curing constipation. 5-11-1934

All that is a form taken by the resistance of the *tamas* in the physical. The proper cure for it would be to bring down the Force into the body to act directly on these things. Otherwise physical means have to be utilised. 5-11-1934

Q: I do not know whether my present consciousness is capable of concentrating to bring down the Force into the body.

SRI AUROBINDO: One need not concentrate to do that. A call ought to be sufficient. 6-11-1934

The Force is being put for the cure—it is only a question of more or less rapid reception. 6-11-1934

Physical pains are not a reason why the *sadhana* should stop whether inside or on the surface. 8-11-1934

Q: During the stomach-ache period, my consciousness did try to concentrate and to rise above. But it felt a strong block at the navel centre which made it too feeble for any such act. Was it not due to the vital resistance?

SRI AUROBINDO: The obstruction at the navel must have been physical, not vital; it came because you had the pain there. 9-11-1934

Q: I think my illness was rather from the atmosphere than from within. The Doctor told me that fever and stomach-ache were quite prevalent in the Ashram at that time. Of course the constipation I had had for long. But there was no reason for the fever.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was a result of the atmosphere and of the relaxed condition of the *sadhana* and the constipation acting all together.

From NAGIN DOSHI

LIGHTS ON THE PATH

PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES

(Continued from the issue of January, 1971)

(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.)

THE perfect action is not to be determined by any kind of mental or vital preference, but by the revealing and inspiring spiritual will which is the Shakti in her direct real initiation. When I say that as I am appointed, I work, I still bring in a limiting personal element and mental reaction. But it is the Master who will do his own work through myself as his instrument, and there must be no mental or other preference in me to limit, to interfere, to be a source of imperfect working. The mind must become a silent luminous channel for the revelations of the supramental Truth and of the Will involved in its seeing. Then shall the action be the action of the highest Being and Truth and not a qualified translation or mistranslation in the mind. Whatever limitation, selection, relation is imposed, will be self-imposed by the Divine on himself in the individual at the moment for his own purpose, not binding, not final, not an ignorant determination of the mind. The thought and will become then an action from a luminous Infinite, a formulation not excluding other formulations, but rather putting them into their just place in relation to itself, englobing or transforming them even and proceeding to larger formations of the divine knowledge and action.

*The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. VI, p. 275.
(Found by Pavitra, April 2, 1931)*

To know God...integrally is to know him as One in the self and in all manifestation and beyond all manifestation,—and all this unitedly and at once. And yet even so to know him is not enough unless it is accompanied by an intense uplifting of the heart and soul Godwards, unless it kindles a one-pointed and at the same time all-embracing love, adoration, aspiration. Indeed the knowledge which is not accompanied by an aspiration and vivified by an uplifting is no true knowledge, for it can be only an intellectual seeing and a barren cognitive endeavour. The vision of God brings infallibly the adoration and passionate seeking of the Divine,—a passion for the Divine in ourselves and for the Divine in all that is. To know with the intellect is simply to understand and may be an effective starting-point,—or, too, it may not be and it will not be if there is no sincerity in the knowledge, no urge towards inner realisation in the will, no power upon the soul, no call in the spirit; for that would mean that the brain has externally understood, but inwardly the soul has seen nothing. True knowledge is to know with the inner being, and when the inner being is touched by the light, then it arises to embrace that which is seen, it yearns to possess, it struggles to shape that in itself and itself to it, it labours to become one with the glory of its vision.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, pp. 93-4.
(Found by Amal, April 2, 1931)

Know your true self to be God and one with the self of all others; know your soul to be a portion of God. Live in what you know; live in the self, live in the supreme spiritual nature, be united with God and Godlike. Offer, first, all your actions as a sacrifice to the Highest and the One in you and to the Highest and the One in the world; deliver last all you are and do into his hands for the supreme and universal Spirit to do through you his own will and works in the world. This is the solution that I present to you and in the end you will find that there is no other.

Essays on the Gita, Second Series, p. 468.
(Found by Lalita, April 3, 1931)

We must rest at nothing less than the All, nothing short of the utter transcendence. And if we can thus be free in the spirit, we shall find out all the wonder of God's workings; we shall find that in inwardly renouncing everything we have lost nothing. "By all this abandoned thou shalt come to enjoy the All." For everything is kept for us and restored to us but with a wonderful change and transfiguration into the All-Good and the All-Beautiful, the All-Light and the All-Delight of Him who is for ever pure and infinite and the mystery and the miracle that ceases not through the ages.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. III, p. 533.
(Found by Dara, April 3, 1931)

“1971 — A SWEET YEAR”*

THIS year brings to the world and to us something “sweet”. It is for us to discover it and rejoice.

Sri Aurobindo spoke of some personalities of the Mother apart from the four great Personalities—hidden emanations that are not in front and do not take an active part in the affairs of the world. One such was that of Ananda. That was sometime ago. More recently Mother spoke of a new Divinity that has come to the fore—the Divinity of Love, the same to whom Sri Aurobindo referred—and has taken her place in the terrestrial atmosphere. It must be this goddess that has made herself more material now, she has infused herself into the very substance of matter, therefore the earth tastes sweet today—for those who have a taste. The manifestation of this goddess has rendered the work of the Supramental more urgent and more effective. The Supramental itself has its share in invoking and bringing down that Divinity, *Anandamayī*, near to us, but it is her grace again that is energising and fulfilling the Supramental. With her touch the earth is now ready, more ready for the ultimate fulfilment.

The inner being was always ready but now the outer being seems to be ready also so that our work is a work of delight—no more a labour: in effectively preparing ourselves in our external material formation we shall taste of a sweetness that was not there before.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

* The Mother’s Message to the Auroville Office on January 2, 1971.

A TALK BY SURENDRA MOHAN GHOSH*

TO THE STUDENTS OF THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

FRIENDS, I shall first read a quotation of the Rig Veda, from *The Life Divine*, the opening quotation for the first chapter:

“She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming,—Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead... What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light, projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come.”

Why I have read this out from *The Life Divine* has a history behind it. As I told you last time, I came to Pondicherry long after Sri Aurobindo left Bengal. I came in 1938 but I couldn't discuss anything of importance. Next I came in 1939. I discussed with Nolini a question that was uppermost in my mind. *The Ideal of Human Unity* had come out only in the *Arya* monthly; somebody had published it in book-form without the knowledge of Sri Aurobindo or the Ashram. So I requested Nolini that it should be printed here in book-form for my use in the political field, as one of Sri Aurobindo's workers. Next day Nolini told me that Sri Aurobindo had said *The Ideal of Human Unity* was being typed out by Miss Margaret Wilson, the daughter of President Wilson whose private secretary also she had been during the first World War. After reading that book she was amazed that those who like her had been the main actors in that period could not see things so clearly as Sri Aurobindo did from one corner of India, as if they had been happening right before his eyes. She would type it and give it to Sri Aurobindo for correction. But he said that first *The Life Divine* would be brought out in book-form and then *The Ideal of Human Unity*. I felt a little disappointed: what was the use of *The Life Divine*? *The Ideal of Human Unity* was the book which people like myself needed. But, well, there was no other way. Then I realised why *The Life Divine* had to come first, because without it his whole *Ideal of Human Unity* would not be understood in its proper perspective.

I have to express my gratitude to Nolini. It was from an article written by him that I came to realise the importance of *The Life Divine*. It was an article in Bengali based on the story of Urvashie and Pururavas in the Rig Veda. He started with the cry

* Reproduced from the tape-record.

of Pururavas, addressing Urvasie, "O my dear one, do not forsake me! It is not for my fault that you have to leave me!"

