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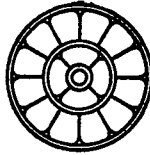
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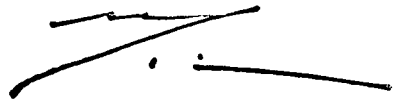


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXIV

No. 10 - 11

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".

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THE MOTHER'S MESSAGE OF

24.11.72

Beyond all preferences and limitations,
there is a ground of mutual understanding
where all can meet and find their
harmony : it is the aspiration
for a divine consciousness.



WORDS OF THE MOTHER

WORK IN THE ASHRAM

FORMERLY I used to keep control over everything. Nothing would be done without my first knowing and approving of it. Afterwards I adopted a different mode of acting. I withdrew from all the details and kept myself at a distance, watching things from above, as it were, and sending the right inspiration to each worker in his own field.

This change was necessary for the worker's spiritual development. He has to become aware of my influence inwardly. But he can receive it only if all the workers collaborate. Without collaboration the right inspiration will not be effective. The action from above has a wide sweep: it covers all the departments and is one harmonious whole. If walls are set up in the field of work, dividing and breaking it up, the work can never be according to the spiritual Will.

So bear this in mind: no collaboration, no right working.

December 1, 1957

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of October, 1972)

(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 the 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.)

July 18, 1956

I would like an explanation, sweet Mother. In "Prayers and Meditations" there is a sentence: "And the hours pass away like dreams unlived."

(January 19, 1917)

This is an experience. You know what an unlived dream is? ... I did not take the word "dream" in the sense of dreams at night; I took the word dream as meaning something one builds up in the best and most clear-sighted part of one's being, something which is an ideal one would like to see realised, something higher, more beautiful, more noble, more wonderful than all that was created, and there is a power of imagination or creation somewhere in one's consciousness and one builds something so that it may be realised.

And then, for some reason or other, it is not realised. Either the world was not ready or perhaps the formation was not sufficiently strong, but it is not realised. And so the hours pass, sterile, unproductive — useless, vain, empty — they seem to fade away because they have no result and no utility.

And so I said: "And the hours pass away like dreams unlived."

(Silence)

I have received two questions. One is about a passage of the "Synthesis of Yoga" where it is said (*The Mother takes her book*):

"For there is concealed behind individual love, obscured by its ignorant human figure, a mystery which the mind cannot seize, the mystery of the body of the Divine, the secret of a mystic form of the Infinite which we can approach only through the ecstasy of the heart and the passion of the pure and sublimated sense, and its attraction which is the call of the divine Flute-player, the mastering compulsion of the All-

Beautiful, can only be seized and seize us through an occult love and yearning which in the end makes one the Form and the Formless, and identifies Spirit and Matter. It is that which the spirit in Love is seeking here in the darkness of the Ignorance and it is that which it finds when individual human love is changed into the love of the Immanent Divine incarnate in the material universe."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 181)

This brings us to the symbol of Krishna and Radha.

Krishna is the One of whom Sri Aurobindo speaks here, the divine Flute-player, that is to say, the immanent and universal Divine who is the supreme power of attraction; and the soul, the psychic personality, called here Radha, replies to the call of the Flute-player. So I am asked to say something this evening on the Radha-consciousness, that is, essentially, on the way in which the individual soul answers the call of the Divine.

It happens that this is exactly what Sri Aurobindo has described in the chapter we have just read: it is that capacity of finding Ananda in all things through identification with the one divine Presence and by a complete self-giving to that Presence. So I don't think I have much to add; what I could say would be a limitation or diminution of the totality of this experience.

(After a silence) This consciousness has the capacity of changing everything into a perpetual ecstasy, for instead of seeing things in their discordant appearance, one sees thereafter only the divine Presence, the divine Will and the Grace everywhere and every event, every element, every circumstance, every form changes into a way, a detail through which one can draw more intimately and profoundly closer to the Divine. Discordances disappear, ugliness vanishes; there is henceforth only the splendour of the divine Presence in a Love shining in all things.

It is evident that from a practical point of view one must be able to remain at a constant and unshakable height in order to be in that state without exposing oneself to fairly troublesome consequences. That is probably why those who wished to live in this state used to withdraw from the world and found the universal contact through Nature...I must say, without meaning to be unpleasant to men, that it is infinitely more easy to realise this state of consciousness when one is surrounded by trees, flowers, plants and even animals, than by human beings. It is easier but not indispensable. And if one wants the state to be truly integral, one must be able to keep it at every moment, in the presence of anyone and anything at all.

There are innumerable legends or stories of this kind, like that of Prahlad,¹ for

¹ In Indian mythology Prahlad is the son of King Hiranyakashipu, an ardent enemy of the god Vishnu. The king had banned the worship of Vishnu in his kingdom, and when he learnt that his son Prahlad was worshipping this god in his own palace, he delivered him up to serpents, but they did not sting him, then he had him thrown down from the top of a hill into the sea, but the child was miraculously carried by the waters. When the enraged king asked his son who had saved him, the

instance, which we saw recently in a film, stories which illustrate that state of consciousness. And I am not only convinced, but have quite a tangible experience myself, that if in the presence of some danger or an enemy or some ill-will, you are able to remain in this condition and see the Divine in all things, well, the danger will have no effect, the ill-will can do nothing to you, and the enemy will either be transformed or will run away. That is quite certain.

But I must add a little word which is quite important. You must not seek this state or consciousness with a motive, seek it because it is a protection or a help. You must have it sincerely, spontaneously, constantly; it must be a normal, natural, effortless way of being. Then it is effective. But if you try in the least to imitate the movement with the idea of obtaining a particular result, that won't work. The result is not obtained at all. And then in your ignorance you will perhaps say: "Oh! but I was told that, but it is not so!" That is because there was some insincerity somewhere.

Otherwise, if you are really sincere, that is, if it is an integral and spontaneous experience, it is all-powerful. If, looking into somebody's eyes, you can spontaneously see the Divine Presence there, the worst of movements will vanish, the worst obstacles disappear; and the flame of an infinite joy leaps up, sometimes in the other person as well as in oneself. If in the other person there's the least possibility or just a tiny rift in the ill-will, that shines forth.

Sweet Mother, about Radha, in all the Vaishnavite stories (and in many mystics), there are always descriptions of tears and anguish: "She wept and the Divine did not come.... The Divine tormented her...." What does this mean? She was integral purity, then why...?

That is just while on the way! That happens when one is still on the way, when one has not reached the goal. They have that, they insist a lot upon this, for they like to prolong the human road, simply because they enjoy this human road and, as I told you, if you want to remain in life, in contact with life, a relativity necessarily remains in the experience. They like it thus — they like to quarrel with the Divine, they like to feel the pain of separation, these things give them pleasure! For they remain in the human consciousness and want to remain there. The minute there is perfect identification, all this disappears. So, it is as though one were deprived of the pleasure of a drama! There is something that has gone from life, that is, its illusion. They still need a reasonable amount of illusion; they can't enter smoothly into the Truth.

Essentially, for the feeling of separation to be there no longer, you must have

child replied: "Vishnu is everywhere, in the serpents and in the sea"... It is interesting to note that the king himself had been driven out from the heaven of Vishnu due to the curse of some rishis who had given him the choice between three lives on earth as the enemy of Vishnu or ten lives on earth as the worshipper of Vishnu. And the king had chosen the shorter way.

realised within yourself a perfect identity; and once this perfect identity is realised, well, the story is over, there is nothing more to narrate.

That is why it is said that if the world, if creation realised its perfect identity with the Divine, there would no longer be any creation. If you realise this perfect identity in which there is no possibility of distinction any more and if the entire universe realised this perfect identity in which there is no longer any possibility of distinction, well, there would no longer be any universe. It would be a going back to *pralaya*.

So the solution is to find the Ananda, even in the game, in this exchange in which one both gives and receives, in which one seems to be two; and that is why they keep the duality.

Otherwise, in identity, nothing remains but the identity. If the identity is complete and perfect, there is no objectification any more.

But I have said this somewhere when speaking of the story of love. I think nobody (oh! I can't tell), probably very few people noticed the distinction. I said that it begins through the Ananda of identity, and that after taking the whole circuit of the creation, it ends in the Ananda of union.¹ Well, if there were no circuit, there would never be the Ananda of union, there would be only the Ananda of identity. Were there no circuit, there would be no union.

This is perhaps a little subtle, but it is a fact: and perhaps it is just in order that the Ananda of identity may find its consummation and crowning, I could say, in the Ananda of union, that the whole circuit was made.

But if there is perfect identity, there can be no union, the feeling of union does not exist, for it necessarily implies something else than perfect identity. There can be perfect union but there is no perfect identity.

Don't try to understand with words and with your head, for these two words express altogether different experiences. And yet the result is the same, but one is rich with all that was not in the other, the richness of the whole experience — the whole universal experience.

¹ Later, someone asked the Mother. "What is this 'it'? the universe?" To which She replied: "I said 'it' deliberately, so as not to be precise. I don't like the word 'creation'; it immediately gives the impression of a special creation as though out of nothing — but it is He Himself! And it is not the universe 'which begins': the universe is begun. How to put it? It is not the universe which takes the initiative of the movement! And if one says the Lord began the universe, that is also false. All these are such fixed ideas! If I say: 'The Lord began the universe,' one sees at once a personal God deciding to begin the universe — it is not that!

"I have said that about Love, the manifestation of Love which is the supreme Ananda. Sri Aurobindo said it also beyond Being and Non-being there is something which is, which manifests as supreme Love, and which is at once Being and Non-being. And the first manifestation of That is the Ananda of identity — essentially it is the identity becoming aware of itself in Ananda, and then, it makes the full circuit through the whole manifestation and all the forms taken by Love, and returns to the Oneness through union. And this adds to that Ananda, the Ananda of union, which would never have existed if the circuit had not been made."

If the experience of union is obtained consciously, why do some mystics continue to have all sorts of emotions like ordinary people, and weep and lament ?

This happens perhaps because the union is not constant.

But Radha is sincere in her aspiration.

If you ask me, I believe this is just literature, my children! Any way, it is certainly in order to give you an artistic picture of human life as it is!

Vaishnavism is founded upon that.

But these people live in the vital and like it. Ah! one can't talk about that, because...

Well, I have another question here, a very small question, but one not without interest.

It is from somebody trying to prepare himself to receive the Supermind, and in this preparation, among other things come prayer and meditation. And then there is this reflection which is very frank and which very few would have the courage to make. Here it is:

"I begin to meditate and pray ardently and fervently, my aspiration is intense and my prayer full of devotion; and then, after a certain length of time (sometimes short, sometimes long), the aspiration becomes mechanical and the prayer purely verbal. What should I do?"

This is not an individual case, it is altogether common. I have often said this already (but still, it was in passing) that people who pretend to meditate for hours every day and pass their whole day praying, it seems to me that three-fourths of the time it is absolutely mechanical; that is to say, it loses all its sincerity. For human nature is not made for that and the human mind not built that way.

In order to concentrate and meditate one must do an exercise which I could call "mental muscle-building" of concentration. One must indeed make an effort — as one makes an effort with muscles, for instance, to lift a weight, — if you want the concentration to be sincere and not artificial.

The same thing for the urge of prayer: suddenly a flame is lit, you feel an enthusiastic élan, a great fervour, and express that in words which, to be true, must be spontaneous. This must come from the heart, directly, with ardour, without passing through the head. That is a prayer. If these are words jostling in your head, it is no longer a prayer. Well, if you don't throw more food in the flame, after a time it dies

out. If you do not give your muscles time to relax, if you don't slacken the movement, your muscles lose the capacity of taking strains. So it is quite natural, and even indispensable, that the intensity of the movement is lost after a certain time. Naturally, one who is accustomed to lifting weights can do so much longer than one who has never done it before. It is the same thing; one who is accustomed to concentration can concentrate much longer than one who isn't in the habit. But for everybody there comes a moment when one must let go, relax, in order to begin again. Consequently, whether immediately or after a while or after several hours, if the movement becomes mechanical, it means that you have slackened and that you need no longer pretend that you are meditating. It is better to do something useful.

If you cannot manage to get a little exercise, for instance, in order to balance off the effect of the mental tension, you may read or try to note down what happened to you, you may express things. Then that produces a relaxation, the necessary relaxation. But the length of the meditation is only relatively important; its duration simply shows how far you are accustomed to this activity.

Of course, this may increase a great deal, but there is always a limit; and when the limit is reached one must stop, that's all. It is not insincerity, it is incapacity. What becomes insincere is your pretence to meditate when you are no longer meditating or you say prayers like many people who go to temple or church, perform ceremonies and repeat their prayers as one repeats a more or less well learnt lesson. Then it is no longer either prayer or meditation, it is simply a profession. It is not interesting.

Just a while ago you said that if one can spontaneously see the Divine in one's enemy, the enemy is converted—didn't you?

Not necessarily! I said: either he will be converted or he will run away. I did not say: he is always converted! I said: if there is the least little rift in his bad will, that thing will enter; and then he can be suddenly changed, or in any case become incapable of acting. But if that is not there, well, he will go away. But he won't be able to do anything. What I assert is that he won't be able to do anything; and if he can do something it is a sign that the state of consciousness you were in was not sufficiently pure and complete.

Why then are there so many enemies of the Divine, since the Divine can see Himself in His enemies?

I don't quite understand your question.

Why are there so many enemies of the Divine?

So many enemies of the Divine?

These hostile forces.

But why are there so many completely unconscious human beings? I find that still more astonishing! For it is quite simply an act of unconsciousness: to be an enemy of the Divine is nothing but being unconscious.

(A teacher) *He means that they should have been converted since the Divine can see the Divine...*

But excuse me, the Divine where? I don't understand your reasoning.

When a man is the Divine's enemy ...

But after all, suppose there is a man in a million who has realised this consciousness in himself. It is possible he may have an effect on those around him — and yet I took care to tell you that for this state to be perfectly realised, generally it is necessary to live in solitude, otherwise there are too many contradictory things, there are too many brutally materialistic necessities which contradict that, for you to be able to get that state absolutely perfectly. But if you get it absolutely perfectly, everything around you will necessarily become divine.

And so? I don't even understand the argument.

(The teacher) *He was objectifying the Divine and was thinking: when somebody is the Divine's enemy, he is an enemy of a divine form, and this divine form sees the Divine in his enemy, consequently the enemy must be converted.*

No, I haven't yet caught it!

(Another disciple) *Sweet Mother, it is perfect but doesn't exist!* (laughter) *What he says doesn't exist.*

No, I admit I don't follow you at all, nor him, nor you, nor you! (laughter) Good Lord, what do you all mean!

When one is an enemy of the Divine, one is an enemy of what?

Oh! ... That depends exclusively upon each one. Usually one is an enemy of one's own idea of the Divine, and that is why it is said that very often the greatest devotee is he who denies the Divine. For if he did not have within himself the certitude that the Divine exists, he would not take the trouble of denying Him. And this is still stronger with the one who hates Him, for if he did not have somewhere far within

himself the certitude of the existence of the Divine, how could he hate Him?

This has been symbolised here in India in many stories of those who wanted to identify themselves with the divine Reality and chose to become His enemies, for the path of the enemy was more direct than that of the worshipper. These are well known stories here, all the old legends and Indian mythology speak about it. Well, this simply illustrates the fact that he who has never put the problem before himself and never given the faintest thought to the existence of the Divine, is certainly farther from the Divine than the one who hates Him or denies Him. For one can't deny something one has never thought about.

He who says or writes: "I declare, I certify, all my experience goes to prove that there is no Divine, no such thing exists, it is just man's imagination, man's creation...", that means he has already thought over the problem any number of times and that something within him is prodigiously interested in this problem.

As for the one who detests Him, there it is still more evident: one can't be the enemy of an illusion.

So (*addressing the disciple*) your question no longer holds. For perhaps, after all, this is yet one form of meeting which may have its interest. One sometimes says in a lighter vein: "My intimate enemy," and it is perhaps not altogether wrong. Perhaps there is more intimacy in hatred than in ignorance. One is nearer to what one hates than to what one is ignorant of.

This doesn't mean I recommend hatred! That is not what I am saying, but very often it has so happened that I have seen more love in a look or an expression of fury and hatred than in an absolutely dull and inert state. It is deformed, spoilt, disfigured, whatever one likes to say, but there is something living, a flame is there.

Evidently, even in unconsciousness and immobility, in the complete inertia — apparently — of the stone, one may find a dazzling Light, that of the divine Presence. But then that is the state we were just speaking about: one sees Him everywhere, meets Him everywhere, and in so manifold and marvellously harmonious a way that all these difficulties disappear.

(*Silence*)

Truly speaking, to be practical, the problem could be expressed like this. If the Divine had not conceived His creation as progressive, there could have been from the beginning a beatific, immobile and unchangeable condition. But the minute... How shall I explain it? —I don't know. Just because the universe had to be progressive, perfect identity, the bliss of this identity, the full consciousness of this identity had necessarily to be veiled, otherwise nothing would have ever stirred.

A static universe may be conceived. One may conceive of something which is "all at one and the same time". That there is no time, only a kind of objectivisation — but not an unfolding in which things manifest progressively one after another, according

to a special rhythm: that they are all manifested at the same time, at once. Then all would be in a blissful state and there would be no universe as we see it, the element of unfolding would be missing, which constitutes...well, what we live in at present.

But once we admit this principle that the universe is progressive, the unfolding progressive, that instead of seeing everything together and at one go, our perception is progressive, then everything takes place within it. And perforce, future perfection must be felt as something higher than what was there before. The realisation towards which we go must necessarily seem superior to that which was accomplished before.

And that opens the door to everything. All possibilities.

Sri Aurobindo often said this: what appeared beautiful, good, even perfect, and marvellous and divine at a given moment in the universe, can no longer appear so now. And what seems to us now beautiful, marvellous, divine and perfect, will be an obscurity after some time. And in the same way, the gods who were all-powerful at a certain period belong to a lower reality than that of the gods who will manifest tomorrow.

And that is a sign that the universe is progressive.

This was said, this was repeated, but men don't understand, you know, when it is a question of all those great ages, that they are like a reducing of the universal progress to the human measure.

That is why if one enters into the state in which all, as it is, appears perfectly divine, one necessarily goes out of the universal movement at the same time. This is what people like Buddha or Shankara had understood. They expressed in their own way that if one could realise the state in which everything appears to you perfectly divine or perfectly perfect, necessarily you go out of the universal movement and enter the Unmanifest.

That is quite correct. It is like that.

They were sufficiently dissatisfied with life as it was and had little hope it could become better; so for them this was the ideal solution. I call it escaping, but still.... It is not so easy! But for them it was the ideal solution — up to a certain point, for... there is perhaps one more step to take.

But it is a fact. If one wants to remain in the universe, one must admit the principle of progress, for this is a progressive universe. If you want to realise a static perfection, well, you will be perforce thrown out of the universe, for you will no longer belong to its principle.

It is a choice.

Only, Sri Aurobindo often used to say: "People who choose the exit forget that at the same time they will lose the consciousness with which they could congratulate themselves on their choice!" They forget that.

A VISION OF INDIA

A LETTER BY SRI AUROBINDO

(This letter to a disciple, which has a particular relevance to the situation today, is reproduced here for the first time.)

THE Mother has given for your perusal an account of the theme of Anu's dance. It runs into three scenes.

In the first the curtain rises showing India in slavery and bondage. Then she awakes and tries to throw off the yoke: the spirit of fight grows.

In the second scene, liberation has come and its joy and the action of a free people. But she is faced with all sorts of problems, such as financial crisis, division, corruption, and moral degradation, etc. She looks to every side for a solution, but finds no way out. The confusion grows worse and worse.

In the third scene, faced with all these difficulties, she aspires and becomes conscious of the soul of the all-pervading Mother and feels a growing union with that soul. She finds out her spiritual mission in the world and by it realises the complete unity of the country. From the moment she becomes conscious of the soul, the chorus begins rising into a great force and enthusiasm.

1948

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of October, 1972)

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November, 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Mamlal, Dr. Becharlal, Puram, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo, 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.)

June 20, 1940

N: Japan is talking of sending an Expeditionary Force to Indo-China.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes; the Governor has intimated that he will resist.

P: There are plenty of Pondicherry people there in the army.

N: They have no chance against the Japanese army.

SRI AUROBINDO: Bulloch has said that the Indians can very quickly learn the technical side of warfare. Provided they get proper leadership with sympathy and understanding they can make very good soldiers.

N: Will England help — if the Governor asks — against Japan?

SRI AUROBINDO: Can't say. England can help only with the Navy. She has no troops there. Japan will attack overland. But if Japan attacks Indo-China, it will be the last straw on America's back. America won't tolerate Japan in the Pacific, just as during the Dutch East Indies question.

N: Japan may have a shot at Pondicherry too.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes; but the Navy will have to pass through Singapore, Malacca etc. India will then be between Japan, Germany and Russia.

S: Russia? Russia is far away and doesn't show any interest?

SRI AUROBINDO: Russia is always silent before she acts. Nobody knows what is in Russia's mind until the last moment. The same with Japan. It is only now that Japan talks about her aims and objects.

N: Hitler is repeating his old game of asking for plenipotentiaries. In the meantime he intends to crush France.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, she must withdraw their army in time. There is a rumour that even if this Government submits, another Government will be started in London. Algeria will declare independence, the commander of the Middle East will not

submit and neither will the Navy.

P: That will be very good. Hitler can't stop the Navy. Except for the Italian navy, he has no sea power.

SRI AUROBINDO: Three things are important: French gold, the Air Force and the Navy. If the Navy falls to Hitler, it will be a difficult time for England.

P: Oil reserves also; it is not known what the French have done with them — whether they have destroyed them or if they have fallen into enemy hands. It seems the Pétain Government is Fascist in tendency and wants to make an alliance with Germany and to rule over France.

SRI AUROBINDO: If Hitler allows. Even then, after taking England he will turn to them and destroy them completely. These people are idiots, not politicians. Hitler has clearly said in his *Mein Kampf* that France must be crushed. So long as France exists, Germany will be in danger. Hitler first wanted to make friends with England. When that failed, he said he had no enmity with France. His grudge is only against the English. His tactics are very familiar now.

N (*After a while*): Another indictment against Bose by Bepin Ganguli. It seems that because Bose let out talks of the Working Committee regarding acceptance or non-acceptance of the federation-talks which were confidential, Gandhi and the High Command strongly objected to the federation. It means Gandhi and the others were at one time in favour of accepting the federation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. Gandhi and Bhulabhai and Satyamurti were discussing it. It is Bose who spoiled it by his untimely disclosure. What Amery has said is true — that if the internal differences were resolved then Dominion Status would be easily granted.

N: But what can Congress do?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? They can take the four Muslim Premiers together — what Azad is doing now — and come to a solution and settle the Dominion Status. Once you get that, it is practically independence, apart from the fact that independence is precarious nowadays. That would be the practical step.

N: Rajagopalachari, I think, would accept it.

P: Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is only Nehru who would object. He lives in his ideas.

P: He may say, for example: "What interest has Japan in Indo-China?" (*laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: What interest had she in China? What interest had Hitler in Uruguay? They have unearthed a plot there which is evidently of Nazi origin.

S: My paper—*The Indian Express* (*laughter*) — says in its editorial that Nehru says: "Come to terms with the Muslims anyhow."

N: He may do quite the opposite the next day.

S: Yes, as the conditions change.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is Supramental.

P: Rajagopalachari will be willing to accept Dominion Status, I think.

SRI AUROBINDO: He is a practical man. Now they are neither doing Civil Disobedience nor going to the Ministry. Gandhi knows only his Charkha. The Charkha is going to give Swaraj, non-violence, everything — his wonderful “coordination” of ideas.

N: Won't it give realisation of God?

SRI AUROBINDO: He has not come to that yet. But he has found the Charkha in the Gita.... If India accepts Dominion Status, that will remove one of the difficulties of America's joining the war.

N: Is that really true? Some papers, of course, mention it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite true. Even the British people have said that there is a strong sympathy for India in America. They say, “England is fighting for her Imperialism. Why should we fight for her?”

N: Of course, Duff Cooper also admits that there is a strong pro-India sentiment there.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well? He is an Imperialist. He doesn't want India to be free. Why should he say that if it were not true?

(After some time Sri Aurobindo himself began speaking.)

SRI AUROBINDO: If England goes down, there won't be any free country left except Russia, Japan, Germany and Italy. I am speaking of the old world. I think the next war will be between Russia and Germany. If Russia finds that England is in a difficult position, then Stalin will put pressure on Turkey and Rumania for the control of the Black Sea, as he has done with the Baltic states; of course, not without difficulty, for they may resist. Hitler is not likely to keep quiet over the trouble in the Balkans. With Italy's help he may settle the Balkan problem and that of Asia Minor. Or he may allow Russia a free hand now, knowing that he can settle with her afterwards.

N: Will Pétain hand over France to Hitler?

SRI AUROBINDO: These people ... *(Sri Aurobindo left the sentence incomplete)*

EVENING

P: The Governor General of Madagascar has wired to the Pondicherry Government that he is not going to accept peace and will fight on. Our Governor also has decided not to accept. And they are going to wire to Pétain not to make peace.

SRI AUROBINDO: That will be a great thing. All these telegrams may put some shame into the heart of Pétain. I am afraid the news about the French fleet leaving for an unknown destination is not very reliable. It is American news.

P: Some of the fleet is under the British command. They can prevent it from falling into German hands.

SRI AUROBINDO: They can't force the Navy. It is for the Navy to decide.

N: They have not given out the names of the envoys.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, one of them seems to be Bondain. He is pro-British. It is

he who stands for honourable peace. He is supposed to be a very capable man. It was due to him that the Indo-China bank flourished.

P: The envoys may be shouted down by Hitler like Hacha.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, or they may be starved till they agree to sign the terms imposed.

P: They can have some food brought for them by parachutists.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, some chemical food to eat surreptitiously. (*laughter*)

N: Churchill's statement is not clear about how many divisions of British troops were sent after the fight in Flanders.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, he says three—while he says again that twelve divisions were equipped and that was what France was led to expect. There may be nine divisions fighting in France and these three makes twelve in all.

P: Rajagopalachari is speaking of non-cooperation in France. He says the occupied countries may offer non-cooperation to Hitler.

N: He can be sent to preach and practise it.

SRI AUROBINDO: He won't preach very long. He will be given a passport to heaven. (*After some time*) Japan is not marching to Indo-China yet. She has appealed to the Axis powers to preserve the *status quo* there.

P: Yes, but if France accepts peace, then Japan may grab it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. Of course, it has been a long-standing aim of Japan to drive out the Europeans from the Far East. If she can do that, and come to the Far East, the Near East also won't last very long.

P: The Japanese seem to be getting displaced from Chungking.

SRI AUROBINDO: That means they have not their old strength. In former times, once Japan occupied a place, it was impossible to dislodge her. That shows what happens if one gives up one's *svadharma*. According to the German advice, to be tall they are taking raw meat, wearing shoes and adopting other European customs. In former days, eating grains and with bare feet, they used to fight splendidly, as in the Russo-Japanese war. They may have improved in stature by eating meat but have lost in other ways.

N: If the Italian colonies in Africa could be seized, which seems not difficult as shown by the wonderful fighting quality of the Italians, it would be something.

SRI AUROBINDO: And if, in addition, the Italian fleet can be smashed, then it will be bad for Germany too. If England can hold on one year at least, or two winters, there is a chance.

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

SRI AUROBINDO: THE PHILOSOPHER

“AIR” NATIONAL BROADCAST ON SEPTEMBER 19, 1972

(We have pleasure in publishing this exposition by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan,
Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras.)

