

MOTHER INDIA

JULY, 1971

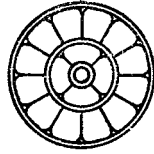
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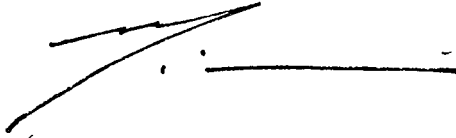


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 6

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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A MANTRA

GIVEN BY THE MOTHER FOR ALL PEOPLE IN
THE COUNTRY FOR THE PRESENT CRISIS

June 1971

*Supreme Lord . Eternal Truth
Let us obey Thee alone
and live according to
Truth .*



WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Mother is with all those who are sincere in their aspiration towards divine life
above party and politics.

26.3.1971

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of June 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 11, 1956

"On one side he [the seeker] is aware of an infinite and self-existent Godhead in being who contains all things in an ineffable potentiality of existence, a Self of all selves, a Soul of all souls, a spiritual Substance of all substances, an impersonal inexpressible Existence, but at the same time an illimitable Person who is here self-represented in numberless personality, a Master of Knowledge, of Force, a Lord of love and bliss and beauty, a single Origin of the worlds, a self-manifester and self-creator, a Cosmic Spirit, a universal Mind, a universal Life, the conscious and living Reality supporting the appearance which we sense as unconscious inanimate Matter."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 140)

Sweet Mother, what does a "self-creator" mean?

Self-creator? It means that He creates Himself.

Create is taken in the sense of manifesting, of making objective, apparent. So it is His own self whom He manifests. It is Himself He manifests, makes evident, objectivises.

Essentially, the word create is usually taken in another sense: it means to make something with something else. That is why Sri Aurobindo says: "self-creator", which means that He gives an external form of Himself, and to Himself. It is a change of the mode of being: instead of being an unmanifested possibility it becomes a manifested reality. It is simply reversed, nothing else. It is the same thing: from this side it is not seen; from that side it is seen—that's all. You turn round and it is seen. You turn like that and don't see it, you turn like this and see it. That is all. As simple as that.

"On the other side he becomes aware of the same Godhead in effectuating consciousness and power put forth as a self-aware Force that contains and carries all within her and is charged to manifest it in universal Time and Space." *(Ibid., p. 140)*

Yes, it is that, that's exactly what I was saying: in one way, it is as if it did not exist, and then it is "put forth", you see, He does that (*gesture*), He puts it forth and it becomes visible and existent, and then, instead of being one thing existing all at a time, it develops, it is manifested in Time and Space. This is what Sri Aurobindo says, it is there that the idea of Time and Space begins, for it is no longer simultaneous.

Sri Aurobindo has first spoken of the duality Brahman-Maya (eternal Existence and existence in the world), and now he speaks of the duality Ishwara-Shakti (the Divine in his Being and the Divine in his Force of cosmic realisation). This duality Ishwara-Shakti is not very clear.

The other is simpler, isn't it?, for it is cut into two, distinct: one is Reality and the other illusion; one is Light and the other darkness; one is Consciousness, the other inconscience; one is Truth, the other falsehood. That is very convenient.

Here, it is much more difficult: it is the same thing self-existent, unmanifest, and then, suddenly, it does this (*gesture of projection*). And it is exactly the same thing, but it is a movement of putting forth what was within. And that is what makes the world. It is the same thing in a double movement: as when you sleep and when you wake up, or when you remain still and when you begin to move or when you are silent and then begin to make a noise, it is like that. One movement is within, containing everything in itself, without any expression of what is there; and the other movement is just doing this (*same gesture of projection*), and all that is within oneself comes outside.

And then, for this to become perceptible, it must be followed up. When it is within, it can be simultaneous, for it is unmanifest, so all is in an eternity outside Time and Space—immobile, inexistent. In the other direction, everything becomes, and so there is a continuity of perceptions following each other and spreading in Space and Time.

And it is the same thing.

It is exactly as if you are first like this (*gesture of one doubled up*), and then you do this (*gesture of opening*)—and so what was there comes out. So these two movements are literally opposite, but it is the same thing in two opposite attitudes which are simultaneous: it remains like this (*gesture inwards*), and at the same time it is like this (*gesture outwards*); the one does not cancel the other and they exist simultaneously. But in one direction it is imperceptible because it is self-contained, in the other movement it is thrown outside, and so it is seen. And when it is self-contained, it is co-existent in a perfect simultaneity; and in the other movement, it unfolds itself in a constant becoming. And when it unfolds itself, it necessarily brings into being Time and Space, whilst up there, it is outside Space, out of Time and beyond all possible perception. But it is the same thing in two opposite movements.

And this is how it *truly* is.

It is like that. And when it does this (*gesture outwards*), it does not cease being like this (*gesture inwards*), that is to say, when it is self-contained, it does not

stop manifesting itself; and when it manifests, it does not cease being self-contained. To put it otherwise, it is a permanent and simultaneous duality, but it is the same thing, a single thing under two opposite aspects.

Has all this gone in a little? Or hasn't it?

Nothing? You have nothing else to ask?

Sweet Mother, may I ask you a question I have asked before? For I haven't understood it properly.

Ah! let us see if I can make it clearer.

I haven't yet understood the meaning of "Personal" and "Impersonal": "The two great elements of the divine Mystery, the Personal and the Impersonal, are here fused together." (Ibid., p. 140)

Yes.

You, you are personal, aren't you? You feel you are a person. And then there's the air, you don't feel the air is a person—so the air is impersonal.

This is not altogether right, it is an analogy: air, wind, water, do have a personality, but this is only to make you understand. To the air you cannot give a precise and definite form, it is everywhere: in your body, outside your body, here, there, everywhere; but it has no precise form. It has an exact, precise composition, but of course we are not talking chemistry, we are speaking of the appearance only. You don't get the feeling of a person when you think of the air.

I wouldn't say exactly the same thing for water, because water has very precise characteristics. The water of one river is not the same as that of another; and besides, it is perceptible, so it has also a little personal character.

But air or vapour gives you the impression of something which is not a person; well, it is that. When a force or a quality manifests in a definite body like yours or anyone else's, that becomes personal. But when it is everywhere at the same time and without particular characteristics, expressed indefinitely, it is said to be "impersonal".

So, the personal God is the God to whom a form is given. For example, the inner God of everyone is a personal God, for He has a personal relation with everyone, He is the God who belongs to this person, who is his very own.

But something which has neither form nor characteristics nor any definite outline of any kind, and with which one cannot have a personal relation,—that is the impersonal Godhead.

And so Sri Aurobindo says that there is a state in which the two are one. It is still the same thing: it is like the right and wrong side of the same material. If you approach the Divine in a certain way, you meet Him as the impersonal, that is to say, you cannot have any personal contact with Him. But if you approach Him from the other side, you meet Him as a person—who is quite out of proportion with you, little person, but with whom you can have personal relations. And yet it is the same Divine, seen in this way or that.

THE VITAL BEING: ITS CO-OPERATION AND NON-CO-OPERATION

SOME ANSWERS BY SRI AUROBINDO

Q: Why does our vital being desire outer and superficial things from the Mother instead of her Ananda, Light and Force?

It is the small physical vital that desires and wants to deal in the same way with these things as it did with the outward desires. It is not so easy for it to open to invisible things—that is more easy for the higher vital.

Q: Where do you locate the true vital being?

It is in the inner being, like the psychic—not on the surface.

17-3-13

Q: My vital has false ideas about the Mother; for example, it said, Though I had so much depression, yet she did not pay any special attention to me! There is so much wrong in me that she is displeased!"

I think you had better get rid of this at once. It is absolutely foolish and causeless and if you indulge it it will be a serious obstacle to your sadhana.

3-I-1934

Q: While referring to the causes of depression you mentioned four main reasons: (1) waves from the general nature, (2) vital dissatisfaction, (3) physical tamas, (4) influences from the subconscious. Which one exactly suits my case?

It may be a combination—a wave from the general nature coming up originally through the subconscious and ...ing¹ vital dissatisfaction or non-co-operation and physical tamas.

13-I-34

Q: Generally, does not our depression start from a small and trivial point in one part of the being? And is it not the cooperation of other parts that increases the tempo of the depression?

Yes, of course. The vital is always making a storm about nothing.

15-I-1934.

Q: There seems to be some external reason for making me depressed. What is it?

I have told you—the vital, its ego, its demands, its habit for being depressed and miserable.

12-3-1934

Q: Why is our vital sometimes attracted to a particular woman?

Because that person has a vital charm or power of attraction, or sometimes simply because she is something new and therefore attractive to the vital.

17-3-1934

¹ First part of the word indecipherable (Editor).

Q: The whole of today was passed in a concentrated and aspiring mood. Even the physical mind was more or less pressed into quietude. Is not such an intense experience a joining of the vital to the central aspiration?

It very often is.

20-3-1934

Q: When the vital cooperates, are its aspirations always so intense, deep and full of power?

Not always—but the participation of the vital does usually help to bring a greater force and intensity.

21-3-1934

Q: When the vital too has begun to cooperate with the central aspiration, it means it is turning towards the Mother. Why then does it still cling at times to old and lower movements?

The vital has many elements in it; they are not usually all in agreement.

22-3-1934

Q: Once I had a fear that if the vital aspired it would break the body (because of its powerful intensity). Now I see that it was an imaginary fear. The intensity of its aspiration is such that it carries away in its momentum even my tamasic physical! Consequently my breathing becomes more rapid. And my body feels an extra energy in all its movements.

It is good that there should be the energy—vital aspiration always brings energy. But the rapid breathing is not necessary, though it sometimes takes place.

23-3-1934

Q: When I feel the vital aspiration, is it my psychic being which projects out into the vital and either itself aspires or makes the vital aspire?

It may also be the vital itself that aspires.

28-3-1934

The vital can rise to the head in two ways—one to cloud the mind with the vital impulses, the other to aspire and join with the higher consciousness. If you noticed the aspiration, it was evidently the latter movement.