Most of you know the story, I suppose, but I shall give you the gist. Urvasie, due to some curse, came to live on earth; but she wanted to go back to heaven. She came to Pururavas on certain conditions, one of them being that he would never appear naked before Urvasie. So the 'devas' and 'gandharvas' conspired to give her the chance. One night thieves stole Pururavas's two lambs and Urvasie suddenly cried out, "There is no man in this house, otherwise they would not have dared to steal." And Pururavas jumped out of his bed with a spear in his hand; he couldn't think of his clothes; suddenly there was lightning, and he was shown naked before Urvasie and she began receding. Then Pururavas realised what had happened and cried out to her, "It is not my fault, do not forsake me!" And Sri Aurobindo raised the question: if Veda is eternal universal Truth, what is there in this story? There is apparently no eternality or universality in it! But everything in the Veda is symbolic. And Nolini has written in that article the meaning Sri Aurobindo had given to this story—Pururavas is the eternal man, and Urvasie is the Divine Grace which comes to every man everywhere throughout the ages; but on a certain condition—that man should not take life as it is, as it appears to be. There is something beyond and, to remind man of it, the Divine Grace comes and tries to help him, to go towards that Beyond. But, instead, if man utilises that Presence with his human knowledge and experience, then the Grace recedes, and then this eternal question: "Why have you forsaken me? Life is barren, everything is meaningless. Why shouldn't I get back all that I have enjoyed?"

Similarly, in politics—now I come back to my subject—what we see on the surface is one thing; but the eternal man in everyone of us and the Divine Grace that comes down to help are constantly working. That is the basis on which the whole of *The Ideal of Human Unity* is written. It is the secret hand of the Divine working through us, without letting us feel that we are being interfered with in our activities by somebody outside ourselves. In our ignorance that secret hand works on. That is how Sri Aurobindo saw the working of it, trying to shape the destiny of mankind towards a certain inevitable goal—which is the ultimate realisation of our inherent unity. It is to be discovered. Today the urge is there, but in our mind, in the intellect the resistance is also there, so the secret hand works in such a manner that we feel that whatever we wanted is being done. I shall give you an example from *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

After the Versailles Treaty, Sri Aurobindo wrote: "You have concluded this Treaty to curb Prussian militarism. But instead what will happen?" He could see how that secret hand was working from behind—he could see all the trends and he interpreted them in terms of political forces, social forces, economic, psychological forces, and then he drew the irresistible conclusion from all those forces that instead of the Treaty curbing Prussian militarism the whole of Europe would come under the heels of Prussian militarism—and how right he was, you have seen. And he

developed this point further. In those perilous days, he said, the British people, who were resisting India's freedom and Independence, would realise that the granting of autonomy, Independence, to India, instead of weakening their imperial power, would be a pillar of strength to save Democracy in this world.

So you see in the passage on Usha I read out, how, one after another, things that were happening were revealed to the Rishi's vision. Similarly everything can be seen in the right perspective.

I'll give you a very recent experience of mine. Maharaj Trailokya Chakravarty, popularly known as Maharaj, was the leader of a rival revolutionary group in Bengal—he was the leader of one group and I of another. I invited him to Delhi, and it was a most successful visit from my point of view. Then suddenly he died at night. I thought his dead body should be sent to Bengal and I made the necessary arrangements. There the whole route was lined by not less than 20 lakhs of people, from Dum-Dum to Shyam Bazaar, and then from there to Calcutta another 15 lakhs of people. I was reminded of this Usha passage. Nobody anywhere remembers Maharaj now—his name is not very prominent today. But he was really a great man. I spent only 23 years in jail, and he had to spend, including the Andamans, 32 years. He was dynamically active, and today's people are very busy with this 'ism and that 'ism and who would now recognise a man who was in those days a very respectable leader? But you see how everybody suddenly felt. I interpreted it to many of my friends as the working of the Dawn.

Another example—Orissa receiving the relics of Sri Aurobindo—a real eye-opener! Nandini Satpathy, after her return to Delhi, told me that she had never seen such a crowd in her life. Dr. Mahtab came afterwards and he too told me the same thing. What is that Force secretly working?

Similarly in 1962, when China attacked India, I was talking to our Prime Minister Nehru after he had returned from Ceylon. I said, "Have you seen the people of India rising up and standing like a rock? And under your leadership they are prepared to go to any length?" "Yes," he replied. I asked, "Did you have any hand in creating this situation? Did anyone of us work for it?" "No." "Keep this in mind," I told him. I need not go into further detail, some political complication might come up.

So this secret hand is working, in me, in you, in everyone, to lead us, to guide us to the destined goal.

My friend Nirod has given me a few points on which he would like me to speak to you. The first is my meeting with Subbiah.

In 1938 I came here without informing anybody in the political field. But at Madras station I found quite a big crowd. I told them, "Don't disclose it to anybody, but I am going to the Ashram. I haven't come here for any politics." I came to the Ashram, but the Darshan was cancelled because of the accident to Sri Aurobindo. I stayed on. One night a person I had known in Ramnad District came to me and said, "Subbiah has come to see you, he is waiting outside in the street." Subbiah and I had known each other only by name, not personally. He had already been implica-

ted in the murder case of that mayor whose statue you see now in the park on the beach road—Selvaraju Park. Now he is one of your ministers; a communist leader. My friend said, “He cannot enter the Ashram fearing that the Ashram might get implicated in that murder case.” I came into the street and Subbiah said, “I have already informed all the people that you will come to my house and have dinner with me; please come, they will be also coming.” I said, “How can I, now I am in the Ashram? I can’t do any political work from here!” He said, “No, but these people will come. What shall I tell them?” Then I hesitated and wondered and told him, “You may go now, I shall see what arrangements can be made.” Next morning I sent word to Sri Aurobindo, through Nolini: “This is my trouble, you see; these people have come to know of my arrival and this is what they suggest. What am I to do?” Sri Aurobindo replied, “Take leave of the Ashram, go away (*laughter*) and finish your political activity, then come back.” (*laughter*) So the next morning I took my leave of the Ashram, saying, “I am now going away!” And then I went to Subbiah’s house; many workers had come, we had dinner and discussions that finished at 1 a.m. After this, another party came by car and said, “You must come with us now. Sri Aurobindo has said you must finish your work and then go back to the Ashram.” I said, “All right” and got into the car. Then continuously for three days and three nights I toured all these districts, without a single minute’s rest—taking my bath here, breakfast there, dinner at a third place, passing, from village to village. On the third day in the evening I again entered the Ashram as an Ashramite!

Now the next point is the Russia-China rift. It relates to my last interview with Sri Aurobindo, in October 1950. I met him, as usual, and on the last day he said to me, “You didn’t ask me anything about China”—and really I hadn’t mentioned anything about China. It had been in turmoil, the communists had come to power under Mao Tse-tung, and Chiang Kai-shek had been driven out. I could not make up my mind about the importance of what had happened there. So I told him, “Sir, I cannot make up my mind about it.” He said, “Keep a very keen, careful eye on China. There are certain forces which might divide China and Russia. Keep a keen eye. There are forces at work, still very subtle, and if they come to the surface, China will be disintegrated one day.” I listened. Then he asked me, “Have you read the articles on Tibet, that have come out in *Mother India*?” “No, Sir.” “Read them, they are not written by me but they were written on my instruction and I have corrected them.”

The next point is Bhriгу’s reading on Sri Aurobindo. I believed in astrology, Sri Aurobindo also believed, but I never felt the urge to go and consult an astrologer. There is a part in me that dislikes it. From what I have seen in my life I am telling you the plain truth without exaggerating anything—nothing is ‘adrishta’—‘unseen’—everything is ‘drishta’, ‘seen’. I need not go to an astrologer to find out what will be my future. My future is in my hands. If I want to do something, and I know how it can be done, no force on earth or heaven can stand in the way. That is what I used to believe. The only thing is, you must know your mind—what you want. If you want

to live an honest life in business, yes, you can shape it. And if you want to be a master black-marketeer, that line is also open to you. So, you see, I had no inclination to go to an astrologer; but I had a friend in Delhi who would go to any astrologer who came and he would try to drag me along, saying "Oh such a great man has come, let's go to him." I never went; but one day I couldn't resist him any more. It was Bhrgu's reading that had been brought. I suddenly decided to take Sri Aurobindo's horoscope and see what Bhrgu had to say. We went. The astrologer brought out the book of horoscopes and read one. It didn't tally; the second one tallied a little, and the third I found tallying exactly with Sri Aurobindo's life. He went on and on and on. Everything was there, the Mother's coming, even my connection! Finally he said, "After 78 years, when Sri Aurobindo will complete 78 years, he will develop a 'ghrina' towards his body and then he may leave his body; otherwise death is in his control, he is such a great Yogi." All this was there in Bhrgu's book. Then I became serious. It was also mentioned there, that the Mother or I could perform a certain 'yagna', sacrificial ceremony, with certain mantras; an elaborate process was given.