It is difficult to disengage the roles of ‘prophet’ and ‘philosopher’ in Sri Aurobindo; for the two are inextricably united in him. He was both a prophetic philosopher and a philosophical prophet. He saw and predicted the future divinization of man and the world; and this insight led him to formulate his unique philosophy which may be described as spiritual evolutionism.

Sri Aurobindo the philosopher may be discerned even in some of his early political writings in the *Bande Mataram* and *Karma-Yogin*. One can garner from these writings such philosophical reflections as these: “Every error serves as a stepping-stone to truth”; “Death is no enemy, no king of Horrors, but a friend who opens the gates of Heaven to the aspiring soul”; “Nirvana is the goal of the soul’s progress”; “India’s very life is Vedanta”. Sri Aurobindo’s systematic philosophical writings, however, were first published in the *Arya*. It is in *The Life Divine*, which was contributed serially to this monthly, that we have the most complete and comprehensive exposition of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy.

The concept of evolution is central to the great mystic’s thought. But it must be carefully distinguished from the nineteenth-century western concept. Darwin’s formulation of what was thought to be the law of biological evolution was seized with a haste which one does not usually associate with philosophers, and quite a few brands of philosophical evolutionisms were evolved. The statement in evolutionary biology addressed to man, “You are descended from the ape”, was sought to be expanded in evolutionary philosophy into “You have risen from matter through life and mind”. “The theory of evolution has been the key-note of the thought of the nineteenth century,” says Sri Aurobindo. “It has not only affected all its science and its thought-attitude, but powerfully influenced its moral temperament, its politics and society.” The application of the theory in philosophy has led to a reductionism: the reduction of all reality in its roots to matter. But, when the first flush of enthusiasm began to wane, the inherent defect of materialism came to be recognized by the evolutionary philosophers themselves. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, “The materialistic view of the world is now rapidly collapsing and with it the materialistic statement of the evolution theory must disappear.” Some of the recent philosophers of evolution have attempted to present modified versions by conceiving of the process of evolution in terms of a vital urge, or as a *nisus* towards Deity. But none of them has succeeded in taking the evolutionary vehicle out of the rut of naturalist empiricism. It is in this

context that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of evolution has to be appraised.

India has had its own tradition of evolutionary philosophy. According to the Sankhya, the world is an evolution from Primal Nature which is called Prakriti. Purusha or Spirit plays only a passive role in the world evolution, and is not implicated therein. In the presence of Purusha, it is said, Prakriti evolves into both psychological and sensory power on the one hand, and physical factors on the other. The Sankhya view is that of *prakṛti-pariṇāma*, evolution from Primal Nature. There is thus a quasi-materialism implicit in Sankhya. Rejecting *prakṛti-pariṇāma-vāda* as an untenable view, some Vedantins sponsor *brahma-pariṇāma-vāda*, according to which it is Brahman or the supreme Spirit that evolves into the world. Since only a part of Brahman manifests itself as the world, the integrity and purity of Brahman are not affected, according to these thinkers.

Sri Aurobindo's evolutionism falls under the category of *brahma-pariṇāma*. According to him, it is Brahman that is the source and summit of evolution. The World-Tree does not have its roots below in Matter, but above in Spirit: it is *ūrdha-mūlam*. The original evolution is from the Spirit, and not from Space-Time or Matter, as the Naturalists would have us believe. As against the naturalistic view, Sri Aurobindo argues: "We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness."

Thus the Vedantic view of *pariṇāma* or evolution, which is accepted by Sri Aurobindo, is that the higher is involved in the lower, the Spirit in Mind, Life and Matter. The descriptive term employed in Vedanta for indicating the nature of Spirit or Brahman is *Saccidānanda*. The term is a combination of three words, *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* which Sri Aurobindo renders into English as the Pure Existent, Consciousness-Force, and the Delight of Existence. The Divine which is the eternal Reality is a Trinity; it is out of this that the world evolves. What effects the evolution is called the Supermind by Sri Aurobindo. It is this which mediates between the Divinity which is *Saccidānanda* and the world of Mind-Life-Matter.

The concept of Supermind constitutes the special feature of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. It may be aptly said that Sri Aurobindo is the philosopher of the Supermind. What is the Supermind? There is an ambiguity in the word, as Sri Aurobindo himself recognizes. But he makes it clear that the term should not be taken "in the sense of mind itself super-eminent and lifted above ordinary mentality but not radically changed". Nor should it be understood to mean all that is beyond mind including the Ineffable Reality, *Saccidānanda*. The Supermind is, then, the link between the pure, unitary and indivisible consciousness which is *Saccidānanda*, and the analytic and dividing consciousness of Mind: it is the comprehensive and creating consciousness which effects the transition from pure Being to phenomenal existence and *vice versa*.

In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "Supermind is the vast self-extension of the Brahman that contains and develops. By the Idea it develops the triune principle of existence, consciousness and bliss out of their indivisible unity. It differentiates them, but it does not divide. It establishes a Trinity." It is because of its unique role that Supermind is called Truth-Consciousness and Real-Idea. It is the real creative agency of the universal Existence. *Sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*, with the Supermind, constitute what Sri Aurobindo calls the divine quaternary; and, using the model of the sphere, he describes the quaternary as the higher hemisphere of Being. The lower hemisphere, consisting of Mind, Life and Matter, derives its being from the higher. The seven factors together — the four of the higher and the three of the lower hemisphere — may be spoken of as the sevenfold chord of Being.

Of the seven terms or principles of existence, the three lower ones are "only subordinate powers of the divine quaternary. Mind is a subordinate power of Supermind, which takes its stand in the standpoint of division, actually forgetful here of the oneness behind, though able to return to it by re-illumination from the supramental; Life is similarly a subordinate power of the energy aspect of *Saccidānanda*, it is Force working out form and the play of conscious energy from the standpoint of division created by Mind; Matter is the form of substance of being which the existence of *Saccidānanda* assumes when it subjects itself to this phenomenal action of its own consciousness and force."

If in-between Life and Mind a fourth factor which Sri Aurobindo calls Psyche is introduced, the correspondence with the divine quaternary will be rendered even. The phenomenal existence will then be seen to be "a sort of refraction of the divine existence, in inverted order of ascent and descent, thus ranged, —

Existence	Matter
Consciousness-Force	Life
Bliss	Psyche
Supermind	Mind."

We have so far considered the first phase in the evolutionism of Sri Aurobindo — the evolution of the world from the Divine. Now we turn to the second phase which is concerned with the return-process: the evolution from Matter through Life and Mind. According to Sri Aurobindo, there is a double evolution, or involution-evolution as a double movement. The second evolution or return-movement is from inconscient Matter to the Divine which is its true source and reality. It has taken aeons for Life to appear in Matter, and for Mind to emerge from Life. Man, the mental being, is the highest evolute so far reached. But he is not the final item on the evolutionary agenda. He is a transitional being, not the ultimate truth of evolution. The return-movement must reach its goal which is *Saccidānanda*. "Evolution is an inverse action of the involution," says Sri Aurobindo. "What is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution, what was original and primal in

the involution is the last and supreme emergence.” The line of evolutionary creation cannot stop with man; it must go beyond him to Supermanhood, and ultimately to the supreme Reality. In man and high beyond him, Sri Aurobindo discerns the radiant degrees that climb to a divine Supermanhood. “There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring but troubled and limited mundane existence.” Man must be reborn as a gnostic being; this is his divine birth, *divya-janma*. It is towards this goal that all other births are “a long series of laborious steps. An involution of spirit in Matter is the beginning, but a spiritual assumption of divine birth is the fullness of the evolution.”

Divine birth is supramental birth. When this is achieved, the individual gets transformed completely. The evolution, however, is not complete with the emergence of the gnostic being. The Supermind must be made to descend to the very last level of earth-consciousness. This is the tertiary movement which makes for the total divinization of the world. This is the consummation of the evolutionary process — the ushering in of the *satya-yuga*, the new heaven and new earth. And the way that leads to this goal is ‘integral yoga’ — the yoga in which all the powers of being “will be combined and included in the transmuting instrumentation”. The aim of integral yoga is to divinize the human race and the outer world. This is made possible when the mind surrenders itself to the Supermind and lets it function fully in life, so that our total being may be completely unified with it and divinized by it.

The massive, subtle and architectonic system of spiritual evolutionism which Sri Aurobindo has constructed is the result of his penetrative insights and incisive mind. But on that account one is not constrained to accept all the aspects of his philosophy. No philosophy is without its difficulties; and Sri Aurobindo’s evolutionism is no exception. One may not agree, for instance, with his view of the supreme Spirit as really changing, or with his teaching that the Infinite and the finite are equally real. As for the future course of evolution as stated by him, one has only to believe. But, in spite of the differences one may have with Sri Aurobindo’s system, one cannot fail to accord him a pre-eminent place among the immortals in philosophy.

DR. T.M.P. MAHADEVAN

EDITOR’S NOTE

An appreciation from a mind like Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan cannot but have value. Similarly any philosophical difficulty felt by such a mind has to be considered. A discussion in philosophy is usually a lengthy affair, for one issue arises out of another. But, within a limited universe of discourse, a few pointed remarks may not be inutile.

Dr. Mahadevan has, in passing, mentioned two difficulties for him in Sri Aurobindo’s philosophical system. The first is: How can the supreme Spirit be viewed as really changing?

I believe it is fundamentally a question of whether any change at all can be thought

of as real. If change is not an illusion, it must be, in whatever manner, a reality. But if it is real, then it must be some aspect of the supreme Spirit which is the sole Existent. In other words, the supreme Spirit must be capable of putting forth a changing expression of itself. The reality of such an expression does not imply that the supreme Spirit has no changeless being. It only implies that changeless being has the power to manifest changeful being, to bring about what is commonly called "becoming". We may remember that Sri Aurobindo posits not merely Consciousness (*cit*) along with Existence (*sat*) and Bliss (*ānanda*) as the ultimate. He posits Consciousness-Force (*cit-tapas*). His Absolute is not impotent to act: it is omnipotent and, where there is the power to do things, there is bound to be a change as a result. Changelessness is not the sole character of the supreme Spirit. To make it so is to deny power to the Absolute. The difficulty felt in conceiving power and peace, being and becoming, changelessness and change as simultaneous characters of the supreme Spirit arises out of our customary dichotomies of seeming opposites. According to Sri Aurobindo's experience the Absolute suffers from no self-contradiction in having a twofold reality. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the so-called opposites are even more than mere complementaries in the supreme Spirit. They are an identity. What are opposites to the mind are harmonious complementaries to the Overmind and a total identity to the Supermind. As a line from a poem of Sri Aurobindo's has it, there is in the supreme Spirit

Force one with unimaginable rest.

Dr. Mahadevan's second difficulty is: How can the Infinite and the finite be equally real? The solution should stem essentially from the answer to the first difficulty. The formation of the finite is an act of the supreme Spirit's power: it is the Infinite's self-expression or self-becoming in a certain mode. In that sense the finite is the Infinite itself and therefore equally real, though logically the latter is the primary reality and the former the secondary. In another sense, however, there is a difference. The Infinite may be self-figured as the finite with a certain veil between the figurer and the figured. This is what we find in the universe that is ours. But the cosmos we live in does not exhaust the full manifesting activity of the Absolute. So the partly veiled self-figuration we have in it is not necessarily the character of all finite existence. Even here it is not the basic stuff of being that can be considered less real: only the play of consciousness and bliss is restricted, creating a psychological diminution, as it were, of the existence-status. Sri Aurobindo never denies the unequal realness in this connotation. The condition of Cosmic Ignorance has to be psychologically less real than the supreme Spirit's direct consciousness and delight of itself — less real even than the condition of Cosmic Knowledge which obtains on "planes" where the supreme Spirit is luminously self-deployed in organised interplay of permanence and change, infinity and finitude. The sense in which Sri Aurobindo puts the Infinite and the finite on a par as realities is the one that cuts down to the question

whether the supreme Spirit has the power of manifestation or there is just an incomprehensible and indescribable Maya which can be regarded as neither real nor unreal and which ultimately gets reduced to an appearance negligible, inconsequential, empty, null. The Infinite and the finite are equally real only as against the shadow of unreality cast on the latter by the illusionist school of thinkers basing themselves on Shankara.

K. D. SETHNA

CURIOUS CROSS

NAILED to a curious cross of life I stand,
Where gusts of nature test my strength and will;
High up, alone on a column of calm I pend,
Tempests and bruises turn me all the more still.

A wilful irony is in chase of me,
A fatal smile laughs ill at my life's cost,
Dark pseudo-spirits passion crazily
To exploit the moments my soul's sleeping lost.

Where ravens of chance upon my energies prey,
My lucent hounding eyes are ever awake,
No clouds can cover up my dynamite ray,
My soul's push none can halt, my trust none shake.

Heightward my steps unceasingly shall march,
Time shall not see the end of my Truth-search.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

WHAT SRI AUROBINDO MEANS TO ME*

I WAS at college when I first heard of Sri Aurobindo. I read somewhere that he was a master of English as well as familiar with several other languages both ancient and modern. I also learnt that he was a great Yogi who had the power to appear in many places at the same time! What impressed my young mind was not so much this alleged power as his multi-linguism. I took it for granted that a great Yogi should be able to flout the common laws of space and time. But I was struck by the fact that this spiritual figure should be at home in such a number of languages and therefore of literatures. Here was somebody who possessed a Light from beyond our earth and yet saw meaning in earthly endeavour and expression. Such a seer could not but have some meaning for me.

However, I was engrossed in my own pursuits and they were not always such as might lead one to the spiritual path. The analytic intellect had grown rather strong in me and I came to carry like a challenging flame the modern temper of doubt and denial. During a short period I professed downright materialism and atheism. There was for me no Soul, there was for me no God. An idealistic vein in my nature loved great poetry and kindled up to great art: their "immortal longings" struck a responsive chord in my heart, but the modern temper held sway on the whole and the name of Sri Aurobindo receded into the background.

A series of unexpected events jolted my intellectual self-sufficiency and sent my emotional part looking for a permanence behind transient things, a support of some love which would be eternal and all-understanding. The all-understanding-ness was an important desideratum. For I was quite a bit of a complexity, my mind and character having a great many sides which sometimes drew me in different directions. I now started searching for a Guru. A number of Sadhus and Yogis I caught hold of, asking them for some satisfying revelation. It was in this period of a vague Godward turn that I came across a Theosophist who was also an art-critic. When he saw that I was on a spiritual quest he said: "Nobody except Sri Aurobindo will satisfy you." This was strange, coming from a Theosophist whose world is chockful of occult Masters forming a coterie among themselves and leaving no room for any outsider like Sri Aurobindo. My friend added: "Sri Aurobindo has the Cosmic Consciousness."

The Theosophist's testimony in general and this phrase in particular joined up with the memorable impression made by the statement that Sri Aurobindo was a multi-linguist. But I still did not realise the exact nature of the spiritual life which

* With grateful acknowledgements to *Indian Literature*, Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) Birth Centenary Number, published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, pp 90-94.

he represented. The basic meaning of his Yoga had not yet gone home to me. Then a most amazing coincidence happened. I went to Bombay's well-known Crawford Market to buy a pair of shoes. I took my purchase away in a box wrapped by the shopkeeper in a sheet of newspaper. On uncovering the box the news-sheet fell back disclosing a big headline: "A Visit to the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo." Immediately I devoured the article. It gave a broad idea of the earth-accepting and life-transforming Yoga practised in the Pondicherry Ashram. All kinds of work, all activities of thought, all movements of literature and art were sought to be taken up into the spiritual life and given their fullest value. I felt nothing in me would be suppressed and discarded, everything would be fulfilled in the light of the Eternal and the Infinite. I wrote to the Ashram, seeking permission to come and live there. The reply was encouraging. So I made my pilgrimage to Pondicherry in the shoes that had brought me that eye-opener of an article.

I was twenty-three at the time. Yoga is not easy on any account — and for a young man it was bound to be pretty difficult at first. For, however life-accepting, no Yoga would be worth its name if the old turns of life were not rectified and dedicated to the Divine. Asceticism was never imposed in the Ashram, but to take everything with an inner detachment and equanimity was the constant call — and every minute was meant to be a gesture of remembering the Divine and offering oneself to Him. A subtle discipline in the midst of a wide freedom lay at the basis of this "Integral Yoga". Yes, it was not a smooth canter all the way. But the returns were great. There were intense inner experiences. The discovery of an inmost self whose very nature is bliss, the sense of being free from the shackles of the body, the enlightening influx of a force from above the brain-mind — these were no small rewards. And the rewards were all the more rich because of the source from which they flowed: the grand personality of Sri Aurobindo, the beautiful presence of his co-worker, the Mother.

And the Master and the Mother came close to us with their gracious abundance of love and light in a thousand ways. The Mother met us again and again each day, a guide and helper in every problem. The Master, who a year before I joined the Ashram had withdrawn from public contacts in order to concentrate on the momentous work in hand and bring about its consummation sooner, was very far indeed from being a world-shunning recluse. He kept in touch with us all the time by writing profusely to us in answer to our questions on every imaginable topic. His interest in our literary activities was immense. He carried on his own literary creation too. Up to the end of his life he kept up his correspondence with me.

Not only did he want my self-critical faculty to be on the alert, but also asked me to comment on the epic he had been writing for years, *Savitri*, whose 23,814 lines of superb blank verse are at once a legend and a symbol and a philosophy, charged everywhere with what the ancient Rishis called the Mantra and what *Savitri* itself sums up in a Mantric utterance:

Sight's sound-waves breaking from the soul's great deeps.

Patiently he considered all that my well-meaning impudence felt to be occasional shortcomings or oversights in the colossal poem. Mostly he demonstrated to me my errors of judgment but now and again he gladly acted on my suggestions. Here was a Guru who never sat on a deliberate pedestal but built for himself a throne of thrones in our hearts and minds by his intimacy and naturalness and that rare humility which stands always in front of the inexhaustible Infinite whose touch lends "a Yonder to all ends".

The most divine being that I could ever hope to meet, Sri Aurobindo was also the most human person I have ever met. Nor was his humanness definable only in terms of his affectionate fatherly attitude which led us onward and upward by the very splendour of spirit he brought so close to us. Its definition has also a deep evolutionary meaning. Sri Aurobindo represented at the same time descending Godhead and ascending Manhood. The whole passion of man's history, the whole arduousness of man's aeonic adventure lived in him. He was no sudden isolated wonder, not merely a haloed visitor from another and brighter world come down on earth to set our air ablaze for a while and make us eager to go soaring into his empyrean. He stood as a gatherer-up of all our problems and difficulties into himself, making them part of his own flesh and blood so as to know them from the inside and find their final solution. Repeatedly has he said that unless he had passed through every difficulty to which his disciples were subject and unless he had discovered and exemplified on his own pulses the conquest of them he could never assure us that they could be overcome by us.

All through his own ordeals — the trials of a spiritual pioneer, the first invoker and realiser of the hitherto unmanifest "Supermind" which holds the original truth, the perfect model of every term of the cosmic evolutionary travail — all through the challenges of his Yoga he had the liveliest sense of humour. The transcendental Bliss of the mystic in him he humanised into a laughter ready for any occasion. He has even joked unreservedly about himself. And his divine levity has often shot with sunshine the clouds in which so many of his disciples got wrapped time and again. When my friend Nirodbaran, whom he had dubbed "Man of Sorrows", wrote to him after a Darshan: "Your Himalayan austerity and grandeur take my breath away, making my heart palpitate", he replied: "O rubbish! I am austere and grand, grim and stern! every blasted thing I never was! I groan in an un-Aurobindian despair when I hear such things. What has happened to the common sense of all you people?"

Our age is one in which old pomp and ceremony are laughed to scorn. Sri Aurobindo's laughter has never been derisive, but he has made light of conventions and creeds that have outlived their use. The period in which he was educated in England — from his seventh to his twenty-first year — was, as he put it, "the heyday of materialism". The mind of materialism has been simultaneously a liberator from age-long superstitions that curb the scientific drive of rationality, and a confiner within a new dogmatism of physical experiment and mathematical formula. Sri

Aurobindo, the evolutionary Avatar, could not but allow the representative currents of modern thought to run through his being and come forth transfigured. In his early life he passed through a genuine phase of agnosticism. So he knew intimately how to deal with a mentality such as mine had once been. He has spoken of gigantic doubts through which he had to cut his way to spiritual certitude. He has even said, incredible as it may seem from the lips of the greatest contemporary Yogi: "I had no urge towards spirituality in me, I developed spirituality."

And he has followed up with the words: "I was incapable of understanding metaphysics. I developed into a philosopher. I had no eye for painting — I developed it by Yoga. I transformed my nature from what it was to what it was not. I did it by a special manner, not by a miracle and I did it to show what could be done and how it could be done. I did not do it out of any personal necessity of my own or by a miracle without any process. I say that if it is not so, then my Yoga is useless and my life was a mistake, a mere absurd freak of Nature without meaning or consequence."

Here, in the universal significance, the lesson of aspiring will-power for the whole world, with which he, who bore within himself the supreme status that has need of nothing, filled the labour of his incarnate days — here is what Sri Aurobindo preeminently means to me.

K. D. SETHNA

A REPORT ON SRI AUROBINDO'S PASSING

(On Nirodbaran's request, Udar who was one of the eye-witnesses of Sri Aurobindo's passing wrote an account of the event. Nirodbaran's recent book, Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo, incorporates the evidence of the opening part of the account. We give here the remaining portion in the writer's own words.)

Now we come to Sri Aurobindo's fatal illness. I call it so from the ordinary point of view, but actually it was something quite different. We know now that He had decided to leave His body because, as the Mother explained to us later, the quickest way at that time to help conquer Death for the world was to cross the barrier and work from the other side.

Having taken a decision He chose to carry it out in a "natural way" and allowed His body to be subjected to an "illness". He therefore did not apply His Force to cure it as He had done before with several ailments. Neither was any treatment given except during the last days when the situation became very serious. The doctors gave various medicines which I had to procure for them at any time of the day or night. This I was able to do with the assistance of a very mysterious person, a German, who had come to the Ashram at that time and was staying at Golconde. He called himself Dr. Kaplan.

In spite of all medical treatment, there was no improvement in Sri Aurobindo's physical condition and it became worse from day to day till he came to a state when oxygen had to be administered. I was asked to arrange for it. It was not available in Pondicherry and had to be obtained from Cuddalore. Pondicherry was still a French possession and there was some tension between the Indian Union and the Pondicherry Government. At the frontier, movement was restricted. It was here that Mr. R. K. Tandon, the Indian Consul General at Pondicherry, helped us a lot. He sent me to Cuddalore in his own car to get the oxygen equipment. When I brought it here I was shown how to use it.

It was about 10:00 on the night of 4th December 1950 that I got a call to go to Sri Aurobindo's room to work the oxygen equipment. I went at once and was present throughout that fateful night when Sri Aurobindo left His body, and I was witness to His last moments on earth.

I found Him in what appeared to me to be a state of coma. The oxygen was given to ease His difficult breathing.

The Mother was standing by the side of His bed. Champaklal, Dr. Sanyal, Dr. Nirod, Dr. Satyabrata, Dyuman and Purani were present in the room. I may be omitting someone else who was there but my memory does not go further.

At about midnight the Mother said that She would retire for the short rest of two

hours or so, that She used to take each night. Sri Aurobindo continued to be in a comatose condition from which, I understand, one does not come out, as it precedes the final state of death.

But at about 1:00 a.m. He suddenly woke up and asked Nirod the time. On being informed, he went back into his previous condition which I then understood to be that of a deep meditation and not a coma which is a state of unconsciousness.

Then Dr. Sanyal said that it was better to call the Mother. Dyuman went to Her room and called Her. She came in a few moments and stood again by the side of Sri Aurobindo's bed. After a while Sri Aurobindo woke up once more and asked Nirod to give him something to drink. Then He sank back. At 1.26 a.m. His breathing ceased.

Everyone and everything was completely still and silent. The Mother was like a rock of strength. At this most grave moment in the history of the world, She stood erect, unmoved, a tower of peace and fortitude. At that moment I saw in Her the fullness of Her Divinity and loved and worshipped Her in my heart to an extent I had never been able to do before.

Champaklal apparently had not yet fully realized the situation. When he did understand that Sri Aurobindo had left His body, he reacted strongly. The Mother soothed and consoled him.

Nolini, Pavitra and others were called. Then Dr. Sanyal asked me to do whatever was necessary. Dyuman and I began settling things around Sri Aurobindo. The Mother asked me to look after all the arrangements.

Meanwhile the news had spread in the Ashram and, as soon as Sri Aurobindo's body was properly laid out, people began to come in. All the doors were opened and everyone was free to enter. It was the morning of 5th December.

We were now constantly going to the Mother for instructions. It was at this time that She told us many important things and particularly about Sri Aurobindo's decision to cross over, of which I have written earlier.

She wanted Sri Aurobindo's "Samadhi" to be under the Service Tree in the Ashram courtyard. She gave detailed instructions, saying how deep we should go and that we should construct a waterproof chamber down below with a waterproof cement slab cover and then an air-space with another waterproof cement slab cover. Then earth was to be filled over this till it came above the surface of the ground, and around it the walls of the Samadhi were to be built.

The Mother also told us to prepare a fine case for His body. I got the Harpagon Workshop to start making one in solid thick rosewood with brass straps and brass rings on the side to take the ropes.

We started working from the morning of the 5th. We decided to build the Samadhi ourselves and not with paid labour — so all of us got down to it. The ground was hard — very hard — and breaking it was quite a job. Here also Dr. Kaplan showed his spirit and all admired his zest. It was decided that the burial would take place on the evening of the 5th. Discolouration of the body generally sets in within 24 hours;

35 hours is the outside limit. But when it was about time for the burial there was no sign of it at all. In fact, even though life had left the body, it was suffused shortly afterwards with a golden light and Sri Aurobindo's face shone with it. It was not the face of death but of a glowing life. The Doctors who examined the body confirmed that, quite contrary to all medical experience, there was no sign of discolouration.

The Mother then said Sri Aurobindo had lived so long in the Supramental Consciousness that it had come down into His body and made it shine with a golden light. But She added that one could not be sure how long the light would remain and in case it remained for a long time it was necessary to protect the body against dust and airborne insects. So She asked me to prepare a large glass covering to go over the whole body in a way which would not disturb it. Immediately a man was sent to Madras to get the necessary large sheets of glass and through Dyuman we arranged for the silver angle strips to join them to form a cover.

In the meantime we thought it would be good if we could keep the room temperature low by arranging large blocks of ice round about with fans to blow over them. We did this without consulting the Mother. As soon as She saw it, She asked us to remove everything at once: She did not want any artificial measures to be taken at all. If the body was to remain without perishing, it would be by His will alone. Only on the morning of the 9th the doctors found on the back some signs which according to them, were an indication that discolouration had set in. I protested vehemently, though I was a layman. I insisted that the only true sign of the end was the unmistakable odour of which there was not the slightest trace.

When the Mother saw that I was protesting so strongly, She took me by the hand and led me to His body, then asked me if I could still see the golden light that had been there all those days. I had to admit that it had gone and that the face was assuming a bluish tone. Then the Mother said that it was not because of the doctors' verdict but because Sri Aurobindo Himself had given the sign to Her that it was now time to bury His body. I had to accept this and the burial was fixed to take place on the evening of the 9th.

When His rosewood case was ready, we had the inner sides lined with pure silver sheets and over them a white satin covering was put. Cushions were placed on the bottom of the case.

When it was time, we lifted His body from His bed and laid it in the case. I had my arms right under His body and they were quite wet with the fluid that had come out of it. The fluid had a fine perfume.

