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SRI AUROBINDO'S BIRTHDAY

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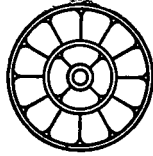
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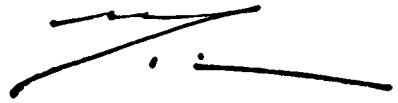


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 8

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."*

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## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
WORDS OF THE MOTHER	595
AUGUST 15	
WHAT SRI AUROBINDO SAID ON THIS DAY IN 1923	... 596
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	<i>The Mother</i> ... 597
THE MOTHER (Poem)	<i>Minnie N. Canteenwalla</i> ... 608
SRI AUROBINDO ON AVATARHOOD:	
SOME LETTERS	<i>From Nagin Doshi</i> ... 609
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Nirodbaran</i> ... 612
AIDS TO AN INQUIRING OUTSIDER	<i>K. D. Sethna</i> ... 614
THOUGHTS	<i>Girdharlal</i> ... 616
INDIA AND THE FATE OF NATIONS:	
A GLANCE AT THE CAREER OF ANCIENT RACES	
THROUGH SRI AUROBINDO'S EYES	<i>Amal Kiran</i> ... 617
MEDITATION IN MOTHER'S ROOM (Poem)	<i>Maggi</i> ... 619
THE SEEKERS OF PONDICHERRY	<i>H. Michael Zelnick</i> ... 620
TRAVELLER'S LUCK	<i>Sisirkumar Ghose</i> ... 625
THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE:	
A SEARCH APROPOS OF R. C. ZAEHNER'S STUDY	
IN SRI AUROBINDO AND TEILHARD DE CHARDIN	<i>K. D. Sethna</i> ... 628
PATHANA (Poem)	<i>Shagore Chowdhury</i> ... 638
THE LEGEND OF ORIGINAL SIN AND ADAM'S FALL:	
AN EXTRACT	<i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 639

## CONTENTS

ANGELIC ARRIVAL (Poem)	<i>Victor B. King</i>	... 641
SEVEN LIVES:		
A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL	<i>Bina Bragg</i>	... 642
“THE LOST CHILD” BY MULK RAJ ANAND:		
AN APPRECIATION	<i>Sanjay</i>	... 648
MY HEART (Poem)	<i>Loretta</i>	... 649
THE SYSTEM OF SIX		
FROM THE GEOMETRIC WORK OF DENIS ROBERT	<i>Robert Lawlor</i>	... 650
“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”	<i>Narayan Prasad</i>	... 660
SRI AUROBINDO (Poem)	<i>K. B. Sitaramayya</i>	... 664
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE:		
SRI AUROBINDO:		
1872-1972 A CENTENARY SYMPOSIUM.		
PUBLISHED BY SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY		
OF GREAT BRITAIN	<i>Review by Manoj Das</i>	... 665
HINDI TRANSLATION OF SRI AUROBINDO’S		
<i>Savitri</i> BY VIDYAVATI ‘KOKIL’	<i>Review by Har Krishan Singh</i>	... 666

## STUDENTS’ SECTION

EYE EDUCATION:		
BETTER EYESIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES	<i>Dr. R.S. Agarwal</i>	... 668

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## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Sri Aurobindo  
is constantly  
among us and  
reveals himself  
to those who are  
ready to see and  
hear him

*Blessings*  


Sri Aurobindo is constantly among us and reveals himself to those who are ready to see and hear him.

## AUGUST 15

### WHAT SRI AUROBINDO SAID ON THIS DAY IN 1923

*(This is a report based on A. B. Purani's Notes)*

You all know that the Supramental Truth has to descend into our life. That Truth is symbolised by this day. But there are several obstacles in the way of its coming down. There is the Mind and the mental ideas that grasp at the Truth coming from above and try to utilise it for their own aims. There is the Vital, or the Life-force, which seizes upon the Higher Force and wants to throw itself out into impure actions. The Truth that is coming down is not mental, it is Supramental. In order that it may be able to work properly, all the lower instruments must be Supramentalised. The lower forces want to utilise this higher Truth for the satisfaction of their ordinary movements. Whenever a man enjoys the pleasures of life, or spends his life in pursuit of his selfish ends, it is, really speaking, these universal forces that take enjoyment through and in him.

For the higher Truth to be able to work in its purity, one has to open oneself to the greater Power above, to give oneself up to it and remove all that stands in the way of the higher Truth. The capacity to surrender consists in these three things.

I have been working all these years to meet the obstacles and remove them and prepare and clear the path so that the task may not be very difficult for you. As for my helping you in that task, it all depends upon your capacity to receive the help. I can give any amount that you can take. There is an idea that to-day every sadhaka gets a new experience. That depends upon your capacity to receive the Truth in yourself. Real spiritual surrender is, of course, quite another matter; but if any of you have experienced even a degree of it, even some faint reflection, then the purpose of the 15th will have been served.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of July, 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.)*

SEPTEMBER 26, 1956

*"All or most of the works of life are at present or seem to be actuated or vitiated by this soul of desire; even those that are ethical or religious, even those that wear the guise of altruism, philanthropy, self-sacrifice, self-denial, are shot through and through with the threads of its making. This soul of desire is a separative soul of ego and all its instincts are for a separative self-affirmation; it pushes always, openly or under more or less shining masks, for its own growth, for possession, for enjoyment, for conquest and empire."*

*(The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 164)*

*Sweet Mother, what is the "soul of desire"?*

It is what makes you live, act, move.

Soul, the word for soul in French, "*âme*", comes from a word which means "to animate". It is that which gives life to the body. If you don't have it you would be inert matter, something like stones or plants, not altogether inert, but vegetative.

Some people say that without desires, that is, without this soul of desire, there would never have been any progress.... In ordinary life it is a very useful thing but when one decides to do yoga, to find the Divine, it becomes a little cumbersome.

*(Silence)*

Is that all?

*When we come to you for the distribution,<sup>1</sup> at times we feel free and joyful, but at times we feel nothing, we are empty. What does that indicate?*

<sup>1</sup> Till 1958 the Mother used to have every evening at the Playground (except on "class" days) a symbolical distribution of groundnuts or sweets, making it possible for all disciples, if they wanted, to go to Her one by one in order to receive her spiritual help directly.

When one is joyful, it means that one is open and receives the Force; when one feels nothing, it means that one is shut up.

But what makes you open or shuts you up? For everybody this is different. It depends on a number of things. You have not noticed the difference in you, whether it depends on outside circumstances or on something within you — you haven't?

Yes.

Yes. Ah! good.

There are many different reasons which make one feel at times more alive, more full of force and joy.... Generally, in ordinary life, there are people who, due to their very constitution, the way they are made, are in a certain harmony with Nature, as though they breathed in the same rhythm, and these people are usually always joyful, happy; they succeed in all they do, they avoid many troubles and catastrophes, indeed they are in harmony with the rhythm of life and Nature. And, moreover, there are days when one is in contact with the divine Consciousness which is at work, with the Grace; and then everything is tinged, coloured with this Presence, and things which usually seem to you dull and uninteresting, become charming, pleasant, attractive, instructive — everything lives and vibrates, and is full of promise and force. So, when one is open to that, one feels stronger, freer, happier, full of energy, and *every* thing has a meaning. One understands why things are as they are and one participates in the general movement.

There are other moments when, for some reason or other, one is clouded or closed up or down in a hole, and so one no longer feels anything and all things lose their taste, their interest, their value; one goes about like a walking piece of wood.

Now, if one succeeds in uniting consciously with one's psychic being, one can *always* be in this state of receptivity, inner joy, energy, progress, communion with the divine Presence. And when one is in communion with That, one sees it everywhere, in everything, and all things take on their true meaning.

On what does that depend?... On an inner rhythm. Perhaps a grace. In any case on a receptivity to something that is beyond you.

*Mother, a well-developed soul, when it incarnates, does it have less difficulty in transforming this soul of desire?*

That means ...?

*The great masters have less difficulties?*

One can't tell.

In principle it is like that, but in fact the more the individuality is formed, the stronger is this false soul of desire. Those who have a well-formed, well-coordin-



ated individuality, self-reliant, with a minimum dependence on their surroundings, have much more difficulty in getting into contact with the divine Presence than others, because they have a very coordinated, very organised separate existence, which is generally self-sufficient. One always finds it much more difficult to convert, if we may put it thus, a very living, very well-formed personality than someone, for instance, who is full of good will but still open to all sorts of influences. When an individual is very strongly made and has the sense of his own personality, his separate existence, it is much more difficult for him to think that he is nothing but an instrument of the divine Force, than for somebody who feels a bit fluid, like this (*gesture*), not very precise, who has no exact limits, no well-built personality; he understands more easily that in himself he is nothing and that it is a force other than his own which makes him act. So you cannot say that a well-developed soul has less difficulties. That depends on the case.

What you mean, I think, is that if you are in contact with your soul (the true one), it is relatively easy to get rid of the soul of desire. But that is a different situation. One must first have found his psychic being and identified oneself with it; and then, later, you may turn to the soul of desire and convince it of its stupidity.

(*Long silence*)

(*To a child*) You have something to ask?

*Not I, Mother. Somebody has asked a question: "In the present state of the sadhana, what is the utility of a personal contact with you? To what extent does a personal contact with you help us?"*

What is meant by a personal contact? To see me, speak to me, what? Individually, collectively, how?

*Individually.*

Oh! (*Laughing*) to have interviews!

You may answer that it depends on what use one makes of them.

It is very difficult to answer, for it is a purely personal question. It depends on the moment, depends on the state one is in, and above all, I say, it depends on whether one knows how to use this contact properly.

Don't you see, if one is inwardly open, if one is receptive, one receives even as far as in the subtle physical all that is necessary for one's integral progress. And in the order of things, the outer contact should come only as a crowning and an aid so that the body — the material physical consciousness and the body may be able to follow the movement of the inner being.

But if you believe that this contact is going to replace the inner receptivity, you

are mistaken, it is not of much use. For example, people who are quite closed up, who receive nothing within, who have no opening to the forces and yet imagine that because they are going to spend a half-hour or an hour chatting before me, this is going to help them to transform themselves, they make a gross mistake. But if they are inwardly open, if they are in contact with the Force and make an effort to transform themselves, then, at a given moment, perhaps a conversation or a material contact, a presence, may help them to make a more integral progress.

One may very easily live in close proximity, be in daily life apparently very near, and get nothing at all out of it, at least in the active consciousness. Perhaps there is a very slow and deep action which goes on...but it seems to me that it would go on in any case. And if, while by my side for some reason or other, the thought is elsewhere, the desires elsewhere, the preoccupations different, it is absolutely useless, it leads to nothing.

The important point is to establish the inner contact; that indeed is the important point. Then in certain cases (perhaps not very often, that depends on each one), but in certain cases, the presence adds something, gives a more concrete, more precise realisation. But if there is nothing within, it is altogether useless. Hence one cannot make a general rule, it depends on each one, on the state one is in.

(Silence)

You see, the general mistake is to believe that one must begin from outside and finish within. It is not like that. One must begin within and come outside afterwards, when one is ready within.

*Mother, when one comes to you, one tries to be the best possible, that is, to have very good thoughts; but often, on the contrary, all the bad impulses, bad thoughts one had during the day come up.*

That is perhaps for you to get rid of them.

If they come, one can offer them up and ask to be freed from them.

That perhaps is the reason, it is because the Consciousness acts for purification. It is no use at all hiding things and pushing them behind, like this, and to imagine they are not there because one has put a veil in front. It is much better to see oneself as one is — provided one is ready to give up this way of being. If one comes allowing all the bad movements to come up to the surface, and show themselves; if one offers them, if one says, "Well, this is how I am" and if at the same time one has the aspiration to be otherwise, then this second of presence is altogether useful; one can, yes, in a few seconds receive the help necessary to get clear of them; whilst if one comes like a little saint and goes away without having received anything, it is not very useful.

Automatically the Consciousness acts like that, it is like the ray that brings light there where there wasn't any. But only, what is needed is to be in the state where

one *wants* to give up the thing, to get rid of it — not to cling to it and keep it. If one sincerely wants to pull it out of oneself, efface it, then it is very useful.

(*Silence*)

Indeed, I could ask a question: Why (I don't know if it is common, but still) why does one, when coming to me, want to have good thoughts and be at one's best? For what reason?

*To have bad movements before you is very ugly!* (Laughter)

If one wants to keep them, yes, it is very ugly, but if one wants to get rid of them?... It is perhaps a chance to get rid of them. It is surely even an occasion to get rid of them, because before me they appear exactly as they are; whilst far from me they paint themselves in all sorts of lights, brilliant and false, so that you take them for what they are not. When the movement is nasty and one sees it in my atmosphere, it appears *exactly* as it is. Then that is the moment to get rid of it.

(*Silence*)

To give the best one has is very fine and is much appreciated; but to give the worst one has is much more useful; and perhaps this offering is even more appreciated — on condition that it is given in order to be rid of it, not to take it back afterwards!

OCTOBER 3, 1956

I have a whole flood of questions here! But before beginning to answer them, I am going to explain something to you.

You must have often noticed before now that my way of talking to you is not always the same. I don't know if you are very sensitive to the difference, but for me it is quite considerable.... Sometimes, either because of something I have read or for quite another reason — at the end of a question sometimes, but pretty rarely — it so happens that I have what may generally be called an experience, but in fact it is simply entering into a certain state of consciousness and, once in that state of consciousness, describing it. In that case what is said passes through the mind, making use of it only as a "storehouse of words", it could be said; the Force, the Consciousness which is expressed passes through the individual mind and attracts by a kind of affinity the words needed for its expression. That is the true teaching, something found with difficulty in books — it may be in books, but one must oneself be in the same state of consciousness to be able to discover it. But here, with the spoken word, the vibration of the sound transmits something at least of the experience, which, for all who are sensitive, can become contagious.

In the second case, the question asked or the subject chosen is conveyed by the mind to the higher Consciousness, then the mind receives a reply and transmits it again through the word. That is what happens usually in all teaching, provided that the one who teaches has the ability to pass on the question to the higher Consciousness, which is not always the case.

I must say the second method does not interest me very much, and that very often when the question asked or the subject dealt with does not give me the possibility of entering into an interesting state of consciousness, I would infinitely prefer to keep silent than to speak; it is a sort of duty to fulfil which makes me speak. I am just telling you beforehand, for it has often happened that I have cut short our conversation — if it could be called a conversation — and passed abruptly to meditation; it was in such cases. But still, someone happened to ask me to explain this difference and so I am speaking to you about it this evening.

(Silence)

Apart from that, I have yet other questions, of a practical nature, and in relation to these questions I saw something I am going to tell you — oh! it was not a vision with images, don't expect something very entertaining! No, it is not that...I was asked (I am re-wording it, that is not the exact text of the question):

*What difference does the presence of the Supermind really make? In what way does it change the tenor of problems, and how should life be considered anew after this manifestation?*

I have been asked to give practical examples; I don't quite know what that may mean, but in any case, here is what I saw in a sort of mathematical mood — though the language of mathematics is quite foreign to me — but I may call this a mathematical vein, that is to say, a mathematical way of seeing the problem.

I think all of you have studied enough mathematics to know the complexity of combinations which may be produced by taking for base certain select elements in a group. I shall give you an example to make myself clear, for I can't use the terms generally employed in teaching you. For instance, the letters of the alphabet. There is a certain number of letters in the alphabet; well, if you want to calculate or know the number of combinations possible by taking all these letters together — how they may be organised, in how many ways they can be organised — you have learnt how very fantastic the figure becomes.... Good. But if you take the material world and go down to the most minute element (you know, don't you, that they have come to absolutely invisible things, innumerable things), if you take this element as the base and the material world as the whole, and if you imagine a Consciousness or a Will enjoying itself, playing with all these elements, making all possible combinations without ever repeating a single one.... Evidently.... In mathematics you are told that the number

of elements is finite and that consequently the number of combinations is finite; but that is purely theoretical, for if you come to the practice and all these combinations had to follow each other, even if they went at so great a speed that the change would be almost imperceptible, it is quite obvious that the time needed to make all these combinations would be, at least apparently, infinite; that is to say, the number of combinations would be so immense that no limit could be assigned to it — at least no practical limit, the theory is not interesting for us; but practically it would be like that.

So imagine that what I tell you is true, in this sense that there is really a Consciousness and a Will manifesting these combinations, successively, indefinitely, without ever repeating a single one twice; we come to the conclusion that the universe is new at every moment of eternity. And if the universe is new at every moment of eternity, we are obliged to acknowledge that there is absolutely nothing that is impossible; not only that, but that what we call logical is not necessarily true, and that the logic, one could almost say the fantasy of the Creator, has no limits.

Hence, if for one reason or another (which perhaps it would be difficult to express, but for some reason) a combination were not followed by the one nearest to it but by another chosen freely by the Supreme Freedom, all our external certitudes and all our external logic would instantaneously break down.

For the problem is yet much more complicated than you think: it is not only on one plane, in one field, that is to say, what may be called a surface of things, that there is this practically infinite number of elements permitting eternally new combinations, there is besides what may be called a depth, that is to say, other dimensions. And the Creation is the result not only of surface combinations but combinations of depths below this surface — what in other terms are called “psychological factors”. But I am at the moment taking a purely mathematical stand, though I don’t speak the language of mathematics, but still it is a mathematical conception. And so here we are at the problem:

Every time a new element is introduced in the total of possible combinations, it causes what may be called a tearing of its limits: the introduction of something which makes all past limits disappear and new possibilities come in and multiply infinitely the possibilities of old. So, you had a world which, according to the ancient knowledge, had twelve depths or twelve — how to put it? — successive dimensions; and in this world of twelve dimensions, suddenly new dimensions are introduced — then all the old formulas are instantaneously transformed and all the possibility of the old unfolding becomes — one can’t say increased but supplemented by an almost infinite number of new possibilities, and all this in such a way that all the former logic becomes illogical in the presence of this new logic.

I am not speaking at all of what the human mind has made of the universe, for that is a reduction of it to its own dimension; I am speaking of the fact just as it is, of a total of combinations which are realised successively, in accordance with an order and a choice which, it is evident, completely escapes the human consciousness, but to which man has somehow adapted himself and which, with a great effort at studying

such as humanity has pursued for centuries, he has succeeded in formulating sufficiently well to be able to hook himself to something tangible.... It is obvious that the modern scientific perception is much nearer something corresponding to the universal reality than were the perceptions of the Stone Age, for instance; that holds without the shadow of a doubt. But even that is going to be all of a sudden completely overpassed, surpassed, and probably turned quite topsy-turvy with the intrusion of something which was not in the universe that was studied.