After this I wanted to test the astrologer further. My own horoscope was in my pocket. I said, "You find out this one from your book." He said, "No, not today." I said I wanted it there and then: I feared he might later collect information (*laughter*) and then say things. I didn't want to allow him that time. Then he said, "All right", brought out his things and started reading. Amazing! There are certain incidents in my life, which today nobody living knows. My mother died at a very early age, I cannot even remember her face. My maternal grandfather had no other children except my mother, and I was the only grandchild, I was never allowed to go to my ancestral home. I was born in Mymensingh and brought up there. I was the only interest in his life. I would join the revolutionary party at a very early age, I would take a vow not to marry—the country would be free when I would be at a certain age at which I would not have time to marry. (*Laughter*) All these things were there! And also that I had persuaded my grandmother to adopt somebody—it is a fact. Because we had big estates and I left everything behind, so to manage them all I persuaded her to adopt another boy. They would thus be looked after and I would be free for my work. Then in jail there was a hunger strike of 64 days; I gave up even drinking water; and then my connection with Sri Aurobindo. More and more I was puzzled at the reading. That was the year precisely when we formed a committee to celebrate Sri Aurobindo's coming 80th Birthday in Delhi—I was Secretary, K. M. Munshi was Chairman and S. N. Jauhar was Secretary too. We had already started working on the scheme.

After hearing Bhrgu's prediction I came almost immediately to Pondicherry. What to do? I didn't want to mention it to Sri Aurobindo, I was afraid it might work as a suggestion in his mind. (*Laughter*) I was really afraid, but at the same time I couldn't keep it to myself. So I went to Nolini and told him everything. He asked me to tell the Mother. I did so and then I met Sri Aurobindo; before I could say anything he said, "What have you told the Mother?" (*Laughter*) I was taken aback.

I didn't know I would have to face such a situation. Then I had to tell him. He asked me, "Why didn't you mention it to me?" I told him that I had been really nervous and afraid that it might act like a suggestion, therefore I had consulted Nolini, and he had asked me to tell the Mother. "No, don't worry," he said. I told him, "I worry because you too believe in astrology." "No, don't worry," he repeated. Now what happened? Here comes in destiny, although I have said I didn't believe in destiny. You see, the Mother asked me, "Can you get a copy of the whole thing and send it to me?" I said, "Yes, I can do that." I went back to that man again, and he saw I was interested in the affair. He used to charge Rs. 10 or 15, but now things had to be copied out and given, so he said he would take Rs. 300. I agreed even though I was in difficulty. Money matters—there I am always in difficulty! He gave me a copy, I put it in an envelope to be sent by registered post. Just then somebody came to me from the Ashram. I asked him how long he'd be in Delhi; he said he would soon go back to the Ashram. So I handed over the thing to him to give it to Nolini. This was all between October and December. On December 5, in the early morning I went out to collect funds for the celebration of Sri Aurobindo's 80th birthday. Every day I used to go early in the morning. That day as usual I went out and at about 7, when I returned, I heard the news that he had passed away—Munshi telephoned it to me. Afterwards I came to know that the gentleman who had taken that paper from me arrived in Pondicherry only after the Master had left his body. So this ends the story about Bhriugu.

As I told you, Sri Aurobindo had asked me to read the articles on Tibet. When I came here in October or November, 1949, he put me another question, "Why have you not asked me anything about the communal situation in Bengal?" I said, "There is nothing to report, it's all very quiet." "No, no, be careful; something may happen." And exactly that year, when I was in Delhi and held the post of President of West Bengal Congress.... Oh, one thing I forgot to tell you, you will find it interesting. Although I worked for Congress, I never took any important office of Congress. It is also a fact that I controlled Bengal Congress, but not as an office-bearer. However, when Subhash Bose revolted against Congress, that was my point of difference with him. The manner in which he was working, I warned him, would ultimately lead him to an organisational revolt. He said, "No." I said, "I'm dead sure; you won't be able to check your steps." He denied the danger. I said, "I can't go with you any longer. I shall not be a party to the organisational revolt with Congress." And when he revolted nobody was found in Bengal to take charge of its Congress. All the big leaders refused. Then I was approached. I took a little time; meanwhile I wrote a letter to Sri Aurobindo, saying, "This is the situation. I believe in Congress but nobody is coming forward to take this responsibility because of Subhash's revolt. What am I to do?" I received the instruction that in that case I would have to take the responsibility. Then I made a condition with the Congress people, who had approached me, that I was prepared to take the responsibility but I must write a letter to Gandhiji, so that I might not be accused afterwards that I had exploited my posi-

tion as Congress President for my party. I wanted to make everything clear. So I wrote to Gandhiji: "I am prepared to take charge, but you say that Non-violence is the only means by which our freedom can be achieved; I don't believe in it. You say Charkha is indispensable for our fight for freedom; I don't believe in it. You say that in order to be a Congress member one must spin regularly; I don't believe in it. But I believe in Congress and I have signed the pledge and I shall work to maintain the organisational integrity of Congress. So I have made my position clear." Gandhiji showed this letter to the Working Committee. He said, "This man doesn't believe in a single item of my programme (*laughter*) and you say he is to be the Congress President?" Maulana took that letter from Gandhiji and said he would tackle me. He came to me in Calcutta and said, "What have you written here? *Aré bhai, yé kya lkhdiya?*"¹—"Méré méra dil ka bat lkhdiya"² (*laughter*)—"Aré, you could have said you believe 25% and don't believe 75% or 50% and 50%, but you have bluntly said you don't believe anything." I said, "*Mé ra dil ka bat ohi hé*"³—"No, you will have to take office."—"All right, but I've made my point clear, so that I don't have to hear later on that I have taken undue advantage of my position."

This point is very important now. I feel sometimes a little ashamed and embarrassed also, but at the same time there is something in me which prompts me to be very outspoken and frank, always, everywhere, and I am known to be of that temperament.

In 1938 I could not see Sri Aurobindo, as I have said; but I received a message from him saying, "You will be shown the Ashram activities, the Mother will send someone to guide you." I was taken round all the different activities in the Ashram. I saw them all; and the day I was finally to leave the Ashram, a message came, "Write your impression of what you have seen." (*Laughter*) I took a paper and wrote down, "I have never seen in my life, anywhere, such a colossal waste!" (*Laughter*). I put the note in an envelope and sent it. (*Laughter*) But there was no reference to it when I met Sri Aurobindo.

After my return I asked the people weaving here from where they got the yarn; they said they had purchased it. At that time everybody was wearing dhotis and sarees—they said they had purchased them. Then going back to Calcutta I asked the Mohini Mills proprietor—a great friend of mine—to send some bales of sarees and dhoties to the Ashram. Immediately he sent them. Then to the proprietor of Basanti Mills I suggested to send some bales of yarn. When I came here Sri Aurobindo asked me, "How did you manage to send all this?" I said, "That's nothing. It was very easy." He told me, "Don't approach anybody in my name or in the Ashram's name for money or things. If anyone wants to give, let him give; don't go and ask." Another thing he said was: "The people outside think that the Mother selects very spiritually advanced people for the Ashram. Nothing of the kind.

¹ "O brother, what have you written?"

² "I've written what's in my heart."

³ "This is what my heart says."

She selects different types. The worst scoundrel also may be selected. (*Laughter*) She wants to observe how the Divine works in different types." I don't know whether I am right in disclosing all these things, but my friend Nirod is asking me to go on, the responsibility will be his! (*Laughter*) All these years I've kept these things a secret.

What Sri Aurobindo next told me was also about the Ashram. "The Mother is trying to develop this Ashram into a university; but not according to the common conception of a university. It will be a place where every branch of knowledge in which a man may be interested will be taught; there will be practical demonstrations too. And everything will be taken up. But there will be no profit motive. Everybody will be taught to work, not with any profit motive but with a spirit of service." Thus in this connection I was awakening to the meaning of the 'colossal waste' which I had mentioned! Because I had seen everything from the profit motive, I saw so much waste, nothing but waste. I was gradually waking up. Sri Aurobindo was giving a reply to that statement! (*Laughter*) He added one thing more: "You know we wanted to teach every sadhak here how to spend money. They must learn the use of money. The Mother used to give them Rs. 2 in cash, apart from all the Prosperity things. And you know what they did? They returned the money to the Mother! (*Laughter*) It was given to them to learn the use of it."