Before the lid was screwed on, the Mother concentrated over the body for quite some time. After that, the lid was fastened down to make an airtight joint. On the top of the case was the symbol of Sri Aurobindo in gold.

It required several strong people to carry the case down to the vault. New Manila ropes, one-inch thick, were attached to the brass rings and the box was lowered in. I went down into the pit, which was large and roomy, to place it centrally on

the heavily cemented waterproof floor. The first layer of cement slabs was laid and joined with waterproof cement — the second layer similarly was laid over the air-space. Then, starting with Champaklal, the French Governor and the Indian Consul General, all those present got into the pit and scattered a handful of soil, till there was quite a mound around which the walls of the Samadhi were built.

I took all the needed precautions to have a waterproof room for the Samadhi: two sealed waterproof roofs — the case itself airtight — the heavy brass rings and the new strong Manila ropes — because I firmly believed that the body would not decompose.

Even though Sri Aurobindo has left His body, His Presence is very real and powerful in the Ashram and even outside it. We have also his assurance to the Mother that He will come back to us in a Supramental Body built in the supramental way. How this will happen we do not know, but He will certainly come and then, along with the Mother, He will lead us to the glorious age of the Supramental Transformation of humanity.

UDAR

DEFECTS AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

MOST of us are hardly aware of our real defects. There was a time when I could not imagine there were defects in me. I was always right and the other wrong. I know there are many who feel that way. As one grows, however, life-experience teaches through a series of shocks and disillusionments something of the truth of himself. One begins to admit to himself some weaknesses which are too glaring to escape notice. But that is only the first step, a new straight view which reveals something of one's nature. It is really when one turns to spiritual life and develops sincerity that he comes to realise the existence of more — in fact much more—serious defects, defects that he would not like to admit to others. All the same, it is a measure of his progress that he becomes conscious of the full extent of his failings, the nature of his recalcitrant parts, the hold of the unspiritual elements on his being. That, too, is not the end. As one develops in the inner consciousness, imbibes more and more of its purity, sincerity and truth, this awareness of his radical defects — especially when they are unspiritual or anti-divine — becomes galling. Times without number I have condemned myself, abused myself, felt ashamed to look into the face of my Maker. There would be a sense of helpless defeat on such occasions. However, I remember Sri Aurobindo's injunction that one should not make too much of one's defects, and I look forward. I appeal to the Mother in person and in silent prayer and She sees me through.

All this came to my mind vividly this morning when I had to talk to the Mother about a friend in similar difficulties. This friend has always impressed me with something noble in her being, a certain dignity with which she bears some unmistakable suffering. She is gifted in many ways and, I would say, the richest gift of God that she has is *sincerity*. That is why she has always been conscious of a strong trait in her personality which, she says, is sadistic, perverse, hostile to all that is divine or what leads to the Divine. This awareness acquired a deep poignancy after her coming to our Ashram. She began to undergo untold psychological suffering at every remembrance of this evil in her and a consuming struggle ensued. She did not know whether it was right for her to stay here at all in this atmosphere of love, beauty and harmony built by the Mother. As it often happens in such crises, dark thoughts of all kinds, especially self-condemnatory, overwhelmed her. Fortunately, she wrote the Mother a frank and soulful letter expressing her state of mind, her own evaluation of her deficiencies and hostilities, mental and vital, and prayed to the Mother to help her get rid of this "devil" in her. "What should I do now?" She asked pathetically.

When I put this matter before the Mother, She was moved. She went into a trance and, when She came out of it, She asked me if my friend could pray. I said Yes. Then She said, "When these attacks come, let her pray to the Divine to make her worthy of Him."

She added, with emphasis, "I have done something. I shall write a prayer for her."

And She wrote in French:

27-10-1972

Seigneur de bonté, rends moi digne de Ta Grace.

She wrote in English:

27-10-1972

Lord of Mercy, make me worthy of Thy Grace.

Indeed this is a Mantra for everyone of us who has evolved enough to be conscious of his radical defects and has the courage to admit them and the sincerity to want to get rid of them.

M. P. PANDIT

NEW HOME

THIS mortal being's unglazed stone
Is not our own original home.
Other it was — an immaculate shade,
From some eternal sun we strayed.

Return, O heart, to splendid youth,
The passion of its fiery truth,
Suffices not a rapture's call
In buds aspiring to God's All.

Glory-bloom love's immortal might,
Revel in cosmic rhythm's delight,
Leap divine the wide world free,
Lie immersed in Mother's conquering sea.

Thou knowest the Real's abode of gold —
Make here the sun's great truth unfold.

DICK

THE GOLDEN PURUSHA

A REVIEW-ARTICLE

THIS year marks the centenary of Sri Aurobindo's birthday and all over the country his message has echoed and re-echoed through the mass media such as radio, television and the Press. All through the year we were encompassed by so vociferous a cloud of witnesses to his greatness that it seemed as if the speakers on the radio had exhausted their treasuries of adulatory prose; tributes were furbished up to ensure that no facet of his many-sided greatness was omitted from their praise. Since the appearance of his works a large and lucrative industry has been founded on his spiritual gospel. University professors have discovered in his mighty works an inexhaustible quarry to construct research theses and ensure increments, promotions and eminence for themselves. The printing industry, too, has not lagged behind. Special supplements have rolled from the presses; new editions of his works have proliferated. Amid this spate of reminiscences, orations and panegyrics one small book stands out which the reading public has been awaiting with keen anticipation:

Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo by Nirodbaran.¹

We have read the author's earlier volumes of correspondence with Sri Aurobindo and the faithful record of Sri Aurobindo's informal talks with the circle of disciples who attended on him after the fateful fracture of his right leg which tore down the walls of his inveterate recessiveness and woke the world to the re-emergence of a Light and Power which had once shot across the political firmament and had disappeared completely from the public view.

Sri Aurobindo withdrew from active politics in 1910 and settled down in the far remoteness of Pondicherry and left the nation guessing about his future aims and plans. Then in 1914 he launched his philosophical monthly journal and the veil was partially lifted. After six years the *Arya* stopped appearing and again the curtain of mystery fell and there were murmurs: "Why doesn't he take into his hands the reins of political struggle and lead India to her goal of freedom with the magic wand of his spiritual power?" There were all sorts of conjectures and wild surmises in the air but no ray of hope about his future reappearance broke the darkness. I distinctly remember the sense of awe and mystery with which I heard from my father that Sri Aurobindo was the wisest man alive in India and that he alone could lead her. I was then barely 15 years old. The image of a naked ascetic living in the deep recesses of a cave doing tapasya haunted our imaginations and the far-off hope of his coming out after sufficient accumulation of spiritual power and liberating the nation from the foreign yoke thrilled our young hearts.

¹ Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry, pp. 289.

Now I take a long leap and land on the year 1941. One day I went to the Punjab Public Library, Lahore, and saw in the cupboard reserved for the latest additions three ponderous volumes with white dust jackets entitled *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo. I was overborne with joy and went bounding home to inform my eldest brother, a deep student of philosophy, about it. With breathless excitement I sputtered out, "A new book by Sri Aurobindo has come!" "Has it?" he asked equally thrilled and said, "Go and bring it at once." Reading the first chapter new hopes of great possibilities began to pulsate in my soul. This first chapter is perhaps the only philosophical writing that gives to the world and human life a real purpose. All the ancient and recent spiritual masters had shown the path out of this vale of tears but none had so far revealed the meaning and purpose of our birth on this earth. Here for the first time was flung open the gateway to the life divine. At the end of a small book, *Thoughts and Glimpses*, was the advertisement about this *magnum opus*, "The book will verily be the new Veda of the Divine Life, which is Sri Aurobindo's message to humanity. It indicates how conditions of life and Nature are now not only favourable to, but are pressing for, the inevitable fulfilment of the highest spiritual aspirations of man through the emergence of divinised Superman and a life of integral humanity of which Sri Aurobindo is the pathfinder." What a heartening message to spur us on and put away care for the thousand weaknesses of the flesh! And when it appeared something impossible for me, a bundle of ineradicable defects — the words rang, "What I cannot do now is the sign of what I shall do hereafter. The sense of impossibility is the beginning of all possibilities." I was at that time in my early twenties and a long vista lay ahead and the soul responded with full vigour and a blazing intensity to the beckoning vision.

Now I have before me the history of the twelve years (1938-1950) as it unfolded itself in the room inhabited by this Golden Purusha. So far we have drawn inspiration from his picture with eyes fixed in an unblinking stare dissolving our massed darkness and lightening the burden of mortality which weighs us down, but now we meet him in flesh and blood — calm, unconcerned with his physical suffering, answering the questions of his attendants with a serene impersonality, ever-compassionate, patient and tolerant, an embodiment of Love and Light. The author recreates the peaceful atmosphere pervading the room in a way that makes us feel grateful to him for enabling us to leave behind our petty world of rasping difficulties and enter

Into that pure unknown world of love
Where injury cannot come —

and hear the voice of the Master whisper

Be thankful thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here. (Wordsworth)

For these twelve years encompassed a clash of destinies on a world-scale, the German war-machine roaring on through Europe and threatening Asia, the Japanese invasion of Burma and threat to India and India herself in the midst of tumult and intrigue, dangerously warring faiths, passionate loyalties and equally passionate treacheries and, to crown all, the British rule coming to a precipitate end, leaving the Indians alone with their ancient, complex and still unresolved pursuit of unity and nationhood. The web of events in modern history is, in fact, not only so intricately interwoven but so extended in scope that one marvels at the controlled manner in which the author handles the shifting focus of his now narrow and now wide-angle lens. Nirodbaran started life as a medical man but later discovered his true vocation in poetry and literature. A rare combination, indeed, but not without precedents. Robert Bridges and Sir Thomas Browne were also doctors to start with and then made memorable contributions as men of letters. Like Thomas Browne Nirodbaran writes a finely tempered prose — devotion balanced by fine and acute objectivity. He endows his account with all the glow and charm of ardent devotion for his master seen with the nostalgic hindsight of one who has been cherishing his most intimate memories of a Divine Being who graced our earth after a lapse of millenniums. If Krishna came when the Dharma fell into disgrace Sri Aurobindo also came when a civilisation was disintegrating and with his Divine Love and Wisdom gave to a sinking humanity an anchor of stability.

The author in his Foreword has restricted his audience to the devotees of Sri Aurobindo because it is they who have importuned him to present the figure of this large pylon on which so many cables are strung and, now that he is no more present physically, to lift the veil from his private life. And anticipating some carping criticisms he writes, "An 'outsider' may find the book filled in places with devotional outpourings, miraculous phenomena and mystical overtones". Perhaps, a reading public addicted to muck may react antipathetically. And I too, while engrossed in the book, have caught myself asking the question, "How would a non-devotee respond to this vividly and artistically painted picture of a Divine Being, who not only came to hew the path to Immortality but actively laboured to make it accessible to our tread?" Well, the answer invariably was, in the words of the poet:

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty... (Wordsworth)

And with what feelings did I lay down the book? I can only repeat what Sanjay said to the blind king:

"O king, remembering, remembering this wonderful and sacred discourse of Keshava and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

"Remembering, remembering also that most marvellous form of Hari, great is my wonder, O king. I rejoice again and again."

And what again is the figure that fires the imagination and haunts the memory?
Here are Sri Aurobindo's own lines:

A larger-seeing man with nobler heart,
A golden vessel of the incarnate Truth,
The executor of the divine attempt
Equipped to wear the earthly body of God,
Communicant and prophet and lover and king.

(*Savitri*, Bk. III, Canto IV)

I am sure this treasure will grace every literary shelf.

(*To be continued*)

RAVINDRA KHANNA

SONG TO SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO, compassion bright!
I strain to you across the night,
I wait for you who are the Lord,
Who guide and watch us, your wandering horde.

Sri Aurobindo, light most rare,
Known only to those who deeply care!
We look to the ever greater beyond,
And pray to you, "Lord, lead us on."

Sri Aurobindo, I am but a child
Who clings to you — the way is wild.
I trip and fall and cry to you —
You are the Saviour Grace of the Blue!

Sri Aurobindo, shepherd of man,
Watching us who graze from your hand,
Giving one and giving all,
To none do you refuse the call.

Sri Aurobindo, I love you alone,
You came for us who have sought the unknown.
We who forget the way we've come,
Return us to the One, our home!

Sri Aurobindo, help from the height,
We wander feeding on your might.
We look to star on star above
And bow to your refuge-feet of love.

Sri Aurobindo standing there,
Pillar of wisdom calm and fair,
Waiting — watching us through the night,
Collecting us for the morrow's light.

Sri Aurobindo, will you shelter me?
I seek my rest beneath your tree.
I've journeyed far to meet your hands,
To kiss your feet and walk your lands.

Sri Aurobindo, your cattle am I,
I come to pray, to feel your sky.
From life to life my heart has run
In search of lands where all are one!

A LOOK BEHIND

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY ASHRAM DAYS

(2)

ONE DAY AMRITA was cowed down by the Mother's strong reproach as he narrated to Her my act of prudence in a case of "tipping". I had stopped the gift and was thus feeling very proud of my wisdom. He told me later that evening that the Mother had been extremely displeased and asked, "Who is he? It is I who decide things in the Ashram and not he. Send for that electrician tomorrow morning, and let the man be paid *by him* Rs. 2 instead of 8 Annas only." Another bombshell! It was clearly another case of my own misfire. The matter was very simple. In those days, perhaps now also, the electric house-installations were done by ourselves. The outside connection, with the main line of the street, was being given by the city municipality workmen. It was arranged according to the Government rules. But in practice we did everything by ourselves. Only, a man from the Electricity Office came and stood by to watch, and declare that everything was all right. And for this august presence of his, 8 Annas were being paid to him. It so happened one day that the municipal man did not turn up. After waiting long, I finished the job as usual, before the evening, without this Witness Brahman. Quite late, when it was all dark, a man appeared and, finding everything well done, was glad, and went away. Amrita was the "Home Minister" in those days. That meant specially that any payment of money for household affairs was done through him. He told me that the Mother paid them 8 Annas each time they came. I knew it also, as on some other occasions Amrita had paid the same. But this time, I was very displeased due to the delay of the man, as it disturbed a lot of other work for me. So I argued with Amrita that we were not obliged to pay. I said, "The Mother is kind to people, so She pays. But the fellows do not even bring their ladders or tools or connecting wires, they bring nothing. They tell us to do the job, and for our presents to them they are very eager. Even then the man should have come early, on time. Why on earth does he come so late? Only to get the tips? So this time we will teach him a lesson. We are not going to give anything, and it is not the same man who comes generally. It is a new man, and does not even ask for it." Amrita, who was always childlike in everything, appreciated my wise understanding; I also felt flattered to find such a noble appreciator. But alas! as usual, man can only propose, — God is there to dispose. And in this case also there was no departure from that maxim! Only, it was not known to me beforehand how God would dispose. I prevented no more than 8 Annas from being spent, and because of that the Mother increased the sum four times and made *me* pay it to the very man, by calling him from his place! My prestige went down to the dust! But

the question remained in me all along. "So, the Divine also encourages tipping!"

About six months later, one night, at about two o'clock, Sri Aurobindo's room light blew its fuse. Although kerosene lamps and candles were always kept ready under the Mother's direct supervision, yet She preferred to have the electric light for Him. Very often it was a fuse wire that got burnt, and it was quickly renewed. I had the unique opportunity in those days to follow the Mother in the dark, while She flashed a torch from fuse to fuse in different places upstairs in Her rooms, and verify the fuses or renew them. Most of the fuse boxes were up near the ceiling. I had to climb a bamboo ladder, and the Mother held it with Her two hands and put a foot against the bottom of the ladder so that it might not slip down. In the beginning I used to feel a little hesitation: how to jump over Her stretched hands holding my ladder? But she said, "Go quick, don't waste time, Sri Aurobindo is waiting." In those days He worked the whole night, writing letters and replying to questions and commenting on our departmental reports.

Now, one night, all the lights went off and yet all the fuses were found intact, even the street fuse connecting the Meditation House was there. So the Mother told me to run to the Power House which in those days was near the light-house on the seaside, and, if I found a man there, to tell him to renew the next street connection. I did so. It was all dark. But there was light in the Power House. I saw nobody in the front room. I found a haggard man asleep in a corner, perhaps due to an overdose of liquor. I told him, in my broken Tamil, "Ashram light fused! Sri Aurobindo." The man at once jumped up, and exclaimed "Ashramam!" He hurried to take a ladder and then rushed to a nearby connecting post and renewed the fuse. By the time I returned, there was light in Sri Aurobindo's room. The Mother must have gone up during this half an hour, arranged Sri Aurobindo's light, and come down again to the back door to let me in. I kept the ladder down in the corner of the garage. It was Her custom to let me out by the same door, and bless me with the words "Bonne nuit," and then "You have still at least two hours to sleep; go and rest."

It was now that I understood why the Mother was particular about giving tips to the electricity people. In those old days the Pondicherry Government's electric lines were all rotten. If it rained a little, most of the lights were off. For Sri Aurobindo, the Mother took special care to keep all the wirings in Her rooms repaired and in order. Often She called from Her window at night. It meant the fuse was gone. By the time one reached the back door of the Ashram She was already waiting down there. And in all these affairs no noise was to be made; She was very particular about not disturbing Pavitra while he slept, and about others downstairs not waking up.

Now in such cases, a haggard man, a drunkard, was very important in helping Sri Aurobindo's work. And what would such a man appreciate more than some money for his drink or for anything else? So my theory of not tipping did not stand any longer.

During the last World War naturally petrol was rationed and motorcar driving restricted in the Ashram. Actually there was hardly any driving of cars, except during the Mother's own outings in the afternoons, which also were not regular in those days. Only an old French car, a Renault, which for long was the car that the Mother used for her own drives, was now on the road for Pavitra's goings out in the town on the Mother's errands. Lately it was also put at the disposal of a devotee who looked after the Cazanove Garden. It was he who had bought and offered the garden to the Mother. He seemed to have been a good agriculturist who made a few successful experiments, one of which at least I remember. He grew radish for the first time in the Ashram soil; and the day when the first crop reached the Mother, She was delighted like a small child and ordered it to be boiled at once. That was done, and Pavitra made a salad (sprinkling a little salt over it and doing nothing else!) and hurried with the big bowl to Her. Later he said that both the Mother and Sri Aurobindo relished it very much. Anyway, Mr. R of the garden became very friendly with me, because I was the only "genius" (knowing nothing, of course) in the old days helping Pavitra in all the Ashram affairs, specially those concerning machines, the workshop and cars. R required the Renault each afternoon to go to the garden. On some days, when I wanted a bit of change and my work was less, I also accompanied him, sitting in front by the side of the driver, the only driver then, who from a small boy in the workshop had grown up into a young man and learnt driving from Pavitra. So he was also very much in tune with me. After a few such trips R came to know that I did not know driving and that I was very eager to learn it but did not find any opportunity. He exclaimed with surprise, "How strange! You are managing the workshop, looking after the cars and yet you do not know driving. It is regrettable. And here is your grand opportunity. I shall be busy in the garden for at least an hour more; during that time you can go out with the car and the driver, and learn the steering first and then the gear changing etc. Car driving is easier than riding on a cycle. I learned it in one day." — "But I need the Mother's permission," said I. He now added more fuel to the fire of my temptation with the words, "You people are very funny! Do you think that the Mother will be displeased if She hears that you have learned driving? She will be rather pleased that you are not missing the proper opportunity to do your line of work better. The little that I have known by coming in contact with Her is that She always likes people to be enthusiastic to learn and do useful things. I am a practical man, so I always value things from that angle..." I felt doubly encouraged to put a veil on my consciousness, because all that he had said was true and yet here one who was working for Her could not and should not jump into anything without Her knowledge and sanction. That is a simple truth against which I have been stumbling all along, due to my impulse-driven enthusiasm, and thus creating difficulties. In this case also it was not otherwise.

So from that day I went out of the garden in the car with the driver, on one side conscience pricking and on the other the vital impulse clouding it over with the enthusiasm to learn driving. I also did not take more than a day to learn steering. On my

return R was very pleased to see that I had heeded his advice and did use the opportunity well. Thus within a week's time I learnt the three gear-changings, which was rather a complicated job and required long practice. But now I took up courage to take my friend to the garden and back home all by my own driving, keeping the driver always by my side to give me the proper directions, but very cautiously leaving the car in his hands when nearing the Ashram, so as to avoid people's curious eyes. Within about a month's time I could drive the car at ease, and felt very thrilled at my achievement. R was no less happy with his own good advice and at the cleverness of the novice who had learned so quickly and so quietly. Now the question was how to bring the matter before the Mother in the most favourable way and get Her sanction for a licence. I knew in my heart of hearts that, whatever be the advice of my friend, the Mother would not allow me to have a licence if She came to know that I had begun driving Her car without Her knowledge. So the best thing was to wait for the right occasion. And it did not take too long to come. Pavitra had to go to the same garden one day to inspect the oil engine of the water pump, that was not working, and for this I had to accompany him because I was to carry out his instructions with the workmen. So, after the job was finished, just before returning to the Ashram, I narrated to him the whole story of my new adventure, and requested him that he let me drive the car up to the Ashram, so that he could see for himself whether I deserved having a licence and accordingly to plead with the Mother in my favour. He agreed to my passionate appeal; but after we passed the Savana Mills, which are now the Swadeshi Mills, he told me to let the driver take charge, as without the Mother's permission he did not feel free. He said that what I had wanted had been done: he had found my driving satisfactory. But he did not agree to speak to the Mother about it himself. He would only give his opinion in my favour if the Mother asked for it. That meant that I was to take the initiative or the risk! To my disappointment the matter dropped there. But as usual with such impure vital impulses, when the desire is successful in the first lap, it becomes impatient to run faster, and one day I became a dare-devil, I took back R to his house, the present house of our Sudhirda opposite Harpagon, and brought the car straight to the garage. Within minutes the news reached the Mother, although I had noticed nobody on the road! When I came up, the Mother was waiting for me. I had the premonition of danger although there was no sign of it for me on Her face. My heart was throbbing faster. "Is it that you are driving the car?" She asked me. — "Yes, Mother, I was trying". — "But you have a licence?" — "No, Mother, not yet, so I told Pavitra to ask for your permission to get one." — "But how did you learn without a licence?" — "I was not driving alone, the driver was always with me, sitting by my side to guide me" — "Even so, you need a learner's licence, if you drive a car on the public road. You have violated the traffic regulation, for which you are liable to prosecution. Moreover, it goes against the Ashram's reputation. I shall be held responsible for encouraging such acts of deliberate violation of the rules. And that apart, what if you make an accident?" — I said in self-defence and with pride, "Mother, I never drive rashly. The driver is

very particular and he controls me at each point. I have been taking the whole family of R in the car and even his friends who have come recently, and I drive very carefully. I have your protection, I know. So nothing can happen. So, Mother, please permit me to have a licence now, not for learning but for actual driving." Now She became quite serious outwardly and said, "After all that you have been doing, you dare ask me still to let you have a licence? It is already a blessing that you didn't make an accident, and the police did not round you up! An impulsive, bad-tempered individual, always at the top of your strained nerves! I wonder how without asking me you dared to take so many people out in the car! Do you think the lives of people are like toys to play with? I am fully responsible for the safety of their lives here, and you are playing with them, as if it was all fun! Do you know that here in Pondicherry, even if you are a very good driver, others will come by the wrong side and dash against your car, and blame you for the accident? So, now forget all that, and from today you are not to touch the car any more." Almost a thunder on my head! But I begged of Her, "How can it be so, Mother? I am to look after the upkeep of the car, so please allow me to handle it inside the garage at least." Very reluctantly She gave me that much permission.

One day the driver was absent and the visit to Cazanove was urgent. So I thought, "Let me try to have a last chance." I went up and told the Mother that the driver was absent, but before I started the next word She told me, "So no car today." — "But Mother, R is anxious to go to the garden, as he has got urgent work there." — "Arrange a rickshaw for him." Still hoping against hope I asked, "Mother, permit me one day to take him. So many days I took even his family and friends without your permission, and nothing happened. Today I want to go with your permission, and with him only, so there can't be any danger at all." — But this time She was very firm and said, "I say, you are never to drive a car, and this is my last word to you!" — I hurried down without a word, and sent word to R through a boy that as the car was not in order that day we were arranging to send him by a rickshaw, on the Mother's order. On other occasions, since the Mother had stopped my driving the car, I did not accompany R but sent the car with the driver, which meant that I was busy. I never let him know the truth. But on that day I felt sorry to receive such a strong blow from the Mother. And that was the way I was taking things from Her in those days! Almost unbelievable to me now!

I did not remain downstairs in the workshop for a long time. I came up and sat at my table, a bit unmindful and withdrawn. Suddenly I was surprised to hear the familiar footsteps of the Mother. Unexpectedly She had come again. I understood that She had felt the reaction of the fellow. I at once stood up, this time quite calm and normal, and sorry for my conduct. She said, very sweetly but firmly, "Why don't you understand that when I prevent you from doing something, it is all for your own good? I see accident written on your face. You are sure to make one. So I don't want you to drive a car. And, after all, what is there in driving a car? Can't you obey me for such a small thing?" This time I was really ashamed and begged pardon of Her and promised that I would never drive a car again. She said, with all Her compassion, "Ah!

that's like a good boy. Now it is all over." Since then, I have at times had chances from other quarters to drive cars, even some have offered to teach me on their new model cars. The desire in me has kept coming to the surface. But somehow up till now, at least one of Her commands I have succeeded in obeying and now the desire seems to have disappeared for good. Today I look back with surprise and shame and almost refuse to believe that so much of Her time and Grace was wasted by me in this and many other things.

M

THE FOOT IN THE DOOR

BEING of the future, sing to us your song
of quiet fulfilment.
Remember in our world we longed
but knew not how to be like you.
It was our striving nursed you into life, uncovered you,
brought our own death to give way to your deathless song.
So sing it to us now, a song of victory
to us with godhead lurking in our eyes, who could not wait to see
our longing fructify.

But wait, what trembling shakes the case?
What is it tries to overthrow the past
ahead of time?
My song no sooner heard is answered!
I did not mean immediate occupation,
never said come, this moment come
to send my being into throes of death and birth
and strip the covering now to let self out, ahead of time.
I meant a wistful musing song on noble man extinct
and cannot take these strong convulsions —
or I will die.
Yes, yes it's true I sang that I would die for you.
... But now? not now!
Would you extinguish noble man?
Yes? There's no escape for quaking knees and fluttering eyes?
The case must break, then I must break and present-future break through me.

I must, half-fainting, take my foot from the stopped door and let
 the god I summoned in though he is death.
 A god! What is this god with fluttering pulse and puling cry, half dead
 from my resistance? All right, come in or both of us will die.
 Tonight I called you and I die. You stand so weak, so helpless at my door,
 your quaking gives me strength to go, you half-wrought god
 so bleeding and benumbed. Already you grow strong and glow as I withdraw.
 "All right," I hiss, "but don't forget," I hoarsely wheeze, "to sing,
 to sing your song." I'm half-way gone but I repeat
 in batlike squeak, "Your song.
 Once you're established and we're gone
 sing for me one song."
 But what is this?
 My voice recovers and grows strong,
 it lifts and dips and chatters
 and now it glides into its own with quietly pulsing note.
 Why, I can sing.
 It's I will sing that song.

MAGGI

TO A BROTHER ON HIS BIRTHDAY

Two small children born of and being borne
 by the Same and Only Mother
 Run with delighted skipping pace to her lap.
 There tender arms hold close to her Heart
 not only two small young bodies
 But all their secret inner needs
 does She encompass in her wide, loving,
 knowing way.
 And thus does She in embracing both to herself
 Press also in embrace one's innocent heart to his brother's.