Well, it is from this change, this sudden transformation of the universal element which quite certainly is going to bring in a sort of chaos in the perceptions that a new knowledge will emerge. That, in the most general way, is the result of the new manifestation.<sup>1</sup>

From an altogether restricted, external and limited point of view, I shall now speak to you of certain things which are not my own experience but about which I have heard; for instance, that there is a greater number of what are called "child prodigies". I haven't met them, so I can't tell you what is the real wonder of these children, but still, according to the stories related, there are evidently some new types which seem astonishing to the ordinary human consciousness. It is examples of this kind, I believe, that people would like to know in order to understand what is happening.... But it is possible, indeed, that things are happening now to which one is not accustomed to attend. But it is a question of interpretation. The only thing I am sure of is what I have just told you about, that the quality, the number and the nature of the possible universal combinations are going to suddenly change so considerably that it will probably be quite bewildering for those who do research in life.

Now, we shall see.

*(Silence)*

I could perhaps add a little practical word to what I have just told you; it is only an illustration of a detail, but will be an indirect answer to other questions which were asked sometime ago about the so-called laws of Nature, causes and effects, "inevitable" consequences in the material field, and more particularly from the point of view of health; for example, that if one doesn't take certain precautions, if one doesn't eat as one should, doesn't follow certain rules, necessarily there are consequences.

It is true. But if this is seen in the light of what I have just said, that there are no two universal combinations which are alike, how can laws be established and what is the absolute truth of these laws?... It does not exist.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of the first publication of this talk, in 1962, the Mother added the following comment about "the new element": "It is not a question of 'new things' in the sense that they did not exist before, but that they were not manifested in the universe. If this was not already there, involved, it could never come! That is evident. Nothing can exist which does not already exist from all eternity in the Supreme, but in the manifestation it is new. The element is not new but it is newly manifested, it has newly come out of the Non-manifest. New, what does that mean? It has no meaning, a new thing! It is new *for us* in the Manifestation, that is all."

For, if you are logical, of course with a little higher logic, since no two things, two combinations, two universal manifestations are ever the same, how can anything repeat itself? It can only be an appearance but is not a fact. And to fix rigid laws in that way (not that you cut yourself off from the apparent surface laws, for the mind makes many laws, and the surface of things, very obligingly, seems to comply with these laws, but it is only an appearance), but in any case that cuts you off from the creative Power of the Spirit, that cuts you off from the true Power of the Grace, for you can understand that if by your aspiration or your attitude you introduce a higher element, a new element — what we may call now a supramental element — into the existing combinations, you can suddenly change their nature, and all these so-called necessary and ineluctable laws become absurdities. That is to say that you yourself, with your conception, with your attitude and your acceptance of certain alleged principles, you yourself close the door upon the possibility of the miracle (they are not miracles when one knows how they happen, but evidently, for the outer consciousness they seem miraculous). And it is you yourself, saying to yourself with a seemingly quite reasonable logic: “Well, if I do this, that will necessarily happen, or if I don’t do that, necessarily that other thing will happen”, it is you yourself who close the door — it is as though you were putting an iron curtain between yourself and the free action of the Grace.

How good would it be to imagine that the Supreme Consciousness, essentially free, presiding at the universal Manifestation, can be fanciful in its choice and make things follow each other not according to a logic accessible to human thought but in accordance with another kind of logic, that of the unforeseen!

Then there would no longer be any limit to the possibilities, to the unexpected, the marvellous; and one could hope for the most splendid, the most delightful things from this sovereignly free Will, playing eternally with all the elements and producing unceasingly a new world which would have absolutely nothing to do logically with the former world.

Don’t you think it would be charming? We have had enough of the world as it is! Why not let it become at least what we feel it ought to be?

And all that I tell you about it is in order that each one may put as few barriers as possible in the way of the possibilities to come. That’s my conclusion.

I don’t know if I have made myself understood, but indeed a day will come, I suppose, when you will know what I meant. That’s all, then.

Sometime later, during a “Friday Class”, the Mother once again took up the subject of infant prodigies.

Recently, in one of the Wednesday classes, there was a question about infant prodigies. Some say that the number of infant prodigies is increasing considerably

from day to day; and some (even among Americans) say it is the influence and work of Sri Aurobindo, and others say it is a result of the atom bombs! But it is a fact that there is a fairly large number of infant prodigies. I did not want to speak about it in much detail for I did not have the proofs in my hands, that is, I did not have any good examples to give. It happens that since then a French book has been brought to me, written by a child of eight.<sup>1</sup> Naturally there are people who argue the possibility, but I shall later explain to you how such a thing is possible.

The book is remarkable for a child of eight. That does not mean that if the age of the child were not known the book would be considered wonderful; but there are here and there some phrases in it which are quite astonishing. I have noted down those phrases and am going to read them out to you. (*The Mother skims through the book*)

A little phrase like this: "If one truly loves oneself well, one can hide nothing from oneself".... Obviously this is fine.

And then another thing written to a boy with a freckled face (you know what freckles are, don't you?). She writes to him: "You are beautiful, yes indeed, your freckles are quite pretty; one would say that an angel has sown grains of wheat in your face to attract the birds of heaven there." Surely this is very poetic.

And one more now, something really good which also opens the door to the explanation I am going to give you: "I am only an ear, a mouth; the ear hears a storm of words which I cannot explain to you, which an immense voice flings within me and my mouth repeats them and nothing of what I say can compare with the streaming of light which is within me."

Evidently this is very beautiful.

It seems that here and there in her poems (she has written many) are found reminiscences of Maeterlinck, for instance; so from that people have concluded that it was not she who had written them, for at the age of eight one doesn't read Maeterlinck, that it must have been someone else. But in fact there is no need at all to imagine a hoax, and the editor indeed declares that he is sure of what he is doing, that he knows the child very intimately (in fact he is in a way her adoptive father, for her father is dead) and can guarantee that there is no deception. But it is not at all necessary to imagine a deception in order to explain this phenomenon.

Authors, writers, who were inspired and serious in their creative work, that is to say, who were concentrated in a sort of consecration of their being to their literary work, form within themselves a sort of mental entity extremely well-constituted and coordinated, having its own life, *independent of the body*, so that when they die and the body returns to the dust, this mental formation continues to exist altogether autonomously and independently, and as it has been fashioned for expression it always looks for a means of expression somewhere. And if there happens to be a child who has been formed in particularly favourable circumstances (for instance, the mother of this little girl is herself a poetess and writer; perhaps this mother had an aspiration, a wish that

<sup>1</sup> Minou Drouet, born in 1947, author of "Arbre mon ami".



her child should be a remarkable, exceptional being), anyway, if the child conceived is formed in particularly favourable circumstances, an entity of that kind may enter into the child at the moment of birth and try to use it to express itself; and in that case this gives a maturity to the mind of the child which is quite extraordinary, exceptional, and which makes it do things of the kind we have just read.

We could say, without fear of sounding quite absurd, that if what she has written resembles certain things surprisingly or has the characteristics of the writings of Maeterlinck, with even certain almost identical turns of phrase, it could very well be that a mental formation of Maeterlinck has incarnated in this child and is using this young instrument to express itself.

There are similar examples, for instance, among musicians. There are pianists who have individualised their hands and made them so wonderfully conscious that these hands do not decompose — not the physical hands: the hands of the subtle physical and vital — do not decompose, do not dissolve at the moment of death. They remain as instruments for playing the piano and always try to incarnate in the hands of someone playing the piano. I know instances of people who at the moment of playing felt as though other hands entered into theirs and who began to play quite marvellously, in a way they could not have done themselves.

These things are not as exceptional as one would believe, they happen quite often.

I saw the same thing in someone who used to play the violin and another who played the 'cello — two different cases — and who were not very wonderful artistes themselves. One of them was just beginning his studies and the other a good performer, but nothing marvellous. But all of a sudden, the moment they played the compositions of certain musicians, something of that musician entered into their hands and made their performance absolutely wonderful.

There was also another person (a woman) who used to play the 'cello, and the moment she played Beethoven, the expression of her face changed completely into Beethoven's, and what she played was sublime, which she could not have done if something of Beethoven's mind had not entered into her.

*Mother, isn't this exceptional faculty bad for the person who plays?*

Why do you suppose it would do them harm? It does them good!

It is always good to make a progress or become better than one is.

*But for the child?*

I don't understand. For the child?

*Yes. She is already fully mature at the age of eight.*

But that is something wonderful — to be at the age of eight the expression of

something which surpasses the intelligence! In what way do you suppose it could do her harm? I don't quite understand your question.

*When one grows up, one becomes less plastic.*

No. You mean that what often happens is that an infant prodigy no longer remains a prodigy when it grows up. But precisely, those who have studied these cases say that what is exceptional about things happening now is that infant prodigies become, as they put it, prodigious men, that is, the exceptional faculty remains in them and gets more firmly established as they grow up.

But I don't see how it can be bad, it can only be good. In what way can it be bad? It is as though you said: If one has a beautiful soul, that is bad!

When something of a higher nature enters into you, it is a grace, isn't it?

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## THE MOTHER

SACRED Sanctuary of our deepest heart!  
Our Anchorage in an uncertain sea —  
Our life would be a desolate nought  
But for you, Sweet Eternity!

Our roots stretched into this changeable earth  
Meaningful because of you, Luminous Core!  
The deep folds of our being, illumined,  
Day upon day will endure

With endless hope — an inner gladness —  
The air ever-charged with your breath —  
A glorious Promise and a Strength —  
Infinite Succour that knows no death.

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA

# SRI AUROBINDO ON AVATARHOOD

## SOME LETTERS

*Q: What is an incarnation? From what plane does it take place?*

SRI AUROBINDO: An incarnation is the Divine Consciousness and Being manifesting through the body. It is possible from any plane.

*Q: When the Divine descends here as an incarnation, does not that very act mould his infinity into a limited finite? How then does he still continue to rule over the universe?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Do you imagine that the Divine is at any time not everywhere in the universe or beyond it? or that he is living at one point in Space and governing the rest from it, as Mussolini governs the Italian Empire from Rome? 11-5-1937

*Q: I was speaking of the Divine in the body, and not of the Divine in his supreme plane above in an impersonal and formless aspect. Does not his incarnation on earth necessarily limit him? Living in such a world he has to govern all the three universes!*

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the omnipresent cosmic Divine who supports the action of the universe; if there is an Incarnation, it does not in the least diminish the cosmic presence and the cosmic action in the three or thirty million universes. 12-5-1937

*Q: When the Avatar comes down here how does he take on a mind, vital and body? It is, I think, the soul that is Divine, but the Adhar has to be built up from the cosmos?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Everybody has to do that when he is born. It is the soul that is permanent. 16-12-1935

*Q: Does an Avatar create a new mind, life and body from the cosmos for himself, or take hold of some liberated human being and use his outer personality for his manifestation?*

SRI AUROBINDO: That would be a possession, not an Avatar, an Avatar is supposed to be from birth. Each soul at its birth takes from the cosmic mind, life and matter to shape a new external personality for himself. What prevents the Divine from doing the same? What is continued from birth to birth is the inner being. 18-12-1935

*Q: You wrote: "The Avatar is a special manifestation, while for the rest of the time it is the Divine working within the ordinary human limits as a Vibhuti." Does not the Divine find it difficult to mould himself into a Vibhuti and accept the human limits?*

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should it be difficult? Even the Avatar accepts limits for his work. 28-12-1935

*Q: There are quite a number of Yogis in India. At least in some of them, like Sri Raman Maharshi, there is truly something great. That means they are open directly to*

*the Divine in some way or other. If the Divine manifests on earth in a human form — as we believe has happened here — would they not be aware of it?*

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no reason why they should. Each has approached the Divine in his own way. He may not recognise if the Divine manifests in another way or a new form.

19-3-1936

*Q: Since an Avatar comes here with a divine Power, Light and Ananda why should he pass through the same process of sadhana as an ordinary sadhak?*

SRI AUROBINDO: The Avatar is not supposed to act in a non-human way — he takes up human action and uses human methods with the human consciousness in front and the Divine behind. If he did not, his taking a human body would have no meaning and would be of no use to anybody. He could just as well have stayed above and done things from there.

10-1-1936

*Q: The Avatar, though not the Vibhuti, does not need to satisfy his vital. (Sri Aurobindo's marginal remark, "Why should he not?") For his vital has no cravings and desires as our vitals have. He is above them. And if he seems to be satisfying them, it is only to acquire experience and knowledge of the vital worlds.*

SRI AUROBINDO: All that is wrong. The Avatar takes upon himself the nature of humanity in his instrumental parts, though the consciousness acting behind is divine.

23-7-1936

*Q: When the Divine condescends to be here (as the Avatar), he has to veil himself and deal with the world and its movements like an ordinary man of the cosmic product. (Sri Aurobindo's marginal remark: "Exactly.") But behind he is perfectly conscious of what happens. The universal forces cannot make him their tool as they do with us.*

SRI AUROBINDO: That does not prevent the Avatar from acting as men act and using the movements of Nature for his life and work.

23-7-1936

*Q: Does your above answer mean that the Avatars too satisfy the vital desires, cravings, lust, etc. as a layman?*

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean by lust? Avatars can be married and have children and that is not possible without sex; they can have friendships, enmities, family feelings, etc., etc. — these are vital things. I think you are under the impression that the Avatar must be a saint or a yogi.

24-7-1936

*Q: The Avatars can of course be married and satisfy the vital movements. But do they really indulge them as ordinary people? While satisfying their outer being do they not remain conscious of their union with the Divine above?*

SRI AUROBINDO: There is not necessarily any union above before the practice of yoga. There is a connection of the consciousness with the veiled Divinity and an action out of that, but this is not dependent on the practice of yoga.

25-7-1936

*Q: When the old Yogis made spiritualisation their goal, it was not because they were ignorant or selfish, seeking their own personal perfection and not the perfection of the terrestrial existence. They simply could not restrain their souls from laya, submerged in the Beyond. It is natural that one should not go against the impulse of one's soul. Moreover, it is by no means an illusion, otherwise the Divine too will be an illusion. We are saved from this impulse by the descent of the Avatar.*

SRI AUROBINDO: I do not understand the reasoning. If the soul's natural impulse is to seek laya and that is the true theory, otherwise the Divine would be an illusion, then anything contrary to it (e.g. my teaching that the true purpose of existence here is the manifestation of the Divine in the world and not laya) must be false. The Divine in the world and its manifestation here must be an illusion. The Avatar being here can only delay the laya, it can't alter the nature of things or the purpose of existence.

20-9-1936

*Q: It is the descent of the Mother and yourself that helped us to transform the attraction for laya into one for the supramental life on earth. It must have demanded of you a herculean work.*

SRI AUROBINDO: What work? You have said the purpose of existence is for the soul to have laya in the Divine. There can then be no work — the only divine work possible is to get ready for laya and, once ready, to go into laya.

The Divine being here in a personal form is only for the work of further manifestation. How can it alter the fundamental purpose of the soul's presence here — which always was, according to the laya theory, to come into the world in order to go out of it again.

20-9-1936

From NAGIN DOSHI

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## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the issue of July, 1973)

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

JUNE 27, 1940

P: If Russia demands Bessarabia it might be by an understanding with Hitler.

SRI AUROBINDO: If Rumania accedes then Russia will next enter Bucharest.... Hitler has demanded all the German refugees from the French Government which means that he will harass them now.

P: Our people in Calcutta have asked whether, in the proof of *The Life Divine*, it shouldn't be *founded on* instead of *founded in*. Not only that but in anticipation they have already put *founded on* in the final proof.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the context concerned it must be *founded in* and not *on*.

P: Does it make a big difference: *in* or *on*?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, a big difference in the meaning.

P: I came to know afterwards that they had changed it already.

S: Perhaps some Calcutta persons have pointed it out thinking it unusual.

SRI AUROBINDO: What idiots some people can become.

P: They are familiar only with *founded on*, it seems.

SRI AUROBINDO: All these people think that they know better English than I do.

N: They perhaps think that it may be an oversight or some mistake in typing or printing.

SRI AUROBINDO: I have used the same expression in the previous pages and there I said it must be *in* and again they change it! Indians, when they write English, use stock phrases and conventional usages while a good writer will never do that. That is why their English is so flat and has no life in it and gives the impression that they have learned English. A good writer will always avoid stock expressions and vary the usages. (*Smiling*) Stephen Phillips the poet said that the English language is like a woman who will only love if you take liberties with her. (*Laughter*). (*After a pause*) Sir Dinshaw Wacha sent here a book he had written. I found on every page almost forty stock phrases — what are called clichés — and all the papers were praising it, saying, "What a wonderful style!" To an Englishman it would seem horrible,

## EVENING

The evening radio news said that the Pétain government had asked the Governors of Indo-China and Africa to resign and new men would be appointed in their places.

S: They haven't yet repudiated the Pétain government. Now they will be forced to decide what they should do; whether to recognise it or revolt against it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Nogues of Africa has said that he won't give an inch of French territory to Italy without a fight.

P: Will the Pétain government send warships then to make them obey?

SRI AUROBINDO: They may do anything. When they have recalled the Governors, it means that the colonies haven't obeyed. What about Syria? The Pétain government hasn't recalled its Governor. Perhaps they know that he will send them to the devil.

S: Will Indo-China be able to resist Japan?

P: At least the French there will be able to give a good account of themselves.

SRI AUROBINDO: It won't be a promenade for Japan.

N: Besides, if Indo-China makes an alliance with Britain, Britain will have to go to her help. That means war with Japan.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. Will Japan undertake all that with Russia and China at her back?

P: The Pétain government may ask Japan to occupy Indo-China.

SRI AUROBINDO: That will be too much. They will be shot in that case or bound.

N: But if Hitler presses?

SRI AUROBINDO: Even so they can't. They have been able to save their faces by saying that they have saved France from destruction by the armistice with Hitler, but to allow foreigners to kill the French people — that would be —

P: Germany has begun regular air raids on England.

SRI AUROBINDO: But that is not an attack yet. After settling France Hitler may start. He may also have to attack Africa. The situation won't be safe if the French fleet falls into his hands.

N: According to Churchill's speech some units of the fleet seem to have escaped. He is asking them to come to British or go to neutral ports.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes; but not to Spain, I hope. The understanding was that the full fleet would make for the British ports.