I shall end with these words. Thank you all very much.

NIRODBARAN'S CLOSING WORDS

Well, friends, we express our loving gratitude to Surenda for having opened the secret chambers of his heart (*laughter*); but his heart is very large and the chambers, anatomically and physiologically, are four. We expect that on his next visit he will open the rest of the chambers to all of you, in return for the love that you have shown. (*Laughter*) You will realise now from what he has said the truth of the statement that Sri Aurobindo made: "Surendra Mohan is my man." (2-1-1971)

DR. M. S. ADISESHIAH
Deputy Director General of UNESCO
ON
AUROVILLE

**Excerpts from the Interview by French Television, Paris,
on 14th December, 1970**

1. In Auroville, I believe, all the different cultures of the world will be able to live harmoniously and fruitfully in unity.

2. Auroville will give us the possibilities of a high level of life which will produce a new civilisation.

3. The foundation of Auroville is a new kind of spirituality, a new consciousness which we lack in our world today. With this new consciousness Auroville will have a sure basis for the development of society in all areas of life—social, economic, cultural, political, etc.

4. The unique importance of Auroville is that it will never cease to evolve. It will always grow towards an ever-greater perfection. This will give us a possibility of infinite growth of the human spirit.

5. We have arrived everywhere—in Europe, as in Asia, North America, Africa—at a stage which drives home to us the faith that for us there is no way forward except a conscious spiritual development.

6. It is difficult for me to explain clearly all the implications of this new consciousness, but Sri Aurobindo has given us in his works a concrete illustration or a crystallisation of the new man with a new consciousness. In our world the great error of our thought has been to divide our life between spiritual life and material life. But the great dream of Auroville, based on Sri Aurobindo's life-work, is to unite the two. With this reunion or marriage between Spirit and Matter we shall have truly the possibility of a new world and a new man, a universal and integral man. Auroville is an attempt to realise Sri Aurobindo's philosophy on the terrestrial plane: the integration of a total man.

7. In our great universities—Oxford, Cambridge, Sorbonne—and also in the monasteries of Roman Catholics as well as the temples of Islam, of Buddhism, etc.—we have tried to develop simultaneously the inner and the outer life but in its application the ideal has not gone deep enough, nor become integral. However, the genius of Auroville, based on Sri Aurobindo's vision, is the concept of a new man with a new consciousness who will unite Spirit and Matter.

8. I believe that in Auroville we shall have a true democracy which does not

exist anywhere in the world, which has never existed before, even in the ancient cities of Greece from where we learned the democratic way of life in the occident—because theirs was a life based on slavery. In the great democratic countries also, we have many social problems which constitute a negation of the democratic life. In one-third of the world, we have economic problems. Well, I think the true democracy does not yet exist anywhere. In Auroville, however, all the institutes, economic, social, cultural, based on the concept of the Integral Man with a new consciousness, will assure a true democracy, where each person will have a special role in the decisions and actions of the township. And thus we shall also have a new form of political life. No person will be excluded from Auroville because of his sex, age, colour, race, religion or nationality, or any other social or cultural accidents. Auroville is open to all and there will be no danger of exclusiveness.

9. As regards tax—the word which always evokes in me a feeling of compulsion and imposition—I believe, that in Auroville, with this new consciousness, there will be no necessity of imposing any taxation. For everyone will naturally and voluntarily contribute to the welfare of all.

10. Our General Conference of UNESCO has three times successively declared that the great project of Auroville is a profound expression of the spirit of UNESCO. On the basis freely and unanimously adopted by 135 member-states of UNESCO, I believe that the moment has come for all the member-states of all the five continents, for all the voluntary organisations and most particularly for all individuals to help in the fulfilment of Auroville. UNESCO, on its part, will certainly continue all its assistance, of which this great project has need. I urge all—the member-states, the governments, the private societies, foundations, non-governmental organisations, specialised agencies, all—to observe the Sri Aurobindo Centenary Year which commences on August 15, 1972 and help the Sri Aurobindo Society in the development of Auroville in every way possible.

(Translated by KAILAS JHAVERI from the French)

TOWARDS AUROVILLE

AN APPROACH THROUGH SRI AUROBINDO'S BOOK, "THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY"

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1971)

NATURE through thousands of years has been busy developing the nation-idea—'a persistent psychological unit'—and establishing and consolidating it in the race consciousness of people in one or other area. Maybe she has done so with the secret purpose of promoting an empire-idea in the course of evolution as a gift to mankind for the creative and spiritual growth of the individual as well as smaller communities and nationalities under conditions of complete freedom and security. By empire here is not meant a heterogeneous or homogeneous aggregate based on race, language or culture but a free and developing collectivity founded on a real and psychological unity. "The earth is in travail now of one common, large and flexible civilisation for the whole human race into which each modern and ancient culture shall bring its contribution and each clearly defined human aggregate shall introduce its necessary element of variation. In the working out of this aim, there must necessarily be some struggle for survival. The fittest to survive will be here all that can best serve the tendencies Nature is working out in humanity,—not only the tendencies of the hour, but the reviving tendencies of the past and the yet inchoate tendencies of the future. And it will be too all that can best help as liberating and combining forces, best make for adaptation and adjustment and for deliverance of the hidden sense of the great Mother in her strivings. But success in this struggle is worst and not best served by military violence or political pressure."¹⁰

The East has always accepted, willingly and freely, the really valuable gifts of modern European culture, namely, its science, its ideal of social emancipation, its love of freedom and democracy and equality. But in the things which are deepest and most essential to the future of mankind and the things of the soul it has refused to accept the verdict of the West. Therefore the new empire that seeks to replace the chauvinism and self-assertive belligerence of the nation or state-idea, has to evolve in obedience to the requirements of the new age. It has to create a firm and secure framework for the growth and development of the many cultures, races and languages and the heterogenous system of thought within it. It may, therefore, under the circumstances be a free and convenient confederacy of different nations, big and small, welded into a natural and psychological unit, for the purpose of individual and collective progress and fulfilment.

¹⁰ *The Ideal of Human Unity, p. 163*

There may, therefore, be several factors helping the emergence of such a federated heterogeneous empire. To name a few: a natural body, a common life and vital interest for the constituents of the body, a conscious mind or a profound sense of unity and a governing centre which helps this common ego-sense to fulfil itself in thought and activity. The list may profitably include other elements such as a composite race, a common country with a settled continuity of association, geographical necessity and a common political and economic interest. If all these elements are harmoniously blended into a free and creative aggregate, many nations and states might be attracted by its ideal to coalesce into a larger confederacy with an underlying supra-national unity. This would mean scrupulous respect for the social, cultural and economic life of the smaller nations, states or colonies composing the larger body, and an equal freedom with that body to all these in the management. The whole may therefore be only a political and cultural centre providing a secure and helpful machinery for the unity and development of the various entities composing it and serve these various cultures for the life of a nobler humanity. If this great ideal of human welfare and cultural fulfilment of mankind were not at the root of its formation, then it would merely be a vulgar and reactionary phenomenon.

The fruitful consequence of the French Revolution, reinforced by the revolutionary ideals of an organised national state in Germany and the Russian Revolution, have together contributed not a little to the recent idea of a federation of free nations, the parliament of man, a world-union. Undoubtedly, such a free association and unity of free nations must be the ultimate goal of our political development and until it is realised the nations and governments of the world must be subject to constant changes and even revolutions. However far mankind may be from this ultimate ideal of a federation of free aggregates, it is worthwhile that it moves in the direction of the unfoldment of the moral and spiritual progress of the race that would ensure a just and healthy social, political and economic foundation as a part of the preparation and eventual fulfilment of its higher destiny.