TIMOTHY JACOB

SRI AUROBINDO AND INDIA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM

The World Context

THE future of India's economic life depends to a large extent, says Sri Aurobindo, on the view we take of the world's future. The world is destined to move in the direction of a growing unity in the political as well as in the economic and cultural fields, culminating at the end in some form of world state whether of the rigorous unitary pattern or a looser type of federal union. Then the pattern of economic life with its sole insistence on national well-being without regard to the claims of the world as a whole cannot obviously be the ultimate end. In a total world scheme, for example, "the advantages of self-sufficiency and predominance...would lose much of their stringency and the advantages of a free give and take would become more easily visible.... Throughout the world, the idea and fact of union once definitely prevailing, unity of interests would be more clearly seen and the greater advantage of agreement and mutual participation in a naturally harmonised life over the feverish artificial prosperity created by a stressing of separative barriers."¹ It is conceivable that each country would continue for some time to produce its own absolute necessities. But in the end it would probably be felt that this was no more necessary than for Wales or Scotland, for instance, to produce all its own necessities independently of the rest of the British Isles or for one State in India to be an economic unit independent of the rest of the country.

"Each would produce and distribute only what it could to the best advantage, most naturally, most efficiently and most economically, for the common need and demand of mankind in which its own would be inseparably included. It would do this according to a system settled by the common will of mankind through its State government and under a method made uniform in its principles, however variable in local detail, so as to secure the simplest, smoothest and most rational working of a necessarily complicated machinery."²

But we are at present far away from any such rational order. And so long as a new world order does not replace the present international system and it continues unchanged in basic principle, the normal relations between one nation and another must remain relations of rivalry and strife, "or rather a confused tangle of exchange and inter-dependence and hostile separatism."³ The main features of economic life under such conditions are bound to remain what they have been in the immediate past: self-defence against each other by a wall of tariffs, a race for closed

markets and fields of exploitation, a struggle for place or predominance in markets and fields which could not be monopolised, an attempt at mutual interpenetration in spite of tariff walls. Even when this does not lead to another global war,

“the state of covert war will still continue; it may even take new and disastrous forms.... Deprived of other weapons, the nations are bound to have increasing resort to the weapon of commercial pressure, as did Capital and Labour in their chronic state of ‘pacific’ struggle within the limits of the national life.”⁴

In extreme cases, this might well lead to such disastrous expedients as a commercial boycott, the refusal of capital or machinery, the prohibition of all or any needed imports, or even a naval blockade leading, if long maintained, to industrial ruin or national starvation. These drastic means have in the recent past been used by one nation against another, both in Asia and Europe, and the experiment may be renewed in the future, if the need arises.

The Fundamental Issues

In assessing the needs of India's economic future, the present international situation in its economic aspects has therefore to be fully recognised. The primary features of this situation are in the main two, namely, commercialism and the struggle between Capital and Labour for the control of the nation's riches.

“Together they have swallowed up or cast out their rivals and are now engaged in a fratricidal conflict for sole possession...in which the ultimate triumph of labour ... seems to be the visible writing of Fate ... Politics, government itself are becoming more and more a machinery for the development of an industrialised society, divided between the service of bourgeois capitalism and the office of a half-involuntary channel for the incoming of economic socialism.”⁵

It is indeed suggested in some quarters that the end of commercialism is near, and that the fratricidal strife between Capital and Labour will soon give place to an eternal amity. This, Sri Aurobindo suggests, is to say the least a premature hope. The economic motive, the basic idea dominating commercialism, still remains the one effective motive of modern life. “The propelling impulsion remains untouched and unchanged.... Nor is this spirit likely to die as yet by exhaustion, for it has not yet fulfilled itself and is growing, not declining in force.”⁶

The struggle between Labour and Capital was the one dominating factor in the economic life of the West before the Great war. There was a temporary lull in the fight owing to the need for concentration of national life on winning the war. But the old antagonism reappeared immediately after the war was over, this time in a more dangerous form than before. Formerly, what Labour demanded was mainly an

improvement in the working conditions and some association in the government of the country. Now, as Sri Aurobindo points out, "a new idea has arisen, the dominance, the rule of Labour,...a rapid transition to another order of society".⁷ The new idea bases itself on the view that labour, not wealth, must be the governing principle.

How far this will go is still left uncertain, in spite of the phenomenal success of Socialism which was thought at one time to represent the complete victory of the Labour idea. But Sri Aurobindo makes the point that there is no inevitable connection between Socialism and the dominance of Labour. This is proved by the fact that even in countries like Russia where the socialistic idea is supposed to have reached its acme, "the bourgeois habit of the predominance of commercialism has been taken up and continued on an even larger scale."⁸ And it is obvious that the socialistic idea has not been accepted in its entirety by all the nations of the world. In America, for example, the attachment to the capitalistic system of society remains complete and one can foresee little possibility of any abatement of its intensity. We therefore are entitled to accept as indisputable Sri Aurobindo's conclusion that at least in the immediately foreseeable future, the world is likely to remain divided between "a congeries of socialistic states on the one hand, and on the other, of states coordinating and controlling a modified capitalism".⁹

It is in the light of this possibility and in the context of the world situation as it actually exists today that the problem of India's economics has to be considered.

The Indian Scene

"Economics," says Sri Aurobindo, "is not a mere abstract science; in its application to the ordinary questions in life, we must take into consideration the peculiarities of a country or nation."¹⁰

We might dwell a little on the peculiarities of the Indian situation in the light of this remark. The first thing that strikes one is that India was not always counted among the "developing" nations of the world. On the contrary, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out and Indian scholars are now trying to marshall all the evidence in support, "no people before modern times reached a higher splendour of wealth, commercial prosperity, material appointment."¹¹ Nor was the idea of obligatory poverty — we are not speaking here of voluntary abnegations on the part of particular individuals or religious groups — ever held up as the ideal in the great days of India's culture. The Upanishad speaks of Yajnavalkya "calm and ironic, taking to himself with both hands, without attachment worldly possessions and spiritual riches".¹² Valmiki, our great epic poet, includes among the signs of a just and enlightened state of society "not only universal education, morality and spirituality, but this also that there shall be none who is compelled to eat coarse food, none uncrowned and unanointed, or who lives a mean and petty slave of luxuries".¹³ Not poverty, but not to be attached to property was the Indian ideal. This is a point of capital importance

which India must bear in mind in shaping her economic life in the future.

The next point of importance is to note the causes that have led to our present state of abject poverty. India's poverty, as Sri Aurobindo pointed out as early as 1907, has been a direct result of the British occupation. It has persisted, and will continue to stick to us, he warns, until we cure the attachment to poverty that has been foisted on the Indian mind by a false view of spirituality.¹⁴

That the "blessings" of British rule were purchased at a heavy cost to our economic life is now admitted by most impartial students of economic history. For the benefit of those who may not be aware of the facts, we quote an extract from *Bande-mataram* about the situation created in Bengal in the early years of the British occupation:

"As early as 1769, the Directors (of the East India Company) sent orders that the silk-winders should be made to work in the Company's factories, and prohibited from working outside under severe penalties by the authority of the Government.... Prohibitive duties soon began to be imposed on imports from India (India used to send to England a large quantity of valuable cottons and silks), whilst English goods were forced on the market practically free of duty.... Listen to Wilson, the historian of the times. 'Had not such prohibitive duties existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset and could scarcely have been again set in action, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of India.' India could not retaliate.... The foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competition with which he could not have contended on equal terms."¹⁵

England thus destroyed "by the most unfair competition known in history all industries of the country which were the main source of its wealth. And the innumerable people who depended on them for their livelihood were rendered destitute, homeless and driven to the soil to dig out a living therefrom."¹⁶ The resulting surplusage of labour on the soil inevitably brought down the wages in agriculture. On the other hand, the population kept steadily on the increase, as it does commonly enough amongst a low-waged and ignorant class of labourers, leading to a continuous worsening of the standard of life. All these evils acting and reacting on each other made India the permanent abode of a perennial famine.¹⁷ The situation was not improved by the constant flow of foodgrains out of the country and the millions of sterling debited every year to India to meet the cost of the "Home Charges" representing profits of the British entrepreneur, the salary and pension of British personnel manning the civil and military services and the interest charges on loans contracted in England by the Indian government to meet the cost of conquering the land and building the railways that facilitated the inflow of British goods and the export of Indian foodgrains.

But the roots of the evil lie deeper. Not only is there an attachment to poverty among our masses, a habit ingrained through centuries of inertia that engendered the habit of dependence on the powers that be — on the *sarkar* as the provender of all benefits, on the rains and their fitful gratuity, and above all on that mysterious entity known as *kismet* that seems to know no law. Added to this was an absolute ignorance of the progress that the world had been making in the material field. Even the “educated” classes found themselves helpless in the struggle for life, for the education that they received in the schools and colleges gave them no power of initiative, no incentive to free thinking, did not help them to stand on their own legs and win in the modern struggle for existence.¹⁸ A remedy has to be found for these spiritual ills if India is to solve the problem of poverty.

In conclusion, Sri Aurobindo lays stress on another more occult feature of the problem of poverty which one must note carefully if the problem is to be solved in the right way. In order that a man is enabled to keep the money that he gets, he must deserve it. “You have to prove that you do not waste it; if you waste it then you lose the right to it.... It is not that you have to hoard money, but you must spend it in the right way, in a certain order, with an arrangement.... That was the ideal of the Vaishya, as opposed to the Bania, the miser.”¹⁹ Wasteful expenditure has been the bane of the poor man in India. This must stop if he is to deserve money. Habits of thrift he must be made to acquire, by whatever means. And this applies to the nation’s finances as well, and perhaps with greater force. It was the inability of the French monarchy “to manage with justice and economy the public purse...which provided the opportunity for the Revolution.... It is questions not of taxation, but of the proper organisation and administration of the economic life of the society which are preparing the revolutions of the future.”²⁰ This is a grim warning of which the nation had better take careful note.

The Immediate Needs

What then should be our immediate objectives? And what principles should guide us in achieving these ends?

Our immediate goal must be to eradicate poverty by every means in our power and to establish our national finances on a stable and sound footing. These two things must be given first priority, before we attempt anything else. “Let India first acquire wealth; without wealth we cannot expect to make any progress”: this was the categorical reply of Sri Aurobindo on the question of poverty.²¹ The problem for all Asiatic peoples, wrote Sri Aurobindo in the first decade of the century, is the preservation of their national individuality and existence while equipping themselves with the weapons of the modern struggle for survival; a “disciplining financial soundness” is a first condition of that survival.²² “First we must live, afterwards we can learn to live well. The effort to survive must for some years command all our energies and absorb all our time.”²³

A prime condition for survival in the modern world is national self-sufficiency. For it is the self-sufficing separateness of a nation that is its independence.²⁴ One of the main objects for which we have to organise our national strength is economic self-sufficiency and industrial independence. We in India do not recognise the nation as the highest synthesis to which we can rise. There is, says Sri Aurobindo, a "higher synthesis, humanity; beyond that there is a still higher synthesis, this living, suffering, aspiring world of creatures, the synthesis of Buddhism; there is a highest of all, the synthesis of God, and that is the Hindu synthesis, the synthesis of Vedanta.... With us today nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel, not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realising the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity."²⁵ India occupies a unique position in Asia, a position of vantage from which, if she can develop among other things her industrial independence, she will be in a position to assert her own will, to offer herself as an ally to the nations of the Far East and the Islamic peoples of the West; she may even be able to mediate between the civilisations of Europe and Asia.²⁶

These must therefore be her immediate goals: eradication of poverty, soundness of the national finances, economic self-sufficiency. What should be the ultimate objectives of our economic policy? What will be the best way to achieve these aims? These we shall consider in the sequel.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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A LETTER FROM ABBÉ BREUIL TO SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated from the French)

Archaeological Survey,
University of Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg, December 1, 1950

Sri Aurobindo,

As it seems you know French as well as English, I shall use my own language to write to you. My friend van Riet Leuwe lent me your book, *The Human Cycle*, which I have just finished reading with profound interest; it is, together with Lecomte du Noüy's great book, *Human Destiny*, the one which has interested me most deeply and stimulated the most thought. My life of "tireless" researcher in matters of my science (prehistory) throughout the world, my independent discipline as a naturalist have never impeded my "free thinking" either in the course of my frequent solitary rounds or in my life as a University man and "academic". During my already long life (74 years) I have known how to live in harmony with the diverse human elements of Western society, with the Church which more than any other earthly element opened my mind to the inner and suprarational problems during the years of my theological-philosophical clerical formation, and with the scholarly world where I acquired an honourable place because of my objective work. Without ambition and without good luck, I have yet never lacked anything and most things that men esteem highly, academic titles, university position, etc., came to me in abundance. The Roman authorities whom I have always avoided uselessly "provoking", have always "left me in peace"; it is all that I have wanted from them. But I have always had excellent and friendly relations with the best elements of other Churches and even circles outside them, in the "free-thinking" element *which seeks*. Your book is my first contact with Indian thought, of which I had no idea. I am unaware whether what one gathers from your book is an individual "fact" or the expression of an important trend. It appeared to me as penetrating and comprehensive as Chinese thought such as I have been able to perceive through the commentators or disciples of the great Confucius, very admirable, of course, but keeping itself separate from the "suprarational" and never leaving the social problem and the life of practical relations. Your form of thought is nearer ours—I am speaking of those among us who do not close themselves in an exclusive positivism or materialism.

I think it would be interesting to have your book read by some open minds amongst us who find themselves in completely different *milieux*.

The foremost of them, a very great mind, less "left in peace" than I by the Roman authorities, and having a large influence in France, England and the United States, is the great palaeontologist and philosopher, Father (Jesuit!!!) Teilhard de Chardin

of the Academy of Sciences.

Our ideas certainly coincide on more points than one. I have often said in my life that this life (individual or social) is not resolved by logic, and reason is, in face of reality, like a little compass for measuring the parameter of the horizon. While reciting (which I do quite often) the "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*", I stop always and stress the ending: "*Emitte Spiritum tuum et creabuntur et renovabis faciem terrae.*" I believe, as you do, that creation continues through humanity and arrives, I know not how, at its transformation. It is an act of faith and hope, but very necessary...

You make vague allusions to cycles of successive lives in which that experience would be accumulated; I know these ideas, at least as they circulate in the West. They please me, among other things, because they make it possible to better understand, by the different degrees of evolution in man on a scale starting from near-animal to Saint and to him who has discovered the suprarational life in God, the inequality of our contemporaries. I do not reject this perspective *a priori* though unprovable.¹

Yet I do not know how your Ideal of another state of things not only individual but also collective can be realised without ecclesiastic educational structures. The individual radiation is not enough.

All told, your reign of God on earth resembles incredibly St. Paul's Parousia: "*Nunc per enigmata, tunc facie ad faciem*" (free quotation), which religious symbolism places at the "end of the world".

But one is always at the end of the world and at the beginning of another!

The orientation you explain is not less justifiable or true, but the mystery of its realisation remains intact and a suprarational "act of faith". Providence carries us along and we must have faith in it or lose hope in life.

With my compliments for your very suggestive book,

Yours sincerely,

H. Breuil

Member of the French Institute and
Honorary Professor of Prehistory
at the College of France

¹ Perhaps still more veiled is the allusion to secret forces in the human being, that one ordinarily designates by the name "metaphysical". I *know* these forces exist, but I doubt whether they are moral

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

A SEARCH APROPOS OF R. C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

(Continued from the issue of October, 1972)

5 (Contd.)

ZAEHNER'S INTERPRETATION OF TEILHARD, THE QUESTION OF TEILHARD'S PANTHEISM

(b)

INTELLECTUALLY, Teilhard defined non-Christian pantheism in the most pejorative style and thus could not but condemn it. Yet his whole nature, with its innate pantheistic trend, felt a rich and exalted impulse in the heart of pantheists. In 1916 he wrote to Père Victor Fontoyant: "I shall put the intoxication of pagan pantheism to a Christian use..."¹ And he connects this intoxication with the question most prominent in his mind: "Cannot *the object, the actual matter* of our human passions be transformed, transformed into the Absolute, the definitive, the divine?" In the same letter he expresses his "'cosmic' aspiration": "I should like to be able to love Christ passionately (by loving) *in the very act of loving the universe*. Is it a wild dream or a blasphemy? Besides communion with God and communion with the Earth, is there communion with God through the Earth — the Earth becoming like a great Host in which God would be contained for us?"² The urge to such love would be "a blasphemy" only if it were pantheistic. And yet this pantheism would seem to lie at the very root of Teilhard. And in unguarded moments it sprouts up into the open, as in the declaration: "I love the universe too dearly not to have confidence in it."³ A packed pantheistic *confessio fidei*, this — for, not only to love but also to have confidence in the object of the love can mean here just one thing: the universe in its true aspect is, to Teilhard, an infinite Being that is loving and lovable at the same time. The declaration is pregnant with Wordsworth's "nature-mysticism", his pantheism

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her,

¹ Quoted in Henri de Lubac's *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (Collins, London, 1967), p. 244.

² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

³ *Science and Christ* (Collins, London, 1966), p. 41.

and that she can so "inform the mind that is within us" that, in spite of every appearance of adverse circumstance, nothing

Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.

And in connection with Wordsworth we may draw upon a letter of Teilhard's to Léontine Zanta:¹ "I have often told you: the secret of having peace and never getting stifled (even in the worst commonplace circumstances) lies in managing, with God's help, to perceive the One Element Needful which circulates in all things, which can give itself to us (with its joy and freedom) through any object provided that object is brought before us by *fidelity* to life, and that it is transformed by *faith* in the divine presence and operation." This is not what we may term pure pantheism: God is there in addition to "the One Element Needful which circulates in all things", but that Universal Element is capable of response and full of joy and freedom, it is a spirit of world-life continuous with the divine presence and operation, it is as though God Himself were concretely projected into Nature and meeting us through any object if our approach is confident and consecrated. This Element recalls the Wordsworthian experience:

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,...
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things.

Teilhard, even in his guarded moments, lets out, time and again, his sense of the spiritual fervour inseparable from pantheism. Thus, he puts the question: "Has any evolutionist pantheism, in fact, ever spoken more magnificently of the Whole than St. Paul did in the words he addressed to the first Christians?"² The intention towards the pantheist is negative, but a positive stir to his mighty enthusiasm and eloquence about the All comes through. Once more, when Teilhard wrote against false pantheism's aspiring to "a centre of intellectual dissociation" and "of unconsciousness", he said: "The danger of false pantheism has been removed, and yet we retain the irreplaceable strength of the religious life that the pantheists unjustly claim as their own."³ How could pantheists claim anything so necessary to genuine religion if

¹ *Letters to Léontine Zanta* (Collins, London, 1969), p. 50

² *Christianity and Evolution* (Collins, London, 1971), p. 72

³ *Science and Christ*, p. 59

they were impelled to get intellectually dissociated and grow unconscious? The very idea is absurd, and at the back of it there is a cleavage between Teilhard's mental figuration of pantheism and his inner feeling of its authentic precious spiritual drive. Again, we have the unacknowledged sympathetic note, a sort of admiring shudder of joy, in: "Many non-Christian mystics have not hesitated, trusting to their desires and natural predilections, to cast themselves into the delectable abyss of belief in a soul of the world."¹ At another place too we have a deep-seated appreciative response: it passes through his vision of the world's end in the Pleroma of Christ: "Like a vast tide, Being will have engulfed the shifting sands of beings. Within a now tranquil ocean, each drop of which, nevertheless, will be conscious of remaining itself, the astonishing adventure of the world will have ended. The dream of every mystic, the eternal pantheistic ideal, will have found their full and legitimate satisfaction".² Even in clear conceptual language the intuition of the true character of pantheism shines forth: "throughout history wherever man (either in isolated cases or collectively) has effected a sufficiently deep breakthrough into the domain of religious forces (whether among the Vedantists, the Taoists, the Sufis or the Christians) — in each case he has felt that he is drifting towards a mysticism of the monist or pantheist type."³ Doubtless, Teilhard follows up with a sharp distinction between the pantheism to be rejected and the one to be accepted; but his sweeping testimony, that the *ne plus ultra* of religious realisation has to be pantheism of some kind or other, makes us question whether the two pantheisms he has diametrically opposed are not after all complementary rather than contradictory. And the very sweepingness of the testimony carries an undertone as of rejoicing in an unescapable single thing, whatever its form.

Evidently, quite unlike the whole mass of Catholic thinkers, Teilhard has no wish to disclaim pantheism in general — and it is still so when he speaks *à la* Blondel of pan-Christism and we hear such expressions as: "Christ is loved as a person; he compels recognition as a world"⁴ — "No one, I think, will understand the great mystics, St. Francis and Blessed Angela, and the others, unless he understands the full depth of the truth that *Jesus must be loved as a world*"⁵ — "Lord Jesus, . . . I love you as a world, as *this* world which has captivated my heart and it is you, I now realise, that my brother-men, even those who do not believe, sense and seek throughout the magic immensities of the cosmos."⁶

In the passage about the world's end in the Cosmic Christ's Pleroma, we have

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85. The same passage occurs in *The Future of Man*, p. 305 Zaehner, *Evolution in Religion: A Study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 86), has it in a translation of his own which rather surprisingly cuts down our final sentence to "The dream of every type of mysticism will have found its full, legitimate satisfaction."

³ *Activation of Energy* (Collins, London, 1970) p. 219

⁴ *Writings in Time of War*: (Collins, London, 1968), p. 213.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

even the classic pantheist metaphor: God an infinite ocean, individual souls the innumerable drops of it. It is the metaphor Teilhard has elsewhere used disparagingly: "many a system of pantheism has led us astray in the cult of a great All in which individuals were supposed to be merged like a drop in the ocean."¹ He refers again unfavourably to these systems with practically the same metaphor when, regretting the common neglect or non-understanding of what he terms "cosmic sense", he adds: "Or else, among these who appreciate and foster it, its promptings are interpreted... as an invitation to anonymous dissolution in the cosmic ocean."² But now, in our passage, Teilhard approvingly sees everything as one element, an essential homogeneity of substance: God is All and All is God — the typical pantheistic experience.

Of course, Teilhard would play down the sameness of the metaphor and speak, as he actually does,³ of "making a distinction between two entirely opposite sorts of union: union by dissolution and union by differentiation." Surely, there are two sorts of union, yet to talk of dissolution by union is pretty meaningless. How can anybody experience a union by getting dissolved and growing anonymous? Can any sane mystic desire to do what Teilhard imagines him as doing? If "anonymous dissolution" of any kind is desired, why not just kill oneself as painlessly as possible, effect a euthanasia, in the hope of ceasing to exist? Really, what is desired is, on the negative side, a forgetfulness of the feverish little self in some universal vastness: on the positive side, the longed-for state is the realisation of a self of selves that is not individual but cosmic. It is never "anonymous dissolution" that is sought but the "cosmic ocean" itself. The former is a misleading label for a psychological act by which one desires to *be* that ocean or at least to get enveloped concretely by it, penetrated by it so that one is not bound to one's all-too-human personality. Nothing except this was basically in the mind of Spinoza whom de Lubac⁴ sets in direct opposition to Teilhard, saying: "Spinoza, that supreme pantheist, who dreamt of 'absorption in the immense calm in which is swallowed up all personality'."⁵ In pantheism the drops that are conscious individuals join a sea of consciousness where their small limited being finds liberation in an immensity whose constituent stuff is the same as their own — namely, water. In other words, water limited loses its boundaries and partakes of a water-infinity. Rather, water does not cease to be water: from its confinement in drops it only enters into a vast wateriness which is the true Being of its being. What is lost is "drophood" — what the Upanishads designate "name and form". There is no dissolution at all: there is an infinitisation of the essence. There would be dissolution if one were to be absorbed into something that is "other" than one: in pantheism there is no ultimate "other": the cosmic ocean is the full final

¹ *The Phenomenon of Man* (Collins, London, 1960), p. 262

² *Human Energy* (Collins, London, 1969), p. 83.

³ *Ibid*, p. 103

⁴ *Op cit* p. 158.

⁵ Marcel Méry, "Les deux dialectiques de Blondel," *Annales de la Faculté de Lettres d'Ala* (1961) p. 15.

Self of each drop: each drop realises there its own plenitude. There is, for pantheism, merely the Single multiplied or diversified, merely the Universal particularised. And in the so-called dissolution the multiple or diverse attains its own Singleness, the particular becomes conscious of its own Universality.

Here a pertinent question is: "Even in being Single and Universal, can the multiple and particular keep a sense of multiplicity and particularity?" When Teilhard, contrary to his usual practice, describes his own *summum bonum* in terms of the "tranquil ocean" and "each drop", the only difference which he suggests, between "the eternal pantheistic ideal" and the "full and legitimate satisfaction" offered for it by his *summum bonum*, is related to our question. It amounts to: "each drop will be conscious of remaining itself" within the "tranquil ocean" of the One Being. And, naturally, since the drops are consummated "persons" — souls conscious of themselves and interiorly centred to perfection — the ocean must be an infinite self-aware Centre, a Super-Person. This is to say that the Centre of centres must be at the same time immanent and transcendent, cosmic and personal, uniform within all and yet distinct in its own right, essentially identical but having also a relationship of the One to the Many, the single Self of all and simultaneously their divine Lord.

All this is precisely what, according to the quotations from Zaehner, the spirituality, in its fullness, of the Indian Upanishads and the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo aim at — and they do so without excluding pantheism from their vision and their discipline. In another place too Zaehner¹ makes the same point, expounding Sri Aurobindo and Indian spirituality together:

"How...is the human race to emerge from 'this perpetual cycle of failure'?² In *The Life Divine* Aurobindo sees the solution in a descent of 'Supermind' which will reveal to the world that it has a common soul, present and the same in all but differentiated in each...

"...each individual realizes that he is not an independent ego acting of his own free will, but an interdependent person deriving his personality from God, wholly indwelt by God, possessed of his eternal Being, his eternal Consciousness, and his eternal Joy, and through this 'sameness' of nature which all beings derive from God, at one with all created things, and so acting and knowing that he acts not on his own account but entirely in accordance with the will of God. But before this stage can be reached the ego must be destroyed;...we must depersonalize ourselves, give up self as the Buddhists are bidden to do and enter into the timeless bliss of Nirvāna,... 'isolated' and 'unconditioned' as are the *puruṣas* of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga.... But, as Aurobindo points out again and again, this is not the end as Śaṅkara had supposed, identifying the 'oneness' of each 'part' of God with the totality of God himself: for this is to realise Being only, beyond Becoming. God, however, is not just a static

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 31, 40-41.

² Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, etc. p. 272, n.1

monad but a *living* and therefore dynamic reality: for does not the Isha Upanishad (5) say:

It moves. It does not move.
It is far, yet it is near.
It is within this whole universe,
And yet it is without it.

"To attain to Nirvāna is to become Brahman, to pass beyond space and time into an unconditioned form of existence. From this vantage-point the Yogin sees his 'self in all things standing, all things in the self: the same in everything he sees.'¹ But one must then go on to the further realization that this interconnectedness, though deriving from the same impersonal One, nevertheless does not mean complete identity of absorption, but leads on to the discovery of a new relationship with a personal God on whom the impersonal Absolute itself depends.

"Who, standing firm on unity communes in love with me as abiding in all beings, in whatever state he be, that integrated man abides in me."²

"So says the Gītā, and, as Aurobindo points out, this de-personalizing process, this loss of all sense of self in the still waters of eternity in which all passion is quenched, love quite as much as hate—this depersonalizing process is only the necessary prelude to the resurrection in God and for God in love."