*(To be continued)*

NIRODBARAN

## AIDS TO AN INQUIRING OUTSIDER

*Q: The Mother, I am told, has described Sri Aurobindo not as the Supreme Lord but as a part of Him. She has also said: "In the eternity of becoming, each Avatar is only the announcer, the forerunner of a more perfect future realisation."*

*Do these words mean that Sri Aurobindo, embodying the realisation of the Supermind, manifests only a part of the Divine Consciousness and that there will be Avatars after him who will embody higher realisations than the Supramental? Do not the words also imply that there can never be the full manifestation of the Supreme Lord and never what may be called the Last Avatar?*

THE context where the Mother speaks of Sri Aurobindo being a "part" is made up of two statements. We can easily get at her true meaning if we look carefully at both of them together.

One of them was made when she was asked what the difference was between the Lord and Sri Aurobindo. She replied: "There is no essential difference, but the Lord is *All* and Sri Aurobindo is a *part* but conscious of the Supreme Lord of whom he is an emanation." Here we see that "part" simply signifies "emanation". What she signifies by "All" is thus to be understood in comparison with "emanation". Her other statement brings out the required meaning when she says: "One day you may see the Lord also but He has not a precise particular form — He has all possible forms and He is also *beyond* all forms.... That is why He sends upon earth *His Avatars* so that the human being can more easily meet Him, see Him and get into contact with Him." So the only difference between Sri Aurobindo and the Supreme Lord is that Sri Aurobindo, by being an emanation, has one "precise particular form" taken for the sake of human beings by the Lord who has all possible forms and who is also beyond all forms. The Mother's word "All", as contrasted to the word "part", simply refers to "all possible forms" and to the formless beyond them. Sri Aurobindo's being a part does not at all mean that he has only a part of the Divine Consciousness and not the whole of it.

Of course, Sri Aurobindo's immediate and direct work is to manifest the Supermind and not the other principles — Ananda (Bliss), Chit-Tapas (Consciousness-Force) and Sat (Pure Existence) — of the Divine's infinity; but he is called a part not because they remain unmanifested in an immediate and direct way. Even if he did manifest everything of the Divine's infinity in this way, he would still be called a part, since he had a definite body marked off from the rest of creation — a material substance limited to a certain shape which we saw on Darshan Days, whereas the Lord could be considered to have taken all material shapes without distinction. To say that Sri Aurobindo is called a part for manifesting immediately and directly the Supermind alone is to raise an issue irrelevant to the Mother's statements.

With regard to the Mother's mention of the succession of Avatars, the issue would not be totally pointless, but the mention itself does not have it in mind. The



words are framed as they are in order to lead on to the second half of the message whose opening they constitute. The second half runs: "And yet men have always the tendency to deify the Avatar of the past in opposition to the Avatar of the future." The sentence alludes to people's neglecting — in the name of the old spirituality as if that spirituality were ultimate — the more perfect realisation that Sri Aurobindo embodied with the Supermind.

Whether the Supermind is ultimate or not is a question left untouched. So the issue about its being a partial perfection is again really irrelevant — but now it can be brought forward as a further inquiry, the next step from where we stand with the Mother's message.

What would be the correct answer? It would be in general: "The nature of the Supremind is such that the supramental realisation cannot be put on a par with any past spirituality." The question raised assumes that just as in the manifestation of lesser powers than the Supermind, Avatar had to succeed Avatar because each of those powers was only a part of the Divine Reality, so also the Supramental Avatar has to be succeeded by a whole series of other Avatars. The comparison is erroneous. By the manifestation of the Supermind a Godlike evolution in the most literal sense results: the formation of an earthly being who by his very nature is free from ignorance, incapacity and the deathward movement that is all embodied life at even its most spiritual. Here is a radical change distinguishing the Supramental manifestation from all others. Hence to say that this manifestation is not final is never the same thing as to say that the manifestations before the Supramental are not final but parts of an endless process of world-perfection. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, there is conversion before the Supermind and progression after it. Until the Supramental change has occurred, something imperfect remains and needs to be converted. With the occurrence of that change, what remains is only the inexhaustible exploration of the perfect: what remains is the "more perfect" in the sense of more quantity, as it were, of the perfection hidden in the Divine and not the "more perfect" in the sense of a superior quality.

After the Supramental manifestation the Divine cannot be diviner but He can still be various and show state on miraculous state of form-assuming flawlessness in an eternity of becoming. The Supramental Avatarhood is from a plane where the ultimate marvel of the Transcendent is organised for time-creation and the all-transformative archetype of earth-existence is dynamic. This Avatarhood carries not only in the inward but also in the outward the utter Godhead, and all potentialities of future Avatarhood are continuous with those which it manifests and come not from qualitatively higher or greater planes but from planes in its own background: the Supermind and what is behind it are one single many-aspected Supreme Reality. A new form of incarnation for a new manifestation is now no longer a necessity. It is the intuitive inkling of this absence of further embodiment, rather than the anomalous idea of putting a term to the Infinite's manifestation on earth, that has led Hinduism to speak of Kalki as the last Avatar.

The Supramental Avatar is under no obligation to pass and give place to other Avatars. He can himself embody all the future aspects of manifestation of the Transcendent. The passing and giving place can apply only to the Avatars before the Supramental. The Mother has not hesitated to ascribe an Avataric finality to Sri Aurobindo in the following question-and-answer passage from the talk on August 15, 1956:

“Is there a connection between the Feast of the Assumption in the Catholic Church (on August 15) and the date of Sri Aurobindo’s birth?”

“Yes, and he has said it himself also. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary is the divinisation of Matter and this is the aim of the last Avatar.”

K.D. SETHNA

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## THOUGHTS

TREES are given birth and sustained by the soil.  
 Souls are given birth and sustained by the Power Above.  
 Trees are rooted in the soil.  
 And souls are rooted in the Power Above.  
 But Man is rooted both Above and Below.  
 Therefore on him lies the burden of heavenising the earth.

\*

“A dwarf is the Soul  
 And a giant is the world!”  
 That is a falsehood.  
 Dwarfs are all the worlds  
 And a giant is the Soul.  
 That is the Truth.  
 For whom?  
 For him who can look beyond surfaces  
 And weigh invisibilities.

GIRDHARLAL

# INDIA AND THE FATE OF NATIONS

## A GLANCE AT THE CAREERS OF ANCIENT RACES THROUGH SRI AUROBINDO'S EYES

*(August 15 is the date both of Sri Aurobindo's birth in 1872 and of India's independence in 1947. The coming of India into her own was one of the great concerns of Sri Aurobindo's life. The following thoughts, inspired by his world-vision, should be very much in place for those who have our country's interests at heart.)*

ACCORDING to Sri Aurobindo, every nation, every large and distinguishable human collectivity, is a super-organism, with a common or communal body, mind and soul. This super-organism, like the individual, passes through a cycle of birth, growth, youth, ripeness and decline. If the decline lasts long, it generally ends in death.

But there resides, in the vast subtleties of the collective being of a people, a power of self-renewal with the help of its inner life-idea. The inner life-idea is the key to a nation's psychology and is more tenacious than the outer form. If it is great and intense and the body is strong enough and the surface-mind plastic and adaptive without being loose or unstable, then the collective being can keep unimpaired through vicissitudes, even rise phoenix-like out of an apparent perishing and one cycle will evolve into another and many cycles run their courses before the final collapse.

Certain of the ancient civilisations had this kind of continuity and resurrection. But even they could not last indefinitely. For, the inner life-idea itself of a super-organism is only a projection of the authentic soul behind, a principle of that soul's manifestation. This soul in turn is a manifestation and vehicle of the eternal Spirit whose expression in time is the whole universe. The Cosmic Self or "Virat", as the Rishis called it, acting through its particularised representative, the soul, is the true source and support of the inner life-idea of the collective being, as it is of the individual. And if the source and support is not sufficiently contacted in consciousness through the soul, the eternal is never brought with dominant effect into the temporal and ultimately a people suffers dissolution or a fusion into other races instead of achieving their assimilation into its own communal consciousness.

This has happened to several great collectivities of old: Egypt, Sumer, Crete, Greece, Persia, the Celtic cultures, Rome, the Incas, the Aztecs and the civilisations of ancient America before them. The nations that exist today where these were at one time are no real continuations of them. Some influence does linger and is still fruitful in general amidst some ethnic remnant, but there is no perceptible identity of inner life-idea or even of outer nation-body.

When, however, there is a constant look into the Inmost, a persistent pressure upon the deepest and widest Self, a people acquires the secret of perpetual life-renewal and never ages, no matter how many millenniums pass, what foreign invasions inter-

fere with the physical expression and what defects and decadences set in as a result of its own folly. Even death may threaten again and again, but every time a renaissance occurs and the wrinkles straighten out, the stiff limbs recover healthy resilient tissue, the crust of dull habit and stifling conservative restraint breaks to reveal an enterprising and creative consciousness that was never moribund within. A people living not only with a keen and independent psychological stress rather than with a merely refined and superficially mentalised animal urge, a people living also in the experience of its profound soul and thereby in the presence of "Virat", the infinite Self of the cosmos seeking its own highest manifestation through human history, such a people never dies and is everlastingly young in spite of many phases of apparent decline.

In ways that are different in several respects but have a basic similarity India and China strike the historian as nations that can be said to have lived from remote antiquity onward with a general touch on this infinite Cosmic Self. The sense of Atman, the sense of Tao meet us throughout. Not that there have been no counter-currents, but, by and large, the inmost universal Reality has been felt by them across the millenniums. And that is why they have persisted with a recognisable continuity, as no other nation contemporary with their early careers has done.

Modern China has gone through a revolution which appears to run against such a continuity at last. But can a nation that has kept a Tao-toned identity for so long lose its character under the sweep of Dialectical Materialism? It hardly seems probable. Certain economic changes may come to stay; permanent change of essential genius is unlikely.

Not the least doubt, however, can be entertained about the India of today. Behind a thousand defects, weaknesses and corruptions, there still runs, as an undying potential, the ancient spirituality. This potential also acts secretly against the trend of a superficial modernism. At one period — in the nineteenth century — India passed through the grave danger of getting its true genius obscured. Then arose Ramakrishna in a stark nudity of fundamental Indianness — illiterate, childlike, clear of all Europeanised trappings and modernised refinements. He began a new cycle of the Eternal in time for the old race. Vivekananda, his disciple, gave a strong vital and mental body to the sheer soulfulness of his master and brought the new cycle into some *rapport* with the temper of the age. But the sannyasi ideal was still a harking back to the past. Now, with the advent of Sri Aurobindo, the power of renewal, the realisation of perpetual youth, is a certainty, for there is the ideal of life-acceptance and life-transformation by means of spirituality, along with the taking up of all that is significantly modern.

But India labours under a host of difficulties, a load of shortcomings. Of course, we must not let them obsess our view or blind us to the greatness growing in the womb of time. Yet we cannot neglect them either. India must wake up more and more at once to these incongruities and to that greatness in order to fulfil with swift strides her deathless destiny.

AMAL KIRAN

## MEDITATION IN MOTHER'S ROOM

ACROSS one window hangs a branch of service tree  
a soft and almost Chinese line  
that's sometimes blurred by agency of wind or squirrel paw.  
The other window screened by green silk shades  
gives subtle lighting to the gracious teak-lined room  
and She a frail and perfumed figure  
sits in her silken robes on a brocaded chair,  
(her little feet on painted cushions)  
dispensing roses, grace and transformation flowers  
and drawing tears of peace and joy.

High up upon another chair she rides the buffeting winds  
her flaming hair whips her soft cheeks  
her cushioned chair rocks like an open boat  
tossed in the storm  
of earth's primeval night.  
What good are silk or cushions here?

Alone in space she makes her way  
Voyaging the hostile regions by her own light  
her only beacon destiny.  
I hear the fallen powers rave  
and see their cunning swollen faces.

Serene she sails amidst the howling forms of ignorance  
and all that can be seen of this dim room up there  
are piercing eyes that tear the gloom  
and navigate the treacherous air.

A parrot in the service tree  
recalls me to the room again  
and what I see is her frail hand  
that takes a golden rose

and with no hint of triumph  
She is offering it to me.

MAGGI

## THE SEEKERS OF PONDICHERRY

*(Continued from the issue of July, 1973)*

*(We are concluding the serial publication of the complete article which in a shortened version has appeared in The Washington Post, Sunday, April 22, 1973, beginning on p. B 1. The American paper introduced the author, H. Michael Zelnick, as follows: "The writer is an American who has lived at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram since 1968, teaching English in an Ashram School.")*

*For the already published portions of the article our acknowledgements are due to The Washington Post.)*

CHRIS and Karen Fahy, both 30, a handsome couple with Salem-commercial type good looks, found their way from the U.S. to the Ashram by a route quite different from Alan's psychedelia. Chris and Karen met in their junior year at the University of Pennsylvania and were married soon after they graduated in 1963. Chris had majored in business management and went to work for a large advertising company. Karen, a sociology major, worked in the University's admissions office. After four years with the company Chris quit his job, along with three other friends to set up a public relations firm of their own. After two years of "getting started", during which time the Fahys lived largely on Karen's salary, the new company began to thrive and Chris suddenly found himself a fairly rich young man with immediate prospects of becoming a very rich young man. A year and a half later, they were in Pondicherry living in a spartanly furnished three-room apartment that the Mother gave them when they joined the Ashram.

"We just never really could find what we wanted in that life," says Karen. "For a long time we thought it was the job and the money thing: Chris wasn't happy in his work at first and then for a while after he started the other firm, we were pretty poor."

"It's not that we were wretchedly unhappy," puts in Chris, "but there was always a sense of something missing, the feeling that it could not all be like this, that there had to be something else."

"But when Chris started making a lot of money, it didn't seem to make any difference," continues Karen. "I mean, it was nice, but after about six months we knew that that wasn't what we were looking for."

"I heard about Sri Aurobindo," says Chris, "from a friend of a friend who knew someone who had visited the Ashram, a pretty tenuous contact, but enough to make me get one of Sri Aurobindo's books and have a look. It was amazing: both of us immediately knew that we'd found the truth of our lives. He said everything that we'd dimly sensed so lucidly. . . It was fantastic; we sat up half the night the day I got the book, reading passages to each other and just saying 'Wow!' It was as if a

tremendously wise and loving friend whom we hadn't seen for years had suddenly appeared to answer all our questions."

Chris wrote to the Mother, explaining their situation and asking for her advice. She replied that they could come to the Ashram for a visit and that if they wished, the question of their staying could be taken up later. They have been at the Ashram now for three years and plan to stay.

I asked them if they thought of themselves as drop-outs:

"Well, sure, I suppose in one sense we're drop-outs," replied Chris. "We found life in America unsatisfactory and we left it. But in another sense, I think a more meaningful one, we're not. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga isn't a turning of one's back on the problems of the world, finding your own little place somewhere and just leaving everybody else to go to hell. The goal of this yoga isn't to leave the world but to change it. But the work is of a different nature than people are familiar with and many just can't understand how we can claim to be 'in the world' and working to improve it."

"I went through it with my father last year. My parents came to visit us and were here for about two weeks. They were very relieved to find that I wasn't the emaciated loin-clothed wreck they'd pictured despite all my assurances to the contrary. They even had to admit that we both looked better and seemed healthier and happier than they'd ever known us to be before. They might really have gotten to like the place, but my father was absolutely hung-up on one thing. Good old 1930's vintage liberal that he is, he just couldn't handle the idea of two thousand well-housed, well-fed, well-clothed people claiming to be leading spiritual lives while all around them people were dressing in rags and living on the streets and hanging their backsides over the curbs everytime they had to defecate.

"I pointed out that even if the Ashram could completely banish poverty from Pondicherry, a most dubious proposition, it wouldn't touch the millions and millions of wretched people in the rest of India, let alone the world; whereas if we succeed along the line Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have opened for us, the problem would be eradicated everywhere because it would be beaten at the most fundamental level, that of the consciousness which presently makes poverty and misery possible in the first place. I told him one didn't reproach Sloan Kettering for not diverting money from cancer research to run a juvenile delinquent rehabilitation program, that if there was to be any hope of succeeding along the line we were following we couldn't afford to dissipate our energies in many other directions, however worthy they might be. But for him at least, the Christian identification of spirituality with charity and the 'liberal' identification of progress with social welfare are absolutes. They're not for us."

"In terms of our personal lives," adds Karen, "it hardly feels like we've dropped out of anything. I mean, we're both working harder, even in purely physical terms of hours spent at our jobs, than we ever did in America. Chris teaches at the Ashram school in the morning and afternoon and helps edit one of the Ashram journals in the evening. I work at one of the gardens in the morning, proof read in the press in the afternoons and do typing for some of the Ashram offices in the evening. It's true that

work done for the Mother doesn't really feel like work, but, as I said, it doesn't feel much like dropping out either."

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The Ashram community is singularly free of rules and regulations, but one rule which has continually been reaffirmed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is a prohibition on sexual activity. It is no doubt an indication of the difficulty that some of the devotees have encountered in this area that in Sri Aurobindo's *Collected Letters* more space is devoted to this subject than to any other.

"The whole principle of this yoga is to give oneself entirely to the Divine alone and to nobody and nothing else, and to bring down into ourselves by union with the Divine Mother-Power all the transcendent light, force, wideness, peace, purity, truth-consciousness and Ananda of the supramental Divine. In this yoga, therefore, there can be no place for vital relations or interchanges with others; any such relation or interchange immediately ties down the soul to the lower consciousness and its lower nature; prevents the true and full union with the Divine.... Still worse would it be if this interchange took the form of a sexual relation or a sexual enjoyment...therefore these things are absolutely forbidden in the sadhana...

"...the vital excitement that accompanies it makes the most favourable opportunity and vibration in the atmosphere for the inrush of those very vital forces and beings whose whole business is to prevent the descent of the supramental Light. The pleasure attached to it is a degradation and not a true form of the divine Ananda.<sup>1</sup> The true divine Ananda in the physical has a different quality and movement and substance; self-existent in its essence, its manifestation is dependent only on an inner union with the Divine."

