

MOTHER INDIA

JUNE, 1971

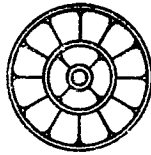
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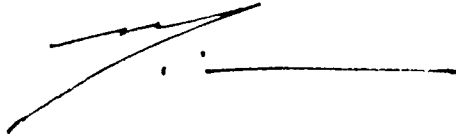
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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXIII

No. 5

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

SOME RECENT PRONOUNCEMENTS*

Is it to satisfy your personal needs that you have come to Auroville? It is really not necessary, the ordinary world is there for that.

One comes to Auroville to realise a divine life which wants to manifest upon earth.

Everyone should make an effort in this direction and not remain hypnotised by the so-called needs which are nothing but personal caprices.

Look up and forward, try to surmount the animal human nature.

Take the resolution and you will find that you are helped on the path.

*
**

To be an Aurovillian one must at least belong to the enlightened humanity and aspire to the higher consciousness, that which will govern the race of tomorrow. Always higher and always better, beyond the egoistic limitation.

*
**

Auroville is in full period of construction and disciplined workers are necessary.

Those who do not want to submit to a discipline should not be here for the moment

Goodwill, sincerity and discipline are indispensable qualities for those who want to be Aurovillians.

*
**

Drugs are prohibited in Auroville. If there are some who take them, they take them on the sly.

The ideal Aurovillian aspiring to become conscious of the Divine Consciousness takes neither tobacco nor alcohol nor drugs.

Q: You had said that you did not want to make rules for Auroville. But lately you have written that drugs are prohibited there. Has there been a modification in your vision of Auroville?

Perhaps the Aurovillians have not attained the level of consciousness expected of them.

* Translated from the French.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of May, 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.)

APRIL 4, 1956

"On one side, he [the seeker] becomes aware of a witness recipient observing experiencing Consciousness which does not appear to act but for which all these activities inside and outside us seem to be undertaken and continue. On the other side he is aware at the same time of an executive Force or an energy of Process which is seen to constitute, drive and guide all conceivable activities and to create a myriad forms visible to us and invisible and use them as stable supports for its incessant flux of action and creation. Entering exclusively into the witness consciousness he becomes silent, untouched, immobile; he sees that he has till now passively reflected and appropriated to himself the movements of Nature and it is by this reflection that they acquired from the witness soul within him what seemed a spiritual value and significance. But now he has withdrawn that ascription or mirroring identification; he is conscious only of his silent self and aloof from all that is in motion around it; all activities are outside him and at once they cease to be intimately real; they appear now mechanical, detachable, endable."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 138)

What is the witness-soul?

It is the soul entering into a state in which it observes without doing anything. A witness is one who looks at what is done, but who does not do it himself. So when the soul is in a state in which it does not participate in the action, does not act through Nature, simply withdraws and observes, it becomes the witness-soul.

If one wants to stop outer activities, this is the best means. One withdraws into one's soul, to the extreme limit of one's existence, in a kind of immobility—an immobility which observes but does not participate, does not even give orders. That is all.

You don't understand, child?

When one wants to detach oneself from something, from a certain movement or activity or state of consciousness, this is the most effective process; one steps back a little, looks upon the thing as one would see a scene in a play, and one does not intervene. And a moment later, the thing is of no concern to you any longer, it is something which takes place outside you. Then one becomes very calm.

Only, when one does this, one never changes anything in the outer movement, that remains what it is, but it no longer touches you. We have said this I don't know how many times already: it is only a first step, it helps you not to feel much troubled by things. But the things remain as they are—indeinitely. It is a negative condition.

Is this what Sri Aurobindo speaks about when he says: "the separative aspect is liberative"?

(*Ibid.*, p. 140)

Yes. It liberates, exactly. It is just that. One practises it for that, don't you see, for liberation, in order to be free from attachments, free from reactions, free from consequences. Those who understand the Gita in this way tell you that, they do not understand much more than that, they tell you: "Why do you want to try and change the world? The world will always be what it is and will remain what it is, you have only to step back, detach yourself, look at it as a witness sees something which does not concern him—and leave it alone." That was my first contact with the Gita at Paris. I met an Indian who was a great Gita enthusiast and a very great friend of silence. He said: "When I am with my disciples, if they are in a fit state I do not need to speak. So we observe silence together, and in the silence something is realised. But when they are not in a sufficiently good state to do this, I speak a little, just a little, to try to put them in the right state. And when they are in a still worse state, they ask questions!" (*Laughter*)

But it was he who did not want to change the world, wasn't it, the one who said we were revolutionaries?

Oh, that's for excusing your questions! (*Laughter*)

No, it was his way of understanding the Gita; these are people who always quote (I believe in a mutilated form) the sentence about there being no smoke without fire.* Perhaps this was true a thousand years ago or even five hundred years ago, but now it is utter stupidity. So one can't use that phrase to explain things: "Why do you bother about the state the world is in?— There is no fire without smoke."

This is not true.

* Perhaps the Mother was referring to the following two verses of the Gita: "All existences follow their nature and what shall coercing it avail? Even the man of knowledge acts according to his own nature . . . As the fire is covered over by smoke and the mirror by dust, as the embryo is wrapped by the amnion, so this knowledge is enveloped by desire." (III. 33,38)

But still, it is one point of view. I think all points of view are necessary—if each one would keep its place and not try to impede the others. If he had just added: “My experience is like that”, it would have been all right; but he used this to criticise what others were doing. And there he was wrong.

That means he was not truly sincere?

Why? He was perhaps sincere in his own conviction....You mean when one goes in for propaganda, one is not sincere?

He believes he is sincere.

No, excuse me, he is convinced. He had neglected (perhaps through politeness) to tell me about the fourth state, which was yet worse: that in which after having asked the question, one begins to discuss the answer. That indeed, that beats all!

If you come to the conception of the world as the expression of the Divine in all his complexity, then the necessity of the complexity and diversity has to be recognised, and it becomes impossible for you to want to make others think and feel as you do.

Everyone should have his own way of thinking, feeling and reacting; why do you want others to do as you do and be like you? And even granting that your truth is greater than theirs (though this word signifies nothing at all, for, from a certain point of view all truths are true—they are all partial, but they are true because they are truths,) but the minute you want your truth to be greater than your neighbour's, you begin to stray away from the truth.

This habit of wanting to compel others to think as you do, always appeared very strange to me; this is what I call “the propagandist spirit,” and it goes very far. You can go a step further and want people to do what you do, feel as you feel, and then that leads to a frightful uniformity.

I met in Japan Tolstoy's son who was going round the world for the welfare of the great human unity. And his solution was very simple: everybody ought to speak the same language, lead the same kind of life, dress in the same way, eat the same things.... And I am not joking, he said exactly that. I met him in Tokyo; he said: “But everybody would be happy, all would understand each other, nobody would quarrel if everyone did the same thing.” There was no way of getting him to understand that it was not very reasonable! He had set out to go round the world for that, and when people asked his name he said, “Tolstoy”—now, Tolstoy, you know....People said, “Oh!” (there were many who didn't know Tolstoy was dead) and they thought: “Oh! what luck, we are going to hear something remarkable”—and then he came out with that!

Well, this is only an exaggeration of the same attitude.

In any case, I may assure you that there comes a time when one no longer feels the least necessity of convincing others of the truth of what one thinks.

When someone criticises what I am, the truth I realise, when others criticise...

You may tell them politely: "Mind your own affairs." But you must stop there. You want to convince the one who criticises that he is wrong in criticising?—The more you tell him, the more will he be convinced that he is right!

Not him, but others who follow?

Oh! you are afraid they will make propaganda on the other side...

That does not matter at all. We had an instance like that, which was very amusing. There was someone whom I won't name, who came here and wrote in one of the big French newspapers an absolutely stupid article which...well, which showed the stupidity of the man and was extremely violent against the Ashram (that's not the reason I call it stupid, but still...). Well, the result—one of the results—of this article was that we got a letter from someone: "I have read the article, I want to come to the Ashram immediately."

This can have just the opposite effect.

THE TALE OF SATYAVAN AND SAVITRI

AN UNPUBLISHED NOTE BY SRI AUROBINDO

THE tale of Satyavan and Savitri is recited in the Mahabharata as a story of conjugal love conquering death. But this legend is, as shown by many features of the human tale, one of the many symbolic myths of the Vedic cycle. Satyavan is the soul carrying the divine truth of being within itself but descended into the grip of death and ignorance; Savitri is the Divine Word, daughter of the Sun, goddess of the supreme Truth who comes down and is born to save; Aswapati, the Lord of the Horse, her human father, is the Lord of Tapasya, the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavour that helps us to rise from the mortal to the immortal planes; Dyumatsena, Lord of the Shining Hosts, father of Satyavan, is the Divine Mind here fallen blind, losing its celestial kingdom of vision, and through that loss its kingdom of glory. Still this is not a mere allegory, the characters are not personified qualities, but incarnations or emanations of living and conscious Forces with whom we can enter into concrete touch and they take human bodies in order to help man and show him the way from his mortal state to a divine consciousness and immortal life.

ACTION OF THE MOTHER'S FORCE

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

Q: Even though I experience calm and silence within, yet I find no more that Ananda and love which were there just after the attack of the hostile forces was over. What was the cause of their sudden disappearance?

SRI AUROBINDO: The basis of calm and silence should be there first—otherwise the Ananda and love may take a too vital character and prove unstable.

19-1-1934

Q: Yesterday I had sent a prayer to the Mother. This morning when the paper came back I could not read farther than two lines of that prayer. Each word of it transmitted so much light that it was not easy to digest it fully. So, when I had finished reading only two lines, my consciousness was plunged into the light and said, "It is impossible to take in a bit more. What is received from the five or six words is already too much! The rest in future."

SRI AUROBINDO: I do not see why the feeling of light should be too much—it is part of the usual idea that to take in too much at a time is not good.

20-1-1934

Q: You wrote, "As the force increases, the pressure increases—that is all." Which force were you referring to?

SRI AUROBINDO: The force that is acting on you for the sadhana—it is the descent of force that creates pressure.

24-1-1934

Q: In the beginning, does the Divine send down force, love, wideness, Ananda etc. all together?

SRI AUROBINDO: It usually sends them down in such a way as the being needs or can assimilate. There is no fixed rule.

1-2-1934

Vibrations are either of a Force or a Presence.

3-2-1934

I mean by the ordinary consciousness the human consciousness which has to be changed—it is into that consciousness that all these experiences from above come in order to change it first into higher mind and then into a still higher thing. Before the divine Love and Ananda can begin to settle, there is much more that has to be done—and first the psychic love must be there and other things besides.

9-2-1934

Q: What is the difference between the psychic love and the Divine Love?

SRI AUROBINDO: The psychic love is pure and full of self-giving without egoistic demand, but it is human and can err and suffer. The Divine Love is something much vaster and deeper and full of light and ananda.

13-2-1934

Q: The higher pressure is felt at different places at different times. What does that mean?

SRI AUROBINDO: It shows simply the place at which the Force is trying to clear its way.

8-3-1934

In the heart centre is the psychic being,—but the Force may come down from above as well as from inward.

24-4-1934

Q: Is the ascending and descending movement to be had as an experience for a particular period? Or is it to be continued all day long?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no particular period. It can be only all day long if the adhar is capable of it.

26-4-1934

The Force works in many without their knowing it.

28-4-1934

Q: Nowadays, I do not feel a pressure when the Force descends. Does it then mean that something else than Force is trying to descend?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may be—or it may be a greater stream of the Force.

4-5-1934

You can apply the energy so long as the automatic action of the higher Force is not there.

5-5-1934

Q: Watching the rising moon I felt as if the Mother's working, instead of descending through the head as usual, came down directly through the forehead centre. How was that?