31-3-1934

Q: By this time, I feel my vital tranquillised, pure, empty of ordinary movements. All this to some extent, and waiting for the descent of the higher consciousness to transform it still more. Is it quite so?

There is no reason to suppose your feeling is not correct. It has to remain like that.

Q: If my above statement is correct, does it mean that my vital is psychicised? It is under the psychic influence.

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

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

(Continued from the issue of June, 1971)

NOVEMBER 27, 1939*

M *(after doing pranam)*: Bump on the head again, Sir, for the third time!

SRI AUROBINDO: If you have not patience, you have persistence.

M *(explaining to the Mother who has just come in)*: The frontage is rather low. Perhaps Mahakali is smiting me?

THE MOTHER: No, no.

SRI AUROBINDO *(looking at the Mother)*: It is certainly an experience. *(Laughter by both)*

M *(after Sri Aurobindo's usual walk)*: How did you find the Darshan, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: How do you mean?

M: I mean about the general progress.

SRI AUROBINDO: What can I say about the general progress when different people are at different stages?

M: Formerly you used to say things.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have given that up, as I told you.

M: You used to say you were pleased, there was some peace, harmony, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: Harmony? Peace maybe.

M: Last time you said, "I can do some things more easily now."

SRI AUROBINDO: Are you asking me about my own progress?

M: Your progress is our progress. We go along with you; at least with the tail end. *(Laughter)*

* This talk should have followed the one published in May. Somehow it got overlooked. (Editor)

SRI AUROBINDO: I wish you did. Then you would be very near the head. The tail of a comet is very long!

M: Then please tell us about individual progress—say, about mine.

SRI AUROBINDO: All I can say about you is: you seem to be getting on.

M: I told you that myself, Sir. Some people say they felt great Ananda, great satisfaction at the Darshan, while I didn't feel anything.

SRI AUROBINDO: There you are! How can I tell about general progress then?

M: How is it I didn't feel anything, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: You may have been too much in the physical. To feel anything, the thickness of your body (*laughing*)—I mean the materiality of it—must reduce.

N: Does it mean that those who felt had some opening or had made more progress?

SRI AUROBINDO: Opening at the moment at least, or they may have been in the vital. It is the physical consciousness that comes in the way.

M: Formerly I used to feel, but now I don't. Does it mean that all I had gained has been lost?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, all that remains behind while the work is going on in front. It is a very stupid stage.

N: Does everybody have to go through this stupid stage?

SRI AUROBINDO: At least I had to.

M: People see also visions and lights though I don't call it necessarily a sign of progress.

SRI AUROBINDO: You don't see visions?

M: No, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: But you had two, one after the other, and you yet say you haven't progressed? As I said, when one falls into the physical consciousness, everything seems to disappear. And after the physical consciousness, there is the subconscious. Are you aware of your subconscious?

M: No, Sir. But how to get out of this physical consciousness?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to get rid of ideas of the mind, desires of the vital and attachments of the physical.

M: But it seems to take a long time and I don't think it is possible to do it by our effort. I believe in grace.

P: Yes, without doing anything ourselves, we want the grace to do everything.

M: Why, I have been trying.

SRI AUROBINDO: Are you sure?

M: Well, Sir, not in that sense... (*Laughter*)

C: What about you, N? How did you feel at Darshan?

N: Don't touch the sore.

C: Let us hear.

N: I am in the same boat with M. So I think I must be in the physical consciousness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Very possibly both in the same doctoral consciousness.

M (*after some time*): You don't approve of that exercise, Sir?—about raising the thigh and letting the leg hang?

SRI AUROBINDO: I stopped it during Darshan as I had other things to do, and after Darshan I have been feeling lazy. I will try to do it again.

P (*after Sri Aurobindo started resting in bed*): C wants to know if M's condition of physical consciousness began after his direct contact with you: that is, after your accident.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, no. It was there long before.

N: It seems to be a great ordeal for those who begin with a physical consciousness, for it takes a very long time to get out of it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, sometimes it takes many years.

N: Unfortunately I have not had practically a single Darshan which could be called unusual and in this consciousness one is quite unconscious of what is happening.

SRI AUROBINDO: Because it is a very thick crust—as I said thickness of the body. Usually it is because of this physical consciousness that people don't take to yoga. Some people are predominantly mental. Some vital and some physical. But it doesn't mean that those who are mental or vital won't have difficulties to face. They may have experiences in those planes but difficulties will come up later on.

N: Perhaps the yogic force works according to the characteristic feature of the individual.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, of course. Stability is the nature of the physical consciousness. So, when anything is gained there, it is solid and stable. Experiences may be exhilarating but they don't always solve difficulties. H had many experiences in the mental plane but his vital revolted when it was touched.

N: When one is unconscious of what is happening, one doesn't get the push. One swings back and forth, no steady progress can be maintained.

SRI AUROBINDO: Very few people can maintain steady progress. Ups and downs are everywhere.

N: But they are more frequent here.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, they are as frequent in other Yogas. What happens is that when the Force works the difficulties rise to the surface so that they may be dealt with, and one may not feel the progress though the work still goes on behind.

N: You said one has to get rid of desires and attachments etc. in order to open the physical consciousness. If I am not deceived it seems my desires are not as strong as before and yet I don't feel the progress or rather I am not conscious of what is happening.

SRI AUROBINDO: When I speak of the physical consciousness I mean the stuff of the consciousness, whether it is fine, coarse or thick. That stuff may get thinner and thinner and an opening may be made.

EVENING

M's departure day. Sri Aurobindo was massaging his knee and M sat leaning against the cot. It was unusual for Sri Aurobindo to ask anything at this time, but as M was to go he perhaps gave him a chance.

SRI AUROBINDO: Any more bumps?

M: No, Sir, no more of them.

Taking the opportunity given all gathered round the bed.

M: By our contact with you, all our physical troubles should have gone, Sir.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why?

M: The physical contact gives something directly to the physical, doesn't it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Do you mean to say that when a person is touched by a Yogi, he should be all right for the rest of his life?

M: No, but if he gives something, there should be improvement in one's physical condition.

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on the person and the contact.

M (*moving his hand to connect Sri Aurobindo to himself*): Here is the person and here is the contact.

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case you don't seem to have benefited much by the contact. (*Laughter*)

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER 1926

(Continued from the issue of June 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 those 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.)

LANGUAGE began as a half-mental thing. It became mental as mind developed. It was at first a group of sounds used to convey certain sensations, not ideas. One root sound represented several sensations. The Indians lost many words, and the Greeks lost many which the Indians have preserved. The idea of an original universal language in the sense that one sound called up the idea of a table, another of a chair and so on in the minds of all is not true. A sound may have a certain characteristic power, may make a particular impression, but it cannot call up ideas of tables or chairs etc. universally. The idea that originally there was one language is another matter.

At the moment of death the soul passes away in peace. Previous to that, the process of death may be painful, but at the final moment all is calm.

T was trying his best to establish a connection with the world of the Gods, but he fell down into the vital, as it ordinarily happens, and failed.

For complete transformation, the impersonal alone will not do, though it has calm and vastness. These can be realised on the mind-planes—and, in a sense, the mind, unlike the vital, is safe, but calm and vastness are not enough. One has to establish a connection with the world of the Gods. For the dyanmic realisation of God in the lower world, the mind, where the impersonal can be experienced, gives us help only up to defined landmarks, help limited by the Dharma of the mental planes. We have to go beyond. The physical being within us must knock at the door of the world of the Gods, the Gods of the supramental, the higher planes.¹ Generally when people begin to worship God, they come by the vital Gods. Unless egoism is thoroughly

¹ Editor's Note: The word "supramental" seems to have been used in those days by Sri Aurobindo as a general covering term for all the dynamic spiritual planes above the mind.

gone, there is always the danger of worshipping the vital Gods. The vital Gods seem to be fond of worship. They take certain forms, but are not bound to form. They may help, if they choose, the devotees on certain conditions. They may give power and wealth or take them away. The vital Gods are also cosmic gods. We may do Puja to them or enter into a pact with them and take the necessary power from them. Egoistic persons worship them to get power over men, worship from men. But, apart from egoism there is another danger. An Asura may come, and you may mistake him for a God. The Asura does not help you, he only comes to oppose you.

A stage is reached after which the vital Gods are overpassed. But the vital Gods do not cease their dealings with you; till you are fit, they send their Apsaras to tempt you and put you to trial. In the Puranas we read of Indra sending Apsaras to the Yogi. The story about Vishwamitra may be a fable, but this is the meaning behind. If you are strong and if you are not tempted the vital Gods approve your endeavour and let you go.

Then there are the higher Gods. They don't enter into conditions with you, but if you are really fit and if you open your self to them they will always help you. They will give not like the vital gods who give on conditions and who take away like Jehovah in Christianity: 'The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Lord.' The Greek Gods are also vital Gods.

Q: What about the Hindu Gods?

Generally they are worshipped in the vital but there is a larger conception behind them. They belong to the plane of the higher mind or even beyond it. When you awaken to your highest self, you receive from the true Gods.

Q: It is said that the divine personality of each man, the supreme Jiva, not the empirical Jiva, sits at the feet of the Gods — he is not a God himself, because he is a Jiva, he watches the progress of the empirical Jiva, and when he is ready, the Gods help the Sadhaka through his divine personality. The divine personality has the attributes of the Gods but he is not a God and he can't directly help himself.