To a particularly close disciple who complained at one point that he was not much attracted to the "grand, cold, empty, remote, overwhelming" consciousness to which he felt such austerity must lead, Sri Aurobindo replied:

"It is curious that you admit your ignorance of what the supramental can be, and yet you in these moods not only pronounce categorically what it is like, but reject emphatically my experience about it as of no practical validity or not valid for anybody but myself!... The Supramental is *not* grand, aloof, cold and austere; it is not something opposed to or inconsistent with a full vital and physical manifestation; on the contrary, it carries in it the only possibility of the full fulness of the vital force and the physical life on earth. It is because it is so, because it was so revealed to me and for no other reason that I have followed after it and persevered till I came into contact with it and was able to draw down some power of it and its influence. I am concerned with the earth, not with worlds beyond for their own sake; it is a terrestrial realisation that I seek and not a flight to distant summits. All other yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental yoga alone regards it as a thing

<sup>1</sup> Perfect delight; delight of the spirit.



created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment of the life and the body for its object. The supramental is simply the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter. One has indeed to rise to high summits to reach it, but the more one rises, the more one can bring down below. No doubt, life and body have not to remain the ignorant, imperfect, impotent things they are now; but why should a change to fuller life-power, fuller body-power be considered something aloof, cold and undesirable? The utmost Ananda the body and life are now capable of is a brief excitement of the vital mind, or the nerves or the cells which is limited, imperfect and soon passes: with the supramental change all the cells, nerves, vital forces, embodied mental forces can become filled with a thousandfold Ananda, capable of an intensity of bliss which passes description and which need not fade away. How aloof, repellent, and undesirable! The supramental love means an intense unity of soul with soul, mind with mind, life with life, and an entire flooding of the body consciousness with the physical experience of oneness, the presence of the Beloved in every part, in every cell of the body. Is that too something aloof and grand and undesirable? With the supramental change, the very thing on which you insist, the possibility of the free physical meeting of the embodied Divine with the sadhak without conflict of forces and with undesirable reactions becomes possible, assured and free. That too is, I suppose, something aloof and undesirable?"

The principle of the sublimation of sexual energy into spiritual force has been known to Indian yoga for thousands of years and has been, says the Mother, part of the essential teaching of initiatic schools in all times and places. What distinguishes the Ashram approach to the matter, however, is its rejection of the convenience of asceticism. To subdue the sexual impulse while living alone in a cave somewhere is, so far as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are concerned, relatively simple, but little more than worthless if for no other reason than that the "mastery" so achieved is a tenuous thing, likely to be entirely overwhelmed the first time one emerges from the cave and encounters erotic stimuli. To be meaningful, the sex impulse must be conquered in its own field, the world of everyday life itself, just as, according to Sri Aurobindo, all spiritual realisation must ultimately be brought into the field of normal life. Thus at the Ashram, men and women mingle freely, dress in any manner they choose, and move absolutely unrestricted through the city. Most husbands and wives continue to live together and it is not uncommon for men and women to develop close friendships and spend much time together. As in all facets of Ashram life the emphasis is on the consciousness behind the activity rather than the external activity itself and the individuals involved in such relationships presumably attempt to relate to one another on a primarily spiritual rather than vital or physical level. Lapses among couples, while not unknown, are, I was assured, far more the exception than the rule and in any case, are simply that: lapses; cynical exploitation of the freedom allowed to Ashramites in such matters seems truly unknown.

I asked Chris and Karen about this aspect of their life at the Ashram. Yes, they

said, the sex thing was certainly a problem, perhaps the most difficult one with which they personally had to deal, but no, the problem did not seem insoluble. "For one thing," said Karen, "the whole matter of sexuality takes on a different aspect when one is not constantly bombarded by the vibration as one is in the West. For example, one becomes able to contemplate celibate existence as a perfectly legitimate alternative to ordinary life. It's awfully hard to do that in an environment where even a hint of such sentiments is considered a sign of some kind of pathological aberration."

"You know, it's not like something we've beaten," says Chris. "It's still virtually a day-to-day struggle, not to fall back into the old ways of relating to one another. But we've gotten to the point where we can at least mentally see and accept the truth of what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother say about sex. And every now and then, even if it's just for a couple of minutes, we touch on something else, a completely different type of relationship that's so incredibly beautiful...it's like a glimpse of what we're moving towards and even the briefest glimpse is enough to make all the struggling not just worthwhile, but a joy, a Grace."

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"Grace." It's a word one hears often at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram: a word one hears applied to things that hardly seem graces by people whose every gesture denies the sugary sentimentality such words often betray: Alan recalling the "Grace" by which "money, chicks, dope", whatever he wanted, just fell into his lap until he finally realised that none of these things could satisfy him and began his journey to the East; Prabhu declaring it Grace that one doesn't see much of the gods any more, for, though it's less fun, he's heard that the work is going faster; Chris telling me it's a Grace to share an apartment with his beautiful wife and continually struggle with sexual desire because, in rare moments, he's glimpsed the wonder towards which the struggle is leading.

"Grace." The Divine Grace itself, they say, incarnate in a tiny old lady who, if she finds you worthy, will let you surrender everything you own, your will, your very being to her and will see you individually for a few moments once a year on your birthday...and it will be enough, and more than enough...

I do not understand what I have seen but something in me will not let me simply dismiss the Mother and her children with a facile tag like "religious fanaticism" or "group psychosis": and perhaps, that I cannot do so is a Grace.

(Concluded)

H. MICHAEL ZELNICK

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## TRAVELLER'S LUCK\*

It is good to be back and breathe the pure, life-giving air of the Ashram. My banishment of nearly a whole year was not wholly of my own seeking. As my friend, Visvajit, would say, it was the Mother's will. In this case for some inscrutable reason the Mother's will chose to work through the University Grants Commission and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, the UGC and the ICCR, for short. They sponsored my tours abroad.

### I

Luckily, I had friends here, there and everywhere. Some of them I had never met before and may not meet again. For instance, the Indian Ambassador to Bulgaria, Dr. Gopal Singh, author of a well-known poem on Jesus Christ, "The Man Who Never Died". Dr. Singh did not spread the red carpet for me — I felt I had to walk on it, anyway — but he opened his home and heart to a fellow traveller in the realms of poetry and the higher dream. Bulgaria is a small Balkan or Central European socialist state, whose revolution was partly managed by the neighbouring USSR. The image of the Big Brother looms everywhere. Imitation and influence dot the landscape. For instance, following Russia's example of monumentalising Lenin in the Red Square, the Bulgarian leader Dimitrov lies embalmed in the heart of the city, a ghastly apparition hardly to be justified by the official philosophy of dialectical materialism. But a socialist state has its advantages, or fringe benefits, for instance total employment. Also there seemed to be a fair amount of equality. The chauffeur who accompanied me on a conducted tour of the country ate and slept in the same hotel. All the same the manual work was confined to a recognizably backward group, mostly elderly, uneducated folk. There was, however, little evidence of crime, unless you look upon patriotism as one. A small nation, be it Bulgaria, Japan or Thailand, has its *amour propre*, and is intensely conscious of its identity. There was of course a lot of brainwashing. It was hard to know what people really thought, or if they thought at all. It was clear that they were afraid to think differently from the people or party in power. Democracy was a dream.

So was Sofia. What a lovely, little city! Where else in the world would you find rose trees as the dividing line between ribbons of roads that stretched miles on end? Or the fabulous Valley of Roses? But it wasn't roses, roses all the way. For some strange reason, Bulgaria's biggest industry happens to be — you can never guess — the hotel industry. The entire country looked like a chain of hotels and might well have been called Hotel Bulgaria. During my short stay I must have seen at least 40,000 — that is no exaggeration. Hotels of all shapes and sizes, mostly modern architecture. The list of hotels included, by the way, some well-preserved monasteries — unholy relics, where late the sweet birds sang, as Shakespeare said

\* From a talk on 22-6-1973.

in one of his sonnets, describing the desecration of church property in Tudor England.

As for hearing my lectures, the Bulgarian government seemed to be in no hurry. Their main intention, so far as I could make out, was to acquaint and impress me with their socialist progress and achievement. But I too wanted to do a bit of impressing and since the Government of India had sent me as part of a cultural exchange programme, the lectures could not be postponed indefinitely. I was well-armed, and had with me matter for about eight lectures, four on Sri Aurobindo. Finally, they chose three: one on Aldous Huxley; the second on Tagore who had visited Bulgaria in the Twenties; the third was a talk which I had hurriedly prepared at the last moment: "the India That Matters". None on Sri Aurobindo. This was a blow to me. But I did my best to put in as many of his thoughts as I could without always identifying him. Here is the gist of what I said:

"The age of tribal gods is over. Today our loyalty is world loyalty, to man and the future. Therefore when we speak of India we are referring not merely to a particular history, people and place but to certain basic, universal ideals and insights. By India we mean a wisdom or philosophy of maturity that is relevant to the total human situation, especially to the double crisis of civilization and evolution. In Sri Aurobindo's words, if we define civilization as a harmony of spirit, body and mind, where has that harmony been altogether real?

"The Indian insights are not necessarily past-oriented or reactionary. Essence of a truly human and civilized living, the Passage to India or the Discovery of India really signifies the search for a lost language of Wisdom. Marked by the spirit of wholeness and balance, the Wisdom is practical, as the spirit of her Yoga will show.

"The Wisdom, such as it is, is based on a firm but graduated idea of Man in terms of First Principles and the Final End. This comes out in one of our earliest prayers: Lead me from the Unreal to the Real, from Darkness to Light, from Death to Immortality. The earliest formula of wisdom promises to be also its last.

"Simply, our so-called science will never be complete without the oldest of sciences, the science of self, *ātma vidyā*. Today the alarming gap between our scientific development and psychological immaturity spells disaster. In spite of the tall claim of revolutions that are not revolutionary enough, a perfected human world cannot be created by or composed of men who are themselves imperfect.

"To help and guide mankind in the evolutionary breakthrough, beyond religion and revolution, towards a just society based on a new consciousness, to create the divine race, such is India's appointed task. This is the India that matters, the unknown India, if you like. That is why Sri Aurobindo says India of the ages has not spoken her last creative word. That is also why Yoga must be revealed once more because without it man cannot take the next step in his further progress. But Yoga need not be India's monopoly nor are its old forms final and sacrosanct. It belongs to all men who are prepared to pay the price, to understand its laws and co-operate with their

own becoming and the world's unborn soul, to find a new body for the old Wisdom.

"There is a need within the soul of man, a deep urge towards a higher emergence and harmony. As responsible members of the race, let us work for this new tomorrow and fulfil the demand of the Spirit as well as the Time-Spirit, the still unfinished evolution or revolution — a harmony of spirit, body and mind. If we don't, who will?"

The talk was of course translated. But even in translation, I could see, it registered, especially among the young. In fact, some of the Party leaders, who had dropped in, felt uneasy and soon whisked me away from the scene to a coffee corner. But those interested managed to meet me later. Many of them seemed to be sincere seekers, though their immediate environment was hardly helpful to such seeking. A girl (who laughingly called herself a witch, she was that pretty) revealed pronounced mystical leanings. She described an experience which can only be called an intimation of immortality. Sensitive people everywhere are looking beyond secularism, socialism and scientism. The European Renaissance is over. In particular something is happening to the young people. This we must understand unless we wish to be left behind. They may be more disturbed, and irregular, than we ever were or dared to be. But they also seem to be more open and in spite of an occasional oddity, exhibitionism and negative gestures, they are closer to the bases of Yoga. It is my feeling that Sri Aurobindo speaks for the youth of the world — defining youth not by age but by attitude — seeking for a new life-style and the day must come when they will claim him. Beyond every doubt tomorrow is his. If only we could be a link between the two!

Sri Aurobindo has revolutionised Yoga and yogicised revolution. Did he not once say: No change can be more radical than that proposed by the Integral Yoga? I used this idea as a sort of shock therapy in an early encounter with Bulgarian officialdom. Like officials everywhere, the chiefs of the Bulgarian Committee for Cultural Affairs were bureaucrats. Polite, firm but also a bit obtuse. In choosing the lectures they had, as I have told you, dropped Sri Aurobindo, obviously because he was an unknown quantity. I was looking for my chance, and it soon came. A little tired of hearing their continued chorus of "Marxist-Leninist" and "scientifique" I happened to say quietly: "Sri Aurobindo has proposed a more radical social philosophy than either Marx or Lenin." They were aghast. For a split second the tea cups hung in mid air, working against Newton's well-known law. Taking advantage of the silence I added: "Did you know his book, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, had been recommended to Lenin?" Obviously they hadn't and I had to leave behind two copies of my abridgement for the edification of the Bulgarian intelligentsia, too bewildered even to say 'Thank you'. This was in 1972, autumn.

(To be continued)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

# 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 July, 1973)

### 6

#### THE FUNDAMENTALS OF TEILHARD'S FAITH: THE TRUE NATURE OF HIS CHRISTIANITY—WHAT IS BASIC TEILHARDISM?—WHAT PLACE HAS HIS CHRISTIANITY IN IT?—TEILHARDISM AND THE MODERN RELIGIOUS INTUITION

(b)

THROUGHOUT his life Teilhard sought to bring the Church into line with himself. He made attempt after attempt to present his Christianity in a fashion that might make it look orthodox in the ordinary sense of the term. He remained respectfully within the Society of Jesus and the Roman Catholic Church, believing in the great destiny of those institutions as well as in his own great mission of changing them from within. Now and again he reduced the sharp angles of his dissension from accepted doctrine. But the compromise was always temporary. Rideau<sup>1</sup> alludes to one such compromise. When Père Joseph Maréchal read in 1934 the manuscript of Teilhard's *Christology and Evolution* (1933), he made a comment correcting Teilhard's complete negation of the accepted meaning of Redemption. Teilhard's *Introduction to Christianity*, written in 1945, "shows that he took notice of this comment". But in 1953, in *The Stuff of the Universe*, "Teilhard puts it with less qualification". And to get an insight into the real Teilhard we have only to read the passage that removes the qualification previously made. We may cite Rideau's own reference to it. In fact he refers to it twice, and the second occasion<sup>2</sup> reveals Rideau's own awareness of the true Teilhard, the obstinate irreducible innovator:

"Towards the end of his life, Teilhard summed up his theological views as follows: 'It is impossible to think of Christ as the "evolver" without thereby having to re-think the whole of Christology.... A functional completion of the one and the multiple takes the place of the creative paternalism we were accustomed to. The twofold notion of *statistical evil* and *evolutionary redemption* corrects or complements the idea of catastrophic sin and reparative expiation. The final Parousia becomes

<sup>1</sup> *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought* (Collins, London, 1967), p. 549.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 575.

more a maturing than a destruction' (*L'étoffe de l'univers*, in *L'activation de l'énergie*, p. 405)."

In an earlier chapter we have already dwelt at some length on the salient points of this passage. We may now touch on them in the context of Rideau's book.

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"Creative paternalism" implies that God, as an agency external to what is created, brings about or "fathers" the world, producing it from absolute non-being or nothingness by an act of sheer benevolence, an act of gratuitous creation — that is, unconditionally free, and without any need in himself or obligation to create. Teilhard contests both the externalistic production — by "efficient causality", as if by a "worker" — of the universe *ex nihilo*, and the utter contingency or dependence of the universe, the universe's nature purely as what in Christian theology is called "participated being" that has no intrinsic eternal existence, the universe's entire lack of inherent as distinguished from conferred value. In a passage Rideau<sup>1</sup> quotes from an early writing Teilhard anticipates in 1919 his stand of 1953: "...if you look around you, you cannot help being astonished that the Christian way of presenting the origins and vicissitudes of the world should be so artificial and even infantile." Among other things Teilhard points out that in "making non-being absolute" and "the creation gratuitous" we are "in danger of making the universe insupportable and the value of souls, which we so emphasize, inexplicable".

Rideau<sup>2</sup> refers to *Comment je vois* of 1948, Nos. 25-31, and, calling it "an essential source" on "the problem of creation", he<sup>3</sup> quotes the key-passage No. 28: "The self-subsistent unity lies at the pole of being, and as a necessary consequence the multiple occupies the whole circumference around it — I mean by that *pure* multiple: 'Creatable nothingness', which is nothing, and yet in virtue of a passive potentiality for arrangement (that is to say, union) is at the same time a possibility of, a yearning for, being — and here our intelligence is completely at a loss to distinguish, in such depths, supreme necessity and supreme freedom, for this potentiality or possibility of yearning is such that it is just as though God were powerless to resist it."

A further gloss on the problem comes when Rideau<sup>4</sup>, after mentioning Nos. 25-31 of *Comment je vois*, notes:

"This line of thought had appeared earlier, in *L'union créatrice*, 1917 (in *Écrits du temps de la guerre*, pp. 184-8), not intended for publication. In this we find that Teilhard has already arrived at his fundamental idea that being is defined by *union*, whether active or received, and is trying to envisage an interconnexion between God and the world that goes beyond the notion of efficient causality. He imagines 'a primitive substratum of spirit' which he sees as an 'extremely attenuated and reduced substance', and even as 'a sort of positive non-being'. 'I cannot pretend,' he says, 'that

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 510: *Note pour servir à l'évangélisation des temps nouveaux* in *Écrits de temps de la guerre*, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 509.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 507.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 509-10.

there are not grave objections to this concept.... It suggests that the creation was not absolutely gratuitous but represents a work of almost absolute involvement.' He adds, however, 'why should we not admit that the necessary existence of absolute unity entails as a secondary consequence, *ad extra*, as an antithesis or a shadow, the appearance at the antipodes of being of an infinite multiplicity?' "

In all this context Rideau<sup>1</sup> is most concerned to comment: "The imagery of his language is sufficient evidence of the absence of any trace of Manicheanism, of the suggestion of God's coexistence with an eternal matter" — in other words, "an antagonistic co-eternal", to use Teilhard's expression.<sup>2</sup> But while, in being non-Manichean, Teilhard is markedly Christian, what happens in his hands to Christianity's doctrine of pure nothingness rather than "a sort of positive non-being" or "a passive potentiality for arrangement...a yearning for being"? Do we not have to un-Christianise Teilhard in order to accommodate it? We get the answer when we see Rideau<sup>3</sup> writing: "One might add a comment that is perhaps too far-fetched. The difficulty would vanish from the real problem put forward by Teilhard, if we accepted an eternal pre-existence of the creature in God. That, however, is impossible and the hypothesis is untenable. Teilhard went a little way in this direction when he spoke, as we saw earlier, of a 'pure potentiality', 'at the antipodes of God' and 'a yearning for being'."

True, Teilhard never made up his mind to go the whole way to the destination indicated by Rideau. He always endeavored to strike a compromise which was chimerical — but even the little way he went takes him leagues off from Roman Catholicism. His problem can never be solved within its framework.