If pantheism can be included in a spiritual outlook and practice, without its shutting off the transcendent Personal Divine and the persistent human soul in relation with Him, why does Teilhard fight shy of it? He should be the last person to disavow it. His entire nature moves towards "a mysticism of the monist or pantheist type", not only by inner instinct but also by his modern evolutionism. This evolutionism, taking the universe as one immense developing entity, is seen by Teilhard to be, in its religious mood, pantheist. What he has himself tried to do is to interpret this evolutionism in Christian terms so that a Christ whose attributes are made proportionate to the dimensions now attributed to the universe "takes over, correcting and completing them, the energies that undoubtedly lie hidden in modern forms of pantheism".³ In short, a universal or cosmic Christ is necessarily posited: "to 'universalise' Christ is the only way we have of retaining his essential attributes (alpha and omega) in a fantastically enlarged Creation."⁴ And Teilhard, eager to seize the truth which he thinks pantheism seeks but distorts, concludes: "If Christianity is to keep its place at the head of mankind, it must make itself explicitly recognisable as a sort of 'pan-Christism'."⁵ In other words, Christianity must become a new, a true pantheism, agreeing with yet differing from "modern forms" of the doctrine in one cen-

¹ Bhagawad-Gītā, 6 29

² *Ibid.*, 6.31.

³ *Science and Christ*, p 124.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

tral point: Christ must be as concretely universal as the God of pantheism, but, "in taking on universality, Christ is not lost in the heart of the universe: .. he dominates and assimilates the universe by imposing upon it the...essential characteristics of his traditional truth .."¹

We need not go into the details of Christ's "traditional truth". Our concern is crucially with that in Teilhardism which is "pan" on the one hand, "Christ" on the other. "Christ" stands for the God who is personal, "pan" for the God who is universal.

And the question of questions is: In coinciding the two, can Teilhard escape making the universe and the human soul fundamentally one substance with his Universal Person?

Repeatedly, by coinciding the two, he is led into undeniable pantheist language. Every reader of Teilhard is likely to notice the phenomenon. Some may do it rather cautiously, seeing it in terms of either careless thinking or linguistic disproportion; but the upshot is the same. Thus de Lubac² admits: "we believe, as Père Rabut does, that the elliptical form and the emphasis of some of Père Teilhard's expressions would seem to suggest a sort of natural identity of Christ and the Universe." To quote de Lubac³ again: "In 'Comment je crois' (1934), p. 21, we may note, as an example of awkward or over-condensed expression, the phrase 'the world, around me, becomes divine'." Nor do we have pantheist language only in locutions like: "To this faith, Jesus, I hold.... that you do more than stand apart from things as their Master, you are more than the incommunicable splendour of the universe; you are, too, the dominating influence that penetrates us, and draws us, through the inmost core of our most imperative and most deep-rooted desires; you are the cosmic Being who envelops us and fulfils us in the perfection of his Unity."⁴ Or take: "The world is still being created, and it is Christ who is reaching his fulfilment in it. When I had heard and understood that saying, I looked around and I saw, as though in an ecstasy, that *through Nature I was immersed in God*..."⁵ Then again: "...the saint...loses his materiality. Everything is God for him, God is Everything for him, and for him Christ is at once God and everything."⁶ We have pantheist language also in turns like the following: "We twentieth-century humans are, indeed, scientifically speaking, nothing but the elements of a soul seeking itself through the cosmos."⁷ Perhaps an example extremely apt to the theme of Teilhard's "tranquil ocean" whose "drops" remain themselves is where he says that men are called one day to become, without being lost in it, "one and the same someone".⁸ Here is a turn

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Op .cit.*, p. 139.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 353, n. 22.

⁴ *Writings in Time of War*, pp 51-52.

⁵ *Ibid*, p 60.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 108

⁷ *Human Energy*, p. 31.

⁸ *Études*, May 1946, p. 116.

which, free from any resort to metaphor, plainly voices an aspect of Vedantic pantheism. To get the full burden of his cosmically mystic Christianity out, Teilhard must use words which, if they are to have a real meaning and not be vain mouthings, accord with that aspect. Pan-Christism constantly passes into pantheism and out of it and makes this accord for a moment every now and then.

This merging and separating was inevitable by the very nature of Teilhard's personality. He was "by temperament a pantheist", "the pantheist's yearnings" were "native" to him,¹ he has openly admitted his "own profound tendencies towards pantheism";² he has even declared: "I believe that I was born with a 'naturally pantheist' soul."³ And the preoccupation of his life may be discerned in his statement: "the pantheist tendency is so universal and so persistent that it must have in it a soul of naturally Christian truth that we must baptise."⁴ Can a born pantheist ever cease to be so? He may become something more, he may find a greater vision in which pantheism — that is, the vision of the universe as God's own being under a multitudinous spatio-temporal aspect through which we have to pierce to the eternal reality — may be taken up as one element in the midst of many; but he cannot become something which essentially alters the pantheist vision, diminishes it by means of a vision running counter to it. If by some need discovered in himself he accepts a vision which he cannot reconcile with his native pantheism and if he tries to give different meanings to pantheist terms like "the All" "The Universal Element", "the Soul of the World", "Cosmic Consciousness", he will never succeed in being consistent. The different meanings will somehow fall short of his innate understanding of the terms, and to keep the terms alive and packed with the fullest significance possible he will be driven to exceed the limits set to the formulas under which others, whose temperament is not pantheist, approach the "truth" with which those different meanings attempt to chime. The mission he feels, to "baptise", to Christianise, what the universal and persistent attraction to pantheism moves towards, is bound again and again to pantheise the baptising and Christianising mood. The Christology of one whose urge towards pantheism is profound can never be the same as that of a Christian who has no such urge: the two Christologies must be fundamentally at variance. The Christian may see the necessity of widening his traditional concepts under the impact of discoveries like universal evolution. He may say like Olivier Rabut⁵ about Teilhard's cosmic Christology: "we can distinguish some extremely sound seminal intuitions that can introduce new vigour into Christian thought." But, like Rabut,⁶ he will be obliged to add: "There is no doubt on some important points Teilhard needs to be completed.... Sometimes the vocabulary is ambiguous, some expressions are unfortunate,

¹ *Writings in Time of War*, pp.

² *Human Energy*, p. 91.

³ Quoted by de Lubac, *Op. cit.*, p. 155, from *Mon Univers* (1918).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Dialogue with Teilhard de Chardin* (Stagbooks, Sheed & Ward, London & New York, 1961), p. 142.

⁶ *Ibid.*

and sometimes the development is insufficient." Or he may echo de Lubac:¹ "The least...we can do is to recognize that he will have done more than any other man of our time to open up a vast field of inquiry for theologians, and that they must make it their business to apply themselves to it. It is hardly to be wondered at that we can find some indecision in his writings, or things that are awkwardly expressed, or some lack of precision in his thought, or some verbal inconsistencies. He raised problems of great importance that urgently needed to be attacked but that he could not by himself solve completely. He opened up some wide avenues of research. He brought out a capital idea, the analysis of which he could not by himself carry further."

Yes, broad and enlightened but basically non-innovating minds like Rabut's and de Lubac's will always know where they stand. In doctrinal matters they will not be ambiguous in vocabulary, unfortunate in expression, insufficient in development. Their writings will not be indecisive, their thought imprecise, their words awkward or inconsistent. But Teilhard simply cannot help any of these things. By whatever standard, he was mentally head and shoulders above every one of his Christian commentators, highly gifted and finely acute though several of them are. It is absurd to suggest that in some respects Teilhard was inadequately equipped in intellect to deal with the issues he raised or that he was not master enough of the proper language to tackle them. The faults found in him — conflicts of idea, contradictions of speech — were due only to the fact that the pantheism born with him was sought to be suppressed by the considerably strong and wholly sincere call in him to be a Roman Catholic, but could not be quite put down: it kept surging up ever and anon. It refused to let pan-Christism suffice in the shape Teilhard tried to give it: it merged it, time and again, with a non-Christian cosmic sense. Occasionally it even showed clearly its own face and urged him towards a greater synthesis. At times he appeared to recognise the real features and gazed vaguely beyond both pantheism and Catholic Christianity.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 203.

THE MYSTERIOUS YUGAS

SATYA YUGA	1,728,000
TRETA YUGA	1,296,000
DWAPARA YUGA	864,000
KALI YUGA	432,000

THESE are the figures given for the Yugas. They are a mystery. What do they mean? Are they to be taken literally? Are they years? Are we in effect in the Kali Yuga, as is supposed? The secret that can be found in these figures and their arrangement is *we are always in a Kali Yuga*.

“Various theories have been put forth by scholars for explaining the Yugas and Manvantaras. Yuga appears to have meant any unit of time. Yuga has variously been taken to represent a quarter of a day, a month, a period less than a year, one year, four years, five years, ten years, one hundred years, one thousand years or ten thousand on the strength of references in Sanskrit works.” This information is from *Studies in Epics and Purāṇas of India* by A. D. Pusalker. Further on in the Introduction to this work the author says: “No satisfactory explanation of the Manvantara Caturyuga theory has yet come forth....” And this appears to be the truth of the matter, for when one consults books and what scholars have said about these figures and their meaning, only confusion results. Everybody has a different idea, and none of these ideas reveal the harmony and perfection one inevitably discovers when the veil is rent and the core of a mystery is touched. With this happening, nothing should fall out of the precise pattern that all revelations display.

I propose now to explain, step by step, what I have discovered about the Yugas, because to me it is entirely satisfying in that it only confirms what has already been found on the same subject, presented under a different name; that is, the Yugas correspond *exactly* to the Zodiacal Ages — the Piscean Age, the Aquarian Age, and so forth.

For quite a long time when I would look at these figures I would feel there was more in them than was apparent; in particular because these numbers had a precise “harmony” which corresponded to the harmony of other discoveries and made me feel that the sages who revealed these data had not divulged the entire story. At the time it was no doubt necessary, but this is no longer the case since the more recent astronomical discoveries have made such information available to all. What still remains secret is the ‘esoteric’ significance of the movement of the Ages, and this is not to be found in science but still belongs to the domain of the soul. So, recently in an astrology class, when pointing out to the students the properties of the sphere, one of them brought up the clock and said this fell out of the pattern I had been

explaining. At that moment I could not refute what he said, but after all the students had left I set myself to verifying the matter. Did the clock actually disprove what was said about the sphere? I studied the divisions of the clock, broke down the hours to minutes and the minutes to seconds and came to the following figures: in 12 hours there are 43,200 seconds; in 24 hours there are 86,400. These figures proved what I had said to the students about the sphere, which it is not necessary to go into here. I left them on the blackboard and was faced with them for a whole day, and each time I looked in their direction I found them so familiar. Where had I seen them before? It did not take long to recall that these very numbers, minus a zero, are two of the figures given for the Yugas.

From this point on the process was very simple. I converted the celestial sphere of 360° into seconds and came up with this figure: 1,296,000. Hence, if we convert the Zodiac into degrees and then into seconds, this is the final number, which in turn is the number given for the Treta Yuga. Things were becoming much clearer. It was apparent that the numbers of the Yugas are not years, as is commonly believed, but are *seconds of degrees of longitude*. To change these into years is, of course, a very simple process, but this is precisely connected to a matter which has mystified scientists for so long. To this day modern astronomers cannot understand how ancient Indian astrologers and astronomers were able to know of the *Precession of the Equinoxes* with accuracy, since there is still somewhat of a controversy as to its exact movement in spite of our present instruments of precision. This movement of the Earth rotating like a top—one of its three movements—traces a circle in the sky which takes approximately 25,920 years to be completed. It moves at a rate of approximately 50 seconds per year. Thus if we divide the figure of the Treta Yuga by 50 seconds, we come to 25,920. Now it must be understood that all Indian Astrology is based on this very movement because of the use of the Constellations and this shifting equinoctial point. Therefore it is not too fantastic to presume that figures were given for the Yugas which were eventually to be converted into years corresponding to this Precession of the Equinoxes, the basis of Indian Astrology. It would have been impossible then for other civilisations to discover their secret meaning since they would have had to possess the knowledge of this celestial movement.

But the pattern was not yet complete, it was not perfect, and the order must be perfect before one can accept a theory.

If the Treta Yuga is equivalent to 25,920 years which would be one complete passage through the sphere, how do the other Yugas fit in? If we put them all together we would have *three* complete cycles, plus $\frac{1}{3}$ *surplus*, precisely the third that is the Kali Yuga. Eliminating this Yuga we have three cycles. Without it there was the harmony of the three, with it there was not. Then again, why was the Satya Yuga first, then Treta, then Dwapara and finally Kali? Dwapara was two times Kali, Treta was three times Kali and Satya was four times. I tried to find out the significance of this grouping and this is what was explained to me: Satya Yuga is the Age of Truth, and if Truth be represented by an animal it can be said to be figuratively standing

on all four legs, stable and hence the first on the list. Then in Treta Yuga it is said to be less stable and to be standing on three legs. In Dwapara Yuga it is even less stable and is only on two legs, and finally in Kali Yuga the situation is the shakiest of all: Truth is only on one leg and hence chaos and confusion, the dark age of Kali. And this is unfortunately the Age we are supposed to be in and which is supposed to last for thousands and thousands of years to come, if we are to believe that the 432,000 of the Kali Yuga are years!

It must be stressed, however, that when dealing with celestial harmonies in relation to the evolution of man, one is *always* struck by the perfection of the design, and above all one finds how discovering a certain key fits in with all other keys: one key does not disprove the others but is only a further confirmation.

So, up to that point I saw that the figures for the Yugas were actually seconds and not years, and that when these were converted by astronomical calculations into years we arrived at the precise amount of the Astrological Ages : 25,920 years for a whole cycle, or passage through the entire 12 signs, and 2,160 years for a passage through each individual sign. But this was valid for the Treta Yuga which was one complete cycle. How did the others fit in?

It was by the initial understanding of the sphere and certain harmonies of numbers found in the Puranas and elsewhere that the final comprehension of the Yugas came. Thus the first, or Satya Yuga, is one complete cycle plus $1/3$; from here we do not go into the Treta Yuga but we move into the Dwapara Yuga which consists of 17,280 years. By this time, these two cycles together give us *two* complete cycles, or passage through 24 signs. Then we move into the Treta Yuga and we have one more complete passage, thus making the entire movement of three cycles, or 36 Zodiacal signs.

What is then the significance of the Kali Yuga, and how does it fit into the design?

The Kali Yuga is nothing more than an indication of a basic unit of time, upon which the construction of the Ages is built. A Sanskrit scholar told me the word comes from 'kala' and could be translated as "the Power of Time". But an even fuller confirmation came from another source who found that in actual fact the word is derived from the root *Kal* which means "to measure", the basis of the English word "calculate" or "calculus". Through the centuries this key of measurement was obscured and was mistaken to mean the Age of Darkness and was further identified with the destructive attributes of the goddess Kali, whereas this figure, 432,000, sets the foundation or is the measurement for all the calculations of the Ages. There are really only three Ages to be reckoned with, and these include 9 periods of Kali. Thus in the completion of the three cycles there are 9 Kali Yugas. This figure comes up many times, as for instance the Puranas speak of the 9 creations, as well as the ancient geographical division of the Indian nation into 9 parts; it follows that around this number therefore the Yugas would be arranged. And at this point the attention of the reader must be brought to the fact that again this is a fundamental part of Indian Astrology: all methods of prediction therein, individual or collective, are based on the division of the sphere into 3×9 parts, called the 27 Asterisms.

We have then the four legs of the animal which are four periods of Kali, the three legs are three periods, and so on. It is not true therefore to say that we are in the dark age, or the age of confusion and chaos. I grant this may appear the case at present, but if one looks with a wider vision and passes into a sense of cosmic dimensions the facts are precisely the contrary: we are in the Satya Yuga, or the Age of Truth. And moreover we are in the last Kali period of that Age, hence there is an intensification and acceleration of all that the Age signifies. Satya Yuga also signifies the Golden Age, and this again corresponds to the Astrological cycles, for we enter the full Golden Age according to calculations based on the latter method within 2,160 years, the Age of Capricorn. The Satya Yuga is of 34,560 years; we have passed approximately 27,180; 6,480 still remain. It ends when the Precession of the Equinoxes reaches the portals of the sign of Scorpio, and it is precisely because of what is taking place in this Age of Truth that the passage into Scorpio and the beginning of the Dwapara Yuga will not be represented by the Scorpion but will rather find its expression in the higher symbol of the sign, the Eagle. It is said that the Kali Yuga is to end with the incarnation of Kalki, who will come triumphant on a horse. This would be in Sagittarius, the sign before Scorpio in the Precession of the Equinoxes, for the symbol of Sagittarius is precisely the man with the body of a horse, therefore leading us to the end of the Satya Yuga and into the Dwapara Yuga which begins in Scorpio and finishes the second cycle.

To sum up: the figures for the Yugas are not years as is believed but are seconds of degrees of longitude which are to be converted into years. We are in a Kali Yuga, we are in manifestation which is bound by Time, and this material creation, either individual or collective, evolves in 9 stages. Thus if the Sage-Astrologer who initially revealed these figures had been asked, "Are these years?" — he could have responded "Yes", without being accused of falsehood. And if asked, "What Age are we in?" — he could have answered "Kali Yuga" in the same manner, for, in effect, we are always in a Kali Yuga.

Vijaya Dashami, 17 October, 1972

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

(Continued from the issue of October, 1972)

(This is the story of a being in Manifestation. The children represent two complementary poles within the individual. It is also a treatment of astrology, each image evoked being a key to the deeper meaning of the signs.)

CHAPTER IX

The Higher Mind

BEYOND the flames the Centaur splashes through the shallow water until he reaches land. He then turns to view the blazing construction and emits a resounding laugh that thoroughly shakes up the children who cling to his back. Giving in to his horse half, kicking and anxious to move on, he gallops off across the fog-filled land.

They travel vast distances through the sombre-coloured countryside, with apparently no specific course. Many times in their travels the Centaur — an extremely jovial sort — stops to play with the animals and other odd creatures he meets along the way. Their journey is delayed by these episodes but the children are delighted, as much as their new-found friend. The gay and free mood of the Archer are completely captivating.

Almost unnoticed, however, the landscape changes and eventually they are galloping through an entirely different sort of country. The sombre tones have turned to fuschia, purple and violet and the fog has completely lifted, revealing an intense and thick vegetation with every variety of plant and tree. The whole land gives a feeling of abundance in every way.

During the ride the Archer continues sending his flaming arrows into the sky and then chases after them, or these seem to light up his path, — one is not sure which. Finally, without realising it he snatches up the last remaining arrow and sends it soaring through the air. They proceed after it and from that point the Archer reaches to pull another from his case when to his amazement he finds he has used them all up.

"Gracious! They're gone. Why didn't you tell me I was using too many!" he cries to Val and Pom-pom.

"Too many for what?" they respond. "What are they for?"

"Oh never mind. It's just that now we have to go back," and so saying he changes course and takes another direction, with head and shoulders drooped, spiritless and completely resigned.

Things have certainly changed all of a sudden. No more fun, no more games, no more time spent with the animals they meet along the way — in fact, the whole ride becomes rather boring. But then they come to a very strange place, a land that seems to contain a thousand different lands all in one. The buildings — what can be seen of them, for they are half-hidden by a high wall — are each of completely different architectural styles, revealing very different cultures in their designs. They are painted in all the various shades of purple, blending with the entire land.

"Come on, let's hurry inside," cries Val, urging the Centaur to enter. The horse has stopped though and refuses to enter. He hems and haws and really seems embarrassed, or distressed.

"What's wrong?" asks Pom-pom, why can't we go in? After all, you've brought us here, now why can't we?"

"Well...er...you see...I can't go in through the door because it's locked, and the way I usually do it is jumping over the fence. But to do that I need my arrows to follow and I've used them all up."

"Take us to the gate. We'll knock and someone will surely let us in," the children reply.

"Hmmmm...that's an idea! Maybe they will," and he gallops along the wall until they come to a thick door. The Archer deposits them in front and then hurries off to hide behind a tree, shouting:

"See what you can do. I'll be waiting until you tell me it's all clear."

Val and Pom-pom go up to the gate, rather puzzled by his attitude. They are about to knock when they notice the symbol \nexists and the number 9. Val joyously calls to the Centaur:

"It's all right. We have the key. You can come back."

"You have the key," he says as he covers his mouth to stifle his laughter, "no one will ever know!"

He dashes up to the children and places them on his back, and then Val leans down and uses the key to open the door. They shove it back and the Centaur halts a bit, to make certain of something, and says:

"It's all quiet. We can go in, but please, don't make a sound. Please," he begs them and quietly they cross the portal as the Archer makes every effort to control his hoofs so that they don't kick up a fuss and call attention.

They are safely across the threshold and tip-hoofing forward when immediately the door slams shut behind them and

SWISH----WHACK! SWISH-----WHACK!

The Centaur whinnies with a frightful start and the children are almost thrown off his back. He grabs them in his arms and starts running away from two big brooms being used to give him a good thrashing. Val and Pom-pom haven't even time to see who is doing it, but they hear two very upset voices shouting:

"You naughty, naughty fellow!"

"Delinquent!"

"Shameful! Disobedient!"

"This time you'll learn a lesson you will never forget!" and they chase after the Centaur who tries his best to keep his rear away from the madly swinging brooms.

Round and round the courtyard they race, kicking up a cloud of dust as they go, until finally the Centaur dashes into a big barn filled with mountains of hay. Tightly holding on to the children, he plunges into one of the stacks and disappears underneath. The anxious archer urges them to keep quiet as, hidden away, they listen to the voices and footsteps of the gentlemen searching for them throughout the barn.

They stay like this for a while when Pom-pom's nose begins to itch — at first just a little, then a bit more, then a bit more than that, and finally

HAAAAAAAAAAAAACHEW!

"We're doomed! I'm done for!"

HAAACHEW! and many, many more while Val explains that Pom-pom's really very sorry but the problem is he sometimes suffers from hay fever.

"It's your fault (Haachew!) You brought us here," sniffles Pom-pom.

"My fault! Ha! What a laugh! My fault, we'll see about that!"

After this heated exchange the three fall into silence, amid Pom-pom's sniffing, straining their ears to hear what is going on. They don't have to wait very long for a great pitchfork is soon thrust into the hay and pricks the Centaur's rump. He springs up and his very embarrassed face emerges from amid the hay.

"Now you just try to escape, you naughty creature"....

But the Centaur interrupts: "It's not my fault, really, I assure you. You see, I was just grazing around, minding my own business, when from behind the fence I heard the cries of two desperate children calling me to come and lead them to the gate. I couldn't resist ..after all, I've been given a gentleman's education, right?"

And with an engaging smile he urges his guardians to agree with him and then continues his tale until Val becomes indignant. She jumps up and out of the hay, pulling Pom-pom with her:

"It's not true! We never called him. We never asked to be brought in here and chased around and all these nasty things. And poor Pom-pom, he's sneezing his head off and you are all just too mean.... You, you really are very naughty!"

"Me? You seem to forget I saved you," retorts the Centaur.

"Oh me ...Pom-pom, he's right. He did save us in Scorpiland," exclaims Val, and the two gentleman, the Centaur's guardians, interrupt her:

"Scorpiland! He's done it again! Disobeyed and gone into the land of the Scorpion. What are we ever going to do with him?" they ask Val and Pom-pom, almost imploring their advice.

Meanwhile the Centaur stands up straight and confesses:

"I'm really not to blame, really. It's him, he's the one," and he points to his horse body!

At this the guardians become even more indignant.

"There you go again! Always talking as if he weren't you. You know very well

that you and he are one and the same. We're going to put an end to all of this! It's November 23rd and the training at the Foundation for Higher Knowledge of Sagittariusland is just beginning. You're going there and let's hope that with an elevated mind you tame that restless body. And no more arrows until you've proven yourself!"

The Centaur agrees to be a good boy and to go to the special training, because he really would do anything to get his arrows back. Life is such a bore without them. But he begs to have the children with him. After all, pranks are more fun in three. He convinces his guardians with a charm few possess and then the five tumble down the haystack and into the courtyard.

The guardians lead them to the entrance of a curious and rather antiquated building. Inside dust covers everything and it doesn't seem to be frequented much. There are not many students about, — in fact, none at all! Certainly different from what Val and Pom-pom expected.

In the first room they enter a kindly old gent sits, the registrar — as a sign on the door indicates — who is most excited over their arrival. He begs them to sign the register and hurries to take stacks of dusty books off shelves, piling them into the Centaur's and the children's arms, — stacks so high that they are almost unable to see ahead. He then escorts them to the top floor where the renowned Heropodus Heronimus awaits them, the Foundation's beloved and only philosopher-teacher.

"Most fortunate you are, most fortunate indeed, indeed," says the gentleman. He hurries before them to show the way, picking up broken chairs, dust mops, papers, etc., as he goes, trying his best to make a good impression on the newcomers.

"Where are all the students?" asks Val.

"Oh they'll soon be coming, yes, yes, soon, soon. I'm sure. We've been waiting for such a long time, but this year they're sure to come. You'll see! And then it will be all we can do to take care of all your needs. Yes, yes, perhaps I should begin preparing things now, after all, they might show up any minute, mightn't they, any minute?"

"Poor thing," Val whispers to Pom-pom.

"Here we are," announces the registrar, and he knocks on a door with a sign that reads:

HEROPODUS HERONIMUS

Teacher of Philosophy, Theology, Astronomy
Alchemy, Psychology and all other "high" subjects.
JUST ASK AND YOU SHALL KNOW!

Also, Official Custodian of Rituals and Ceremonials!

He knocks again but there is no sound from within. After knocking a third time the old gentleman timidly puts his ear to the door. The Centaur and Val and Pom-

pom do the same, as best they can with the stacks of books they carry. Suddenly it gives way and they all tumble into the room with a terrific crash as the three piles of books fall to the floor and the registrar, Centaur and Val and Pom-pom on top. The noise awakens Heropodus Heronimus, who was dozing in his chair. He is slightly daffy looking with dreamy, violet coloured eyes, long white, dishevelled hair, a huge body clothed in an unkempt, purple professor's robe. His whole appearance denotes someone who doesn't give much thought about how he looks: Heropodus Heronimus has more important things to think about.

The room is a sight to see! In one corner stands a sort of improvised laboratory, with all the implements necessary for alchemical experiments. In another there is a drawing table with many sheets of paper spread out and strange symbols designed on them. There is a telescope set up at the window, and everywhere books and papers strewn about. Dust has collected on many objects and there are cobwebs indicating that many of these have long lain idle.

Heropodus Heronimus manages to get on his feet and shakes the sleep out of his big body. He straightens his robes a bit and passes his hands through his hair. But all this is of little avail — his general appearance remains much the same.

The registrar excuses himself for interrupting his sleep and Heropodus Heronimus insists he wasn't sleeping at all but was rather "contemplating". The new students are presented and his face lights up with joy, for he is delighted to be able to teach someone the abundance of elevated subjects he knows. The registrar takes his leave and quickly room is made for the newcomers in the disordered classroom. Val and Pom-pom go to fetch the books still in piles on the floor and Heropodus Heronimus becomes indignant:

"That's an insult to my higher mind. When you come to H.H. you need no books. It's all here," he points to his temple, "—and here," he points to his heart. "The mind and the heart must work together or there is no real knowledge. You must learn to shoot the arrows of the mind forward, and the rest will follow. Perhaps only in the distant future, but, who cares.... Send off the arrows! That's the point."

"My arrows!"

"Ssssh!" Val and Pom-pom echo, for they are enraptured by such erudition and so impressed by the learned professor's presence.

"And you see this land with all these different structures: they represent all the regions of the mind made to work harmoniously together. The higher nature of.. of...fine clouds out there...hmmmmmm — who knows what there'll be for supper tonight...."

"What was that?" the Centaur asks.

"What?"

"You were saying... 'the higher nature'..." responds Val.

"Oh! Ahem...the higher nature shall come forth in all its splendour as a result of a cultivation of the higher mind which lies dormant.....my! must get them to clean those belfries...ah! the joy of...."

The Centaur's hoofs begin kicking.

"Be still," shout Val and Pom-pom, and Heropodus Heronimus is awakened from his dream world once again.

"Where was I?" he asks.

"You said, 'which lies dormant'," responds Pom-pom.

"Dormant? Me? I was meditating, I assure you!"

"No! The higher nature," interrupts Val.

"Ah yes! The higher nature awakens in meditation," continues Heropodus Heronimus.

"No, you were saying cultivation of the mind ..."

"Impossible! In meditation the mind must cease! You've misunderstood. Really it's not possible to find capable students any more. What a joy it is to have pupils who follow what one has to say. Once when I taught..." and he goes on to tell a very long story, completely unrelated to the subjects they had come to study, in fact, unrelated to anything. But his manner is so pleasant and his tale is so humorous that they all forgive him for not sticking to the point. When Heropodus Heronimus starts talking, however, it's impossible to stop him and all the time is spent listening to stories instead of doing what they were sent there for.

Finally he is interrupted by a bell tolling in one of the odd looking belfries.

"Aha!" he exclaims, "It's time for ritual N° 3,402."

Val and Pom-pom jump to their feet and scramble to hide under their desks.

"What's the matter?" asks Heropodus Heronimus.

"We don't want to go to any more rituals," they reply.

Yet with gentle insistency Heropodus quizzes them on the reason for their fears and finally the children relate all their previous adventures.

"A magic potion. Hmmmmmm ... should only be taken with ritual N° 18,405 that must be performed only after ritual N° 792 which is to be performed only after N° 3,402 ... 3,402! THAT'S NOW! Glorious fireflies! That's today's ritual. Ah... What good fortune!" he exclaims, "Luck always smiles on H.H. Let's have the necklaces with the magic potion."

The children hand them over and they all follow as he hustles out of the room, down the long corridor and into a sort of ceremonial hall, the only part of the Foundation that appears well-kept and constantly in use. He rushes around the room lighting candles and arranging other odds and ends that seem to be necessary for the rites he is to perform.

"Please be seated, for we are already late. Everything is ready," and he begins ritual N° 3,402. Meanwhile the Centaur starts fidgeting and growing restless. It is obvious his horse nature wants to move again.

"Now, now. Calm down," says H.H. "We must be quick for the Foundation will soon close and there's a lot to do before the magic potion can be drunk.

"Oh dear! It must be drunk. Who's going to drink it?"

"Not me!" says Val.

"Not me!" says Pom-pom.

"And certainly not me," says Heropodus Heronimus, "but it has to be taken since the rituals are being performed. It would be sacrilegious not to! Unheard of in my Foundation!"

All are silent for a moment until, almost simultaneously, they get a brilliant idea. The three look at the Centaur.

"You.", they point.

"Me? Ha! Why me?"

"Because you're a horse," says Heropodus, and it would take ten times this quantity to do anything to your nature."

They all agree in spite of the Centaur's protests, and the rituals continue.

"Four steps sideways to the left, two fingers on the forehead. Three bows and two squats," explains the teacher, as he carries out the instructions he gives himself.

"Oh me! Wrong. That's ritual N° 79r. Six bows and two squats... yes... that's more like it..."

The children are getting rather nervous for Heropodus Heronimus keeps getting his rites mixed up and then has to start again. Time is running out fast and they seem no nearer to getting out of the Foundation and Sagittariusland.

"Nine invocations recited with half-closed eyes..."

"Hurry, please," timidly begs Val.

"My dear, you don't seem to realise this is a very sacred moment. Silence, and try to take the matter to heart. Recite with me: HANA MANI COMA DO, HANA MANI COMA DO, HANA MANI COMA DO ..." and all recite the invocation with half-closed eyes nine times.

After what seems to be an eternity, Heropodus informs them that he is to perform N° 18,405, which immediately precedes the drinking. He begins, of course making several mistakes along the way and having to start over each time, until at long last the sacred moment arrives: the Centaur must drink the magic potion!

Now his hoofs are really kicking up a fuss and he refuses to waste any more time. He shies away from the three and prances around the room, carefully remaining out of reach as they all chase after him. Heropodus Heronimus is terribly distressed so finally Val calls to the Centaur:

"Remember your arrows! They certainly won't give them back if you don't do as Heropodus says!"

Her words seem more magic than the potion for the Centaur scurries up and submits to the final and most sacred moment of the ritual: he obediently drinks the potion.

"Great fireflies! Help hold him down!" shouts H.H., trying to keep the Centaur on the ground, who is making great leaps in the air, almost touching the ceiling and emitting the most distressing sounds imaginable.

Val and Pom-pom run to hide under a chair until little by little the commotion dies down. They peep out from under to see the Centaur comfortably arranged in

the middle of the room with the most contented grin on his face and emanating a steady, serene feeling.

"Well, so much for your magic potion," says H.H. "I think this year you've learned enough, that is, as much as your little brains will learn. But next year...."

"Pom-pom, we should leave right away," exclaims Val, and she explains to H.H. why they must leave Sagittariusland.

"Hmmmmmm...you'll never make it, my tiny travellers. It's too far, the distance is too great for your little feet to carry you before the Sun leaves. No, I'm afraid there's nothing to be done."

"He's the one who brought us here and he should take us away," cries Pom-pom, pointing to the Centaur.

"Yes, he could take us, and besides, he loves to travel. Just give him back his arrows and we'll be on time," exclaims Val.

Heropodus Heronimus scratches his head a bit, looks at the Centaur and finally lets his enthusiastic nature convince him.

"Well, all right. But first I must prepare travelling cards for you, lest you become lost. Travelling cards are always necessary on such a long journey and whoever you meet will know that you have come from the renowned Foundation for Higher Knowledge."

He goes out of the hall to return with the two cards and hands one to each. They approach the Centaur, expecting the usual enthusiastic reception at the news of his arrows and imminent journey, but find he is completely indifferent. In fact, he refuses to budge from Sagittariusland, the Foundation, the very room and spot he is sitting on: the magic potion has taken effect!

"Heropodus Heronimus, you must do something to help us. You know so many things. Can't you do something?" the children cry.

"Well, there's not much time. Perhaps just enough to prepare a special antidote that will at least get you to the border!"

He rushes off to his laboratory and busies himself amid phials and flasks to concoct the remedy. This accomplished he returns and with Val and Pom-pom's help gives the antidote to the Centaur.

The effect is almost immediate and the change is notorious. The Archer's eyes light up again and the wandering spirit takes possession of the horse once more. They barely have time to run after him as he charges through the Foundation and into the courtyard. He is especially joyous at the sight of his arrows the guardians present him with. The children mount as the two men warn the Centaur he has only enough arrows to get him to the border and no further,—so no mischief along the way. And no hopping off into strange lands!

Once again he is Val and Pom-pom's savior. They cling to him tightly and with their free arms wave to Heropodus Heronimus, the registrar and the guardians, who have all gathered at the gate to bid the young ones farewell and a safe journey. Heropodus comes close to the children and with a far away look in his eyes, almost as if

he were having a strange vision, he whispers:

"You are about to discover the last three realms, the regions very few consciously reach. Remember Heropodus Heronimus and all his teachings, for in those realms this knowledge is used. Good-bye my little ones, good-bye...."

They gallop off at great speed, crossing the violet and fuschia coloured land, for the Centaur makes every effort to fulfil his mission properly and to bring the children to their destination on time. He travels so swiftly they seem to go even faster than sound and light, and at a certain moment the very space around them disappears, they are almost unaware of moving at all and seem to have entered a point right within themselves.

Sagittarius is a Fire sign, masculine, of Mutable Energy Quality and ruled by Jupiter, the planet of consciousness, the Guru, the Greater Benefic. This is the sign of philosophic-religious understanding, of prophecy, of vision, the planes above the mind (it lies in opposition to Gemini); but in prophetic vision the "mind and heart must work together" as Heropodus Heronimus says.

The sign's hieroglyph gives the indication that the vital force has been liberated; the diagonal line at the base of the arrow shows the energy awakened in Scorpio (the arrow forms the tail of the Scorpio hieroglyph) to be cut from that which binds it to the lower nature and is now free to carry the soul into the sphere which will signify the final purification. Sagittarius is the last of the Fire signs. In Aries we see the spark, in Leo the radiant, steady flame, and in Sagittarius the smouldering warmth, the journey nearing its end. It is a Mutable sign, therefore the difficulty — as portrayed in the story — to keep the energy channeled in the proper direction: the Centaur continuously escapes into other lands, as yet not able to control the precious force at his disposal. Sagittarius represents a penetration into far, unknown regions, therefore in the story only the Centaur has wandered into other lands, the rest of the characters have been confined to their own territory. And it is dual: in its pictograph we have a man, the Archer, with the body of a horse — it is the body with all its potent energies, the vital force which must be controlled by the higher faculties. An interesting fact to note is that there is a fragment of an ancient Babylonian sculpture of the Zodiac in which the Scorpion is depicted chasing after the Centaur and trying to grab his genitals with his pincers. This is almost precisely the last image in the story. The Scorpion refuses to let go of his hold through the dominance of the lower nature. (The sign is of Fixed energy). But the spirit-soul is too powerful and with majestic, joyful ease it escapes the clutches of death.

Heropodus Heronimus represents the higher faculties, also the Teacher. He prepares the ground for the children's entry into the last quarter of the Zodiac where unity is achieved. He opens the portals, indicates the way — but only that — for the next step must be taken alone by the individual. His contribution may appear somewhat superficial after such powerful experiences in Scorpio. But

here a pause is necessary, a suspension of breath before the great plunge that is to follow. The higher knowledge which Heropodus Heronimus represents is passed on to the children and will serve them as support in their subsequent Initiation and the fulfilment of their Earthly mission. Thus they are released from the land, sent abroad into "the regions very few consciously reach". For most the spiritual journey can be endlessly suspended here, the Kundalini is awakened and has brought its illumination. But the children have three more keys, ones larger than the former nine, and the last line of the chapter is most significant, "...they are almost unaware of moving at all and seem to have entered a point right within themselves." Now they are to plunge into the most profound recesses of being, they touch both hell and heaven, the way opens for a conscious union with the Divine and a total manifestation of the eternal Word.

CHAPTER X

The Universal Mother Conquest and Crystallisation in Matter

An enormous steep mountain rises before them, a majestic sight that juts up from the plains and stretches up to the heavens. Silhouetted against the bright sky it would seem as if the mountain were living, actually breathing, for the shadows formed by the crests and crevices make it appear as the face of a very ancient and wise person.

The Centaur has fulfilled his mission and reluctantly takes his leave. And thus Val and Pom-pom are left alone, at the foot of this mountain so steep it looks almost impossible to scale, and yet there seems to be no other way to go. They decide the only action possible is to climb the mountain, and so they begin the long and arduous ascent that they hope will lead them to the first of the last three realms.

Before long the journey proves too much and they stop to rest and view the land they have left below. It is already possible to see far, though they have not climbed so high — for the air is crisp and the atmosphere so clean, thus revealing in the far horizon a vast bed of water.

"Maybe that's where we should have gone, Valie," says Pom-pom.

But continuing to look they see a big splash and some sort of animal emerging from the water. The distance is too great to make out what form of creature he is, though they suspect it to be a crocodile. With a steady, persevering pace the animal moves ever closer toward the very place Val and Pom-pom stand, for he too is scaling the mountain but with a strength much greater than the children's.

Before long he reaches them and they are faced with a very strange animal, a Goat with the tail of a Fish! He halts his forceful climb just in front of Val and Pom-pom and looks at them in a quiet, penetrative silence. They are captivated by his profound and somewhat melancholic regard and the strength emanating from him, though his body is rather frail.

"Are you in difficulty?" the Goat-Fish asks.

Val and Pom-pom are delighted he has spoken to them and quickly tell him their reasons for being there. The Goat listens attentively and when they have finished says:

"You have arrived at the right place, you know. But the mountain is steep and the journey too arduous for such little people. However, this is my path and if you wish I will share the burden with you. If you ride with me it may take long but you can be sure you will arrive."

They readily accept his offer and mount as the Goat-Fish indicates, and then the three begin ascending. The climb really is very difficult but the Goat does not complain, nor for a moment do the children feel he would give up. Many times he falls to his knees, stumbling on a rock or some other obstacle along the way, but the responsibility he has taken upon himself must be fulfilled. And so with great effort once again he rises and carries his load higher.

Eventually they arrive at the end of their journey. The children are surprised for it is not the top of the mountain as they expected. Instead they have come to a door about halfway up which leads right into the mountain itself. The Goat-Fish asks them to dismount.

"But this isn't the top!" they exclaim.

"Oh, you cannot reach it by the outside. It is only through the inside that you may come to the peak, and this you must do alone. It is December 21st and on this day Capricornland awaits you within!"

He then begins descending and leaves the children to themselves at the big wooden door with the symbol VS and the number 10. The key that Val inserts is bigger than those they have used so far and it is only with Pom-pom's help that they manage to turn the lock. With great effort they push the door open and enter the mountain.

Inside, the first thing that impresses them is the musty smell, of damp earth, as if this mountain were a gigantic, age-old tomb, never penetrated. It is too dark to make out their surroundings but they seem to be in a narrow passage and then become aware of an indescribable force carrying them forward. In spite of themselves it raises them from the ground and moves them along.

They continue this way for some time until without being aware of how or when it happens they are immersed in a soft light and a very strange scene takes shape before them. A woman appears, clothed in long robes with a hood covering her face, making it impossible to see what she looks like. She sits under an olive tree and is in a very sorrowful mood. She brings her hands to her face and weeps silently, stops for a while, then resumes sighing and softly weeping. And with each lament Val and Pom-pom sigh also for her melancholy is thoroughly captivating. The lady's presence and the gloomy atmosphere produce an immense sorrow in the children, without reason nor justification. And what is more they almost enjoy this condition and actually regret that the vision fades before their eyes and once more they are carried along by

the invisible current, pulling them higher now and always forward.

After a while again the light envelops them and another vision appears. This time it is a hooded woman, apparently the same as before, jealously hiding someone from view. A child or grown-up, they cannot tell which. She covers the person with her robes like an animal avidly protecting its own. Val and Pom-pom are desperate to plunge into the scene, but immediately the vision fades and once more they are carried higher.

Through the darkness they proceed until at last another scene comes to light. A long table is filled with every food imaginable, each plate overflowing. Seated at the table with her back to the children, the robed lady is partaking of the food, in such a way as to make one think she had not eaten for centuries. Grotesquely she grabs it with both hands and these disappear inside the hood covering her face. Val and Pom-pom feel a pull in their stomachs, an intense desire to feast in the same manner, as if it were more important than anything else. They are ready to grab as much as their little hands can hold when the vision blurs and disappears, leaving them to continue their magical ascent in the darkness.

The visions go on, however, and next they see the lady walking along and many outstretched arms forming a sort of corridor through which she proceeds, imploring and striving to touch her as she walks in total isolation through the multitude, oblivious of their needs.

Once this vision fades it is followed almost immediately by another and they see the lady seated on a throne with many people bowing at her feet and presenting her with offerings of gold and other fine treasures. As grand as these offerings are they never seem to be enough, for she always demands more and is never satisfied.

Now the visions multiply and come in rapid succession overwhelming the children, for each time they are irresistibly carried into them as if discovering some intimate part of themselves. The inside of the mountain becomes lighter the higher they are drawn and Val and Pom-pom feel that soon they will reach the top as the Goat-Fish explained. Now it is almost as if the visions themselves are the force that carries them higher, as they go from scene to scene with no interval in between.

But at the moment they feel it all coming to a climax they are thrust into a solitary, isolated chamber of bare walls. Left to themselves in total silence, they tightly hold hands in a frantic need to feel they are not completely alone. But the sense of abandon is strong and almost too much for them. Val and Pom-pom are at a point of utter despair when an insistent, continuous ticking is heard through the heavy silence. The sound increases and increases, becoming louder with each tick until it is right upon them and apparently in their very presence. They begin running round and round the room, passing their hands along the bare walls to make sure there are no secret doors and are soon at a point of exhaustion and collapse to the ground.

Lying there in complete stillness they become aware of a hole in the middle of the room, which seems to have been there all the while. The children crawl up to it, peer over the rim and down below they see an old, old man with flowing beard and

long white hair, seated at a table with a huge book open before him. Behind him stands a great clock, unusual and unique for there are only three symbols drawn on its face: a minus to the left, a plus to the right, and a circle in the middle. But there are no hands pointing anywhere as one would normally expect. The ticking is loud and strong now for it comes from this very clock.

As they gaze at the scene below the old gentleman, table and clock slowly rise into the centre of the room through the hole.

"Who are you?" the Man asks.

"Val. Pom-pom," they reply.

"I ask: who are you?" he insists.

"But we told you." says Val.

"That's not your identity."

"Valie, let's show him the travelling cards," says Pom-pom, and they hand them to him.

He studies them for a long while and appears quite impressed, though able to control his feelings. He reflects a moment and then speaks:

"Having been given these you should be able to tell me who you are."

While talking he opens the enormous volume on the desk before him and begins leafing through the old parchment pages, yellowed with age and wear. It is a huge book with an infinite amount of sheets and a while passes before he finally finds what he is looking for.

"Yes, here we are. VAL...BORN ON THE PLANET EARTH IN THE YEAR..." and thus he begins relating the whole past of Val, going so far back even to events she is totally unaware of. Then he passes on to the future and gives a detailed account of all the important events in life to come. He does the same with Pom-pom. Meanwhile the ponderous, mysterious clock ticks away in the background, with no hands to indicate any advance at all.

Finally the information is complete; he begins to speak of their present, the most intimate details of their character and essence, many of which they had come to understand through the magical visions of the mountain. Having finished he asks:

"Now do you know who you are and what your duty is?" and both Val and Pom-pom agree to their true identity.

The old Man then pulls out two objects from his robes and hands one to Val and the other to Pom-pom. They are curious golden globes, but looking closer within one can see that each sphere contains the symbols of the odd-looking clock: a plus and a minus with the circles.

"Take these with you on your journey through the remaining realms. And now I bid you farewell. You are almost at the top of the mountain and the end of your stay in Capricornland, but before you leave you will see what is reserved for very few people. It is the abode of Omanisol. Farewell!" and he, the table and clock disappear through the floor and in their place a very sturdy looking wooden ladder appears, leading up and becoming lost in a ceiling of dark green smoke.

Val and Pom-pom hasten to climb until they penetrate the deeply coloured smoke and are completely immersed in it, going higher and higher. It is an unending ladder, or seems to be, for as the children climb they count the rungs until at the 99th they emerge from the smoke to find themselves on the mountain peak.

A woman sits before them.

She is clothed in robes that blend in colour with the mountain, in fact she herself appears to be the continuation of the mountain itself. She sits on the ground with legs crossed and covered by the robes, immobile and breathing ever so slightly, in a manner which makes one feel the physical life in her is suspended. Her face is not old but rather ancient, and her half-closed eyes reveal an understanding that is of the nature of the mountain over which she presides. Omanisol is cloaked in an aura of serenity and strength, of timelessness and intensity, which become a part of the children merely by being in her presence. In the same still attitude, a unicorn sits by her side.

The mountain peak is enveloped in the rays of the brightest midday sun, which, however, Val and Pom-pom cannot locate in the sky. This vivid light makes it possible to see over an enormous distance, an unending stretch of land on all sides, revealing every type of landscape—dominated by the abode of Omanisol. As they face this majestic sight and become evermore immersed in the atmosphere of the place, a swell of iridescent, multicoloured smoke appears on the far-off horizon. It moves in their direction, coming with great force, always closer toward the commanding peak on which the children stand. If it were not for Omanisol Val and Pom-pom would surely flee for the smoke, approaching closer, reveals itself to be a tornado, whirling with mighty power. She gives a maternal feeling of protection, a sort of mother of the spirit, for it seems the state she is in could never be harmed by any outside force, being herself the essence of the rocky mountain.

The tornado whips up to the peak in a swirl of cosmic sounds. It picks Val and Pom-pom off the mountain, spinning them round and round in the smoke, carrying them out of the land of Omanisol and up through the clear, radiant sky.

Capricorn is an Earth sign, of Cardinal Energy Quality, feminine, ruled by Saturn and co-ruled by the new planet Pluto. It is Cosmic Midday, the Sun's highest point, visible throughout the lands, the Divine bathing creation in his glorious light.

It can be said that the whole Zodiac is the horoscope of the Divine Mother, or the map of the evolution of manifested divinity in time and space. Therefore each sign refers to an aspect of the Mother, but this one particularly offers mankind the key to her essence and hence the summit of manifestation. Here the Shakti is visibly apparent in all creation; Capricorn lies in opposition to Cancer: there Prakriti, here Paraprakriti. We shall follow the story by degrees for this sign is the most mysterious of all. Its hieroglyph has been referred to as the name of God, and when its message is revealed the reign of Light is said to have come.

The children are left at the foot of the mountain which symbolises Matter. For them it is also their very body, since what is manifest without is to be found within. (Capricorn, in fact, signifies the realisation in matter of the Divine; it is the sign towards which humanity now moves and will reach after a period of 2,000 years approximately.) From afar they see the Goat approach and in this pictograph, half-goat, half-fish, we understand the very essence of the sign: the unity of both heaven and hell, the abyss and the top of the mountain, soul and matter move from below to join the spirit-Sun descending from above.

Val and Pom-pom are brought half-way up and are there deposited, symbolising the seat of the vital force, and it is this plunge they take into the abyss when they penetrate the mountain, "a gigantic, age-old tomb, never penetrated," they go into the most obscure and unexplored recesses of matter.

That which was released in Scorpio is here met in its most intense manifestation; all the accumulation of past tendencies and hence future possibilities are unfolded, for Capricorn is ruled by Saturn, the planet of destiny, fate, karma,—mysteriously beautiful with its circle of light and nine moons, the last of the ancient seven and the one toward which the children were headed in the beginning of the story, it must be remembered; the whole essence of Earthly existence is herein contained, as well as the ultimate goal. It is here that the secret knowledge is given. The plunge into their inner being seems to take them into hell, but this hell is "the very force that carries them higher." In Capricorn Mars is in exaltation; thus the vital force is the key to the sign's realisation. Capricorn is Power, controlling and dominating the forces of death, a Power manifest within the very body.

For Val and Pom-pom the sign is an Initiation, and the only companion they imagine they have at this point is the force which manifests within their very being. In fact, it is that which they embrace; this Lady who entices them again and again into the throes of their most secret desires, passions and failings, is Maya. She is another aspect of Hayala, but in this sign there is an almost wilful taking on of the veils of illusion. She appears to masquerade before them (similar to the Queen of Night in Cancer) all their weaknesses, that they may face them, reject them and ascend to the abode of Omanisol, the Shakti in her transcendental and most sublime aspect, the Mahashakti.

When they have viewed the play of Maya, which seemed to be their very essence, they are thrown into a state of total abandon and isolation: all that they clung to, believing it to be real, is seen as mere illusion; they plunge ever deeper into the abyss of being and there are faced with the desperation of an apparent Void. Nothing remains of "them", the ego is no more, but what is there at that moment?

The Father of Destiny appears, revealing himself to have always been a part of them, and he speaks of their true identity, of their mission, of the eternity of their essence — symbolised by the clock with the plus, minus, circle and no hands,

indicating the timeless nature of being, the unity of positive and negative. He then opens the way to the Universal Mother, the essence of the very mountain and all that is manifest, the dark as well as the light; when necessary she makes use of even the ego to bring mankind to her abode under the luminous rays of Truth. In her presence they feel protection, for the children have realised that the darkness they feared is but the shade of the Mother's light, the forces of decay were used to bring about a union with the Divine, or, better said, these forces themselves are brought into the light and have lost their hold at the feet of the Power of God. They have come to know the simultaneous experience of the abyss and the heavens as One.

This is the secret meaning of the hieroglyph of Capricorn, and in the new planet, Pluto, its co-ruler, the key to the actual stage in the spiral of creation is revealed. Pluto points to the new creation; it is the solar and vital forces combined, the movement from below meeting that from above.

It will perhaps prove of interest to the reader to note the following, which throws this book into a further dimension and casts some light on a totally new aspect of the art of prophecy. Hence it is important to keep in mind that the book was written in February/March of 1970, over a year before the author became acquainted with the two beings who are described in this chapter, for they have physical counterparts. The following are extracts from a book wherein the experience of writing "The Magical Carousel" is explained; its complete character was understood only after a first meeting on the physical plane with the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry:

"When I finished I was aware that something unique in the literature of astrology had been written, that it had a power to express the deeper meaning of the Art better than anything I had come across so far, but what I was not aware of was that the story was my own biography, beginning with the 18th year—or 1956—and continuing through in perfect sequence (as proven by the events) to my age at the time, 32. And what is more, I went beyond that and wrote in precise detail of the next years to follow, describing the two beings I would later meet, indicating one of their ages (99 in 1971), to thus pin-point the time period, and giving all the details of certain major events to come. All of this I was completely ignorant of then and it was only when the events actually took place that the nature of the book was understood. The remarkable characteristic of it all was the absolutely perfect order of the whole thing. Not a detail was erroneous, either in the light of astrology on the whole or as a detailed autobiography, — but it was an autobiography which explained the journey of the soul and its uncovering and was concerned with nothing else, as it also explained the journey of all souls in manifestation "

And further on:

"Through the meeting with the Mother something most remarkable ensued. It was then I understood the book for children on astrology I had written a year and a half earlier was a prophetic autobiography .

"..... the Fourth Chapter corresponded to the sign Cancer which is the gestation of the soul and 9 signs are then journeyed through until return to the Origin, or unity of being. Thus from the Fourth, each subsequent chapter was approximately 1 year of life, —

so five chapters later, my 32nd year, the book was written, falling into the 9th astrological sign, Sagittarius — which precisely refers to prophecy and religious-philosophic experience and writings, and therein the next years were predicted. So, for the Tenth Chapter, referring to Capricorn, I put all the details of the 33rd year, described Sri Aurobindo physically, gave his age which was the clue to my age, and even a specific character trait, as well as the Mother — and it was the Mother of that morning of October 8, 1971. In that chapter exactly what I experienced before her, that overwhelming feeling of protection in her presence was precisely described in the book. It was amazing, for what is more, in this manner the secret of the sign of Capricorn, so misunderstood and enigmatic for astrologers, was made clear; in a sense it was revealed to me by myself, if I were to believe the book was written out of some personal fount of inspiration. The realisation of the sign of Capricorn was clearly recorded in that chapter, and it coincided with the very experiences I had been through before coming to the Mother. All this and much more was revealed. It was seen that Sri Aurobindo opened the gates to the final trinity of the Zodiac, to the unified man as I called it, which he speaks of as the Integral Yogi."

In this sign and the following two a different quality is felt in the story. Unity is achieved; now the children must together open the doors. The personal has given way to the impersonal, the ego has receded, the signs reveal themselves in universal, cosmic terms; therefore the characters in each chapter are much less "humanly descriptive" than in the former nine. In effect, in what refers to the journey of the soul, this is the rightful development, and we are concerned in this exposition with the esoteric meaning of the Zodiac, with this and nothing more: the mysteries of the evolution of the soul.

PATRIZIA

Editor's Note

The Magical Carousel will appear in book-form on January 1, 1973. It will be completed in *Mother India* in February.

SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

(Continued from the issue of October, 1972)

CHAPTER II

IN her new solitude, Silent Daughter felt the menace in the air tighten all the more around her. Everywhere the darkness moved and shifted in restless shadows, making her feel perpetually off her guard with her back seemingly turned in every direction at once. A drowsiness came over her at the height of her anxiety till suddenly in a half-waking state she found the darkness had grown a voice and was addressing her:

"Great Queen, at last you have come to me. Age upon age I have waited for this moment when I should claim you as my bride, and you should become the reigning jewel of my crown, thus adorning it with the brilliance of your many accomplishments. Then, as I pass my fingers through the heaped coins of my treasury, for a fleeting instant your light would fall on each piece, making the gold flash in my hands before it fell again into the black safety of my coffer."

Rigid with an unfamiliar terror, her heart alive with pain through her stupefaction, Silent Daughter listened, but was unable to reply. Persuasively the voice continued: "You don't believe me, my royal one? See—here I present myself. No less than you am I. No greater prince than I bestrides the worlds. All pathos, sorrow, and tragedy do I hold within my grasp. Each coin of my vast horde is but the tablet of one creature's fate. During the time the coins spend within my Plutonic vault, the beings they represent sleep in death, while those that lie upon my counting table, in the crimson light of my brazier, live. Often while I observed the pieces spread before me on that table, I saw the unearthly sparkle of your genius in the metal, and since that brightness first came to my eyes, and I learnt a princess existed who had bestowed it, I have coveted you and your beauty. Transient beauty of woman, of earthly achievement, of grace, brilliance and delicacy, how I have dreamt of possessing all these in their immortal form to be mine for all time as my beloved and my queen."

Now all at once as he appeared before her, she knew instantaneously that he was no counterfeit who had spoken but the Lord of Death himself. That he was a great god none could gainsay. His body was young with a terrible strength; an immense and clouded power hung about him like an aura created by the numberless, millennial outpourings of humanity's accumulated tears and pain and loss. His air bore the confidence, the surety of inevitable fate, of the final word that none knew how to deny. And his face was that of a grand and frightful man-beast, cold and pallid

of skin yet with eyes that held and hypnotised till none could resist the impulsion of their will. A crown rested on the great head exquisitely made by the phantom labour of trapped souls while behind the huge and sinister form stretched an earth-embracing mantle of purest black.

Trembling, Silent Daughter faced the dreadful majesty before her, and bore within herself the shock of recognition. For surely he was as familiar to her as time itself. Surely he had followed her with sombre, stealthy measure through every life her hand had touched. A turmoil of darkness invaded her mind. It seemed as though the Dark Lord's mantle rose up and enveloped her, while his voice spoke on—"Come to me and remain mine forever. For in reality you have always been mine. Nature works for me as my slave, but you hold the promise of being my queen. How many aeons have I longed to hold you, and now you have come to me of yourself, most fortunate of all beings that I am. Come, I will possess you as none has ever possessed so marvellous a capture. And see the outward reason of it, beloved—this child, this golden one that I have had so fortuitously put to sleep to serve as a snare for you, my splendid quarry, for does he not also in the end belong to me? His very breath he takes at my command, his every living heartbeat is my whim. So in serving him, you are serving really me, as you have served me all these years without knowing my face, or my heart that consumes itself for you."

How persuasive the voice as it flowed on resounding deeply, vibrantly like an echo in a cavern, even though it spoke only in a whisper. Every lover's guile the Lord of Death had learnt, for who could count the lovers he had spirited away within the folds of his ebony cloak? Every thwarted passion trembled in his tone, for which human passion unrequited in life had not found its last retreat in his bosom?

Paralysed, Silent Daughter listened as the sweet poison of his words and the bitter nectar of his longing entered her being. No retort came to her, no rebuttal—only the numb helplessness of one stung to immobility by some ether that gives no pain save that of a subconscious, nameless fear. Then suddenly as she stood in utter darkness before the God of Death, even the fear disappeared in the face of an onrushing sorrow so violent that her heart rose up within her throat and let forth a silent cry of anguish that spread outward from her in great waves, traversing the black cloak and dispersing through the worlds and heavens far beyond. At the same time all the poison in her system flowed to her eyes and spilt out in acrid, burning tears, that fell onto her feet and vanished like fiery, liquid jewels into the ground. So blinded was she by her tears that Silent Daughter lost all visual awareness of her surroundings, till bit by bit as the storm of sorrow subsided, her eyes cleared, and she felt herself cleansed throughout her being. It was then that she noticed she was once again alone. The ominous presence of her sombre suitor was gone. The black cloak too had disappeared, as had the urgent, compelling voice, and she stood deserted in a clouded twilight, the child a huddled form at her feet. Through the mist that surrounded her, a mist as of an immense sadness suffered and overcome, the distant, watery sunshine of the Great One filtered, and the stillness of a stunned aftermath reigned. Yet even now, Silent

Daughter felt an unease she could not explain till she looked at her garments and saw the smudges of the Dark Lord's breath upon them, and the stain of his fingerprints upon her hem.

Startled by the unexpected and intolerable taint, she determined to look for the water of some cleansing spring, and the cool shade of such a tree of life as could make her forget the experience she had just passed through and, she told herself, miraculously survived, so near had she come to forgetting her own immortality and divine origin amongst the folds of the cloak of Death. Even the child, she found, had been reduced to a grey, amorphous mass lying on the ground, and with welling anger at the outrage, she knelt down to take in her arms what had once been the form of a beautiful, sun-gold infant. As she rose and started to walk with her burden through the mist she felt its flame of life shrunk infinitesimally small—as small as a tiny, pin-prick speck buried at the core of its shapeless, lifeless body. For the Dark One had uttered his ultimate, irrefutable, rhetorical question: "Does he not also in the end belong to me?" and brought to death's heel all within the child but that final spark that never dies. "Belong? Oh yes," she thought, bitterness mingling with her anger, as cautiously, wearily, she walked on, recalling slowly, very slowly, who she was and everything about herself that she had lost to the waters of Lethe during her confrontation with the sovereign power of Night. At last she felt a vestige of her capacity return to her, but then the noxious vapour of the soiled garments rose again to her nostrils and numbed her consciousness back to partial anaesthesia. Now more like a somnambulist than ever, she meandered on hardly knowing where she went, but driven by a mounting distress she found impossible to formulate, until as a last resort she felt she must cry out before she became totally and irreparably lost. Yet, as in human nightmares, she opened her mouth and no sound came. She mustered all her force to scream and still her voice suffocated in her throat. At last, in desperation she cast about her dying sense of recollection and clutched at a brace of words she discovered hanging inside her emptying mind with no apparent connection to anything: "Cloven of hoof and golden of horn." As she did so her voice suddenly emerged in a clear, long, liquid call that sprang outwards and beamed forward through the misty air. The words' forgotten magic did its work and the thin gold thread of sound produced by the disembodied mantra brought its predestined result.

A wavering white shape appeared through the clouded dimness before her, small and distant at first and then slowly growing in size and solidity as it approached. A second, slighter form hovered beside the first, keeping pace with it as it moved. In a deepening stupor, only half comprehending what she saw, Silent Daughter watched the two forms draw nearer and nearer, till at last some flicker of recognition jarred her momentarily from her fainting state. They were upon her now, gathering her into their midst—the unicorn white as a gardenia in moonlight, its horn a spear of spiraling gold and its cloven hoofs dainty as a newborn kid's, its mistress tall and flaxen haired, born of some noble Frankish line from the age of Europe's chivalry.

"Quickly," Silent Daughter heard her rescuer say. "Speed us, my fabled beast, from this unwholesome place. A moment longer and our two beloved wayfarers from heaven's paths shall fade away forever—come, White One, fly!" Instantly as all three were settled on its back, the stately creature arched its slender neck and leapt away in the direction of its coming, impaling the mist on the point of its mystic horn. The shock of motion made Silent Daughter faint away altogether with a relief that sought immediate oblivion and repose, while her companion supported her in her arms and looked forward over the curved, white neck as her steed and pet transported them to a clearer air. Then motioning it to a slow, drifting movement, she cried, "And now to beseech the heavens for what we need." Strange words flowed from her in incantations known only to initiates of an occult medieval lore, as she sought to bring into being with her practised power all that she required to heal and cleanse.

Before them, as though in answer to Silent Daughter's own desire, instantly sprang a great tree with vaulting foliage that rendered all light beneath it a dappled, summer green, and distributed the bounty of the divine sun in soothing filtered tones on the ground below. At the same time, flowing to one side of its massive roots, a stream of sparkling clarity appeared, with round white pebbles in its bed that winked up through the water at the leaves reflected on the bubbling surface.

"Good," the Frankish princess murmured, looking around her at the little world she had brought into being. "What had been sought has been provided." She then slipped off the unicorn's back and directed it to carefully lower itself to the ground while she maintained her hold on Silent Daughter and her child. "We will lay them to sleep here," she continued, "where the shade will shield them. Now, my white beauty, place the point of your horn upon her heart, while I bring the liquid elixir from the stream." She held up her hands and there appeared between them a goblet in wrought gold and inlaid precious stones of ancient Carolingian design. This she carried to the water's edge, filled, and brought back, stepping as lightly and gracefully as a sylph, while the unicorn lay beside the unconscious pair and radiated its healing power upon Silent Daughter through its golden horn. Kneeling by the animal's head, the princess held up the goblet once again and blew on it. As she did so, the water inside rose up and fell in a fine mist over the ailing goddess and her charge, each particle of vapour turning to sapphire dust as it came down upon the sleeping bodies.

At the touch of the gentle shower, Silent Daughter stirred. It was as though the sparkling mist had not merely fallen on her body but passed through it, dropping like soft rain into her consciousness. She awoke to find the princess heaping fresh leaves on her clothes, while the unicorn seated to one side continued to gaze solemnly at her with its horn still pointed at her heart.

"Ah, sweet goddess, at last you awaken," the princess said, looking up from her task. Then she went on, addressing the leaves, "Shed the gift of your living greenness on the garments, if it please you, and make them live in truth and freshness as once they lived..."

As she spoke, Silent Daughter felt the marks of death beneath the leaves recede

from her clothing, and sensed the fabric become clean and vibrant next to her ethereal body. A dreamlike satisfaction came over her as she lay and looked up into the dappled canopy of the giant tree and felt life and joy return to her senses. Even then through her languor she knew something to be lacking, and with a start she remembered the child. But immediately as she struggled to rise, the princess stretched out her arm.

"No, I have not forgotten, dear one," she said. "He is lying by your side and I am about to attend to him."

She motioned to the unicorn, which rose to its feet and turned to face the child's inert form. "See, my dear," she instructed it, "how our newborn lies on the grass, muffled in greyness. Let us divest it of its membrane of death that it may take breath and be itself again." With the suggestion, which also came from her in the form of an incantation, the unicorn lowered its head and started to lick the grey bundle that had once been the Golden Child.

"Darkness of Death," the princess spoke on, "pursue not your quarry into the cradle of the child, the newborn—withdraw your mantle. For your time has passed, and you may not visit again the abode of god-blessed infancy."

And yet with all the magic at the command of the princess and her mythic companion, the thick grey membrane which had grown over the child's form came away ever so slowly from the body within. But at last even this clinging vestige of the Dark Lord's touch gave way to the pressure of the unicorn's tongue and the amorphous covering instantaneously disappeared upon falling free of the golden one's inner core, and coming in contact with a protruding root of the great tree.

Seeing him again after what appeared to be an age of night, Silent Daughter could not restrain a gasp. From the semblance of a year-old-child, the boy had now been reduced to a just-born infant too weak even to cry, so tiny, so shrivelled and locked in sleep had he become.

"No, no," Silent Daughter wailed picking him up and rocking him in her arms. "Would you believe, Mélisande (for that was the flaxen haired princess's name), that he had been a grown man once, golden and equal to the gods themselves in beauty, and now he creeps back to the grave with every breath —"

"Have no fear, my lovely one, none can die here. Not with Unicorn by our side and the tree above and below us; for the tree is the source itself of Life's vitality."

"How strange your words seem to my ears, when a short time ago, in my madness, I had almost forgotten what living was."

"I know of your meeting, Silent One. When your cry came to me it was heavy and choked with the Dark Lord's presence." She paused, thought a moment, and then went on. "But have we not all known that this would have to come? After all, dear friend, how long is it since we have been dreaming of the time when his dominion must come to an end? All these ages he has worked unchallenged, without even needing to declare himself, so sure was he of his supremacy. But now he senses a new intention in the air, a new stirring in the heavens, a new breath upon the earth. He sees the seeds

you have planted stir and cry for expression, and fearing their immortality, while impassioned at the same time by the blossoming new beauty in things, he seeks to possess its source, and make himself its sole master."

"What you say is true, Mélisande. Only I had been witless enough to try to keep the reality from myself; for in my heart too was engraved the omen, the date and occasion itself of his coming. And now — who can believe the shame of it — it seems he has shot something into my depths which whispers to me only of him, his love and his desire."

"Silent One, it is merely that before this, you encountered him only second-hand, through the hearts of your children that he snuffed out while you sat beside them and allowed the treasured images of their doomed and fading lives to seek refuge in the bright tableaux of your memory. The Dark One's existence did not touch you then — for he did not seek to capture you, as each time you withdrew with your divine discretion from his sorry, crumbling spoils that a moment before had been a soul's abode. But now, fair one, he does indeed seek you, and despite your immortality, you feel upon your back the pursuing breath of Death that lingers about all living mortal things."

"How well you phrase my plight. Yet even you with your magic tongue would shrink at describing the spell of Death that I have now come to know within myself."

"Yes, in our ancient lore, this one admonition we were always given: 'If thou wishest to preserve life, thine own to boot, dwell not on the visage of Death His demons and petty goblins, yes. Deal with them through thy magic — indeed for such was it created. But ever shun the Lord of Death himself, fly from his shadow as an arrow, thus saving thyself from thine own perdition.' It is an old tenet, and I know for a surety that the time has come to cast it aside. Tell me what has happened to you, what you have seen and understood, for I am determined to share this peril which has arisen, and face it come what may."

"Mélisande, you are brave and beautiful, much more now than you ever were on earth, and Unicorn is the very guardian angel of purity atop the enchanted mountain where you both dwell and from which you shed your clear and gentle light on all that lives. Must you now face the deeps of darkness and challenge the awful night when so many have already foundered there?"

"Such a confrontation is written in all of our fates, dear one, and if this is my chance to enter the fray, I welcome it."

The two looked at each other for a prolonged instant and then Silent Daughter began to speak or rather, as always, to communicate in a stream of consciousness which needed no words, but for which words have once again had to be substituted for the sake of a written record.

"Listen then, flaxen Mélisande — for I shall speak to you as one bewitched, who supposedly knowing life, suddenly sees its most renowned face for the first time, and feels a magnetism never experienced before. For as you have already hinted, I have lived upon my heights with my divine discretion, and always withdrawn from

the poignancies of mortal life whose time is split in passing between the poles of night and day, of living and dying. What have I cared in my divine unconcern, for even my own offerings, my own little seeds that I have planted in men's beings, that found no voice nor soil in which to flower? So often immersed in splendour at the Great One's feet, far from the toil and struggle of the nether worlds where beauty can wither at a malignant glance, oblivious of the human sorrow and despair which I was not empowered to relieve, I saw earth as but a pebble at the bottom of a deep and murky ocean. And all those years, since those nascent times when that pebble floated upon the universal ocean in the form of a great island, which was freely visited by the gods — for jewel-like it lay invitingly beneath our own immensity of heaven — I have left it for the greater part to its ways. But now...

"No, *Mélisande*, we must not speak of it here beneath this tree where my infant sleeps and Unicorn rests. Let their dreams remain untroubled while we move away a little — here where nothing is to be seen and all is white and featureless space."

"Yes, this shall suit our purpose, for our words can do no harm here. Now speak on —"

"Indeed, at last to describe him whose spell lurks about my heart: Evil he has been called — yet evil is a curious word. Did I see the picture of evil, or of a devil or a demon when he appeared before me? No, my princess, I did not. I saw sorrow and longing. I saw a god striving to be as divine as the Great One is, yet doomed to failure — I saw a creature stamped with all the pain of a human face and hung about through all his being with an aura of tears unshed. I saw fear coupled with an unrequited passion for the unattainable. In a word, my princess, I saw Mortality, and in my heart his memory remains."

"You speak dangerous words, Silent One. He has indeed bewitched you, and I fear for your safety. Surely his ways are more devious than your guileless heart can ever imagine. Surely one must cast his image from oneself as though it were a corroding venom."

"*Mélisande*, his bitter-sweet venom already trickles through my veins. Nor am I sorry now that I took it in while I remained within his grasp. All the pain of my children flows in it. For he *is* that pain personified, which has so intimately coloured every plant of mine that has bloomed in earthly soil. Recall for a moment how mortal sorrow has tinted all the human art and beauty my gifts have brought into being till these little wonders of man burst from him like a cry of torment. For he finds that each creative act has cost him so dearly, that he must continually keep paying a usurer's ransom for it with the substance of his own life.

"No, my princess, I cannot bear any longer to see the cries of my children lose themselves to an unheeding wind. If they die, I must know the how of it; if they suffer and weep, I must see the face of the god that visits them in their hours of despair...even though that face follow me thereafter, and haunt me like a blighting shadow wherever I go."

"I know, I know," *Mélisande* whispered, for she found herself lost in many

memories of her own. "But what will come of it in the end? Will he not capture you, and ruin you forever for your trouble? Are you not afraid that you will never again see the Divine One nor rest at his luminous feet?"

"Afraid I may well be. For who can predict the outcome of an encounter in the lower worlds, let alone such an encounter in which one meets the very limit and ultimate confine itself of Nature's hazardous domain? Yet the cries of life imprisoned continue to come to us, and perhaps the time has come when each must bear the burden of those cries and face their challenge in his own manner. Think how it must be to mortal ones, *Mélisande*. To some Death comes as a void, a nothingness where all the labour of a life must come to nought. To the ancients among human kind he came as the Lord of the land of shadows and ghosts from which none could return. To many even now he comes as the visage of terror and decay, to others as a flood of sorrow for things irretrievably lost and torn away. To still others, it is true, he comes as a release from circumstances long suffered and days too wearying to be borne, yet it is the Dark One himself who prepares for death those living bodies that long for their own demise, by subtracting daily from their will to live and from their limbs' capacity to move and act.

"Even to our gods, the Lord of Mortal Being presents his various faces, while to me, *Mélisande*, he comes as a lover and suitor for my hand. Somehow in some way, I must bear the load of this terrible courtship, and bring the sorrow and pain of my loved ones within reach of the Great One's hand where he may dissolve them in the white brilliance of his touch; and where the Lord of Death himself may vanish as night's spectre before the sun that is the Great One's and the Universal Mother's supernal gaze."

"Silent One, you speak of things of which we've only dreamt — of that moment so sacred none has dared to speak of it, when Death shall be erased like some figment of an imperfect imagination at the feet of the Creation's true and only Master. Yet it seems there is far to walk before all shall be ready for that magic day."

"I fear so, my princess. It appears that Death's sovereign shall haunt us to the end of the long journey, for his kingdom is vast, and his sombre treasures not easily laid bare."

"But then how is the work to be done?"

"*Mélisande*, I can know only the part I myself must play for the time being. None but the Great One knows all, planning and executing his own strategy, but to each of us, his godly children, he gives only an appointed task that we must perform to the exclusion of all else. So I can say nothing of the rest. All I have been told and can feel within my own being is that our Divine Lord has decreed a change whose time has come and that each of us must bring to life and actuality in our own particular way. My work it is to nurture the Golden Child, symbol and standard-bearer of my latent gifts, till he achieves a conscious maturity through which he will be able to illumine earth's pathways with the soft splendour of their unfolding, undimmed by Death and unalloyed by humanity's petty struggling nature. And so my undertaking

begins, but did I say that I was afraid, or that I might well be so? No, it is no longer true. The more I speak the more my fear disperses; the more I know what must be done, the more the Great One's arms reach about me with their strength. And the more it comes to me that each must meet his fate, myself no less, the more I look to the days ahead with no flinching of distaste.

"Therefore wish me well, beloved Mélisande, and see me on my way with my golden child. You have helped us immeasurably. Indeed you have restored us to life itself. I will need you again, so do not fly far from my thoughts. But now I must seek warm sunny places where the small one can grow and learn to use his infant eyes and voice and limbs."

Now at last they made their way back to the tree and stream, where the baby still lay peacefully asleep beside Unicorn. As Silent Daughter approached she took Unicorn's lovely gold-horned head between her hands and gazed fondly into its eyes that glowed quietly with purity's white fire. Then stroking its rich and curly mane, she bade it a wordless farewell and gathered up the infant lying by its flank. Finally she turned once again to Mélisande and poured out her thanks to her in that extravagant silent flow of the heart's warmth that cannot be captured in any form of speech, and passed on into the mists beyond the tree.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

MUSIC AND YOGA

(Continued from the issue of October, 1972)

To discover the great truth standing behind and supporting music one needs a spiritual realisation which can come only through yoga and yogic discipline. For music as a science and art can be touched by the scientist and the artist only up to a certain point, through an analytical, mathematical and logical method by the one and through emotion and sentiment by the other. Beyond that, the true secret of music is an unapproachable domain of the spirit. Unless he taps this unique source, a musician — specially the musician of tomorrow — can never attain true mastery of music, however proficient he may be in external musical knowledge and skill. Man has reached his acme in outer and seizable musical perfection — all that the perfection of technique and the vast heritage of the past can endow.

As for the yogi, the path of music as another way of self-perfection can open out a new and unattempted possibility. For here is a fusion of devotion, and work, a merging of the emotions in a gesture of upward movement — a labour which itself is a sacrifice and self-giving. But unfortunately the yogin in general chooses the path of knowledge, devotion or work, caring little for the path of beauty and aesthetic realisation. For the spirit manifests itself in multitudinous ways — not only in knowledge, love or work but also as supreme joy and beauty.

The artist on the other hand has an abhorrence for the life of the ascetic and all ways of yoga. He loves and clings to his dissipated ways, his erratic moods, his temperamental character making him a difficult person to work or live with. This also shuts him away from higher and purer realisations. He considers himself, because he is a musician or an artist, a special individual to whom no laws apply and who thus has all the rights and privileges with no consequential responsibilities. We are not here referring to the ethical aspect of the question, but to that of human perfection which is the aim of all men, musicians included.

Being a musician is a rare privilege, but we must not forget that music is a universal and divine power and the musician is nothing but a recipient and instrument of this. To possess this capacity and open to this source can surely make him an extraordinary person. The musician must grow aware of it and instead of this awareness inflating his egoism and vanity he must obey the laws of his higher nature, rise above his egoism and fulfil himself by a richer creativity as a conscious and selfless instrument. We can cite here a portion of a letter of the famous Indian maestro and great virtuoso who recently celebrated his hundred-and-tenth birthday. (Alas, he is no more now!) He was both a yogi and an outstanding musician who could play about a dozen instruments with perfect mastery. He, Allauddin Khan, says, "...I have only gathered small gems from the endless ocean of music." (Tr. from the preface of

Sangit O Samaskriti by Prajnananda. Translation is mine).

But tuning oneself to the higher reaches of music and opening to them is not easy. The thick veil caused by ignorance is there. The habits of physical inertia, the unrest of the life parts, the mental doubts close the door of inspiration and intuition. By yoga, by conscious effort and will these impediments can be removed, the thick veil can be pierced. Then the musician would come in touch with that hidden source of Beauty, the primal chords which move creation; he would be dominated by those overwhelming influences; he would be possessed by the light of inspiration and intuition and at the end would touch Reality as the All-Beautiful with its inexhaustible Ananda. The poet, the artist, the musician and the dancer choose this path unconsciously, only seizing a glimpse of it as we find in the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven or the sonorous *Dhrupad* of Tansen, in the painting of the Last Supper by Da Vinci, or in *Kubla Khan* by Coleridge.

But what the artist or musician does unconsciously, falteringly, guided by his ego or his ambition could become a spontaneous movement if done as a yogic process. In fact this is not a new thing. A great number of architects and sculptors of the past as in Ajanta, in the Surya-temple of Konaraka, in the massive sacred architecture of Byzantium or Medieval Europe, to cite only a few examples, made art a mode of worship, an occasion for dedication, yet their names are unknown. But what they created still stand as wonders of human achievement. Specially in India yoga and art in general were not divorced from each other. Sri Aurobindo says, "Its (Indian art's) highest business is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine to the regard of the soul, the Self through its expressions, the Infinite through its living symbols, the Divine through his powers." (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, American ed., pp. 235-6.) This was not possible unless the artist was a yogi. Sri Aurobindo further says that music "...may well have a power to awaken a spiritual and uplifting impulse, even certain kinds of realisation. To say that it cannot contradicts spiritual experience." (*Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, Part 3, p. 292) He adds also that music like other artistic creation "can be made of some spiritual importance if it is taken up with that aim..." (*Ibid.* p. 293.) Not only that, he emphasises that "when one does yoga they (Sri Aurobindo here means art, literature and music) can become part of the sadhana only if done for the Divine or taken up by the Divine Force." (*Ibid.* p. 294).

This refutes the popular creed of 'Art for art's sake'. As it is, it is only a camouflage to cover the inescapable truth of art for ego and ambition's sake. For the true aim of art and, for that matter, of music as well is the expression of beauty and harmony which in its turn can be translated as the Divine Reality. The popular notion is a misnomer and only a partial truth. The artist hugs it because it saves him the trouble to raise himself above the common and easy trend of things and endows him with fame and applause into the bargain, which only puffs up his vanity. In the case of music this is particularly true. This egoistic ideal and ambition, however subtle or vague, only vitiates all artistic creation in general and music in particular. The musician is extremely sensitive like a high-pitched string. This keen sensitivity makes him

open to both external and inner, lower and higher influences. If turned to materialism or to the egoistic impulse, the musician craves recognition, making commerce of his music, selling his very soul for the sake of his ambition. This gradually stops the flow of pure inspiration and higher creation. On the other hand, if he turns inwards and to a more elevated source of creation, he can make his music a highway to inner perfection. His creativity would then be a rich, abundant and all-satisfying process, a march of adventure into newer and unexpected heights of spiritual ecstasy. This is the spiritual music referred to by the Mother as against the music of the higher vital that is in the West or the music of the psychic region that we have in India.

One question may be posed at this point. In India, music was practiced as some type of yoga or at least as a way of self-dedication. Even in Europe Johann Sebastian Bach, or Beethoven or César Franck created music which seems to have touched some spiritual origin. If this be so, are we not begging the question by emphasizing this rapport between music and yoga? It is true, as we have seen earlier, music in India had a psychic origin or perhaps a spiritual one. Even today "When we have good musicians," says the Mother, "Indian music has a psychic source, the source, for example, of the Ragas". (*The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part Seven, p. 187.) As for Western music, "its source is very often purely vital". (*Ibid.*) Thus if we took up this type of music and make it a path of yoga, we would inevitably be shut up in the world of life with its colour, magnificence or 'voluptuous innocence' as Sri Aurobindo says in *The Life Heavens*. There would be no progression, no upward urge. If on the contrary we made Indian music our path, we would dive deep into our soul (which is certainly a necessity at the outset) but we would lose our hold on life, a thing that is not desirable for one seeking integral perfection. Therefore only that music which emerges from the spiritual region can be our path of yoga, for spirit alone synthesises all the divergent elements of life, mind and soul. We shall have occasion later on to dilate on this.