This 'gospel of philosophic anarchism,' missioned to reassert man's revolutionary faith in individual freedom and free self-fulfilment, may perhaps invoke the assistance of a new and superior religious and spiritual revolution hitherto unknown to human history. For, all great and enduring movements cultural and political, social and economic, have sought their sustenance and appeal from deeper sources of spiritual experience. This supra-national aggregate of free people, it can be presumed, would combine the vivacity of spiritual life present in the Vedic and Upanishadic times with the general vividness of life and dynamic force of culture and creation of the early Greek and Roman civilisation. Also, the chief characteristics of these two great ancient cultures—the complete participation not of a limited class, but of the individual generally in the many-sided life of the community, (and) the sense each had of being full of the energy of all and of a certain freedom to grow, to be himself, to achieve, to think, to create in the undammed flood of that universal energy—would be combined with the dynamic alternatives of harmonious interrelations between com-

munity and community achieved in our modern times in the wider context of much vaster forces of life and thought available to us as well as the growing cultural unity and economic and political interdependence of nations. This great unification of human aggregates would, while assimilating its component units, seek a new and higher unity that would fully provide for the growth and development of its components.

If this new unification is in the very nature of things a compelling urge, then conscious humanity must through a constant, living and vigorous striving evolve an enduring framework or scaffolding within which the new edifice might arise, as well as consolidate this aspiration as part of the vital and mental habits of the race.

There should therefore precede a long intellectual preparation and a vital urge supported by an inner passion and the hope to achieve this new happiness for mankind by breaking up the present basis of things and reconstructing a new scheme of collective life. The present individualistic basis of society has to be replaced by an increasing collectivism founded on liberty, equality and the ideal of fraternity wherein the individual is helped to new ethical and social advancement and fulfilment. The two World Wars have in their wake ushered in a new precipitative force into the channels of human thinking and made intellectuals the world over feel the necessity of an immediate international existence. But the mass of men are ruled in their actions not so much by an ideal as by their interests. What is needed is a great and effective outburst of a massed and dynamic idealism and creative human hope that can release into the earth atmosphere forces and factors capable of bringing about the needed transformation. The new consciousness of world-unity must eliminate the bases of national egoisms, hungers, cupidities and self-assertions, abolish national armies and all the causes of conflicts, explosions, wars and catastrophes and lay hold upon much purer roots of action of the individuals, communities, races and nations in a mighty bid towards the total transmutation. As respect for individual liberty and free growth of the personal being is harmonised with respect and consideration for the needs, natural growth, solidarity and organic perfection of the collectivity in an ideal state, so also national liberty, free national growth and self-realisation must be progressively harmonised with the solidarity, unified growth and perfection of the human race in an ideal aggregate of all humanity.

One of the dominant drifts of World-Nature in our present times has been the movement of nations towards a possible loose political and administrative unification by political and economic motives in different regions of the world. But the form of a federation of free and equal nations which we envisage seems to be set aside to a much later period of our collective evolution in the distant future. The political and administrative unification of regional states or nations or even of the whole of mankind will not satisfy the long human anguish. For it is most likely that such unifications brought about by purely political and administrative means might suppress for a considerable period the freedoms of the individual which have been the most precious gains of humanity's past social, political and spiritual struggles. And it would be inevitable that humanity will be dominated by two or three great powerful nations for

an indefinite period. What is desired is a new formulation of liberty initiated and sustained by a new powerful spiritual movement capable of reconciling "individual liberty with the collective ideal of a communal life and the liberty of the group-unit with the new born necessity of a more united life for the human race"¹¹. At the moment, the instinct of domination and expansion, the hunger for power and property, and the vital, intellectual and cultural aggressiveness of nation-egos seem to be too strong to admit or to conceive the possibility of such an international aggregate. The unification of the human race will therefore have to take the cautious road, taking full and conscious care of the freedom and fulfilment of the individual and the group units, for these are fundamental to the very mathematics and physics of creation and overcome all temptations to the rigid and mechanical casts of uniformity and regimentation.

(To be continued)

MADHUSUDAN REDDI

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165

TRUTH, SINCERITY, POETRY

A READER'S LETTER ABOUT AN ARTICLE AND THE AUTHOR'S REPLY

The Letter

Dear K. D. Sethna,

Your essay *A Poet's Sincerity* in the *Mother India* of August 15, 1970, has caused a small doubt in my mind with its comment on a dictum of A.E.'s. If there is no "passionate desire for truth" in a poet, how can he see the beauty of truth and manifest it through his instrument? Yes, "a dramatist can be a poet and he speaks through a multitude of characters". But the dramatist is not a mere tape-recorder, he is a seer and witness, giver of sanction, lord and enjoyer. He stamps his super-personality upon the totality of the dramatic characters. Therefore, why should we not include, in A.E.'s definition of truth, truth's manifold aspects? A Shakespeare need not hesitate to give a befitting form to what he sees, whether the object of his vision is a hero or a villain. A.E. uses his own vocabulary—"believing and feeling"—instead of writing: "the visionary urge," etc., which you speak of. There is a poetic truth as well as a poetic beauty. A poem is indeed "ardhanarinaleswar," a half-man half-woman godhead, isn't it?

There are two parts of A.E.'s dictum. "All writing of poetry should be preceded by a passionate desire for truth" —I think no harm is done to the divine afflatus by this part. We must concede it and take it at its full face-value. The second part—"And when the poet is writing he should continually ask himself, 'Do I really believe this? Is this truly what I feel?'" —is a bit weak. Still, it deserves a high proportion of *cash value*. Without the crown of truth the Queen of Beauty degenerates into a public woman. If I do not believe and have faith in what I write, then what is the use of my writing it? I may get fame and even knock down some Academy award, but in my heart of hearts I shall remain a hypocrite. I don't know if poets are such hypocrites. Would you kindly clarify the issue?

A. VENKATARANGA

The Reply

Dear Venkataranga,

I have kept you hanging for quite a time. I am sorry, but I couldn't help it, for I had a Himalaya of work on my hands.

Having written this I am visited by a scruple. Could I justifiably have penned a line of poetry like

A Himalaya of work on my frail hands?

Would such a line be prompted by "a passionate desire for truth" and would it pass the test: "Do I really believe this? Is this truly what I feel?"

Neither you nor I really believe that Everest, Kanchanjanga, Gaurishankar, Dwalagiri and Nanga Parbat were weighing down on my five fingers, or even that the mass of work my hands had to deal with was anywhere comparable in quantity to India's northern mountain-range of 800 miles' length and 5 miles' height. Here is evidently an exaggeration: literal truth has been sacrificed to significant effect.

Again, to think of the Himalaya is to visualise endless snow, perpetual solitude, eternal immobility. What have these things to do with my work? Surely I am letting fantasy run riot. My words cannot possibly answer to my actual feeling. Yet I think some sort of genuine poetry has been struck out.

And when I let my mind brood a little upon what I have said I discover that there are suggestions in it which I did not at all entertain when I framed it. Here is not merely a contrast between a huge labour and a small capacity: here is also a figuration of something that looms with a superhuman grandeur, something rapt and remote, something ineffably godlike, and this deific presence is brought into relation with striving finitude. Further, a divine infinity of calm is, as it were, converted into values of force, the immutable Vast has become vibrant with activity and laid its command on a poor mortal's weak and faltering instruments to dare and do creative work.

In addition, the very nature of this work is shadowed forth: besides being massive, it has to be snow-white in motive, it has to uplift man's thought, it has to convey through its power a peace that passeth understanding.

Yes, all this significance can be read into my line—and it is certainly hiding in it and glimmering out of it. But it belongs to the poetry achieved, not to the poet intending to say no more than that he was too busy with *Mother India* and other occupations to reply to Venkataranga's critical letter in due time. If the poet's intention was this alone, the achieved poetry is undoubtedly insincere. From its first step it betrayed fact and falsified truth—and in doing so it betrayed even its own betrayal and falsified its falsehood itself, without knowing what it was up to, for it brought in spiritual nuances unconsciously, it played the poet's humanly busy hands into the unseen hands of some visionary agency by means of a moment's contact with a world of inspiration or revelation beyond him, a contact through his happy sip of what I may term the wine of words, his sudden heady thrill with the possibility of imaginative and rhythmic beauty, his heart's response to the call of art from some domain of perfect name and form.

The dramatist in the poet has taken charge, he has broken loose from the immediate situation, introduced an expressive metaphor from a different universe of discourse, fused disparate elements in a single act of vision and become the channel of a super-dramatisation outside even his dreams.