And, if it cannot, Teilhard's demand for "a functional completion of the one and the multiple" must logically elude Christian thought. The total contingency of the multiple will always leave a hole in the theory of functional completion *à la* Teilhard. As a quotation by Rideau<sup>4</sup> from Teilhard tells us, Christianity stands poles apart from this theory and it is this theory, rather than the traditional Christian religion, that should be entitled real Christianity:

"From the human point of view, a doctrine that *no longer justifies in our eyes* the vastness and the laboriousness of the evolution in which we can *see* that we are now caught up, does more than violently contradict the evidence of our minds — it strikes at the very motive power behind our action. What is the point of attaining 'beatitude' if, in the final reckoning, we have made no absolute contribution, through our lives, to the totality of being? At the same time, from the Christian point of view, we can no longer understand why a God could have committed himself, out of mere 'benevolence', to such a flood of sufferings and vicissitudes. You may, by a dialectic of pure act, silence our reason as much as you please, but you will never now convince our hearts that the vast business of the cosmos, *as we now see it*, is simply some gift or plaything of God's. And why, again, if that were so, do the most unmistakable scrip-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 507.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 514.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 508.



tural texts attach so much importance to the fulfilment of the mysterious Pleroma? God is entirely self-sufficient: nevertheless the universe brings him something that is vitally necessary: there you have the two conditions, apparently contradictory, that must in future be satisfied explicitly by any theory of participated being" (*Christianisme et évolution*, 1945).

Once more we glean from Rideau<sup>1</sup> an onslaught on Christianity as it has been so far and a claim that Teilhardism alone is the true Christian position:

"Christian faith, through its mysteries of the Incarnation and even of the Redemption, adorns this world with many charms, but does it not, on the other hand, rob it of all interest — even, maybe, make it contemptible to us — by insisting on God's self-sufficiency and, in consequence, on the complete contingency of creation?... It is sound scholastic philosophy, we all know, that being, in the form of *Ens a se*, is posited exhaustively and super-abundantly, and immediately, at the ontological origin of all things. After this, in a second phase, all the rest (which means the world) appears only as an addition, or an extra granted entirely by favour: we are guests at God's banquet.... Unless at the term of existence we seek only an individual happiness (and that is a form of happiness we have definitely to reject), how could the self-styled revelation of man's radical uselessness fail to make him *lose all heart for action*?... This is a time when man is becoming conscious — as, apparently, he will now never cease to be — of his planetary responsibilities and future: and Christianity (for all the beauty of its gospel) would cease to have any religious value for us if we could suspect that it was depriving our universe of its zest; for that alone would exclude it from the domain of vitalizing faiths.... If I allow myself here to criticize so sharply the scholastic notion of 'participation', it is not only (as will have been apparent) because it degrades the man in us, but also because it angers the Christian in me. 'God creates by love' is a fine scholastic phrase: but what is this love, then, inexplicable in its subject and degrading for its object, that is *based on no need* (unless it be the pleasure of giving for the sake of giving)?" (*Contingence de l'univers et goût humain de survivre*, 1953).

Teilhard presses home in another of Rideau's citations<sup>2</sup> the disparity between the doctrine of a wholly contingent participated being and "the really authentic and concrete expressions of Christian revelation and mysticism". He writes: "What we find at the heart of the teaching and those outbursts is none other than the affirmation and the experience of a strictly bilateral and complementary relationship between God and the world.... We should read St John again, and St Paul. They accept the existence of the world (in too summary a fashion, maybe, for our taste) as an initial datum. But, on the other hand, what a feeling they both have for the absolute value of a cosmic drama, in which it is just as though God, even before his Incarnation, were ontologically involved. And, in consequence of this, how forcibly they stress the Pleroma and pleromization. Indeed, what really gives life to Christianity is not the sense of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 508-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

contingence of the created, but the sense of the mutual completion of the world and God."

Teilhard goes on to fill with "this spirit of 'complementarity' " what he considers a lack in the "Aristotelian ontology" which Christianity bases itself on. He takes the created and the uncreated as indispensable to each other, "both, each in its own way, exist in themselves and join together."<sup>1</sup>

But we know that neither St John nor St Paul denied the complete contingency of participated being. So, in Teilhard's eyes, even Johannine and Pauline Christianity must be inadequate, failing as it does to plumb the full implications of the Pleromatic mystery. For, this mystery at its deepest must imply two modes of perfection in God: one of them enables God to do without the world but the other needs the world: the world "represents completion and fulfilment for absolute being itself"<sup>2</sup> and "we cannot conceive the world as being merely accessory without rendering creation incomprehensible, the passion of Christ an absurdity — and our own struggle meaningless."<sup>3</sup>

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We can perceive how radically revolutionary Teilhard's feeling is about the first point of his re-thought Christology. The second is no less uncompromisingly unorthodox.

In orthodox Christianity, sin occurs with the first Man, whether we take Adam in an individual or in a collective sense. As a result of Adam's violation of God's command, evil entered the world and ruined the paradisaic state: all life, and not only humanity, underwent a catastrophe and man lost the intimacy with God he had been accorded by supernatural Grace. Adam's loss extends, because of the solidarity of all human generations, over the whole post-Adamic history. To heal the terrible cleft between Man and God, God's Son came to earth to sacrifice himself in an extreme love and pay by his death the price of original sin. The root of Sin and Evil on earth is in Adam, in initial Mankind — and Christ's mission is to expiate divinely for human transgression. This nexus of human sin and divine expiation has been basic for Christianity ever since St Paul enunciated it in Romans 9.5.

Teilhard does not overlook the fact that sin as such is confined to the human state in which one has the power to choose, the freedom of accepting or rejecting love for God and His creatures. Nor does he ignore the impression of an excess of evil in the human world due to man's exercise of his distinctive and intensified power, as the sole moral being among all the products of evolution, to go counter to evolution's upward push. Evil assumes in the human world a specially marked colour which is absent from what we may call the "natural" or "normal" evil in the general state of the universe.

What Teilhard refuses to accept is, in the first place, that man is the originator of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 512.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511, *Le cœur de la matière*, 1950, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 508: *Mon univers*, 1924, quoted in *The Future of Man*, p. 308.

evil on the earth. Disorder was there from the beginning, suffering and death were present in prehuman times. One of Rideau's<sup>1</sup> quotations from Teilhard says: "The origin of evil does not present the same difficulties, nor call for the same explanations, in a universe whose structure is evolutionary as it does in an initially perfect static universe. It ceases then to be necessary for reason to suspect or look for a 'culprit'. Physical and moral disorders arise spontaneously in a self-organizing system, so long as that system is not completely organized. *Necesse est ut eveniant scandala*.\* From that point of view, original sin — considered in its cosmic basis, if not in its historical occurrence among the first men — tends to merge into the actual mechanism of creation, in which it appears as the activity of the negative force of counter-evolution" (*Note sur le péché originel*, at the end of *Le Christ évoluteur*).

In the second place, Teilhard refuses to accept that Man's Sin was accidental and could as well have not happened. Being an element in the evolutionary process man was subject from the start to the forces of counter-evolution: moral evil, which is the form that universal evil takes among reflective beings, is to be expected. To expect it is just to acknowledge that statistically a certain number of sinful actions must take place because there is a constant pull back towards the lesser conditions of synthesis from which man has half-emerged. Here we may take some passages of Teilhard's from Rideau.<sup>2</sup> Evil, according to Teilhard, is "the very expression of a still incompletely organized plurality. In a world that is in process of formation, this transitory state of imperfection is manifested, no doubt, in detail, in the form of a certain number of culpable actions: the very first instances of these, and the most decisive (although the least conscious actions in human history<sup>3</sup>) could well be taken separately and described as a 'primitive fault'. But what constitutes the original weakness for the creature is in reality the radical condition that causes it to be born from the multiple, so that it continually retains in its fibres (so long as it is not completely spiritualized) a tendency to sink back into the dust. In such conditions evil is not an unforeseen accident in the universe. It is an enemy, a shadow that God inevitably raises up simply by the fact that he decides on Creation.... Creation is no trifle for omnipotence, no afternoon picnic. It is an adventure, a risk, a battle to which he commits himself entirely" (*Christologie et évolution*, 1933). "In this new setting, evil, without losing any of its bite or horror, ceases to be an unintelligible element, and becomes a *natural feature* of the world's structure" (*Ibid*).

Thirdly, Teilhard refuses to consider man a fallen being who needs to be redeemed from his hopeless state by a divine sacrifice. Man is the spearhead of evolution's forward thrust towards the ultra-human. Statistically, in spite of his freedom to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 539.

\* "It is necessary that temptations come" The exact text of the Vulgate (Matt. 18:7) is: "*Necesse est enim ut veniant scandala*" (Footnote 5 on p. 150 of *Christianity and Evolution*, Collins, London, 1971).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 540-1.

<sup>3</sup> Here a very original piece of early writing by Sri Aurobindo would be pertinent. It is reproduced after this article of ours. (K.D.S.)

choose the downward path and in spite of a certain number of fall-backs, there must be on the whole an evolutionary advance — a passage towards a finer and wider synthesis, a collective unanimity, a superconscious totalisation of mankind. Hence whatever payment has to be made, in sweat and tears and blood, is not for an initial fall whose victim is the entire race throughout history, but for errors and crimes constantly committed all along historical time by individuals and collectivities. It is the harsh price to be rendered for an inevitable yet hard-won progress. Sin is not a catastrophe which chanced to strike down heavenly man; redemption is evolutionary and not reparative: it is meant to uplift man still further along his rising curve and to check him from a degriugolade which he could never be immune from. A short Teilhardian excerpt from Rideau<sup>1</sup> will bear out this point: "Nothing, as it seems to me, can prevent the universe from succeeding — nothing, not even our human liberties, whose essential tendency to union may fail in detail but cannot (without 'cosmic' contradiction) err 'statistically' " (*Faith in Peace*, 1947, in *The Future of Man*, p. 152). A letter of Teilhard to Rideau,<sup>2</sup> of 13 June 1953, may also be called to witness: "Human evolution is both conscious and self-directed. Nevertheless it is, at the same time, *statistically* determined in this sense: 1. That there are natural through-roads and dead-ends about which our freedom can do nothing; and 2, there are, in the Human, currents of unanimity against which the individual's reaction is fruitless or impotent."

Finally, Teilhard refuses to whittle down the function of Christ the Evolver of all cosmos to a function of salvation that is not cosmic in its central meaning. We would decosmicise his role by making him counter merely the wrong turn taken by man in quite recent time, rather than act as one who has animated universal evolution from the very beginning of time — animated it not by an external "juridical" right but by an internal "organic" activity. How could he be a cosmic organic evolver if he is not made the saviour of a cosmic fall structurally inherent in creation? Teilhard urges that St John and St Paul always saw Christ's function in cosmic terms. Christ saved the entire universe and not only man. The original sin, therefore, must be as cosmic as Christ. If it were just a moral accident of no great antiquity, then, as a quotation by Rideau<sup>3</sup> has it, "the Christic power could never directly, organically, formally extend beyond a short slender human spindle" (*Reflexions sur la péché originel*, 1947).

Rideau<sup>4</sup> informs us: "some aspects, at least, of the problem of original sin have been removed by the principles of the encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu* (1943) and by advances in exegesis. Thus Teilhard's statement of the problem is to some extent out of date." But the progress of theological thought on the subject still leaves the crux of Teilhard's differences from orthodoxy untouched. And an assertion of Rideau's<sup>5</sup> a little earlier suggests the unconvertable heart of the situation even now. He says that, realising the difficulty in winning acceptance for his theory, Teilhard wrote: "I don't think that in the history of the Church anyone has 'pulled off' such an

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 551.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 552

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 539

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 540.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 539.

adjustment (in the way of representation) of dogma as that of which we're speaking though similar attempts have been made and carried half-way, for example when geocentrism was abandoned...." (Letter of 14 May 1922).

The exact divergence of Teilhard's theory is spotlighted in a letter of Père Joseph Maréchal cited by Rideau. The letter, according to Rideau<sup>1</sup>, is most sympathetic to some of Teilhard's theories, yet Maréchal<sup>2</sup> is forced to write: "...this new explanation modifies, it seems to me, the essential basis and not simply the formulation of the 'defined' dogma. More precisely still, it suppresses the dogma, by declaring that it is superfluous. What in fact it does is to replace original sin by the distant ontological root of physical and moral evil.... The whole Christian economy of justification is upset. The hypothesis put forward would lead to saying that mankind as such has never lost its initial right to grace and that the deprivation of grace is to be seen in each individual, simply as the effect of a fault of which he is now guilty."

Teilhard's revolutionary departure in going beyond Adam and making a cosmic Christ call for a cosmic imperfection to be compensated and turned to the advantage of man's earthly progress — that revolutionary departure is indirectly brought to a head and hit at in a sharp condensed negative mode by N. M. Wildiers<sup>3</sup> in a footnote to Teilhard's "Reflections on Original Sin" when Teilhard appeals to St John and St Paul. The footnote goes: "St Paul himself in the Epistle to the Romans (9:5) speaks of Adam as essentially related to Christ. This point of view must dominate all theological treatment of the nature of original sin." This point of view is precisely what Teilhard brushes aside.

In passing, we may remember that St Paul takes Adam to be "one man" — a single individual, even if representative of all possible human nature. Teilhard repeatedly dubbed absurd by scientific standards the assertion of monogenism that mankind first emerged as a single individual or, at most, as a pair: one male and one female. Rideau<sup>4</sup> informs us: "Discussing the question of monogenism, Teilhard says that it is essentially for 'theological' reasons ('the Pauline conception of the fall and redemption') that 'the Church clings to the historical reality of Adam and Eve' (*What should we think of transformism?*, 1930, in *Vision of the Past*, p. 156). He adds: 'On the other hand, for reasons of probability and also comparative anatomy science, left to itself, would never (to say the least of it) dream of attributing so narrow a basis as two individuals to the enormous edifice of humankind'. And he anticipates that more theological research may solve the problem (*Ibid.*).'" According to science, every natural species makes its evolutionary appearance polygenetically — as a group — though mostly within a certain restricted cradle-area. But, as late as July, 1966, the allocution of Pope Paul VI as communicated to the secular press suggests that polygenism spoils the picture of original sin.<sup>5</sup> Hence the authoritative Christian position

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 543.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 543-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Christianity and Evolution*, p. 190, fn. 5.      <sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 517.

<sup>5</sup> See *Teilhard and the Creation of the Soul* by Robert North S.J. (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1966) p. 207, fn. 4 (continued on p. 208).

is still in conflict with Teilhard's modern-mindedness with regard not only to the Fall as such but also to the type of "genism" that may be associated with it.

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Free of the incubus of orthodoxy's "*peccatum originale*", Teilhard cannot help fixing his gaze on a peak of evolution awaiting us in the future. And he defines the peak as the natural meeting-place between fully evolved Man and the Christ who will reappear with his final supernatural action to gather the elect into himself and, through himself, into God. But we must get the proper "hang" of Teilhard's statement that the Parousia will not be a destruction.

By this he does not mean that all will be peaceful for the world at the end — clear of all internal conflict within the world itself. Rideau<sup>1</sup> has well said that "although Teilhard emphasizes certain passages in St Paul dealing with the final unity of the Church or the presence of God in all things", he is also at pains to set forth the view suggested by many other passages "(in the Gospels and the Apocalypse for example) which present the general history of the world as a dramatic conflict whose issue is a forcible division of mankind". But even a final conflict can come only when a mass of mankind has attained an ultra-human unification by an evolutionary process of fulfilment. What Teilhard means by "destruction" grows clear when Rideau shows him writing: "The Kingdom of Christ to whose cause we have devoted ourselves can never be established, either peacefully or through conflict, except on an earth that has been carried by the development of every intellectual and technological resource to the extreme limit of its humanization" (*Sur la valeur religieuse de la recherche*, 1947, in *Science et Christ*, p. 203).<sup>2</sup> — "We continue from force of habit to think of the Parousia, whereby the Kingdom of God is to be consummated on earth, as an event of a purely catastrophic nature — that is to say, liable to come about at any moment in history, irrespective of any definite state of mankind. But why should we not assume, in accordance with the latest scientific view of mankind in a state of anthropogenesis, that the parousia can, of physical and organic necessity, only be kindled between heaven and a mankind which has biologically reached a certain critical evolutionary point of collective maturity?" (*The Heart of the Problem*, 1949, in *The Future of Man*, p. 267).<sup>3</sup>

Teilhard has a footnote to the above: "And it may be added in perfect analogy with the mystery of the first Christmas which (as everyone agrees) could only have happened between heaven and an earth which was *prepared*, socially, politically, and psychologically to receive Jesus."

Teilhard's thesis simply is that there will be and can be no Parousia in the manner Christianity has figured. He insists: "Christ delays his reappearance until collective humanity shall have finally become capable, in virtue of having fully realized its

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 559.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 627.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564.

natural *potentialities*, of receiving from him its spiritual consummation" (*Trois choses que je vois*, 1948).<sup>1</sup>

The Teilhardian thesis in its stark and firm formulation flies in the face of the Christian vision. Rideau<sup>2</sup>, for all his sympathy with several of Teilhard's contentions, makes this perfectly plain. In the previous section we have already seen him<sup>3</sup> sceptical whether the convergence of cosmic history which Teilhard deduces from scientific reflection can correspond or coincide with what St Paul says about the final unification of the Church. Further on, Rideau<sup>4</sup> notes: "While...the final coming of the kingdom of God implies conditions and preparations, the conception of a global unanimity of the human mass at the end of history as a necessary preliminary to the Parousia, is purely hypothetical. The realism of the beatitudes, modelled on the long, austere and dramatic experience of Israel, can hardly be reconciled with this triumphalism. Rather than this hypothetical vision, some would prefer — and rightly — that of a humanity or a Church that is constantly staggering under a burden, constantly road-weary, constantly, but always with greater hope, crying out to the divine mercy to take pity on it. Christianity, we must remember, is above all *salvation*, which means liberation — God's enterprise to extract man from a condition of loss and despair; and the true picture of man is always that of the wounded traveller, more dead than alive lying by the roadside and awaiting the charity of the Samaritan."

Thus we can derive the clearest evidence from Rideau's book that Teilhard contradicted orthodoxy on every vital issue.

(*To be continued*)

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K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 248

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 248-9.

## PATHANA

A CHURNING fracas of foam and froth,  
As it vaulted skyward panting spray,  
Caused a mighty uproar as it burst  
Forth from the breast of the oppressing earth  
This was Pathana, who saw daylight  
Amidst the jagged blue Himalayas.  
Its thunderous torrent, as it passed  
Through gorge and valley,  
Seethed among giant adamantine obstacles.  
Plants were swept away, uprooted;  
Boulders, rocks flung aside  
At the impact of this white-peaked fury;  
Down crags it cascaded, its tumult causing  
The thunders to echo like drums in far heaven.  
All watched in awe the foam-topped assailants  
Whose brazen-throated cry shook the skies.  
Creatures from forests and plains  
Fled, terror-stricken at its roar.  
Villages and towns like toys were washed away  
By the flood and spume bursting like volcanoes.  
Trees groaned and cracked under its blow  
And crashed in the swirl of the titan river.  
But Pathana never lessened its sweep  
Over precipice and lowland  
Till its waters clasped the tides of Ganga,  
Whose peaceful glide churned into sudden violence  
And drunken whirlpools sucking down boats in its rise.  
Ganga swelled over its brim and flooded  
The fields for miles and miles.  
The brown sacred waters  
Became white with spume.  
Thus Pathana came to a new life,  
The giant river of eternal energy....