Another point. Should we then infer that only sacred music as in Europe, or the Bhajan and Kirtan of India or even the religious music of Japan, China, Tibet and Indonesia are the only types of music we should have as the ideal? We must not forget that what is labelled as sacred or religious music does not guarantee that it must be spiritual, or even aesthetically the better type of music. It is true some church-music like the *Ave Maria* does touch some elevated plane of consciousness. In India some Bhajans of Surdas or Mira, for example, have definitely a spiritual origin. But, more often, in the majority of cases, the music itself, apart from the words, is vulgar or commonplace. In South India, take the Kirtans of Andal or of the Alwar saints. In spite of the songs themselves being of a high order, the airs that they embody have no stirring quality, being abstract or of no consequence. The *Brahmo-sangit* of the Brahmo Samaj from Rammohan to Tagore reflects the same poverty of music. The songs themselves, heavy and ponderous, were copies of Christian hymns and the pseudo-classical tunes that went with them which had nothing spiritual in their expression. All these were respected because of the sacred association, the tradi-

tion and the usage. Thus chanting the name of a deity or voicing a prayer are not enough in themselves to lift one to a spiritual height. All the hymns, prayers or chants belong to religion. By the descent of a new Power superior to that of mind and consequently of its creeds and Gods, religion becomes a spent force. Thus for the man seeking a greater perfection, religious music would fail to quench his deeper and higher thirst.

(To be continued)

ROMEN

TWO POEMS

As the white swan blended with the blue-white lotuses above,
 Earth too tuned to her mystic rhythmical chant
 Heard and adored the measure of the Immortal's feet;
 His Light struck a note in her bosom's deep unrest.
 The music sounded, vibrant, in the dark Vasts yet to be lighted.
 A second chord was struck by His blue creation's Light,
 Far-off was heard the clarion and hoof-beats
 Of a myriad dragon-soldiers
 Who loved and protected their sweet dolorous Vasts.

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From amid this obscure, unmoulded mire
 Arose a golden vibrant flame.
 Because a Will was there, He came here,
 His soul married to great spiritual heights.
 Our life is a call for the Supreme
 Plunged in our bosom's deep turbulent voids,
 Summoning us to worlds beyond mortal thought.

ARVIND

(Age 14)

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of October, 1972)

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION EXPERIMENTS IN NEW EDUCATION

CHILDREN are like rivers, their energies can be canalised in any direction. They have to go through several stages. Up to the age of three they belong to the family. Every word they hear leaves a stamp on their minds. In this period they have no sense of bad or good. Some even rush to catch a burning lamp, taking it to be a plaything.

Three to six years are an age of play. Hence the system of education through educational games. Seven, eight and nine can be reckoned the period of grounding. The child's interest is now shifted from family to school. Individual interest begins to take shape around the age of ten or twelve years. This is the time to sow the seed of what the child is destined to become. How is he going to bloom in life? Is it his destiny to develop in such a way that even distant lands will come to know of him?

Freud wrote: “Only someone who can feel his way into the minds of the children is capable of educating them, and the grown-up people cannot understand children because we no longer understand our childhood.”

Pavitra (P. Barbier St. Hilaire) said: “An adult's intervention is in most cases not sought for nor is it effective, as the adult's understanding is too removed from the child's mentality.”

But is the child to be left to his fate if he is mischeivous or idle? Pavitra answers:

“An adult has an important part to fulfil...it is for the adult, parent or teacher, to keep the environment supplied with elements of interest, which give satisfaction to his creative impulse, the lightening that suddenly flashes in his mind when he ‘gets it’ for the very joy of having overcome a difficulty and succeeded.”

How a child is likely to grow can be marked from his tendencies to particular things and activities.

There was a boy of thirteen who had the habit of breaking whatever toys were given to him and then trying to set them aright. This led the father to think the boy had scientific and mechanical abilities and therefore he bought him children's scientific apparatus which he thought would give his son pleasure to break and reset. Dewey calls such a movement “learning by doing.”

The great French animal trainer, Bouglione, was put into a cage with a lioness shortly after his birth. Because of his father's foresight — Bouglione was thereafter one with the lions.¹

¹ Equals 1

If a child is to make a mark in life, good habits should be cultivated from childhood. He should be brought up in a place that is a source of sweetness. A child is not only the picture of the present but also a dream of the future. The world of tomorrow depends on the children of today.

Thirteen to eighteen is the time of mental development. The child must feel a hunger for new subjects and be full of an adventurous spirit. At this age the youngsters want freedom, not only freedom in thought but action as well. They want to experience things and make experiments.

A teacher should feel highly satisfied if he is able to kindle a creative spark of enquiry in the minds of the students. The appetite to know must rise like a flame. Not a day should pass that the student doesn't feel he has learned something new.

The heart of every child is a mine of divine qualities and attributes. All depends on how he avails himself of this hidden treasure. Hence the need of keeping him, right from the beginning, in an environment which gives him a chance to develop his inner qualities. This was the reason why, in ancient India, sons of even kings had their education in an Ashram. The Guru was a highly realised soul who took charge of the entire life of his pupils.

There was a time when the Mother was absorbed in the younger section of the Ashram. She gave them lessons, narrated stories, corrected their copy books and personally gave marks. Her evening class was a beautiful scene in which restless and noisy children grew still and silent as if discipline had naturally sprung up from within them.

Let us go back to the year 1930 when there were only two children B and C, in the Ashram. Both of them had come the same year, one in July and the other in November 1930. About B we have said something while speaking about pre-school days. The days of which we are speaking, new comers were not allowed to go to the Mother even during Pranam time.

The father of C had first come in 1927 and joined the Ashram in 1929. Even when he had secured permission for his son, a wire was sent to C not to come. On being informed about C's age the Mother said he was too young to take up yoga. It is interesting to see how a boy of thirteen made a place for himself in the Mother's consciousness.

On receiving the wire C didn't lose heart but went on writing, pleading, praying till he was permitted to come. But he was asked to come only for Darshan.

When he came he was not allowed to take food in the D.R. He was to carry his food to a small room in the Ashram. Once the dish dropped from his hand and the next day he was allowed to take food with the others.

In those days the ladies' food was carried by the servants to their rooms. Later on a separate D.R. was created for them. Once when the Mother visited the Aroumé (present D.R.) She was told about the separate arrangements for men and women. On learning this She remarked "why separate?" After that, it was discontinued.

The very day C came he was granted the joy of seeing the Mother and he told

Her that he didn't want to go back. The Mother said that She would speak to Sri Aurobindo.

Just after the Darshan he was informed through Premanand — then librarian — that Sri Aurobindo had been pleased with him and the Mother wanted him to learn French.

After 15 days of his taking lessons in French the Mother spoke to him in French but he could not follow. A little later when he began to talk with the Mother in French, She expressed her appreciation of his accent, to which he says, "The credit must go to my teacher P."

How quickly childhood passes! But something imprinted in childhood leaves a mark which cannot be erased. The very name Premanand floods C's eyes with tears of gratitude. "Whatever little literary capacities in French, sense of duty, habit of punctuality, cleanliness there is in me," he asserted, "is due to my loving teacher. It was he who grounded me in the French language. He was a man of great discipline and led a very regulated life. He is remembered by some for the sternness of his temperament but I remember him for the seeds of good qualities that he sowed in my young age. He was very particular about regularity. Even if I was late 5 minutes he would ask me to leave. Another thing that I learnt from him was his love for perfection — accuracy about facts and figures. Anything done haphazardly was alien to his nature and he could not tolerate it. These, I suppose, are the very soul of discipline and form the key to the secret of a teacher's life, the work for which the Mother was preparing me."

One day P. stopped giving C. lessons and told him that he had taught him all he could.

Henceforth the Mother became C.'s teacher. At what height She resides but to meet the needs of a novice a raw boy, She came down to his level. A day will come when people will remember how much the Mother has laboured "to lead the great, blind struggling world to light".

C started sending his note-books to the Mother, not one but five or six daily on different subjects: French grammar, translations from English into French, arithmetic, history, geography and various questions on different topics. When he was assigned the work of a teacher, there were practically no books in French. C had to prepare lessons and get them corrected by the Mother. This process continued many years. The last correction he had in 1946.

Along with all this he was given work with Amrita. His job was to note the meter readings in all the houses in a note-book and present it to the Mother on the first of every month. Once he found an electric meter running during the day-time in a particular house. He spoke to the Mother and she put the remark in the note-book: "Why?"

At that time the Ashram employees used to receive monthly wages from the Mother's hand. She would come down and sit in the Pranam Hall. Amrita would pass on to her the wages.

On Ayudha Puja Day the Mother used to pay a visit to various departments. The Ashram workers would perform Puja, place their offerings before Her and after accepting their Pranam the Mother gave to each of them Prasad. In 1931, the very next day after the function she fell ill and all these activities stopped.

A memorable day in C's life was his interview with the Mother on his birthday on May 22, 1932.

The Mother started the conversation and asked him: "What are your ambitions?"

C: "I don't know, Mother."

Reading his mind the Mother said:

"You nurse an ambition to be a big Guru with lots of disciples round you?"

C was startled. He realised that he had some such hidden desire and he said: "Yes, Mother."

THE MOTHER: "Do you know that to be a Guru one must have a realisation of the Divine and live in the Divine Consciousness?"

Hearing this C said that he didn't want to be a Guru anymore but only the Mother's child.

This pleased the Mother and she said: "Very good".

Then he suddenly remembered about his other ambition to become a big writer.

In reply to this the Mother explained to him what qualities are required to be a writer and that one must have a wide knowledge of so many things before one could become a writer.

Finding that this too was not possible he dropped the idea.

Thus the Mother helped him to shake off his ambitious attitude.

Six months after his coming, the Mother hired a house and gave him a room in it all to himself. She went to see his room. No one was allowed to visit his room, not even his father. If C had to go to see, or talk with, someone and allow anyone to come to his room, he had to seek the Mother's approval. He was given the full liberty to write anything to the Mother and he wrote twice a day for many years.

I shall close this story with one more episode: The day there was no morning pranam the Mother used to stand in the meditation hall staircase and give flowers to each of us. The two boys, B and C, would remain standing below with their hands raised upward with the intention of being blessed with flowers first. The Mother took the flowers in both Her hands and gave them both at the same time.

A few extracts from C's note-book:

Q: What am I?

THE MOTHER: Outwardly, you are a child who is unconsciously trying to become conscious. Inwardly: you are an eternal soul trying to manifest itself in a body.

Q: I think too much of my own movements, wrong or otherwise. Hereafter I won't write to you of them more than once.

THE MOTHER: No purpose would be served by not informing me about them, if you think so. On the contrary, if you tell me I can help you more easily (18.1.1935)

Q: One part of me says it is not necessary to inform you of this incident but another part says I must inform. I am inclined to the latter. What are these parts?

THE MOTHER: Both of them are parts of the physical mind; but one is submitted to the Divine Will, while the other is not. (23.1.1935)

Q: I had decided that on the day I do not study, I shall not take my food.

THE MOTHER: What a funny idea! You are going to punish your body for a fault the vital commits? That is not just. (22.12.1934)

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo by *Sisirkumar Mitra*. Published by Indian Book Company, 36c Connaught Place, New Delhi, pp. 215. Price: Rs. 25.00

THIS is the year of the centennial anniversary of Sri Aurobindo. People everywhere and in all walks of life are evincing an increasing interest to know more about the Life and Work of this Master Soul who, in the pregnant words of the Mother, “represents in the world’s history...not a teaching, not even a revelation; ...(but) a decisive action direct from the Supreme.”

But, while attempting to give us his biography, who can possibly hope to do adequate justice to this unique personality who declared in no uncertain terms: “It would be only myself who could speak of things in my past giving them their true form and significance.” But why so? That too he explained in a letter addressed to one of his would-be biographers:

“I see that you have persisted in giving a biography — is it really necessary or useful? The attempt is bound to be a failure, because neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for men to see.”

These warnings of the *Sthitaprajna* notwithstanding, following the law of demand and supply there have sprung up of late a number of biographies of the Master-Seer. Prof. Sisirkumar Mitra too has ventured to offer us an appraisal of the Yogi-Raj who has been at the same time the ‘World-Redeemer’ in more than one sense. How far has Mitra succeeded in his self-chosen task?

Sisirkumar is a historian by training and profession: Hence it is but natural that he has displayed commendable critical acumen in the selection and correlation of the biographical materials that came into his ken in course of his extensive search and research.

But for that matter he has not turned his book into a mere pantechnicon of facts, nor has he anywhere betrayed any “careless and insensitive fingering” (to use the telling phrase of John Freeman) while dealing with the high theme of his choice.

And this is in no small measure due to the significant fact that Mitra is not a mere arid chronicler. He is above everything else a genuine Bhakta by temperament; and did not Sri Ramakrishna make the perceptive remark: “Mere knowledge can frequent only the outer precincts of a house, but true devotion has access even to the inner chamber”?

Thus Sisirkumar Mitra, being a practising sadhak of the Master’s Integral Yoga, has acquired a keen insight into the play of forces behind the superficialities of life’s events. And this has helped him to maintain our lively attention all through this well produced and attractively printed biography of Sri Aurobindo. We cannot but

note the excellence of his style of narration that at times grips and stirs, charms and moves us.

We regret to say that the book under review has a number of printing mistakes but for which we could have offered unstinted praise for it.

However let us believe that our critical duty will be better performed by pointing out the merits and not by dwelling on the faults. On the whole, this biography of Sri Aurobindo as presented by Prof. Mitra will surely appeal to anyone with a serious interest in the Life and Work of the Master Yogi about whom the author aptly remarks:

“He is the Seer, he is the Vision, he is the Truth, he is the Will; and all these together seem to be what his earthly sojourn points to.” (p. 10)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

Eternity in Words: Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* by Rameshwar Gupta, Chetna Prakashana, Bombay, pp. 194, Rs. 16.

Savitri is Sri Aurobindo's greatest poetical work, an epic in English, on which he worked for more than thirty-five years, and ultimately succeeded in creating a lofty and sublime monument comprising 23, 814 lines of blank verse divided into 49 cantos. Eminent scholars and critics have used superlatives in their tributes to the poem which has been described as “the most comprehensive, integrated, beautiful and perfect cosmic poem ever composed in verse of unparalleled massiveness, magnificence, and metaphorical brilliance” (Dr. Raymond Frank Piper) and “the gigantic epic of our time” (Professor Frederic Spiegelberg).

For the basic framework, Sri Aurobindo takes the ancient legend of Satyavan and Savitri but, by the magic wand of his genius, he transforms Maharshi Vyasa's story into an epic of Evolution, a cosmic symbol reflecting the whole visible, invisible and transcendent movement in the body of the Eternal (God). Such is the magnitude and splendour of the design and the glorious melody of expression that the only works with which the poem could invite comparison are the *Divina Commedia* of Dante and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

To examine critically a work of this dimension requires scholarship of the highest level. It must be said to the credit of Professor Rameshwar Gupta that he has eminently succeeded in a most difficult task. Professor Gupta is already well-known as the author of *The Essential Tagore* and editor of *The Banasthali Patrika*, a research journal recognized for its excellence in literary circles. He is a critic of intelligence, sensitivity and learning who writes cogently, stylishly and powerfully. He has worked with discriminating enthusiasm in opening up the treasures of rhythm, imagery and mean-

ing in *Savitri* to the uninitiated and helping them towards an understanding of this divine epic of a new world.

Dr. Gupta has the scholar's modesty when he claims his "attempt to place *Savitri* in the midst of the World's great poems touching some points of comparison and contrast" as "only suggestive". In attempting this critical commentary and examination, Professor Gupta ventured into a formidable undertaking but the achievement is most impressive. He has performed a real feat — a book that is as compulsively readable as it is profound and serious. *Eternity in Words* is, indeed, a noble and fitting tribute to Sri Aurobindo's great work.

R. K.

(From *The Tribune*, June 21, 1970)

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

Ninth Annual Conference — 15th August 1972

SRI AUROBINDO REVEALS THE FUTURE

The Future World Unity

YOU must be familiar with Sri Aurobindo's Birthday Message of the 15th August 1947, wherein he speaks of his five dreams. Sri Aurobindo calls them "dreams" but in truth they are not dreams in the usual sense of the word. By dreams he means things which appear to be impracticable and unrealisable now, in the present conditions, but which are sure to be realised in the future. For instance, let us take his first dream of a free India. When he was dreaming of India's freedom, way back towards the end of the nineteenth century, at that time it seemed impossible, yet it was realised, as it had to be since it was already decreed by the Divine.

Here I will dwell upon his third dream only: his dream of "a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind".¹ However impossible this may seem today, it has to become a reality sooner or later. Being the dream of the Lord it cannot do otherwise. The Divine will is behind it to assure fulfilment.

In his *Ideal of Human Unity*, Sri Aurobindo tackles this problem in all its aspects. In this paper, I intend to present the main ideas of that work in a brief outline.

Just as after the family came the commune, then the clan or tribe, the small city state and finally the nation (which is the largest unit yet successfully developed by Nature), so logically the next step in Nature's process would be the union of all nations into one world-community. There was, of course, the empire too, but it could not endure because it was never a real unity, whereas the nation was and is.

What then is real unity which alone can create an enduring collective group-life? Let me explain it in reference to the formation of the nation-group.

According to the general conception the important factors required to form a nation are: geographical convenience, common race, language, culture and history. But to Sri Aurobindo these are of secondary importance which only help in the formation of a nation. The main factor is the *psychological feeling* of unity; when a group of

¹ *Sri Aurobindo on Himself* (1953), p. 311.

people psychologically feel one, only then can a nation be truly formed. And this psychological unity can come only when a nation has a distinct group-soul. It is only then that it is a real and lasting unity. A mere political unity can never survive. Wherever the group-soul is present, the external unity is bound to be realised. The most striking example of this in history is India. Throughout its long history it was never externally united. But because the inner unity was always there, the external one had to come. Nature went on trying to achieve the external political unity through a succession of empires and dynasties. Even then when unity did not come she took the drastic measure of imposing an alien rule.

The British rule united India finally. Even though the psychological inner unity was always there, the outward form of unity took more than two thousand years to realise itself, and even now it is not altogether complete. Greece and Italy also took a long time to achieve unity.

The empires never had any inner psychological unity, nor did they succeed in achieving it; that was why they crumbled down sooner or later.

So if the world-union is to have a permanent durability, it has to have that all-important thing: the psychological feeling of unity among all the nations of the world.

Nowadays some have begun to dream of a social, administrative and political unity achieved through the military force of the state. This might bring about some sort of mechanical unity quickly and effectively, and it could have its temporary advantages: strict organisation, efficiency, security, order and material well-being. But its disadvantages would be disastrous: everything would become mechanical, life would lose its colour, richness, variety, and the individual would be deprived of his freedom and victorious impulse towards creation. Everything would be made standard and uniform. Thus life would come to a standstill, and finally the whole organisation would lose its vitality and die of an increasing stagnation.

Whenever the individual dwindles, stagnation is inevitable, for on him hangs the fate of collective progress. The individual with his initiative, energy, idealism attempts that which the state has not the wisdom or courage to attempt. The state normally would either leave such things undone or actively suppress and oppose them. How many times has a great personality come and taken mankind by bounds towards progress! Great things have always been done by exceptional individuals, by a Newton, a Napoleon, a Shakespeare, not by the mass. The mass moves slowly while the exceptional individual progresses by leaps and drags the rest in his wake. This is so because the mass-mind is always miles behind the few best individuals; the collectivity only serves as a brake upon such swift progress. Without those bright and brilliant souls, the society would die a slow death. The State with its rigid machinery is bound to eliminate or dwarf these few individual efforts, and thus the necessary correctives to the defects and limitations of the State machine would disappear.

Theoretically, the State idea is the subordination of the individual for the good of the collectivity. (This is what Communism also claims.) Practically, it is his subor-

dination to a collective egoism, to help to seek collective aims and ambitions imposed by a certain number of governing men. They are supposed to represent the collectivity in some way. There is no proof that these men do represent the very best mind and character of the community. In fact, they usually represent the pettiness, selfishness, ruthlessness, self-deception and incompetency of the community. Even if they did represent the noblest aims and highest instincts of the nation, yet the administration is sure to become a gigantic machine which is caught in its own machinery.

There is yet another reason why the State has no right to suppress the individual. The collective egoism is far worse than the individual's; the State has no soul, no sense of morality, no ethical conscience, no fear of social opinion or of communal law, because it controls most of these and has absolute power in its hands. "Man within the community is now at least a half-civilised creature, but his international existence is still primitive. Until recently the organised nation in its relations with other nations was only a huge beast of prey with appetites which sometimes slept when gorged or discouraged by events, but were always its chief reason for existence. Self-protection and self-expansion by the devouring of others were its *dharma*"¹ Nowadays it is somewhat better, not because of any growth of the sentiment of unity, but because there is a greater difficulty in devouring. The State's only fear is of defeat and of disastrous economic disorganisation but even these checks are ineffective.

The State now claims that it is the best means of human progress. This is a fiction. After all, it is only a "machine without tact, taste, delicacy, or intuition"² in its dealings. In the past, in its inner life it was "brutal, rapacious, cunning, oppressive, and intolerant of free action, free speech and opinion, even freedom of conscience in religion."³ In modern times there has been considerable improvement in some respects. "The State now feels the necessity of justifying its existence by organising the general economic and animal well-being of the community and even of all individuals. It is beginning to see the necessity of assuring the intellectual and, indirectly, the moral development of the whole community."⁴ But it still claims to absorb all free individual activities, which is a premature claim, for it can only put an end to human progress.

Thus the strife between the individual and the collectivity has been going on perpetually. But in their true relation both are complementary to each other, both need each other to survive, develop and perfect themselves.

The State should help the individual to grow and expand, remove all obstacles from his path, not hamper him in his progress. But the State machine can never bring about a healthy unity because of its inevitable tendency to artificial uniformity.

And uniformity is a great obstacle to human progress. "The State tends always towards uniformity, because uniformity is easy to it,"⁵ and it brings effective and

Sri Aurobindo: *The Ideal of Human Unity* (1950), p. 24.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

speedy results. But it also leads to stagnation and death. A national culture, religion and education are useful provided they do not interfere with the growth of the individual; but a State education, religion and culture are unnatural violences. It is right and necessary that education should be *provided* for all by the State, but it should not *control* it and make it a routine. This is the flaw in State-governed education.¹

Nature always wants rich variety. And this is the point on which Sri Aurobindo lays special stress: unity in variety or diversity in oneness. "Life exists by diversity", the whole "evolution moves through diversity, from a simple to a complex oneness."² Life "insists that every group, every being, shall be, even while one with all the rest in its universality, yet by some principle or ordered detail of variation unique. The over-centralisation which is the condition of a working uniformity is not the healthy method of life. Order is indeed the law of life, but not an artificial regulation. The sound order is that which comes from within, as the result of a nature that has discovered and found its own law and the law of its relations with others. Therefore the truest order is that which is founded on the greatest possible liberty; for liberty is at once the condition of vigorous variation and the condition of self-finding. Nature secures variation by division into groups and insists on liberty by the force of individuality in the members of the group. Therefore the unity of the human race to be entirely sound and in consonance with the deepest laws of life, must be founded on free groupings, and the groupings again must be the natural association of free individuals. This is an ideal which it is certainly impossible to realise under present conditions ... but it is an ideal which ought to be kept in view...."³

Peace, order, well-being and security are all very important for a great world-culture, but variation and freedom of the group and of the individual are equally and even much more important. "Not a uniform unity, not a logically simple, a scientifically rigid, a beautifully neat and mechanical sameness but a living oneness full of healthy freedom and variation is the ideal which we should keep in view and strive to get realised in man's future."⁴

According to Sri Aurobindo, the external structure of the world-union — political, administrative, economic etc. — can be securely founded only on an inner sense of human unity which must go deeper than even the psychological unity and discover its spiritual source. The eighteenth century ideal of the religion of humanity will not suffice for the purpose because it is only an intellectual creed. Only when it turns into a spiritual aspiration can it fulfil its promise of realising human unity. Such a spiritual religion of humanity, "much more powerful, explicit, self-conscious, universal in its appeal than the nationalist's religion of country" would need "the clear recognition by man in all his thought and life of a single soul in humanity of which each man and each people is an incarnation and soul-form; an ascension of man beyond the principle of ego which lives by separateness, — and yet there must be no destruc-

¹ *Ibid* , p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

tion of individuality for without that man would stagnate; ...and sufficient means of expressing all the resultant complex life and growth in a flexible and progressive form of human society."¹

Sri Aurobindo says that the aim of the intellectual religion of humanity, when it was formulated in the eighteenth century by a sort of primal intuition, was to re-create society in the image of three kindred ideas: liberty, equality, and fraternity. None of these has really won as yet. What has been realised is only a political, social and legal liberty and equality. Fraternity is not even considered to be a practicable principle.²

Sri Aurobindo maintains that these three "are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego.... A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature.... Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the idea of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the Spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race."³

MARIA JAIN

¹ See *Ibid.*, p. 367.

² *Ibid.*, p. 360.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 368-369.

EYE EDUCATION

PRESBYOPIA OR OLD AGE SIGHT

PRESBYOPIA is the name given to the loss of power to use the eyes at the near point without the aid of glasses, which usually occurs after the age of forty. It is a noteworthy fact that many other eye troubles such as cataract, glaucoma and inflammation of the interior of the eyeball start about this time. There are cases, however, in which the vision remains quite normal in both eyes long after the presbyopic age.

A man of sixty-five had quite good vision both for far and near. His vision on the Snellen test card was 20/10, and he could read fine print at twelve inches. In reply to a query he explained how he could possess normal vision at this age. When he was about forty he began to experience difficulty in reading. He consulted an optician who advised glasses. He could not believe, however, that the glasses were necessary, because at times he could read perfectly without them. The matter interested him so much that he began to observe facts, a thing that people seldom do. He noted, first, that when he tried hard to see either at the near-point or at a distance, his vision invariably became worse, and the harder he tried the worse it became. Evidently something was wrong with this method of using the eyes. Then he tried looking at things without effort, without trying to see them. He also tried resting his eyes by closing them for five minutes or longer, or by looking away from the page that he wished to read, or the distant object he wished to see. These practices always improved his sight and by keeping them up he not only regained normal vision but retained it for twenty-five years.

The fact is that presbyopia is due to strain. Glasses may enable the patient to read but cannot relieve the strain which underlies the imperfect function of the eyes. It is a matter of common experience that the vision declines rapidly after the patient begins to wear glasses. When people put on glasses because they cannot read fine print they often find that in a couple of weeks they cannot, without them, read the coarse print which was perfectly clear to them before. In some cases the decline of eyesight is quite fast and the oculist is compelled to change the glasses quite frequently, increasing the number each time.

Presbyopia is cured just as any other error of refraction is cured, by rest and relaxation. Some presbyopic patients are cured very quickly, others are very slow, but as a rule everyone is benefited. When the improvement is very slow, glasses are permitted along with a few minutes exercise. Such patients are advised to concentrate on candle flame and read fine print with glasses.

Central fixation on OM chart, shifting the sight on white lines, concentration on candle flame, frequent palming, and the reading of fine print are very helpful in presbyopic patients.

While it is sometimes very difficult to cure presbyopia, it is fortunately easy to reduce the power of glasses or to prevent it. Persons who are approaching the presbyopic age should start reading fine print in good light and in candle light alternately, bringing the print closer and closer to the eyes till it can be read at six inches. Thus you will escape, not only the necessity of glasses for reading, but all other eye troubles which so often darken the later years of life.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL
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