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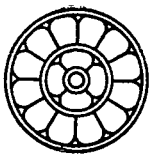
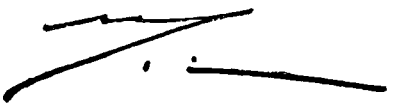


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 5**

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail".

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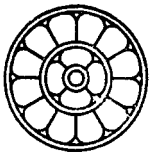

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

La raison d'être d'Auroville est de hâter l'avènement de la réalité supramentale sur la terre.

L'aide de tous ceux qui trouvent que le monde n'est pas comme il devrait être est là bienvenue.

Chacun doit savoir s'il veut s'associer à un vieux monde prêt à mourir, ou travailler pour un monde nouveau et meilleur qui se prépare à naître. 1-2-1972

The reason for Auroville's existence is to hasten the advent of the Supramental Reality upon earth.

The help of all those who find that the world is not as it should be is welcome there.

Each one should know whether he wants to be a part of the old dying world or to work for a new and better world which is preparing to be born. 1-2-1972

L'homme a été créé pour exprimer le Divin. Son devoir est donc de prendre conscience du Divin et de se soumettre entièrement à Sa Volonté. Tout le reste, quelle que soit son apparence, est mensonge et ignorance. 26-12-1971

Man was created to express the Divine. His duty is therefore to become conscious of the Divine and to surrender himself entirely to His Will. All the rest, whatever the appearance, is falsehood and ignorance. 26-12-1971

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(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 at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968.)*

JUNE 20, 1956

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: "And yet there is in the heart or behind it a profounder mystic light..."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 170)

What is this mystic light?

It is love.

But after that, Sri Aurobindo continues: "... which, if not what we call intuition—for that, though not of the mind, yet descends through the mind—has yet a direct touch upon Truth and is nearer to the Divine than the human intellect in its pride of knowledge." Is there a relation between this mystic light and intuition?

It is not intuition. It is knowledge through love, light through love, understanding through love. Sri Aurobindo says that it is not intuition, for intuition belongs to the intellect (at least in its expression, the expression of intuition is intellectual). Whilst this is a sort of direct knowledge almost by identity, which comes from love.

And what is "the inner oracle?" (Ibid.)

The oracle? That is the power of divination, of foresight, of understanding symbols, and that is in the psychic being Prophets, for example, do not prophesy by their mind, it is through a *direct* contact, beyond emotions and sentiments. Sri Aurobindo even says that the Vedas, particularly, were not written with the mind and through the head. The form of the hymn welled up spontaneously from the psychic being, along with the words.

Mother, if someone has the psychic contact, does that mean that he has this power?

More or less, yes. The more perfect the contact, the greater the power.

That depends also on the outer possibilities of the being. But I have already explained that to you several times, I have already told you that when one enters into contact with one's psychic, certain faculties develop spontaneously. For instance, there are people with no intellectual education who suddenly get quite a remarkable power of expression, which comes in this way, spontaneously, through the inner contact with the psychic being.

Sri Aurobindo speaks here of "secular refrigeration".

What!

He writes: "It is indeed by the religio-ethical sense that the law of universal goodwill or universal compassion or of love and service to the neighbour, the Vedantic, the Buddhistic, the Christian ideal, was created; only by a sort of secular refrigeration extinguishing the fervour of the religious element in it could the humanitarian ideal disengage itself and become the highest plane of a secular system of mental and moral ethics. (*Ibid., p. 172*)

Yes, it is materialistic and purely physical thinking which freezes and congeals the emotions, takes away all the warmth of the soul, all the fervour, all the ardour of the feelings and the religious consciousness, and makes you coldly reasonable.

Mother, if the heart can serve for a more direct knowledge, what is the role of the intellect as an intermediary of knowledge?

As an intermediary, you say?

For the real role of the mind is the formation and organisation of action. The mind has a formative and organising power, and it is that which puts the different elements of inspiration into order for the purpose of action, for organising action. And if it would only stick to that role, receiving inspirations—whether from above or from the mystic centre of the soul—and simply formulating the plan of action (in broad outline or in minute detail, whether for the smallest things of life or the great world-organisations), it would amply fulfil its function.

It is not an instrument of knowledge.

But it can utilise knowledge for action, to organise action. It is an instrument of organisation and formation, very powerful and very capable when it is well developed.

One can feel this very clearly when one wants just to organise one's life, for instance,—just to put the different elements in their place in one's existence. There is a certain intellectual faculty which immediately puts each thing in its place and makes a plan and organises. And it is not a knowledge that comes from the mind, it is a knowledge which comes, as I said, from the mystic depths of the soul or from a

higher consciousness; and the mind concentrates it in the physical world and organises it to give a basis of action to the higher consciousness.

One has this experience very clearly when one wants to organise one's life.

Then, there is another use. When one is in contact with one's reason, with the rational centre of the intellect, the pure reason, it is a powerful control over all vital impulses. All that comes from the vital world can be controlled by it with great surety, and used in a disciplined and organised action. But it must be at the service of something else—not feel self-satisfied.

These are the two uses of the mind: it is a controlling force, an instrument for control, and it is a power of organisation. That is its true place.

Sweet Mother, can one realise the Divine through love alone?

Oh! yes, my child, certainly. It is even the most direct way.

One can realise the Divine, that is to say, identify oneself with the Divine, become fully aware of the Divine and be an instrument of the Divine. But naturally, one does not realise the integral yoga, for one goes only along a single line. But from the point of view of identification with the Divine it is even the most direct path.

But without mental development one won't be able to express the Divine?

One cannot express Him intellectually, but one can express Him in action, one can express Him in feelings, one can express Him in life.

(*Silence*)

(*To be continued*)

LIGHTS ON THE PATH

PASSAGES FROM SRI AUROBINDO FOUND BY THE MOTHER AND SOME DISCIPLES

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1971)

....THE process of Yoga is a turning of the human soul from the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances and attractions of things to a higher state in which the Transcendent and Universal can pour itself into the individual mould and transform it. The first determining element of the *siddhi* is, therefore, the intensity of the turning, the force which directs the soul inward. The power of aspiration of the heart, the force of a will, the concentration of the mind, the perseverance and determination of the applied energy are the measure of that intensity. The ideal sadhaka should be able to say in Biblical phrase, "My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up." It is this zeal for the Lord,—*utsāha*, the zeal of the whole nature for its divine result, *vyākulatā*, the heart's eagerness for the attainment of the Divine,— that devours the ego and breaks up the limitations of its egoistic mould for the full and wide reception of that which it seeks.

... So long as the contact with the Divine is not in some degree established, so long as there is not some measure of sustained *sāyujya*, the element of personal effort must normally predominate. But in proportion as this contact establishes itself, the sadhaka must become conscious that a force other than his own, a force transcending his egoistic endeavour and capacity is at work in him and to this Power he leans progressively to submit himself and delivers up to it the charge of his Yoga. In the end his own will and force become one with the higher Power and merge in the divine Will and Force which preside over the necessary transformation of his mental, vital and physical being with an impartial wisdom and provident effectivity of which the eager and interested ego is not capable. It is when this identification and self-mergence are complete that the divine centre in the world is ready to serve as a means for the direct action of the supreme Power in the large Yoga of humanity.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. I, pp. 369-70.
(Found by Amal, April 11, 1931)

The effort towards a passive or purely receptive equality may start from three different principles or attitudes which all lead to the same result and ultimate consequence,—endurance, indifference and submission...

The third way is that of submission, which may be the Christian resignation founded on submission to the will of God, or an unegoistic acceptance of things and happenings as a manifestation of the universal Will in time, or a complete surrender of

the person to the Divine, to the Supreme Purusha. As the first was a way of the will and the second a way of knowledge, so this is a way of the temperament and heart and very intimately connected with the principle of Bhakti. If it is pushed to the end, it arrives at the same result of a perfect equality. For the knot of the ego is loosened and the personal claim begins to disappear, we find that we are no longer bound to joy in things pleasant or sorrow over the unpleasant; we bear them without eager acceptance or troubled rejection, refer them to the Master of our being, concern ourselves less and less with their personal result to us and hold only one thing of importance, to approach God, or to be in touch and tune with the universal and infinite Existence, or to be united with the Divine, his channel, instrument, servant, lover, rejoicing in him and in our relation with him and having no other object or cause of joy or sorrow.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. VI, pp. 207-12.
(Found by Dara, April 12, 1931)

All art should be a thing of harmony and joy and illumination, a solution and release of the soul from its vital unrest and questioning and struggle, not by any ignoring of these things but by an uplifting into the strength of the self within and the light and air of its greater view where there is found not only the point of escape but the supporting calmness and power of a seated knowledge, mastery and deliverance.

The Future Poetry, The Arya, Vol. VI, p. 566.
(Found by the Mother, April 12, 1931)

Man...becomes perfect only when he has found within himself that absolute calm and passivity of the Brahman and supports by it with the same divine tolerance and the same divine bliss a free and inexhaustible activity. Those who have thus possessed the Calm within can perceive always welling out from its silence the perennial supply of the energies that work in the universe.

The Life Divine, The Arya, Vol. I, pp. 195.
(Found by Purushottama, April 16, 1931)

Each veil that hides the unknown God becomes for the God-lover and God-seeker an instrument of His unveiling.

(*The Life Divine, The Arya*, Vol. I, p. 323.
(Found by Purushottama, April 16, 1931)

...When the full heart of Love is tranquillised by knowledge into a calm ecstasy and vibrates with strength, when the strong hands of Power labour for the world in a radiant fullness of joy and light, when the luminous brain of knowledge accepts and transforms the heart's obscure inspirations and lends itself to the workings of the high-seated Will, when all these gods are founded together on a soul of sacrifice that lives in unity with all the world and accepts all things to transmute them, then is the condition of man's integral self-transcendence. This and not a haughty, strong and

brilliant egoistic self-culture enthroning itself upon an enslaved humanity is the divine way of supermanhood.

(*The Type of the Superman, The Arya*, Vol. I, p., 576.
(Found by Satyen, April 18, 1931)

The bhakta offers up his life and all that he is and all that he has and all that he does to the Divine.

(*The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya*, Vol. IV, p. 731.

There is nothing which is beyond the reach of the God-lover or denied to him; for he is the favourite of the divine Lover and the self of the Beloved.

The Synthesis of Yoga, The Arya, Vol. V, p. 222.
(Finder unrecorded, April 19, 1931)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the notebooks of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others after the accident to his right leg in November, 1938. Besides the recorder the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becharlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshankar. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

JUNE 16, 1940

P: Jaswant has been arrested under the Defence Act. As the president of All-India Students' Federation or something of the sort he gave lectures for which he has been arrested. He is not careful about what he says.

SRI AUROBINDO: He never was.

P: I am thinking what will become of his marriage.

SRI AUROBINDO: God allows marriages but the government prevents them! Marriages are made in heaven, they say.

S: That is difficult to swallow. Marie Corelli writes of such things in her novels, bringing in Christianity—Electric Christianity, etc. She was very popular at one time, at least in India.

SRI AUROBINDO: I used to see her novels everywhere. In England also she was a bestseller. Only the critics were hard on her.

S: Poor *Indian Express* is not allowed up here now.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Why?

S: Premanand says that the Mother has asked him to send only the *Hindu* and the *Patrika*. The others spoil the atmosphere. The thing is that it gives all the news though not the views.

P: Paris is not going to be defended, no street fighting.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is to prevent the destruction of Paris. Hitler is having remarkable inspiration from his Asura. He doesn't go by reason but only by the voice. He considers also all possibilities and when he fixes on something he goes ahead. Only, he did not foresee the British and French intervention on behalf of Poland.

S: Ordinary people won't believe that it is the Asura guiding him.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, they won't.

N: Already he is being hailed as greater than Napoleon.

SRI AUROBINDO: That he is not. Napoleon did not have Hitler's resources. If he could have had them, he would have conquered England by this time.

S: Ludwig writes in his biography of Napoleon that Napoleon was the first to conceive of a federation of Europe under France.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, Henry IV and his minister were the first to conceive of federated European states.

S: Napoleon of course wanted the federation to be under France.

SRI AUROBINDO: Under himself.

S: He was France.

P: Even the Germans favoured the idea. Geothe welcomed it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Goethe was not a patriot. He said that the Germans were barbarians and would always be barbarians.

P: Kant also did not have much sympathy with Prussia. He was a professor in Prussia, at Konigsberg, I think, and he was not allowed to publish his books there. He had them sent to Weimar and published from there. The authorities were wild with him.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Duke of Weimar was a liberal.

P: The Christians tried to make out that Kant disproved the existence of God.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, on the contrary he tried to prove the possibility of the existence of God. Goethe was a cosmopolitan. When he was asked to express hatred against France, he said that he owed most of his culture to France.

P: Frederick the Great had a deep respect for France. He tried to establish a friendship with Voltaire and frequently invited him to his court. Voltaire used to get disgusted with the company of all the German generals sitting upright and very often he refused the invitation.

SRI AUROBINDO: Naturally. English generals are no better perhaps. Frederick tried to write poetry in French and once sent some to Voltaire. Someone seeing a bundle asked him what it was; Voltaire said, "Frederick has sent some of his dirty linen to wash." (*Laughter*)

P: He was very bad-tempered and nobody dared to take any liberty with him, except Voltaire.

SRI AUROBINDO: Both were bad-tempered and they were difficult for anybody to live with. Frederick was an egotist too.

P: He was very charitable, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that was one good side of his character.

N: Has Paris been taken any time before?

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh yes, during Napoleon's time and then during the Franco-Prussian war.

P: The difficulty is that Paris is very near the frontier, just as Madras to Pondicherry.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but each yard of fight costs a tremendous loss.This war is not so bad as the last one, as that was a trench-warfare. Besides, in the defence the loss is less than in the attack.

S: Even in the open field this holds true.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, because in the defence the army remains behind the guns.

P(*after some time*): They are all calculating Italy's strength, economy, materials, and military power.

SRI AUROBINDO: Calculations are always wrong.

P: Reynaud has appealed to Roosevelt for materials.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, everything short of an Expeditionary Force.

N: Why does he stop there?

SRI AUROBINDO: He doesn't want to offend the American people, so he repeats himself in the same language.

P: If the French had more materials, guns, bombs then they could stand.

N: If America sends an army at all, it may be too late, as Reynaud says.

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite so.

P: If Roosevelt had been fixed in his Presidential seat, then—

SRI AUROBINDO: Then he would have declared war at once. He is too clever a politician to do it now. After he is elected by the Democratic Party by the end of June, he may declare war. If Washington had been destroyed by the Germans, then—

P: Then of course on that pretext he would have done it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Constitutionally he has the power to declare war.

P: Oh yes, he can do anything like a dictator. In that way the President has immense power.

N: Reynaud says that the French will fight from Africa.

SRI AUROBINDO: And even from America. They have taken that example from King Albert. In the last war he carried on the war from France, and Wilhelmina is also doing it.

N: The French can bring their African army to Paris—perhaps the Africans are not good fighters.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, they are excellent fighters.

P: Some French military officer said that the French knew all about the German dive-bombers, tanks etc.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is said to protect the government. If they had known, they would have done something to counter the heavy tanks.

N: What are these secret bomb-sights of America?

P: By them they can see clearly even from a distance of 10,000 ft. at night and thus strike accurately.

N: But seeing is not enough; they may miss.

P: No, what about the *Graf Spee* fight? Both parties were 10 miles away and yet they could hit correctly. The bombs are mechanised in an accurate way.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is like the guns — you see and shoot. That is not the difficulty.

EVENING

The Germans have entered Paris as it was proclaimed to be undefended. There was very little talk; all seemed to be sad and stunned by the news though it was not quite unexpected as the French had been fighting against heavy odds.

P: The French troops must have been thoroughly exhausted by so many days' consecutive fighting. They seem to have no reserve force.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, no reserve force. But such a force was the first thing they saw to in the last war. (*After a pause*) They have not defended Paris to prevent destruction, I suppose. But I don't think it has been a wise decision. They would have done well if they had defended it, because it is not likely that Germany will preserve it. Destruction of Paris means the destruction of modern European civilisation.

N: Especially if the tide of war turns against them, they are certain to destroy it.

SRI AUROBINDO: The French first decided to defend, what made them change their minds?

P: Maybe England advised them so.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not England's business.

P: Dara has written from Hyderabad how he is faring and how everybody is kind to him. Then he says, "It doesn't matter much to the world whether I remain here or go elsewhere." (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: Why "much"? It doesn't matter at all! (*Laughter*)

JUNE 15, 1940

P: Haradhan is convinced that France will win.

N: Is he sending Spiritual Force?

P: Of course he is!

SRI AUROBINDO: France might win after great suffering but she is likely to be overrun before that.

N: Already they are being chased by Germany. They have bombed the new centre of government.

SRI AUROBINDO: They must have got the information from the Communists. It is like Norway.

P: Yes, there the Germans knew the exact place where the government had shifted.

N: What has happened to the communist prisoners now? Are they released?

SRI AUROBINDO: Why? They are in Britanny. I hope they will be sent to French Guiana before anything happens. (*Laughter*) (*Looking at P*) By the way, Hitler has said that he will enter Paris on the 15th. He may have meant the army.

N: By Jove, how remarkably precise!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he is getting remarkable guidance from his Asura. Some-

times the Asuras have an extraordinary foresight that comes true with perfect precision both on the vital and subtle-physical planes,—just like those possible on the spiritual planes. Of course they are not always infallible. But Hitler committed only one mistake: when attacking Poland he thought that the Allies wouldn't intervene. (*Smiling*) Napoleon did not have such guidance.

N: Had Hitler's Asura anything to do with your accident?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't think so.

N: Do the Asuras know about their own destruction?

SRI AUROBINDO: No.

N: That's like the astrologers who know of others' death but not their own.

SRI AUROBINDO: No, some know of their own death also. Kashi Rao's father knew the exact day to the minute. He was an astrologer. Did I tell you the story of Louis XI and his astrologer? He was invited by Charles of Burgandy. Louis consulted his astrologer whether he should go or not. The astrologer said, "It is quite safe, you can go." And Louis was imprisoned! From the prison Louis arranged to have his astrologer murdered. But the astrologer came to know of the plot from the hangman. The plot was that when the astrologer would go away after seeing the king in the prison, the king would say, "Peace be with you, peace be with you", which would be the signal to kill him. So when the astrologer came the king asked him, "By the way, do you know the hour of your death?" He replied, "Exactly 24 hours before your death." The king got the fright of his life and accompanied him all along the way to see that he might be quite safe. (*Laughter*) This story is given by Scott in *Quentin Durward*. But it turned out later on that the king died actually 24 hours after the astrologer. Many others stories are there where the hour of death was precisely known.

N: Turkey is on the point of taking grave decisions. Is it about joining the war?

SRI AUROBINDO: Probably. She is bound by a treaty with the Allies to do so when disturbance breaks out in the Mediterranean.

N: That means the involvement of the Balkan Powers.

SRI AUROBINDO: She is consulting them.

N: Russia seems to be frightened by Germany's success and taking many precautions in the Balkans and the Baltic.

SRI AUROBINDO: Precautions won't stand if Hitler is triumphant. (*After a while to P*) Do you know if still there are any people with political tendencies in the Maharshi's Ashram? Once it had revolutionaries like Ganpati Shastri.

P: I don't know but I don't think there are any such now. Somebody in the Maharshi's Ashram holds the view that knowledge and power are quite separate aspects of the Divine. The one is dissociated and quite distinct from the other. That is, knowledge won't have power; they don't go together.

SRI AUROBINDO: Won't have?

P: Or need not have.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is another matter.

S: We have seen this in so many people who have knowledge but no power.

One who may have experience or knowledge of *sat* need not know of *chit* and thus have no power, unless it is of *chit rūpa.*

SRI AUROBINDO: If knowledge gave power all intellectuals would have power, and really they have none. (*Laughter*)

P: I am not talking of —

SRI AUROBINDO: I know, I know. (*Laughing*) I am talking of principles. Even the knowledge of *chit* does not necessarily give power. The power may be there but it may not manifest; it may remain quiescent. The Spirit is not impotent but may remain static and quiescent. It depends on the line one follows, whether one leans on the witness side or the dynamic side. On the other hand there are many spiritual people who have little knowledge but much power.

P: Olaf is angry with Nolini because Nolini did not tell him at first that he had to accept the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO: He did not come here as a disciple but only as a visitor. Even then he has said that if he had known about the discipline of the Ashram, he would have left it at once. Anyway, I would like to see him go as soon as possible.

P: In the Maharshi he has found his right Guru, he says. I hope he will be able to stay half the year there. Premanand was waiting for Sarojini Naidu's visit to the Library. Punjalal remarked, "Keep both parts of the door open!" Premanand did not understand the joke, so I said, "She may not be able to pass through one open part of the door!" (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO: It would have been awkward if she came and got stuck and then the other part of the door had to be opened. In the photographs she looks hardly human. How has she become so fat? Eats much? Of course, some people have the tendency of growing fat in spite of sparse meals. (*Looking at N*) Is it due to glands?

N: In women sometimes the change of life brings it in, because of the action of the glands.

S: Yes, women get fat after the menopause.

P: Not all women.

SRI AUROBINDO: Otherwise the world would be full of fat women. Suvrata[1] is tolerable compared to Sarojini Naidu.

P: Oh, yes, because she is taller too.

N: Sisir had a vision of the Mahakali aspect of the Mother in meditation, as a sort of reply to his sorrow over the fall of Paris and his hearing a voice saying, "Don't worry, don't worry."

P: I had the perception of an angel praying to the Mother for Paris and the descent of peace over Paris.

[1] Madame Y. R. Gaebelé.

EVENING

P: I don't know how to interpret Suvrata's report to me that she heard on the radio that you have appealed to Roosevelt to intervene on behalf of the Allies. She heard your name clearly. (*Laughter*) I don't see what the relation between you and Roosevelt is.

SRI AUROBINDO: Oh, I know. It may be because of Nishtha.[1] That may be the relation. (*Laughter*)

P: Later on it struck me that it may be Sailen Ghose who may have appealed.

SRI AUROBINDO: I see!

(*To be continued*)

NIRODBARAN

---

[1] Margaret Woodrow Wilson.

SRI AUROBINDO AT EVENING TALK

SOME NOTES OF MAY-TO-NOVEMBER, 1926

(Continued from the issue of May, 1972)

(These notes were not taken on the spot. They are recollections of the talks at which their author, V. Chidanandam, was present. Whatever in those talks seized the young aspirant's mind was jotted down the next day. Neither complete continuity nor absolute accuracy could be maintained. But, in reconstructing from memory, the author sought to capture something of the language no less than of the thought-substance. In places, later editing has been found necessary in order to clarify notations which had served merely as signposts.)

Q: Ekalavya acquired Drona's power of arms by worshipping his image. What is the explanation?

The image helps concentration of the physical mind on the power of Drona. The Universal Power was organised as a faculty in Drona, and by worshipping Drona's image Ekalavya worshipped the Universal Power; and as he had faith, openness, aspiration, will, he got it. Anybody can get the power of any other if he has the faith.

The centre of the ego is in that part of the vital being where the mind is. There is a true individuality above the false individuality we take as ours. The former feels that it is a channel of Shakti.

Q: Are the vital beings in contact with the Supramental?

No, if they were included in a movement of the supramental they would see and recognise the supramental and work under its direction. The supramental is part of Para-prakriti. Higher than the supramental is the Ananda Plane, the base of Sachchidananda. We can only feel the Ananda in essence, for one drop of the Ananda would make people mad. Supermind is the organising power of the Infinite. You can organise the Ananda on the mental level and then there are those states of the liberated soul—the childlike (*bālavat*), the stonelike (*jaḍavat*), etc.

Q: Does the Yogin control the forces around him?

No. He puts an influence on them. Our actions are shaped generally by an immediate feeling behind the act, by emotion or conscience. We have to analyse and see the motives. When we speak the truth, we do so because we want our conduct to be shaped by higher motives, e. g. self-development. Utilitarian motives are not in themselves bad, but only when they come into conflict with higher motives. We have to reject them. As perception develops, as our likes and dislikes go away, we see the source to which they lead, we see why we act from love, etc.

There is a tendency towards Righteousness in things, the right thing gets done.

Conscience belongs to the vital being. It is formed where the mind and vital being meet. The vital being creates it for its own ends—in order to control its movements. The vital being is capable of an intense Asuric (Titanic) Tapasya. Conscience says ditto to your beliefs.

Indian civilisation degenerated like the Greek. The mind became top-heavy and there was a pressure on life. There were no large vital aspirations, only attachments to family, etc.

Q: Is there a conflict among the beings of the vital plane?

You have to write to the post office of the vital world. A conflict there may be but not in the sense of a conflict between Angels and Devils.

Q: What are the powers that help one in Yoga?

The Divine Powers, Peace, etc. They help you in a normal and unprominent fashion; the other powers that help, help only under them. The Gods may help you if they like. As you rise to successive planes, each plane profits by your Yoga and you may profit from the powers of each plane under conditions—that is, if you accept the conditions. We have to create a control on each plane. If you give worship to the beings of the planes they will help you.

We can organise a personality on each plane. In everyone there are many different personalities brought from past lives, not persons but past selves.

Q: Can the love of a wife for her husband prevent his death?

It is possible that it may concentrate a certain force which can repel death.

I have seen the different personalities that constitute a part of my being — some are dynamic now, the rest absorbed or latent. I did not see the events of my past lives, but the psychology of the incidents.

Q: Generally people who have psychic powers or are mediums are weak in health. How is it? And conversely does emaciation of the body facilitate the growth of psychic powers?

What is generally called a psychic phenomenon is only contact with the vital world, not the true psychic. When through this contact the vital-physical envelope, the fabric which supports all, becomes thin, health wears out. And as to starving the body, there is some truth in it. The physical is an obstacle to the higher power and when that covering is made less and less dense it may facilitate the descent of subtle forces, but it is not a healthy way. Ascetic diet may not even suit some; for some a sumptuous diet is necessary.

Aesthetic pleasure is reflected in the whole being. The excitement, the vibration in the nerves, transport, the sense of being carried away, is the reflection in the Prana. There need not be such vibration in the higher enjoyment, which is quiet and serene joy. Even the ordinary vibratory response to Nature's contact may be inhibited and in so far as it is a weakness,—for example, the excitement in the external, —it must be conquered.

Q: Would the delight be the same in all contacts?

Essentially the contact is one, but it takes many forms. From the point of view of the All-existence, there is one delight, but from the individual point of view, since the individual has his personal likes and dislikes, tastes, etc., the delight would be differentiated. In essence the delight is single; in manifestation it is various.

In the classic works of the true poets, we get a stillness and mastery—as in the Ramayana. In Kalidasa's works there is a deeper stillness than in those of A.E. or Tagore: the stillness and restraint (*sama*) that would not carry you away as in the Romantic poets (*asama*), a stillness that is central. Emotional manifestation is not banned so long as it is controlled. Geothe shows a happy blend of the classical and the romantic elements.... The inspiration of Nandalal Bose is of a higher order than Abanindra Nath's, which is vital. The latter is a greater artist. O. P. C.'s Chandrasekhar is bad; his Abhimanyu is theatrical. The artist who came here in July is a medium for vital influence. He sees, as he says, sometimes the life movement and even his babies have a hideous, criminal look, a vital twist. The man may be good but the inspiration is bad.

As the body is external, it is easy to separate ourselves from it; not so with the emotions, which are nearer to us and in which we are involved. But again, the body being external, it is not so much within our control as the emotions.

You get the mental power, and even the spiritual, transmitted through one's mind and therefore deformed; they are no longer in their genuine nature. But one's mind can get brightened up by these powers. True power comes after this brightening up and under the stimulus of strong emotion. One can then think more deeply, truly, all-sidedly. The temperamental colour will go. One gets to a higher mind, one can separate oneself even for many hours in the day from the mind, life and body.

The physical consciousness in stocks and stones and the vital consciousness in plants, though of the same form as in man, is not of the same degree in both and therefore not one, because of the different organisations.

The Mantra is charged with psychic power, the amulet with vital power...

Possession is a case of some vital being completely holding and controlling the consciousness, or it may be a case of entering into another consciousness.

The vital beings are generally fond of worship.

There is an emotion accompanied by a vital rush and an emotion subtle and still that does not carry you away with its vital urge.

The language of the Gods springs from a higher consciousness than that of poets. Generally all poetry is vital.

Some who are not spiritually developed enough have a capacity to register the experiences of others passively in their consciousness. This is the use of common meditation. Sometimes something in the atmosphere may do harm also.

Re-incarnation is not a matter of just one entity surviving this mortal body after death and entering into another body. The psychic being may take its own course, the vital being has its own karma and so on. There is much truth in the Buddhist idea of Karma, that all is Karma, that there is not one entity exempt from its law, which the Vedanta fought against. Vivekananda somewhere spoke very favourably of this Buddhist idea of Karma.

If the mental energy flags the vital energy also diminishes. Heightening the mental energy, you heighten the vital energy.

(To be continued)

V. CHIDANANDAM

SRI AUROBINDO: ARCHITECT OF INDIA'S FREEDOM

(*Continued from the issue of May, 1972*)

(2)

The Precursors

BEFORE we come to the movements that Sri Aurobindo inaugurated or pushed towards their fruition, it would be well to cast a rapid glance at the work done in India till about 1900 to prepare the ground on which he was to work. Our assessment will be based on Sri Aurobindo himself, for there has perhaps never been a political leader who has done greater justice to his precursors, however much he might have had to depart from their ways.

The Rajputs

National consciousness, in the modern sense of a people aware or desirous of their political unity apart from a vague sense of cultural oneness, has been of recent origin in India, as among the peoples of modern Europe. In India, it was the Rajputs who under the stress of the Pathan and Mughal inroads into their territorial independence first awoke to the necessity of a strong separative existence under secular leaders. The record of Rajput heroism, "the reckless bravery of the Rajput men and women, shrinking not in the least from fire and steel, pouring blood like pools of water for the honour of mother and motherland,—admirable and wonderful in its flaming brightness"[1] would be a glory to the annals of any land. It has naturally figured largely in the early patriotic poetry of renascent India and has furnished material for our 19th century leaders in their oratory. But in spite of the patriotic heroism of a Rana Pratap, Rajput chivalry ended in servitude to Aurangzeb, and later to the attractive concessions offered by the British overlords. It did little to help in the formation of an independent India. Only small embers of the old heroic spirit burnt here and there among the petty nobility, the Thakurs of Rajputana, who still hoped against hope for an armed crusade against the foreigner. To this we shall turn later.

Maharashtra

Maharashtra was next in point of time to nurse the national consciousness, and it kept it alive in vigorous strength well into the present century. Here the beginnings were a spiritual inspiration leaning for its support on the supreme political genius of a secular leader. "Ramdas and Tukaram and a host of other mighty spiritual giants

created in Maharashtra by their *tapas* a great self-conscious Hindu nation which it was given to Shivaji to organise and lead."[2] The people of Maharashtra, under their inspiration and the guidance of the political leader Shivaji, "not only established a secular head, representative of the conscious nation, but so sec·l·rised themselves that, as it were, the whole people indiscriminately, Brahmin and Shudra, became for a time potentially a people of soldiers, politicians and administraters."[3]

In its essence, the Maharashtra experiment was an essay in what may be termed "Hindu nationalism". On this point Sri Aurobindo has some interesting comments. "Hindu nationalism had a meaning in the times of Shivaji and Ramdas, when the object of national revival was to overthrow a Mahomedan domination which, once tending to Indian unity and toleration (under Akbar), had become oppressive and disruptive. It was possible because India was then a world to itself and the existence of two geographical units entirely Hindu, Maharashtra and Rajputana, provided it with a basis. It was necessary, because the misuse of their domination by the Mahomedan element was fatal to India's future and had to be punished and corrected by the resurgence and domination of the Hindu. And because it was possible and necessary, it came into being."[4] But it failed of its purpose, for the ultimate goal was the political unification of the whole of India, and "the Peshwas for all their genius lacked the vision of the founder and could only establish a military and political confederacy. And their endeavour to found an empire could not succeed because it was inspired by a regional patriotism that failed to enlarge itself beyond its own limits and awaken to the living ideal of a united India."[5]

Still, the spirit of defiance against established authority which the Maharashtrians had imbibed from their great leaders of the 17th and 18th centuries remained with them in the 19th and 20th. It inspired a solid opposition to the British advent, first by the military leaders of the Confederacy who fought for the preservation of their freedom, and next by a scion of the house of Peshwa in the abortive rising of 1857. Both attempts failed, for want of cohesion and the true national spirit. "If the Mahrattas had been able to rise above the idea of provincial or racial separateness, they would have established a permanent empire."[6] And it was again in Maharashtra that the seeds of revolution were sown at the turn of the century when the time came for the British domination to come to real grips with the problem of keeping India safe in its hands. It was again under a Maharashtra leader in the person of Balgangadhar Tilak that the nationalist leaders of Swadeshi days sought to organise the nation.

Punjab

Last to emerge in full-grown form but with its roots going down deep into the past wast the naion-building effort of the Punjab. "In the Panchanad, the sacred land of the five rivers, Guru Nanak cemented the hearts of the Hindus and Musulmans in the name of Alakh Niranjan and this laid another foundation-stone to the mighty edifice of Indian nation-building.... Punjab has a great contribution to offer in the way of

nation-building in the life of the Ten Gurus. Each a towering monument of fiery spirituality, each has left a record of sacrifice and suffering, ever memorable in the history of the land. Indeed, at times we feel confounded as to which to place first in our estimation between the patriotic heroism of Rana Pratap and the religious heroism of the Sikh Gurus...who...when they bled, they bled to build a nation.... The intense and solid line of spiritual power which Guru Nanak founded in the heart of the Sikh sub-nation is unexampled in the history of any nation. That which had its beginnings in Nanak and Angada and flowered in Har Govind and Teg Bahadur, came to some sort of crowning culmination in the Tenth Guru, Govind Singh.... Guru Govind Singh, the militant churchman, clasped the sword himself and transformed a race of *udāsīs* into a race of fiery Kshatriyas. .. That was a glorious chapter in our national history, when Guru Govind Singh called five picked-up souls from the multitude and breathed the fire of faith into them."[7]

That was the beginning of the Sikh Khalsa, the élite of the race who were to bridge the gulf between Hindu and Muslim and weld the Indian people into a single nation. "The Sikh Khalsa...was an astonishingly original and novel creation and its face was turned not to the past but the future. Apart and singular in its theocratic head and democratic soul and structure, its profound spiritual beginning, its first attempt to combine the deepest elements of Islam and Vedanta, it was a premature drive towards an entrance into the third or spiritual stage of human society; but it could not create between the spirit and the external life the transmitting medium of rich creative thought and culture. And thus hampered and deficient it began and ended within narrow local limits."[8]

The spirit of Guru Govind Singh was embodied once again in the valiant Ranjit Singh who could unite the Sikh people under his banner in a last attempt to drive out the foreigner from Indian soil. But the odds against him were enormous, he could derive little help from the rest of India, and after his death, under the weak leadership of his successors, the Punjab fell to the British. But the habit of indomitable courage instilled into the hearts of the Sikh people by the Gurus persisted and still persists.

"The overthrow of the Sikh power had left the Punjab stupefied and apathetic"[9] no doubt, but there soon arose a new power in the Punjab that was to give it new life. This was heralded by the coming of Swami Dayananda and the wide acceptance of his gospel by the non-Sikh elements among the Punjabi Hindus. "Swami Dayananda as a restorer of Vedicism included the theory of politics in his scope and revealed the intensely national character of the Hindu religion and morality. His work was avowedly a work of national regeneration.... Aryanism was in its nature a gospel of freedom, individual freedom, social freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom in all things, and the accomplishment of such an all-pervading liberation cannot come about without bringing national freedom in its train."[10] It took about half a century before this ideal of national freedom was accepted by the Punjab in its entirety and found a champion in the person of an eminent political leader, Lala Lajpat Rai.

Bengal

But strangely enough, it was Bengal, the only province of India that had at first showed the least inclination or power to resist the British advent, that was destined to lead in the modern movement of national self-assertion, so much so that Sri Aurobindo could say with entire truth as early as 1894, "what Bengal thinks tomorrow, India will be thinking tomorrow week."[11] A rapid glance at the history of Bengal since the débacle of Plassey might help us understand the reasons.

"The Princes of Bengal at the time of Plassey did not realise that we could save ourselves, they thought that something outside would save us. We were not enslaved by Clive, for not even a thousand Clives could have had strength enough to enslave us; we were enslaved by our own delusions, by the false conviction of weakness."[12] This delusion persisted for nearly a century and a half. This was mainly due to the fact that the "benefits" of British rule were there in Bengal longer than in any other region of India. Bengal had remained unassailed by inner political turmoil or outer attack since 1757. It saw the rise of a prosperous middle class and the zemindars remained in undisturbed possession of their fiefs. It felt flattered by the Government of India making Calcutta its headquarters and the hub of the official universe; above all, the new education and culture that its young men received at the hands of England turned their heads to such an extent that for a long season they remained blind to the darker side of British rule: the destruction of the handloom industries, the constant drain of wealth that followed the Plassey plunder, the steady emasculation of our manhood by enticing it to depend more and more on the foreign support.

"The immediate effect of English education had been to foster an undiscriminating love of things English and an unwise contempt for things Bengali."[13] Not only did the cultured élite at first discard the Bengali tongue as "an instrument hopelessly bad and unsatisfying";[14] even the old religion was sought to be "reformed" out of existence in the imitative ritual of the Brahmo Samaj, and the social system sought to be remodelled on the basis of the 19th century bourgeois model. A servile imitation of English methods was their sole idea of politics. "Destitute of political experience, they could not avoid basing their political creed on theories and ideals rather than upon facts; without any education but what the rulers chose to impart, they had no choice but to borrow their theories and ideas from their English teachers."[15]

The first awakening came through literature, a new literature using an almost new medium of language. "The Bengali of the Pundits would have crushed the growing richness, variety and versatility of the Bengali genius under its stiff inflexible ponderousness. We needed a tongue for other purposes than dignified treatises and erudite lucubrations. We needed a language which should combine the strength, dignity or soft beauty of Sanskrit with the nerve and vigour of the vernacular, capable at one end of the utmost vernacular raciness and at the other of the most sonorous gravity."[16] This new literature and new language we owe to the three great names of

Madhusudan, Bankim and Rabindranath. They more than anyone else may be rightly regarded as the creaters of the Bengali nation. "Young Bengal," Sri Aurobindo wrote in 1894, "gets its ideas, feelings and culture not from schools and colleges, but from Bankim's novels and Rabindranath Tagore's poems; so true is it that language is the life of a nation."[17]

Following closely upon literature was the renovating flood of spirituality that was let loose by Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. "It was when the flower of the educated youth of Calcutta bowed down at the feet of an illiterate Hindu ascetic, a self-illuminated ecstatic and 'mystic' without a single trace or touch of the alien thought or education upon him that the battle was won".[18] The subtle influence of Vivekananda worked upon the mind and soul of the race in a puissant manner; "we perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, 'Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children.' "[19]

No less than in literature and spirituality, Bengal took the lead in giving a new shape to politics. Here the work of Bankim Chandra stands supreme. "He, first of our great politicians, understood the hollowness and inutility of the method of political agitation which prevailed in his time and exposed it with merciless satire.. . He bade us leave the canine method of agitation for the leonine.. . It was the gospel of fearless strength and force which he preached under a veil and in images in *Ananda Math* and *Devi Chaudhurani*. .. This is the second great service of Bankim to this country that he pointed out to it the way of salvation and gave it the religion of patriotism.... The third and supreme service of Bankim to his nation was that he gave us the vision of our Mother.... To some men it is given to have that vision and reveal it to others.... The mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism. The Mother had revealed herself .... A great nation which has had that vision can never again bend its neck in subjection to the yoke of a conquerer."[20]

Others

Other workers there had been in the field, in Bengal and elsewhere. There was some talk of economic regeneration, beginnings even of what may be called a national industry. New ideas on education were abroad and some experiments to put them into practice. The Indian National Congress had come into existence, an organisation with immense potentialities, which it would not do to belittle. Above all, a sense of national honour had begun to grow, at least among the more sensitive elements of the race, and this would not tolerate for long the continued subjection to an alien yoke with its heaping of insults on injury. Voices of protest were being raised at the annual meetings of the Congress; and the vernacular press, at least in Bengal and the North West Province (the modern Uttar Pradesh) was seething with discontent. Even the word

"Revolution" was being mentioned in certain quarters.

This was the situation when Sri Aurobindo entered the political scene.

(To be continued)

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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 May, 1972*)

3 (*Continued*)

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH, CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY AND TEILHARD'S "NEW RELIGION"

(C)

WHAT covers up for most minds Teilhard's revolutionary religion is the persistence with which he clung to Christianity and the Roman Church at the same time that he welcomed "with irrepressible hope .the inevitable rise of this new mysticism" and anticipated "its equally inevitable triumph".[1] To him Christ is the manifestation of the Divine which we may logically expect in an evolving universe like ours. Universal evolution rising, by and large, on a tide of increasing complexity and consciousness, proceeds in response to a focus of attraction in the future, representing the maximum of complexity-consciousness, the ultra-human on a unified global scale. What acts through this focus must be an already existent Divinity, and such a Divinity, bent on evolving its universe towards Himself, must send His radiation into it not only through a general religious self-manifestation but also through a direct incarnation serving as redeemer: in other words, He must—according to Teilhard—be Christified. And the Roman Church, with which Teilhard intimately connected God's Christification, is to him logically the axis upon which the consummation awaiting us in the future can and must be effected. Further, he saw in Roman Catholicism at its most intense not only the finest vision of a world in relation to God but also the most activating "*experiences of contact* with a supreme Inexpressible"[2] preserved and passed on — experiences which, sustaining and guiding men "along the road of contemplation and prayer", would make them "succeed in entering directly into receptive communication with the very source of all interior drive",[3] all evolutionary urge. No wonder, then, that he did not wish to break with the "old love" which Catholic Christianity was to him. Inasmuch as that "old love" was to be retained, he was averse to "a completely fresh faith"—particularly if it would be a religion concentrated only on "some 'evolutionary sense' or 'sense of man' "[4] and lacked the sense of an already existent and attracting God.

[1] *Activation of Energy* (Collins, London, 1970), p. 383.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 242. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

But "the consciousness of a deep, ontological drift that embraced the whole of the Universe I lived in", the consciousness of evolution "much less as an abstract notion than as a presence to such a degree as to fill my whole spiritual horizon"[1] made the intuition of a cosmic Inexpressible ahead so strong in Teilhard that to him the already existent God rendered vivid by Roman Catholic Christianity was, first and foremost, the God of evolution, the Christ commensurate with the cosmos and most organically linked to all its processes rather than the God who, in Roman Catholic Christianity no less than in every other creed of the past, was associated with a pull towards a Beyond, bearing one away from the concerns of terrestrial life.[2] What such a stance constituted was, by its multitude of novel and unorthodox implications with their call for basic readjustments, "a hitherto unknown form of religion".

Only in the double light of an "old love" retained in essence yet radically reorientated we must understand the picture Étienne Gilson, eminent historian of Christian and mediaeval philosophy, has painted. Robert Speaight[3] quotes from *Seminarium* No. 4 where Gilson describes his meeting with Teilhard at a symposium organised by the University of Columbia at Auden Home near New York a year before Teilhard's death:

"He had hardly seen me when he came forward to greet me but his face lit up with a candid smile and grasping my arm with both his hands, said, 'Can you tell me who will give us at last the meta-Christianity we are all waiting for?' I have hesitated for a long time before reporting these words. They seemed to me incredible, impossible from the lips of a priest....

"But on the same day, during the afternoon, in a passage where a crowd of people were incessantly moving to and fro, I happened to pass in front of a priest seated in an arm-chair. He was completely oblivious of what was going on around him and absorbed in the reading of his breviary. It was the Reverend Father Teilhard de Chardin of The Society of Jesus. This double image sums up for me what I call 'the case of Teilhard de Chardin'. Even if he was waiting for a 'meta-Christianity', it was in Christianity itself that he had already found it."

What is meant by "Christianity itself" is evident from another Gilson quotation of Speaight's[4] about Teilhard from *Seminarium* No. 4: "Under the continual flow of scientific or other alluvions he kept intact and miraculously preserved the nugget of pure gold which was the piety and faith of his childhood."[5] Fervour for the historical Christ, as kindled at his mother's knees in Auvergne and later kept incandescent by the sense of the Christian mystical life down the centuries, was Teilhard's till the end. But this Christ was aureoled for him by a mystico-scientific humanism

[1] *Writings in Time of War* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 78, fn. 4, quoting Teilhard's *Le Cœur de la Matière* (1950), first part.

[2] *Cf. Activation of Energy*, pp. 262-64, 276.

[3] *Teilhard de Chardin: A Biography* (Collins, London, 2nd Impression, 1968), p. 224.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

[5] *Cf. Activation of Energy*, pp. 262-64, 278.

which laid bare to Teilhard Christianity in a form quite "meta" to the Church's version. The form where the cosmos-commensurate Christ, the God guiding evolution and fulfilling himself in it, predominated.

De Lubac[1] tries to assure us that this aspect of Teilhardism, emphasising earthly maturation for the Pleroma, is not at loggerheads with Roman Catholic Christianity at all: "There is a certain relation, even if we cannot completely succeed in determining it, between the natural, collective and terrestrial future of humanity and its supernatural and eternal end.... Whether in the particular form in which Père Teilhard expressed it, or in some other form, this idea, thanks more to him than to any other writer, has become generally accepted. It has ample support in the earliest tradition. It now seems an essential element in the Church's consciousness...." De Lubac's assurance immediately becomes suspect by his allusion to "ample support in the earliest tradition". If the Cosmic Christ of St. Paul and St. John was not sufficient to prevent Teilhardism from being revolutionary, how would the earliest tradition help?

And what exactly is this tradition? De Lubac[2] asks us to consult a certain writing of St. Irenaeus, but he does not give us the actual words. Luckily, in another place we get a similar harking back to that Greek Father. In *Activation of Energy* Teilhard[3] says: "The supernatural... would not exclude but, on the contrary, call for, as a necessary preparation, the complete maturing of an ultra-human." The editorial footnote informs us: "Here Père Teilhard reproduces the teaching of St. Irenaeus, of which he was so fond. God raises man up step by step in the course of history. 'It was necessary that man should first be created, then that he should grow up, then that he should become adult man, then that he should multiply, then gain in strength, then attain glory, that he should have the vision of his master' (Demonstration, Bk. IV, ch. 38)."

Have we a genuine parallel to Teilhardism here? Obviously, St. Irenaeus, with a phrase like "adult man", is comparing human history with an individual's growth into religious wisdom and giving us a broad ideal picture in which the spiritual turn would be a widespread achievement after mankind had developed from bare primitivism through rich vitalism to adventurous civilisation and enlightened culture. Any student of historical humanity could have made St. Irenaeus's pronouncement. It has nothing to do with the Teilhardian *weltanschauung*. The "vision of God" spoken of is just what Teilhard, in the very essay containing that editorial footnote, finds deficient or incomplete. Modern knowledge "discloses ahead of us the possibility of as yet unknown physico-psychic arrangements": we recognise "that the universe is moving evolutively towards a peak of consciousness, that it has a 'head'." Our recognition "has more than a great physical importance". It has also "more than a great metaphysical importance", for now "the act of reflection" is not confined to being "an

[1] *The Religion of Teilhad de Chardin* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 219.
[2] *Ibid.*, 358, n. 72.
[3] *Activation of Energy*, p. 279.

individual operation of mental dialectic": it "assumes the form of an historic process cosmic in scope". "Even—indeed above all—in the field of mysticism the newly acquired perception of a movement of ontological convergence inevitably arouses questionings and necessitates profound reformulations".[1] St. Irenaeus, surely, demands no challenges to doctrine, no revolutionary changes of outlook.

The reason why may be described as follows in Teilhard's words:[2]

"Hitherto, the idea of *spirit* had always, on the whole, been presented to the consciousness of man as linked with an *ascending movement* which carries the soul towards heaven through *denial* (or at least through *contempt*) of terrestrial values. Thus whatever the form of the divine—personal or impersonal, immanent or transcendent —for the 'perfect' it always represented a sort of Above; and to attain it, it was 'by definition' necessary to escape from the determinisms and seductions of the corporeal things in which we are involved.

"Now, it is precisely at right-angles (if I may so put it) to this traditional pole of sublimation and holiness that, as a result of the *cephalization* [the coming to a 'head'] of evolution, our baffled minds see the emergence at this moment of a second centre of spiritualization and divinization. spirit no longer in discord, but in *concord,* with a super-arrangement of the phenomenal multiple. The issue, no longer above, into some transcendent supernatural, but ahead, into some ultra-human.

"In other words, there is now a conflict between two pictures of God, one vertical and the other horizontal.

"In that diagrammatic form, I am daily more convinced, we can express the root source of the religious difficulties we are going through."

Then Teilhard suggests his solution:[3] "a synthesis between the above and the ahead in a becoming of the 'Christic' type, in which access to the transcendent hyper-personal would depend, as a condition, on the previous arrival of human consciousness at a critical point of collective reflection."

De Lubac is right in saying that we need not restrict ourselves to every "slant" and stress in Teilhard's vision. But to be Teilhardian in the essential connotation we must respond to the conceptual and mystical need set up by modern evolutionism. St. Irenaeus is quite irrelevant there and, if the Church merely modernises him, it has missed the Teilhardian "revolution".

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 278.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 279.

GOETHE—THE SUFI UNFULFILLED

(The 223rd birthday of the greatest German poet falls in this month. We take the opportunity to offer our readers some light on an aspect of him which is not generally emphasised.)

GOETHE and Shelley were by far the most gifted poets of their age. Nor does their similarity end with the high excellence of their poetic gifts. Although different in various respects owing to outward circumstances as well as to Goethe's being much more complex and versatile, they had a remarkable kinship in the power of what may be termed "mysticism of artistic love". In Shelley this power can be seen by all; in Goethe it has to be discerned from amidst a multitude of qualities—the balanced Greek intellectuality, the humanism of the Renaissance temper, the Modern Man's Faustian rebelliousness and curiosity—but it is the central power of the poet in him, and to overlook it is to miss the most intense point in his psychology and the deepest tone in his self-expression.

Pantheism and the Eternal Feminine

Goethe was a pantheist: he declared that the universe does not fall outside of Divinity but that a Divine Substance underlies all phenomena and the forms of outward Nature have an inward animating Spirit one and perfect. This Spirit, in its Wholeness, is a tremendous mystery—the Absolute of the philosophers, "the inconceivable, utterly unimaginable highest Being" of which Goethe used to speak in awed accents to Eckermann. But between the Absolute and the relative, the Divine was for him an active Presence ordering from ineffable eternity the universe in time. While Goethe the poet found in the Absolute little matter for thought, the active ordering World-Presence haunted him. Not only did he intellectually live with it. Again and again, like Shelley, he passed through an exaltation which made outward phenomenal Nature so transparent a medium of inward divine Nature that when Jacobi asserted in view of the obvious imperfection of things that "Nature hid God", he could in truth flash out: "Not from everyone!" The intellect, to him, was merely an instrument to formulate the findings of an intuition born of an emotional and aesthetic response to things. "Man cannot learn to know a thing," wrote Goethe,[1] unless he loves it, and the deeper and fuller the knowledge is to be, the stronger, the more intense and the more living must be the love, I will even say the passion." His pantheism, therefore, is best summed up in his famous dictum: "The core of Nature is set within man's heart." Its most poetic utterance is the oft-quoted passage where Faust makes his confession of faith to Margaret that Love, Rapture and God are one and the same Omnipresence containing and sustaining all.

According to Goethe, the Love and Rapture that is God is the infinite never-ending union of an Eternal Feminine with an Eternal Masculine. In this union the two cannot be differentiated but on the level of our own existence where man and woman stand apart, Divinity in order to remove all differentiation must come as a Love and Rapture with the face and force of the opposite sex idealised. So, man attains blessedness by following what Goethe apostrophised as "the Woman in woman": under the aspect of feminine perfection—"Maiden, Mother, Goddess of all life"—the World-Presence attracts and fulfils man, giving at the same time to woman the opportunity to rise morally to the full height of her destiny as the incarnation of Divine Grace—Grace in both its meanings, the Everlasting Mercy as well as the "Beauty of ancient days which is ever new". Hence, like the Sufi and the Tantric, Goethe dwelt in the feeling of a Universal Creatrix who was also a Mediatrix between his soul and the ultimate completion of its existence, and he assimilated into his feeling not only the impersonal ardour of Platonic idealism seeking the one Perfect Form which the manifold time-process images, but also the personal passion of Christian Mariolatry.

Physical Interpretation of Sufism

However, he could not keep it on the rare oriental level. What was to the Persian mystics and the Indian Yogis a powerful symbol became for him more real than the Truth itself; for, while they regarded woman as only an earthly simile of the Divine, to be renounced as an object of lust and worshipped only in the spirit for the sake of the Reality behind, Goethe looked upon woman not as a simile but a visible synonym. Though human love thus took on the colour of a sacred rite, the initiation into which he esoterically described as the dying into the Life of life, yet his physical interpretation of Sunsm debarred him from directly realising what was the quintessence of his religious perception, the "Mater Gloriosa" concealed behind each Gretchen. "The Woman clothed with the Sun", the Archetypal Beauty which made the earth so fair, the highest Idea-Force by which the whole universe, according to him, was harmoniously expressed and which glowed through even the thickest of Jacobi's veils, became lost in the heat and tumult of carnal desire.

He found the immaculate splendour too bright, because he did not know that in order to enter what the ancients had called "the gates of the Sun" and pass to "where the Immortal Spirit wastes not nor perishes", one has to gaze inward—a practice which he curiously distrusted as liable to lead to inactivity. The wisdom of the seers who sought in the heart a core deeper than the emotional-aesthetic centre was not fully open to him, though ever and anon he felt a blind affinity to it; and he never did learn to understand that the realisation of the Supreme Spirit by an inward mystical discipline could be used as a fount of inspired action in the world, a stress of God-willed energy overflowing through the transformed individual instrument. Unable to stand the pressure of the profound intuition which he sometimes had, the intense pang of revelatory pleasure which is mysticism, be it only a mysticism of artistic love, his was

fated to be the cry of Faust at the hour of dawn when awakened by the song of the elves:

> The sun is here!—Alas, my eyes are blinded!
> I turn away, I cannot bear his radiance.
> Even so it is when all the self is minded
> To force the goal of our own confidence
> And wide are flung the gates of all fulfilment,
> Sudden there bursts from that eternal portal,
> A sea of flame, past mercy, past concealment;
> We thought to light a candle,—fire immortal
> Wraps us, engulfed in unknown glowing seas:
> Is it hate or love that those great gates outpour?
> That ocean full of rapture and of tears?
> Awakened we shrink and turn to earth once more,
> Hiding our faces in our childish fears.[2]

The ring of the mystical intuition here is no doubt authentic; but like Icarus Goethe sought the empyrean with wings that were not quite genuine. Suffering "the fall precipitant," he was obliged to make it the first article of his credo that man is born to look at lit things, not at light:

> Then be the Sun behind me, not before!
> I turn and gaze, my heart abrim with wonder,
> Where the wild torrent down the torn cliff rushes.
> From ledge to ledge it leaps in joyous thunder,
> Forth in a thousand swirling streams it gushes,
> Bursting in foam, tossing the spray on high.
> Lo, in calm glory from the tumult springing
> The million-coloured bow that cannot die!
> Through change unchanging, now its pure arch flinging
> In full clear lines, now faint where the winds fly,
> While still the coolness and the fragrance hover.
> Torrent and rainbow!—So our efforts seem.
> Follow that thought, that image and discover
> Our life lies in the changing coloured gleam.[3]

This surely is one of Goethe's poetic victories; but it is also an expression of his spiritual defeat. Indeed he that has felt the Divine, however passingly, cannot be the same man again. And Goethe, who had a feel and sense of the Sun, went always vaguely thirsting after the Eternal and the Perfect and straining through all phenomenal objects to glimpse the Everlasting Moment of flawless rhythm which is the Time-experience of God, "the calm of His celestial Day", in which the shift and

commotion of the world are elevated and transfigured into the divine archetype behind its imperfect course of history. "In the true symbolism", Goethe opines elsewhere, "the particular represents the Universal not as a dream or shadow, but as a living momentary revelation of the Unfathomable;"[4] but by definite embrace of the Earth in preference to the Sun as his domain, he lost something which mundane Nature really hid and which no amount of poetic philosophy could supply, clutch as it might at love as the phenomenon super-symbolic of the Eternal.

"The Desire of the Moth for the Star"

This is not to say that Goethe did not feel the transcendental phase of human emotion; in his relation with Charlotte Von Stein he did feel it unmistakably:

> For, all that men within their earth-bound limits
> Learn of high bliss and call by holy names...
> The light that only in their loneliest thoughts
> Burns for the wise, for poets in their dreams,
> Their heavenliest—I too in my best hours
> Found it in her and found it there for me.[5]

But the concupiscent part of him was too vehement in its demands to bear the strain of Charlotte's idealism. Finding no satisfactory solution to his *liaison* with her, he fled to Italy where, in Rome, he gave vent to himself in "the sweet flower gardens" of Armida in sensual experiences which formed the undertone of some of the most antinomian of his *Roman Elegies*. But he was not satisfied with this heartless sort of enjoyment, either. He wanted true love, and on returning formed a union with the young and pretty Christiane Vulpius which fully afforded that love to him, without at the same time starving his passions.

It cannot be denied that he combined with human love a superhuman longing and, even at his most earthly, felt "the desire of the moth for the star". For, men and women he saw as but human fronts and faces of the world-creative Divine Polarity of God the lover and God the beloved, the Eternal Masculine and the Eternal Feminine. All this hectic yearning of the flesh, he therefore held, points to a consummation in which the human lovers lose the cravings of their separate limited egos and fuse into an ecstasy in which Matter falls off like a withered garment and Spirit, with the Divine Polarity ever implicit in it, shines out pure of the aberrations of the earthly Eros. It was to this strange dematerialisation that he gave, in Shelleyan fashion, the name Death; so that Death signified to him not merely the cessation of terrestrial life but the flight to a heavenly consciousness in which "all failure shall grow to achievement". The mere brute fact of death meant only the casting off of one material body for another, a reincarnation of the soul for still further progress:

Like water it wanders,
The spirit of man:
It comes from the sky,
To the sky it goes.
Then down once more,
Drawn down to the earth,
It changes, it flows.[6]

In a letter to Weiland Goethe writes with reference to Charlotte Von Stein: "I cannot explain to myself the significance of the power which this woman has over me, unless by metempsychosis. Yes, we were once man and wife." The same idea he expresses in an exquisite poem to Charlotte herself; for, did he not have the strong intuition that nothing could be which did not in one form or another exist before to prepare for its present condition and that if the human soul were an "entelechy"—that is in Goethe's own words, a piece of eternity which the few years of its connection with the body does not age"—it would be absurd to think of it as not having had its own definite soul-nature from the beginning of time, developing its possibilities of manifestation on earth through many births? Death, therefore, was, from the natural point of view, a transition to another plane of being, with a subsequent return to this; but in the high esoteric sense it stood for the Shelleyan trampling of life into fragments, the trampling of that imperfection which,

like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

To make the brute fact at the same time a celestial truth was, in Goethe's eyes, the aim and end of living. His own failure, owing to the downward trend of his passions, to realise the light of the Divine had led him to the conclusion that man is condemned never to dwell in the ideal and perfect Consciousness, the Solar Glory, while alive: striving is all his lot, never achievement. But when the fetters of the body are broken, surmised Goethe, there must be the possibility of attainment: the very futility of the effort here towards the Divine implied for him fulfilment elsewhere, in a poise of consciousness in which, to employ Tantric terms, the pure Shakti, the one supreme Creatrix, is in everlasting union with the supreme Ishwara, "the Untellable" —"das Unbeschreinbliche". To penetrate into this beatific condition was, in his philosophy, love's crown of Love, and the soul's preparation for this leap into the Infinite with the help of "the unknown Eros" which, in Shelley's phrase, "sustains the world from below and kindles it from above" was the height of wisdom leading to the *grand finale* of human life—the divine death.

Thus we find him striking in one of his mystical poems a note such as is sounded with an equal poignancy and richness only by Wagner at the close of *Tristan und Isoldë*:

Tell no man, tell wise man only,
For the world might count it madness,
Him I praise who thirsts for fire,
Thirsts for death and dies in gladness.

Thou wast got and thou begettest
In dewy love-nights long ago;
Now a stranger love shall seize thee
When the quiet lamp burns low.

Thou art freed and lifted, taken
From the shadow of our night,
Thou art drawn by some new passion
Towards a nobler marriage-rite.

Distance cannot weight thee, soaring
Where the far enchantment calls,
Till the moth, the star-fire's lover,
Drinks the light, and burns, and falls.

Die and grow! Until thou hearest
What that word can say,
The world is dark and thou a wanderer
Who has lost his way.[7]

Tragedy of Spiritual Unfulfilment

But the divine death thus glorified is not achievable, as the spiritual experiences of all ages unanimously show, without transcendence of the temporal symbol of Eros. No shuffling off the mortal coil can kill the roots of desire, nor lead to godlike Bliss until they are killed. As Goethe himself recognised, in order to partake of that Bliss the human entelechy must be made fit for it while still alive. It must die and grow every minute if finally with the physical dissolution it is to die into God. But, it may be remarked, once the fitness for God's Bliss is reached, the very necessity of physically dying for the sake of entering the deific is removed. When the true Yogi dies, he only continues the state of blessedness which was his during life; for "he in whom the knot of the heart-strings has been rent asunder," says the Katha Upanishad, "enjoys the Bliss of Brahman even in this body of clay." Goethe, however, could not snap the cords of human attachment by diving deep into his psyche in constant meditative adoration of the Supreme. Perhaps his most magically Sufi address to Love the Universal Mediatrix is:

Thou mayst choose a thousand forms to hide thee,
Yet, All-beloved, I shall know thee there;
Thou mayst take enchanted veils to shroud thee,
Yet, thou All-present, I shall feel thee near.

In the pure springing of the tall young cypress,
All-stateliest, I know thee well, the while,
In the pure lakelet's limpid, laughing ripple,
Thou, All-beguiler, I behold thy smile.

And when the fountain lifts her jet and opens,
All-playfullest, I gaze upon thy glee,
And when the cloud-forms change their changing fashion,
All-myriad-natured, I am sure of thee.

Gay in the meadow's flower-embroidered raiment,
All-starry-brightness, I can see thy face;
Where the light-handed ivy climbs and clusters,
All-clamberer, I catch thy eager grace.

When the new morning flames upon the mountains,
All-gladdener, gladly I welcome thee,
And when the pure sky arches out above us,
All-heart-enlarger, I know it breathes of thee.

If aught I learn by outward sense or inward,
All-learned teacher, I learn it all through thee,
And when I name the hundred names of Allah,
There echoes with each one a name for thee.[8]

But this most inspired address of his to the Eternal Feminine is tragically typical of the spiritual unfulfilment of his whole life, because it was after all an apotheosis of his attachment to Marianne Von Willemar! The only other tragedy equally typical and regrettable is Shelley's passionate confusion of the Divine Beauty, which so urgently beckoned to his soul, with the human all-too-human Emilia Viviani.

AMAL KIRAN

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4. *Maxims and Reflections*, 314.
5. *The Secrets.*
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THE IMPERTINENCES OF THE SKYLARK

YEARS ago I heard a prominent professor of philosophy—a specialist in aesthetics, and as acute as most of our modern academic specialists seem to be—ask scoffingly what Shelley *means*, when he says that life stains the white radiance of eternity like a dome of many-coloured glass. I was young then, and still somewhat callow, and even though I knew what an ass the professor was it surprised me to hear this from him —for I *had* heard him say a perceptive and interesting thing or two: and I marvelled that anyone could not see something so clear and plain, as Shelley's meaning. It was Modernism, of course, with its "naturalistic" prepossessions, that got in the way. But aside from this it seemed to be a particular animus against Shelley himself, and all his poetry.

I have seen such an animus in many people since then; and it has been borne in upon me that to be *indifferent* to Shelley, or neutral toward him, is something of which few readers seem capable. Apparently he must be either adored or detested. This does not surprise me, for I think I know where the difficulty lies: in the especially elusive and ethereal quality of Shelley, and the natural enough feeling that he is something disembodied, and not quite human. He does not *weight* his lines, they are off like the skylark; some delight to rise with him or to see him rise and some do not; and those, who do not, feel a kind of outrage about it all, as if something so high and impalpable were a standing or rather a soaring affront to them. Perhaps it is. No doubt to enjoy Shelley requires a certain fineness of nature that is still rare in mankind. Surely the terms in which he is wont to be disparaged lately argue little but a lamentable coarseness of nature, if not a wilful obtuseness of the inveterately and stubbornly earth-bound. Of course it is the worm's-eye view that is now in fashion.

And so that famous poem of his, that ode *To a Skylark*, the song that holds its prominent place despite everything, comes in for a large proportion of the abuse that is visited upon him. For how can *art* be *unpremeditated*? It is quite foreign to twentieth century experience! And what in the world does a mere bird have to do with all that irresponsible riot of imagery? How is a skylark like a glow-worm in a dell of dew, or a love-laden maiden in a tower, high-born or not, or a sweet rose in its greenery? It is all just a lot of romantic vague rhetoric, and fluff and foolishness

I quite despair of answering such objections, to the people who make them. For they could not have made them, if they had really read the poem; and no doubt they would have read it, if they had been capable of doing so. It is all really as plain as the white radiance, and the dome of many-coloured glass. That the skylark is *not* like these images, Shelley says himself: but it can call forth and occasion a flood of imagery, because it is beyond any possible comparison. The finest, the most beautiful, the most delicate things that one can think of, can take one closest to that disembodied glory. Its unbidden song, its spontaneous flood of joy, is beyond all earthly poetry:

it is something to be aspired to, and something that shall eventually move the world despite itself. It is the overcoming of the shallow and dark "tragic sense" that dogs humanity. Its disembodiment embodies what is needed: the desire of the moth for the star; the looking upward, the *willingness* to become something better.

At present humanity seems to have little enough of this willingness; and yet one is not truly human without it. Man is a transitional being, he is not stable, and he *must* grow; or if he insists on balking his evolutionary possibilities, he must be superseded. He is not the measure of things: if he were, the measure of this skylark would not be so far above and beyond him, so much larger than his struggling consciousness. To hear Shelley, as Shelley heard the skylark, can help to lift one; but to be deaf to any voice "from heaven, or near it", to reject anything that is not of the earth earthy is to renounce one's birthright, and fall by the wayside; to perish in the struggle, and fail the trial. The higher possibilities are not vain; and certainly without them life is all vanity, and dust and ashes. One must rise, or fall. It is death, to confine oneself to a particular formulation.

JESSE ROARKE

O LOVE, THOU RISEST!

O LOVE, thou risest immense like a sea,
Surging waves of limpid delight
Engulf the being with invincible might
From beauty's unplumbed infinity.

'Tis love, the kiss on each child's face,
That burst in sunlit pools of play,
The wild wind's leap o'er wings of clay,
The streaming flower's rainbow race.

'Tis love immortal, Krishna's feet
Treading forever the unseen's call
The thirst, the seeking, the nectar of all
In depths where souls with eternity sleep.

O love thou risest my soul's great need—
The path to enchanted summits lead.

DICK

FRANCIS THOMPSON ON POET AND POETRY

A LARGE portion of Francis Thompson's poetry is concerned with his own experience as a poet. Sometimes his self-consciousness seems tiresome to the reader but in a few passages he succeeds in conveying sincerely and powerfully something of what it feels like to be a poet—a creative artist. If Thompson is a great religious poet, he is greater as an artist. He believed that art, science, religion and philosophy are the four great powers to which the mental destiny of mankind is committed. But at the same time, he asserted that the activity of the poet (who is a creative artist) is not appreciated by people, because, as he says, in his essay *A Renegade Poet on the Poet*:

"A Poet is one who endeavours to make the worst of both worlds. For he is thought seldom to make provision for himself in the next life, and 'tis odds if he gets any in this. The world will have nothing with his writings because they are not of the world nor the religious, because they are not of religion."

People look at a poet as a strange creature and he "is suspect of the worldly, because of his unworldliness, and of the religious for the same reason", observes Thompson in the same essay. The life of a poet is full of paradoxes and he is not only misunderstood by others for his paradoxical character but suffers too. Yet, Thompson holds that the life of a poet is inevitably bound up with suffering. He knows suffering, pain and poverty intimately but for the sake of Poetry. He had to lose many things irrevocably in life for her:

> And one by one to cast
> Life, love, and health,
> Content, and wealth,
> Before her, thinking ever on her praise.
> Until at last
> Naught had I left she would be gracious for.
>
> (*Against Urania*)

Those who are acquainted with Thompson's life are aware of the fact that suffering was not a pose with him and he welcomed pain and poverty gladly in his courtship with poetry. If poetry, as Robert Frost says, "begins with a lump in the throat", then Thompson learned to know poetry during the harshness of his outcast days. Thompson's voice is heard as lamentation in the following lines:

> Implacable sweet daemon, Poetry,
> What have I lost for thee,
> Whose lips too sensitively well
> Have shaped thy shrivelling oracle?

So much as I have lost, O world, thou hast,
And for thy plenty I am waste;
Ah, count, O world, my cost,
Ah, count, O world, my gain,
For thou hast nothing gained but I have lost.

(*Laus Amara Doloris*)

The suffering and pain experienced and undergone by the poet unite him with saints. Agonies of mortification are endured by saints not for their own sake, but because pain is known to be a condition for sanctity, as of all supreme attainment. There is an irresistible urge working within the soul of a saint to arrive at a state of illumination; similarly, poetic creation comes to a poet after an acute pain experienced by his pregnant mind. A new vision, a new kingdom of God and beauty is opened up by the *via dolorosa* to a saint as well as a poet. Both of them attain the power of revelation of the Supreme Reality while passing through suffering and pain, and then "the true artist's resignation of prosperity", writes Rev. Claude Williamson, "and of happiness as common minds understand happiness is, like that of the saint, complete and irrevocable". Thompson took poetry so seriously that he treated it with a saint's sanctity in his religious practices.

Thompson further believed that a period of preparation is necessary for both a saint and a poet—"in both a notable feature of this preparation is a period of preliminary retirement", as he says in his essay *Health and Holiness*.

He further adds:

"In Poet, as in Saint, this retirement is a process of pain and struggle. For it is nothing else than a gradual conformation to artistic law. He absorbs the law into himself; or rather he is himself absorbed into the law, moulded to it, until he becomes sensitively respondent to its faintest motion, as the spiritualized body to the soul."

The illumination of the saint or the perfection of the poet is not achieved overnight. "In both Saint and Poet," Thompson writes, "...there are throes, as it were, the throes of birth." A rich harvest is reaped after many true devotions. So both Saint and Poet must undergo a state of pain and labour before they achieve perfect success. Pain is a prelude to joy in the case of either of them.

The idea of pain and suffering links Thompson with St. Francis of Assisi whose influence on Thompson's life and thought was indelible. In St. Francis, Thompson discovered his ideal poet, because the Saint combined in himself the three qualities required by Thompson's criteria—poverty, holiness, and power to sing. Thompson, therefore, suggested to his godchild (now Sir Francis Meynell) to take his name from

The Assisian, who kept plighted faith to three—
To Song, to Sanctitude, and Poverty.

(*To My Godchild*)

The two aspects in Thompson's personality—the deeply religious and the deeply poetical—built up his idea of a true poet and finally he identified Sanctity with Song:

> The mountains where the Muses hymn
> For Sinai and the Seraphim—
> Now in both the mountains' shine
> Dress thy countenance, twice divine!
> From Moses and the Muses draw
> The Tables of thy double Law.
> His rod-born fount and Castaly
> Let the one rock bring forth for thee,
> Renewing so from either spring
> The songs which both thy countries sing.
>
> (*To a Poet Breaking Silence*)

Thompson had always been preoccupied with various aspects of poetry and his own experience as a poet in his lifetime. That is the reason why one comes across his musings on poetry and poet again and again in his poems. "You might read," Everard Meynell rightly remarks in his biography of the poet, "his three volumes and think they were but prefaces to thirty-three." He may be accused of harping on the same string, but, nevertheless, he has something valuable to say about the nature and sources of poetic inspiration, poetic creativeness and the poet himself. In *From the Night of Forebeing*, there is a long passage on the winter of unproductiveness and the spring of poetic inspiration. In *The Cloud's Swan Song*, there is an elaborate metaphor, comparing the formation of a cloud with poetry arising within the poet's mind; while *The Singer Saith of His Song* and *Contemplation* deal with the fruitful solitude of the poet in serene and passive periods of retirement from active life. The theme of the poem *Mistress of Vision* is poetic creation and the ode *Laus Amara Doloris* dwells upon the relation between poetic insight and the experience of pain. In some parts of *Sister Songs*, Thompson tells us something valuable and interesting about the poetic vision and inspiration.

Poetic inspiration, Thompson says, is like a flash of lightning before the eyes of the poet. There is no hard and fast rule for the poetic creation:

> The poet is not lord
> Of the next syllable may come
> With the returning pendulum.
>
> (*Sister Songs* II)

Its character is dynamic. What the poet plans today may change tomorrow. He may reap a rich harvest though he has not toiled in the field nor sown and just the contrary may happen:

Where the last leaf fell from his bough,
He knows not if a leaf shall grow;
Where he sows he doth not reap,
He reapeth where he did not sow;
He sleeps, and dreams forsake his sleep
To meet him on his waking way.

(*Sister Songs* II)

Poetic vision does not visit the poet "by law and vow," but of its own accord:

Vision will mate him not by law and vow;
Disguised in life's most hodden-grey
By the most beaten road of everyday
She waits him, unsuspected and unknown.

(*Sister Songs* II)

But such a visit is not an easy one; it comes to a poet in the midst of the hardships of life just as Jacob's dream came to him when he laid his head on the stones (*Genesis*, XXVIII, 11-12):

The hardest pang whereon
He lays his mutinous head may be a Jacob's stone.

(*Sister Songs* II)

And,

In the most iron crag his foot can tread
A Dream may strew her bed,
And suddenly his limbs entwine,
And draw him down through rock as sea-nymph might through brine.

(*Sister Songs* II)

The Dream, the Vision, seems to be something coming to the poet from the outside and taking hold of him, and so it is spoken of as another being, with whom he can, or is forced to, have relations. The moment passes, and the work of art that is born from it can never be a complete embodiment of it.

An experience in active life is as important for poetic inspiration and creativity as passiveness is. The poet has an intuitive power by which he is able to see the secret identities of essence in outwardly separate things. Here the poet is akin to the mystic who finds unity in diversity. It is Thompson's firm conviction that the poet's creative power is not spoilt by passivity. Poetic inspiration visits the poet even in his inactiveness:

His heart's a drop-well of tranquillity;
His mind more still is than the limbs of fear,
And yet its unperturbed velocity
The spirit of the simoom mocks,
He round the solemn centre of his soul
Wheels like a dervish, while his being is
Streamed with the set of the world's harmonies.

(*Contemplation*)

Thompson wrote in a review: "The insight of the poet springs from intuition, which is the highest reason, and is acquired through contemplation, which is the highest effort." By his use of the word Contemplation Thompson links the activity of the poet to that of the mystic. In his opinion the instrument of the poet or the saint is intuition, and contemplation is the mental condition, the attitude, which disposes the mind to receive intuitions. For Contemplation, Thompson writes in the same review, "implies a concentration far greater than is needed for ordinary thought." A contemplative leads a life of solitude and in *The Singer Saith of His Song*, Thompson describes such solitudes as fruitful; the poetic creation continues even in a state of quietude and passivity:

Her heart sole-towered in her steep spirit,
Somewhat sweet is she, somewhat wan.

Both the mystic and the poet are engaged in a service of joy; the mystic through his prayer, and the poet through his creation. "The mystic's prayer," writes E.I. Watkin, "and the poet's work alike are a service of joy. For the artist's creative activity reflecting and reproducing the glory of God like the Divine Creation, which in a true sense it completes, reproduces somewhat of the Creator's joy in His work." The poet touches God by his poetic art, and he is endowed with a creative vision that makes him the "maker", since in poetry the spirit becomes incarnate and the body becomes instinct with spirit. As God is the maker, Thompson believes, so is a poet who is conscious that he is the maker who presumes upon the common advantage of being made in the likeness of God, and adds point to the likeness. Thompson expresses his belief in these lines:

Poet! still, still thou dost rehearse,
In the great *fiat* of thy verse.
Creation's primal plot;
And what thy Maker in the whole
Worked, little maker, in thy soul
Thou work'st, and men know not."

(*Carmen Genesis*)

And again,

A poet took a flaw of pain,
A hap of skiey pleasure,
A thought had in his cradle lain,
And mingled them in measure.

(*Field Flower*)

Thompson well understood the difference between the emotional outbursts of the sentimental poet and the work of the true poet. In an ordinary poet, the flame of poetry burns brightly and then is extinguished abruptly. The flame becomes fire in the true poet and keeps burning for ever. Essentially a Christian poet, Thompson suggests a motto and an ideal of Christian poets in the following lines:

To make song wait on life, not life on song,
To hold sweet not too sweet, and bread for bread though sour.

(*The Cloud's Swan Song*)

Passion for God and passion for poetry go hand in hand in Thompson. In his view, when a poet's outlook unites with that of a saint, then perfect achievement is not remote. Poetry brings religion near the heart of people; religion imparts spirituality to poetry.

SHAILENDRA NATH CHAKRAVERTY

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"INSCRIPTION ON A FALLEN LEAF"

SHE passed this way,
The moonbeam giver
The moonglow thief—
Leaving at my feet
The fallen parchment leaves
She so long had gathered—
All of passion's fading hieroglyphs
Inscribed by life's lovers everywhere.

Her coming, her going
Was an event,
Foretold and settled,
Between spans.
I am left now less spanless
With no urge to make foretellings
For no old dreams are left to take me out of time
...And, of men and events—
No concepts need pre-cognition
(Form comes as a magnificent mystery discovered,
Without illusion)

I see as seeing is—
And all my aspirations
Shall be attained
Moment to moment.

My only desire is hungerless.
The Grace, The Peace—
Alive, active and conscious,
Growing free.

No moon is sightless ivory—
No beam is darkly silver-marked.

GENE MASLOW

A BUBBLE

I LIGHTLY blew a bubble
And a thousand thoughts
Floated across my mind
As that bubble did.
When will it burst,
So I can remake a new?
But it did not hear me,
It sailed on
    Unconcerned and mute.
My impatience turned
    To surprise and awe!
Suddenly it popped—
    No more;
In a mixed mood
    Sad and glad
I recreated again.

This fledgeling smoothly
Drifted far from me
And a soft sweep of wind
Whisked it away up in
The vernal air...
I expected it to pop soon—
But no —
Instead the bubble was
Soaring...above,
Above its fatal height
As if with a sublime thirst for Eternity!

I gazed
And gazed
Little thinking
Of what I had created...
In my wonderment
My joy assured me
This bubble was
    An extraordinary one
As the sun shone.

It looked so beautiful,
So resplendent,
Displaying its luminous
Scintillations in the
Flooding sunlight
As it twirled
And swirled
On its upward spiral way
Into the vast blue.
    And
Then on a sudden
    I observed
That any time—
The next instant—
Could be the beautiful
Bubble's end.
But
Even such a thought—
So imminent—
Worried not the bubble.
Its only intention was
The Highest Aspiration!
And it was by this
Enrapturing thought that
It was speeding on its
Journey — rather than
The wind blowing it faster.

And it appeared
Bubbling with exultation
As if
    All joys of life
    Were contained in that
Sailing, little, lucent globe
Which had shaped itself
In the wetness of a wee
Transparent drop of Bliss!
It was a distended
    Dew-drop
Speaking of infinite ecstasy.
    An unsounding bell

Of unknown bliss
Tintinning far away...

Such shortlived beauty!—
Even yet aspiring to scale
The highest heights of
    Heavenly Bliss!...

This bubble—this spherical
Small, delicate beauty was
All my creation.
I had given it life by
Blowing into it my breath—
A living throb of life—
From within my heart.
    So be it that
    I had englobed my
Soul in that bubble
And sent it up
To heaven
To call down
"The rain of God's Bounty"!

MANAN BHATT
(Aged 16)

THE MAGICAL CAROUSEL

A ZODIACAL ODYSSEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

(Continued from the issue of May, 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 IV

The Feminine Principle

Soul, Ego and Form

DARKNESS encloses them, like being suspended in a black onyx stone. The children can see nothing but they hope their carrier knows the way.

Before long they stop descending and can see the approaching surface of water which slowly becomes illuminated, as if by the reflection of the brightest full Moon; but there is no Moon. The bird glides smoothly over the water, circling many times until finally he seems to find what he is searching for. Gently and with great care he deposits Val and Pom-pom on what appears to be a rock slightly protruding above the top of the water. He then takes flight once more and is quickly lost in the ink black above.

Only the silvery water and the shiny rock where the children are standing can be seen. Tired now after the long journey and in spite of their fear, they curl up close to each other and fall into a deep sleep, in part brought on by the blackness enveloping them. For a long while they remain like this—who knows how long really—until they are awakened from their slumber by a soft rocking motion, ever so soft.

"What?" cries Val, "the rock is moving! We're moving, Pom-pom. Wake up!"

They shake the sleep out of their frail bodies and in no time are wide awake, with eyes enormous and shiny in the pitch darkness, trying to see where they are being taken. After a seemingly endless ride the water becomes less and less deep, more shallow until very soon the rock cautiously emerges from the water and to the amazement, horror, fright and wonder of Val and Pom-pom, they see it is a huge crab they have been sleeping on, an enormous coral-coloured Crab!

They are now on a small beach and desperate to descend, but they don't know

how to get off the Crab's back without falling into its huge pincers! There's not much time to think about such problems, however, because the Crab, with these very pincers, snatches up the two and cautiously deposits them in front of a thick, sinister-looking door. With this accomplished, he slowly sinks back into the quiet waters he emerged from.

Val and Pom-pom anxiously want to leave this strange shore they have been placed upon in the black night, and the door seems the only possible way. They bang and bang on it but no one answers. Val decides to look through the keyhole and as she comes closer she sees the symbol ॐ and the number 4. She searches for the right key, which they have almost forgotten about, and then unlocks the door. As they push on it it gives way before them, emitting the eeriest of squeaks.

Inside there is nothing but a dark narrow stairway with two torches at the bottom. It is impossible to see where it leads and so Val and Pom-pom take the torches and begin to climb. At the top they find a small chamber with three doors.

"Which door is it, Valie?" asks Pom-pom.

"Which door is what?" replies Val.

"The one we're supposed to take," he continues.

"How should I know? I've never been here before. Let's try the middle one."

This they do and so come into another chamber, slightly larger, with two doors. They again choose a door to open and then come upon a third room, this time with five doors! And so, round and round they go, in and out doors, through passageways and corridors, into other chambers, up and down steps, and then—back into the first chamber! Both are quite frightened now because they can't seem to find a way out of this labyrinth.

They try the door on the left and this time find themselves in a peculiar, candle-lit room, all decorated with hanging veils in the oddest fashion. While they look about they are suddenly startled by giggling voices. Quickly they turn round and find a group of young girls in flowing, gauzy tunics of mauves, lavenders and silvery tones, with jasmine wreaths in their hair.

In a flash the ladies disappear behind one of the hanging veils at a far end of the room. Val and Pom-pom hurry after them but to no avail. They find themselves in a large empty chamber with mirrored walls, reflecting hundreds of Vals and Pom-poms. Suddenly from behind they hear noises and turning they see a lovely human bird,—that is, a lady with silver hair dressed in the fantastic iridescent plumes of a bird from head to toe. She circles the room several times with winged arms outstretched, emitting bird cries in her flight, and appears to be totally oblivious of the children's presence. With her reflection in the mirrors Val and Pom-pom seem to be surrounded by a flock of these fantastic birds. It makes their heads spin!

They run after her but she disappears through the mirrors. Pushing one of them, the children find it is a sort of door leading into another chamber. There they find several girls dancing and playing, who at the sight of Val and Pom-pom vanish through one of the many entrances.

Mysteriously the bird-lady appears again, but this time she is dressed as a serpent. She makes a sort of reptile dance that somewhat frightens the two and then vanishes. They go in search of her but she is nowhere to be found, nor are there traces of the girls.

Soon they come upon a door which leads them strangely enough back into the room full of veils where the children are surprised by the giggling and laughing young ladies, who sing and dance around Val and Pom-pom until they are completely dizzy. They try to escape and find themselves caught in a maze of veils which gather them up and swirl them round and round. The children are spun as if in a whirlpool of veils and then collapse. Finally wrapped in these cloths they are transported by the giggling girls who continue laughing.

"To the Queen! Mother will care for them. To the Queen!" they exclaim.

Before long Val and Pom-pom are deposited on the softest of cushions. The veils are removed and gazing down upon them are the same girls they tried to follow, only now there are many more. The room they are in is rather large, the only source of light from candles. In one corner a group is seated on delicately coloured rugs and cushions, playing flutes and cymbals, while others graciously dance to the music, tinkling tiny bells on their fingers.

Val's hair is decorated with flowers and she is draped with several veils. Pom-pom watches as his sister is carefully prepared for the arrival of the Queen.

"You must look very nice for Mother. It is a very special time for her. The twenty-second of June is when her changes start and anything can happen, you will see. And she will care for you, because you are like us now," they explain.

"What about him?" Val asks as she points to Pom-pom.

"Oh," exclaims one of the girls, "he is not like us. Never seen anything like that! What do you think Mother will do?" she asks another.

"Perhaps we'd better hide him," answers someone from the group.

"Yes, hide him!"

"That's the best idea!"

And Pom-pom is quickly immersed in a sea of veils and cushions, just in time for the entrance of the Queen of Night.

She appears. It is the bird-serpent lady but this time dressed as a ballet dancer. She makes several pirouettes, the girls play the flutes and cymbals and delicate bells tinkle. Some giggle but try to hide their amusement for the Queen takes her dancing very seriously. She disappears again in the same way she arrived.

There is lots of movement and commotion among her audience, many of whom openly have a good laugh now that the Queen is gone. They play and dance about until she appears again and all hurry to their places.

This time she enters playing the part of a fawn, a most fantastic fawn of the gayest colours. She rushes about the room in a graceful prance as the girls create a chorus of sounds to cajole her in her game.

On and on this goes, now she appears as a clown, then as a turtle, now as an owl,

and so on. The young ladies enjoy it immensely for the Queen totally identifies herself with the personality she is playing.

How amazing this all is for Val, who is so sorry Pom-pom can't be allowed to see these funny costumes of the Queen of Night and all the looney shows she is putting on for the group.

A gong sounds and now the Queen enters in what appears to be her normal attire, a flowing veily tunic, similar to what the girls are wearing but much grander. She is quickly surrounded by the group, each wanting to be cuddled by their Queen Mother, who seems to care for them all very much. Val watches, rather sad that she cannot participate. She is left in the middle of the room, standing alone amid the cushions and strewn flowers, looking somewhat like a flower herself. The Queen of Night notices her and the girls rush to bring Val forward.

"Who are you?" she asks.

Val is so touched by the scene she has just witnessed that she cannot manage to speak.

"Who are you? What is your name?" the lady asks again.

Val can say nothing but remembers the certificate she is still clutching and hands it to the Queen, who reads it and exclaims:

"Super-emotion! Magnificent! Little one, you must tell us of all the adventures you have been through. But remember, here in Cancerland you have found a mother and I shall care for you always, as if you were one of my own. Poor Val/Pom-pom, you must no longer be afraid, for I am sure you have been through many, many trials."

Val tries to interrupt her and explain that her name is only Val, not Val/Pom-pom as the certificate says, but it is impossible to put words together in this place, and it seems they are not much interested in words anyway. No one mentions little Pom-pom who is still hidden under the cushions.

With gentle insistence the Queen of Night makes Val relate all her adventures and, when she finishes, asks:

"Where is he?"

"Where is who?"

"The little boy," the Queen responds.

Val blushes and points to the mound of cushions, unable to speak the truth. The Queen takes her by the hand and approaches the spot where Pom-pom is hidden. One by one they remove the cushions and soon uncover the boy who is sound asleep.