This is all that in my essay I have tried to say the poet is always doing in one manner or another. Of course, a passionate desire for truth in a certain sense operates

through the poet and turns him somewhat of a seer, but this truth cannot be tied down to the poet's tangible personality or to his measurable feeling. AE does tie it down: the two parts of his dictum make one whole: we cannot split them, as you do. Besides, the poet is not principally a truth-teller, he is an image-maker and sound-fashioner and suggestion-shaper—in short, an artist—but he ever strains beyond himself and therefore beyond his own “truth” too and puts his being in tune with some archetypal *līlā* and becomes by his role of dramatist (*līlā-lover*) the direct or indirect mouthpiece of the beautiful Truth that is Krishna.

Are you still dissatisfied with me and my article?

K. D. SETHNA

EMPTY HANDS

I WANTED to capture the sweet-sounding tunes
That were strewn plentifully into the air
By the gay-coloured birds:
 But alas,
 The sombre winds rapidly carried them far.

I wanted to gather the gold-ruby sparks
That were strewn plentifully over the sea
By the slow-setting sun:
 But alas,
 The grey-gloomy dusk withdrew their glint.

I wanted to pick up the silvery coins
That were strewn plentifully over the lake
By the white-haloed moon:
 But alas,
 The harpy-like cloud made them vanish like dreams.

I wanted to harvest the delicate pearls
That were strewn plentifully over the leaves
By the magnanimous dawn:
 But alas,
 The morning-breeze carelessly tossed them away.

I wanted to give of the dancing joy
That was strewn plentifully into my heart
By the heavenly king:
 But alas,
 My earth-heavy tongue turned it all into dust.

AUBE

RISHABHCHAND

SOME REMINISCENCES

IN the month of February 1970 I went to my home-town-Azimganj from Pondicherry. Azimganj was also the home-town of Rishabhchand in the district of Murshidabad in West Bengal from where Rishabhchand, Parichand, Umirchand and Prithwising hailed. Azimganj-Jiaganj are twin-cities on both the banks of the river Ganges under the same Municipality. Rishabhchand was born in his maternal uncle's house at Jiaganj on the 3rd of December, 1900.

With a view to build Sri Aurobindo Mandir in our town I selected a plot there in 1943, very near to the Ganges. This plot was Parichand's ancestral property. On the 21st of February 1970 the Foundation-stone for the Sri Aurobindo Mandir was laid on the spot before a small gathering of devotees which I had arranged with the help of my local friends. In order to collect money for the Mandir I had to go to Calcutta from Azimganj to meet Rishabhchand's brother-in-law Motichand and also Rishabhchand's brothers Sumati and Bimalchand. I reached Calcutta on the 28th of April and went to Motichand's residence on the morning of the 29th. But, alas, it was the day that brought me the news of Rishabhchand's death!

Motichand came down to the ground floor to see me. He told me in a melancholy tone, "Rishabhchand died on the morning of April 25th in Pondicherry at the sea-shore!" I was stunned with the news as I could have never imagined that my beloved Rishabhchandda would leave his body so soon and so abruptly though once he had expressed before me his disinterest in his gross body which was not so able to act as before because of the illness he had been suffering from for nearly a decade. He accepted the Mother's work in the Ashram and his literary work as well in a sincere faith and in total devotion, as work for the Divine was his life's tapasya and sadhana. So his argument was that if his physical being could not give any more service to the Divine then what use was it of living in such an invalid body which was not fit for Divine service?

December 3rd was his birthday. My birthday also is on the same date. So both of us used to go to the Mother on the 3rd of December for our birthday blessings every year. In 1969 too on the 3rd of December we went to the Mother for our birthday pranam one after the other. But who knew that that was the last year for Rishabhchand to go to the Mother in person for his birthday blessings? In 1970 when the marked 3rd December came I went to the Mother for my birthday blessings and I deeply felt the absence of my Rishabhchandda who was no more with us. All past memories of him surged up in my mind.

In our boyhood Rishabhchand, Parichand and myself studied in the same M.E. School at Azimganj; Parichand and myself were then reading in the same lower

class and Rishabhchand was reading in the higher class. Though he was born in a Jain family, he could break all religious traditions in his adult life. He was older than I by 3 years, so I used to adore him as my elder brother when we were closely associated in the field of business in Calcutta in later years. Rishabhchand gave up his studies from Berhampore College in Bengal during the Non-cooperation movement. We also abandoned our studies and worked together with Rishabhchand in Azimganj in picketing and money collection for the Swadeshi fund though it was for a brief period, as my guardian did not like that I should waste time like this avoiding my study. So, I had to run away to Calcutta to work for the Swadeshi movement freely in a wider field. There I joined the Tarakeshwar Satyagraha movement as a volunteer under C. R. Das's leadership; Rishabhchand also came to Calcutta, but he had to go to Shillong for a change for his ill-health.

It is true that Gandhiji with all his dominant mental force had started the Non-Cooperation movement which rapidly spread all over the country. But after a couple of years the absurdity of the movement was realised by wise leaders and patriots like C. R. Das and others, and C. R. Das then decided to form the Swarajya party without wasting time and spoiling the brains of Indian youths. He wanted to lead his country in the path and programme which Sri Aurobindo had chalked out to achieve India's political freedom: Council-entry, to form a parallel government and judiciary and also a National Education Centre, etc. With this in mind C. R. Das hastened to Pondicherry in the month of June, 1923 to apprise Sri Aurobindo of his plan, and Sri Aurobindo whole-heartedly approved the idea and gave his consent and blessings for the Swarajya party.

Motilal Nehru with other sensible leaders joined C. R. Das. This was an historical event. The National Congress then adopted the principle of council-entry and other programmes of cooperation to take the country's administrative power in hand. Consequently Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation movement got buried. Later the National Congress with the flexible and liberal political principle of Sri Aurobindo was able to form a Congress ministry in nine provinces of the country. Before this, C. R. Das ventured to capture the Calcutta Corporation for the National Congress and he was overwhelmingly successful in his effort in league with Subhash Chandra Bose and other Bengal leaders. The Calcutta Corporation for the first time was taken over by a National Body, and C. R. Das was elected the first National Mayor, and Subhash Chandra Bose the first Executive officer. They totally remoulded the Calcutta Corporation for the benefit of the Calcutta Citizens and the employees of the Corporation.

After Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation movement had failed, the youths of the country again started their education in schools and colleges. But Rishabhchand did not want to appear for his B.A. examination though he had completed his B.A. course. He decided to earn money by starting some business on an honest basis independently. Such a course was needed for his family. He started Swadeshi Silk business in Calcutta under the name "Indian Silk House," perhaps in the year 1926 with a limited fund. But later his relative and personal friend Parichand, while

studying for his M.A. in Calcutta, joined Rishabhchand in his business as a partner, adding some more capital to it. The business gradually began to flourish. After a couple of years I also joined them not as a partner but as an employee. However, there was no such relation with them as boss and employee, for we were friends and brothers. Though Rishabhchand had fixed a monthly salary for me, he used to help me with money from his personal fund in case of need.

In this period I realised a truth about Rishabhchand from his free monetary gifts to needy people—namely, that he had totally, conquered all attachment to money even in his business life. Parichand also was liberal in money affairs. Later during his Ashram-life Rishabhchand used to say that a devotee's faith is judged when the money-question arises. Once he remarked to me in this strain when one of his close and rich devotee friend shrank at Rishabhchand's request to him to offer some money to the Mother.

It was perhaps in 1929 that one day after dusk Rishabhchand took Parichand and me to his residence in Calcutta. The day was Sri Aurobindo's Darshan-day in the Pondicherry Ashram. Rishabhchand asked us to sit quietly with him in a room before the photographs of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. It was for the first time that I had seen the Mother's picture. We sat in the room quietly for some time. Then Rishabhchand told us something about Sri Aurobindo's yoga, and only on that day I came to know that he had been following Sri Aurobindo's yoga-sadhana, accepting the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as his Guru. Parichand also was bent upon it, and from that day the contagion entered in me also unconsciously, at their touch. Sri Aurobindo's name as a great yogi and patriot had come to my ear in my boyhood through one of my friends at Azimganj who had heard about Sri Aurobindo's yogic power from his teacher yogi Baradacharan at Lalgola. But later it was Rishabhchand who was our guide and inspiration on the path of Sri Aurobindo's yoga; Parichand and myself and also Umirchand and Udaysing were attracted to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo only through Rishabhchand. Later we came to learn that he had been first attracted to Sri Aurobindo when he had begun to read the *Arya*.