There is much truth in that. Brahman is impersonal. He is the support for the play of Prakriti. To merely rest in the impersonal is, as the Isha Upanishad says, *andham tamah*, 'blind darkness'. But it is a strong way of putting it. It is not true to say that 'All is Brahman' (*sarvam brahma*) just because Brahman is impersonal. It is only a way of putting the matter. What the Gita states as *sarvam vāsudevaḥ*, 'All is Vasudeva', is the supreme truth. The highest Truth for us is the Purushottama. Practically we cannot go so far as that, we can only see the Ananda plane through the supramental. Krishna is seen as golden lightnings shooting through a ground of blue. When you are completely fit in your reception of the higher power, you first see a ground of blue colour (the Ananda plane is Beauty) and then you see golden lightning coming from above. This is the symbol of the cloud and lightning as resembling Krishna. But Krishna is seen in different forms by different people: e.g. Vaishnavites. What the ancient tradition speaks of as Blue Krishna has a truth of experience behind it,

If the mind is very insistent we can't easily open to the Truth; for it externalises and does not go inside. In the mind we are safe, but it does not carry us very far. It goes round and round in its progress. The heart or the emotional-psychic takes you inside and goes direct, straight to the truth. The trouble with the heart is impure emotion, mixture of vital elements and the imaginative side of mind. Women enter more easily than men into the psychic. Pure Bhakti comes from the psychic.

Some people start Yoga with the vital, though there may be an intellectual element in it; but the vital is very uncertain, for it is beset with confusion and danger.

Purusha is the support of Prakriti's activities. He gives or refuses sanction. Even from the lower standpoint where he is involved in Prakriti, he gives or refuses sanction; he expresses himself through the mental will in man. But the real will is not mental and as Purusha awakes he uses the real will and is the Lord of Prakriti. The ego is not the image of Purusha, but it pretends to be such.

Matter is that which has a palpable substance. The more gross the substance the more involved is the consciousness in it, and the more subtle the substance the more on the surface is the consciousness. For instance, in the air substance there is a sort of unmaterial life, the consciousness is on the surface. Air, fire, etc., are obvious forces. Electricity in the Veda is a form of Agni; behind electricity there is Vidyut-Agni (a being) which manifests itself as electricity.

Now if the consciousness of these things is on the surface, it is easy to control them. Thus, in the wind there is a consciousness on the surface; we can get into touch with it and act on it; it listens and therefore it is easy to act on it. To get into touch with the consciousness of the wind is not a difficult thing.

It is only one step beyond the normal functioning of the mind. Every Yogi gets into touch with the consciousness in wind and in water. The power you can wield over these things is not absolute, but by practice you can exercise some power over them. I have seen a Yogi controlling a spirit of fire that was amusing itself by burning houses. It is more difficult if the consciousness is more involved, as in gross material things, but by practice we can control them also; it is the same thing, say, as when the tap is out of order and you want water; you can get the tap to work but it is not as easy as controlling the wind.

There are three ways of doing these things. (i) Suppose there is a storm arising out of the difference of atmospheric pressure in two places. The scientist goes into the conditions, the details, the process, he may try to equalise the pressure and may partially succeed. (ii) There is an occult way of controlling these things, it is less mechanical and more subtle. (iii) The Yogi controls them by his spiritual force. He does not bother himself with the details or conditions as the scientist does. Even in Coué's system of cure, the scientist does not concern himself with the nature of the disease; what the disease is, does not matter; Coué asks you to send a force direct which acts on the body. The diagnosis, the experiment may give you more knowledge but that is another matter.

Q: Is there a purpose in these phenomena?

What purpose is there in the spirit of Fire burning my house? You say rain is there to raise your crops, but rain brings about floods also. We must not look at things from our human standpoint and say that there is a purpose in all these phenomena; the purpose may be served only by the way. There is more truth in saying that things carry their purpose in themselves. God does not care whether you take two lumps or three lumps of sugar. We must not bring in our idea of purpose or of good into these matters. We must dismiss all such human nonsense, popular nonsense.

To get into touch with the universal forces—air, fire—you must be universal. Even then you do not get absolute mastery, but a certain hold. The superman also has no purpose, does not act according to a purpose; whatever he does is a spontaneous expression of truth. He does not think with the mind, and then will, and combine the thought and the will and then act; things combine themselves through him.

There is no such thing as construction on the supramental plane. It is only on the mental and vital levels that there is construction or formation. Above, it is only intention and decision.

One cannot say that our Yoga is constructed in the supramental and that it is manifesting itself here. It is rather a descent of the Truth and our growing into it, building it on the mental and vital levels. Some people have seen visions of our Yoga as a sort of **unfinished building**. The building is of course on the mental and vital planes, the visions are not definite or precise, but only general indications.

X is a powerful vital personality. He organised his group with my force behind. It was only a mental and vital construction; I put my old vital force—not regenerated at that time—into it. I worked from here (*pointing to his navel*). It was not cast by Truth and in terms of the Truth. It can continue as long as there is life in it, but it is bound to go, because it was not intended by Truth.

In a sense I was doing political work even in the days of the Non-cooperation movement. This movement at first was a resuscitation of the Swadeshi idea in principle, and so I put my force into it. Many leaders, Das and several others, had my force behind them. But later I withdrew.

Q: What force was there originally behind this movement?

A large vital force.

(*To be continued*)

V. CHIDANANDAM

TOWARDS AUROVILLE

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

(Continued from the issue of March)

AMONG all the creatures inhabiting the earth, it is the prerogative of man alone to think rightly and to live rightly by the joint instrumentation of all his faculties both hidden and manifest. He has to know the forces of life within him and around him and realise the 'true nature of his being and its constant self-effectuation in the values of life.' Within and through the constant change and flux of Nature there subsist certain eternal principles which form the bedrock of human existence as well as provide a framework for his progress, perfection and evolution. It is in man that Nature becomes conscious of her own laws and forces, conscious of her struggle of progression and imposes on herself higher and higher laws of evolution. Man is possessed of 'a conscious will impelled always to execute what knowledge perceives' and as such is subjected to a constant inner conflict which makes him capable 'of an inner evolution, a progression from higher to higher type, a constant self-transcending.'¹ The human intellect stands between what is actual and the possible and potential. As such it often tends 'to mistake present law and form for the eternal law of our nature and existence and regard any change as a deviation and fall.'² On the contrary, it also mistakes some future and potential law and form for our ideal rule of life and hence considers any deviation from that as a grievous error. "In reality," says Sri Aurobindo, "only that is eternal which is constant through all changes and our ideal can be no more than a progressive expression of it. Only the utmost limit of height, wideness and fullness of self-expression possible to man, if any such limit there be, could be regarded, did we know of it,—and as yet we do not know our utmost possibilities,—as the eternal ideal."³

The phenomenon of life is a constant process, a continuous and progressive realisation and expression of its immense possibilities and potentialities. And the human mind is only the conscious part of this movement of Nature in its increasing self-realisation and self-fulfilment of the values and potentialities of life. The true way of our mentality lies in its perfect and conscious identification with this movement of Nature, for it is only then that there would be no conflict. A perfect mentality is always 'one in its knowledge and will with the totality of the secret Knowledge and Will' which it tries to manifest.

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1950), p. 165.

² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni
 guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
 ahaṁkāravimūḍhātāmā
 kartā'hamiti manyate*

“While the actions are being entirely done by the modes of Nature, he whose self is bewildered by egoism thinks that it is his ‘I’ which is doing them.”

*tattvavittu mahābaho
 guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ
 guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta
 iti matvā na sajjate*

“But one, O mighty-armed, who knows the true principles of the divisions of the modes and of works, realises that it is the modes which are acting and reacting on each other and is not caught in them by attachment.”

*prakṛterguṇasammūḍhāḥ
 sajjante guṇakarmasu
 tānakṛtsnavido mandān
 kṛtsnavinna vicālayet*

“Those who are bewildered by the modes, not knowers of the whole, let not the knower of the whole disturb in their mental standpoint.”

The Gita, Ch. III, 27-29. Sri Aurobindo's trans.

Our mentality, limited and imperfect as it is at present, catches only glimpses of that secret and supreme Knowledge and Will in Nature and hastens to erect them into absolute or ideal theories of life and conduct and insists on their unreserved acceptance. But the movement or process of Nature has many more aspects, and working through the imperfect mind of the individual and the collectivity she reveals and raises them as opposing facts and powers of our existence, and favouring and depressing now this and now another she leads man to the realisation of the truth of their mutual necessity and transcendence in the final *dénouement*.

The social evolution of man is the story of the development of the interrelations between the individual, the community and mankind. Nature works out the destiny of man through these terms. While each seeks its own satisfaction and fulfilment, each is compelled necessarily to develop itself in terms of the other two. The life-type too has these three terms—genus, species and individual. Nature, while trying to evolve the united life of mankind to its full satisfaction, has been consistently engaged in the development of the individual as well as the community to the full and complete expression of their existence. The organised life of mankind should therefore

be attempted to achieve not by suppression of the fullness of life of the individual and the community, but by taking full advantage of the diversity which they develop. Unfortunately "mankind as a whole has at present no consciously organised common life; it has only an inchoate organisation determined much more by circumstances than by human intelligence and will. And yet the idea and the fact of our common human existence, nature, destiny has always exercised its strong influence on human thought and action."¹ No doubt, religions and great systems of ethics have always been inspiring man to fulfil his obligations to mankind, and communities, social, political, cultural and religious, have, under the pressure of large movements and fluctuations within the race, felt the need to expand and include sooner rather than later the totality of mankind.

Human life, in its present stage of development, is far from being governed by a principle of free and harmonious mutuality. There is a struggle among individuals as well as between nations and communities, an opposition of ideas and interests, an attempt of each to profit by suppression of the others. "This is the aspect of life which humanity in its highest thought and aspiration knows that it has to transcend, but has either not yet discovered the right means or else has not had the force to apply it."² Instead, it attempts to get rid of strife and discord by a strong subordination of the life of the individual to the life of the community. It might follow from this that the strife between communities will be sought to be removed by a strong subordination of the life of the community to the united life of the human race. "But freedom is as necessary to life as law and regime; diversity is as necessary as unity to our true completeness. Existence is only one in its essence and totality, in its play it is necessarily multiform. Absolute uniformity would mean the cessation of life, while on the other hand, the vigour of the pulse of life may be measured by the richness of the diversities which it creates. At the same time, while diversity is essential for power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement and stability. Unity we must create, but not necessarily uniformity."³

(To be continued)

Compiled by MADHUSUDAN REDDI

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 178.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

CYBERNETICS AND TELEVISION IN INDIA

FOURTH REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, AUROVILLE

WHEN man discovered the wheel he was led to a more full and free manner of living. He made a first giant step in the rich process of evolution.