SHAGORE CHOWDHURY



## THE LEGEND OF ORIGINAL SIN AND ADAM'S FALL

*(These pages are from a chapter in a series of articles written by Sri Aurobindo for his journal The Karmayogin in the first decade of the present century. The chapter is entitled "The Place of Religion in Ethics" and is preceded by the exposition of a view of human development which Sri Aurobindo calls "trigunic development", from the Indian vision that all nature is a play of three "gunas" or qualities: tamas=inertia, obscurity, mechanical movement; rajas=kinesis, movement prompted by impulse, desire, self-assertiveness; sattva=balance, harmony, enlightened activity. Thus human development would be, on the whole, in a tamasic, rajasic, sattvic sequence. To what phase of this sequence would correspond the legendary picture of the "original sin" committed by Adam and leading to his "Fall"? Religious dogma speaks of a lapse from perfection; Teilhard de Chardin, speaking from the evolutionary standpoint, considers the first state of humanity to be "the least conscious" in its whole history. Sri Aurobindo casts light on the subject from many sides and gives us a convincing assessment of the legend's implications within the general panorama of human progression.)*

...We shall have to part with several notions long cherished by humanity. One of these is the pristine perfection of man and his degradation from his perfect state by falling into the domination of sin; God made man perfect but man by his own fault brought sin and death into the world. This Semitic tradition, passed from Judaism into Christianity and less prominently into Mahomedanism, became for a long time part and parcel of the fixed beliefs of half humanity. Yet it is doubtful whether the original legend which enshrined and prolonged this tradition, quite bears the interpretation which has been put on it. If rightly understood, it supports rather than conflicts with the theory of trigunic development.

The legend does not state that man was unfailingly virtuous by choice, but that he was innocent because he did not yet know good and evil. Innocence of this kind is possible only in the primitive state of man and the description of man as naked and unashamed shows that it is precisely the primitive state of society before arts and civilisation were developed, to which the legend alludes. Man was then innocent, because being unable to distinguish between good and evil he could not choose evil of free choice and therefore had no sense of sin and no more responsibility for his actions than the pure animal. His fall from the state of innocence was the result of the growth of rajasic individuality in his mind which led him to assert his own will and desires and disobey the law imposed on him by an external Power. In this first stage of his evolution he is not guided by a law within himself, but by prohibitions which his environment imposes on him without his either understanding or caring to understand the reason for their imposition. Certain things are forbidden to him, and it is as much

a necessity for him to refrain from them as to refrain from putting his hand in the fire lest he should be burned; all others are allowed to him and he does them freely without questioning whether, apart from their legality, they are bad or good. Sin comes by disobedience and disobedience by the assertion of an inner standard as against the external standard hitherto obeyed; but it is still a standard not of right and wrong, but of licit and illicit. "What I desire, what my individual nature demands, should be allowed me," reasons the rajasic man; the struggle is between an external negation and an internal assertion, not between two conflicting internal assertions.

But once the former begins, the latter must in time follow; the physical conflict must create its psychical counterpart. From the opposition of punished and unpunished evolves the opposition of licit and illicit, from the opposition of licit and illicit evolves the opposition of right and wrong. Originally the sanction which punishes or spares, allows or disallows, approves or disapproves, is external and social; society is the individual's judge. Finally, in the higher stage of evolution, the sanction is internal and individual; the individual is his own judge. The indulgence of individual desire in disobedience to a general law is the origin of sin.

With the rejection of this theory of an originally perfect humanity, the tradition of an infallible inner conscience which reflects a divinely-ordained canon of absolute right and wrong must be also rejected. If morality is a growth, the moral sense is also a growth and conscience is nothing more than the activity of the moral sense, the individual as judge of his own actions. If conscience be a divine and infallible judge, it must be the same in all men; but we know perfectly well that it is not. The conscience of the Red-Indian finds nothing immoral in murder and torture; the conscience of the modern civilised man vehemently condemns them. Even in the same man conscience is an uncertain and capricious quantity changing and deciding inconsistently under the influence of time, place and circumstances. The conscience of one age or country varies from the conscience of another age or country. It is therefore contrary to all experience to assert the divinity or infallibility of conscience. A man must be guided ordinarily by his moral sense, not because it is infallible or perfect, but because moral growth depends upon development from within and to this end the independent use of the "inner monitor", when once evolved, is the first necessity.

SRI AUROBINDO

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## ANGELIC ARRIVAL

A LITTLE white Egg came down to Earth,  
gold-bordered, glowing, lone.  
It breathed out soft angelic waves,  
their flow to all unknown.

Around played forms of all weird sizes  
all quite covered in a mist of gloom,  
and cowering beneath their coats of grey  
they threatened the Egg with doom.

The little white Egg just kept on breathing  
golden waves of soothing charm  
and all these wicked, harmful creatures  
fled away in bright alarm.

The little white Egg then breathed out wider  
and reached them in their corners dark,  
whereupon these impish beings  
arose and stood there naked, stark.

Feeling that the field was wider  
with lots of room to play around,  
the golden Being awoke to ponder  
where its feet should find their ground.

Then it saw that Earth was crying  
and felt the pain of many a soul  
and looked for one who knew that sighing  
on the way to make it whole.

In the distance stood another Being  
and the two met eye to eye:  
then gazing down at Earth's unseeing  
they looked up at the sky.

VICTOR B. KING

# SEVEN LIVES

## A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

*(Continued from the issue of July, 1973)*

### CHAPTER V (Contd.)

#### PART 3

FOR another hour, Hiranyamaya sat where the goddess had left him, like one hypnotized, until an instinct bred of long habit told him he must return with his morning's collection of wood. Shouldering the large bundle, he set off as conscious of his load as he might have been of a sparrow's egg in his palm and as aware of earth, rock, and bramble beneath his feet as one walking on a bed of duck's down.

When he arrived at the gallery he felt as though he had been delivered there by an especially buoyant cloud and his eyes shone like the eyes of a mortal man who has fallen desperately in love. Shukratma had just come out of his cell as his young pupil was approaching from the other end of the gallery, and he looked up immediately. Hiranyamaya noticing his guru's scrutiny, dropped his eyes hastily to his feet for he felt like a drunken man before a critical parent, so outlandish did his heady delight seem before the sober yogic presence of his master. Shukratma for his part neither smiled nor uttered any word of assurance but simply held out his arms to his pupil while looking at him with an expression of mingled firmness and compassion. Hiranyamaya went straight to him and knelt at his feet, the tears again rising to his eyes as tokens of his remembered and intoxicating ebullience as well as his embarrassment and confusion at what he believed to be an unimaginable indulgence of feeling.

Now at last his guru's reassurance rained down upon him as the older man pressed the disciple's head against his smooth and placid chest.

"Peace," Shukratma said softly. "You are not the first man, dear one, to feel her passion — gods and nations are overturned by it as she so properly showed you. But you must let her boon settle deep, instead of allowing it to blow your heart about like a feather in the wind. Then only can it become the lasting gift she intended it to be and not the dangerous bauble of a suicidal hour or day."

For the first time since his return, the young sadhak breathed freely, while the earth and trees and mountains about him ceased to float in the air and returned to their proper places in the landscape. Solid rock reappeared beneath his feet and legs, and his body stopped drifting off in disconnected molecules to reassume its integrated physical form and substance. A cool calm sank from his guru's hand through his head and thence downward through all his limbs, till he felt he was suspended in a pool of green water where no ripples played and his soul spread outwards in a soft, temperate serenity.

Shukratma, feeling his influence exert its quietening effect, withdrew his clasp, motioned Hiranyamaya to rise to his feet and guided him towards his cell.

"Sleep," he said, and the young man went to his bed where he immediately fell into such a slumber that one might have imagined he had been drugged.

During the next few days the same drugged quietude remained with him even during the waking state, and he was thankful for it. For the fire of the goddess's boon burnt in his veins and nerves, and seemed to carry within it the power to sear and dismember him unless checked by the counterbalance of an unshakable calm. Thus in those first days of adjustment the steadying force of the Guru never left him, and he was able to carry on all his normal duties with regularity and self-composure.

But gradually, as the calm took its settled hold on all the parts of Hiranyamaya's consciousness that had been affected by the divine gift, Shukratma withdrew his touch, knowing that the result had been achieved, and that the peace had found roots which could not be displaced.

Now the boon began to exert its true effect, and as Hiranyamaya walked the forest paths in the pursuance of his tasks, he began to feel the difference it had created in himself. He found that a new bond joined him to all that lived and was, from the green-backed crickets to the totality of the vaulting sky above the mountaintops. All, in some miraculous way existed in him, with each life and form of being coursing through his very blood in its poignant essence. All remoteness too had fled from him and he found himself intimately connected with every living detail of the universe, all of which incredibly found place with room to spare in the confines of his human consciousness. He even mused as he thought of this new feeling how Shukratma had once said the entire creation could be fitted on the head of a pin, such being the nature of its infinity in macrocosm or microcosm, and he recognized the reality of the statement in terms of his own self.

And then he learned to care.... How much he found he cared now for each tiny thing that flew or crawled! How much he noticed and cared about the changing moods of the day as Nature doffed her dress of lowering thunder for one of dancing sunshine, or earnest driving wind and cloud. How dear were each of these moods of hers and how carefully taken account of by his lover's heart! Yet even the caring was not the end of the new feeling the boon had brought. To care and feel each thing as a living portion of himself, this too was not sufficient; beyond it came a compassion in which all else swam as in its native substance, a compassion as all-encompassing as the primeval sea in which all earthly life found its sustenance and source. Within this ocean the young Hiranyamaya found himself replete. He walked in it, lived and slept in it, and sensed it spread its infinite, ever-gentle waves to every corner of the universe. In it all ascetic aloofness vanished, all withdrawal became an impossibility, for the goddess's boon rendered him one in a union of love with the pulsation of all life, the exuberance and fullness of which he could only bear through the massive, imper-turbable peace bequeathed to him by his guru.

As the days slipped by, Hiranyamaya discovered further that a new vision had

opened in him. Now with the naked eye he saw the forest spirits invisible to other men. He observed their dwelling places in trees and among their roots. He recognized their favourite rocks, and the secret pools among the crevices where they disported themselves in the faultless purity of the water. He could clearly see the being of the thunder god as he bore down from the icy North upon the hermit valley, ensconced in his vehicle of bursting, muttering storm clouds. And a few times he caught a glimpse once again of the goddess of love taking her ease beneath the great rock cliff, for it seemed it was a favourite haunt of hers. She would drift down the paths and along the banks of the little streams, or stand and watch the busy troops of monkeys among the rocks and shrubs with a delight apparently aimless and yet so full of a godly concern that Hiranyamaya thought to himself while secretly observing the scene that surely it must have been a look such as this that inspired the apes in some forgotten age to evolve into men. Indeed he was certain that there was no single thing the goddess could look upon without some fragment of her incredible passion — as natural to her as the merest breath, and as overpowering as a cyclone to any lesser being — entering into it and goading it in some new and unforeseen direction. Flowers gained new forms and colours as she passed. Jackals learned to cry not for their kill but for the sheer enchantment of a silvery moon. Birds learnt to mate for life as even men had not. And the trees found strength to cast their seed upon the ground about them with the abundance of kings distributing largess, while clothing their boughs with the soft green velvet of a myriad budding leaves in the ecstasy of Spring. Such were the effects of the goddess in the haunts of nature, yet Hiranyamaya knew as he watched her the few times he was fortunate enough to find her, that her freedom of movement and her unrestrained pleasure could express themselves only here. He understood too well from experience that in the haunts of men she would have to step more carefully for she bore the power to drive men mad — delicate and uncertain offspring that they were of a destiny which had left them to their own weakness as a tigress might wantonly leave her cubs before their eyes had opened.

The days stretched into years during which the goddess's boon took such root in the being of Silent Daughter's son that he no longer noticed it as something outside himself. It had indeed grown into an integral part of his nature, and he was now ready for another step in his inner progress. He himself awoke now each morning with his body tingling in anticipation of some imminent but as yet undisclosed event, and he never failed to pay his respects to his guru before setting out for his day's work in the hope that Shukratma might cast some light on his sadhak's unusual condition. But Shukratma seemed more than usually reticent these days and invariably sent Hiranyamaya on his way with a noncommittal smile.

Then on the tenth day it happened. Hiranyamaya left as usual by the long route from the gallery for he was in no particular hurry and he always delighted in the solitary walk down the steep slope with its leaf-strewn paths and its secret passages through plunging rock crevices. But today more than any other day he felt his guru constantly by his side with an all but physical presence. He even sensed his hand on

his back as though to guide him, so that once having reached the foot of the cliff, Shukratma turned him in a direction which he normally never took. The little path which they were following hugged the cliff face, pursuing it to its very end where the mountains that encircled the valley parted to provide its only exit. Here at the crest of the narrow pass a vast vista of mountain range upon range stretched to the horizon as though the earth had spread itself out beneath a gorgeous azure sky in great crumpled folds of green-blue silk. White wisps of morning mist still clung to the slopes like a mystic wrapping the sun had not yet entirely removed and the whole luxuriant earth seemed to tingle with the same anticipation Hiranyamaya so keenly felt within himself. But the invisible guru stopped at the pass only momentarily, and his pupil was not surprised. It was clear that something was to transpire between them and he knew full well that Shukratma never did his work in an off-handed way, standing casually on a path, for instance, if any important teaching was to be imparted. Instead they made their way a short distance up the slope to one side of the pass where a grassy ledge, protected even from the prying of birds, hung out over the mountain panorama like an impregnable look-out as skillfully conceived and executed as any a man could ever devise for defense or stealth, yet purely the work of Nature. Here Hiranyamaya seated himself and heard his guru's voice speak to him from within.

"I have brought you to a sacred spot, my son," it said. "None of the sadhaks alive in the valley today know of it for I have shown it to none of them. Yet it was here that the first rishi to come to the valley's caves four hundred years ago had revealed to him the dearest secret of his heart. Since that time, no rakshasa pries here, nor bird nor beast despoils the sacred spot which overlooks the earth like some princely, hidden throne. Feel yourself seated upon it then like the heir of some finer than earthly realm, for you are about to receive a gift more dazzling than any a worldly sovereign has ever known."

The voice fell silent, and all nature too seemed to stand still in the growing brilliance of the morning sunlight. Then all of a sudden, almost before he had time to notice how, Hiranyamaya saw that the quality of the light had begun to change. The sun seemed to fade from the sky, eclipsed by a brighter yet softer luminosity that radiated not heat but a strange, kinetic force which appeared to dissolve the very solidity of matter so that it took on its aspect of suspended, vibrating energy. At the same time, as the concentration of light descended from the higher spheres, the whole earth and everything in it, both animate and inanimate, found voice, so that a great symphonic hymn of sound more perfect in blend and form and harmony than any music conceived by man, rose to greet it. Now even the stillness terminated, for the earth and sky not only poured forth music but spontaneously, unrestrainedly broke into dance. The beings in the clouds normally so sedate in their movements, danced about their cloud vehicles. The animal beings of the forests, furtive and reticent by nature, danced on the open slopes. The tree beings danced with their arms to the sky, and even the immobile mountain beings pulsed with delight and raised their gaze to the light. At last the fireball of luminosity arrived at such a point before Hiranyamaya's eyes that he

lost awareness of all else, so totally did it fill the range of his vision. It was then that the being at its centre emerged, a beautiful divine form with white limbs and wings of sunlit gold. From his outspread arms and fingertips tiny particles of light streamed outward in a continuous flow, while the smile he bore came from neither mouth nor eyes but in some inexplicable way from all his face at once. Now he began to speak to the sadhak but again as with the smile, not from his lips. The voice emanated directly from his white flamed heart and the words reached Hiranyamaya not as words but as a portion of the music that had come into being when the godly form had descended.

"I bring to you the sun-sparked boon of the divine ananda, the joy and delight for which the universe lives. I bring to you the music of the gods and the divine pleasure that never dies. For they are the life-blood of all that is, as surely as they are the glow and vibrance that permeate the Divine One's being and shine out upon his creation as an eternal sun. The vast spaces of the universal skies thrill with them, while even the densest core of earthly rock knows the ananda's tremor and harbours it in its depths. Take then the boon and permit its godly elixir to flow and sparkle within your veins. For it shall render the dull substance of your humanity light and buoyant, and it shall brighten the dark way that stretches into time before you. Through it even the profoundest sorrow shall turn to you its face of ecstasy, and even in the direst pain will it bring you the divine caress."

The luminous being's message ended and once again Hiranyamaya bowed to the ground as he had done before the goddess of love. When he rose again the vision had vanished but the whole earth continued to exude the god's rare ethereal rapture and pour forth the music of his joy. The young man lost all account of time as he sat absorbed upon his ledge, with his consciousness scattered abroad through the brilliant air and all awareness of his physical body or individual identity abandoned. The inebriating excitement of love's visitation was absent now, for the ananda the god had brought was of a different nature that lived in the vastness of its own pure calm even at the height of its effervescence.

Perhaps Hiranyamaya would have remained on the ledge till nightfall so little urge did he feel to leave the blessed spot, but his guru was ever-vigilant and did not permit him to break his discipline. At last as the sun rose to its noon-time zenith, Shukratma's voice broke in upon his pupil. "Come child, and remember a godly boon is given as a tool and not as an intoxicant. Your work lies before you and you must shoulder it along with your divine treasures!"

Hiranyamaya smiled at his teacher's half-humorous chiding and rose to go. Yet so enamoured had he become of the little ledge that his feet lingered upon it and he could not tear them away. Again the guru's voice resumed, "Cast off your fear, my boy, the sacred spot will not disappear but shall await your next visit. In a way it feels as enamoured of you as you of it, for the spirit that guards it is a sweet creature, but so small that you have failed to notice it, who takes to its heart the guests the Divine One invites upon its ledge's narrow confines. For with you it is the only living thing that has directly shared the godly visitation you have witnessed.



And now it seeks to restrain your trailing feet, and I must scold it for its impudence. Go, impish one, and sit upon your favourite tree. Have I not told you your job is merely to keep away the birds and mice, and not to play pranks like a toothless bear cub? Leap into my arms and you will have all the caresses your heart desires, but for pity's sake leave my sadhaks to their work!"

Suppressing the laugh he felt rising in his throat, Hiranyamaya lifted his feet, found them suddenly free, and regretfully descended from "The Balcony of Heaven's Delight", as he named the ledge to himself. Then once again he hastily set about collecting firewood. He knew that he had overshot his usual time for returning to his cell, but the colony's requirement for fuel could not be gainsaid even for a day. A second time, he found his pile increasing with unaccustomed ease, but the midday sun was hot, and by the time he was ready for the ascent to the gallery, he felt overpoweringly drowsy and tired. The experience of the morning longed for the tranquillity which it needed to sink into his bones and find a resting place in every portion of his nature and physical body. Indeed it was all Hiranyamaya could do to prevent himself from finding a warm grass tuft beside the path and stretching himself out upon it for the rest of the day. In a torment of weariness he climbed the path he had descended so exuberantly a few hours before. Each step he took as though in a dream where every path leads away from one's destination instead of towards it. Yet in the end, sweating and out of breath he reached the gallery, threw down his bundle of faggots and made for his cell. No one was to be seen, for all had retired for the afternoon, but when he reached his own door he found his guru standing there. A beautiful smile illumined the older man's face and once more he held out his arms to his pupil who came stumbling towards him. A warm, strong embrace greeted Hiranyamaya and instantaneously his weariness fell from him. Soothing words bathed him like cool spring water for he heard Shukratma saying, "You have done well, my child. I know how sleep descends upon you now with its imperative command. Satisfy it to its full extent and release your mind from further cares. Awaken when you will and keep the god's boon about you while you sleep."

With enormous relief and gratification Hiranyamaya passed into his cell, fell onto his stone bed, and retired from the world of wakefulness till sunrise the next morning. But of his dream-state visitors he awoke with recollections not only of the God of Bliss but also of his mother, Silent Daughter, who had spent long hours during the night by his side, sometimes walking with him, sometimes sitting, and sometimes simply gazing at him with her great depthless eyes.

*(To be continued)*

BINA BRAGG

## “THE LOST CHILD” BY MULK RAJ ANAND

### An Appreciation

“THE Lost Child” opens, or rather rushes at you with a vivid scene of a small village preening itself for a fair: a *mela*. Splashes of striking colour rise up at you from the people on the dust road, from the lush fields around them, from their gay and gushing mood. Indeed, it is by these moods that he evokes — or shall we say creates? — in you that you must admire the work of Mulk Raj Anand.

Not only has he a firm grip on his imagery, but he utilises successfully the technique of long sentences for the larger areas of his canvas and shorter ones for the arresting details of the fast-moving drama of the panic-stricken lost child. Very subtle and beautiful is his manner of guiding us; first a bird-eye tour, then a portrait of the child’s fanciful mind and finally the fast poignant episode. While the child’s babbling fancies are clothed in loose rambling sentences, its sudden shock, the tension and panic in his realisation is fired in a terse volley: “There was no reply. He turned to look on the side. They were not there. He looked behind. There was no sign of them.” As if, slashing through the musical game of a tiny dinghy on huge fondling waves in a dark ocean, comes the sudden shocking realisation that it is cut off from its mooring.

From there on we are, curiously, inside and at the same time outside the lost child. We share his fear, his shock; but we also see him out there, lost, suddenly alone. And we pity him, we reach out to him, just as the kindly bystander in the story who vainly attempts to quell his outburst. Then, with admirable control over the pace and rhythm of his narrative, the author takes the mind back to the first step which hurled the child into this unexpected inferno: the desire to possess, to enjoy ignoring what is of supreme importance, the warmth and security of the mother’s embrace.

The style of Mulk Raj Anand, it appears, has a most fascinating blend of a realism which notes every detail — leaving little to the reader’s imagination — and a sensitive mind that misses none of the deep psychological nuances. With this unique charm, he weaves into his story valuable observations of human life: Man judges everything in the light of a contrast. He realises the importance of things only when they are needed but not found. Until the parents disappeared, anything could hold the child’s fancy: the sweets looked sweeter, the balloons a brighter company, and the merry-go-round a precious experience, in comparison to the exhortations and coaxing of the parents. Not until hell is in sight does the errant mind turn to beseech the graces it has so often misused or ignored.

Finally, though “this exquisitely drawn picture” may be just that, to a mind eager for allegories and symbolism — and does one not expect it from the ‘eastern’ mind? — this narrative does permit them.

The child may represent the adolescent mind hungering after satisfaction and beauty in the vital world, and the parents the cold voice of Reason. So entrancing is the world of the senses that the laws of ethics or the higher life seem like shackles, until

one awakens to the absence of the inner solace. Interwoven in this wider plan we find an old symbolism of the East: Life is a vast *mela*. Fleeting but fanciful, and as complex as it is compelling. In our national *melas*, such as the *Kumbha-mela*, hundreds are lost or separated, scores lose their lives, and thousands are cheated and robbed. Yet the 'devotees' flood in, and the flood surges on. It is only when he has lost something, or gained an insight into it, that man begins to know the consequences of life's dazzling attractions. And then, like the child who desires no more the sweets, the balloons, or the merry-go-round that the bystander offers to him but cries for mother and father, he too craves for the lord of his heart, and the true home of his aching soul.

Yet another symbolism, no less interesting if less philosophic, can be read into this compelling situation of the lost child. Taking the parents to represent the knowledge of the past, the voice of Tradition, we may symbolise the child as the bubbling hopes of man, his spontaneous passions for the Beautiful and the Ecstatic. And argue that it is the fault of the parents, in the first place, to ignore, to stifle so often and so thoughtlessly, the child's enthusiasms and yearnings. O how often has the 'wisdom' of the Elders, whether in religious or secular life, in governments, in universities, in social behaviour, sought to 'discipline', to repress, to beat into the 'proven' moulds of its own limits, the spontaneity, the deep, if not always enlightened, aspirations of Youth?

It is not the story itself, therefore, or the skill with which it is presented that distinguishes the artist. These only help to create the atmosphere, the mood in which he can best express the substance of his experience: his inspirations and his insights.

SANJAY

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## MY HEART

My heart is transparent  
 A crystal glass  
 Through which shines  
 The steady light of my loving  
 For all to see.  
 Oh Mother,  
 You who always see my glowing heart  
 I love the ones whose presence  
 Pervades my memory.  
 But I pray that I may love all, all  
 Of the creation  
 Feeling them as much your children  
 As those most dear to me,

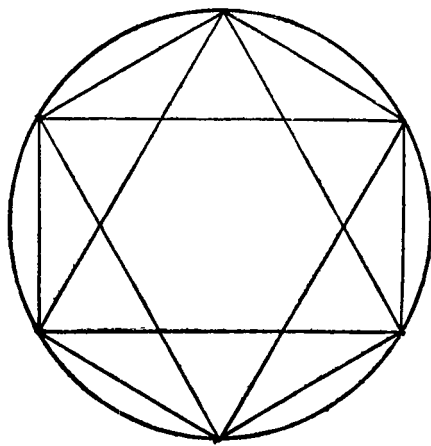
LORETTA

# THE SYSTEM OF SIX

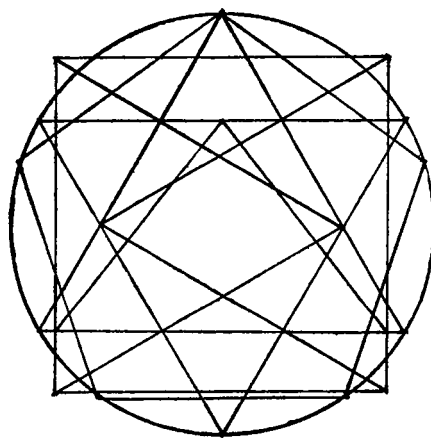
From the Geometric Work of Denis Robert

*(Continued from the issue of July, 1973)*

## PART II



*Figure 1 — The Creation of Six*



*Figure 2 — The "Grail"*

THE essential feature of the hexagon is that each side of this inscribed figure is exactly equal to the radius of the circle. The six points are then joined to form the opposing interlocking equilateral triangles. (See Figure 1)

Figure two (*Opposite page*) is the complete geometric “grail” of the system of six. It contains in one diagram the major proportions and points of interrelationship which this system yields.

1. The squaring of the Circle
2. The inscribed pentagon
3. The proportions of the Great Pyramid
4. The division of the circle into nine equal parts
5. The construction of Sri Aurobindo's Symbol

This series of geometric drawings were developed by Denis Robert during his three month stay in Pondicherry. They comprise a simple, intuitive geometric statement which is to our knowledge and research, unique and original.

Each are drawn separately for clarification.

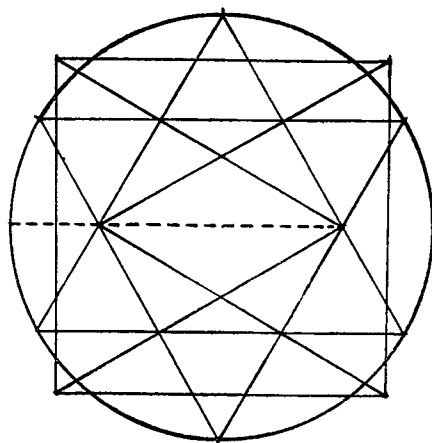


Figure 3 — The Squaring of the Circle

The construction of a square with its perimeter equal to a given circle was the most crucial exercise in the history of esoteric geometry. It was always to be performed with nothing other than a straight edge and a compass.

The circle represents Spirit, Unity, the Immeasurable Unmanifest; its perimeter which is  $\pi$  times its diameter can never be measured because of the irrational nature of  $\pi$ .\* The square is the perfection of the material manifestation: the perimeter is

rational (from the Greek word *ratio* which means "measurable"), it is precisely four times the length of one side.

Both the universal and the individual are a union of these two incommensurable elements, body and spirit, manifest and unmanifest.

The squaring of the circle is symbolically impossible and has never been geometrically accomplished to an absolute numerical exactness, *nor is it intended that this exact equality should be achieved*. Yet a Geometry which wishes to create a true image of the Cosmos must combine square and circle of very near equal perimeters in one integral scheme of proportion. This task, if done successfully gives the reward of the plan for a Cosmic Temple.

The Great Pyramid at Cheops is a monument to the squaring of the circle (two times the height of the triangle times  $p$ , equals the perimeter of the squared base). This is the same formula for determining the circumference of a circle.

In this diagram the line segment three-quarters of the diameter or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times the radius measured from the circumference to the intersection of the two equilateral triangles on the diameter, gives the length of the side of the square whose perimeter is virtually equal to the circumference of the circle.

The points of intersection in a geometric figure are always of consequence, for they are location of the "nodes" in the vibratory field which is represented by the diagram. This possibility that there is a relation between the way energy fields project themselves and the intervals and proportions used in the construction of a space is the underlying reason why a knowledgeably designed temple or cathedral feeds back to the mental field of those who enter, a harmonizing, elevating feeling. And this principle of the architecture contributing to the maintenance of a higher human consciousness is, for the "City of the Future", a necessity.

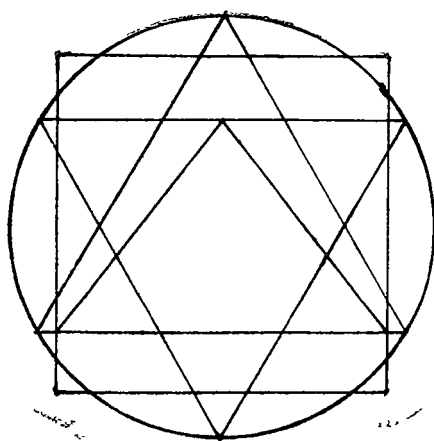


Figure 4—The Great Pyramid

The proportions of the Great Pyramid are all self-produced by the intersections of this geometric system. The triangle constructed from where the base line of the lower equilateral triangle intersects with the squaring, and drawn to a height of the base line of the upper inverted equilateral triangle, gives the exact pyramid proportions.

This pyramid is an architectural embodiment of a vast body of both earth and celestial measurements interwoven in a system of geometric proportions which reflect an advanced, unified knowledge of time and space. The purpose here is not to explore the details of all that is contained in the pyramid. Peter Tompkins' book, *Secrets of the Great Pyramid* is an excellent source for this material.

The pyramid occurs in the "Seventh Manifestation" and relates seven to eleven in its height and perimeter, fulfilling not only the expression of that number or epoch but also reflecting, materializing and containing a synthetic knowledge of the six preceding manifestations.\*\* It is in structure an evolutionary summary built to endure through the passage of diminished light so that the consciousness which re-emerged may have access to the achievements of the past as an assistance in the work of the "resurrection of the human spirit".

Egypt, according to the concept inherent in Patrizia Norelli-Bachelet's diagram of the Astrological Ages (see *Mother India*, April 24, 1973), occurred exactly opposite to where we are positioned now, approximately 12,000 years ago. It has been said that the knowledge of these "sacred measures" that are inherent in the universe, must recur, in some form, when and where there is a rebirth of a Science of cosmological unification.

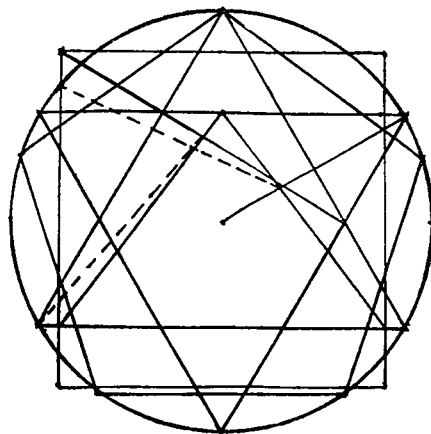


Figure 5 — The Pentagon

The pentagon or the field of five is a difficult figure to accurately inscribe; the line drawn from where the base and side of the equilateral triangle of the square

cross the side of the Great Pyramid yields the exact length of the line for the inscribed pentagon.

The interchange employed here between the energy lines of 3,6,9 (the Absolute) and the side of the Pyramid (the structure of the highest cosmological knowledge) yield the five line, the pentagon, the number of Man.

Five has widely been considered the number of humanity. The five senses, the five fingers, the five extremities as so beautifully drawn in the circle by Leonardo da Vinci and the proportions of a man's body may be accurately interpreted as conforming to the ratio of the Golden Section, 1.618 or  $\frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2}$ , which is derived from

the conical  $\sqrt{5}$  rectangle. The pentagon, thus number five, is the symbol of Auroville.

The conciliation of five (man, the mental being) with the generating Conscious Force of six, is an adequate symbol for humanity's role in the cosmos. Five is the mean number between four (manifestation) and six (Divinity in manifestation).

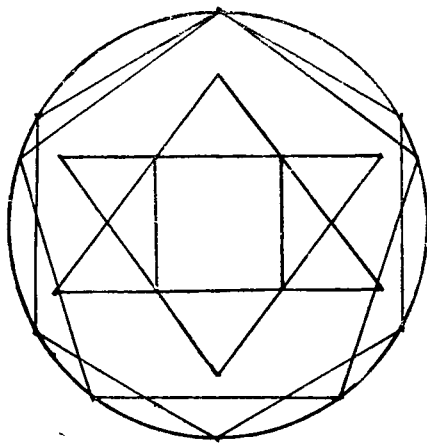


Figure 6 — Sri Aurobindo's Symbol

The system of six yields points which allow for the construction of this Symbol directly and geometrically. The two triangles which here form the star of Sri Aurobindo are of the exact proportions of the Great Pyramid. When placed so that the upper inverted pyramid's base line is on the diagonal of the pentagon (the heart chakra line of the Rosicrucians), and the base of the bottom pyramid triangle coincides with a line drawn at the intersection of the equilateral triangle with the pentagon near its base, the figure is formed.

The center of this figure is a perfect square. *Man (five) and the Conscious Force (six) are united to transform the gnostic principle (the Pyramid) into Supramentality (the Square).*



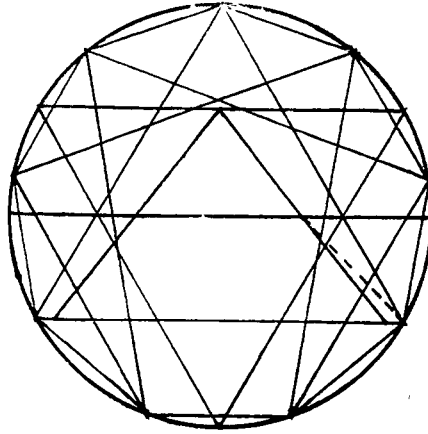


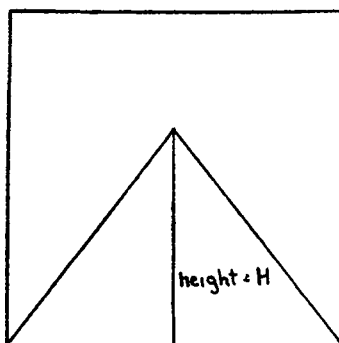
Figure 7 — The Nine-Sided Figure

The difficult enneagram or nine-sided figure can also be geometrically rendered through the system of six. The superimposure of the enneagram on the division of the circle into twelve is Patrizia's structure for diagramming the "spiral of the Ages", the "key to prophesy".

The side of the inscribed nine-sided figure is a line drawn from the base of the large equilateral triangle on the circumference to a point where the mid-diameter of the circle cuts the side of the Great Pyramid. Again the gnostic principle (the Pyramid) in relationship with Chit (Conscious Force) — six — exchange through the creation of nine, the Divine Mother.

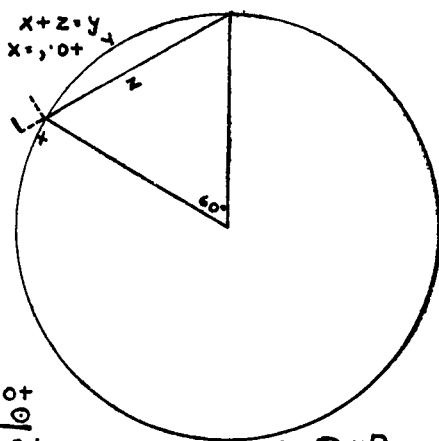
Through a transfer of relative values from the base of ten to the base of six with some lengthy calculations, the value of pi (the value which puts the mental process in working relationship with the circle-unity) has the numerical value of 6.14 (0,0+) instead of 3.14 etc., and it becomes a rational value. It also eliminates the necessity to double the radius in the formula for the circumference (C) of the circle.  $C = 2\pi r$  becomes  $C = \pi r$ . This figure and the following demonstrate the accurate geometric relationships which are shown to exist with this value of pi (in the base of six). Figure 8 utilizes the proportion of the Great Pyramid, which is said to be two times the height times pi, equalling the perimeter of the base. The formula and values have been transferred to the base of six.