SRI AUROBINDO: It can come in anywhere, but the normal way of descent is through the head.

8-5-1934

Q: While doing the sadhana, could I not submit myself and deliver up to the Mother's Force the charge of my Yoga? That is, instead of allowing my adhar to think that it is doing the sadhana for the being?

SRI AUROBINDO: That can be only when all is ready.

Q: In that case, would it be necessary for the mind to aspire or do some such work? Once there is the Force it will set everything right.

SRI AUROBINDO: The system has first to be accustomed to the Force working.
9-5-1934

Q: During the external actions, when the Purusha is busy with the self-realisation, what goes on doing the work? Is it the Mother's Force?

SRI AUROBINDO: The Mother's Force or else the cosmic Force. 15-5-1934

The Force is always there, one has to keep oneself open to it.

29-5-1934

Electricity shocks always indicate a passage of dynamic Force.

25-6-1934

Q: I think that in order to progress rapidly one should have an understanding of the Mother's Force.

SRI AUROBINDO: Plenty of people progress rapidly without understanding what the Force is doing—they simply observe and describe and say "I leave all to the Mother." Eventually the knowledge and understanding come.

7-7-1935

Q: If one rejects all objects of pleasure and does not take delight in the outer things till the soul ripens, will he not become dry?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not if he takes delight in the Divine. If he merely takes no pleasure in anything at all, then he becomes dry.

24-7-1934

Q: As to the Mother's Force you said, "It creates its own activities in the mind or elsewhere." In that case would the mind or whatever part in which it creates its activities, express only what the Force wants?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the ideal condition when the Force acting is the true Force only—but there is too much mixture in the nature for that to be possible at this stage of the sadhana.

3-8-1934

From NOGIN DOSHI

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of May, 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. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.

We are interrupting the sequence of the Talks with a few that were somehow left out. Once these have been published, we shall resume the usual series.)

NOVEMBER 28, 1939

N: Satuda was lamenting over the plight of Bengal Hindus. He says there is a cultural conquest taking place.

SRI AUROBINDO: How? Hindus are becoming Muslims?

N: No, not religious conquest but cultural, Hindu culture being replaced by Muslim. At schools and colleges, books on Muslim culture are being forced on the students.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why don't the Hindus react?

P: Instead of lamenting they should also organise something.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so.

N: They have no leaders; that's the trouble. Satuda appeals to you to do something.

SRI AUROBINDO: Bah!

N: Satuda had a small cut on his finger which made him so nervous that he postponed going back to Bengal by one day.

P: What will he do if war breaks out in India?

SRI AUROBINDO: Perhaps he will go to Burma!

EVENING

N *(when Sri Aurobindo lay down after walking)*: Dakshinapada had a vision: he saw you sitting high up radiating great power and light as if by a slight movement of your body you could break the world and remake it. All the gods and goddesses

stood around in adoration. Hitherto he has considered the Shakti greater than the Bhagavan. Now he thinks the reverse.

SRI AUROBINDO: He is going to the other extreme now.

N: But he saw the Shaktis adoring...

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but they are *Shaktis*.

N: He feels some intense yearning within for something he can't reach due to some obstruction.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the psychic yearning, and the obstruction is the vital. He has to make the vital quiet to get rid of the obstruction.

N: Sisir Mitra asks if there is any difference in quality between vegetarian diet and meat and fish diet.

SRI AUROBINDO: Meat and fish diet is good for fighters. But it makes the body consciousness heavy—I mean the psychological stuff of that consciousness.

N: You have said before that the nature of food doesn't matter much in yoga and that people here used to take everything.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but all the same it has that effect.

NOVEMBER 29, 1939

N: What is the significance of the experience in which the being is uplifted from the crust of the physical?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the liberation of consciousness by its rising upwards free from the physical crust. Ordinarily it is this physical crust that prevents the consciousness from going within or upwards. What makes you ask?

N: Sahana had the experience, and she wants to know the significance. Just before Darshan she felt as if the whole being were uplifted from the physical crust which appeared like a hollow case. The experience lasted one or two days.

SRI AUROBINDO: When any descent takes place, this crust prevents one from feeling it, but when the crust is removed the ascent can take place more easily and the higher force can also be brought down. It is the physical crust that gives the most opposition. There is of course, the vital opposition too but the physical is stronger. Did Sahana have no such experience before?

N: I don't know. When such liberation takes place, does it mean that the physical crust also becomes thinner?

S: What did you say? Liberation makes the body thin?

SRI AUROBINDO: Then the complete liberation will make the body ultimately disappear!

N: No, I said the 'crust'.

S: Is it in continuation of your other day's question?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, somebody had an experience of liberation. (To N) You passed her experience on and kept the crust perhaps for yourself?

N: Her experience came first.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then she passed on to you the crust.

N: Does this experience mean a new stage in sadhana?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

S: You said to somebody that the Adya Shakti, the Primal Goddess-Power, of the Supermind brings down the Supermind.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

S: Brings from where?

SRI AUROBINDO: From the higher planes.

S: There is also the Unmanifest?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, from the Unmanifest comes the Manifest.

N: Some people find your book *The Mother* very difficult.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't see what is the difficulty there.

N: No, it is not the style but the idea that they find difficult to grasp. The Chinese Professor who is here read it and couldn't follow. After reading Anil Baran's book *Songs from the Soul* many things became clear to him.

SRI AUROBINDO: Then it must be the difficulty of the mind which is not prepared.

A small ulceration had formed during the two preceding days on Sri Aurobindo's right shin.

SRI AUROBINDO (*when that leg was being douched*): How is the ulcer?

N: Looks better.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the physical crust going the wrong way. (*Laughter*)

N: I thought it was the starting-point of eczema.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, eczema starts with a vesicle.

S: You had eczema there?

SRI AUROBINDO: That was due to blankets and mosquito-bites in jail.

EVENING

DR. B (*after a long preparatory silence*): How to see God in others? You say it can't be done by the mind.

SRI AUROBINDO: By increasing the consciousness and making the psychic more active.

Just at this point the Mother came and the talk was suspended.

P (*while giving the douche*): There is a story of a Mahratta lady (told originally by Lalji). In some ecstatic moments of descent she can explain the Gita and other Scriptures, though she herself is not educated. In those moments her face takes on a blue colour. She says the descent is of her true Divine Self. But what is this blue colour?

SRI AUROBINDO: The Divine Self means the Atman. Does she follow the Adwaita path? The Atman has no colour. Maybe the blue is of some being. She doesn't know herself?

P: No. Could it be Krishna's light?

SRI AUROBINDO: Possibly—or Vishnu's.

P (*switching on to Krishnamurti*): Krishnamurti is giving some new principles now but they are so amorphous. He says that to realise the Reality a Guru is not necessary. One has only to get rid of preconceived notions and ideas...

SRI AUROBINDO: That is nothing new and can be understood. What further?

P: Then one will find one's own Truth and Reality. But when someone asked, "What is this Reality?", he replied, "No one can say. One has to find it out for himself."

SRI AUROBINDO: Then what is the necessity of his saying the rest also? He may as well say nothing. Each one will find out his own path and Truth.

S: Though he has relinquished Theosophy and Messiah-hood, old disciples seem still to run after him.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why doesn't he close his doors against them? He can stop speaking to them.

S: He has started with a handicap—having been proclaimed a Messiah.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is why he is disgusted with Guruship perhaps. This Reality seems to be like Tao. When you realise it you can't speak about it. It is simply "nothing at all".

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

(Continued from the issue of May, 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.)

August 15: The Conditions of Yoga

(i) We must change the point of view of the human consciousness for the point of view of the divine consciousness.

(ii) Whatever work we do must be a part of the yoga or must be done in the external being and not disturb the inner calm.

(iii) The physical has to be completely changed. Unless this is done the vital does not completely realise itself, just as the mind does not completely realise itself unless all the range of the vital is opened and changed.

Q. This year how far are you sure of your success?

I am morally sure, but not practically sure. Morally sure because the Higher Power is coming down more and more into the physical, not practically sure because the material world is unrepentant. The material world is ignorant, does not believe in change and resists change.

Q. What is the condition for fulfilment?

We must open a direct connection with the world of the Gods (the true Gods, not the mental or vital ones).

Q. Does the Asuric world attack the material?

The material world is backed by the Asuric forces. That is why there is not much success yet. But the Asuric world is not present there.

Q. Does the attitude of humanity affect the progress?

It does not radically affect the progress. The two are not inseparable.

Q. If the change is centrally accepted, does not the physical yield?

Not necessarily. If the mind accepts, does the vital yield? Here and there it may yield, but not radically. What we want is a fundamental and integral change. If there is a change in principle in the physical itself, the details will follow. Otherwise if the change is accepted only in the vital, we can only say the change will follow in the physical as a logical consequence. That is why I say I am morally sure but not sure of any natural and necessary consequence.

Q. If the physical does not yield, does the Higher Power retreat?

For the time being it may retreat and wait for a while until the physical is ready. We may not have the chance of the victory of changing the physical but I am certain and there is no shadow of doubt that one day the victory will be achieved on earth.

Matter is the body; the physical is all the physical consciousness. The physical consciousness includes the physical mind, the vital physical and the consciousness or mind in the matter of the body. What I am now speaking of, to begin with, is the subtle material world and the external being. In matter or energy there is a mind or consciousness. The Inconscient is inconscient of the outside impacts, but in itself it has a terrible force. Energy admits consciousness. It must listen to consciousness, admit power of consciousness, some time or other. That is why we hope to change it. Otherwise, if, as science says, it is brute matter and obeys none but its own fixed laws, there is no hope for us. But law is only a habit and we can change the habit of matter.

Q. If the law of matter is changed, does matter cease to be?

Not at all. If I change my habit, do I cease? Matter remains as matter but is transformed.

Q. J. C. Bose says that he can change the disposition of the nervous system of a plant, so that it gives entirely different reactions from what it used to give.

Yes. But how far does the change go? Even in matter itself, elements differ from one another owing to a slight difference in the molecular constitution. In the inflammation of the body the molecular adjustment becomes different. Even so the nervous system of a plant may be changed by molecular adjustment. But that is only the tail end of the thing. What we want is a complete and radical change. A pebble may overthrow a giant, it is said; and unless we have completely transformed the physical, there is no complete success.

The next thing in the physical consciousness is the vital-physical: it is the life in matter subject to the laws of matter, working in the material formula. It is the work-

ing in the nerves of the body. It does not admit change very soon. It is not the higher vital, the vital proper but the vital working in matter. The true vital has great ideals, big dreams, and though it is rajasic it is not stupid like matter; it yields quicker.

The higher vital is a dreamer. It is the vital mind in Napoleon which said, "Erase the word 'impossible' out of the dictionary." If the vital being is enlightened and purified it is a powerful instrument. But this vital-physical is slow to change; that is why it takes millenniums to evolve, nor can it evolve of itself working within the physical formula, unless there is the pressure of a higher force from above.

The surface vital self is a vital personality, not the true vital being; the true vital being is there behind, calm, and clear, pure, and strong, and it enjoys the works of its force (Prakriti). The surface vital personality and whatever other vital personalities there are in the being have to be completely changed.

The next thing in the physical consciousness is the physical mind. It is the end of the mind, so to say; it sees things as they are, does not go beyond them, it does not see with the help of the idea. It is limited in the material formula. It does not believe in change; it believes the past miracles, but it refuses to believe in the changes that shall be. It is this which stands in the way of our attempt to change the point of view of the human consciousness into the Divine Standpoint.

The European mentality is a fine thing in its domain but for us who have overpassed that domain, it is an obstacle.