Val and the girls notice that the Queen is deeply moved by the sight of Pom-pom, so much so she can hardly keep steady. Val cannot understand why and the girls think it is just another one of her changeable moods coming on again.

Being a very regal woman, the Queen of Night is able to control herself for a while. But slowly she walks away from them and then collapses. The girls rush to her aid and after regaining composure she begins relating, in particular to Val, the following story:

"I was once the fairest young princess in the land, and being so lovely there were

many kings who wanted me for their queen. My heart was not steady though, and I couldn't decide on any of them,. Yet one day I met the one who was to be my king and together we had the most exciting court of all. Everyone would journey for days to spend time with us and enjoy all the amusements that were prepared for our guests each year.

"I gave birth to many children, for it was the King's need and fervent wish to have an heir, a boy to succeed him. Each child that was born of me was a further disappointment to the King, for they were all girls, many, many girls—27 in all, until finally, of my own choice, I retired to this castle you are in now, safe in the security of these walls closing out the sorrow I left behind. If I could have presented him with a boy everything would have been different. But at least I am here with my girls and can care for and nourish them with all my heart for the rest of my life."

Pom-pom's little head appears amid the cushions. He is waking and feels very strange under the girls' silent stares. For a long while no one says anything, then someone has an idea:

"We can send *him* to the King! He's a boy!"

The girls all dance around the room, clap hands and are overjoyed. Pom-pom is as good a boy as any other and the King will surely accept him for his heir. The Queen thinks it a brilliant idea and tells them to prepare Pom-pom for his journey. His hair is combed and a special wreath of myrtle placed on his head. A letter is prepared for the King in which the Queen of Night announces:

To the most
Honourable
Loyal
Noble
and Magnanimous
KING OF DAY
This boy POM-POM is offered
as heir to the throne,
hopefully,
by his

Queen of Night

Pom-pom is ready to leave—and just in time for it is July 22nd and they must quickly depart from Cancerland. Suddenly the children realise that Pom-pom is being sent off alone!

"What about Val?" he asks.

"Ah yes, don't you worry," the Queen explains, "I shall take very good care of her, always."

Pom-pom and Val are desperate. They refuse to do anything or go anywhere

if not together, and yet they are anxious to leave the castle for Glow's instructions keep ringing in their ears and there is very little time left. Val entreats the Queen to let her leave. Being a very motherly sort, the Queen is moved by Val's pleas and grants her desire, though still reluctant to let her go. She is not happy about losing Val but her other girls console her and soon the lady's mood changes once again.

The children are brought to the beach on which they arrived and magically the coral Crab re-appears, this time pulling a small boat by a rope held in his pincers. The water is still illumined by the reflections of an invisible Moon as when they arrived, but not quite as bright.

Amid tears of joy and very touching farewells, the Queen and girls assist Val and Pom-pom into the boat while showering them with cascades of flowers. The Crab then pulls them out into the deep waters and the black night.

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Cancer is a Water sign, an element which corresponds to the soul. It is feminine and of Cardinal energy. From Aries, Cosmic Dawn, we progress to Cancer which represents Cosmic Midnight, the evolutionary movement being therefore into darkness.

In this sign the "Fall" represents the divine spark being encased or imprisoned in the density of form or matter, and thus we speak of the gestation of the psychic being with regard to Cancer. In fact, Cancer is ruled by the Moon which is the Earth's satellite, making it unique in the Zodiac and giving us the clue that the psychic being is a peculiarity of Earthly existence. The Moon refers to the personality and ego and its motion in orbit around the Earth is symbolic of the ego encasing the divine spark.

The element Water refers to the soul, as stated. It makes its first appearance in the wheel witht he sign that signifies human gestation. From this point in evolution the individual begins working to uncover the soul that is enveloped in the protective veils of ego, much the same as the human being is gestated within the protective maternal womb or sack and after nine months birth takes place. From this point nine signs must be journeyed through before return to the Origin. Thus Cancer is a sign of individual gestation and maternity, but in the map of entire human evolution it represents the fall of spirit into the confinements of form,—matter itself being of the essence of divinity but this realisation of essential oneness, or the uncovering of divinity in matter, is to take place only further on in the wheel,—in the sign which lies, in fact, in opposition to Cancer: Capricorn.

In all the chapters so far each image and situation have revealed a specific characteristic of the sign; thus, for example, the children enter a long dark stairway and find three doors, then after entering the middle one they find two doors, and so on. This is all symbolic of the feminine reproductive system, the

clue to this lying in the very hieroglyph of the sign. Further on they are enveloped in veils signifying the ego. The torches they carry with them represent the divine spark or spirit. At a certian point the boy (masculine principle) is hidden and falls asleep, and all is centred upon the feminine part.

None of these images were mentally calculated and it was, in some instances, only long after the book had been written that many of the choices became clear. One such case, the jasmine wreaths adorning the girls' hair. Suddenly it was understood why jasmine had been the flower selected: Cancer is the sign of Midnight and the flowers' perfume emanates at night. And so each line in the story is rich in symbolism too numerous to detail at present.

The Queen of Night is the Personality, identifying herself completely with each role she plays. Constantly changing, of multiple and varied form, she moves with Cardinal energy, with direction, force and power. She is Prakriti.

(To be continued)

PATRIZIA

"LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL"

(*Continued from the issue of May, 1972*)

GOD AND LIFE

THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION

THE structure of education in the Ashram is singular in its composition, character and objective. Its teachers and students are drawn from various States of India and abroad—America, Canada, France, Britain, Switzerland, Australia, Indian citizens of Africa and other countries. There is provision for teaching French, English, German, Spanish, Italian, Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Kannada, Oriya. Normally students pick up four or five languages of their choice.

This seat of learning differs in some fundamentals from other schools. Universities are supposed to be makers of leaders of men, ministers, administrators, lawyers, doctors and other builders of the nation—the lenses of their faculties are focussed on worldly riches, that have been termed by the Indian seers *aparā vidyā*.

It is true that a country's progress depends on the skill of these people and our Centre does not hold back any who have tendencies in this direction but the stress here is on *parā vidyā* — the "Science of the Soul," the inner search, the exploration of the inner space leading to the Unknown.

Freedom is essential for all creative endeavour: Sri Aurobindo has written: "It is by allowing Nature to work that we get the benefit of the gifts she has bestowed on us. Humanity in its education of children has chosen to thwart and hamper her processes and by so doing has done much to thwart and hamper the rapidity of its onward march." This institution does not follow the accepted tradition of tying down children to a prescribed syllabus, but creates conditions so the students might grow conscious of their well-being and chalk out their own charter of life, intuitively guided by inner needs and propensities.

That is one of the basic principles of the Free Progress System introduced in 1961 by Pavitra, who devoted much of his time to give a practical form to the Mother's vision of education.

Why has it been called Free Progress?

"It is free because it is not imposed on any individual, it is free because it encourages each one to break the limitations of the past and to open to an exploration of new future possibilities.

"Free Progress is progress guided by soul and not enslaved by habits, conventions and preconceived ideas."

These are the Mother's words.

Art and literature cannot flourish if they are not free.

Let us hear what the Mother says about the possibilities of each of us:

"Everybody possesses within himself countless possibilities of which one is ignorant and which are developed only if one does what ought to be done and in the way needed.

"You can multiply your possibilities, greaten them, increase them; you can bring forth all on a sudden, something you did not think you had."

Mark the word "if one does what ought to be done and in the way needed." There lies the seed of success.

The fear of examinations does not hang over the students here like a dragon. In his presidential address at the ninth annual conference of the Institute of Historical Studies, Dr. K. N. Raj observed:

"...higher education has begun to generate more frustration than anything else. Much of the criticism in the educational field revolves around the examination system. Denunciation has not been followed up by the introduction of any other and by better means of testing, that would be acceptable both to the students and employers..." It is said that "The universities turn out only 'half-baked' products." (*The Hindu* Oct. 9, 1971)

Now let us see what process is adopted in our Centre.

The Mother is reported to have said:

"Whenever tests are given there should be no previous notification for the same and all tests should be impromptu, as this is the best way of assessing the assimilation and comprehension of a child".

Even for these tests no marks are allotted. Only general remarks: good, fair, very good are noted. If any teacher gives marks it is by individual choice.

These remarks speak about the merits of the child and give an indication of the progress made. Every attempt is made by the teachers to create a healthy atmosphere and make the child feel happy so that the love for beauty, the flower of perfection, might open slowly and steadily.

All the teachers aspire that the students "should be the children of the past, possessors of the present, creatures of the future..."[1]

Education is not mere training of the mind but of the whole human system, all the faculties of life. Mere stuffing the mind with information, in Sri Aurobindo's view, is no education. "All the knowledge is within and has to be evolved by education rather than instilled from outside." Sri Aurobindo said this during his political days.

Education is a process of self-discovery. This implies that a child must be free to grow at his own pace. One might grasp a subject in four hours while another might take four days. Why should the progress of either child be impaired by a single time table? Thus double promotion is a regular feature of this system.

[1] *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*, p. 54.

Another thing. If a child is absorbed in Mathematics, the school bell will not compel him to shift his interest and switch on to History. He is free to adjust in his own time and to the teacher of his choice for History. Children look at things with sharp eyes and know what is best suited to their needs.

Asked "What do you do when a child is found making ill-use of freedom or shrinking from the labour of study?" A woman teacher who has been here since the age of 12 and is now 29, replied:

"If once an interest is created, the joy of creation is tasted, a love for learning will steadily grow in the child. And if love for study is generated, only time is needed for his self-unfolding. Thereby it is found that his progress is much more rapid than by the insistence on a fixed programme." And it is this that is expected of a teacher.

To quote the Master:

"... The child must be shown, made to appreciate, taught to love beautiful, lofty, healthy and noble things, whether in nature or in human creation. The sovereign means is to rouse in the child interest in the thing that one wishes to teach, the taste for work, the will to progress. To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can make to a child..."

A professor who came here as a boy of ten says, "If I am asked today what was the most striking feature in my student-life, my answer is: the utter freedom."

Many question, "Why this freedom?" Indeed why this freedom? Well, this is what the Mother said in one of our classes:

"You have been given an almost fantastic freedom, my children—I do not believe that there is any part in the world where children are so free—and indeed it is very difficult to make good use of such a freedom.

"Yet the experiment was worth the trial. You do not appreciate it, because you do not know how things are when things are not so; to you here all appears quite natural. But it is very difficult to organise one's own freedom. And yet if you succeed in disciplining yourself for higher reasons, not for passing examinations, making a career, pleasing your professors—not to be scolded, not to be punished—we put aside all these reasons, and if then you succeed in disciplining yourself simply because you want to progress, you want to pull out the best of you then you become beings much superior to those who follow the ordinary school discipline."[1]

A German professor who was in the Ashram in 1959 and stayed with us for four months said, "Well, I am not new to the Ashram. I have been a Sadhak as you are, for the last 16 years though away from here. I have come here to know how things are taking shape. I want to learn much more than I have learnt from books."

After a pause he added, "If we allow freedom, it becomes difficult to maintain discipline. If we insist on discipline, students complain about lack of freedom. This does not pose a problem here."

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

[1] *Bulletin*, VOL. XII, No. 4, pp. 35-7.

Students' Section

EYE EDUCATION

SYNTHESIS (*Contd*).

THE source of life is LIFE ENERGY which pervades the universe and descends from the Unknown Summit. Its flow in the organs of the body is disturbed by strain due to a number of reasons. In the case of visual defects the strain immediately appears when there is an effort to see. The normal eye functioning normally never makes an effort to see, it functions like other sense-organs without any effort on its part. So when there is an effort to see, the nerves of the eye and brain are under strain and imperfect sight is the result. To relieve this strain a triune process is to be adopted. This process is based on three principles:

1. Elimination: elimination of toxic matter and bad habits and wrong use of the organ.

2. Stimulation : stimulation of the vitality of the organ by certain simple methods.

3. Relaxation of the mind and nerves by relaxation exercises.

We will detail this triune process later. It is a fact that every system of medicine has developed a part of this triune process and a harmonious combination of all of them will yield wonderful results to root out the sufferings of humanity and man will enjoy perfect eyesight. Hence to achieve great success, the integral knowledge of medicine is essential in its basic principles, but the proper sense of integration and efficiency will develop in the physician more and more by the evolution of the Spirit in him. This integral knowledge in Ophthalmic Science is being taught to the students of the School for Perfect Eyesight, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, through a four years' course.

A lady patient aged thirty-five had developed insomnia and total night-blindness. The doctors of Orissa failed to give her any relief. This patient was treated through the triune process and was completely cured in a month's time.

A boy whose eyesight had failed for distance and near, gained normal vision in about two weeks' time. Almost all cases developing defective vision or blindness can be greatly benefited by the integral system of medicine through Dr. Bates' system of relaxation could play a very important part in the treatment. It is such a thing that should be taught to our students in the medical institutions. The old rut ought to be replaced by the integral system of medicine.

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