Rishabhchand finally joined the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry in 1931, leaving behind him his family and his running business. He came to the Ashram in the month of February and never went anywhere out of Pondicherry afterwards. Parichand, Udaysing and myself came to Pondicherry together for Sri Aurobindo's darshan in November, 1934. Prithwising and Umirchand had come to the Ashram for darshan in the previous year; Umirchand had settled in the Ashram in August the same year. Parichand also then decided to live in the Ashram permanently and he did not go back. But as for me I could not decide whether to stay permanently or go back to Calcutta, as the maintenance of my family depended on my income. In this regard I sought Sri Aurobindo's advice through a letter placing before him my intention and my problems as well. Sri Aurobindo wrote to me in answer: "For you to stay here as a permanent sadhaka is not possible...you must go back and do your sadhana there."

At that time, in 1934, I had stayed in the Ashram for a month and availed myself of the chance of receiving the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's touch and blessings together as in those days Shiva-Shakti used to touch together a devotee's head during his pranam at their feet. Rishabhchand told me, when I showed him Sri Aurobindo's letter: "It is good for you that Sri Aurobindo has so clearly given you his advice. You need not hesitate at all to go back to Calcutta at present." Still when I thought that I would have to leave the Ashram and the Mother I could not check my tears. Rishabhchand then advised me to refer about this to Sri Aurobindo. So I wrote to Sri Aurobindo of my mental upset, saying that my being did not want to miss the Mother.

Sri Aurobindo wrote to me in answer: "You must learn to be able to feel the Mother's Presence, wherever you are."

Yes, it is true that the Mother, whose touch and blessings and compassion I received every day for more than a month, is the Mother omnipresent and omniscient. So, she is not limited in one particular body,—a devotee can feel her Presence and Power everywhere if the soul is opened and prepared.

I also wanted to know clearly from my Guru before going back to Calcutta whether it would be possible for me to reach my goal in this life of mine. I again wrote a letter to him in this regard.

Sri Aurobindo kindly answered my question in clear terms. He wrote "...If you are sincere and constant at your aim, you will reach your goal..."

But the condition is hard to fulfil—to be absolutely sincere in the path of the Divine and to cling to it in all circumstances, till the final victory is achieved, is not an easy task. To be sincere means: one must aspire for the Divine alone with one's whole being; the Divine must be the single aim of one's life. Hence, when the Mother gave me an interview on my birthday, the 3rd December, 1934 I told her what Sri Aurobindo had written to me and asked: "Mother, do you see any sincerity in me?"

The Mother smiled and answered: "If you had not been sincere you would not have come to us." The Mother also advised me that whenever any difficulty would arise in my life outside I should immediately write to Sri Aurobindo about it, and I should do so, even if I did not get any answer. I followed the Mother's advice and benefited by it in all my difficulties.

After a gap of a few years, I again came to the Ashram several times for the Darshan and went back. I permanently joined the Ashram with my wife and children in 1945 when the Mother wanted me to start the Bengali section in the Ashram press. My direct connection with Rishabhchand was then resumed.

To Rishabhchand the Divine was everything; he surrendered himself totally to the feet of the Mother and achieved complete detachment from all material objects. During the second half of his Ashram-life he devoted himself to expressing his experiences in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga and his appreciation of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in his articles in the English language over which he had an admirable

command. In his school and college life Rishabhchand used to take special interest in English and he obtained high marks in the subject; he had acquired deep knowledge of the language by the time he had completed his B.A. course. But he got his mastery over it after he had joined the Ashram and studied Sri Aurobindo's philosophy thoroughly. His works: *In the Mother's Light*, *Divine Collaborators*, *The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* and *The Life of Sri Aurobindo* are a vivid proof of his profound erudition, and have won the admiration of all readers. He also used to take classes on *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Savitri*. His explanations were clear and impressive. He had equal mastery over the Bengali language also.

Had Rishabhchand lived for some years more he could have brought to light more of his experiences in Sri Aurobindo's yoga. But his health was broken and he realised that the Divine work was no longer possible through his body. He referred to the Divine Mother his wish to leave the body. On a fixed date, at a fixed hour he was led by a secret hand to a fixed spot on the sea-shore and there he saw the Lord and his soul was taken by Him.

RAGHUNANDAN

GOD AND THE WORLD—THEIR INTERRELATION

At the very outset a preliminary objection may be raised, viz., that the existence of God is doubtful and so the question of His relation with the world does not arise; the world exists, that's all. Let us first, then, examine this objection. The argument behind this objection must be something like this: "The world's existence is a patent fact, for we perceive it through our senses, and the existence of God is doubtful, for we can neither so perceive it, nor has His existence been proved by scientific and logical methods." The argument seems to be very strong, but still let us examine its strength.

2. Everybody (except a certain school of philosophy which considers the world as an illusion) admits the existence—the reality, to be precise and accurate—of the world, but the "everybody" includes a good many persons who have made this admission not just on the evidence of sense perception, for instances can be cited to prove that our sense perceptions are not a dependable evidence. We actually see the mirage, but the most confirmed protagonists of sense perception will not be bold enough to suggest that it is real; we, each and everyone of us, actually see every day with our own eyes that the sun moves round the earth, but even the sense-perceptionists have admitted that the earth moves round the sun. Again, there are many things which are beyond our sense perceptions, but still they are real; gravitation, magnetism, force, etc., can be cited as instances. It is clear, therefore, that in determining the reality or otherwise of a thing, sense perceptions, positive or negative, cannot be depended upon. Such being the case, it is poor argument to say that the reality of God is doubtful because we cannot perceive Him through our senses.

3. As regards the second part of the argument, viz., that the existence of God has not been proved by scientific and logical methods, it is admitted on all hands that there is no such proof. But leaving aside for the moment the question if such proof is at all possible, we may say that absence of scientific proof of a thing does not disprove it even in the material field. In Galileo's time, there was no scientific proof that the earth moves round the sun, but did not the earth so move then? Today we have admitted that diamond and coal are essentially the same substance and that matter and energy are basically the same thing, but a century or two ago there was no scientific proof; did the position then stand otherwise on that account? If the absence of scientific proof of a thing cannot be advanced as an argument to disprove that thing even in the material field, how can such an argument be advanced to disprove a thing in the spiritual field? It is only in the material field that scientific proof can be demanded; in the spiritual field, we have to look to the knowledgeable persons in that field.

4. We may now take up the question we have just left aside, viz., if it is at all possible to prove the existence of God by scientific and logical methods. We somehow know that man has an ego and that he has a mind and that the frame of mind differs

from man to man and that mind works differently in different men. But could these things be proved by scientific and logical methods in spite of the tremendous advancement of knowledge in recent times in regard to human body and mind? Whatever so-called proof has been produced is vitiated by a '*petitio principii*' and is as such inadmissible. If such patent things cannot be proved by scientific and logical methods, is it not too much for the proof-seekers to expect a proof of the existence of God by such methods?

5. Now, the truth of the astounding discoveries indicated in para 3 above is not seizable to non-scientists which most of us are, but still we all have accepted the findings as correct. Why? Obviously, we have done so on the basis of the evidence of scientists, *i.e.*, persons who are reputed to be knowledgeable in those matters. We may likewise admit, on the basis of evidence of persons who are reputed to be knowledgeable in spiritual matters, that God exists. Not to do so would be unreasonable persistence.

6. The preliminary objection thus goes. God is admitted. The world already stands admitted. We may now turn to our original theme and examine it on the basis of spiritual literatures,—scriptures, we may say. But here again there is a difficulty. The idea of God's relation with the world as conveyed by esoteric literatures varies. For instance, certain esoteric literatures have pictured God somewhat like this: God has created the world and everything in it; He made man after His own image; He is the Lord of everything; He sits in a cosy corner of Heaven somewhere high up in the sky wherefrom He rules the world, etc., etc. Those literatures are silent as to out of what He made the world and the things in it; the suggestion seems to be 'out of nothing'. A host of other esoteric literatures differ on many of the above points. It would be audacious to suggest that, for the reason of that, esoteric literatures are not dependable evidence; we may only respectfully submit that we fail to appreciate the truth behind the language. Anyway, we are embarrassed.