Q. Is there a decision from above that you will conquer?

The decision must be there above. But we do not know. I am speaking from the immediate standpoint—the standpoint here and now. Do you expect me to speak and act always from the higher planes? The decision does not work arbitrarily, it works with due regard to the movements here and it comes in the right time.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

A TALK TO THE STUDENTS

AT THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

Here is the report, edited in places, of the last of the three talks recently given by Amal Kiran (K.D. Sethna). The date was March 3, 1971. A fourth and final talk was to follow but was postponed. It is expected to be given some time in the near future.

I AM afraid that last time I again left a lot of loose ends. I don't quite know where to pick up the thread of discourse. But, first, can a talk of mine be at all designated a discourse? Discourse implies acting the philosopher. In that respect I seem to resemble Dr. Jonathan whom Samuel Johnson once asked: "Have you tried being a philosopher?" Dr. Jonathan replied: "Sir, I have tried several times, but always cheerfulness keeps breaking in." (*Laughter*)

Well, the mention of "philosopher" gives me a sort of clue where to begin: the factor which would most seem to accord with the serious look, the grave air, the philosophic posture—I mean the beard I had in the old days. And perhaps the matter of loose ends is quite appropriate to the beard because a beard appears to be a formation of hanging loose ends. (*Laughter*) But whether my beard was appropriate to me is another question. I said I wanted to look like Bernard Shaw. Undoubtedly Shaw's beard was very expressive of him, particularly by its colour. A wit has said, "When Shaw was young, his beard was red with anger, and when he became old it grew white with rage." (*Laughter*) My beard was not white at that time, it was fairly blackish and in any case even if it had been red it wouldn't have exactly suited me, because I don't think I am prone very much to angry explosions. As far as I can recollect, I was angry only twice in my first ten years and that too for a moment. I am unfortunately not so Yogic now, since I find that every year I once lose my temper for a second and I feel so ashamed not only because of the loss of control but also because the occasion is so tremendously trivial.

Talking of loss of temper, I think the most anger-prone sadhak I have seen was one who once confessed to the Mother: "If I had a pistol in my hand I would shoot the labourer with whom I am angry." Actually the anger back-fired—all the more because he was a true and sincere aspirant who had, in addition, a phenomenal capacity to give himself to the Mother's work. I have rarely seen a worker of that kind, ready to spend every ounce of energy day and night if need be. But those fits of anger used to play havoc with him. He had horrible reactions: fits of vomiting, as though something nasty had come into the being which could not be assimilated and had to

be thrown out. Towards the end of his life I think he arrived at some control over his excitable nature.

Another thing fairly infrequent with me by the grace of God is that very upsetting movement called jealousy. People think jealousy is a most human and natural feeling—but, if they are right, it makes one lament the human and natural, for it is one of the most dangerous responses in a life of Yoga. One may digress from Yoga in various directions and still be able to come back to the straight path; but if jealousy takes possession of one in regard to the Mother's relations with the sadhaks, I am sure that one digs one's own spiritual grave. When one goes wrong in other ways, one doubts one's own capacity to do Yoga: one does not doubt the Mother's capacity to be one's Guru. But when jealousy overwhelms one, one thinks in terms of favouritism on the Mother's part. We start saying: "Oh she is all smiles to this sadhak but doesn't even look at me! She gives such a lot of attention to that sadhika, but completely ignores my needs." Such a critical view leads to a fundamental misgiving about the Guru's own status and the Guru's right to be a guide. This misgiving is, in my opinion, absolutely disastrous.

I once acutely realised what a disaster it can lead to. I was sitting at the top of the staircase outside the Mother's door. She used to open that door sometimes and glance at the people sitting. There was a girl next to me. I think it was Chinmayi who is no more with us. I had been waiting and waiting while she had just come. Suddenly the Mother opened the door, did not even look at me but just called Chinmayi in. Chinmayi went behind the Mother and I was left with the door practically shut in my face. I was terribly upset and a great surge of jealousy swept over me. Wave after hot wave struck against me and I was totally submerged. I felt extremely uncomfortable because it was a most unusual phenomenon with me. I think the extreme form of my experience was secretly a gift of the Mother's grace, for it broke open an inner vision. When I hung my head down and looked between my legs at the stairs, I did not see the stairs but a black abyss, a bottomless black abyss. At once I was shocked into saying: "Ah, so this is what jealousy is! It is a pit of darkness unfathomable which tries to suck us in irrevocably." And since that moment—except for minor twinges of envy when somebody or other has written good poems more often than I—I don't think I have had any invasion of jealousy.

Before proceeding further I may hark back for a minute to my blessed beard. Although I have said it was not expressive of any indignation *à la* Shaw at the follies of the age (least of all at my own follies), it did play a certain expressive role. On the one side it mildly suggested what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother thought was quite evident—namely, that I had been an ancient Athenian in one of my past lives. On the other it conjured up, in the all-round look of the face, the early Christian. The early Christians used to retire to the desert—in order to avoid the temptations of the world and wrestle with the Devil in private. And quite a wrestle they did have with the Devil, for after all the Devil is inside us as much as in the world. I am sure the wrestling took perverse forms because there was also the unnatural pressure of

solitude and they could not distract their minds with anything even innocently improper. They had to concentrate all the time on their souls and that can be a very difficult job. It was the Mother again who marked the look of the early Christian in me. She glanced at a photograph of mine and pointed out the resemblance. I believe part of the resemblance lay in a certain fear in me at that time, fear of relapsing into the ordinary life. I would keep away from crowds, not be a good mixer, avoid even going to a shop, run to my room every now and then—and, with the Darshan in the offing, there would be almost a retirement for a week or so. The Mother doesn't care for a spirituality which is full of fear. I remember we had a French class taken by a very kind French lady, Madame Gaebelé, whose Ashram name is Suvrata, and once at the end of a course she invited all her students to her place for tea, cakes, ice-cream and such things. I was very trepidant: "Should I go? Should I not go? What should I do? Would my Yoga be completely overturned if I went?" (*Laughter*) I was in two minds and I asked the Mother: "Do you think I may go?" She replied in effect: "If you don't, won't you feel sorry afterwards? To have a regret that you have missed something would not be healthy. As a rule we don't encourage parties, but there must be no fear on your side. On this occasion I think you can go; but go quite calmly."

Now I would like to come to more serious topics. phases and phenomena of the Ashram which were contemporaneous with the career of my beard. By the way, my beard did not last all my life, as you can see for yourselves. Actually the first shaving of it marked the first spiritual fall I had, because after a year and a half my people from Bombay came on a visit and they brought the Bombay atmosphere. Although I agreed to see them only twice a week, I was afraid I might lose or spoil my Yogic halo. And those few meetings made me open myself to the Bombay atmosphere and I said: "Why should I not shave off my beard? I'll be better-looking without it!" My brother had no beard, the friend accompanying my family had none, either. So one morning I just cleared mine away. But when I looked in the mirror it seemed as if half my face had been cut off! (*Laughter*) So much removed from under the chin so suddenly made the face look horribly small. And it was with this face that I went to the Darshan of Sri Aurobindo. He was a little puzzled: "Who is this funny-looking fellow with a face familiar but inexplicably halved?" (*Laughter*) Then he concentrated a little and recognised that here was Amal Kiran. Seeing his expression, I on my return home wrote at once to him: "How did you find me?" He replied: "Grow back your beard as fast as you can!" (*Laughter*) And I started re-growing it by whatever means I could—even watering my face at times in my desperation. (*Laughter*) In a fortnight there was some result to show of all my pains and prayers.

Gradually as I grew out of the complex of fear I felt that the beard which formed part of the early-Christian *ensemble* of my face did not fit in with the new look I was acquiring. But now I was wiser from that first abrupt change from hirsute to clean-shaven: so I began to trim my beard. Every month it became shorter and shorter. (*Laughter*) Finally, on the eve of my third visit to Bombay during the first ten years

of my Ashram-life, I asked the Mother: "What shall I do? Do you think I could shave off my beard?" She said: "There is hardly any beard left. You might as well shave off what you call a beard. Do what you like; it won't make any difference." (*Laughter*) So that was the end of the beard. And since then I am afraid to grow it because now I think most of it will come out white and make me look even more old than I am. (*Laughter*)

To go back to the old days when I was young: the most important things then were the Pranam and the meeting with the Mother in various ways. There was at that time not only, as I said, a meditation in the early morning at 7.30 but also a night meditation to which I was not admitted because I was a mere novice and the Mother must have thought I would fall asleep. Even now she thinks that people on the whole can really meditate only for three minutes: afterwards there are diverse states of sleep. (*Laughter*) When somebody asked her how long a man could sit in Sri Aurobindo's room for meditation, she said: "It can't be for more than three minutes, for soon after that he will fall asleep." And actually even the older sadhaks seemed to be falling asleep, for Sri Aurobindo shortly after I came to Pondicherry, put a dead stop to the night meditation, saying: "I don't care for a snoring concert." (*Laughter*)

The morning meditation went on and a little later there was started an evening meditation. It was extremely exalting because everything was dim and the Mother used to come and sit in a trance and all of us would try to do the same. I believe there were good results for all of us, except that every day there was one little odd occurrence, a disturbance, due to a South Indian Yogi who had become a sadhak here. He was supposed to be a great doer of tapasya—one who could carry on austere meditation. He told me once that before he came here he had thought he was the Avatar of the age. (*Laughter*) After he saw Sri Aurobindo he developed some misgiving about himself and was inclined to think that perhaps Sri Aurobindo was the Avatar! Now, he would first sit in his room to meditate and then when he had got into the full swing of the inner consciousness he would come to the general meditation of the evening. In order to keep his room-meditation going he would open only one eye and keep the other shut and come like that all the way so that all of the inner consciousness might not escape. (*Laughter*) With one eye shut, naturally several sorts of disasters could take place. The catastrophe that did frequently happen was that on his passage into the hall he put one of his feet right into the capacious lap of a fat lady named Mridu who used to sit just at the entrance. (*Laughter*) She was outraged and indignant, but it was impossible to make any protest when the Mother was deep in trance.

In the period of Ashram history somewhat earlier than that of this evening function we had what I may call the Soup Ceremony. I referred to it in my last talk. It was a very important function every evening. It impressed one like a snatch of the Ancient Mysteries. The atmosphere was as in some secret temple of Egyptian or Greek times. In subdued light people would sit on mats in the hall which is now the Reception Room. At about 8 the Mother would come down from the Prosperity Room upstairs and take her seat near the shaded lamp. Champaklal brought down a big cauldron of

hot soup and placed it in front of her on a stool. Then the Mother would go into a trance. In the course of her trance her arms would stretch forward over the soup-cauldron. For a minute they would remain there as if she were pouring something of her subtle-physical spirituality into the liquid. The idea must have been to give her own luminous subtle-physical substance and energy—a most concrete transference of spirituality into physical stuff. Then the Mother would open her eyes and Champaklal would remove the cauldron to one side and give her a big spoon. Each of us in turn would go and kneel before her and offer her our cup. The cup used to be called in the Ashram lingo “the animal cup”: really it was “the enamel cup” mispronounced! (*Laughter*) Perhaps the mispronunciation was quite appropriate: what we had to give the Mother was really an animal emptiness after all. (*Laughter*) The Mother used to take the animal cup and pour divine soup into it; and sometimes in the middle of the pouring she would again be lost in meditation and we had to kneel there for even three or four minutes. Suddenly she would open her eyes and smile in a little shy or embarrassed way. After filling the cup she would take a sip from it. You see, that was the further and final touch of the transference of her subtle-physical force to something we could materially take into ourselves.