When man discovered the steam engine he made another giant step towards a free and enlightened future. He could travel faster, communicate more easily, build industries and improve his manner of living way beyond his dreams in the age of the wheel.

Now man has discovered electronics and he is moving into the cybernetic age. He is taking another large evolutionary step towards his full future enlightenment. The word cybernetic comes from the Greek and it means 'steersman.' In this new age man is discovering machines which can steer themselves...machines which have memories and can actually answer questions about many things far better, sometimes, than man himself. We should by now, be dynamically aware of how fast the process of evolution is suddenly advancing. We can fly around the globe in less than a day, explore outer space, communicate instantly with any other man anywhere...and in the near future we shall be able, because of cybernetics, to free ourselves almost entirely from work, at least as work has been understood in the industrial age. When the cybernetic age becomes fully actuated we shall find that we have been given an overwhelming freedom and startling amounts of time for leisure. This age we are now entering will soon become fraught with drastically new and different technological facts. We, in India, must be ready for enormous change happening with enormous speed. We must be ready to see to it that our inner growth and consciousness keeps pace with the material and technological growth going on all around us.

In India this will probably mean that traditional concepts of spirituality will have to be re-examined and modified. A spirituality which is modest, exclusive and hyper-mysterious, will have to be moulded into a spirituality which is more outgoing and optimistic, more practical in its application to life in the cybernetic age. We must be ready to accept the Force which is present in advanced technology as well as the Force present in the hearts of the holy men of India. The vision of Sri Aurobindo is large enough to embrace life in the cybernetic age...an age in which it would seem that man's mind itself is about to be surpassed by technology. This phenomenon has been predicted. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother envision the total transformation of man. It has been stated over and over again by them that in the next stage of evolution man's consciousness will move far beyond the mind. Therefore, it looks as if machines will perform the functions of the mind and man will move beyond to high levels of consciousness. In the cybernetic age the arrows of the future are clearly pointing towards

total transformation. Thus far, this transformation has been seen in the West as mostly effecting the physical lives of men. In India, however, there has never been a dichotomy between the physical life and the spiritual life. Therefore the arrows, for us, pointing towards physical transformation will inevitably include some kind of transformation of the spirit. There will no longer be any possibility of avoiding overwhelming technological progress but there is no reason to fear this progress if it can be blended with India's traditional and fundamental need to live in the spirit. As a matter of fact, could not this blending of the material life with the spiritual life be the hope which the West needs so desperately now? Man in the West must re-examine his fundamental value system and be ready for change morally, socially and on the deepest levels of his inner being. Man in the East must adapt his inner being to the new pace of life in the cybernetic age. It has been predicted by some renowned writers of the West that if some new basic inner moral directions are not given to counteract physical and technological advances, man is in for a future shock perhaps beyond his power to control. This shock in the East would be more severe because Indian man considers his social life in the spirit far more important than any physical progress. It is imperative, therefore, that India modify its social structures now to get ready for shocking change. If India accepts, as it must, the force of Western man's technological progress, Western man will then perhaps accept India's modified value system of the spirit. In this way the East and the West will help each other to survive and move into the new age with courage and trust. The fantastic energy which India has shown during her passive resistance in the face of oppression can be transformed into a fearlessness in the face of change.

How can India modify its value system of the spirit to blend with the technological progress of the West? First, the Indian people must rid themselves of the last vestiges of inferiority feelings left over from the bullying of the British and an exaggerated respect for the rationalism of the West. Secondly, India must use the new medium of television to expedite its new structures with such speed that she can beat the effects of the cybernetic age to the punch.

To make a courageous plunge into the cybernetic age the Indian inferiority complex must be dropped like the poisonous viper it is. Tamasic passivity must be changed into a karmic creativity and dedicated work. Feelings of inferiority must be replaced by a confidence so strong that a political and social structure can be built which will be newer, more sensible and more powerful than the world has ever known before. If India creates this new structure it will become a star for the rest of the world to steer by and then perhaps it and the rest of the world can transform the electronic steersmen of the cybernetic age into helpmates on the journey into the future. The destiny of India is to be the social and spiritual leader of the world. If this destiny is to be fulfilled there is no longer any room in this country for inferiority feelings. India must activate its deepest soul now and apply it to the practical necessities of living in the 20th Century.

In the near future of this century, by 1973 or 1974, an Indian satellite will go into synchronous orbit over the southern tip of this country and the phenomenon of complete, global television will have become a reality on earth. It will be through the proper use of this satellite that India can move fast enough to beat the cybernetic age to the punch. We in India must joyfully face the powerful medium of television and use it in almost totally new ways, to implement the new structures necessary for this country now. The people involved in television programming must be put in immediate and constant contact with the people working on the new practical planning for India's entry into the cybernetic age. The new structures planned and hoped for in this country will dictate the basic approaches which must be taken for the new television programming.

If there is to be a new approach to education proportioned to India's soul and to the new age, the people involved with television programming must become aware of it. If television is to be used as the basic means to educate the masses of the Indian people, television programmers must be offered the challenge now. If there are plans to use community television sets in the villages to enlighten the huge numbers of people who can be educated instantly by the direct-to-home satellite, creative people must start thinking now about what programs will be needed and what means might be conceived to follow up the television programs in the villages. Certainly there are huge areas of our important Westernized school system which could be phased out. The many well-trained and unemployed products of this system might be used in large force to implement the new educational system across the country.

Many questions should be answered before the new educational television programming can be planned properly: Will it be economical and feasible to use television as the most important core of an educational system for the Indian villagers? Will it be feasible to set up a large corps of trained professional educators and experts-out-of-work to follow-up the television programs in the villages? Will it be possible to use the scientific experts who are not actually being trained for the new technology to train the villagers for the practical work of developing the rural areas? Will it be possible to use the liberal arts teachers who are not actually engaged in teaching to lead the villagers in the New Leisure which will be a major challenge in the cybernetic age? What is the deep fundamental philosophy of education to be for socialism and for spirituality in the India of the future?

Many questions should also be answered in other areas before television programming can be developed in a full and balanced manner. Is there some practical plan to stop the vicious cycle of villagers moving from the country to the city and back to the country again? Are there some plans to spread technological development over the rural areas rather than have it all concentrated around the big cities? How is it planned to continue and increase agricultural growth? Which approaches to birth control have proven most effective so far? Is there any information on how near people like the CIBA Research Laboratories are to producing a one-a-month birth control pill? Is there any thought of using deeper motivations for the encouragement of birth

control in India like the motivations which were used during the movement for independence? It was Mother India who was shackled then by the chains of foreign domination. Are there any plans to inform the people of India that they are the ones who are shackling Her now with over-population?

How much thought has been given to new housing and town planning? Have any dreams been conceived of how to build huts which are well-built but economical; which are functional while they make a break from too much luxury; which are contemporary and beautiful while they take deeply into consideration the ancient soul of the place where they are to be built; and which take advantage of new discoveries which make particular sense for India, like solar heating and solar cooking? Have there been any dreams of total environment in the villages which would retain the Indian atmosphere of Presence and Peace?

When we begin to find the answers to these questions a fundamentally new approach will have been made towards the bright new future of India and of all mankind. This new approach will engender, even demand, a new approach to television programming. We at Auroville would like to be involved and help in any way we can with this new television programming. We will welcome any challenge offered to us by the Government of India. We will use the closed circuit television equipment being sent to us by UNESCO to begin our experimenting immediately.

Once the new structures in India start to materialize through the help of television, then the Divine Mother can bring to full physical reality her dreams of Auroville. She can offer the vision of Sri Aurobindo to all men. She can let us walk then, wide-awake and conscious, in the new light already shining forth on the earth.

WILLIAM T. NETTER

TWO POEMS

INEFFABILITY

ACHIEVEMENT,
a Kashmiri apple held out
to the adventurer,
where the tall pines
looking straight ahead,
turning not to right or left,
are the soul of Aspiration,
tempting man to heaven
where it is always a lighted and lovely
Ineffability.

THE POET

REFINED, with the connoisseur's
soul, he has the fastidiousness
which with care takes what it wants,
and with care rejects the unwanted.
He has the long and lovely patience
which is the will to work
to produce such perfection in a piece
as to make it seem the whole.
His an innocence of expression
That is intuitive Art.

CHITRA

KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS

THERE is a notice in the Press that a number of kidney-transplant cases have reported of nightmares following the operation. It appears that the patients dream of the dead person asking back for the organ removed from his body. Some others are reported to be complaining of being 'haunted' and otherwise disturbed. The tenor of the notice is one of disbelief. These happenings are ascribed to nervous apprehensions or fertile imagination.

Actually, however, these phenomena—at any rate some of them—could have a basis in fact. For it is true that the dead person continues to take interest in his discarded body even after his departure, at least for sometime. In fact it is something more than interest. For the subtle connection between the soul and the physical body continues for quite a while. The being hovers round the body immediately after the death. What happens to that body does in some way affect the soul. The Mother once observed that the soul of someone who had just died and had come to her for rest suddenly shivered. She looked out to find the reason for this: just at that moment the body had been set afire for cremation.

Thus as long as the departed being is within the precincts of its earthly habitation there is a continuing relation between the two. If the being is specially attached to the body or to anyone or anything connected with it, the pull lasts longer.

In the light of this background it is understandable how the departed person may feel about the removal of an organ from the body just discarded but not yet wholly disconnected. It may be asked how there can be this reaction when a consent has been given by the donor during his life-time. Well, it may be that the consent proceeded from a very surface level of the person, say, from the mind. The vital part or the subtle physical being may have quite different reactions to a situation. After all, the attachments that persist after death are not so much of the mental kind as the physical and the vital.¹

Further, it is not unusual for the spirit of a dead person to return to the earth scene to fulfil directly or indirectly some uncompleted task. We often read of cases where persons who are murdered without any clue being left appear in dreams either to the relatives or to others interested like the police and give clues to their disappearance. These are not myths. They have been found to corroborate facts.

To conclude: it is not that every transplantation of the kind under report is followed by any haunting on the part of the dispossessed person. But that is likely to

¹ It is interesting to note these incidents of 'protest' have been reported only in case of kidney transplants—not of heart or other organs. Could it be because the physical and the vital parts are more concerned with organs like the kidney than with others?

happen if the person concerned had a strong attachment or a dominating ego in his life-time. The sense of possession continues long after the actual separation on the physical plane.

It may be added that such interventions can be negatived if the subject concerned, the person who is the beneficiary in the transplantation, keeps calm and refuses to be ruffled. If he does not get agitated and give room to the disturbance, the visitation is bound to disappear. One has to develop a certain strength of nerve and self-confidence to keep oneself immune to such interferences.

M. P. PANDIT

(*Courtesy: Indian Review*)

GOLDEN RAIN

WE'VE shared the depths and heights, sweet Danae,
Though you claimed woman's glow of tress and limb,
And I, a man, had little cause to see
The eyes of Hera, occult blue, grow dim
With jealousy. We breathed the living tomb:
Imprisoned in your rock, within my mind
Of stone, partakers of a silent doom
By some august benevolence designed,
What fathomed you or I when sudden god
Stormed through the shell that shaped our being's mode—
Your unilluminated loins, my thought's façade—
And seeded in our clay His sun's abode?
O Danae, your hero's myth is greatly told;
What child's in me, engendered by those gusts of gold?

WILLIAM JONES

BERNARD SHAW—THE PHILOSOPHER

IF G.B.S. were alive today—and, of course, being G.B.S., always kicking—there would be world-wide celebration of his 115th birthday on July 26, world-wide except for himself who looked upon birthday-celebrations as utterly puerile. His abundant genius has left its mark not only on contemporary literature but also on contemporary life. A heap of sentimentality, prudery and hypocrisy he has blown off and mostly by his virile intellectual wit. But he often complained that people did not take him seriously enough and that his very wit frequently served to distract attention from his wisdom. He claimed to shed light on life's deeper issues no less than on its socio-ethical questions. We may make an attempt to take him as seriously as he would have wished and to appraise him on the more fundamental level of his thought and feeling.

Frank Harris booed the claim of Bernard Shaw to be a philosopher. Many people are inclined to echo that negating noise. It may be conceded to them immediately that Shaw does not follow the usual method of philosophy: dry reasoning, relentless and unswerving logic—no sidetrack of any imaginative rhetoric, no flight of the least literary language—nothing save preoccupation with proving a thesis in the most direct and abstractly argumentative style. But Shaw, though quite a Tartar at debate, never did claim the title of philosopher in this sense: in point of fact, he calls himself an artist-philosopher.

An artist-philosopher's appeal is not confined to the reason: addressing himself to something more elemental in us, he combines with the dry light of the intellect the creative heat of the imagination. He is a logician who is also a visionary, and who is able to express his vision in a spirited and cogently attractive form by means of his literary gift. So the question arises: Does his vision confront, as philosophy should, the riddle of the universe and does his art aim, as philosophy must, at interpreting the world's essence?

The Life Force

Now what in brief is Shaw's vision? The most striking as well as the most profound fact of psychology, according to him, is man's will towards deeper, wider, intenser consciousness. We have an ineradicable sense of something immense in us, which is not yet fulfilled and realised, but the intuition of which is the motive-power of civilisation. Why do we strive to master physical Nature, to control and marshal the forces of mind, to bring to light the secrets of the subliminal? It is in order to unfold and evolve as fully as possible the latent greatness, the potential godhead which we feel in ourselves, the unborn superman with whom our consciousness is pregnant.

But is the will to betterment confined only to humans or is it at the back of all things? What is the truth of the general evolutionary process? Is evolution mecha-

nical, an unpurposive affair happening just through accidental variations in the species and through the favouring of some variations by an accidental feature of the environment so that such variations survive? The Darwinian says Yes. Shaw says No—for Darwinism explains neither the cause of variation nor the rising from lower to higher grades of consciousness, the ascent from the amoeba to man. Only a Will that strives, however fumblingly, to change always for the better and makes terms with its environment more than being ruled by it, is the truth of evolution. If that is so, Life indeed cannot be more aptly defined than as a Force of incessant self-formation which refuses to be beaten because it has a blind faith in its own deific possibilities.

The epithet "blind" is of considerable importance, for we must not in the Shavian vision confuse the pure stuff of the Life Force with its manifestation in us. In itself, it is a kind of impetuous in-feeling, a pure drive towards self-growth: its in-feeling is just an apprehension of its own enormous potencies and not a distinct idea of what they involve. To realise this nondescript apprehension, it tries a myriad experiments in consciousness. Our intellect and imagination are some of the means it has invented—by long groping and experimentation with lower types of conscious functioning—in order to comprehend the universe within and the universe without. It cannot comprehend totally yet, but our science and art, philosophy and religion are the eyes with which its Will attempts to read its own grandiose secret and fulfil its ultimate destiny.

The Life Force and Matter

Nowhere has Shaw elaborated his notion of the exact relation between what we call matter and this Life Force of his. But he finds it impossible to draw a trenchant line of demarcation between animate and inanimate, he recognises only various degrees of manifestation of life everywhere. That is why he hails the discoveries of Dr. Jagadish Bose as philosophically the most important in our own day. For Bose contends that the restriction of life to organic form is arbitrary: when we find metals reacting to stimuli like a living tissue, the lack of organic form need not debar us from calling them living. The Life Force is inherent in all material being, the activity of the physical universe is but a multitudinous result of this Force essaying to complete the godhead which is emergent in it, a series of trials and errors and self-corrections on its part, a labyrinthine process towards its own supreme possibility. But to say this is not necessarily to give the Life Force a status prior to the physical universe or even independent of it. There may be no progressive activity of matter without it; but can there be matter itself—the stuff which is activated? And, on the other hand, can there be the active agent without the stuff?

Bergson, whose "*évolution créatrice*" Shaw anticipated, is inclined to see the Life Force as a fountain rising upward yet with a tendency to fall back. The drops and sprays which do fall back are felt by the upward thrust as resistances against which and through which it has to progress. These resistances constitute our sense of matter.

Matter is for Bergson nothing save the Life Force opposed by an insufficiency in its own push. At times Shaw seems to subscribe to the Bergsonian view: it is at least in consonance with his conviction that, though the Life Force is the one reality that counts, what it undertakes is a groping self-resisted adventure, prompted by a mighty yet unilluminated instinct of betterment.

But whether or not he reduces matter to a particular mode of the Life Force, the Life Force for him can exist independent of the physical universe. If it is not only coeval with physical stuff but handles and shapes it with a mastery which is often concealed yet always to be discerned on a long view, it is likely to have an existence in itself. Not, however, as personalities surviving death: a personality, according to Shaw, is too much a result of the Life Force associated with an organism made of matter. When an organism dissolves, the personality perishes: as he uncompromisingly puts it, "Bernard Shaw as such will be dead as mutton." What will survive is the impersonal Presence whose one experiment among many is Bernard Shaw. A survival with any stamp of personality might take place only when we have attained freedom from all the weaknesses and limitations connected with bodily being, when that which began its evolution as "a vortex in pure force" can achieve "a vortex in pure intelligence". That is indeed a far cry. In the meantime we have brief personalities in physical formations that last a short while. What is eternal is only the "*élan vital*" (to use Bergson's famous term) pressing towards an illumined future from a blind past.

The Life Force and God

Such a conception cannot, it must be admitted, satisfy either the Bhakta who wants to be wholly in the hands of a Lord of the world or the Jnani seeking union with an Absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Even the ordinary religious man must find it rather unassuring. But it has one advantage, urges Shaw, over other notions of the Divine: it obviates the most crucial difficulty of the nineteenth-century apologist of religion—the reconciliation of God's omniscience and omnipotence with His benevolence.

If God is benevolent, He cannot be omniscient and omnipotent, said John Stuart Mill: for, if He is omniscient and omnipotent and has still left the evolutionary process so wild and stumbling and suffering-packed and even now leaves the world the miserable hell it is for the majority of living creatures, He must be not a God but a Devil! The Life Force, ever aspiring yet endowed with no superlative attributes and proceeding by trial and error, escapes Mill's poignant poser and supplies in Shaw's opinion the crying need of the world for an invigorating religion without slurring over the vast body of scientific fact with its grim picture of the struggle for existence and of the indifferent pruning by Nature.

Shaw forgets there is a deeper way of tackling the antithesis of Mill—a refusal to apply the standards of Good and Evil to a Being who is by definition above our mental consciousness and hence transcendent of our mental criteria of moral fitness,

just as much as we are above a chimpanzee's presumable sense of what the world of man ought to be.

A supra-intellectual Truth, of which our righteousness is a limited reflection but which works out essential Good by its large luminous look and which has chosen the hard evolutionary way because of some purpose too profound for mortal plumbing—that is the faith the mystic would hold against a measuring of the Infinite and the Eternal by the fumbling rod of the human intellect. To embrace this faith would not go against the grain of Shaw's mind with its contempt for conventional morality and so-called rationality; but brought up in a psychological environment uncongenial to transcendentalism he has taken to what appeared a more scientific theory—a theory which seemed to make a less drastic demand on his capacity for belief.

It must, however, be said that he shilly-shallies about basic issues. While he insists on going beyond biology into metaphysics (or "metabiology", as he designates it) and subscribes to the mystic's in-feeling of godlike possibility, he fights shy of the results reached by those who have explored and developed most that in-feeling, he avoids assessing the full implications of what the Saints and the Yogis have experienced. He is content to have just sufficient metaphysics and mysticism to give mankind a message of hope and of honour and save it from the blight cast by Darwinian materialism, an utter purposelessness and egoistic cupidity.

The Fulfilment of the Life Force

The message of Shaw, couched in the highest terms, would be: "Let us, by invoking the evolutionary Presence in us, put an end to our fitful pathetic ignorance and wavering twilit struggle against the powers of darkness and death." Yes, death as well as darkness. Shaw considers our present span of living to be too brief for adequate development. No sooner are we on the brink of some little wisdom than we begin the downward grade to the dust.

Three score years and ten are not Nature's irrevocable "finis" to our life-story. In *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw imagines a race of men who have at last put away the old Adam in them and attained eternal life, a kind of earthly immortality threatened only by a fatal accident. Natural death is nothing but an expedient introduced by the Life Force, as Weismann long ago pointed out, to provide for renewal without overcrowding. Hence, even as vitality can be directed, by a constantly intense conviction of necessity, to build up any sort of organism—from the hundred-legged crustacean to the legless fish and from the mammal gestating her young inside her body to the fowl incubating her young outside hers—so also can it by an inner compulsion work the miracle of a body contrived to last centuries of wear and tear. In the turtle we have almost an instance of Methuselahite longevity. There is thus no reason why the tremendous creative power of the life in us cannot be employed, by deep and sustained willing, to produce an organism that will be practically immune from natural decay.

But what should be the ideal consciousness functioning in such an organism?

Shaw has pictured the Wise Ones in whom the Life Force has advanced the most. The Ancients in the *grand finale* to his "metabiological pentateuch", dwell in intimate and incessant contact with the hidden Life Force: they are immersed in a species of infinite in-feeling, letting their outer consciousness and body be moulded by the urge of the divine potentiality in them. They have long outgrown the fascination and folly of sex, worldly ambition too has left them. They carry about them an aura of attraction towards some sheer ecstasy and insight. Not only the power they have won of producing changes in their bodies at will is their goal. They aspire to command an existence free of matter, a redemption from the flesh, as "vortices" of luminous consciousness. Their endeavour is to achieve an immortality which laughs at the agelong slavery of the Life Force to its own self-figuration as the animal body. They want to use the body but not be victimised by it nor destroyed when it disintegrates in the wake of a fatal accident and puts an end to the superficial outer personality which they in their ignorance were once content to be. And when they succeed, when the new focus of supraphysical consciousness is formed, vastly wise, fiery with a miraculous effectivity, the Life Force will have come into its own, accomplishing what lay in seed within the past ages.

Shaw's Ancients are pretty vague about their own state of ecstasy and insight. Very few mystics are able to give a lucid account of their realisations, but many throw out suggestive glimmering clues and some figure forth the secret splendour in marvelously moving bursts of inspired language. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita cast a powerful light on what the divine consciousness is, the western contemplatives and saints spring on us bright surprises; and in our own day Sri Aurobindo has on the one hand a massive philosophical exposition of the supreme mystery and on the other a concrete colourful revelation of it in poetry. Compared to any account by a genuine mystic, Shaw's hints in *Back to Methuselah* are poor and pallid. Nor are his Ancients properly fitted for earth's completion. Although they are practically undying, their eyes appear to be fixed beyond the earth and the best of bodies would be to them a bother and a burden. The whole complex embodied being of us with its diverse activities, its manifold dream to build a heaven out of clay, is set aside by them as a huge childishness. In this there is a strong influence of the old type of ascetic and puritan mysticism with its other-worldly ultimates. And even this mysticism is not regarded by Shaw as promising its ecstasy and insight to present-day humans; the Ancients are products of evolution in the far-away future, and consciousness like theirs cannot be achieved by us today; all we can do is to keep desiring, imagining and willing the Perfect, and if this is sustained by generations the remote posterity will find itself possessing one by one the attributes of Perfection! Shaw seems to make very little of what Yoga means and offers here and now. Yes, his vision is deficient in various respects. Nevertheless, there is a certain exaltation about it and a sense of endless distances of superhuman glory and power—hazy indeed yet with a conviction that this haze is the most significant thing going and more full of vital substantiality than flesh and bone.

The Philosophy and the Philosopher

Shavianism—however incomplete in its intuition of the basic process and fulfilment of the world—is more in consonance with the great tradition of religious philosophy than the Wellsian worship of mankind's growing sense of community and solidarity. Wells, no doubt, has his Utopias of more energetic, brilliant, beautiful, harmonious expression of the life-impulse and he has a more serious-seeming prefiguration of the future's progress. Shaw is often fantastic and makes an impression of irresponsibility; but Wells's mind, though sensitive and penetrating, lacks that touch of "inwardness" which carries Shaw through the passionate religio-metaphysical argument of the third act of *Man and Superman* or the prophetic enthusiasm of the speech of Lilith with which *Back to Methuselah* tries to lift towards a kind of disembodied vastitude.

Yet Shaw's "inwardness" falls short of its own promise; and it falls short less because of his irresponsible fantastications than because of the ultra-critical *penchant* of his mind and his over-energetic interest in current contemporary affairs. He has let his keen intellect turn so persistently destructive of superstitions and fanaticisms, so sarcastically vigilant against being taken in by sham idealists and self-deceptive mumbo-jumboists, that by its practice of cutting up things and laughing them out of court he has acquired a habit of doubt and detachment and ironic analysis even where they have no place: he denudes religion and mysticism of most that is organic to them, what in fact supplies the true driving power to the exploration of and union with the inmost Spirit. While declaring that of the old Trinity modern thought has done away with God the Father and God the Son and kept only the Holy Ghost, *alias* the Life Force, he forgot that the Holy Ghost became thereby too ghostly and not holy enough to pull him towards the deific mystery which he intuited at the back of himself and the world. Even when running down the dictatorship of rationalism he could not escape the subtle essence of the reason's tyrannical superficiality; the atmosphere of the age was too strong for him, he chipped and chopped at the "soul" in man to such an extent that his intuition of it got thinned and divested of both its elemental urgency and its plenary creativeness. He permitted the "soul" to be a fine talent instead of a sweeping genius. And in this error he was aided by the imperious demand he, quite unlike his own Ancients, allowed external problems—economics, politics, sociology, eugenics—to make on him. That was another concession the nature of the age wrested from him to an exaggerated degree. Although he kept harping on the superman's turn towards the depths within and the necessity of following the inmost Will, he could not bring about the correct creative relation between the inner and the outer.

The Central Shaw

However, all said and done, Shaw is an inspiring philosopher and his general affinity with religious values must be recognised. Few men of his generation have been

less carnal in personal life; and the word "divine" is used by him always with a strange intensity lacking in most churchmen. For all his rationalising and externalising of Saint Joan in his most applauded play and for all his pseudo-psychological explaining-away of her visions, he conveys vividly that she was actually in communion with an immaterial Magnitude which is our essence. And even in his dramatisation of secular "men of destiny," giants preoccupied with the active outer world, he retains a sharp though sporadic sense of hidden spiritual mainsprings. Something almost of Plato and Plotinus finds voice in that splendid apostrophe of Caesar to the Sphinx:

"Hail, Sphinx: salutation from Julius Caesar! I have wandered in most lands, seeking the lost regions from which my birth into this world exiled me, and the company of creatures such as myself. I have found flocks and pastures, men and cities, but no other Caesar, no air native to me, no man kindred to me, none who can do my day's deed and think my night's thought. In the little world yonder, Sphinx, my place is as high as yours in this great desert; only, I wander, and you sit still; I conquer, and you endure; I work, and wonder, you watch and wait; I look up and am dazzled, look down and am darkened, look round and am puzzled whilst your eyes never turn from looking out—out of the world—to the lost region—the home from which we have strayed. Sphinx, you and I, strangers to the race of men, are no strangers to one another; have I not been conscious of you and of this place since I was born? Rome is a mad man's dream: this is my reality. These starry lamps of yours I have seen from afar in Gaul, in Britain, in Spain, in Thessaly, signalling great secrets to some eternal sentinel below, whose post I never could find. And here at last is their sentinel—an image of the constant and immortal part of my life, silent, full of thoughts, alone in the silver desert. Sphinx, Sphinx: I have climbed mountains at night to hear in the distance the stealthy footfall of the winds that chase your sands in forbidden play—our invisible children, O Sphinx, laughing in whispers. My way hither was the way of destiny; for I am he of whose genius you are the symbol: part brute, part woman and part god—nothing of man in me at all. Have I read your riddle, Sphinx?"

It is in the thrilled visionariness of such language that we touch the central Shaw, the Shaw who is often swaddled away by surface interests and controversies and prevented from standing out in the full dynamic idealism of that declaration of his—"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one, the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap, the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy." The public knows well enough the Mephistophelean wit, the indefatigable Fabian, the fiery-tongued Ibsenite, the breaker of conventional idols, it knows of all the oddities and audacities of Shaw the vegetarian, teetotaler and anti-vivisectionist, the educational antinomian and apostle of eugenics; but how very few dream that his most intimate pleasure and profoundest pursuit is the practice of contemplating in a

church—when it is empty! There we have the key to his essential character and philosophy as well as to the inspiration of his supreme moments of utterance.

The empty cathedral, he once said in an interview, is the one place he can go into and fully express his soul. "There I find rest without languor and recreation without excitement, both of a quality unknown to the traveller who turns from the village church to the village inn and seeks to renew himself with shandygaff. Any place where men dwell, village or city, is a reflection of the consciousness of every single man. In my consciousness there is a market, a garden, a dwelling, a workshop, a lover's walk—above all a Cathedral. My appeal to the master builder is: Mirror this Cathedral in me in enduring stone; make it with hands; let it direct its clear and sure appeal to my senses, so that when my spirit is vaguely groping after an elusive mood, my eye shall be caught by the skyward tower, showing me where within the Cathedral I may find my way to the Cathedral within me."

Rodin has sculptured for posterity the superb Caesarian Shaw looking out—out of the world. Will no painter give us the vacant church with that lonely meditative figure, trying to glimpse the Dweller in the Inmost?

K. D. SETHNA

BERNARD SHAW ON HINDUISM

FROM A LETTER TO ENSOR WILLIAMS

"I AM writing this in the Gulf of Siam after inspecting a remarkable collection of religions in Egypt and India. The apparent multiplicity of Gods is bewildering at the first glance; but you soon discover that they are all the same God in different aspects and functions and even sexes. There is always one uttermost God who defies personification. This makes Hinduism the most tolerant religion in the world, because its one transcendent God includes all possible Gods, from elephant Gods, bird Gods and snake Gods to the great Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, which makes room for the Virgin Mary and modern Feminism by making Shiva a woman as well as a man. Christ is there as Krishna, who might also be Dionysos. In fact Hinduism is so elastic and subtle that the profoundest Methodist and the crudest idolater are equally at home in it."

(February, 1933)

INDIAN WORDS NOW USED IN ENGLISH

IN India, when we speak in Hindustani or any other dialect, English words like "lamp" and "telephone" creep in quite naturally. But what is less known is that a lot of familiar words in the English language take their derivation from our country.

This is a process that started 300 years ago and it comes as a tremendous surprise to an English speaker that the words he thinks come from England, actually come from India.

Take the word "mulligatawny," for example. Most Englishmen think that this word for a certain kind of soup comes from Ireland. In fact, it comes from a Tamil word, pronounced in the same way and meaning pepper water.

"Pepper" itself is a very old Sanskrit word, whose date of origin cannot be traced. It comes from "pippali," which means long pepper

Words from India have found their way into the English language in many different ways. Some through trade, some through the British association with India, some through living conditions, many through the new interest in India, revived by the Beatles and hippies and many from the other nations who had a stake in India long ago.

In trade there are words like "Calico", a kind of cloth which came from Calicut; "chintz," "cheroot" from South India; "bazaar" and so on.

Living conditions produced "teapoy," "curry," "toddy," "verandah," "bungalow," to name but a few.

Along with the English, who set up colonies in India, were also the French and the Portuguese. The Portuguese in India contributed words like "plantain," "kameez," "pomfret" and the well-known "cobra," which in Portuguese means snake.

When you say "I am short of cash," you are talking about a very old Sanskrit word "karsha," which was a weight of silver or gold equal to one four hundredth of a tola.

In Bombay, when you go for a visit, you are told that it is very pleasant to go for a walk at Apollo Bunder. The next time, you can tell your Bombay friend that it stands for "Pallav Bandar," meaning "the harbour of the clustering shoots"—which it used to be many years ago.

In the West, the hippies have familiarised words like "guru" and "avatar" and "nirvana"—but long before the hippies, serious writers were talking about "pundits" when they wanted to describe a person who was an authority on any subject. When talking about a huge force of people, or armies, the English word "Juggernaut" refers to "Jagannath," the Hindu God, whose chariot festival is celebrated every year.

When someone was very angry you might have heard him say, "I do not give a damn." A dam was a copper coin in use in ancient India and what he really means (although he does not know it) is that he would not give the smallest coin.

I can think of many more words that India has given to the English language: "shawl," "bamboo," "monsoon" and even "shampoo."

So the next time you read a book. carefully look at the words, and you will probably find that some words used by the writer are from India. But though you will know this, he may not.

PREM RAJ

(From an old issue of *The Mail*, Madras)

A DREAM

It was the hour of truth.
The screaming lights went out of breath,
The smart honourable guests talked and slept.

The sudden clouds of night
Came thundering by, a rain of death,
Some invisible claws were at my throat.

The dogs were wildly barking,
I knew I was dead without dying
When I heard the unexpected knocking.

The knocking at the gate.
Familiar but far, I knew the note—
I opened the eyes and there was light.

A. VENKATARANGA

KANNAN

(Subramanya Bharati, the famous Tamil poet, wrote a number of songs on Sri Krishna(Kannan), imagining the latter as his King, as his Master, as his Disciple and even as his Servant. The following poem takes up the last-named unusual theme and develops it with both humour and feeling.)

My Servant

Much money the servants want—and always more.
Promptly they forget whatever is given.
If they see more work they will not come.
“Why did you not come yesterday?” you ask;
Out comes the reply: “A mighty scorpion, Sir,
Sitting inside the rice-pot in my house
Bit my finger with its sharp teeth!”—
“A terrible ghost came upon my wife
And I had to drive it out!”—
“The twelfth day of my grandmother’s death
Was to be celebrated with due glory and rite.”
Such are the lies they tell, and such is
My fate that I should hear them and keep mum.
Tell them to do some work, they will
Do anything but what is right.
Whispering to our enemies, neighbours,
They will make all our family-affairs public.
That we did not have salt today,
Everybody in the world must know without delay!
Thus indeed I was constantly tortured
By servants. But without servants too
Impossible it is for me to manage—
Vexed and worried, tormented and perplexed,
I knew not what to do. Such
A moment it was, when from somewhere
He came. “To the cowherd caste, I belong,”
He said, “I shall tend your cows and calves;
I shall look after your children;
Sweep the house, light the lamps,

Shall be faithful and obedient unto the last;
I shall keep your clothes clean and sparkling,
For your little one too I can sing songs,
And dance for her too if she wants,
She shall never weep and cry any more.
Day and night I shall follow you,
Save you from danger and fear,
From enemies, thieves, robbers and beasts
In the dark paths of the forests
Or anywhere and at any time, ready
I shall ever be at your call.
No rest I need, and little sleep.
Not learned am I, nor skilled;
Jungle-man I am, Sir, of simple ways.
Still I know well how to use
This sturdy forest stick
Both in offence and in defence.
Falsehood, cunning, deceit, trickery,
I have none. Take me, Sir, I pray,
A simple man, with you to stay.”
“Well,” I said, “Tell me what name
You bear.” “I have no name, Sir,
But people call me Kannan,” he said.
Strong and muscular in body,
Frank in the look of his eyes,
Simple and truthful in talk,
His presence enchanted me and my heart.
But my happiness I could conceal
And with a harsher tone I said:
“You talk much and boast
Of your talents. Let me know, then,
What wage you want.” “Sir,” he said,
“Father, mother, wife, children,
I have none. Single I am and lonely.
Though no sign of age you can see
Yet am I very, very old in time.
Your affection, your love I crave,
Your money I have no need of.”
Man of a by-gone age he must be
Oh who will work without money in this age
Of Iron, greedy for gold? So I thought,
And with joy in heart I took him.

And that was a day of days for me.
Kannan's love for me my mind cannot fathom;
Words fail to tell you all the good I get
From him. As the lids protect the eye,
So is he to me and my entire family.
Never have I seen him murmur.
He sweeps the house and keeps it ever clean,
The maid-servant he puts under control and threat;
A teacher, mother, doctor and friend
Is he to my children. He brought plenty,
Fullness and joy to my family; he
Keeps guard over my things,
Gives courage to the women of the house,
Does all the work. A good counsellor, in need,
Friend, tutor, physician,
A very god in character,
A servant in form.
What tapasya, what good deeds in all my lives
I must have done to get such a one as he!
From the very day he set foot in my house
Worry, care, anxiety, fear, household responsibility
Have left me for ever without a trace.
Wealth and riches, peace and prosperity,
Health and happiness, intelligence and poetry,
Yoga, Jnana and Bhakti, Truth, Harmony,
And Bliss are pouring in my home.
Gratitude from my heart overflows as tears.
A servant in form, a very god have I.

(A free rendering by P. V. Sitaram from the original Tamil)

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

YOGIC SCIENCE AND MATERIAL SCIENCE

(Continued from the issue of April 24, 1971)

The pride of the West is material science.
The life-breath of the East is spiritual science.

MATERIAL Science aims at victory over the material world. It solely depends upon mental faculties. Man has acquired the power to control a spaceship, lakhs of miles away from the earth, but is unable to control himself. It is Yogic Science that can bring illumination into life.

Should Yoga be termed science? A systematised though not a rigid process, it is a science that reveals the inner secrets of existence. It is a science that shows the way to endow life with सत्यम् (The True), शिवं (The Good) सुन्दरम् (The Beautiful). It is much more comprehensive than other sciences.

Physical Science is the product of one side of man's nature. It gives power but not knowledge. Power without knowledge is suicidal. Two World Wars bear testimony to the extent to which power by itself makes life a battlefield of Darkness.

Physical Science does nothing for the formation of character. It ignores the fact that moral and spiritual values and ideals alone fortify man against temptation and give him courage to live, work and die for a noble cause.

The first requisite of a Yogi is a perfectly regulated life. For him self-conquest is better than world-conquest. Sweet manners are his outstanding attribute.

The world will ever remain indebted to the East for the gift of its God-men who first mastered themselves and then anything else they put their heads to. Even after the lapse of two thousand years they rule the hearts of men.

The eminent Oxford historian Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, raising the question, “Who are the individuals, who are the greatest benefactors of the living generation of mankind?” answers, “I should say, Confucius and Lao-tse; the Buddha, the Prophets of Israel and Judah, Zoroaster; Jesus and Mohammad and Socrates.”¹

Material Science does not say anything about the meaning and purpose of life or of the universe we live in.

To quote Kenneth Walker:

“It (the universe) is a vast laboratory packed from floor to ceiling with elaborate machinery, moving, turning, producing and consuming, creating and destroying

¹ *Civilization on Trial* Oxford University Press Cf New York 1948 p. 156.

and doing all this endlessly and to no purpose....We are cogs in the immense machinery of the world, reagents in this vast chemical factory of nature....We search for meaning and there is no meaning; we discover beauty and find that it is an illusion..."¹.

It may be argued that if there is no meaning and purpose to life what is it that the saints and sages all over the world have tried to discover for ages?

It is Yogic Science that brings out the spiritual potentiality of man. Yoga asserts that each of us has a role to play. With the awakening of consciousness there dawns the perception of what the Divine demands of our nature. In short, Yoga is the science of man himself.

If Western scientists choose to take the aid of Yoga in their field of work, they will soon find that there has awakened in them a new perception, a new capacity, hitherto unknown, to make use of in their field of work.

Material Science goes on breaking the world to pieces and then proceeds with its work of examining the fragments. It is unable to grasp that which is beyond the reach of intellect or understand that which does not submit to statistical analysis. It explains the 'how' of things but is unable to define the 'why'.

Sincerity is more important in Yogic Science than skill.

Spiritual Science reaches the very source of things by identity. Unification, oneness, unity even in diversity, are among its fundamentals. It is more subtle and complex than Physical Science. One must be prepared to give heart and soul to learn its technique.

The one thing needed and wanted most is that "the Government of life by Science" evolves into the Government of life by Spiritual Science.

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According to Kenneth Walker, prior to the nineteenth century, Science exerted little influence on the thought of the ordinary people. But its voice could not be ignored for long. When Science began to dominate commerce and industry, religion began to lose its ground and thereafter the decline of religion was rapid. People no longer took volcanoes for hell nor thought that heaven existed somewhere in the sky.

The nineteenth century came to be reckoned as an age of great expansion and soon Science became an essential part of man's life.

The progress of Science since World War II, especially during the last ten or fifteen years, has been so marvellous that to the men of yore ours would have been a fairy-tale. But has it in any way served to solve the stormy problems of life?

No doubt man is slowly awakening, but the problems are also increasing. Man keenly feels his helplessness but does not know what to do, in which direction to make a move.

No more does he look to religion or to humanitarian methods for the final redress

¹ Sri Aurobindo holds. "The world ...is the growing image of a divine creation"

The Life Divine p. 120 (6th edition).

of life's ills. They have failed to lead him out of the tangle. He has lost faith even in the various methods adopted by the U.N.O. Unable to find a foothold man is as if suspended between heaven and earth.

But man has benefited by this loss of faith and this fruitless search,—one great good resulting from them is that the ground has been cleared for some form of a new life, a new civilisation, a new era.

All this must lead to the conclusion that the problem is inner and not outer. Inner problems cannot be solved by outer means. In other words, it is the psychic being in us, the soul, that is crying for deliverance.

Let us fulfil at least one condition laid down by the Mother: let us bring the psychic being to the front and then see how life vibrates with bliss and beauty.

Our hope and aspiration is that Auroville will set an example showing to what extent Natural Science and Spiritual Science can go together and make a successful living.

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Physical Science demands ceaseless action. Yogic Science feeds on silence. The basic principle of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, in his own words, is "Silence and action." Action emanating from the depth of silence.

Even a scientist succeeds when he is fully absorbed, lost in his work, totally forgetful of self—for then some flashes crown his labour from within. Whatever is truly great springs up from the deeps within.

Likewise a Yogi's efforts are crowned with success when he is fully absorbed and has made a joyous gift of himself to the Divine. Then in some exceptional moment the Divine gives Himself to the Yogi.

It is beyond the frame of this essay to quote the Mother in full—her exposition on "Science of Living". Sri Aurobindo uses the term "Yogic Science" in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

Each Yoga has its own law and a set process. A word or two about Sri Aurobindo's way of approach to Yoga and its scientific methods.

Right from the beginning Sri Aurobindo was a revolutionary. He was for an all-round revolution in life. He has revolutionised the whole system of Yogic Sadhana.

The following extract from Professor Tan-Yan-Shan's address deserves special attention:

"Sri Aurobindo was not one of those ordinary great men or heroes whom people usually hail, praise and worship lavishly or rather snobbishly. Made of the stuff that endures, Sri Aurobindo was successively scholar and writer, thinker and philosopher, teacher and educationist, revolutionary and yogi; but above all a Mahaguru or Great Master of the Spiritual Science...

"Above all, his masterpiece, *The Life Divine*, has long been recognised as the culmination of spiritual thought on the problems of human existence, indeed, of All Existence,"

Sri Aurobindo's Yoga does not believe in mental gymnastics or bodily mortification. No *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana* or *prāṇāyāma*, for they do not carry us far in a single lifetime. Sitting in a room with closed eyes and giving oneself to meditation all the time is also not among the essentials in his Yoga. That might suit the temperament of one or two in a hundred, but not appeal to others. People with a strong vital being would progress faster in Yoga through works. The number of hours spent in meditation is also no guarantee of a swift progress.

In the Mother's view true meditation is not a laboured process. When of a sudden one is seized by the desire to meditate then there is real meditation. And it comes when all is ready.

Samadhi is held in very high esteem in almost all traditional Yogas. This too is not a 'must' in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

No one ever saw Sri Aurobindo lying inert in a trance. Rather he spent eight hours a day in walking. He was for waking if not walking samadhi. All the boons and blessings of samadhi are to be enjoyed in the waking state, in the working hours, in all the activities and movements of life. Leading an earthly life one has to be always in God, not only to live in God but to allow Him to shine in one's life and action. That is the only way to divinise life, divinise works. And this in essence is the Life Divine.¹

Now the question is how to apply Yogic Science to the daily round of life and make the Life Divine a permanent factor. The answer will be unfolded as we proceed.

The Mother says, "Everyone should have an aim. On the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life." So this must form our next study.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ "To lead the Divine Life does not depend on any exterior activity or circumstances, whatever you do from the highest to the most ordinary, you can lead the Divine Life if you are in the true consciousness."

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Satprem: La Genèse du Surhomme (Essai d'évolution expérimentale). Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Price Rs. 15.*

THIS book is far more a song than a treatise—of course, being a book it has to use words, to put them into a grammatical form and appear to “talk about” something. But it is like a heaven-bird in some fairy-tale, which comes down to a branch at our level and speaks in our own language—then, having caught our attention, flies up a few branches and, without our becoming aware of it, starts singing its message. We do not know how it happens, we even begin to fly up ourselves behind the heavenly messenger, we have become a bird ourselves.

Each chapter really starts as a chapter usually starts. But after a time it is not even only a bird-song, although that is not missing, but a symphony of pictures, idea-perfumes, coloured hints, vibration-charged sounds—if we have a bird's heart we cannot but let ourselves be transported away. No: not *away*, for that is exactly what the book does not allow, it does not carry us away from here and now. But it is winging *through*: through all that is mechanical, limited, mental, worn-out, dead.

And we, having read the book or rather having been a bird for some time, will not easily recollect any “contents”, thought-matter, feeling-matter or any other matter. But we shall not stop trying our wings, feeling the urge to fly, fly with all our being, at all levels of it. And to burn: because it is a bird of fire, and out of fire it will rise.

In short: it is not one more book *about* something, not even about Yoga. If there is philosophy, psychology, poetry, sociology, Yoga—and indeed, there is—then it is all implied in a “movement TOWARDS”, a movement towards THAT: THAT which is trying to embody a new aspect of Itself on earth, travelling in men and nations, giving signs and pushes, preparing hearts and minds and bodies to become vessels for Its manifestation, a manifestation as different from the so-called good of our epoch as from its so-called bad, a growing manifestation of SOMETHING ELSE which calls us, calls us incessantly in a myriad ways, each one and each nation according to their openings and potentialities—or according to their failures to respond.

Nor is it a book *about* Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—their names and mantras are not just some of the suggestive *leit-motifs* of the book—but something of their Being, Consciousness, Power and Bliss make up the whole of it.

And all this radiates through the medium of one particular human soul—but being part of the All-Soul, its work has a more than individual validity.

Significantly, it starts with these lines of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*:

Or we may find when all the rest has failed
Hid in ourselves the key of perfect change.

PETER STEIGER

* Translations into English and some other languages are expected soon.

Narayan Prasad Bindu: Sri Aurobindo (Hindi). Pp. 42. Publishers: Rajpal and Sons, Kashmir Gate, Delhi. Price Re. 1.

This booklet has been written with the intention of inspiring young minds to emulate the great men who have sacrificed their whole lives for the service of the nation and of humanity at large.

Narayan Prasad Bindu is an accomplished Hindi writer and in this small book presents the life of Sri Aurobindo in simple idiomatic Hindi avoiding pedantic Sanskritized ink-horn coinages. We hope the biography will have a wide circulation and stimulate deeper interest in the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother which continues with ever-increasing vigour and flows out into new channels. There is the Ashram with its multifarious activities, the International Centre of Education which draws teachers and students from all parts of the world and now there is under way the international city, Auroville. The Mother's own life and teachings inculcate the spirit of dedicated constructive and creative action.

For the younger generation a study of Sri Aurobindo's life can serve as a counter-blast to the present-day dissipations and destructive proclivities among modern youth and at the same time it can come as the right answer to this youth's passionate seeking for a light beyond all established ways.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

Dr. R. S. Agarwal: Yoga of Perfect Sight. Published by the School for Perfect Eyesight, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Price Rs. 12.

The author of this book is a well-known eye specialist and a member of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram where he runs the School for Perfect Eyesight.

Blending medical skill with spiritual insight, the book explains a discipline of eye education and mental relaxation to prevent and cure most of the eye defects and eye troubles for which the orthodox practitioners have no preventives even.

Various methods of treatment, such as facing the sun with closed eyes, palming, swinging, blinking, central fixation, etc., have been explained in a simple and practical way with case reports and questions and answers. Most of the readers having some visual defects can benefit by following the easy process of treatment as explained in the book. The last chapter includes the illuminating letters by Sri Aurobindo written to Dr. Agarwal.

Almost every eye specialist in the world believes that there is neither any preventive nor cure for errors of refraction like myopia, hypermetropia, astigmatism, etc.; but Dr. Agarwal, while quoting the scientific explanations, surprises us by showing how quickly vision begins to improve in many so-called incurable cases by eye education and mental relaxation. The editor of *Mother India*, K. D. Sethna, has discarded his plus glasses after using them for 20 years and reads fine print daily.

We recommend this book to laymen as well as to ophthalmologists.

"EYRIE"