7. Fortunately, we are not in a helpless position. We have the records of the experience of people who sought God, found Him and knew Him *inter alia* in His relation to the world. The Upanishads are such records the gist of which the Gita embodies. The truth in these records was also realised and explained by Indian sages of all times. Of the most modern ones, particular mention may be made of Sri Aurobindo, for, as he was brought up and educated in England from his early childhood, the catholicity of his views cannot be questioned even by the West-minded. According to these sages (and there is no disagreement among them, except for the Mayavadins who admit the reality of God—Brahman they call it—but not of the world which they consider as an illusion, a view which is just the opposite of that of the Materialists)—

(i) God is one, not numerically, but in essence.

(ii) He has created everything, not out of nothing, but out of Himself, without of course losing an iota of His Self or Being, for He is not subject to physical laws which are on the contrary subject to Him; in other words, creation is a Becoming of

His Being, the Being not a whit affected on that account in any form or manner.

(iii) He does not reside in any particular place, but exists in everything and everywhere.

(iv) He is not only the Substance or Stuff of things He has created out of Himself, but also the indwelling and sustaining Spirit. Substance and Spirit are essentially the same thing; Substance is Spirit concretised, so to say (*cf.* the deduction of physical science in respect of matter and energy).

(v) The world is, as it were, a mansion built out of God-Stuff brought out of His Being, wherein He resides as the indwelling Spirit, just as the spider spins out of itself the web, its home wherein it resides. The world may also be considered as His body wherein He dwells as the sustaining Spirit. Each separate object or thing—animate or inanimate, gross or subtle, big or small—is as if a chamber of the many-chambered mansion, or a limb of the many-limbed body. In each and every chamber or limb He is present simultaneously at all moments and not alternately; He is indivisible and undivided and omnipresent.

(vi) It is not only that God exists in all things; all things also exist in Him, for where else could they exist? There is nowhere where God is not.

(vii) God is not only the Creator and Sustainer of the world. He is also its Destroyer.

8. Incidentally, God is only one of the many aspects of what the ancient Indian sages called Brahman. So the word 'Brahman' may very well be substituted for the word 'God', but not *vice versa*.

KAMALENDRA RAY

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

THESE were the words spoken by the Mother to one of us in 1970. They carry a world of meaning. From the time they came to my ears they remained hovering in my mind for days together. Once attracted by the dark beauty of the night I was gazing listlessly at the splendour of the stars. Of a sudden I found my mind floating in the waveless stream of thought.

“What is life today?” I asked myself. No better than a log of wood drifting on the tide of events. How restless is man today! Is he in peace even for a moment? And this restlessness is called life.

Can death-bound man, sunk nose-deep in the mire of obscurities made up of lust, greed, anger, selfishness, get out of the dungeon? His mind runs with the wind. Can there be peace in a mind which is like a stormy sea?

Science has done so much to make life beautiful, to make earth the abode of happiness. We find that though innumerable physical means are invented and mental ways adopted, man is not able to have the joy of life in its fullness. Something is missing. Some worries are always there. If one is always worried and troubled, can any amount of material things bring him the joy of life?

I kept on musing and musing: why after every little joy does pain follow like a shadow? Must man suffer forever? Has he no future? No higher destiny? Is there no way to cure life of this curse? This led me to probe into the question: Why is this the lot of man's life? What is the nature of its disease?

THE DISEASE OF LIFE

In a meditative moment the mind turned to thinking why life was not beautiful. How to make it beautiful?

Before coming to that let us analyse the disease of life.

The disease of life must be attributed to the disease of modern civilisation. It is the manifold demand on life and the claims of a thousand kinds on man's mental and physical parts which keep him all the time strained and in tension. Even little shocks make him perplexed.

Wrong living, foolish mental constructions, perverted outlook, animal selfishness, bad habits and the like make a hell of life.

The whole world today is infected by the germs of this disease. No country is immune from its infection.

Wars generally have their origin in the desire to possess more than what is our right to possess.

If there were no desires to encroach upon the rights of others, there would be harmony among nations. All clashes are due to the clash of egos. For, our ego

wants to have all for itself and for those with whom we are concerned and to dominate others. The moment the "vital ego"¹ is hit it jumps to fall on others like a bomb.

The "blind, marred, mutilated, discordant" ignorant movements of the collectivity carry far more dangers than those of the individual. The crudity and cruelty of a man can bring disgrace to himself and do harm to a few, but the ego and ambition of a nation can lead to a world war and bring untold suffering to mankind.

So it is the ego of the collectivity as well as of the individual that has to be disciplined.

The disease is so serious and terrible that even the attempts of spiritual giants and avatars have failed to bring a radical cure. So long as the earth is blessed by their sacred presence its bleeding wounds feel a healing balm upon them. For, it is from their presence that the earth draws nourishment, new strength and new spirit. But after their departure from the scene all is swallowed up by the mouth of Darkness.

The big question is: Why?

The answer can be found in Sri Aurobindo's words:

"This world is in love with its own ignorance."²

It rejects the light brought from above. "It has always done so."³

So long as the ego is the ruler of life and ignorance fills our minds we cannot get rid of the miseries of life. Sri Aurobindo holds that all suffering and unhappiness is due to man's 'ignorance'⁴ And it is not an individual problem, as most philosophers think, but a collective problem—a cosmic problem.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram is trying to solve the problem in its own way. Its very acceptance of life indicates that it does not want to bypass the issue. This seems to be the reason why work has been chosen as the field for our Sadhana.

The ideal pursued here is to solve the collective problem—the problem of the collective life. Ours is not a one-man battle but the whole world's.⁵ What is the use of changing one man if the whole world around remains as it is?

The problem that occupied the thought of Sri Aurobindo all his life was how to raise the level of human consciousness. As the chemist experiments with the elements of matter Sri Aurobindo experimented with the elements of consciousness and made the supreme discovery of the Supermind. The full significance of this discovery will be recognised with the lapse of time. When the Supermind is well established in the earthly consciousness there will be no problem which man will not be able to solve. If a way is found to cure life of its diseases and a new

¹ *Letters on Yoga*, II, Tome II, p 53

² *Savitri*, Vol II, p. 93.

³ *Letters on Yoga*, II, Tome II, p 530.

⁴ "The laws of this world as it is are the laws of Ignorance Pain and suffering are necessary results of the Ignorance in which we live" *Ibid.*, pp. 452-3.

⁵ Accepting life he (the sadhak) has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of the world's burden .his Yoga has much more of the nature of a battle .not only an individual battle, it is a collective war .He has not only to conquer in himself the forces of egoistic falsehood and disorder but to conquer them as representatives of the same. .in forces in the world."

consciousness established on earth, all will change as night changes into dawn.

It is to the service of this dream, to the realisation of this ideal, that we have given our lives.

*

There are people who would say, "This is a day dream. Man as he is can never reach the peak of perfection, however hard he tries. The very stuff of which he is made is so imperfect that it can never attain perfection."

In this respect the whole Ashram is a research institute and every bit of its energy is devoted to finding how this life can be changed into a life divine. The Ashram's eyes are fixed not on the sky but on the earth.

Needless to say, life as it is cannot be transformed into the life divine. It must be purified. This is the work of Yoga. It is here that philosophy joins hands with spirituality.

One point more:

How can the Sadhana of a few help the suffering world? "This is tall talk," the sceptic mind might say.

It must be kept in view that there is none having a separate existence. All are tied down by one string. There is One who pervades all. If a single one rises to a higher level of consciousness and succeeds in bringing down a new light, its impact cannot be only on those who have like hopes and aspirations but also on others.

All Scriptures proclaim at the top of their voice, "Man is a child of immortality, his true nature is bliss alone." Then how and where did pain enter into life?

Many have sought in various ways to answer the question. It still stands as unanswered as ever. If we cover a lamp—even a searchlight—with a blanket, can it shed light? A patch of cloud is enough to hide the grace and glory of the moon.

Let the cover, the mask of ignorance be removed and life will shine in its full glory.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD