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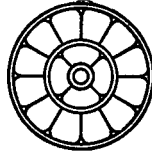
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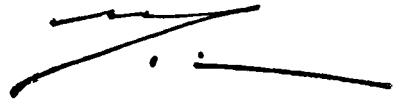


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XXV

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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12TH AUGUST, 1972

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NOTE

Owing to the cut in electricity at the press, the future issues, like the one of February, may come out a little later than usual.

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

L'aide est toujours là.
C'est vous qui devez garder vivante votre réceptivité.
L'aide divine est beaucoup plus vaste que ce qu'aucun être humain ne peut en recevoir.

28-12-1972

The help is always there.
It is you who must keep your receptivity living.
The divine help is much vaster than what any human being is able to receive.

28-12-1972

Personal effort is indispensable; without it nothing can be done. When the personal effort is sincere the help is always there.

15-10-1972

Se complaire dans la saleté et le désordre est le signe certain d'une nature qui repousse son être psychique et ne veut rien avoir à faire avec lui.

21-10-1972

To feel at ease in dirt and disorder is the sure sign of one who pushes away the psychic being and wants to have nothing to do with it.

21-10-1972

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of February, 1973)

(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.)

AUGUST 8, 1956

Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo writes: "A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it."

(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 187)

Isn't the psychic fire always lit?

It is not always lit.

Then how is it to be lit?

By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection.

Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will to progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves.

And every defect one wants to cure or every progress one wants to make, — if all this is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not a mere image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense.

"For devotion by its embodiment in acts not only makes its own way broad and full and dynamic, but brings at once into the harder way of works in the world the divinely passionate element of joy and love which is often absent in its beginning when it is only the austere spiritual will that follows in a struggling uplifting tension the steep ascent, and the heart is still asleep or bound to silence. If the spirit of divine

love can enter, the hardness of the way diminishes, the tension is lightened, there is a sweetness and joy even in the core of difficulty and struggle". (Ibid., p. 187)

How can one feel sweetness and joy when one is in difficulty?

Exactly, when the difficulty is egoistical or personal, if one offers it up and throws it into the fire of purification, immediately one feels the joy of progress. If one does it sincerely, at once there is a welling up of joy.

That, evidently, is what ought to be done instead of despairing and lamenting. If one offers it up and aspires sincerely for transformation and purification, one immediately feels joy springing up in the depths of the heart. Even when the difficulty is a great sorrow, one may do that with much success. One realises that behind the sorrow, no matter how intense it be, there is a divine joy.

(Silence)

Is that all?

(The Mother shows a packet of written questions.) My portfolio is getting fatter! More questions come to me than I can answer.... One, of a very practical kind, I shall answer first because it will be quickly over. Besides, it is a question which has been put very often, and perhaps I have already answered it several times. But still it is always good to say it again.

Without conscious occult powers, is it possible to help or protect from a distance somebody in difficulty or danger? If so, what is the practical procedure?

Then a sub-question:

What can thought do?

We are not going to speak of occult processes at all; though, to tell the truth, everything that happens in the invisible world is occult, by definition. But still, practically, there are two processes, which do not exclude but complete each other, but which may be used separately according to one's preference.

Evidently, thought forms a part of one of the means, quite an important part. I have already told you many a time that if one thinks clearly and powerfully, one makes a mental formation, and that every mental formation is an entity independent of its fashioner, having its own life and tending to find its realisation in the mental world (I don't mean that you see your formation with your physical eyes, but it exists in the mental world, has its own particular independent existence). If you have made a formation with a definite aim, its whole life will tend to the realisation of this aim. Consequently, if you want to help someone at a distance, you have only to formulate very clearly, very precisely and strongly the kind of help you want to give and the

result you wish to obtain. That will have its effect. I cannot say that it will be all-powerful, for the mental world is full of innumerable formations of this kind and naturally they clash and contradict one another; hence the strongest and the most persistent will have the best of it.

Now, what is it that gives strength and persistence to mental formations? It is emotion and will. If you know how to add to your mental formation an emotion, affection, tenderness, love, and an intensity of will, a dynamism, it will have a much greater chance of success. That is the first method. It is within the scope of all who know how to think, and even more of those who know how to love. But, as I said, the power is limited and there is a great competition in this world.

Hence, even if one has no knowledge at all but has a trust in the divine Grace, if one has the faith that there is something in the world like the divine Grace, and that this Something can answer a prayer, an aspiration, an invocation, then, after making one's mental formation, if one offers it to the Grace and puts one's trust in It, asking It to intervene and keeping the faith that It will intervene, then indeed you have a chance of success.

Try, and you will see the result clearly.

But, Mother, when one prays sincerely for the intervention of the Grace, doesn't one expect a particular result?

Excuse me, that depends on the tenor of the prayer. If one simply invokes the Grace or the Divine, and puts oneself in His hands, one does not expect a particular result. To expect a particular result one must formulate one's prayer, must ask for something. If you have only a great aspiration for the divine Grace and evoke it, entreat it, without asking for anything precise from it, it is the Grace which will choose what It will do for you, not you.

That is better, isn't it?

Ah! that, that is another question.

Evidently, that is higher in its quality, perhaps. But still, if one wants something precise, it is better to formulate it. If one has a special reason for invoking the Grace, it is better to formulate it precisely and clearly.

Of course, if one is in a state of complete surrender and gives oneself entirely, if simply one offers oneself to the Grace and lets it do what It likes, that is very good. But after that one must not dispute what It does! One must not say to It: "Oh! I did that with the idea of having this", for if one really has the idea of obtaining something, it is better to formulate it in all sincerity, simply, just as one sees it. Afterwards, it is for the Grace to choose if It will do it or It will not do it; but in any case one will have formulated clearly what one wanted. And there is no harm in that.

Where it goes wrong is when the request is not granted and one revolts. Then

naturally it becomes bad. It is at that moment one must understand that the desire one has or the aspiration may not have been very enlightened and that perhaps one has asked for something which was not quite good for oneself. Then at that moment one must be wise and say simply: "Well, may Thy Will be done." But-so long as one has an inner perception and an inner preference, there is no harm in formulating it. It is a very natural movement.

For example, if one has been foolish or made a mistake and one truly, sincerely wishes never to do it again, well, I don't see any harm in asking for it. And in fact, if one asks for it with sincerity, a true inner sincerity, there is a great chance that it will be granted.

You must not think that the Divine likes to contradict you. He doesn't want it at all! He can see better than you what is good for you; but it is only when it is quite indispensable that He opposes your aspiration. Otherwise He is always ready to give what is asked.

Is that all?

(Silence)

There are three texts here which I have been asked to comment upon or explain. The last one is a sort of continuation of what we have just said; I am going to begin with that:

*"If one were in union with this Grace, if one saw It everywhere, one would begin living a life of exultation, all-power, infinite happiness.
And that would be the best possible collaboration in the divine Work."*

(Talk of August 1, 1956)

The first condition is not very easily realised. It is the result of a conscious growth, a constant observation and perpetual experience in life.

I have already told you this several times. When you are in a particular set of circumstances and certain events take place, often these events oppose your desire or what seems to you best, and often you happen to regret this and say to yourself: "Ah! how good it would have been otherwise if it had been like this or like that", for little things and big things.... Then years pass by, events are unfolded; you progress, become more conscious, understand better, and when you look back, you notice — first — with astonishment, then later with a smile — that those famous circumstances which seemed to you quite disastrous and unfavourable, were exactly the best thing that could have happened to you to make you progress as you had to. And if you are the least bit wise you tell yourself: "Truely the divine Grace is infinite."

So, when this sort of thing has happened to you a number of times, you begin to understand that in spite of the blindness of man and deceptive appearances, it is the Grace that is at work everywhere, so that at every moment it is the best possible

that happens in the conditions in which the world is at that moment. It is because our vision is limited or even because we are blinded by our own preferences that we cannot discern that things are like that.

But when one begins to see it, one enters upon one of those marvels which nothing can describe. For behind appearances one perceives this Grace — infinite, wonderful, all-powerful — which knows all, organises all, arranges all, and leads us — whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not — towards the supreme goal, that is, the union with the Divine, the awareness of the Godhead and union with Him.

Then one lives in the Action and Presence of the Grace a life full of joy, of wonder, with the feeling of a marvellous strength, and at the same time with a trust so calm, so complete, that nothing can shake it any longer.

And when one is in this state of perfect receptivity and perfect adherence, one diminishes to that extent the resistance of the world to the divine Action; consequently, that is the best collaboration one can bring to the Action of the Divine. One understands what He wants, and with all one's consciousness adheres to His Will.

THE MOTHER'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON MUSIC

(At the request of some readers we are reproducing these questions and answers from the Mother India of September, 1956.)

Q. We saw a film about the musician Berlioz. His work, it appears, came to ripeness by his suffering. What is the place of suffering in the creation of art ?

It all depends on people. There are some who are considerably helped by suffering. This man Berlioz, I consider him one of the most pure expressions of music. I may even say he is an incarnation of music, of the musical spirit. Unfortunately his body was a little frail — that is to say, it did not have the basis which Yoga for example gives and so it shook him too much and made him too emotional, nervous, agitated. But from the point of view of creation, I have always had the impression — and it was very strong on the day of the film — not only that he was in rapport with the spirit of music, the musical sense itself, but also that this spirit entered into him with such force that it quite upset him.

The opinion that it was suffering which made him a creator is a purely human opinion. What is on the contrary very remarkable — if we turn the whole thing round — is that there was no physical pain which did not instantly translate itself into music within him: in other words, the spirit of music was much stronger than human suffering, and every blow which he received from life and which he was just too sensitive to have the power to resist was all the same translated immediately into music. This is a very rare thing. Generally all creators need a little time, a little tranquillity in order to be able to recommence creating. With Berlioz it was spontaneous, the stroke of suffering brought about the musical expression at once. Truly, for him all life began with music, ended with music, was music itself, and he had such a sincerity and such an exclusive intensity in his attachment to music that I am convinced the very spirit of music manifested through him. It is perhaps not the most beautiful music written: the cause for this is that weakness of what we here call the *ādhāra*. But it is still very beautiful and in spite of its power it has a great simplicity. It is a sort of limpidity of line he achieved with naturally a masterly knowledge of technique. His power of orchestration was most remarkable. When one can orchestrate something for six hundred players, it is a science as complicated as the most complex mathematics and in fact very close to it.

I knew a musician who was not at all his equal but was still good and he used to compose; he had composed operas. He would sit before a big sheet of paper and put down the names of the different instruments and in front of each he would simply

write down what had to be played. He was a friend whom I saw at work: it was as if he were writing equations. When it was finished, there was nothing to do but give it to an orchestra; it turned out to be a magnificent thing. Berlioz, you must have observed, played on the piano his theme; he played some notes, it was nothing, it had the air of two or three notes. That was all: it made his theme. And then on this theme, all of a sudden he would set himself to write. Sometimes he did not even play on the piano, he wrote directly. It is a special cerebral construction. There were others who composed exclusively on the piano and it was necessary to make someone else write for them. Someone else had to undergo the labour of giving the different notes and of organising the notes in order to reproduce the harmony that was made. But this man of whom I speak — there were great musicians like Saint-Saens, for example, musicians of his time, who gave him their compositions to be orchestrated. They wrote them as one writes for the piano, for two hands, and he changed them into orchestral music; he orchestrated just as I have said, simply by separating the different groups of instruments and putting before each the part which it had to play.

Q. When one listens to music, how should one truly listen?

One can truly listen if one can be totally silent, silent and attentive, simply as if one were a registering instrument: one does not move and one is nothing but ears. Then the music enters one; and it is only after a while that one perceives the effect or what the music means or the impression that it creates.

The best way of hearing is to be like a mirror, immobile and concentrated, quite silent. I have seen musicians — that is, composers and players — hearing music: people, like them, who really love music still themselves completely: All has to be a stillness — and if one can stop thinking, that is all to the good, one can get then the full profit.

Music is one of the means of inner opening, one of the most powerful means.

Q. When one receives a shock of misfortune, should one try to express it by music or poetry, at least if the expression is spontaneous?

If one has the gift of expression, yes. Otherwise it is not necessary. There are different depths in the shocks, all are not on the same plane. Generally people receive emotional or sentimental shocks altogether on the surface and that is why they weep and cry and sometimes even gesticulate: these are shocks in the outer crust. But at a greater depth there are shocks which one usually receives in silence, yet which awake in one a creative vibration and the need to express oneself. Then if you are a poet you write poetry, if you are a musician you make music, if you are a littérateur you write a story and if you are a philosopher you describe your state. Now, there is a still greater depth of sorrow which leaves you in an absolute silence and opens the inner gates to profundities that put you into immediate contact with the Divine. But

this does not get expressed in words. It changes your consciousness, but mostly some time passes before you can say anything. The shocks suffered by Berlioz belong to the second category.

Q. Often on Sundays you have yourself played on the organ. Do you decide beforehand what plane the music should come from?

Before I take my seat I do not even know what notes I want to strike. Plane? It is always the same inner region. That is why I can speak with some experience of the origin of the music of Berlioz: it is a region which is well-known to me and which I constantly visit. But I do not know at all what will come. I do not even decide what is the sentiment or idea or state of consciousness I am going to express. I am like a blank sheet of paper, I come and sit down, I concentrate for a minute and I let it all come. After a while I know, but not always. When, however, I hear the music a second time — on the tape-record — in the evening, then I know what it is because it is no longer myself doing anything, it is something that comes from outside.

Q. On one day you asked all of us to make out what you were going to say.

There are times when I know, there are times when I do not. Only, at times if I could have at my disposal an orchestra of two hundred players, it would be most interesting. The means are poor: that is to say, the music which I perceive and which comes to me would get expressed just as it should, by such means as you saw the other evening in the cinema. It needs expression of that kind in order to express itself wholly. So at present it has got to be collected as in a dropper and then given out drop by drop: like that it is naturally much reduced. It is not a grand affair. There is a great deal that escapes.

(2-10-1954)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1973)

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

The talk below was overlooked. So we are making a break in our sequence. The sequence will be resumed next month.

May 24, 1940

P: The British Expeditionary Force seems to be surrounded by two German contingents now. They have either to push-through them or re-embark.

SRI AUROBINDO: They may try to dislodge them from their occupied positions.

N: It is surprising how in two weeks the Germans have marched across Belgium. It reminds me of Chengis Khan.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not only marched but driven back the Allies.

P: Duff Cooper has written an article on the likelihood of America joining the war if the Allies are defeated. Otherwise, he says, America will be the next victim.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. But Hitler won't turn so soon towards America. He will turn first towards the Balkans and, if Stalin comes in the way, march into Russia. After gaining Asia and Africa he will turn towards America. You know Washington's three dreams: 1) War with England. 2) American Civil war. 3) Destruction of America by all mixed races coloured and white. I suppose Hitler will pick out an American Gaulieter as he has picked out an Austrian in Austria.

N: What is a Gaulieter?

SRI AUROBINDO: Gau is province; Gaulieter is a province-protector. Austria has been divided into various provinces and each put under a Gaulieter. The same has been done in Norway, Denmark and Belgium. I hope he won't succeed in America. As I said, his aim is clearly a world-empire.

N: If Hitler is defeated what will happen to his Being?

SRI AUROBINDO: He will try to possess somebody else: for instance, Stalin.

But I should say Stalin is himself a devil. He is cold and calculating, not suitable for the action of such Beings.

N: The Mother said that Stalin is an incarnation of the Devil.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

N: In that case, Dilip says, he is worse than a case of possession. How does he allow dancing, music etc. in Russia?

SRI AUROBINDO: That he can. He is an intellectual Asura. All such things are a device to keep the people contented. But if they do go against the State they are shot. And that sort of music? Folk songs? Communism is a means for keeping power in his hands. Hitler's Being is a *rākṣasa*.¹

N: Are these Beings immortal?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, they can be destroyed but they may be born again.

N: In the physical world?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, in their own world. (*After some time*) Gamelin is said to have shot himself.

P: No, that is the German news.

SRI AUROBINDO: He should have. I saw his latest picture. It is the face of a man already defeated, extremely weak. His chin is catastrophic.

N: Pétain has something.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, he is a man with a massive force but he is too old.

N: He may be able to use the force.

SRI AUROBINDO: But, as I said, he is too old. Still he seems to have kept his intellectual powers intact, considering that he has turned Spain from an enemy into an ally.

P: Yes, he has great influence over Franco.

N: Dilip has become a convert to the Supermind.

(*Sri Aurobindo made an expression of pretended surprise.*)

N: Yes, he says the Supermind only, can save humanity. If he has mocked at the Supermind, it was all in humour.

(*Sri Aurobindo began to laugh.*)

N: But he is in despair and wants to leave this sorrowful world.

SRI AUROBINDO: He will have to come back into a still more sorrowful world.

P: When this war is over, there may be again a recrudescence of war after twenty-five years or so, unless some solution is arrived at.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, we have developed the system of nations and now we have to develop the unity of nations; unless we do that there will always be these recrudescences, till Nature forces us to come to a solution of the problem.

P: In *The Psychology of Social Development*,² you have said the same thing. The nations and tribes that resisted had to perish.

¹ A vital, not an intellectual, demon.
Now published as *The Human Cycle*.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was the same condition in France before the restoration of Monarchy. On one side humanity is locked together, on the other side the national egos remain. The unity has of course to be a living unity, not like that of the Roman Empire in which the same old organisations and institutions remained.

P: Now that the Allies and the Belgians have been forced to pool their economies, they may form such an alliance even after the war.

SRI AUROBINDO: Unless they do, there is no solution. The big Powers must form some sort of a system, it need not be a rigid system. If the small neutrals find that it is not unworkable they may join. It has to be some sort of a federation but not the bungle and mess of the League of Nations.

EVENING

The radio said that through a gap in the British position the Germans had advanced.

P: So they had left a gap for the Germans?

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): Yes, what on earth did they leave this gap for?

P: Perhaps in their retreat they couldn't keep up their line.

S: Now the British say that they are in the town of Narvik.

P: First seven miles, then five, then two miles away!

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, they will explain that Narvik is in mountainous country, covered with snow, no roads and communications. They are slowly closing round without the loss of a single man. They began in a gentlemanly way.

S: Yes, by dropping leaflets and making reconnaissance.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not in what they would call the savage way of the French who took Arras in one night! Only when the Germans dive-bombed they became wild — that too in their Navy and Air.

S: Because on land they couldn't do anything.

P: Gandhi seems to be in a conciliatory mood now — he will leave no stone unturned, he says. He will try to come to a compromise perhaps.

SRI AUROBINDO: He ought to unless Jawaharlal prevents him.

P: Jawaharlal is not satisfied.

SRI AUROBINDO: Gandhi is now under his influence.

P: But C.R. and Patel may exert some influence too.

SRI AUROBINDO: England is trying to make up with Russia, it seems. They say that Russia has asked Germany and Italy to keep off from the Balkans. That would explain Russia's massing of troops on the German frontier. Italy of course will plunge towards the Balkans if she can pluck up courage.

This book of prophecy says things which are proved obviously false. He says Fritch, who died in Poland, would reorganise Germany after Hitler's death. I can understand now what the astrologers do. They see the position, give a general impression of things which may come true. But when they particularise, they make

mistakes and try to wriggle out of them. This man said that the annexation of Poland was the last successful result of Hitler's ambition. Then he goes on to say that after Hitler and Stalin have gone, Russia and Germany will make a military alliance and grow a new type of State. And then he pays a high tribute to Chamberlain.

P: Yes, he makes him out a saint.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, saint, apostle, everything.

NIRODBARAN

A TALK TO ASHRAM CHILDREN

AN UPANISHADIC STORY

KING Janaka was a great king and a great sage. He wielded an empire without and equally an empire within: he had realised the Truth, known Brahman. He was *svarāṭ* and *samrāṭ*. A friend and intimate of his was Rishi Yajnavalkya, who also was a sage — in fact, considered to be the greatest sage of the time, a supreme knower of Brahman.

Once upon a time King Janaka invited sages from everywhere, whoever wanted to come to the assembly. The king from time to time used to call such assemblies for spiritual discussion and interchange of experiences. This time he summoned the assembly for a special reason. He had collected a herd of one thousand cows and nuggets of gold were tied to the horns of each. When all had gathered and taken their places he announced that whoever considered himself the best knower of Brahman (Brahmishtha) might come forward and take away the cows. None stirred. No one had the temerity to declare that he was the best *knower* and the most eligible for the prize. The king repeated his announcement. Then all of a sudden people saw Yajnavalkya advancing and telling his disciples to take hold of the herd and drive it home. A hue and cry arose: how is it? How dare he? One came forward and asked Yajnavalkya: How is it, Yajnavalkya? Do you consider yourself the most wise in the matter of Brahman? First prove your claim and then touch the cows. Yajnavalkya in great humility bowed down and said to the assembly: I bow down to the great sages. I have come here solely with the intention of getting the cows. As for the knowledge of Brahman, I leave it to the knowers of Brahman. All the others in one voice said: That will not do, Yajnavalkya. You cannot get away so easily. Come sit down and prove your worth. Yajnavalkya had no way of escape. So one by one the sages came up and put questions and enigmas to Yajnavalkya. All he answered quietly and perfectly to their full satisfaction. Towards the end a woman stood up, Gargi, a fair and famous name too. She said: Yajnavalkya, I shall put two questions to you like two arrows directed at you, even as a king shoots his arrows at his enemies; if you can meet and parry them, yours the victory. — Yajnavalkya: Let me hear them. — Gargi: Yajnavalkya, you once said that the earth is the warp and woof woven upon water; upon what is woven the water? — Yajnavalkya: "Air". — "Upon what then is air woven?" — "sky". — "Upon what is woven the sky?" — "The world of Gandharvas." — "Upon what the Gandharvas?" — "Upon the Sun." She continued her questioning. And thus she was led successively through higher and higher worlds — from the Sun to the Moon, then to the Stars, then to the Gods and the King of Gods, then to the Creator of the

Gods and the peoples¹ and finally to the Brahmaloka (the world of the One Supreme Transcendent Reality).

Gargi still continued and asked again: "Upon what is Brahman woven?" To this Yajnavalkya cried halt and warned her: "Now, Gargi, your questioning goes too far, beyond the limits. If you question farther, your head will fall off. You are questioning about a thing that does not bear questioning — *mā ati prākṣiḥ* — *anati praśnyā devatā* — the Gods abide not our question." So Gargi had to desist and Yajnavalkya was accepted as the best of the sages (Brahmishtha) and he could drive his cattle away home.

The ultimate reality does not lie within the ken of the questioning mind, the Upanishad emphatically declares. We all know the famous mantra: *naiṣā tarkeṇ matirāpanīyā* — this consciousness cannot be reached by reasoning nor by intelligence nor by much learning. Indeed the Self, the Divine discloses his body to him alone whom he chooses as his own.

(2)

It is to be noted that even when at the top of the consciousness, full of the Supreme Brahman, one with it, Yajnavalkya does not lose hold of the earthly foothold — he does not forget his cows, and thereby hangs another amusing tale of his.

Once king Janaka, as it was customary, was holding his court and there was a large assembly of people — courtiers, ministers, officials, petitioners and a crowd of curious visitors. All of a sudden stepped in Yajnavalkya. The king saw him, and after welcoming him asked with an ironical smile what he was there for. Did he come for cows (referring to the previous episode) or for the knowledge of Brahman? Yajnavalkya too answered with a beatific smile: O king, I come for both — *ubhayaeva samrāṭ*.

In other words, even after passing through all the inferior worlds, the intermediary formulations of the Supreme, even after passing beyond, Yajnavalkya does not reject these stations as delusions but accepts them, subsumes them, within one integral consciousness — something in the manner imaged in those famous lines of Wordsworth:

Type of the wise who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

¹ It is difficult to locate or identify the Upanishadic worlds or explain their gradations; evidently they are symbolical. But for us it is sufficient if we know that they are mounting steps, higher and higher tiers of being and consciousness leading to the supreme Being and Consciousness, the Brahman.

SRI AUROBINDO'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

AN OUTLINE

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1973)

(2)

The Problem of International Relations

The Elements of the Problem

MANKIND, we have seen, has succeeded in organising its collective life on a more or less stable basis, in the form of the nation-unit which has developed in the West in the course of the last few centuries, and is now in the process of rapid development in Asia and Africa under the impact of the West, as a firmly founded political entity. The nation-idea in itself is not a new phenomenon in history; it existed in earlier times and gave the peoples who now constitute the political units a vague sense of cultural unity which marked them out from the other peoples, often with a keen sense of difference and even hostility. It is this sense of "being different" from the others, the desire sometimes vehemently expressed of "becoming ourselves", that is the distinctive feature of the new development. And it is this that constitutes the main problem of international relations.

The problem may be stated thus, in the form of certain precise questions which demand categorical answers. Can the collective egoisms already created in the form of nation-units be sufficiently modified or abolished so as to enable the nations to live together in peace and harmony in the international community? Even assuming that a form of external unity can be created which serves to efface the acute differences, will not this sort of unity mechanise human existence by substituting for the real and active life now enjoyed by the free nations a monstrous organisation in the form of a World State which will crush out of existence the free and varied play of both the individual and collective life? Ought not this external form of unity be preceded by at least the beginnings of a moral and spiritual oneness, so that the unity becomes a living thing, a reality rather than an artificial creation?

Modern Attempts at Coexistence

The questions may be taken up in their logical sequence and the answers given in the light of Sri Aurobindo.

It is a fact of history that almost simultaneously with the growth of nationalist sentiment, the nations of Europe, partly as a result of the devastating conflicts known as the Thirty Years War ending in the Peace of Westphalia (1648), and partly under the influence of certain thinkers and jurists of whom Grotius takes the lead, accepted with more or less grudging consent the principles of a rudimentary international law, which allowed them to live together in spite of antagonisms and conflicts. This did not mean that national egoisms had been abolished; far from it, for this new international system permitted too many ugly features, of oppression, bloodshed, revolt and disorder, not to speak of wars which continued to cause widespread ruin.

In two directions, the modern mind has sought an escape from the dilemma posed by the existence of independent nation-states in a rapidly growing international system, with many points of mutual contact and forcible interchange. On one hand, there was the attempt at reviving the old Roman type of empire bringing together within its orbit many warring peoples and fusing them together or at least compelling them to forego the pleasure of mutual destruction. On the other, there has been growing an internationalist pacifist sentiment translated in diplomatic practice by the adoption of certain precise mechanics of peace. Neither of these two methods has shown any conspicuous success.

The modern empire, whether of the British or French pattern or of the more overtly forceful German or Russian type, sought at first to "civilise" the countries where it carried its flag and establish commercial and military colonies among the conquered peoples. It did succeed in preventing internecine war among the subject nations and in passing on some of the benefits of European civilisation. But it failed to obliterate the sense of separateness; on the contrary, in most instances the dormant feeling of national unity was awakened rudely by the very presence of this foreign element. Even the colonies of pure or mixed European origin, as in Canada, South Africa and Australia, began in course of time to aspire for separate nationhood, and had to be given substantial concessions in this respect. Most tragic of all, the empires themselves fell to quarrelling among themselves and brought their own ruin in two devastating world wars. It may be taken for granted that the empire idea has failed of its purpose, and is not likely to be revived, at least in its classical form.

The hopes of the pacifists and the many devices of pre-1914 diplomacy to prevent large-scale wars have been equally fruitless. The pacifism professed at one time by the socialists all over the Western world was put to a crucial test when the Great War broke out; their pacifism was abjured *en masse* by all the socialist parties in every country and they voted for war. The diplomatic contrivances, beginning with the Holy Alliance of post-Napoleonic Europe and ending with the League of Nations, taking in their stride such half-sincere measures as the Concert of Europe, with its blundering discords, arbitration treaties and Hague tribunals, attempts at codifying the international law of peace and war and neutrality, and the holding of disarmament conferences and signing of non-aggression pacts — these half-measures were bound to fail and showed their futility, in 1914 and again in 1939. It has been

clearly brought home that nations and their rulers were determined not to listen to reason.

A World State: Its Possibilities and Perils

One has perforce to come to the conclusion that nothing short of a really effective world-authority, a world-state on the pattern of the nation-state possessing a monopoly or at least an overwhelming superiority of armed strength *vis à vis* its individual constituents, the nations big and small, would be able to maintain the peace of the world. Men feel shy of contemplating even the possibility of such a world-authority, and perhaps very rightly. But unless there comes over humanity a deep inner psychological and spiritual change which makes war a natural impossibility, unless that is to say the egoism of individuals and nations comes to be replaced by something rich and strange by their awaking to the divinity concealed behind, the soul in man, a world-state enforcing a form of outer unity remains the only hope for man to survive. Such an outward form may take shape, avers Sri Aurobindo, within a century or two, at the most three or four, but its coming is certain; Nature herself will enforce it and find the necessary means, for she has a need for man as the trustee of the evolutionary process.

Some hints as to how the world-state will come about can be gathered from the history of the birth and growth of the nation-state. The modern nation began with a loose chaotic unity represented by the feudal order. That corresponds readily enough to the international situation today. For underlying all the apparent discords, the nations of the world have been brought together to an unprecedented extent by Science, international commerce and by the political and cultural penetration of Asia and Africa by the dominant West. Each feels in its culture, political tendencies and economic existence the influence and repercussion of events and movements in other parts of the world. The occurrence or the possibility of great wars has become a powerful element of disturbance to the whole fabric.

What put an end to the feudal chaos within the nation may very well be reproduced in the international community, with some possible variations of detail. Instead of a single king-nation taking upon itself the task of dominating the rest of the world partly by force and partly by their ready acquiescence, — although this drastic method may not be altogether left out of account if other means fail, — the two great Power blocs may eventually succeed in coming to an understanding and create an initial union for the most pressing common needs: arrangements of commerce, peace and war, common arbitration of disputes, arrangements for the policing of the world. What will induce the less powerful nations to join such a union may well be the advantages of protection against external attack and internal disruption. At first the world authority so created may well confine itself to occasional intervention in matters of great moment. But these initial arrangements, once accepted, will tend to develop, by the pressure of need, into a closer supervision and control, and in the

end into a supreme governmental authority. Given the current trend towards uniformity and over-all control of the national life under the influence of the socialistic idea, it may be safely assumed that unless there comes about a radical change in political thinking, the world authority will in course of time extend its functions and jurisdiction to all matters political, economic, social and cultural, which are now considered to be the exclusive concern of the individual nation-states.

Under such a system, the nation-idea will tend to disappear: the nations will be relegated to the position now enjoyed by the county or the district in a strongly unitary state like England or France. They will maintain their separate existence only for the sake of administrative convenience, and lose their identity as cultural units. The benefits of such an organisation of the world will be unbroken peace and security, economic well-being, unprecedented opportunities for cooperative effort in the fields of social, cultural and scientific progress. But if the system persists for long, there will supervene a dying down of force, stagnation, decay and death. For, men may tire of peace; economic well-being may not satisfy the need for struggle and effort; a common intellectual and cultural activity and progress may do much, but need not by themselves be sufficient to bring into being the living sense of oneness that keeps alive the vigour of the modern nation. It is the sense of distinctness from other nations and the feeling of loyalty amounting to adoration almost that is offered to the nation-unit by its citizens that will be entirely missing and will ultimately bring about the dissolution of the world-state, by a resurgence of the suppressed instincts of variation and freedom.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

SRI AUROBINDO: A REMEMBRANCE

THE figure of Sri Aurobindo is one of the most attractive of all those that appear in the history of the Indian Renaissance; indeed he stands almost alone among his contemporaries not only as one of the most learned men of his time but also as a leading spokesman of the heroic age of Indian Nationalism. And the distinction of Mr. Manoj Das's book on Sri Aurobindo¹ lies in the fact that he has perceived that charismatic personality in different capacities — as a poet of patriotism, as a representative nationalist, as a poet of love and dawn, as an interpreter of India's past, as a prophet of the life divine and as a commander of the future poetry. Here is a carefully assembled pen-portrait which conveys more than a knowledge of the main events of Sri Aurobindo's life; it broadens our understanding of Sri Aurobindo's contribution to the history of our times.

While reviewing the earlier phase of Sri Aurobindo's career (St. Paul's School, London, and King's College, Cambridge) Mr. Manoj Das rightly emphasizes his youthful interest in poetry. In fact his 'Songs to Myrtilla' have a quaint charm even today. Incidentally Mr. Manoj Das makes a point which reveals his insight into this particular era. Commenting on Sri Aurobindo's voyage to India in 1893, he observes: "Two significant voyages took place in the year 1893. One was from India — into the West. The other was from the West — into India. Swami Vivekananda was going out to make the Western world hearken to the message of India, the message of Spirit; Sri Aurobindo was returning from the West to India, to surprise her from her stupor." Here it is only to the purpose to note that it was as a professor of English at the Maharaja's College, Baroda, that Sri Aurobindo turned from Western thought to pursue his encyclopaedic investigations into the nature of Indian philosophy, Sanskrit literature, Bengali literature and the state of politics around him.

The story of Sri Aurobindo's increasing fame as a political revolutionary, of his active participation in the Indian National Movement as the Editor of 'Bande Mataram' as well as the principal of Calcutta National College, of his opposition of Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal in 1905, of his involvement in the Alipore Conspiracy Case and of the interpretation of the nation as 'Shakti' is a part of the history of modern India. Indeed, C. R. Das, celebrated as Deshabandhu Chittaranjan, not only successfully defended Sri Aurobindo during the Alipore trial, but also made the following prophetic observation at the conclusion of his arguments: "Long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after the turmoil, the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed, not only in India, but across distant seas and lands."

¹ SRI AUROBINDO by Manoj Das, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 1972, Rs. 2.50.

Mr. Manoj Das is right in stressing that Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the nation as 'Shakti' is a key to his philosophy: "While in 'Bhawani Mandir' Sri Aurobindo narrates the conditions which the people must fulfil so that the Mother can manifest in the country, and in 'Vidula' he makes a mother — whose voice can be taken as the symbolic voice of the brave and ideal motherhood — speak out what she expects of her children, in 'Durga Stotra', Hymn to Durga, he gives the 'mantra' by which the children can invoke the Mother's Grace. Vibrant with the spirit of aspiration, the hymn shows the sure path to the Mother's protection, for this is a song of total surrender too: "Mother Durga! Rider on the lion, trident in hand, thy body of beauty armour-clad, Mother, giver of victory, India awaits thee, eager to see the gracious form of thine. Listen, O Mother, descend upon earth, make thyself manifest in this land of India."

For an example of Sri Aurobindo's heroic poetry, take the following lines from his 'Vidula' — a theme from the Mahabharata in which Vidula exhorts her son Sunjoy to prefer death on the battlefield rather than play for safety. Indeed Mr. Manoj Das describes this poem as "the call of Mother India to her Sunjoy-like children."

"Shrink not from a noble action, stoop not to unworthy deed!
Vile are they who stoop, they gain not Heaven's doors, nor here succeed...
When the men of Sindhu are not, blotted by thy hands from life,
When thou winnest difficult victory from the clutch of fearful strife,
I shall know thou art my offspring and shall love my son indeed."

A variation of this theme is reflected in Sri Aurobindo's 'Bhawani Mandir': "What is a nation? What is our mother country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty shakti.... Come then, hearken to the call of the Mother. She is already in our hearts waiting to manifest Herself, waiting to be worshipped, — inactive because the God in us is concealed in inactive tamas, troubled by Her inactivity, sorrowful because Her children will not call on Her to help them.... Draw not back, for against those who were called and heard Her not she may well be wroth in the day of Her coming; but to those who help Her advent even a little, how radiant with beauty and kindness will be the face of their Mother."

Again, the legend of Savitri took Sri Aurobindo back to the Vedas, where it was a prayer to the truth-principle sustaining the universe. In the Mahabharata, it was a symbol of the victory of love over death. Sri Aurobindo imparts to the legend a contemporary relevance by projecting it as a symbol of the conquest of darkness by light, of ignorance by knowledge. Here Savitri symbolizes the birth of new knowledge in man. With this new knowledge, she conquers death and saves Satyavan, the symbol of the evolving soul-truth. Incidentally, Sri Aurobindo's conception of Agni as the spiritual fire in matter helps us to understand the nature of his Yoga:

"I cherish God the Fire, not God the Dream!"

exclaims Savitri, and all her life is

“A fire to call eternity into Time,
Make body’s joy as vivid as the soul’s.”

It is worth mentioning here that Mr. Manoj Das has done considerable, painstaking and accurate research (in the wake of his recent sojourn in the United Kingdom) on Sri Aurobindo’s contribution to the heroic age of Indian politics (1905-10). In fact what Mr. Manoj Das has woven for us in his *Sri Aurobindo in the First Decade of the Century*¹ is a magnificent fabric of primary source materials such as contemporary assessments by men like Ratcliffe, Nevinson and Upadhyaya, extracts from the memorable speech delivered by C. R. Das in defending Sri Aurobindo as well as Beachcroft’s judgment, the Minto-Morley correspondence on “the most dangerous man we have to reckon with” and an account of the historic, the only occasion — April 28, 1910 — when an Indian figured in a House of Commons debate, the debate on Sri Aurobindo in which Ramsay MacDonald and Keir Hardie participated.

It is well to remember that even after his withdrawal from active politics, he did not completely cut himself off from the freedom movement. For instance, he declares himself publicly on the side of the Allies in 1940 during the Second World War. Again, he advised the acceptance of the Cripps proposals in 1942. It is also worth mentioning that Sri Aurobindo warned the Indian nation about the nature of China as an expansionist power as early as 1950. Whether we agree or disagree with Sri Aurobindo, the point worth stressing is that Sri Aurobindo was aware of these momentous issues even while he was absorbed in his retreat at Pondicherry.

Switching to Sri Aurobindo’s contribution to the interpretation of Indian culture in its wider perspectives, one must gratefully cherish works such as *Essays on the Gita*, *On the Veda*, and *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. These works have been perceptively discussed in Mr. Manoj Das’s chapter entitled ‘Revelation of India’s past’. Equally perceptive is his chapter on ‘Poetry and Aesthetics of the Future’. For it is a sensitive assessment of what Mr. Manoj Das has appropriately described as “a singularity in Sri Aurobindo’s vision of poetry and his ideas of aesthetics”. “Sri Aurobindo,” says Mr. Manoj Das, “views man as an evolving being with the possibility — or rather the assurance — of hitherto unrealized capacities opening up in him.”

“Savitri,” wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1936, “has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry can be written from one’s yogic consciousness and how that could be made creative.” This is an observation that is important in defining both the nature of his poetry and its characteristic significance. For his *Savitri* illumines a movement from the parti-

¹ SRI AUROBINDO IN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE CENTURY By Manoj Das, Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

cular to the universal, from the personal to the eternal. Actually Aswapathy travels through the occult worlds, which are actually levels of consciousness, until he is blessed with the Beatific Vision, and Savitri is born. Indeed this process of evolution has been immortalized in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* as "...the adventure of consciousness and joy".

Mr. Manoj Das is to be congratulated on this work. The value of this book is enhanced by the tastefully chosen appendix which includes Sri Aurobindo's poems 'The Godhead' and 'The Stone Goddess', the historic message on August 15, 1947, and the memorable piece 'The Hour of God'.

A. RANGANATHAN

(The Indian Libertarian, Bombay, December 15, 1972)

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 February 21, 1972)

5 (Contd.)

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

(e)

THE Universal or Cosmic Christ stands at the hub of the Teilhardian revolution of the Christian religion. It will pay us to look at him a little more intimately with the assistance of some writings other than *Pantheism and Christianity*.

In a preceding chapter we came to grips with Teilhard's view of Creation. By the action of "creative union" God organises into ever higher levels of "complexity-consciousness" the pure Multiple which constitutes the shadow-antipodes of His Supreme Unity. The pure Multiple is what Teilhard means by the "nothingness" from which Christian orthodoxy makes God create the world. Teilhard distinguishes his nothingness as "physical" or "creatable", a "positive non-being", from the sheer undefined *nil* of orthodoxy, the concept of which he stigmatises as "a pseudo-idea". God Himself, the Sole Being, under the aspect of an infinitely divided cosmic stuff is here for all intelligible purposes. We may now add that the power exercising creative union in this stuff is God as Christ, a divine-human Super-Person, one whose humanity no less than divinity is a mystical fact of all eternity, St. Paul's Christ who is "theandric" (God-Man) even before the historical incarnation we know as Jesus. This Super-Person at the same time exceeds the cosmic process, includes it in himself and is included in it as the animating force, the evolutive energy. A world in evolution, a universe in the making, a cosmos moving towards greater unifications, is quite different from the full-blown creation which traditional Christianity, prior to the advent of the modern scientific age, postulated. Teilhard's vision is not of a cosmos as such but of a cosmogenesis, and to his mind the universal movement converges towards a future of completely unified mankind, a final totalisation or universalisation of consciousness which he labels "Omega Point". Cosmogenesis requires a creative Christ functioning differently from the traditional Son of God empowered to create the world. Claude Cuénot¹ well phrases the change that comes over God's face with cosmo-

¹ *Science and Faith in Teilhard de Chardin*, translated by Noel Lindsay (Garnstone Press, London, 1967), pp. 88-9.

genesis replacing cosmos:

"The God of cosmos is the worker who acts efficaciously, whose deeds are extrinsic, so that the effects are produced outside himself and have nothing of their author but a distant imprint. On the other hand, if we look for the conditions of a God of convergent cosmogenesis, we find that the creator is bound to act as an internal animating principle, by a force of animation. He acts not so much as a workman, but as a force of evolution. A ready-made world (static or cyclical) *ipso facto* detaches itself from its creator. A world in the making, that is to say in the process of unification, on the contrary is no more able than an unborn child to detach itself from its creator, from the evolutionary and unifying principle which is giving it birth.

"Thus, God must, in a certain fashion, enter into cosmogenesis. He will thus find himself partly immersed, incorporated in a system in the process of evolution and therefore suffering, since there is no evolution without suffering. The God of cosmogenesis therefore has an element of the incarnate and of the redeemer, and therefore of the fellow sufferer. Cosmogenesis seems to incline us towards a God who fairly closely resembles the Christian God, since the centre of convergence must be 'within' and cosmogenesis invites us to Christify the God appropriate to it. It therefore seems to call upon the Christian God. But by a return shock, it will act upon our religious representations in such a way that the Christian God is bound to be enormously enlarged, and Christ constrained to be formidably extended since he can only supernaturalize the world by completing it. To complete it in him, he must first complete it in itself since Christ is, at the same time, the principle of supernaturalization, and the ultra-humanizing principle of evolution. In short, cosmogenesis compels us to Christify the rational God and cosmify the traditional Christ."

Cuénot¹ also remarks: "In cosmos, in a static vision of the universe the element behaves like a small piece in a mosaic, where juxtaposition reigns. The idea of a creation exclusively *ex nihilo*, however obscure it may be, is in harmony with this vision in cosmos. On the other hand in a vision in cosmogenesis we see a world which is groping, which is striving to unite, to arrive at constantly higher syntheses from the megamolecule to man, from man to planetized mankind. Now, union, like the dough which cannot rise without ferment, requires a binding force, an internal factor of unification."

From Cuénot's exposition along Teilhardian lines we can see that the change in God's face may be summed up, briefly, in Cuénot's own words:² "God is Christifying himself and becoming more immanent." But the increase in immanence, coinciding with God's Christification, cannot be equated merely to the cosmogenetic revision Cuénot³ approvingly quotes from Pastor Georges Créspey⁴ "Things are no

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *De la Science à la Théologie: Essai sur Teilhard de Chardin* (Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1965), p. 22.

longer at all the same if the world is in movement...God, in this perspective, can no longer be regarded as the necessary Being, the external cause of reality, and we must make up our minds to look upon Him as the *direction* of reality, *in proportion as reality deploys itself*. If the world is movement, then God is history, or at least God can be no longer thought of as immobile, eternally frozen in his Being, but must be regarded as linked in some manner with the movement of the world." Just to have a link with the world in some manner does not adequately characterise the more immanent God of cosmogenesis. The true traits are indicated in Cuénot's expressions: "partly immersed, incorporated in a system in the process of evolution, ... has an element of the incarnate and of the redeemer...." The central term is "incarnate". Teilhard¹ regards the acknowledged and traditional Incarnation that is Jesus Christ, the crucified God-Man, as "the visible aspect" of "Creation" itself. He² says: "The first act of the Incarnation, the first appearance of the Cross, is marked by the plunging of the divine unity into the ultimate depths of the Multiple.... The Redeemer could penetrate the stuff of the cosmos, could pour himself into the life-blood of the universe, only by first dissolving himself in matter, later to be reborn from it." Teilhard³ continues: "The endless aeons that preceded the first Christmas are not empty of Christ, but impregnated by his potent influx. It is the ferment of his conception that sets the cosmic masses in motion and controls the first currents of the biosphere. It is the preparation for his birth that accelerates the progress of instinct and the full development of thought on earth. We should not, in our stupidity, be horrified because the Messiah has made us wait so interminably for his coming. It called for all the fearsome, anonymous toil of primitive man, for the long drawn-out beauty of Egypt, for Israel's anxious expectation, the slowly distilled fragrance of eastern mysticism, and the endlessly refined wisdom of the Greeks — it called for all these before the flower could bloom on the stock of Jesse and mankind. All these preparations were cosmically, biologically, necessary if Christ was to gain a footing on the human scene. And all this work was set in motion by the active and creative awakening of his soul, in as much as that human soul of his was chosen to animate the universe. When Christ appeared in the arms of Mary, what he had just done was to raise up the world." No wonder Teilhard frames the unforgettable formula:⁴ "the Redeeming Incarnation" was "a prodigious biological operation".

Keeping this in mind we should guard also against the suggestion that the Teilhardian Christ is only a modernised version of the Christ whom Duns Scotus, as opposed to Thomas Aquinas, pictured to mediaeval theology. Aquinas held that Christ would not have taken birth if Adam had not sinned and all mankind had not thereby been tainted and corrupted. Thus the historical Incarnation was not an integral part of God's original world-plan. Scotus said that Christ would have been

¹ *Science and Christ*, (Collins, London, 1968), p. 64.

² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴ *The Phenomenon of Man* (Collins, London, 1960), p. 293.

born in any case: the Incarnation had been intended as the master event of history, an integral element in creation. Christ's role as a saviour from sin was an additional one due to the circumstance of Adam's fall: his essential role was to be the crowning-piece of the world-order. "Thus this interpretation," the Jesuit theologian N. M. Wildiers¹ tells us, "ascribes to Christ a central function in the cosmos — a function, that is, not to be understood in purely moral or juridical terms. In its very existence the world is centered on Christ — and not *vice versa*, as the first interpretation avers. In the beginning it was oriented upon him, so that we are indeed right to say that he is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega of all things. Christ's place in the cosmos is an organic function: that is, the world is centred on Christ in respect of its intrinsic structure, in its actual mode of being, so that — to use St. Paul's expression — he 'is in all things pre-eminent'." Wildiers's description makes out the Christ of Scotus to be completely Teilhardian, except that Teilhard has to indicate the place of Christ not in such a world as "forms the background to mediaeval theology" but "in a creation with an evolving convergent character".²

Wildiers³ informs us that the Scotist interpretation no less than the Thomist has a right to exist in Catholic theology and is entirely consistent with the fundamental tenets of Christianity. Hence, if all that Teilhard did was to give Scotism the background of an evolutionary world-picture, he can be deemed perfectly orthodox in the basic sense. By calling the Scotist Christ "organic" to the world Wildiers has orthodoxised the question he⁴ imagines Teilhard as asking himself: "Is there any link between the God-man and this evolving world; and if there is, is it to be construed as a merely external juridical connection, or ought we to think of it rather as a close, organic relatedness?"

The fallacy in Wildiers's presentation can easily be exposed. Scotism, like Thomism, pivots wholly on the issue of Adam's Fall. Is that Fall fundamentally responsible for Christ's appearance? Scotism's "No" has nothing to do with whether the universe is static or evolutionary. Evolution, for Scotism, would be purely a view about the way universal history is constituted, it would not affect the way Christ appeared. And indeed Scotism is concerned only with the original plan of the universe, not with the mechanics and dynamics of the actual world-existence. In an evolutionary world the Scotist Christ, organically connected with the world-plan and bound to appear in the course of history irrespective of a possible event like Adam's Fall, would still not himself be evolutionary at all. He would incarnate himself simply when he judged that humanity was ripe for his birth — just as much from outside as the Thomist Christ. The fact of evolution would not *per se* render his birth a prodigious operation of biological forces, an incarnation from inside even

¹ *An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin*, translated by Hubert Hoskins (Collins, Fontana Books, London, 1968), p. 132.

² *Ibid.*, 133.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

though the Being incarnated may have his own transcendent aspect as well. God would no more than intend to insert him into the evolving world at one sole historical point: Christ would not be inserted from the beginning into evolution so that when he emerged from it at a single point as a human-divine figure he was merely the visible sign of what all creation according to Teilhard is — namely, a secret universal act of Divine Incarnation. There it is that the essence of the Teilhardian Christ lies. To have “a close, organic relatedness” to a world in evolution is for the Teilhardian Christ to be himself evolutionary: his historical advent has the whole past process of the universe as a history of his own hidden universal incarnation from the beginning of creation. Do we have anything mediaeval modernised in this Christ? Wildiers has employed for the Scotist Christ the words “organic function” with no bearing in the least on the question Teilhard had to ask. There is a radical change of conception with regard to organicity. The Christ of Scotus has no relevance to that of Teilhard. To think otherwise is to adulterate the Universal or Cosmic Christ of Teilhardism.

We realise the adulteration more clearly on studying how Teilhard universalises his Christ. He¹ argues: “It is philosophically sound to ask of each element of the world whether its roots do not extend into the furthest limits of the past. We have much better reason to accord to Christ this mysterious pre-existence.” And in what form exactly shall we conceive the pre-existence of Christ? We may proceed from Teilhard’s vision of the historical Christ’s stance *vis-à-vis* the universe in which he appeared. As in the case of time, so in that of space. Teilhard speaks of each element of the world. Now he² concentrates on each human element: “*Each and everyone of us*, if we are to observe it, is enveloped — is *haloed* — by an extension of his being as vast as the universe. We are conscious of only the core of our selves. Nevertheless, the interplay of the monads would be unintelligible if an *aura* did not extend from one to another: something, that is, which is peculiar to each one of them and at the same time common to all.” What is true of each of us must be super-emminently true of the historical Jesus. We have to see “a magnification, a transformation, realised in the humanity of Christ, of the aura that surrounds every human monad.”³ But the magnification and transformation imply a master-role of the Christ-aura:

“Just as one sees in a living organism elements, originally indistinguishable from the others, suddenly emerge as *leaders* so that they are seen to be centres of attraction or points at which a formative activity is concentrated:

“So (on an incomparably larger scale) the man, the Son of Mary, was *chosen* so that his *aura*, instead of serving simply as the medium in which interaction with other men might be effected *ex aequo*, might dominate them and draw them all into the network of its influence.”

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

² *Writings in Time of War* (Collins, London, 1968), p. 253.

³ *Ibid.*

More vividly Teilhard¹ writes of the Christ-aura and its cosmic function: "Around the radiant sun of love that has risen to light up the world, there extends into infinity a 'corona' that is seldom seen and that is, nevertheless, the seat of the encompassing and unifying activity of the Incarnate Word." And, again, he says of "this universal physical element in Christ"².! "We must admit that there is in *natura Christi*, besides the specifically individual element of Man — and in virtue of God's choice — some *universal physical reality*, a certain cosmic extension of this Body and Soul."³ The word "Body" is important. And a more direct sense of the physicality, however subtle, of the Cosmic Christ comes to us with Teilhard's testimony before his Lord:⁴

"In a light that consistently grows brighter, you show me ever more clearly your Body — your personal sacramental Body — enveloped in a 'corona' of living dust, as vast as the world....

"I see your flesh extend throughout the entire universe, there to be mingled with it and so extract from it all the elements that can be made to serve your purpose."

This is the Cosmic Christ after the historical Incarnation took place and the Eucharistic ritual started, the ritual by which Christ physically enters into the bread consecrated by the priest and from that centre, which is the technical Host, spreads out to form "another, infinitely larger Host, which is nothing less than the universe itself — the universe gradually being absorbed by the universal element".⁵ But "the Incarnation is an act co-extensive with the duration of the world".⁶ "Even before the Incarnation became a fact the whole history of the universe (in virtue of a true notion of the humanity of Christ, mysterious but yet known to us through revelation) is the history of the progressive information of the universe by Christ."⁷ Hence from all past, from the very act of world-creation there is a Christ-incarnation in the universe. In the Body of Christ there are various stages and states. The historical Jesus is the individualised direct manifestation of this primordial incarnation. That is why Teilhard designates the latter "a prodigious biological operation" — a natural emergence of the supernatural and the superhuman which are also from the beginning a natural process one with evolution. Here we have the hypostatic union extended to the universe in a more diffused sense than the historical Incarnation. But the diffuseness does not diminish the reality of it. And here, as there, we have a Christ-self ruling the incarnative phenomenon. The individual body of Christ was ruled by a distinct Person: so too the universal body is ruled by a distinct Self. And what is the relation between the universal body and the universe? The universal body is the divine unity at work — the universe is the pure Multiple getting unified. Both are

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

⁵ *Science and Christ*, p. 65.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 64.

⁷ *Writings in Time of War*, pp. 253-254.

God — they are, respectively, his aspects of positive being and “positive non-being”. The slow leavening of the latter is the cosmogenesis that is simultaneously Christogenesis, the biological operation which comes to a head in the historical Jesus. At that stage the leavening becomes crucial. Christ’s historical existence is “a vast hand to hand struggle between the supreme unity and the Multiple it was engaged in unifying.”¹ But “the Resurrection is a tremendous cosmic event. It marks Christ’s effective assumption of his function as the universal centre. Until that time he is present in all things as a soul that is painfully gathering together its embryonic elements. Now he radiates over the universe as a consciousness and activity fully in control of themselves.”²

Yes, to Teilhard the life of the historical Jesus signifies a momentous turning-point in evolution. Still, as he says, Creation, Incarnation and Redemption are one continuous process. The Incarnation is, let us repeat, only the visible sign of what invisibly was the very identical fact as soon as Creation took place. And where we have incarnation in the true sense we must have the hypostatic union. But we saw in the last chapter how Teilhard³ himself recognises a universal hypostatic union to be Spinozism: that is to say, pantheism. The sole difference between Spinozist pantheism and the Teilhardian concept is: the Cosmic Christ is more than the soul of the universe, he has a transcendent reality too; but as the soul of the universe he certainly is Pantheos, and the universe is the gross form of his being. More precisely, the universe is his gross physicality, upon which his subtle physicality, his cosmic Christ-Body, has been at work from the start of creation.

The subtle body, constituting the Universal Christ, most active after the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus but basically active throughout the past history of the universe, is the Mystical Milieu, the Divine Milieu, which Teilhard has made famous — the milieu which cannot be equated with the old “omnipresence” or “immanence” of God but is something superadded to it, a new development of essential pantheism as well as a new development of essential Christianity. Teilhard claims that it is exclusively the latter. But when we pierce through his effort to assimilate pantheism into Christianity’s essence, we discover that he is equally assimilating Christianity into the essence of pantheism. Added to the term “positive non-being” for the *nihi* converted by God’s creative act into the universe, the term “incarnation” for God’s creative act itself leaves us with no alternative.

Teilhard’s Cosmic Christ, involving a universal incarnationism for all time along with an historical appearance of God in human flesh and blood to concentrate and render triumphant the gradual action of “divinising” the physical world — Teilhard’s fusion of Christianity with pantheism sends us back to ancient India’s vision of God and His way with the world emanating from Him. One difference, of course, is that India believed not in a single once-for-all Incarnation in mankind’s midst but in a

¹ *Science and Christ*, p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³ *Christianity and Evolution* (Collins, London, 1971), p. 69.

succession of Avatars down the ages. In every other respect Teilhardism is more the many-sided Vedanta than the restricted Christianity within which Teilhard strove to express himself. Sri Aurobindo¹ has well characterised the former *vis-à-vis* the Christian attitude to God's incarnational activity:

"India has from ancient times held strongly a belief in the reality of the Avatar, the descent into form, the revelation of the Godhead in humanity. In the West this belief has never really stamped itself upon the mind because it has been presented through exoteric Christianity as a theological dogma without any roots in the reason and general consciousness and attitude towards life. But in India it has grown up and persisted as a logical outcome of the Vedantic view of life and taken firm root in the consciousness of the race. All existence is a manifestation of God because He is the only existence and nothing can be except as either a real figuring or else a figment of that one reality. Therefore every conscious being is in part or in some way a descent of the Infinite into the apparent finiteness of name and form. But it is a veiled manifestation and there is a gradation between the supreme being of the Divine and the consciousness shrouded partly or wholly by ignorance of self in the finite. The conscious embodied soul is the spark of the divine Fire and that soul in man opens out to self-knowledge as it develops out of ignorance of self into self-being. The Divine also, pouring itself into the forms of the cosmic existence, is revealed ordinarily in an efflorescence of its powers, in energies and magnitudes of its knowledge, love, joy, developed force of being, in degrees and faces of its divinity. But when the divine Consciousness and Power, taking upon itself the human form and the human mode of action, possesses it not only by powers and magnitudes, by degrees and outward faces of itself but out of its eternal self-knowledge, when the Unborn knows itself and acts in the frame of the mental being and the appearance of birth, that is the height of the conditioned manifestation; it is the full and conscious descent of the Godhead, it is the Avatar."

One Divine Reality — the universe its restricted self-manifestation — human beings its veiled expressions — the Incarnation proper the direct revealing figure of the general descent of the Transcendent into name and form that all cosmos is: here in the Vedantic philosophy of Incarnation which combines transcendentalism and pantheism we have the real visionary of the Cosmic Christ, the true Teilhard who was constantly coming up yet repeatedly pushed down by himself.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Essays on the Gita* (New York, 1950), pp. 12-13.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Some reflections inspired by the book of Richard Bach: Jonathan Livingston Seagull, a story, published by The Macmillan Company, New York, pp. 93 US 4.95

I HAVE been asked to review this book, and so I sit down with my pen, not knowing where to begin really, because reviews and such things I have always felt to be out of my capacity; they belong to another kind of mind and the whole process seems rather foreign. But I accept the task because this book fired me with such enthusiasm and force that after reading it I immediately rushed about talking of it to all the people I met, commenting on the extraordinary phenomena of its appearance, the manner in which it was conceived, the fact that it is a best seller, the message — oh, the wonderful message of light its author, Richard Bach, has transmitted to man. This is what this so-called review will speak of, a message contained in *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* that is the universal message, pushing itself out into manifestation, imposing itself on this society that sorely needs it and must now receive it.

I cannot comment in detail and with authority about the style and the purely literary value of the book. These matters belong to the world of form and when we touch the sphere of inspiration, of light, they move into the background — we become incapable of dwelling on them, and after reading such books we never once fall to thinking of the manner in which they are written, but are rather left with a unified understanding that carries us beyond the details of composition.

To have a clear picture, let us first view the 20th-century society into which Richard Bach's book was cast. It is not a happy task and I do not believe there is any reader who has not, for at least a period, been brought to wonder at the outcome of it all. Society is apparently at its lowest ebb: drugs, pornography, political chaos, on the one hand extreme poverty and on the other an overabundance are the order of the day; our children are being influenced and corrupted almost every moment of their lives, either within their homes by a dated and limiting conditioning, or in their schools by a stale and uninspiring education which only prepares them one degree further for the task of inserting themselves into the world at large, the so-called reality of existence, or, even if we do not take into consideration these two primordial facts in a child's life, we must remember that as he walks the streets of whatever country and city he lives in, he is picking up impressions — consciously or unconsciously — of a sick and degenerate society. He sees posters announcing films, for example, which not only warp his vision of love and its various manifestations, but also corrupt his aesthetic sense. At every corner he is faced with propaganda geared to entice and stimulate the lesser nature of man. He is made to idolise money, to see the power he can attain with it, the doors that are opened because of it, in any environ-

ment, from the most materialistic to oftentimes even the most spiritual. To this god he eventually sacrifices his most cherished aspirations; he makes compromises and later in life, in homage to this power, he sells his soul and suffocates the truth of his being.

On this food he grows up, except with rare exceptions. But we cannot here speak of the exceptions, though they exist, for the movement of the times is *universal*, it is a collective, mass movement, and as such we must view the whole condition of humanity, for it is the whole which is feeling the pressure of an imperative transformation.

To the pensive person the situation could appear hopeless. We cry out: "Where is the grace? Why does it not manifest? Is the destiny of the world to sink lower and lower until it is eventually swallowed up by these disintegrating forces, these seemingly all-powerful, invincible elements of destruction?"

But it is not all hopeless. The light is there, perhaps even stronger than ever — just because of the very strength of these degenerate elements. And sometimes we see a spark in the world, in the very heart of darkness, right in the middle of the raging battle.

One such spark is this little book, for it has appeared in the land which perhaps most needs it, a land where the highest possibilities both ways are present, where constantly the forces of destruction and salvation are facing each other — and because of its immense material power these possibilities face the whole world through this nation. America sets the pace for the world movement largely because of its dollar power. Yet this nation, which has so much of the material, now feels satiated by it and a tremendous spiritual awakening has begun. Not just this year or last but back as far as the end of the last century, perhaps the seeds were planted when Masters like Swami Vivekananda walked the land and spread the word of Truth. Thus today we find America undergoing a "spiritual" revolution. Its youth leads the way, and though the step is yet shaky, we find in its unsteady pace the indication that the world, as a whole and no longer in isolated groups, is ready, eager and waiting for the great transformation.

Richard Bach was an Air Force pilot, an average man with no doubt a modest literary talent and some ambition in that direction. To him a "voice" spoke one day, and amazingly enough he didn't run to a psychiatrist, a priest, rabbi or guru, his wife or friend. He listened, and what he listened to is the work under review, dictated to him from the first word to the last, a simple narration — of the order of *Le Petit Prince* by St. Exupéry — himself a pilot oddly enough — about a seagull. In brief, this is the story. Jonathan Livingston is dissatisfied, he is a born misfit, a rebel. He envisions a higher life for a seagull than that of merely living to fly to feed himself. He knows intuitively that there must be something more, something beyond this ordinary existence spent in satisfying his senses, and his striving to attain this state is what finally leads him to be labelled an "outcast" and banished from the society of seagulls in which he lives.

His quest for perfection is centred on flight; to him this is the means of reali-

sing his higher nature. By pushing himself always to further breakthroughs, by demanding of himself always a more and more perfect performance, he begins to fulfil this aspiration, and slowly a transformation takes place. After a particular breakthrough he is taken into a higher dimension by two perfected gulls come to fetch him, whose "wings were as pure as starlight, and the glow from them was gentle and friendly", and he is brought into relation with the Elder Gull Chiang, who leads him to the gates of Truth and realisation. This place he believes to be heaven. But one evening he expresses his doubts to the Master Chiang, whose advanced age has only served to add more power to his realisation and who "was soon to be moving beyond this world". He understands this isn't heaven and asks if there really is such a place, what is to happen and where are they going? Chiang answers:

"No, Jonathan, there is no such place. Heaven is not a place, and it is not a time. Heaven is being perfect.... You will begin to touch heaven, Jonathan, in the moment that you touch perfect speed. And that isn't flying a thousand miles an hour, or a million, or flying at the speed of light. Because any number is a limit, and perfection doesn't have limits. Perfect speed, my son, is being there."

He then proceeds to teach him the secrets he knows, the path to liberation from the confinements of form, of time, of space. "The truth was to know that his true nature lived, as perfect as an unwritten number, everywhere at once across space and time." And this cannot be understood on the basis of faith: it must be realised, experienced in every part of the nature. But the most important task of all — after he has broken through all the barriers of past and future — is to "know the meaning of kindness and love." And finally the time comes for the Elder Gull to go on to other realms and as he begins to vanish into an ever more brilliant light, so bright that others cannot look at him, his final words to Jonathan are, "Keep working on love."

It is this last quest that brings him back to Earth and among the very seagulls who banished him. There he slowly gathers the minority of gulls around him who are aspiring for the very transformation he has attained down to his very body of feathers and bones, and he is able to lead them toward it. Amid the opposition of the "elders" he works with his group and the day arrives when one of his pupils dashes himself against a cliff in his flight at a speed of over 200 miles per hour, precisely the kind of disaster the elders were waiting for. But the pupil is brought back to life and made to realise the immortality of his being. The crowd then proclaims Jonathan Livingston Seagull a god, but at his denial the cries turn into "Devil".

Jonathan continues teaching his pupil about love, the true love, when the latter questions him how he can still feel this for a mob who wanted to kill him. Jonathan replies:

"...You don't love that. You don't love hatred and evil, of course. You have to practice and see the real gull, the good in every one of them, and to help them see it in themselves. That's what I mean by love...." He urges his pupil to practice and practice in order to find his true essence, to unveil the Truth within himself, for it is there that he will discover reality and the perfection that is.

As he leaves him some of his last words are: "Don't let them spread silly rumours about me, or make me a god." Then his body of light shimmers, becomes transparent and disappears.

Does this message sound familiar? To those who are acquainted with the teachings of Sri Aurobindo, is this not the goal which he announces and which he urges humanity to strive for, a goal which is not in some far-removed heaven, or limited to a special caste and society, apart from the most material creation? He urges humanity to realise this goal Here and Now, on Earth, in matter. And the phenomena of the appearance of this book, especially the manner in which it came to Bach, dictated to him by a "voice", are proof that the universal forces *are* at work and pressing to manifest. Their powers are felt in all the four corners of the globe, and if one is even slightly receptive one can tune in to this plane and assist in the universal transformation. The strange advent of this book, by itself, apart from its profound message, teaches us something more: it teaches us the lesson of not viewing the spiritual Movement in a limited fashion, as being restricted to a place, a society, an individual. It is universal and there are our brothers and sisters, of all different races and colours, related because of our common heritage, all of us born of the same Source, who are assisting in the Movement — even in the midst of the most incongruous environments. To people like Richard Bach we must be grateful, for they are touched by the same light we are all aspiring to know, the light of our Universal Mother; they are on the battleground together with us, striving to establish this light in all its aspects in the Earth we inhabit, striving to realise this perfection that is, was and always will be, though we may be bewildered by its paradoxical manifestation, for

Perfection is not static. It is an eternal becoming, being at each moment what the Lord wills and therefore always what should be. It is the celestial harmony unfolding itself into eternity, and as such each moment is in itself a perfection.

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

FRANCIS THOMPSON'S IDEA OF LOVE AND BEAUTY

To a careful reader of Francis Thompson's poetry it would appear that the poet's Catholic faith plays a vital role in forming his thought about Nature, Poetry and God. His concept of love and beauty is also coloured by the same faith. Love pursued him like a 'hound of heaven' all through his life, but he had a strong aversion to the type of love which had inspired Don Juan of Seville. We propose, in these few pages, to study Thompson's idea of love and beauty.

In order to understand Thompson's attitude to love, we have to know his relationships with the women who happened to come into his life and awakened love in him. We read in Everard Meynell's authentic biography of Francis Thompson that the poet was in love with Katie King and Maggie Brien besides Alice Meynell, his permanent ladylove and the "unknown She". Even before them, he had met two other girls — the one, his sister's school friend, about whom he had written the poem *Dream Tryst*, when he was eleven years old. The other was — his "Ann" — the girl whom he celebrated later on in *Sister Songs I*. Thompson's weakness for his sister's school friend can be dismissed as a schoolboy's infatuation for a schoolgirl and his love for "Ann" was broken before it could be crystallised since she had vanished one day suddenly never to return. There was more of gratitude than pure love in his friendship with the girl of the street. Thompson's friendship with Katie King was, to a great extent, on equal terms. He wrote about her in the *Ad Amicam* Sonnets and some other poems arranged as *A Poetic Sequence* by Thompson himself which have been published now by Rev. T. L. Connolly in the volume, *The Man Has Wings*, and Thompson the lover could be seen through these verses. In the *Ad Amicam* sonnet sequence, and the other poems addressed to Katie, Thompson's attitude to love is that of a normal lover. He sees the advent of a new life in her friendship:

"Dear Dove, that bear'st to my sole-labouring ark
The olive-branch of so-long-wishèd rest,
When the white solace glimmers through my dark
Of nearing wings, what comfort in my breast!"
(*Ad Amicam I*)

But his dual personality is reflected in these poems — his longing for human love and company, and his inability to materialise his desire. This somewhat Petrarchan love story was interrupted by Katie's mother, Mrs. Hamilton King. Mrs. King wrote to Thompson:

"It is not in her nature to love you; but I see no reason why some other good woman should not; yet perhaps you are most fitted to live and die solitary, and in the love only of the highest Lover, whom you yourself in your supreme moments feel to have espoused you to himself."

Thompson's reply, which no longer exists, must have disclaimed in his usual fashion, the idea of any woman loving him. However, in his love affair with Katie, as Everard Meynell remarks, "only once had he known love really sufficient for love poetry." But Thompson's disappointment did not paralyse his power to endure such grief. Like Browning, he holds that endurance and sacrifice are the two guiding principles of love:

"I have endured, and I endure,
I know it is the bitter blast
Of sacrifice which sifts the pure
Pained peaks enstoles;¹
I have stood fast, and I stand fast."

(*The Solemn Voice*)

Thompson's attachment to Maggie Brien was also short-lived. It was an incident with a country girl during his days at Pantasaph. He narrates the episode in *A Narrow Vessel*, a group of poems which he subtitled "a little dramatic sequence on the aspect of primitive girl-nature towards a love beyond its capacities." In *A Narrow Vessel*, love is not seen through sentimental exaltation, but by psychological episode. Maggie was afraid of the incongruous relationship and hesitated to receive his love. She, therefore, did not allow the matter to develop:

"She was aweary of the hovering
Of Love's incessant and tumultuous wing;
Her lover's tokens she would answer not —
'Twere well she should be strange with him somewhat."

(*Beginning of End*)

Maggie, like Alice Meynell, is also a tyranness, but "the tender tyranness", and,

"She did not love to love, but hated him
For making her to love; and so her whim
From passion thought misprision to begin."

(*The End of It*)

¹ Editor's Note: Some words have evidently got omitted in connection with this line: the syntax is incomplete.

Thompson found in her love a child's instability because whatever she gave him was not meant to be kept for ever. She recoiled from him:

"You gave yourself as children give, that weep
And snatch back, with — 'I meant you not to keep!'"

(Penelope)

If Maggie had a child's apprehension Thompson knew very well that he was unable to impart sexual feelings of an adult to his love for her. In fact, it was not in Thompson's nature to be loved by a woman in the sense in which a woman loves a man. Maggie was loved *because* she could not return his love. Here the picture of Thompson the masochist comes before our eyes. Our view is confirmed by his own recorded confession: "...already I previsioned that with me it would be to love, not to be loved."

There is some truth in the letter of Mrs. Hamilton King cited previously in this article, that Thompson was "to live and die solitary, and in the love only of the highest Lover," since Thompson himself said in a commentary on the "Epilogue" to *A Narrow Vessel*, "...all human love was to me a symbol of divine love; nay, that human love was in my eyes a piteous failure unless as an image of the supreme Love which gave meaning and reality to its seeming insanity." Mrs. King was correct in her prevision that Thompson was destined to love the highest Lover — God only. Human love, as Thompson perceived it, is the kind "which alters when it alteration finds" but divine love is permanent. What is the use of running after the shadow leaving the substance behind? But it is not easy to embrace the highest Lover because that demands utter renunciation of the sensuous world and unconditional surrender to Him. Human nature recoils of such sacrifices, and the human soul is frightened to think that by loving God it would lose everything:

"(For, though I knew His love who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside)."

(The Hound of Heaven)

Thomson described this fear in *A Narrow Vessel* in which "the hesitant flirtation, the meetings, the kisses, and Maggie's frightened retreat became an image of the being's fear of the love of God" (Paul van K. Thomson).

Thompson, in his love poems, aimed at transforming human love into divine love, though the language he used was the language of earthly love. To our mind, Thompson is a supreme advocate of Christian love that does not destroy natural love, but elevates it; and of virginal love, that approaches nearer to the divine than any other human love because it is concerned with the spirit instead of the body:

"Lady who hold'st on me dominion!
 Within your spirit's arms I stay me fast
 Against the fell
 Immitigate ravening of the gates of hell."

("Manus Animum Pinxit")

His love for Alice Meynell, Thompson instinctively knew, was a spiritual emotion which must not be questioned or analysed, but held always as a flower.¹ Thompson's conception of love springs directly from and is integrated to his faith, his belief in God and in the soul. The body of the beloved is the temple in which the divine spirit dwells. So Thompson looks upon Alice Meynell as a divine being,

"Whose spirit sure is lineal to that
 Which sang *Magnificat*."

("Manus Animum Pinxit")

Thompson assures Mrs. Meynell that his love is purely spiritual and immune from physical desire since such desire leads one to take possession of the thing desired. Possessiveness, in whatever form it appears, is the destructive element in human relationship. And finally, possession is rooted in fear, in a profound sense of insecurity. The God-centred life has no need to possess either goods or human beings. So Thompson is happy with the spiritual union — the union of soul to soul:

"This soul which on your soul is laid
 As maid's breast against breast of maid;
 Beholding how your own I have engraved
 On it, and with what purging thoughts have laved
 This love of mine from all mortality."

("Manus Animum Pinxit")

It is in the Divine plan to use the love of the flesh as a stepping stone to the love of the Divine: this it always happens in a well-regulated moral heart. As time goes on, the erotic love diminishes, and the spiritual love increases. Love passes from an affection for outer appearances, to those inner depths of personality which embody the Divine Spirit. But some fail to know God's love during life and mistake human love for divine love, as Thompson says:

"But some have eyes, and will not see;
 And some would see, and have not eyes;

¹ Thompson's relationship with Alice Meynell reminds us of those men and women who were "born of the Spirit". It is sufficient only to mention here Socrates and Diotima, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa, Thomas Traherne and Susanna Hopton, and John Donne and Mrs. Herbert,

And fail the tryst, yet find the Tree,
And take the lesson for the prize."

(*Grace of the Way*)

For Thompson, a lover's purely spiritual love for his beloved is just like a child's love for its mother. To him the relation between child and mother is an intuitive expression of the relation between the temporal and the eternal, and this is why he was able to express with such splendour the truths symbolised by the Christian theology. Thompson describes beautifully the eternal mother in the heart of a woman and the eternal child in the heart of a man in these lines:

"Ah, foolish pools and meads! You did not see
Essence of old, essential pure as she,
For this was even that Lady, and none other,
The man in me calls 'Love', the child calls 'Mother.' "

(*In Her Paths*)

Thompson's attitude to love has close kinship with the doctrine of the Trinity which can be apprehended spiritually: God the Father, the great Creative Power, from whom proceed all things, without whom nothing is, nor can be; God who is also Divine Love, itself the Creative Power; God the Son, infused with divinity, Divine Love incarnated in humanity; and the Holy Spirit, the essence of Love issuing from union of Two — proceeding from the Father and the Son. Hence Thompson's postulate in *From the Night of Forebeing*:

"Love, that is child of Beauty and of Awe."

In God, there is awe — inspiring beauty in His power of creation and of life; and love that sustains life is originated from the Supreme Beauty and Awe, which is God Himself. Here we have a synthesis of Thompson's idea of love. When there is a perfect balance between Beauty and Awe, the passion of love is the greatest of virtues, but when this perfect balance is destroyed, it degenerates into the most bestial of vices, lust, though we have fair and high-sounding names for it now. With the Aesthetes of the Eighteen-Nineties the danger lay in the over emphasis of what they called beauty. Today, the danger is in the destruction of Awe, respect for the person or thing loved.

Now let us turn to Thompson's idea of beauty. Thompson's attitude to beauty, unlike Keats's, is coloured by his deep religious faith, although his weakness for felicitous phrases used in the manner of Keats is evident in most of his poems. Thompson finds the divine beauty in and through all things beautiful, but particularly in the beauty of women. His attitude towards them is eloquently expressed in these lines:

"A perfect woman — Thine be laud!
Her body is a Temple of God,

At Doom-bar dare I make avows:
I have loved the beauty of Thy house."

(*Domus Tua*)

This same idea is sufficiently apparent in most of the poems in *Love in Dian's Lap* and some others. In Alice Meynell he sees the reflection of the consecrated beauty:

"Your beauty, Dian, dress and contemplate
Within a pool to Dian consecrate!"

(*"Manus Animum Pinxit"*)

It is quite plain from his poems that Nature, in her beauty and strength, her energy and peace, had religious value for Thompson, but in his prose he takes great pains to state his "faith" on the subject of beauty from a different point of view. In his essay, *Paganism Old and New*, Thompson maintains that "Pagan Paganism was not poetical", because "Christianity had not yet come to give it a spiritual touch." Thompson, discussing the thought that the lack of a real appreciation of beauty is due to an absence of spiritual insight, says in the same essay:

"For it is a noteworthy fact that the intellect of man seems unable to seize the divine beauty of Nature, until moving beyond that outward beauty it gazes on the spirit of Nature; even as the mind seems unable to appreciate the beautiful face of woman until it has learned to appreciate the more beautiful beauty of her soul."

Thompson further develops the principle of Spirit in another essay, *Form and Formalism*, where he states that the object of form is to incarnate truth, and that only by this medium can the Spirit which otherwise "walks invisible among men", find "effigy and witness." But it should be borne in mind that for Thompson, spiritual beauty could have no meaning apart from its natural expression, and the sense of natural beauty depended for its permanence on its inner experience. It was an apparent dualism in him which left the impression, especially in some of his poems, of an ascetic revelling in sensualism, or of a sensualist exploiting the rigidities of mysticism. Thompson was quite aware of this dualism, rather paradox, in himself and faced seriously an inner conflict over the question of whether or not a life spent in the service of the sensory joys of the arts was likely to destroy one's chances of ultimate salvation. What would be the fate of a poet who loved Beauty so intensely and passionately? This doubt peeps through the poem *To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster*:

"Can it be his alone,
To find when all is known
That what
He solely sought

'Is lost, and thereto lost
 All that its seeking cost?
 That he
 Must finally,

'Through sacrificial tears,
 And anchoretic years,
 Tryst
 With the sensualist?' "

These lines reflect a mood of suspicion. But while wandering on the South Downs, one idea crystallised in his mind which was the cardinal point of his essay on Shelley. To worship beauty is not to worship evil but good, and "it is only evil when divorced from the worship of the Primal Beauty," Thompson writes in his *Shelley* essay. To Thompson, beauty is a spiritual substance, and in his writings it is pictured as a universal human need. In tangible beauty he saw the intangible beauty reflected. In *Sister Songs* Thompson says that in Monica he finds the tangible proof of the reality of that Beauty which all his life he has been seeking. It was not merely the visible beauty either of human being or nature he was concerned with, but an invisible, intangible, inapprehensible beauty. He found in the little Monica the concrete symbol of his abstract ideal of Beauty.

Thompson, like St. Francis of Assisi, "discerned through the lamp Beauty the Light God," as he says in his essay on Shelley. This principle of beauty illumines his vision of external Nature as well, for he writes in his essay *Nature's Immortality*:

"Within the Spirit Who is Heaven lies Earth; for within Him rests the great conception of Creation. There are the woods, the streams, the meads, the hills, the seas that we have known in life, but breathing indeed 'an ampler ether, a diviner air', themselves beautiful with a beauty which, for even the highest created spirit, utterly to apprehend were 'swooning destruction'."

Thompson is not content with physical beauty, because it is subject to destruction. He writes further with conviction in the same essay, "... beauty — such is my truth — is beauty for eternity." The direction of his thought ultimately culminates in the belief that through the beauty of external Nature man may climb to God:

"Bright juts for foothold to the climbing sight
 Which else must slip from the steep infinite."

(To Stars)

Thompson's principle of beauty is but another side of his principle of truth

which he acquired late in life, but never deserted thereafter. To Thompson, love, beauty, truth and goodness are all one, different aspects of the same mystery whose key is God. His attitude to love is based on the principle that human love is an emblem of, and preparation for, the union of the soul with God; and his conception of beauty finds inspiration in his faith that earthly beauty is but the reflection of heavenly beauty.

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SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1973)

CHAPTER IV

FINALLY the last traces of Diomed's presence vanished and the silence deepened to a sense of chill. Instinctively the child turned and huddled against Silent Daughter's shoulder, while she pressed him close and stood so utterly still that not the slightest movement animated her being. All around them the feeling of menace augmented — the mist turned to the grey of a rumbling storm, and a strange wind arose emitting the wails of spirits driven mad by loneliness and despair — the cries of a silence made unbearable by an endless night.

Yet Silent Daughter, wiser now with her experience, and burning with her own immortality, felt no tremor of fear. Instead, imbued with the warriors' courage she had just seen displayed before her, her body glowed in the midst of the increasing darkness and her eyes poured forth a divine defiance and scorn. Even the child gained strength from her and, turning back from her shoulder, glowered undaunted into the gloom.

Then all at once the lightless space before them congealed into a well-known giant form whose cloak spread deep into the surrounding night, and the earnest perilous voice of Death broke through the crying of the wind.

"Splendid you are in your anger, my queen, and marvellous the performance of heroes you have staged for my pleasure, in which I too was called to play my inevitable part — for see once more how we are linked, you and I, Beloved — and how your child has belonged to me since the earliest times.

"I come now to melt your wrath and teach you of my love. Come — come to me: the voices of the wind are the lamentations of my heart in your absence. Now I approach to take you, for I have wept for you alone too long to be able to bear our separation any longer."

With sinister dignity the being of darkness began to step forward, but scarcely had he started to move when a streak of white lightning flashed through the sombre air and a luminous figure stood before him blocking his advance. It was Unicorn, the faithful and ever-vigilant one, with the spear of its horn that no weapon could thrust aside, aimed at the Dark One's heart. Its shining coat, still bearing the gloss of a heavenly sun, made mockery of the surrounding night, while the play of its tail and mane in the wind taunted the aching sorrow of the phantom voices. Slowly the form of Death drew back for the magic horn pressed close upon him, and he felt its piercing light redoubling the sorrow in the writhing, desolate heart of his being

"No, Beloved, no!" he cried. "Do you know what cruelty you visit upon me by driving me from your side with these vicious stabs of pain? And through the agency of this beast who has no heart as I have, nor whose eyes know sorrow and tears as mine do, but who comes only to mock and deride my agony? No, my love — stretch out your hand to me ..."

But how faint his voice had now become, how small and helpless, for Unicorn had driven him further and further away till he was now no more than a black dot fast receding into the dim reaches of space below. All around in Unicorn's wake the light flooded back, the wind vanished like a howling dog pack that has missed its prey, and Silent Daughter with her child quietly awaited their rescuer's return. Then at last they saw it coming back, mincing through the air on its neat cloven hooves of silvery white, its horn held high like the lance of a victorious knight. Upon reaching Silent Daughter, it nickered softly and she leaned forward and kissed it on its snowy forehead.

"Breath of Immortal Purity," she whispered, "send always a shadow of yourself before us that we may never forget you. But for yourself, take your rest and pleasure now in some divine pasture of light after your labour and take a gift from me as well, one that you may share with your flaxen mistress. Here!" She swung her free arm in an arc over Unicorn's shoulder and instantly a long trailing mantle appeared, falling over Unicorn's back and hind quarters, no ordinary cloak of cloth but one woven of a myriad tiny flowers of every brilliant hue imaginable, each singing of its own particular joy and brightness in the streaming light of Unicorn's presence. Flowers! How it delighted in them — its dreams were visions of floating blooms, and forests riotous with orchids and rhododendrons, nasturtiums and wild roses. Could any gift thrill it more than that of a flower? Perhaps only the ecstasy of receiving a thousand flowers at once knitted into a living fabric such as this. In a transport of joy, Unicorn placed its head across Silent Daughter's shoulder, while a soft warm tear fell from its eye onto her neck. Then with one bound it leapt away but looking back all the time, not only to bid farewell to Silent Daughter but to admire her ravishing gift that billowed and floated behind it as it flew.

With tranquillity restored about her, Silent Daughter decided to act quickly for she knew that immobility invited risk. Putting the child down in front of her and kneeling before him, she took her first close look at the boy since he had lain inert as a tiny infant below Méllisande's restoring tree of life. She found before her, now that his stage of infancy had passed, a child of an immense and profound solemnity, who stood on his own feet and gazed at his mother with such an air of total trust and deep-pained wonder that she took his head between her hands as she began to speak:

"My darling, is it not always a shock to awaken to life and find that it bites so deep into the flesh? How vivid the sting of earthly existence after the cloudy softness of sleep; how sharp the sense of living and knowing upon one's waking physical consciousness; how thunderous the presence of the gods and the clamour of circumstance they bring to being as they go about their earthly work and leave one to watch or participate, helpless and astonished."

With a rush of recognition at her words tears started in the little one's eyes. He flung his arms about her neck and buried his face in her hair. Holding him tightly against her as she kneeled, she spoke on.

"But no, my dearest, this is not all. We will see more, and this time, we will see it together, so that you will have no fear, and feel no regret. We will bring forth only that which will fill you with the sun's rays and make you thrive and grow as a sunflower towards a brilliant azure sky. Come and let me show you without any further delay. Where we are about to go, the world shall still be young and bright from the Creator's hand, and the taint of man upon it shall still be almost as insignificant as that of any ant-hill that washes away with the first rain. All this you have once lived but shall relive in the way that it should have been, and to the soul's eyes really was, except that the external human consciousness may not have felt it so."

Silent Daughter stood up and took the little boy's hand. "Remember," was the single mantric word she whispered for the magic to be done.

The Golden Child suddenly found himself walking along a dusty road. It was as though he had awakened abruptly out of a dream — albeit one he could vividly remember — and discovered himself in the midst of some old and long familiar life. It was true that his age could not have been more than six, yet all he saw around him it seemed he had known since a time he could not measure. Beside him walked his mother in her dark shawl, still he knew that she was in reality the Silent One of the dream out of which he had just awakened. Not that her features particularly resembled Silent Daughter's — somehow everything always seemed to become so fixed in physical life, while in the other worlds nothing was ever so. But within her, she bore all of Silent Daughter's presence in so unmistakable a way, that the Golden Child knew for certain he had walked with her and himself intact from what appeared to him, in his present human frame of mind, to have been a dream. Then she spoke and he knew further that the life and situation into which they had dropped was no ordinary awakening from any ordinary sleep.

"I am sure you remember all this well, Aureus, my love. It was one of your truly happy times, when you grew with the earth without wanting or knowing how to separate your own human identity from it." Upon reflection he realised that she only seemed to say the words, for her lips had not moved, and he heard her voice only in his heart, for she had spoken to him from within. He looked up at her and beamed.

To the right of the rocky path along which they were walking, the Adriatic Sea unrolled its vista of royal blue, while from above, the sun cast down its ineffable early morning rays of summer warmth. The craggy countryside with its tufts of sparse, hardy grass and rocks bleached golden-white by aeons of undimmed sunshine, sang of its ancient contentment disturbed by none save nibbling goats and barefooted herding boys. The Roman legions and government officials that were seen about the provincial town of Ligerium towards which Silent Daughter, or Amalthea as she was known in this human existence, and her child Aureus were making their way, were unknown to this byway which only peasants used while taking their wares to the mar-

ket. Even now Amalthea bore a basket full of vegetables, eggs and fruit, which she carried as effortlessly as though it had no more weight than a bag full of husks. Soon, upon a turn in the road, they came on a full view of the town nestling around a turquoise bay as sparkingly beautiful as a deep tinted jewel. Three triremes with square sails unfurled seemed about to leave the docks to which they were moored at the water's edge, while behind, the buildings and columned temples washed as gold as the rocks by the tireless sun, appeared to rise from the ground like a tranquil prayer to the divinity of life and a quiet prosperity.

Slowly Amalthea and her son made their way down the remaining incline to Ligerium. As they entered the busy, narrow streets, familiar faces greeted them, yet the words seemed to be spoken as though in pantomime for neither mother nor child registered the sounds with their true consciousness. Only some mechanical portion of their minds engaged in the task of normal human exchange while they themselves — or the part of them that knew themselves to be Silent Daughter and her golden child — saw and spoke of other things in their own inaudible tongue.

"My child, let us walk slowly," Silent Daughter was saying. "Look how thirsty the sun is for your soul and its pure tender droplets of dewy life. For that is how it is when you are young. Your life hangs upon you as dew on the grass before the day has dawned and the light thirsts to illumine you with its touch."

"But the sun is strong and the dew is just little drops of water, Mother."

"And so you are afraid? My darling, that is why I have come with you, to shelter you and to see that the sun, the earth's great and powerful lord, does not destroy you with the passion of his love but performs his transforming miracle of growth while I stand above you like a leafy tree, to guard you when he burns too brightly."

"Why does he not burn you also?"

"Because I have seen and known him too long. Too long has he blazed over the deserts of my soul. Too familiar have we become, till at last something within me has absorbed his substance to such an extent that now I am able to walk with him and know him as a brother. So fear nothing, dearest one — I will see that he shall be as gentle with you as an adoring parent."

They had just reached the centre of the market place. The square thronged with peasant women who looked much as Amalthea did with her basket. They welcomed her as one of themselves and chuckled jovial greetings to her as she went to sit with her produce at her usual place. Nearby, her neighbour's brace of donkeys stood with heads drooping as they dozed in the sunlight after the long, burdened journey from their farm. Between the outspread displays of vegetables, the townsfolk milled and bargained goodnaturedly. Amalthea had her regular customers who came and bought what she had to offer with a minimum of haggling for they had come to know and trust her over the seasons. She grew little on her tiny acreage, but what she persuaded her rocky soil to yield bore a taste her regular buyers found unmatched in the more abundant wares of the larger landholders. Even her hens laid eggs with a peculiar sweetness of taste — or so one might call it for want of a better word — that brought a

curious and tranquil satisfaction to those that ate them. Not that her customers would have described the effect as such, but there were certainly some that went far enough to say that Amalthea watered her plants and fed her chickens on a sorceress's charms that her produce should taste so good and so indescribably different from everyone else's.

Occasionally some well-meaning householders would even ask the quiet, pleasant peasant woman with the little boy why with the good money she made, she did not seek to increase her holdings, seeing that all she brought to sell was so much in demand, or why at the very least she did not remarry and alleviate her widow's loneliness.

To such questions Amalthea would answer along the following lines: "Kind sir, I am not on this earth for long. Are we not just sightseers and passing travellers here, after all? Let me enjoy my journey then — one basket of eggs and fruits and vegetables is all I can carry in a day, and a few hectares of land is all I and my few helpers can till while the sun is high. As for my widow's solitude, is this little one not enough to banish it?"

Her questioners would chuckle at her words and then pass on, one thinking, "she's a funny one, all right," another reflecting, "a real peasant with no interest in progress and civilisation," and a third casually remarking to himself, "well, perhaps she's right — how short the journey from birth to the grave, yet how great the mountain of possessions and circumstances we somehow manage to collect along the way, ...if only the rest of us could restrict ourselves throughout life to a daily burden of one basket of vegetables and one contented child —"

But despite their various reactions, all the people that came into contact with Amalthea liked her, and those of a less excitable temperament liked her the best, because being humblest of the humble though she was, she had the manners of a princess and no strident or raucous tone needed to be raised in her presence. It seemed that even in the market place all was silence and sunshine about her, while her boy sat beside her like a golden angel, envied by the other peasant vendors for his unusual beauty, and coveted by the high-born as a possible addition to their households. Yet none had even dared to approach the solitary woman for her exquisite child, for there was an air about him of one priceless and untouchable, and a nobility about his mother that stood around her like a rampart. Thus the two remained safe from cupidity of men.

The boy himself, meanwhile, remained as quiet and courteous as his mother. He counted out and handed over the purchased items to his mother's customers with a concentrated solemnity rare in one of his age, yet at unexpected moments looked around and broke into an unsolicited smile. For through a gulley leading from the market place he could catch a glimpse of the sea twinkling in the sunshine, while above there were the hawks to watch wheeling in the sky or the pigeons that flew in swarms from roof top to roof top. Around him at the same time, he felt the crowds constantly milling, happy and relaxed, for it was an era of an easy-flowing

prosperity, and the absence of stress and want could be seen on every face.

So it was that he understood inwardly why Silent Daughter had brought him back to such a time and place, to this little, ancient existence of a peasant boy, for as he sat beside his mother in the market place of Ligerium, he could feel the sun by some miraculous alchemy sink into his very innermost substance and make him swell as a wheat grain in its husk.

When the morning's sale was over, mother and son rose for the long walk back to their small farm. Storm clouds were gathering on the horizon of the ocean as they started along the rocky path and a freshness had come into the air from the wind that blew in from the approaching storm. Like sails, the loose garments of the peasant couple billowed around them as they walked, while the wind played with their spirits as with autumn straws. At this moment Amalthea looked down at Aureus and felt overcome with a satisfaction that momentarily removed the mask from her human form to reveal the luminous splendour of the inward goddess — had any been there to see it. For she saw that he, while sitting and doing his work in the market, had visibly, tangibly grown. In the place of a trembling dewdrop at dawn she observed now a steady sappling putting forth its myriad buds of golden leaves, and indeed beside her walked not the unsteady child of six, but a silent, graceful boy who seemed one and a half times that age. Yet he had little of the earth's rock and soil in his veins, but much of the air and of the light-footedness of the creatures of the forest. Still one more miracle she observed as she studied her charge, which was that in outer form he as exactly resembled the Golden Child of the immaterial realms as could reasonably be as expected in the gross human vehicle. No longer was he an inward infant in the human body of a grown man, nor an ancient sage in the physical garb of a babe, daily sights which passed in such profusion before Amalthea's inward, godly vision that she had become fairly sick of the ill-assorted array. Here at last beside her walked a total being and she was glad with a gladness that bore no human name. Reaching out her hand she touched the golden head, and an overpowering envelope of ethereal love seemed to flow out of her palm and enfold him in its breathtaking embrace. All the air, even the wind, the sun, and the dust swirling up from the path appeared to find still refuge in its warmth, and the boy held within the clasp of such a love bourgeoned forth even more, sending out the soft power of his being as the rays of a young and ardent star.

The sun was just beginning to sink from its noontime zenith, and the clouds rapidly scudding inland from the sea, when the pair, still wrapped in their exotic joy, climbed the last stony steps to their farmhouse door. Inside the low dark structure, it was as though the house itself awaited their return like a conscious entity. Neat and freshly swept, it welcomed its mistress and young master by receiving them into its sheltered coolness with its straw beds sweet and fragrant, its oven clean and stacked with wood, its earthenware scrubbed and ranged along the wall, and its water pots brimming as an invitation to the hot and thirsty traveller. Then, as Amalthea flung open the wooden window, the sun too poured in to cast a square imprint of his brilliance on the immaculate mud floor, while outside all the beauty of the little farm

with its trees and its growing crops spread before them as a picture composed and painted by the same hand of love the goddess had placed on the head of her human son. Indeed, her spell hung over the whole like an indescribable enchantment, and seemed to coax to life and consciousness even those elements considered the most inert by the majority of men — the unmoving mud and stone and wood of the earth itself.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION EXPERIMENTS IN NEW EDUCATION

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1973)

FOR the students in the Higher Course the teaching consists in the application of the power that is in the pupil, all that he knows and all he can do. It is left to him how he wants to build himself.

To a layman it would appear that the students are left in the midst of the sea to swim to the shore. From a surface reading it might appear like that but one who knows the inside story will know by experience that it is not true. A child learns swimming more swiftly by self-help than by being taught to swim on the back of others. The number of self-taught are, of course, rare, but it is they who know the value of self-reliance and self-confidence.

From theory let us now come to practice. If, for example, a student is asked to write on Soviet economy how sorry would be his plight! For he knows nothing about economics.

The simple answer to this question is: if the subject arouses genuine interest and the student is keen to grapple with the problem he will spare no pains to hunt for materials, run to the teacher who will feed his appetite, stimulate his imagination, open his vision, refer him to books that will give food for thought. Does it not afford an opportunity to the fiery youth to seize upon something of his own peculiar creative quality and insist on its development? If love for knowledge has awakened, the student might be found hungry for new subjects and take delight in new adventures.

In the course of a merry chat, Professor R, observed, “We do not claim we have reached the state of perfection. But we all try to channel our energies in the right direction.”

Exactly the same remark was made by an eminent visiting Professor from Madhya Pradesh, “I don’t say all here have reached the state of perfection. But it cannot be denied that a genuine desire is there to make themselves perfect.”

After a moment’s pause he continued, “But a lingering doubt oppresses my mind about the efficacy of the Free Progress system. This system might prove helpful for art and literature, but how can it help in the study of economics and commerce without systematic training?”

At this point I am reminded of the following two lines of John Dewey: “It is certainly as futile to expect a child to evolve a universe out of his own mind as for a philosopher to attempt that task.”¹

¹ *The Child and the Curricula*, p. 18.

"Suppose," argued the learned Professor, "the teacher has planned and prepared himself to give an exposition of, say, Management but the student comes and tells him that he wants his help to understand about the devaluation of the rupee.

"Now, to make him understand the topic of devaluation the teacher must prepare the background in the mind of the student, tell him something of the monetary system and other aspects of economics. What benefit can the student derive from random talks? Usually a Professor has to spend hours in deep study at home: only then can he hope to be fresh enough to answer the volley of questions put by the pupils.

"In the natural sciences, in history, in geography, one can, if necessary, start anywhere, take up one point and disregard another. But that is not possible in subjects like mathematics, for they are like pyramids and have to be built from the bottom. Bright students are keenly aware of the weaknesses of their teachers and will not spare them."

"Further," the Professor proceeded, "if next day the student chooses some other subject, must the teacher be carried away by the whims and fancies of the student? What benefit can the student himself derive from such whimsical tactics in the field of education? Without a concentrated effort and perseverance can he hope to acquire efficiency in any subject?"

This is an oft-repeated question and demands a satisfactory answer:

The Free Progress System wants the children to act and not to be acted upon. The key-word in this system is 'interest' — love of learning. In this system the children soon realise that success or failure depends on themselves and so naturally they make the desired efforts. By the time the children enter the Higher Course they have become adolescents. Their interests also have undergone a radical change. Some of them have succeeded in forming their own personality, in moulding their own future; now is the time to grasp the purpose of their stay and study in the Ashram atmosphere.

Each student must know what he wants to be, the ideal he has set before his eyes and the ways and means to reach it. The choice reflects a real and serious quest of the student. He has been given the liberty to approach one who can meet his needs, "breathe in him the fire of faith," manage to infect him with something of his own enthusiasm giving great and rich results. If the student chooses a teacher, not meant for a particular subject, misuses or abuses the liberty, he must suffer the consequences. Even if he follows a rigid schedule, how is he likely to fare better, escape beatings in life?

An ideal teacher is he who has acquired the capacity to answer all questions from a silent mind. The teacher should help the child act in a way that makes life sublime. The child must feel the need of self-perfection. This brings us to psychic education.

Psychic education requires a long training. Even the individualised mind takes time to appear. The Mother explains:

"The individualised mind is an extremely rare thing; it appears only after long education. Otherwise it is a kind of thought stream that passes through your head,

through the head of another, through the heads of the multitude.... You think what the others think and the others think what others think and everybody thinks like that, in a mixture. It is only when you have an intellectual life, when you have the habit of reflecting, observing, putting together the ideas, that a mental individuality forms little by little."

So one should concentrate on what one is to achieve and apply every bit of energy to achieve it. How much energy is wasted in petty things!

The beautiful words of the Mother regarding energy: flash into my memory:

"Before the age of reason little children receive much energy and spend abundantly without thought, that is why they can play for hours together without getting tired. But as thought grows, you begin to measure and calculate your energies.... You must know what energy you want, from where it comes and in what it consists. Afterwards comes the control over the energy received. Ninety per cent of the people do not absorb sufficient energy...as soon as they take in a sufficient dose, they throw it out immediately, in moving about, talking, shouting and so on. You must know how to keep within you the energy you receive and concentrate it wholly on the required activity and not on any other thing."

If one wants the full play of his creative faculties, he must learn the value of concentration. The more intense his absorption, the greater the concentration. This would enormously widen the range of his awareness and he could turn his mind to anything.

But bringing changes in the mental notions and physical habits is a tough job and requires lots of time and effort. The nature and destiny of the child war with each other.

To quote the celebrated educationist Mary Brook:

"What is it that education should bring forth from the child and from the student? Surely it should bring forth his individuality, his individual uniqueness, his unique flowering.... (They) should be made to face their own particular problems, not only of study but of living. If from early years they can be helped to meet and understand their fears, conflicts and sorrows we should soon have a new generation."

Our hopes and aspirations for the new generation are somewhat different. We believe life problems cannot be solved by the mind. All labour of the mind for the solution of a problem is often found leading to a deadlock. Development does not mean getting something out of the mind. "Education," says Ben Morris, in his Paper, *An Educational Perspective of Mental Health*, "does not consist of merely completing tasks from text books but must also develop the capacity to deal with both internal conflicts and external stress." Even if the student has acquired intellectual ability and the power of answering relevant questions, he may pass the school examinations with credits but will fail in the university of life. To quote the Mother again: "What you know, what you are conscious of is almost like the skin of an orange.... You know only the skin, nothing of the orange." Sri Aurobindo wrote: "The thinking mind has to learn how to be entirely silent. It is only then that true knowledge can come."

The following lines from our Registrar will show the procedure followed in the Free Progress System in the Higher Course:

"At the beginning of the session, students are invited to indicate what lines of study or what particular topics they would like to explore.

"In order to facilitate the choices of topics, teachers may present to the students a suggestive but detailed list of suitable topics. Each topic thus selected constitutes a short or a long project. In exploring each project, students would take the help of the teachers whom they might choose.... In guiding the students, teachers are expected to endeavour to widen and intensify the area of exploration so as to avoid narrow specialisation or a mere wide superficiality. Each student's programme of studies is thus flexible, supple and evolutionary.

"In order to have completed his course, each student should have shown regularity of sustained effort, development of capacities, understanding of his subjects and the power of answering relevant questions. The quality of the work is considered more important than the quantity of the work although the latter too should not be meagre, but commensurable with high standards."¹

The first biographer of Sri Aurobindo in English, K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar writes about our "Free Progress System":

"The 'free progress education' now in force at the Centre of Education expects the pupil to follow Satyakam Jabala's example and rely on his soul rather than on habits, conventions or preconceived ideas. The whole aim is to make the educational process spontaneous, flexible and evolutionary and not artificial, rigid and static. Education thus becomes a joyous adventure in self-discovery and not a tyrannical infliction from without. And what the Centre of Education itself provides is an atmosphere of protection and affection in which the child's impulse to joyous self-discovery finds the necessary warmth for full flowering and fruition.... Used to self-reliance in education, he would be self-reliant in all situations, drawing the needed strength from the reservoir of the Spirit."²

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ Those who want to know more about our system might refer to the Educational Number of *Mother India*, December, 1968, edited with the help of our Registrar Kireet Joshi. It deals with the subject very elaborately and gives a full picture of the organisation and the procedure followed in our institution.

² *Sri Aurobindo: A Biography and a History* Published by Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar. Vol. II, pp. 1387-8.

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

India: Vision and Fulfilment: By *Prof. Sisirkumar Mitra*. D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Private Ltd. 210 D. Naoroji Road, Bombay 1. Pp. vi+290 (with 8 full page illustrations). Price: Rs. 35.00

IN Sri Aurobindo's vision, Mother India is not a piece of earth, she is a Power, a God-head: "Each nation is a Shakti or power of the evolving spirit in humanity and lives by the principle which it embodies. India is the Bharata Shakti, the living energy of a great spiritual conception, and fidelity to it is the very principle of her existence. For by its virtue alone she has been one of the immortal nations; this alone has been the secret of her amazing persistence and perpetual force of survival and revival."

Now, it is but proper that in this Centenary Year of the great Seer, someone should come forward to help us in focussing our attention on the true significance of the historical march of the Spirit that is India. In the comity of nations, what does Bharat essentially represent? What is her *svadharma*, the self-law of her being? Has she got a specific mission to fulfil? Behind and through the vicissitudes of her national existence, is she being inexorably led towards the realisation of her destiny? And, if so, what is the exact import of that destiny — for herself and for the world at large?

When free India has been celebrating the silver jubilee of her emancipation from alien rule, these and allied questions are intriguing the minds of thoughtful Indians everywhere. We are happy to note that the eminent sadhak-historian, Prof. Sisirkumar Mitra of Pondicherry, presents us with a book of the highest excellence and value, bearing the significant title: *India, Vision and Fulfilment*. This laudable production has been clearly the outcome of long years of deep thought and profound study but at the same time a labour of love on the part of the erudite author.

The central theme of Mitra's book, as also the main lines of its elaboration, is inspired by Sri Aurobindo. "It is," in the words of the author, "an attempt at a study, from the standpoint of evolutionary history, of the growth and expansion of Indian culture as a motivating force in the progress of man towards his divine destiny, envisaged in the Master's vision of the Future...."

"The book seeks among other things to be a pointer to that phase of India's historic development which carries in it the mighty seed of a world transformation. It traces the evolution of her great past in order to show how her soul speaks through it into a greater future, a future big with the destiny of the entire humanity."

We have found it a genuine pleasure to read chapter after arresting chapter of this illuminating book and we have no hesitation in affirming that Prof. Mitra has indeed been endowed with unique qualifications for fulfilling his self-imposed task: a truly

Indian mind, a profound knowledge of his subject and the gift of clear exposition through a remarkable command of graceful and lucid English.

India: Vision and Fulfilment is undoubtedly a luminous work representing a scholarly and appealing treatment of a great subject and is altogether indispensable for any serious study of Indian history and culture.

The book has been neatly printed and is really charming to see. Prof. Mitra and his publishers deserve to be congratulated on having presented to the readers a book that is from beginning to end delightful, captivating and inspiring.

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

Hindi Translation of *Savitri* in Rhymed Verse: By *Vidyavati 'Kokil'*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2 Price Rs. 4/-

Translation of poetry is always a ticklish affair, and more so when the original is in a foreign tongue. The difficulty is increased a hundredfold if it is a highly mystic and symbolic poetry that has to be translated.

Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, the longest epic in the English language, is a saga of his spiritual adventure in which he has explored every plane of consciousness up to the absolute Transcendent and also the dark planes of the Inconscient and the Subconscient in which the roots of our evolutionary life lie buried. It is a symbolic representation of the plunge of Truth into the darkness and unconsciousness of Matter and its eventual deliverance by Savitri, the Power of Truth. "It is the most comprehensive, integrated, beautiful and perfect cosmic poem ever composed. It ranges symbolically from a primordial cosmic void, through earth's darkness and struggles, and illumines every important concern of man, through verse of unparalleled massiveness, magnificence, and metaphorical brilliance," according to Prof. Raymond Piper of the Syracuse University.

When I saw Vidyavati 'Kokil' embark upon a translation of this monumental epic, I wondered at the boldness of her venture. But I have watched her at work, watched with growing admiration how she grappled with her task with an unflinching devotion and consecrated care. I dare say it was her devotion and self-dedication that brought down a shower of the Divine Grace upon her. And what is impossible to the Grace? "All can be done if the God-touch is there."

She has, indeed, achieved a marvel. There is an exalting atmosphere in her translation, a kindling breath of inspiration, and a haunting vibration of rhythmic utterance. Words wing and sing, as if they were messengers of an unearthly glory. I am sure her translation will appeal to those who cherish in their hearts the hope of a new Dawn.

RISHABHCHAND

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

12TH AUGUST, 1972

SRI AUROBINDO REVEALS THE FUTURE

Man and Women in the New Age

(Continued from the issue of February 21, 1973)

There is a body of opinion which holds that the difference between man and woman is created by Nature or some Moral Power called God for some definite purpose and, if it were not fulfilled, we would go against the religious fiat, the ethical dogma, the very principle of existence and the laws of nature.

To begin with, this difference is only external and not essential or psychological. If we probe profoundly enough, we would discover that Nature has made this sex-differentiation because it is convenient and meets her purpose of the continuity of species and in addition she has grafted the sex-impulse and attraction to enhance and further her goal. The Mother says very clearly, "I repeat, it has not been so from the beginning. A zoologist could tell you that there are species which are not at all like that. Nature has tried that means — she has tried many things, she has made two in one, she has made all possible species. She tried in that way, perhaps because it seemed to her more practical." (*Bulletin of Physical Education*, February 1963, p. 35) Sex exists for a very utilitarian purpose — the physical continuity of the species. For as yet even in man, the highest so far of Nature's creation, physical immortality is impossible due to the factors of decay, illness and eventual death, which have not been controlled.

Also this difference is not so clearly marked even among human beings. For example, physiology reveals that male traits exist in women and female traits in men. Over - or under - functioning of the ductless glands, circumstances and heredity produce these traits and even changing over of a man into a woman or *vice versa* is not an impossibility. If we rise to the supraphysical worlds of life, mind or of the Gods this sex-difference is non-existent. The Mother says, "in the vital world, it is extremely rare to come across sex difference, the beings there are generally without sex...there are many divinities who are sexless. Therefore this difference is nothing else than a means of Nature to arrive at her goal.... It is not an eternal symbol." (*Ibid.*) Here the Mother is referring to the crude thing and not to the essence of the truth of which this sex difference is a base representation. In fact all in this present existence is conditioned by the shadow of Ignorance. The sex-principle in its essence and at the source of things, "takes the spiritual form of the Ishwara and the Shakti and without it there could be no world-creation or manifestation of the world-principle of Purusha and Prakriti which are both necessary for the creation," says Sri Aurobindo.

The Supramental Manifestation, 1952, p. 48. Not sex but two aspects of the same transcendent and universal principle is at the base of what all men and women are. And sex, along with other deformative principles like Pain, Death, Hatred, is a perversion. Sri Aurobindo says, "Sex is the degradation of the Ananda-force."

The upward spiritual march of evolution would make it necessary for man and woman to outgrow these limitations if they must live up to the need of the hour. Moreover, as there is the pull from below by the lower nature, there is also the call from above from the higher nature, also the urge of the Spirit behind, to surpass all humanity of the past. Therefore like all other things, the man-woman relationship must undergo a radical change. As yet in truth man and woman are half animal and half human in their passions, desires, hungers and sexual impulse. The Mother says, "Humanity has the sexual impulse; that is altogether natural, spontaneous and, if I may say, legitimate. This impulse will naturally and spontaneously disappear with animality." (*Bulletin of Physical Education*, February 1966, p. 91) Sex would then be not a hindrance, a source of passions, but of creative energy and joy when, "Entirely controlled it can be turned into a force of spiritual energy also. This was well-known in ancient India and was described as the conversion of *retas* into *ojas* by Brahmacharya." (Sri Aurobindo Centenary Volume No. 24, p. 1516) It is not only sublimation of sexual energy, but a drawing upwards of this, which is commonly spilled and wasted, to be turned into a great psycho-physical force. The result would be an amazing power, stamina and energy in the body, an increase of mental and life faculties, a large outburst of creative and all-embracing illumination. This would be the first step towards rising beyond animality.

Then man would find that his comrade no longer ties him down to the flesh, to little things of life but is "in principle, the executive power", and that "the true relation of the two sexes is an equal footing of mutual help and close collaboration"; also finally he would discover that "The true domain of women is spiritual." (*The Mother of Love*, Vol. 4, by Madhav Pandit, p. 244)

The whole aspect of man's and woman's life would undergo a radical change. The war of the sexes would have no cause to exist. The suppression and domination of man by woman or of woman by man, the jealousies, hatreds, petty disharmonies would be things of the past. The lower nature and ego would be replaced by the Divine and Its will working in men and women. Consequently, "all relations should pass from the vital to the spiritual basis with the vital only as a form and instrument of the spiritual — this means that, from whatever relationship they have with each other, all jealousy, strife, hatred, aversion, rancour and other evil vital feelings should be abandoned, for they can be no part of the spiritual life." (Sri Aurobindo Centenary Volume No. 23, p. 804) That is to say, man and woman would enjoy a purer and more lasting basis of relationship than common human relationships could ever endow.

Love, as humanity understands it, would change; for now it is mixed with lust, demands, sense of possession and other impurities. Love as understood by the West is synonymous with sex; this is a gross misunderstanding and total falsehood. True love

is not a bargaining, a commerce, it is selfless in essence, and its character is above all lower elements of demands, revolts and strifes. The Mother defines love thus: "Love is not sexual intercourse. Love is not vital attraction and interchange. Love is not the heart's hunger for affection. Love is a mighty vibration coming straight from the One, and only the very pure and very strong are capable of receiving and manifesting it." (*The Bulletin of Physical Education*, November 1963, p. 25) This alters the whole aspect of the question. Further Sri Aurobindo clarifies, "Love would remain, all forms of pure truth of love in higher and higher steps till it realised its highest nature, widened into universal love, merged into the love of the Divine." (Sri Aurobindo Centenary Vol. No. 16, p. 27) That is, the link between man and woman would be the Divine, the spiritual power and not a small, personal, limiting and narrow love.

This would mean that the society of the future would undergo a radical change, for man and woman form the components of society and its structure. The family as a unit would have to disappear in the course of time as individuals evolve out of the mental and egoistic types into spiritual beings. As it is, the family unit is dwindling fast due to economic pressure and circumstantial necessity. There is a vast difference between the large family unit, almost feudal in character, existing a century back, and the present tiny family nucleus. If spirituality becomes the base of humanity, the social necessity of marriage as an institution would automatically cease to exist. For man and woman would discard sex and all it entails as a prehistoric and animal legacy that they have outgrown and find no longer necessary. Marriage, if it at all took place, would be not a social ceremony, but a marriage of the souls who were beginning a common existence together, a common adventure of realising the Divine.

All this would be for the élite, the advanced portion of humanity aspiring for a higher existence and truth. The rest, the common mass of men and women, would advance slowly and stumblingly at a snail's pace, continuing their old ways, following the beaten track of habits and precedents, changing very slowly, almost imperceptibly.

Only the élite and vanguard of man and woman, enlightened, changed and reborn, shall be:

"A dual power of God in an ignorant world,
In a hedged creation shut from limitless self,
Bringing down God to the insentient globe,
Lifting earth-beings to immortality."

(Sri Aurobindo Centenary Volume, No. 29, p. 702)

ROMEN PALIT

EYE EDUCATION

DEMONSTRATE:

1. That sun treatment is an immediate benefit to many diseases of the eye.

Before the treatment, take a record of your best vision on the Snellen Eye Chart and on the Reading test type. Then sit in the sun with your eyes closed, slowly moving your head a short distance from side to side, and allowing the sun to shine directly on your closed eyelids. Forget about your eyes; just think of something pleasant and let your mind drift from one pleasant thought to another. Before opening your eyes, palm for a few minutes. Then test your vision and note the improvement.

2. That long swing improves the sight, relieves pain, fatigue and many other disagreeable symptoms.

Take a record of your best vision with both eyes together and each eye separately without glasses. Stand with the feet about one foot apart facing a blank wall. Turn the body to the left, at the same time raising the heel of the right foot. Now place the heel of the right foot on the floor in its usual position; then turn the body to the right, lifting the heel of the left foot.

Let the head and eyes move with the body; do not make an effort to see more distinctly stationary objects which are apparently moving. Practise this fifty to one hundred times, easily, without making any effort. Notice that, after practising, the vision for the test card improves.

DR. R. S. AGARWAL

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