The Soup Ceremony was a very solemn one; but I am afraid the fundamental thing that was required of us was not fulfilled: there was no exchange of energy between the Mother and us. When the Mother gives and gives we should not just gobble up her gifts: on our part we should make an offering too because unless we give ourselves or whatever is in us, we cannot make room for what she gives: otherwise what she gives is grabbed as it were by some sort of spiritual greed. Not an unresponsive vacuity—an animal emptiness—but a receptive vacancy made by a self-purifying consecrated inner gesture is the need. Such a gesture doesn't appear to have been sufficiently made by us. Owing to the one-way traffic of the spiritual process, there was an enormous drain on the Mother and after some months of the Soup Ceremony she fell terribly ill and it was stopped. I can't quite vouch for the words but I have the impression that Sri Aurobindo's comment ran somewhat like: “These fellows are brutes.” We did not realise what the Mother was doing: she was as if playing with her own life for our sake.

Closely connected with the Soup Ceremony was a series of meetings between the Mother and a few sadhaks in the Prosperity Room before she went down. If the Soup Ceremony had an air of Divine Gravity, the Prosperity Meeting may be considered to have had about it a breath of Divine Levity. It was enjoyable beyond description. The Mother came an hour before the Soup and sat down and attended first to the chits submitted for articles from the Stores. The man in charge was the one who bore the all-overtopping name: Purushottam (“Supreme Being”). Our present Prosperity-chief, Harikant, was not even born at that time. Besides Purushottam there were two or three people sitting there. Champaklal was always the Mother's attendant in those days, just as he has been in recent times. The Mother says she keeps some lions about her: they belong to the occult planes—but Champaklal looks almost like a physical

lion guarding her—a faithful vehicle, *vāhana*, of her Power. In the course of time more and more people gathered around the Mother in the Stores. But it was not because they chose to do so: the manner in which the group grew was incalculable and depended on the Mother alone. I remember how I happened to be in the group. I once went up to collect a writing pad I had asked for. The Mother was sitting in her usual place. I was at the door and Purushottam came and gave me the pad. Then the Mother just said: “Would you like to sit here?” I replied: “Of course, of course.” Most happily I went in and sat down. In a more or less similar fashion hardly pre-planned, each of the others got a place. The total number stayed fixed at the end. I think it was 24. Like 6, 24 has a special value. 6 is the half and 24 the double of Sri Aurobindo’s number—12—which represents “The New Perfection”. Sri Aurobindo has said that there are 12 powers or vibrations seen from the beginning above the Mother’s head: these are indicated in the outermost circle of the Mother’s symbol. Sri Aurobindo has also observed that there are really 12 planets in our solar system. 9 have already been discovered but 3 still remain. If you can manage to get this widely proclaimed, you will be hailed as a prophet when the tally is at last made. According to Sri Aurobindo, 12 rays (creating colour-effects) come from the sun, not 7 as we believe. I may note that the Greeks seem to have seen only three: they discerned nothing more than red, blue and yellow in the rainbow. We have obviously developed more colour-sight. Do you realise that the name “Sri Aurobindo” has itself 12 letters? And, surely, you know, as I once related, that a succession of 12 years marks the most momentous spiritual events in Sri Aurobindo’s life. The double of 12—24—has a personal association for me in connection with *Savitri*. When the first one-volume edition of the poem was to be brought out and I was set to look after it, I thought of ascertaining the exact number of lines. Being absolutely incompetent at the counting job, I put our best calculator, Girdharlal, to work. In practically no time he announced the number: 23,814. Then I submitted it to the Mother. At once she said: “There should have been 24,000 lines.” This meant, to my mind, that Sri Aurobindo had left some lines uncomposed. One or two parts of the poem did not receive the full final recast—particularly the Epilogue. Perhaps many of the missing lines would have come in there. By the way, the complete title of the epic—*Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*—makes 24 letters!

To each of us sitting with the Mother in the Prosperity Room she gave a number. I have the impression that Doraiswamy who used to be in the group whenever he came down from Madras had the last number. The first number was of Dara’s youngest brother, René. My own was 15, which adds up its numerals to 6: 6 is the number of what is called “The Divine Creation”, of which indeed I am very badly in need all the time!¹

We sat before the Mother in a rough semi-circle. But there was one exception. At the Mother’s feet was a stool and Chandulal, our Ashram engineer,

¹ It may be noted that the numerals of 24, the sum of letters in the title of Sri Aurobindo’s epic, add up also to 6—a fact most gratifying to a *Savitri*-maniac like me!

somehow got to lie flat in front of the Mother with his head resting against the stool and the soles of his feet displayed to us. (*Laughter*) "Bite-bite", the cat, often came and made herself comfortable on Chandulal's chest and he would try to talk to her in the endearing way the Mother used to address cats. His attempts were extremely funny to hear. All of us and the Mother herself laughed heartily. Chandulal was full of humour and sometimes of unconscious humour, odd turns of speech, strange combinations of words. Some of his pronouncements were quite memorable. I'll give a few examples. Once we had been waiting a long time in silent suspense for the Mother to come down to the room where the evening meditation took place. The effect which her appearance produced on us was summed up by Chandulal in the sentence: "We were all aghast." How the Mother enjoyed this freakish expression! His character-reading of the first American lady to come to the Ashram—Janet McPheeters renamed Shantimayi, who formed part of the Prosperity group—ran: "Frivolous in the eyes but serious in the back." (*Laughter*) She was puzzled as well as amused, until in less original English it was explained to her that he saw a seriousness of temper behind her apparent light-heartedness. On another occasion, he was discussing the repair of the ceiling of the room below the one across whose floor Sri Aurobindo used to walk vigorously, as he had done in the room of the old "Guest House", where I later stayed for 10 years. Chandulal explained to the Mother in technical language that, if he used beams of a certain thickness, they would bear the moving load only of such and such a weight! (*Laughter*) The Mother felt very tickled and Chandulal did not know why she and all of us laughed. At last it dawned on him that he had unwittingly referred to Sri Aurobindo!

Various things were done in the Prosperity *sourées*. The Mother answered all sorts of questions and gave many talks. I would jot down her words in abbreviated long-hand and later reconstruct them. My transcriptions have appeared as the third series in *Words of the Mother*. At times there would be readings from the works of Sri Aurobindo. We would thrust a finger or a paper-cutter into the pages of a book and read out the passage on which we would thus alight. The Mother herself took part in this game. At other times she invented games to test or develop our faculty of intuition. She would arrange some flowers to make up a sentence according to the significances allotted by her to them. We had to guess what she had in mind. It so happened—most interestingly—that everyone of us had on at least one occasion the correct sentence implanted into our heads by her! What was thus demonstrated was not exactly our intuitiveness but her power to make us intuitive when she wanted. There were other games too. I don't remember all the details. Whenever we succeeded in scoring a hit we got a material reward. A slab of French chocolate was the usual gift. Only I went after an unusual prize: a box of French cough-pastilles named Fiamma. I preferred their taste to the chocolates. All the time there would be joking among us or with the Mother. We were quite uninhibited and the laughter was sometimes uproarious. Many of the over-serious sadhaks in the Soup Room, waiting for the Mother to come down, were rather disturbed and did not at all approve of the bursts of Ananda

upstairs! (*Laughter*) It went on like this for an hour every evening.

There were two sights most deeply engraved on my memory. Both relate to the Mother. Once there was a meditation and, as was my wont, I kept opening my eyes and looking around. After the meditation had progressed for some minutes they fell on the Mother. Well, I have never seen the Mother as I saw her now. She was no longer human. Her whole body appeared to have become magnified and there was a light pervading her and the face was of a Goddess. I can only say that it was the face of Maheshwari. Sri Aurobindo has written of this aspect of the Divine Shakti: "Imperial Maheshwari is seated in the wideness above the thinking mind and will and sublimates and greatens them into wisdom and largeness or floods with a splendour beyond them. For she is the mighty and wise One who opens us to the supramental infinities and the cosmic vastness, to the grandeur of the supreme Light, to a treasure house of miraculous knowledge, to the measureless movement of the Mother's eternal forces. Tranquil is she and wonderful, great and calm for ever. . ." This was the first time I realised that when the Mother wants she can put forth the Divine Presence and Power completely into the physical being and manifest it. My wife Sehra has seen light coming out of the Mother's whole body and, as it were, assimilating the physical substance or else getting assimilated into it and making it radiant. I have never witnessed such a phenomenon, but here before me was indeed a superhuman being without any veils. I said to myself: "How much I would have lost if I had meditated!" (*Laughter*) And, if the Mother showed herself like that all the time, we would not require even to meditate, because all the human part in us, all the mortality in us would be absolutely quelled.

This concrete vision of mine was one peak of the memorable sight-seeing I had in the Prosperity Room. The other peak, which I might call just the opposite but equally divine, was when we were playing a certain game with big lemons. Each of us was trying to balance one of these fruits on our head. And then the Mother herself did the same and sat steady, most unself-consciously. It was a revelatory spectacle, showing how one whom we considered the Supreme Divine incarnate could come down to a funny game like this—I mean something which might look even ridiculous. The Mother sitting with a big yellow lemon on her head! Can you imagine anything more unexpected? But whenever I recollect the sight I think of the mighty fourth line in the second stanza of Sri Aurobindo's *Rose of God*. Here is the stanza:

Rose of God, great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being,
 Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing!
 Live in the mind of our earthhood; O golden Mystery, flower,
 Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour.

A figuration of Maheshwari, the Goddess of my first vision, seems also in these lines, and the last of them—

Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour—

calls forth from me, as an equally profound disclosure of the sheer Divine, a new phrase, now too about a "golden Mystery":

Lemon on the head of the Mother, our host of the marvellous Hour.

When the Mother, as a gracious host, entertained us in those sixty minutes in the Prosperity Room, we saw not only her utter height but also her complete refusal to put on any airs. Perhaps "refusal" is not the right term because any airs would be unnatural to her and she does not have to make an effort against them. But we have to be on guard against taking her for granted. She comes so close to our beings, acts so familiarly with us, as though she were one of us, that unless we keep our minds and hearts open we shall be in danger at times of missing to realise what she is.

I am sure Sri Aurobindo behaved in the same natural manner. From Nirod's accounts we see him overflowing with humour, cracking all kinds of jokes. Some of the jokes were even unreportable! (*Laughter*) When editing Nirod's accounts, I submitted a few of Sri Aurobindo's jokes to the Mother for approval and she said: "No, no, you can't publish that in *Mother India*."

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother do not deliberately keep any barriers between themselves and their disciples. I have found the Mother behaving without the slightest sense of the gulf separating her in quality of consciousness from us. The Divine Shakti, I have learnt, does not go on thinking of her own greatness, does not stand on her supreme dignity as human V.I.P.'s do. Once I found the Mother come very sweetly in search of me all the way from her lunch-corner to the farther of the two doors of Sri Aurobindo's room. In those years after Sri Aurobindo's passing away, some of us used to gather on the first floor and receive flowers and blessings from her or be near her for some reason or other until her lunch-hour. Then everybody would go away. But, by an inexplicable stroke of Grace, I was allowed to remain waiting in the passage-room outside her bathroom. I would sit there until she finished her lunch and came out to go to the bathroom. On occasion I would not quite know what to do and so I would walk into Sri Aurobindo's room, sit there for a while and then return to my usual station and meet the Mother. One day I oversat in Sri Aurobindo's room. And what did I see? The Mother had crossed all the way through the passage-room right to the end of the long room outside Sri Aurobindo's, wondering where the waiting fellow had disappeared. When I saw her I got up with a start, feeling ashamed that I had made her take all that trouble to come and look for someone utterly unimportant, just to give him the blessing he hardly deserved but keenly desired.

The manner in which the Mother deals with children is another eye-opener. I recall how she once handled a little girl who was brought to her as having fever. The Mother put her hand gently over the girl's head, moved it slowly to the back of the head, then slid it right down the spine in the same caressing way, and at the end lightly kissed the child on her forehead. The little patient, I am positive, went away as good as cured. I wish everybody could receive such doctoring. The Mother has told

me that she used to cure her son André, when a boy, of all his illnesses without ever calling a doctor. She has an extraordinary healing power. Most of us have had plenty of experiences of it. I would like to tell you some of mine, but where's the time today? I shall close this part of my talk on the theme of the Mother's coming intimately near to us and making the Integral Yoga so very easy and lavishing her love on us without reserve—I shall close this part of my talk by quoting, if you will excuse me, two poems of my own. One is concerned with the time of Pranam. I have entitled it *Grace*:

Take all my shining hours from me,
 But hang upon my quiet soul's
 Pale brow your dream-kiss like a gem.
 Let life fall stricken to its knee,
 If unto lone-faced poverty
 You give your blessing's diadem.
 Make of these proud eyes beggar-bowls,
 But only drop your smile in them.

The other poem, named *O Silent Love*, reads:

Because you never claim of us a tear,
 O Silent Love, how often we forget
 The eyes of countless centuries were wet
 To bring your smile so near!

Forgive if I remember not the blaze,
 Imperishable, perfect, infinite,
 Of far omnipotence from which you light
 Your lamp of human face.

Make me a worship-vigil everywhere,
 Slumber and wakefulness one memory
 That you are God. O let each pore of me
 Become a mouth of prayer.

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

THE TWO VENKATESHAS

CRITICISM of others is bad not because the elders have said it is so or because moral guide-books warn against it. It is to be avoided not even for the injustice that may be done to others by ill-informed comments. It is dangerous for the harm it does to oneself.

Criticism, like all evil, is a thing that grows on its own. Once one begins to indulge in it—even if it be only for the fun of it—it becomes a habit and it digs itself into one's nature. It forms grooves in the mind and, consciously or unconsciously, thought moves in those grooves. Every observation, every reaction gets shaped in them, irrespective of the truth of the matter. There is formed in one's nature a proclivity to see everything in a critical light, to look only at the wrong end of things—real or imagined. One loses contact with the nobler side of life. One becomes blind to aspects of beauty, harmony, heroism and similar verities in Nature which testify to the presence of Divinity in this Creation. One poisons oneself systematically. And like all poison it spreads itself wherever one goes, and infects others.

The sense of truth is lost and one steepes oneself in falsehood—the enemy of the soul. The vision gets perverted and one goes to unbelievable lengths to lampoon others. If facts do not fit in, no matter; things can be invented to suit the mood.

This happened only a few days ago near the Samadhi in our Ashram compound. It was forenoon. There were many present—men, women, children, some sprawling near the walls, some gossiping animatedly, some sweeping with unnecessary noise. Two inmates were sitting in different places, deeply lost in meditation. Obviously this annoyed the eyes of a self-righteous person watching nearby. For she was heard to remark with a certain acidity that could not be missed: "Two Venkateshas are sitting to bring down God from above."

But she forgot that the whole effort of life in the Ashram is precisely this: to invoke the Mother's Light and Grace to descend on Earth; and that the Samadhi is a special centre where all should do this and nothing else. One comes to the Samadhi to pray, to meditate; anything else is surely unnatural. And to laugh at those who meditate there is itself laughable! One may as well take exception to students for studying in the school premises, readers for reading in the library, children for playing in the playground!

A THIRD VENKATESHA

A POET'S LETTER FROM AUROVILLE

Amal

I will write poetry,—
but not yet awhile...the fields of peace
from which much future poetry must spring
to reach the hearts of men are not yet quite laid.

I will write that poetry
and perhaps now that poetry of the future
prepares itself...
in the experience of events never before encountered
on the face of the earth...or, perhaps
now that poetry of the future is being etched on some
far-guided heart and by another's hand it will be written
once it finds a place of love to come to rest—
a poetry then that will be a torch of truth
calling the world to the arms of Her love and unity.

That place must be a bed prepared for the bride
of the new morning...some place above the horizons of life
where the poet of the future may be opened to dream only
of the sacred delight for which he was especially born.

That poetry is to be ..but to be and live and mature,
to reach its destined heights, a place must be made
for its birth, a cradle of consciousness prepared
from the new stuff of heaven and earth.

I will write poetry,—
but not yet awhile...
for the future of poetry and the world depends now on
the nature of something She is establishing here in Auroville,
and for that to become more concretely sure
the hands of action are called foremost.

Now the building must take place; a progressive seeding
of the green fields of consciousness to grow more deeply

than the proliferative weeds of chaos are growing widely,
 a preparation for the bloom of peace in a life lucid,
 filled with the opportunity for faith and cheerfulness
 and the ways divine.

So I will write poetry, but first the plowing, the growing
 and the tending of the fields divine. Is that not better
 left to the artists, than to the businessmen alone or to
 the uninitiated? If the artists do not care enough for the substance
 of the matter how can we expect the roots and the tree
 to grow with the poise of a natural harmony, a dynamic
 integrity, a touch or spark of something from beyond?

Something more than practical conveniences devised
 only for the ease of mind and body. Something more
 than getting stopped short, caught in the charmed net of transient
 pleasures lost in Prakriti's round of passions.

To you, Amal, I can say that, 'that something' is tangibly
 related to the poet of the future, and whether he is in
 my breast or another's, I dedicate myself to preparing the ground
 upon which he can be born, in the name of Sri Aurobindo,
 who, above all his work and ways, enjoyed knowing
 himself as The Poet.

I will write poetry...or perhaps I am trying to help
 create a poetry in Life; whatever, it is not quite yet awhile,

O Lord, not until the waters flow over these harsh desert grounds
 and a garden grow with an air on which may cling
 all love's responsible things.

Thank you for enquiring,
 Yours, GENE

THE POETRY OF JONES VERY

(Continued from the issue of May, 1971)

SOON after his death, a larger edition of Very's poems was published, and was not altogether neglected. A few accepted him as a precious gift, while some others gave him a distant and bemused respect; and he was never entirely forgotten, anomalous though he was in a "practical" society. But his reputation dwindled more and more, and at present it can hardly be said to be more than a faint whisper. Small though his achievement was, it has been too much for his country to assimilate: and he has been pronounced monotonous by people to whom the slightest touch of spirituality is very nearly excessive, dismissed as being lamentably afflicted with a "semi-Buddhist quietism" (this being of course unacceptably outlandish to the capacious and far-ranging modern mind), and most thoroughly disposed of as being simply not in accordance with that god of the literatus, present taste. He does require a delicate palate.

If he could have previewed the decline of his always modest reputation, he would probably have done so with indifference. His great object being to have no will but the divine will, he snuffed out, or allowed to be snuffed out, his poetical ambition. He cultivated his tranquillity, and let things take what course they would.

The wind that blows the ship along,
Her swelling sails cannot confine;
Alike to all the gales belong,
Nor canst thou claim a breath as thine.

So he saw and expressed it: and he was content for his wind to become slighter and slighter. He did not wish to move at all unless the Spirit moved him, and it seems to have moved him little. He did not wish to venture much, or to go on far voyages: his early enlargement had been almost too much for him, and latterly he seemed rather to want to narrow his consciousness than to expand it. For the most part, the prospect of the ocean rather depressed than exhilarated him. Life in a great seaport found him perhaps even more antipathetic than indifferent. He turned inland, to the trees and the flowers; and he became himself a hidden flower, caring not whether its fragrance were given alone to the woodland shade.

The Spirit did not move him to cultivate his poetical capacity, and win new regions of divine utterance. But in the time of his mounting enthusiasm he was interested in questions and problems of poetry, and he wrote three critical essays, which were included by Emerson in the volume already mentioned. One was on Hamlet, and one more generally and inclusively on Shakespeare. Very was perplexed by the ques-

tion of how Shakespeare could be such a genius, and yet such an unspiritual man; and concluded that genius was the decay of wisdom, and that the wisdom that was trying to enter Shakespeare found too great an opposition—and so could inspire only great poetry, not spiritual poetry. As he put it, the pre-existent Shakespeare was offered wisdom, but declined it, and took only genius.

It may readily be observed that such wisdom as Very was given did not suffer a diminution to genius. And yet he wrote such things, after all, as Shakespeare could not have written, and drew from a source beyond Shakespeare's—or experienced things beyond Shakespeare's experience. He wanted, for a time, to express a good deal more than he did:

There is no moment but whose flight doth bring
Bright clouds and fluttering leaves to deck my bower;
And I within like some sweet bird must sing
To tell the story of the passing hour;
For time has secrets that no bird has sung.
Nor changing leaf with changing season told;
They wait the utterance of some nobler tongue
Like that which spoke in prophet tones of old.

But he and the time together were not ripe: he remained in his private bower; the secret was kept, and the tones did not ring out.

He had been interested in the epic, and in fact the first of his three essays was on that subject. It was his conclusion that since mankind was becoming more and more inward-directed, epic was becoming more and more difficult to write: and that since, in fact, changes of consciousness, and the direct influence of one consciousness on another, were the only things that were likely to make an acceptable modern epic, it was not likely that one would be written. To him, such a task seemed insurmountably difficult.

At the time of Very's death, Sri Aurobindo was still a schoolboy and in fact was not yet Sri Aurobindo. Almost three quarters of a century had to pass, before the world could have *Savitri*, and see how an epic of inwardness was possible. Perhaps we will not have to wait much longer for the manifold efflorescence of the Future Poetry about which Sri Aurobindo wrote so eloquently, and with an inspiration and a knowledge so much beyond mere eloquence: poetry to create whole new worlds of occult existence, and express inexhaustibly the inexhaustible experiences of the spirit: poetry worthy of the Dawn.

Very posed the question:

How long ere shall shine,
In this glimmer of things,
The Light of which prophet

In prophecy sings,
And the gates of that city
Be open, whose sun
No more to the west
Its circuit shall run!

If the answer is now before us, it is because so many have striven, for so long; because men like Very, and greater men, have aspired to divine consciousness, making the earth finally ready for its decisive advent.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother could not have founded that City in a totally unspiritual desert. If now there is readiness, or capacity however unripe, if, with the progress of the New Age, and the thirsting for the opening of those gates, a solid and true spirituality shall develop even in America, Jones Very may come into his own, being seen in his true light, and appreciated for what he can give. Any expression of spirituality, and of spiritual aspiration, is now thrice precious and meaningful, severely truncated though it may be. Especially in a country like America, with no spiritual tradition, one needs all that one can get: and one may hope that serious aspiring, including the serious reading of spiritual literature, shall even come to predominate over attempts to destroy the mind, or to find the Real It quickly and easily without discipline and purification, and the changing of one's life. Neither as a poet nor as a mystic is Very great: but he is genuine, and that alone makes him rare and precious.

(Concluded)

JESSE ROARKE

THE LOST CHILDREN OF THE WEST

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HIPPIES

(Continued from the issue of May, 1971)

The Historical Context

How has the wide use of drugs among young people of the West come about?

The historical development of the para-social phenomenon is stamped by four factors: drugs, music, politics and the culture of the East. Its roots reach back into the twenties, when with the unfolding of free improvisation in Jazz the musicians begin to use Marijuana to promote inspiration. The more dependent on inspiration the musicians become the more they use the drug. The effect does not suffice, they start to take 'snow', cocaine and heroin.

At the end of the forties there begins a development towards a more relaxed and understated 'cool' Jazz which reaches its acme in 1950. Originally used predominantly for its effect of increased musicality, the drug becomes more and more the general means for a push into the inner world.

Political currents introduce the third factor. The world is threatened by atomic weapons. In all countries nuclear disarmers find one another and unite. At Easter 1963 in London more than 100,000 people come out in protest against the threat to world-peace.

The world-wide demonstrations awaken in the young people a political consciousness. Politically orientated youth-groups spring up, among them radical Leftists demanding a more practical politics than that practised by the idealistic leaders of the nuclear disarmers.

These currents even influence music. The coloured Jazz-musicians enter into political engagements, fertilising a new development of their art. This tendency towards the Left attracts the young to the music of the socialist countries. Their interest soon widens to include the folk-music of all countries, especially that of England and America whose main exponents Bob Dylan, John Donovan and Joan Baez become world-famous. Parallel to the renascent folk-music out of the traditional New Orleans Jazz there develops by way of Country Blues and City Blues (Rhythm and Blues) first Rock'n Roll and then the beginnings of Beat-music.

The spread of folk-music attracts the young to foreign countries. Their destinations, at first limited to Europe, soon grow wider. They travel to the Near and even to the Far East. From their journeys they bring back Hashish which up to now has been little known in Europe.

In the winter of 1964-65 lie the beginnings of progressive Beat-music. Its sources are Jazz, folk-music and City Blues, its most famous exponents are the Rolling Stones, Manfred Man and the Beatles. When Bob Dylan begins to use the electrical guitar for his music, progressive folk-music also becomes Beat. Within a year both forms of Beat-music are almost indistinguishable.

In the same year from the student-hostels of American universities LSD spreads among the young people of Europe. As in the twenties drugs inspired Jazz so now they help to develop Beat, and with the spread of Beat-music drugs spread among the young. When after several smaller political groups a radical Leftist movement, the Provos, appears in Amsterdam in 1965 and in Scandinavia a year later, they take both Beat-music and Hashish as the expression of their protest.

The Provos use the drug differently. They split into a politically active group which subordinates the use of the drug to its political interests, and into a passive group of Hippies who think it desirable to stay under the influence of euphorics as long as possible.

Owing to this development finally a new musical form comes into being which renounces melodic sound-sequence and develops its statements in rhythmic sound-structures, supported by mobile light-effects—psychedelic or consciousness-expanding music. Its most outstanding exponents are the "Mothers of Invention" of San Francisco.

The newest currents in para-social development have their origin in India. In the last four years the Hippies of America and Europe absorb Indian culture to an increasing extent. They wear Indian clothes, burn Indian incense, make music on Vinas and Sitar and sing songs of Indian wisdom. Indian spiritual music begins to flow into Beat. Following the Beatles many young people all over the world are looking for Indian gurus and turning to meditation.

If the turn of the individual away from drugs to meditation becomes more widespread the decisive step in the para-social development will have been taken.

The Psychological Background

It may be supposed that the manifold aspects of the para-social phenomenon are forms of expression of a psychological process in the young which tends to turn them away from the traditional forms of social life and makes them explore new roads of becoming and action.

When asked for the decisive factors, the young people give symptomatic answers which can be classified into two categories of reactions—withdrawal and protest. In the first category the answers which predominate are those which concern lack of love and understanding on the part of the parents. But this lack is not only experienced as missing affection. Consciously or unconsciously the young person feels deprived of something more, something past generations did not ask for—"something inside that was always denied," as the Beatles sing in their song about the girl who leaves home for

good. The lack seems to derive from a deeper psychological layer which, overlaid by ordinary life, remains untouched.

The answers of the second category result from a dissatisfaction with the world as it is and in rare cases also with the person himself. The aims of bourgeois society, success, position, wealth, fame and the form of life governed by them are more or less radically rejected. In the beginning the reaction exhausts itself in the few means available to the young: unconventional appearance, protest songs, demonstrations, breaking-away from the parental home, a para-social way of life. Where however drugs come in too a decisive turn takes place: an opening into layers of his inner nature previously unknown to him turns his attention more and more to subjective reality. And out of his 'No' to the objective world can come a 'Yes' to himself. He may start to practise forms of Yoga as an adequate reaction to the externalisation of life and to free himself from the artificial, limited, uncertain and even dangerous means towards subjective reality by a natural and widely liberating one.

In the turning of the young person from the known and mastered world to the knowledge and mastery of himself there is manifested the psychic tendency which determines his behaviour. For with this turn the para-social person actively acknowledges a universal process which since it started to become manifest in the beginnings of subjectivism has until now still taken a reactive course—the psychic evolution of mankind

Evolution is not made by man, it makes man; its processes are inevitable. It has—by unconventional means and not without sacrifice—begun to enforce in some of the young a conscious opening into the world of man's latent underdeveloped existence as yet unknown to him. The opening and the young people's subsequent development seem indispensable to Evolution. Man has to decide whether he is called upon to close the opening and to lead the young back into the society they have left, or whether he would do better to create adequate conditions for a healthy inner growth and a more promising psychic evolution.

(To be continued)

JOBST MUHLING

THE PURSUIT OF PHILOSOPHY

A SYMPOSIUM

Dr. Indra Sen's Approach

THE way and the manner of the pursuit of philosophy has been a matter of concern now for quite a length of time. The question is whether the academic spirit is quite adequate for it or it must seek to remain close to life. Thus 'Philosophy and Life' has tended to become a problem by itself.

The modern academic spirit seeks to make of philosophy a pursuit of intellect in respect of truth and reality for intellect's own satisfaction. The other view which seeks to keep it close to life argues that intellect itself is a function of life and that the pursuit of philosophy should seek to enlighten and enrich life as such.

The Indian tradition, as clearly reflected in the Upanishads, the Gita, the Vedantic thought, the Sankhya system and otherwise, demands an approach of the whole man, of intellect as of feeling and will to the problem of truth and reality and it aims also at a satisfaction of the whole man. The fulfilment of the pursuit is a 'Darshan', a Vision, a living spiritual perception of truth and reality and nothing short of it. Such a perception, of course, lends its own force and vitality to the human person.

With the Greeks too, on the whole, philosophy was a way of thought but also a way of life.

In the modern period, however, Europe has evolved what has come to be known as the academic spirit and it is bound up with the intellectualist tradition. This approach has contributed tremendously to engender a spirit of disinterested pursuit of truth, but that disinterestedness has been conceived rather intellectualistically, *i.e.* with intellect as the supreme and sovereign faculty for knowledge and as capable of acting independently, uninfluenced by will and emotions. Philosophy too came under this scheme of disinterestedness and thus tended to separate itself from life. And gradually a feeling of disappointment arose that philosophy was not helpful to life.

Under an impulse that we in India, in particular, needed to think over this issue of the academic spirit and philosophy and life a number of persons of long dedication and devotion to philosophy met at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, on the 19th December, 1970 and discussed these questions. At the end, a brief draft was also considered. It was later sent to a few colleagues in philosophy for their reactions. And the same is now sought to be shared with all who cherish a satisfying and a creative pursuit of philosophy. The observations offered by different persons regarding the draft are also appended.

The Draft: Philosophy and Life

I. Philosophy, mind's thinking approach to Truth and Reality, is a need of life and may possibly be pursued as such a need rather than as a complete and an independent pursuit of intellect's own interest and for its own satisfaction only.

II. There is a pervasive egoism in man's life—body tends to seek its own satisfaction, instinctive and habitual drives their own and reason or intellect its own. And the last being qualitatively the highest tends to enjoy the highest prestige and its egoism too tends to become most powerful and exclusive.

III. But reason is yet a function of life and may really recognise its status as such, and might even remain conscious that it is capable of a synthetic activity as well as an analytic one. It can break up a whole into its parts and thus comprehend a thing or relate one whole to another whole or a number of other wholes or a higher whole. Hegel's dialectic process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is an action of the synthetic reason. Or Sri Aurobindo's approach of determining the right place or precise measure of truth for different philosophical systems in integral truth or of different cultures in the integral culture, as attempted in *The Life Divine*, is the working of synthetic intellect or reason.

IV. If reason is yet more conscious of itself, it can even recognise and remember that it is capable of flashes of the truth of things without any discursive activity, whether analytic or synthetic.

V. And if reason is, besides being well conscious of itself, modest and humble too, it might as well become aware of another instrumentation of knowledge, a spiritual one, which is more confident of truth and of the approach to truth.

VI. Such a reason will evidently be more competent in philosophising. It will not possibly land us in thought-systems separated from life and exclusive of one another.

VII. But this will involve a recognition that a discipline wider and more comprehensive than that of formal logic of analytic thought as usually understood is needed, and more than that, a recognition of the fact of egoism of reason, which limits it rather severely to a narrower action. And also of the egoism of the other parts of human nature, of emotional sympathies and antipathies and other partialities, which directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, influence reason.

VIII. If the above orientation commends itself to our philosophic mind, will it not lead to a solution of the problem so keenly felt as the problem of 'Philosophy and Life'? And will it not also tend to bring about a better understanding between East and West in philosophy and life generally? And will it not also create a larger and a more promising prospect for philosophy and philosophising?

Observations

(1)

My dear Dr. Indra Sen,

I have read with considerable interest your observations under the caption "Philosophy and Life". It seems to me that you are dissatisfied with what usually passes for philosophy, on the understanding that it is divorced from life. Believe me, I am at one with you in this regard. But in what precise sense is traditional philosophy subject to this drawback or inaptitude? Your answer seems to me to be that philosophy has been pursued for the sake of the satisfaction of the intellect in disregard of the *need* of life. But what is the *need* of life? In reply one may say that the understanding of the universe as a whole as well as in parts, which is the aim of the sciences, is a need of life. And if this need be regarded as the only need of its kind, then there would be left no room for philosophy to occupy. But it may be held that there is another need of life which is of primary importance and indeed concerns the determination of the way of life as it deserves to be lived. This view is obviously not opposed to, but may, on the contrary, be in consonance with the interests of science; in particular, it serves to draw attention to the consideration that life owes a duty towards itself and that that duty needs to be performed by way of suggesting *how life should be lived*. And it may well be that the discipline upon which it is incumbent to make the suggestion in question is philosophy.

It seems to me that the definition of philosophy with which you have started is likely to prove misleading. In any case, once you define philosophy as a "*thinking approach to Truth and Reality*" as you have done, you, perhaps, cannot find a way out of the magic circle of intellectualism as you seem to me to be anxious to do. Moreover, it is hard to make room for philosophy in distinction from science by merely spelling Truth with a capital T and Reality with a capital R. For the sciences also have a legitimate claim to an access to *truths* and *realities*. Besides, I am not quite sure whether reason *qua* reason has any means of giving information about a source of knowledge which is not *rational*, but, as you say, *spiritual*. And it also seems doubtful whether reason can yield truths which are not attainable by means of discursive reasoning. For these reasons it seems to me that to ascribe to reason either of these two capacities is tantamount to the replacement of reason by a non-rational faculty and the consequent admission of some brand of intuitionism or other. And this must be openly admitted, so that no doubt may be left about the standpoint that comes to be advocated.

These are some of the comments which I have ventured to make on your valuable observations regarding the future of philosophy.

Yours sincerely,

Sd.-N. V. Banerjee

(Formerly Professor and Head of the Philosophy Dept., University of Delhi)

(2)

I welcome the spirit and intention of the paper and agree with its main points. It should be widely distributed among philosophers. But I feel that before this is done, a few points should perhaps be given more thought and elaborated. For example, points IV and V: many rational philosophers by purely logical analysis come to the conclusion that reason cannot know reality. Bradley comes immediately to my mind, in this connection. But his findings do not seem to have convinced many philosophers. Would we really gain much by re-opening the question philosophically? We may be able to advance some fresh arguments in favour of the position, but it is doubtful whether that will settle the matter for the majority of philosophers. Secondly, point VIII. This paragraph seems to assume that there is a connection between philosophy and life (indeed, that is already indirectly stated in the sentence 'Intellect is yet a function of life'), that intellectual analysis of existence and life are somehow manifestations of a common underlying reality. But is not this itself a burning topic of philosophy?

However, I do hope the paper will stimulate fruitful discussions and at least few questions may be clarified even if agreed answers are not found.

ARINDAM BASU

(Formerly Spalding Lecturer, Durham University, U.K.,
presently at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.)

(3)

I agree with your thesis that philosophy should return to life.

Yes; there *should* be a "thinking approach to truth and reality": this implies that this "thinking" approach is generally not there; this is a fact.

(Philosophy arises out of a "thinking" approach; and out of this "thinking" out of which philosophy arises, there arises also the "scientific attitude".)

But how do we know that a philosophy which arises out of the "thinking" approach is not itself involved in illusion? For the "thinking" approach may lead us to a "partial" philosophy; or, it may lead us to the illusion that we *think* we know, whereas we may not, in fact, know. If *a-vidyā* is dangerous, *vidyā* of this kind may be more dangerous.

Hume said that reason is a slave of passion. Intellect and reason may become a "slave" of the "pervasive egoism of man's life". This "egoism" is so pervasive that it is even present in the saint—"the egoism of the saint", as Sri Aurobindo called it. Instead of leaving the philosopher to the discovery of truth, this "egoism" may lead the philosopher only to the activity of 'refuting' philosophies.

Not only therefore should there be a "thinking approach" to truth and reality but the "thinking approach" to truth and reality itself should be tested. What is it that can test this? The answer is: *Life*.

"To be or not to be, that is the question," said Hamlet. Is "not to be" the question

with which the philosopher is concerned? As a philosopher of *Being*, the philosopher is concerned with Being: *How* to be: How to *be* "in spite of" a chaotic, disappointing, and threatening world. In affirming Being, the philosopher ought to affirm and not negate world and life. His "thinking approach" to truth and reality ought to have some answer to the problem of life. And therefore a philosophy ought to interest everyone and not merely the intellectual. But if the philosopher "thinks" that he is *not* involved in the problem of life and how "to be," as the contemporary situation in philosophy shows, then, how do we know that the philosopher himself is not involved in an illusion? Kant warned us against a transcendental illusion that generally goes undetected. Therefore a philosophy ought to be tested by life and the philosopher ought to bring his philosophy into relation with life—viz. *transform* life; i.e. make life *divine*. This is the philosopher's "ought".

N.A. NIKAM

(Formerly Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy
and Vice-Chancellor, University of Mysore)

(4)

My dear Dr. Indra Sen,

It was so good to meet you after such a long time in Madras. I have read your paper which you gave me there and also the short note you sent along with your letter dated 30th December, 1970. Both of them strike a positive note and are full of experiential insight. My own feelings in the matter relate to your assessment of what you have called the 'Egoistic trend in human Life' and what I would like to call 'autonomous pursuit of the particular value or of the particular domain'. The feeling for an integral system assumes a clear-cut hierarchy among values and also of a harmony between them. However, both need not necessarily be there and if one reflects on experience one would find that generally they are not there.

The concept of integration itself needs a close analysis. Many times, the talk of integration merely hides a haziness and ambiguity in thought. The question as I see it is not so much between synthetic and analytic reason as to discover the criteria of validity in both. Also, how to do justice to each realm in such a way that persons who are pursuing them may realise that justice has been done to them.

Further, the problem is not from where one gets a flash of truth, but how does one judge and determine that it is true. Similarly, it is not mere reason which makes us conscious of its limitation but every faculty of man including the spiritual one.

Even if one is higher than the other, it does not imply that it gives you the lower values also. The question of relevance to life itself needs examination. What exactly is meant by life with respect to whose relevance we are judging other things?

These are just stray comments which I felt while reading your note....

Yours sincerely,

Sd:—DAYA KRISHNA

(Professor and Head of the Dept. of Philosophy, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur)

(5)

Normal human personality is egoistic, i.e., self-centred, self-preservative, self-appropriating or acquisitive and intellect too shares these characteristics; and when it seeks truth, except where there are external physical checks, it conceives truth in terms of its own make-up. But truth is an objective fact and philosophical truth is a vast illimitable fact, in extent as in gradations of qualities. Therefore, the attitude towards it must be one of self-giving, of opening out to it and receiving and apprehending it *as it is* and not of acquiring and possessing it in the limitations of our egoistic form. That means growing into a wider and a larger form in intellect as also life generally, since life affects the working of intellect more or less.

With the issue of 'Philosophy and Life' is closely associated the right pursuit of Indian philosophy. Philosophy in India continues to be pursued with Western thinking as the basis and the approach. For true creativity it needs to be pursued from its own foundations with Western thinking as an additional enrichment. Indian philosophy, in all its varied developments, has been essentially an issue of life, not purely a matter of intellectual interest. Indian philosophy has evidently yet to come to its own and become truly creative and a helpful guidance for contemporary life.

INDRA SEN

(Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry)

ONE WAITS AND WATCHES...

THE residue of Karmic deeds
 Disturbs the flight towards the Name
 And fetters freedom's soaring flame.
 While grains of sand in hour-glasses
 Drain the very face of Time,
 One waits and watches patiently
 The maze of endless patterns weaving
 Fate, the father of our bounden rule,
 And knows within that Flame shall flower
 The blaze of Aspiration's seed.

RICHARD EGGENBERGER

COMMUNICATION IN THE FUTURE EDUCATION OF AUROVILLE

AUROVILLE is developing into a universal city and in consequence must interest itself in all forms of communication media. Such media will range from the primitive sounds of sea creatures, birds and animals to man's sophisticated devices in computer electronics on to the transmental powers of communication on many levels of consciousness.

We have entered an age when the cybernetics of machines and creatures have come very close to each other. It was perhaps inevitable that the pragmatic manifestations of man's mind would eventually turn back upon itself and ask by inference the inevitable question : why? And naturally man has to answer the question of his own making even though the "excursion" into Philistian pragmatism was an excuse to avoid the question in the first place.

It was perhaps Freud who first drew attention to the fact that words often obscured issues rather than communicated true revelation and so he relied heavily on acts rather than words for a fuller communication. We have come a long way since Freud, Jung and Adler. The psychology of future communication will now have to be completely restated, not in terms of case histories, behaviour patterns and the casual delving into the unconscious through hypnosis or dream experiences, but by the yogic processes of true union by identity and the educated powers of thought projection.

Much thought and speculation has gone into the problem of two people endeavouring to make themselves understood so as to get their ideas, feelings, wishes and desires accepted by each other; but very little practical research has been done on the subject from the approach of educating for understanding. Or we could put it another way: educating for communication.

That an education is most necessary is borne out by the research that has been done in this field over the past fifty years at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and International Centre of Education at Pondicherry, from which Auroville has taken birth.

Sri Aurobindo bases his concept of psychology on the purity or impurity of the *four minds*, i.e. physical mind, vital mind, mental mind, and psychic mind.

That communication with understanding depends upon the purity of the communicating media is indisputable. How much more then is it necessary that there should be a pristine clarity at the source of the will to communicate?

The average individual considers himself as having one mind, precisely because all the four minds are a *mélange*, so intermixed as to rarely allow a clear communication of what is intended. In fact the average person does not think. He is usually activated by impulses governed by the universal forces of love, hatred, envy, jealousy,

longings and desires, over which he has very little control. He is not educated to know himself but only to accumulate facts and knowledge outside himself. *Know Thyself* was the injunction written over the portals of the temple of Delphi in ancient Greece. It was the basis of learning laid down by the Rishis of the Gurukuls of Vedic India. These truths have slept latent in the consciousness of man for thousands of years. Is man ready for this truth now? The indications at this International Centre of Education are in the affirmative. After experimenting with all forms of progressive methods of education over the past twenty-five years we have arrived at the following conclusions for a practical implementation of the ideal.

The first principle of education as laid down by Sri Aurobindo is that *nothing can be taught*. This was quite difficult for most of the teachers to accept in the beginning until it was understood very clearly that all knowledge is within and the job of education was to *educate* that which is latent in the being. One can only learn what one needs to know, not what other people think you need to know.

We have long forgotten that *educere* is the root word of education and *to bring forth* is the one truth upon which education has to stand. Each individual has something of his own to manifest. Only he can be perfectly himself. A person becomes an individual when he can manifest that which is his true purpose to manifest and lives according to the true law of his own nature.

To bring this about in the most natural and effective way two apparently opposing factors need to be reconciled—discipline and freedom.

Remembering that there are four minds which have to be considered and activated at the right time and place, we have proceeded along the following lines:

We have initiated at the very outset a strong basis of physical education, where attendance in the organised groups of capacity is compulsory. This discipline of the physical mind and its expressed activities is required of all age-groups ranging from two and a half to eighty and over. It holds for both students and teachers. At the play-school level, the Montessori practice of keeping all materials in their right place and patiently seeing that the children learn the habit of returning playthings to their proper places rather than the teacher doing this, is the first step in the discipline of the physical mind.

The vital mind continues the discipline through language practice both audio and visual and through this language practice the many forms of art expression blossom into an activity of disciplined joy and self-expression. Through music, drawing, painting, sculpture, dancing and mime and simple dramatic sketches.

This work of joyfully stimulating the physical and emotional (vital) minds through disciplined forms of self-expression continues up to the fourth year language level or thereabouts, depending mostly on the speed of progress and the capacity of each individual child. It may be between 11 and 14 years of age.

About this time the mental mind becomes active to the point of wanting to extend itself in curiosity and discovery. It is during this activity of growth that the **mental mind** is most open to learn from its own inner potential as well as from the higher levels

of mental awareness such as the higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind and other levels of universal consciousness. But it is also precisely at this stage of education that much of the mixture with the physical and vital minds occurs, because this period of growth is also the period of adolescence which entails much chaos from physical and emotional change.

Unless a previous physical and vital discipline has been established as the true foundation upon which to build the further mental education this chaos will continue to damage the mind growth, weaken the will power and cloud the inner sources of knowledge so that only a fraction of the human evolutionary potential becomes possible.

If, however, the proper physical and vital mind disciplines have been established before the mental mind becomes active it is then possible to initiate a climate of learning through "free progress" where the student is left completely free to choose the subject or subjects he feels a need to study. This "Free Progress" method will be most effective, provided the foundation of a disciplined physical and vital mind is established in the early formative years; otherwise such freedom only issues into licence. True freedom has always to be founded on order and discipline.

Today this true freedom to study is especially important. We have come a long way from Pestalozzi, to Montessori, to Dewey and A. S. Neil's Summerhill, yet all have contributed something to the true freedom we envisage—a passing from a teacher dominated class to a student activated class. But this is not enough, the child to be educated must enter school life with the assurance that freedom from fear shall be a major principle of its educational environment. How is this freedom from fear to come about? How are we to make it a practical reality and not just an aspiration in the heart of the idealist? After all, it is certainly long overdue.

Bertrand Russell says:

"One generation of fearless women could transform the world, by bringing into it a generation of fearless children, not contorted into unnatural shapes, but straight and candid, generous, affectionate and free. Their ardour would sweep away the cruelty and pain which we endure because we are lazy, cowardly, hard-hearted and stupid. It is education that gives us these bad qualities and education that must give us the opposite virtues. Education is the key to the new world."

Fear is the most destroying blocking agent in human communication. It is a universal force which if not dealt with through a disciplined use of the physical nervous and vital nervous energies in early life runs riot throughout the human system making a chaos and a havoc of what we are prone to call education. It is so easy for a child to submit to the habit of fear, to submit to the impulse of expediency and circumstance, to follow the "easy" path that requires no effort. This pernicious submission conditions the child to all kinds of weakening influences that make communication almost impossible, and receptivity a mere distortion of truth.

It is therefore imperative to educate for the whole being, preparing the ground for a mental evolution free from fear, free from compulsion, free from imposition. A

freedom based on a physical and emotional discipline which builds an inner confidence in the child so that he can embrace a greater freedom of the mental mind as soon as it begins to become active in its quest for wider horizons and new discoveries.

It is inevitable that man, being a transitional being, must evolve. It is also inevitable that his evolving consciousness must find the more integral needs of his education. But the history of man's evolution up to date bears witness to his learning by the most negative pressures of calamities, holocausts, wars, and destruction. I suggest that now a new and higher consciousness has entered the earth atmosphere and in consequence man is ready for a more positive change in consciously aiding the next step in his evolution. He is entering the phase where he can more fully participate and enjoy the progress of his own growth through new discoveries and a breakthrough of awareness to new horizons of expanding consciousness.

Already the very young are aware of this new consciousness and they intuitively know that a great leap into the future is imminent. Already the outworn platitudes of philosophy and clichés of culture are strewn over the battlefields of the past. A new philosophy and a new ethics is about to take place out of the need for a higher and wider statement of Truth.

What exactly do the young people revolt against? The *status quo*? The technocratic society? The cybernetic age? Is it not the *mendacium continuatum* or a menticide, the statement of science that: "the sciences yield information about men and their universe and that this data is used to modify the universe *and perhaps some day men themselves*"¹? But, as Dr. Seaborg says, the upheavals in today's dynamic society demand changed relationships among men, as well as technological changes.

Man has to learn to communicate on different levels of consciousness if he is to meet the demands of the new individual, the new terrestrial climate, the new universal knowledge.

We must educate the instrument of knowledge if the new knowledge is to be effectively brought into manifestation.

We must no longer confuse information and data with knowledge. The libraries of our world can deal with the former but the latter has to be deduced from the latent faculties and inner potentialities of man.

Both William James and Havelock Ellis undertook to study the possibility to communicate with latent parts of the being through hallucinogenic agents. Ellis reporting to the Smithsonian Institute in 1898 on his introduction to the "saturnalia for the specific senses", observed:

"If it should ever chance that the consumption of mescal becomes a habit, the favourite poet of the mescal drinker will certainly be Wordsworth...many of his most memorable poems and phrases cannot be appreciated in their full significance by one who has never been under the influence of mescal."

But James was even more emphatic in hailing the philosophic importance of the

¹ "Science, technology vs irrationality" by Dr. Seaborg C.B.M.

non-intellective powers, not only through his experiments with narcotics but more academically by way of his breakthrough survey, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. James expressed his conviction:

"...our normal waking consciousness, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different....No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded.....they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality."¹

We have made some further progress with regard to internal perspective on modes of consciousness since the time of Ellis and James even from a rigorously scientific viewpoint. If the function of science is the disciplined examination of human experience then surely transmental states of consciousness must be included in a field of scientific study. And surely in this regard there is no more exacting science than that of yoga-sadhana.

And here the conclusions of that great palaeontologist and theologian, Teilhard de Chardin, are pertinent. Not only does he discern a spiritual urge in the evolutionary drive but also predicts with scientific rigour an extension of man's present consciousness into a collective "unanimism," of which he had himself some glimpses.

Much more direct in its bearing on the problem is the exacting science of yoga-sadhana whose precise philosophy no less than accurate method on the widest scale is found in the writings of the foremost yogi-rishi of our time: Sri Aurobindo. They provide the most illuminating internal perspective of man's extrasensory and transmental experiences, leading to what he has called supermind.

The research contained in the works of Sri Aurobindo is not only a map for individual advancement but has been projected into a living collective movement in the form of the Ashram life and the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education and its multifarious educational experiments over the past twenty-five years.

This research is now to be projected into a further practical universal experiment in the form of the Universe-city of Auroville.

In keeping the truth of the inner and outer worlds of man's experience with regard to communication for the future, one has to take into consideration the world authorities of yogic and spiritual experience together with open-minded individual leaders of science. A further consideration has to take cognisance of the world change of consciousness and the educational revolution at present in action in all major countries of the world.

If we would educate for the future we must be prepared for change because man is at the threshold of the next evolutionary leap of consciousness which will either change or destroy his world.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

¹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York : Modern Library, 1936), pp. 378-79.

• Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

NINETEENTH SEMINAR

22ND FEBRUARY 1970

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1971)

WHAT IS THE BIG CHANGE FOR WHICH THE WORLD IS PREPARING? HOW CAN ONE HELP IT?

THE subject of this seminar is related to the Mother's message for this year. This message appears, at a cursory view, to be a simple one. But a deeper regard would reveal its profound spiritual significance. We shall attempt to seize this underlying significance.

At the outset we have to ask, what is this 'big change' the Mother is referring to? Next, what is the help She expects from us? Lastly, how is this message related to the others which have come from Her in previous years?

The active and dynamic descent of the supramental Truth into the terrestrial scene which occurred in 1956 is slowly preparing the world for a colossal revolution, the spiritual revolution, which will culminate in a total reversal of the consciousness and a complete transformation of life. This revolution involves an intensification of the conflict of occult forces, some of which are contrary to the progress of the cosmic evolution, while others aid its advancement. So long as the supramental Power had not manifested this conflict was neither imminent nor acute. But with its manifestation, which is a continuous process, we are facing problems which were unknown or at least not in the forefront. These problems are of a diverse character. And so long as man is not prepared to face them squarely and tackle them, this acute individual and cosmic conflict will continue, feeding on our indecision, our ill-will, our hostility, our fear, in short the composite of our limitations.

But this is not the whole aspect of the thing. Gradually the supramental Power is assuming unprecedented dynamism and is seeking to fulfil itself by a greater and fuller manifestation which calls for man's greater and greater receptivity to it. Also it has come so close that it can no longer be satisfied with working in the higher reaches of our being; it seeks to enter into contact with the whole of man's nature, so that it may become its transparent instrument, instead of remaining an obscuring mask.

This change is both a transcendence and a reversal. For, sometimes, growing greater than our lower nature is not a conquest of it but a psychological escape into the higher reaches of our being. But in our yoga we envisage a total reversal of all we are, of all we term humanity or rather animal humanity. This may appear to be too enormous a step, but from the spiritual point of view, it is the only logical forward step of evolution. For evolution cannot cry a halt at the human level and needs must pass into something greater, more true, more living and more dynamic. All of Nature's efforts, conscious or unconscious, have been directed towards this reversal, this transcendence, this great movement of transformation. At the present moment the problem has become so insistent and urgent, that unless man exceeds himself he may very well suffer self-annihilation. The world's current unrest, the great universal disequilibrium, should make us pause and reconsider our present position, our future trend, the whole gamut of our existence. There must be definitely something radically wrong somewhere in us, that has generated such an all-pervading disturbance. Are not these disturbances the outward manifestations of some deep and lurking malady within us, which we have failed to detect and exterminate and which can only be cured by a profound spiritual change of our being and consciousness? That is why the Mother gives Her call to participate in this change, instead of being forced to it by the pressure of circumstance. She seeks our glad collaboration. For the Power that is at work will brook no dalliance, negligence or half-hearted effort.

Skeptics may well doubt the capacity of man to change himself, unaided by any agent beyond him. The answer is clear. The stupendous power of the Supermind is at our elbow and if we are really determined to change ourselves, a fraction of that power will be sufficient to change us entirely. The central difficulty is our unwillingness to abandon our past moorings. We are too much enamoured of our pettinesses and limitations to leave them for the wider horizons of the spirit. In the twilight of our lower nature, we feel safe, safe from the intolerant light that can consume all our robes of clinging ignorance. In fact the wisdom of skeptics is a mask to conceal these limitations. Our doubts, our questionings, our misgivings, our vacillations are only movements to mark time and evade somehow the truth. This way of being and living has continued long. We have, under many pretexts, warded off the issue. But now the time has come when some definite step must be taken. This is the "help" the Mother is calling for. Actually this help is not an external aid, but an endeavour to help ourselves by becoming sincere, by becoming single-minded in our effort and will. Let us also not forget that this is the only way by which we can help the world to change. Let us by our participation, our conscious willingness to change, help the world movement, which in turn will aid us. But the option is there always to retrace our steps and halt. The result would be disastrous to us, for the Time-Spirit is rushing forward and if at some given point we suddenly halted, our nature itself would revolt against such a reactionary step.

Let us not forget that life is perpetual movement. Hence if we must survive, we must continue to move forward. And now there is only one great movement forward,

the movement towards the Truth of the Spirit. All other movements are either wrong or perverse.

As in the life of an individual, so also in the life of the nation, of the entire humanity, at a certain crucial moment the need to make a choice to move in a forward or a backward direction becomes imperative. Either of these choices must be definite and final. The failure to make this choice has created all our present problems. This means either we have not discovered the true aim of our life, or else we are too hesitant or lethargic to make a final and resolute decision. Such a state of affairs has continued too long but now it cannot continue.

The Mother's message this year is not a message apart from those which have come from Her in previous years. In fact, this message is in continuation of those earlier ones bearing on the same theme of the supramental descent and its insistence on transformation and a call for our participation in that process. From 1956 onwards, there has been the supramental Power's greater and greater manifestation on the terrestrial scene, working more and more intensely upon the human consciousness. It is now working in the cells of the material body to alter the whole face of physical existence. The present message is a clarion call to the aspirants to take an unequivocal plunge into that process of transformation which will culminate in the accomplishment of the next step of man's evolutionary destiny.

For those who are sincere, the path is open to a greater and surer Truth. But those who are insincere or hypocritical, have baser aims or wish to exploit the divine help for personal or egoistic ends, would find the hammer of the titan crushing them, the feet of the cosmic 'dancer of Time' annihilating them. This message is a definite pointer to sincerity and an all-embracing acceptance of the Truth.

A new reign of the Spirit is imminent. The age of reason is a past and spent force. We need a new way of organisation, of orientation, of a new becoming in life, thought and body. Already in the West there is a blind but insistent urge to surpass reason, which has given rise to innumerable new movements in art, life and culture. Unfortunately, these movements are limited by a lack of perception, of awareness of the new Truth, with the result that they get misdirected and end in frustration. What is needed is a conscious opening to the new light: we must be unegoistic enough to become its conscious vessels so that a new age of the Spirit could take birth by this awareness and instrumentality. We must be ready to sacrifice all we are and all we have at the altar of this new descending power, instead of keeping ourselves shut, limited within our ignorant ego-centricity.

This new age that is at our doorstep is for the young in spirit and heart, for all those who seek a great and new adventure into the unknown—the Spirit with its teeming possibilities. The senile rationalist, the sombre doubting individual shall have no place in it.

What will be the effect of this change and this collaboration? Our limitations and our slavery to human ills in all spheres of life and consciousness will disappear. One radical gesture, one ardent appeal, one decisive opening to the new Truth can

yield unimaginable results. Ultimately even death as the physical end will cease to be inevitable, if the soul so chooses, and the soul's progress will be unhampered and free. And, lastly, the gulf between Matter and Spirit will be bridged, the way opened to an unbelievable fulfilment of the supreme promise—the promise made by the Divine to terrestrial Nature.

ROMEN

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

A PRAYER

SPEAK to me, Mother, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

O lead me, Mother, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, Mother, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

O strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm in the rock, and strong in Thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

O teach me, Mother, that I may teach
The precious thing Thou dost impart,
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

O give Thine own sweet rest to me,
That I may speak with soothing power
A word in season, as from Thee,
To weary ones in needful hour.

O fill me with Thy fulness, Mother,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and soothing word
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

"SWAMI SIVANANDA"