Figure nine shows the formula of the relationship of the circumference to radius to surface with this 6.14 value of pi in the base of six.



The perimeter of the square (P)  
base of the "great pyramid"  
is, in the base of six, equal  
to: height (H) X pi or  $\pi$   
 $\pi = 6.14 = \pi = 0,0+$   
 $P = \pi \times H$   
 $\pi = \frac{P}{H}$

Figure 8



$$\begin{array}{r} ,0+ \\ \times \pi \\ \hline 0,0+ \end{array}$$

$$\pi = \pi = 0,0+ = 6.14$$

R = radius  
C = circumference  
S = Surface

$$C = \pi \times R$$

$$S = \pi \times R^2$$

$$C = \pi \times R$$

$$C = \pi R^2, 0+R$$

$$,0+R = C - \pi R$$

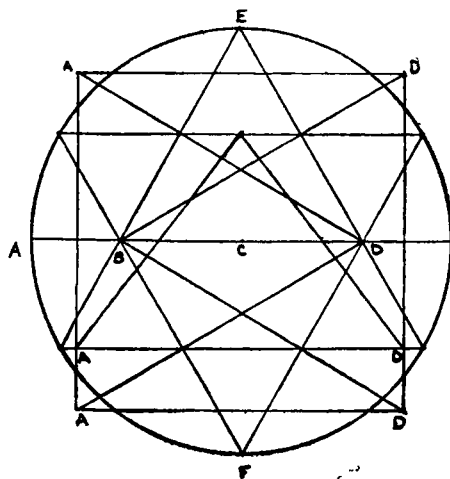
$$,0+ = \frac{C}{R} - \pi$$

$$\frac{C}{R} = 0,0+$$

$$,0+ \times 0^{\wedge} = 0+ \cdot 60^{\circ}$$

$$,0+ \times 0+ = 0+ \cdot 360^{\circ}$$

Figure 9



# THEORIA

$$AC = \text{Radius}(R)$$

$BC = CD =$  Side of small equilateral  $\Delta$

$$AD = AC - CD$$

"  $\pm$  Side of the square

4. = base of the "great pyramid"

$+AD = P$  of the square.

$P = C$  Perimeter of Square = Circumference of circle

$$C = \frac{1}{T} AD$$
$$\angle C D = \angle R(\angle 1 \angle)$$
$$C = + (AC - CD)$$
$$\Delta CD = R(0.1 + 0.1)$$
$$C = + (R - CD)$$

$\triangle CD =$  side of the large equilateral  $\triangle$

$$C = \mathbb{Q} + \mathbb{R}$$
$$CD = \frac{\otimes R}{\underline{F}} - R$$

$\Delta R$  = height of large equilateral  $\triangle EFG$

$$CD = R \left( \frac{\otimes}{\oplus} - 0 \right)$$


$\frac{2}{3}$  of  $\Delta$  radius or  $\frac{1}{3}$  of  $l$  radius = height of large equilateral  $\Delta E F$

$$CD = R(\frac{0,0+}{+} - 0) \otimes 0,0+ = p_i \pi$$
$$\otimes = 0, 0+ = \rho i \pi$$
$$CD = R(\wedge I \wedge)$$
$$\oplus = 0, \wedge 1 \wedge = 1_a$$
$$AD = R - R(A|A)$$

$\odot = 0, +0 \wedge go$

$$AD = R(0^-, \Delta \wedge)$$
$$\odot = \frac{0.1 \cdot \lambda}{0.1 \cdot \lambda} = R_a$$
$$AD = R(0, \frac{1}{2})$$

$1 = 0$   
 $2 = 1$   
 $3 = \wedge$   
 $4 = +$   
 $5 = \text{A}$   
 $6 = \odot \text{ or } \circ$

addition (+) = —  
 subtraction (-) = —  
 Radius = 1 = 0  
 pi ( $\pi$ ) = 6.14 = 0,0+  


$R \otimes$  = Circumference  
 $R \oplus$  = side of square  
 $R \odot$  = side of equilateral  $\Delta$   
 $R \dagger$  = height of " "  
 $\frac{\otimes}{\oplus} = +$

*Figure. 10 and Table*

Figure 10 and its associated table of theoria demonstrate very well the means through which numerical values are generated by geometric relational proportions. The three constants which are developed here into their numerical values are:

$$\begin{array}{lll} 0,0+ & = 6.14 \text{ or } & \text{pi in a base of six} \\ 0, \Lambda \Lambda & = 1.323 & \text{ta} \\ 0,+ 0\Lambda & = 1.413 & \text{go} \end{array}$$

These are three rational constants which are structurally as valuable as  $\sqrt{2}$  or  $\sqrt{3}$  are in the base of ten. In the system of six these functions are no longer irrational and become complete numbers in three decimal places. As we stated earlier, the base of ten system is a mental circuitry of quantitative thinking.  $\sqrt{2}$  and  $\sqrt{3}$  are essentially not numbers, they are functions of the process of one (unity — 0) becoming two (duality — 1), for two is not created by adding one to another one. Two is created through the division of one. This can be seen in nature as well as in Geometry (where in the theorem of Pythagoras, square “two” is built on the diagonal of square “one”). The utilization of a term such as  $\sqrt{2}$  as a numerical value is at its very inception an error, as  $\sqrt{2}$  never produces a complete number but instead it yields an infinite, irrational decimal. Again “one plus one” is an error in logic and in symbolic interpretation as there is only one unity, and unity by definition contains everything. This totally quantitative utilization of number is basic to understanding why our present technology has come to serious disequilibrium with the natural environment of the planet. Whereas the importance of using form and number in a manner harmonious with the universal Intention was so crucial to the mathematicians of ancient Egypt that they would never write fractions such as  $3/11$  but would laboriously divide them out so that the quantity would appear as several fractions with numerators of one. Only one (unity) was used as a numerator because every division is in truth a division or a part of the original One.

We may conclude that a geometrical numerical system of six could provide the most facile working tool through which the principles and powers of the dominating number nine could enter into mentality, physicality and technology. But all this is proposed with the understanding that a change in number system is for human nature a deep and difficult ordeal. For number is to mind as food is to the body, ingrained into the habit structure and chemistry of the organism. What instead is proposed here is not a direct, immediate adaption of a new number system, but rather the intention is to indicate *the level of change* that is required of the process of Auroville if it is to fulfill its role as a material generator of a new race. It is in these severely basic fundamentals that we should seek out the keys of originality. For “new” is an uncompromising term and merely sociological, aesthetic and architectural modification and variation do not contain the depth to make a movement towards real change authentic. The relative value of the system of six will only be known when future

scientists, architects and educators attempt to build forms of matter and mind through new numerical systems.

The spiritual blueprint of transformation has been profoundly and precisely set before us. It is our growth towards that plan or vision which will render these higher principles into an active, material methodology.

“It is not simply a better world we seek, but a new world.”

— SRI AUROBINDO

(Concluded)

ROBERT LAWLOR

\* In the base of six  $\pi$  becomes, though not a whole number, a rational number with two decimal places. This will perhaps yield relationships of greater affinity between the circle and square, and provide a more effective tool in constructing or manifesting the sphere.

\*\* The unit factors of both six and seven are found in the structure of the Great Pyramid. A standard of measure with a factor of six (the cubit) was used for the geodetic measure and was the basis for measure in the exterior of this Pyramid. A standard with a factor of seven (the royal cubit) was used for the interior. The measure of volume in Egypt was standardized through the division of the cube into 42 units ( $6 \times 7$ ).

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## “LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of July 1973)

### YOGA AND EDUCATION

(1)

YOGA has been termed by our ancients *Vidyā* (education). It is the *Vidyā* which has withstood the ravages of time. If there is anything of which India can be proud — it is its *Yoga-Vidyā*. The time is not far off when it will again attain its lost glory.

India's *Yoga-Vidyā* puts before man a scientifically worked-out method of realising the truth. It is based on thousands of years of knowledge gained by experience. People think if God is allowed to dominate life or if yoga takes hold of the child's imagination he will be lost to the world and it may prove fatal to the child's worldly success. This view is entirely erroneous. Future generations will see things differently.

We do not realise our greatness until the appreciation comes from the West. Let us hear Yehudi Menuhin, the world-famous musician and winner of the *Nehru Award* :

“... I owe my success as a violinist to yoga, which I have been practising for years. Yoga has given me perfect health, peace of mind and poise — three elements essential for concentration in concert performance.”

After receiving the *Nehru Award* he said, “India is a land of incredible fascination, of tremendous contrasts and like the ocean, for ever unfathomable. I go, but leave my heart in India. I have always felt an attachment for India because of its large-hearted capacity to inspire people the world over with its unique philosophy, art, music and culture.”

According to Menuhin, India's contribution to the world resides largely in the fact that she has learnt to live in a certain equilibrium. “Some foreign invasions apart, she has maintained one form of human ideal incarnate, a certain type of resignation, a certain type of tolerance, a certain philosophy, a vision of the human being in relation to nature, to the past and to the future. I hope she will continue to make these contributions.”

Bertrand Russell says, “To live a good life in the fullest sense a man must have a good education...”<sup>1</sup> It can be said, to lead a beautiful and contented life one must be initiated into Yogic education.

If the children of the nation are committed to Yogic discipline, even in its elementary form, from a very young age, India will soon realise its own characteristic feature, its unique personality. Thereby the nation will acquire the much-needed

<sup>1</sup> *What I Believe*, London, 1928.

inner strength to ward off the many evils of life. Indiscipline, lack of love for study, lack of love for the country will cease to be a baffling problem. Above all, Yoga will prove to be a great binding force, a great unifying entity. Unity in diversity will no longer be the imagination of a visionary, or the day-dream of a poet.

Thus the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is engaged in a great experiment. In order to believe, the world wants to be dazzled, but that is the work of miracle-mongers. A true foundation can be laid only in silence.

It may be asked where the teachers are to undertake the job. The answer is: First let the ideal be set before us. The great drawback of present education is the lack of an ideal for the younger generation. Let our Government first be convinced that spirituality is the *raison d'être* of India. It is time the Government recognised the place of Yoga in education.

To quote the Mother:

"I would like them (the Government) to recognise Yoga as education not so much for ourselves, but it will be good for the country."

Let the Yogic process of teaching, along with other subjects, be introduced at least in a few schools, or in a college or university. India is not devoid of great men, or of God-men. Let the experiment first be made on a small scale. It might provide the first batch of teachers, as was the case with the Ashram.

Materialism cannot be India's motto. We all know some 400 years ago there was no trace of science in its present form. 100 years ago India needed proficiency in material science. That was the only way to rejuvenate the younger generation. Unless our boys came up to the standard of European youth in the field of science, India could not catch up with the spirit of the age. That period is now over. The cry of the hour is different. India must wake up now and be conscious of its mission. It is given to India to carve out a new path, a new way of living, thinking and acting. It has been decreed that India should give to the world a new leadership.

Let us look at Sri Aurobindo's reading of the nation's history and India's future role. The following is from his evening talk in 1926.

"It is interesting to study the rising and falling of nations. Greece and Rome went down after fulfilling their respective functions of giving to the world the ideals of Beauty and Law. So also England will go down. Her function has been the transference of Government from the Aristocracy to the Middle class, the Bourgeoisie, the Vaishya and from the Vaishya to the Sudra, the Labour class. I don't know if England will be able to manage the last transference. After that is done, she will have to relinquish her lead. But India's function can never be exhausted, the function of the spiritual consciousness to lead the world to the Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Here are a few lines from Professor Max Muller to show how India was regarded by him:

"If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly end-

<sup>1</sup> *Mother India*, December 1972.

owed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow — in some parts a very paradise on earth — I should point to India.... If I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thought of the Greeks and Romans and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw their corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more truly human, a life not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life — again I should point to India.”

Is there not a resemblance between Sri Aurobindo's view of India and Max Muller's statement, especially in the last lines?

Before pursuing the topic of Yoga and education further, I wish to recall a talk I had with a casual visitor — a retired officer from Malayasia, who spent some months (1972) in the Ashram. It may give an idea of how India is looked upon even today.

His first visit to India was in 1965. I met him in May, 1972 on his fifth visit. He is a devotee of Swami Shivananda and had been to Rishikesh. On his way back home he came here:

“Thirty years! There are people who have been here with an unbroken stay of thirty or forty years in a spiritual pursuit in spite of the restless worldly mind which delights in movement and change! I bow to India. This is possible only in India,” said he in a reverential tone, then he added, “India is indeed a land of saints and sages. In my country the only dispensers of happiness are wine, women and song. In India alone you meet people who talk of the soul.

“Shivananda teaches, ‘Be bodiless, why should you care so much for the happiness of the perishable body? Turn your gaze inward, realise your soul and enjoy the eternal bliss here and now.’ Ah, the atmosphere of my Guru's place is so pure. Two things add to its purity: the sacred water of the Ganges and the grandeur of the Himalayas.

“On my first visit I took a little Ganga water and kept it in a bottle. It is surprising that it has not become infected with germs. From time to time I put a drop in my palm, sip it and touch it to my forehead. It rouses in me a sense of purity.”

“How did you happen to come here?” I asked.

“Through books. I have been reading Sri Aurobindo's books. How lucky I would have felt if I had been blessed with a chance to see him, to feel his presence. Why do such great souls leave their bodies? Death certainly cannot touch them. They are deathless.”

“Sri Aurobindo has not left us. He is here. Here in the atmosphere. Stand before the Samadhi. You will feel his presence.”

“That's right. When one stands before the Samadhi, one feels a vibration. Two thousand people have collected round him. It is the Mother who has initiated so many activities. With her Yogic eye she must be supervising everything. This evening I joined the evening meditation. When I heard her voice I was lost to the world.”

Now let us turn to the place of Yoga in education:

In ancient India, Yoga formed the very foundation of education. *Śikṣā* and



*sādhana* went on side by side. The practice of *Brahmacarya* was the first requisite. Scripture-study was inseparable from the curriculum. How was it that the young student became a Rishi — a seer who saw events a hundred years ahead? What secret power was at work? Does this not proclaim the efficacy of India's *Yoga Vidyā*?

If, after encompassing the lore of the West, Sri Aurobindo had not plunged into Yoga, could he have fathomed the mysteries and purpose of creation or made the discovery of the Supermind which holds out the hope of changing one day the very face of the earth?

A well-furnished mind is said to be as rare as a well-lived life. What a precious gift of God is "mind"<sup>1</sup> to man! If it is left to grow wild it might become full of thorns and a source of trouble not only to itself but to others. But if properly trained, well nurtured, well developed one may rise from peak to peak.

Is not the marvellous civilisation of today a creation of the mind? If by the power of mind, man could be the maker of such a powerful world how great would be his achievement if the guiding light of his life were the Supermind?

In these few lines Sri Aurobindo shows the distinction between the power of the Mind and that of the Supermind.

"Mind is a power of the Ignorance seeking for Truth, groping with difficulty to find it.... Supermind, on the contrary, is in actual and natural possession of the Truth."<sup>2</sup>

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

<sup>1</sup> A comparative study of two instances will help to clear the point:

Two servants, two nurses and a doctor were deputed to attend a big industrialist, but they could not give him any relief. Why? Because his mind had ceased functioning. He could not apply his mind to anything. If the brain is gone all is gone. That is why *Yoga Vidyā* lays so much stress on making the mind stable and strong, pure and powerful.

Swami Gangeshwaranand lost his eye sight due to an attack of small-pox when he was five. After initiation he was asked by his Guru to go to Varanasi to learn the scriptures. There he astounded everybody by learning within three years a course to which a sighted student has to devote 20 years. His memory is stupendous. He never forgets what has been read to him. On his visit to the Ashram he presented to our Library a magnificent volume of *The Vedas*, published by him,

<sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine*, American Edition, p. 250.

## **SRI AUROBINDO**

THERE have been other Avatars, —  
Of Love and Joy and Power in the Past:  
Else, all life would have been a mere farce,  
Nothing great or noble could ever last.

There have been human efforts too  
To enthrone God in the realms of life:  
Else, few would have sought the Good, the True  
Or Harmony beyond our struggle and strife.

Yet none before You sought to draw the Force  
That would change the very cells of Earth  
And hasten long Evolution's course  
And bring about a Divine race's birth.

Nor did any even make the Soul  
At once govern the World and be its goal.

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Sri Aurobindo:** 1872-1972. *A Centenary Symposium*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Society of Great Britain, 82 Bell Street, London, N.W.I.

SRI Aurobindo's relevance to England and *vice versa* can hardly be exaggerated. At the instance of an anglicised father Sri Aurobindo spent those fourteen years in England which ordinarily constitute the most formative stage in one's life. Back in India he became the voice of India's resurgence — described by the hierarchs of the British Empire in India as the greatest menace to their rule.

Sri Aurobindo gave to Indian nationalism the sure touch of a movement heading towards victory and then turned to concentrate on her spiritual destiny and that of humanity. (Occupation of India by England, after all, was an ephemeral phenomenon. Transaction great and sublime had taken place under the surface — between the Indian consciousness and the mind of England representing the West). The profound experiences on his voyage spiritual were recorded in the English language, imparting to the language itself a new subtlety, a plasticity of great promise for a future growth in a mystic direction — and even enriching several words and phrases with new connotations.

England, thus, is of special significance in relation to Sri Aurobindo and so is this publication brought out by the Sri Aurobindo Society of Great Britain, in commemoration of the Master's Birth Centenary. In a quiet part of London (82 Bell Street) a group of men and women meet twice a week and meditate and read passages from the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. This is the Sri Aurobindo Centre. But its activities are not limited to the regular bi-weekly meetings. During less than three months' stay in London this reviewer has seen a three-day long exhibition of Auroville photographs at the Government of India's tourist department hall, opened by Mr. Appa Pant, then India's High Commissioner in the U.K. An evening of slides, a meeting in a public auditorium addressed by a devoted ambassador for Auroville, Mrs. Margaret Smith-White, and the observance of Sri Aurobindo's birthday (1971) at the spacious residence of Mr. Yamunadas Modi — all under the auspices of this centre. This is how the centre is continuously and purposefully busy, under the management of devoted people like Mr. Dhirubhai Shaw and Mr. Nirmal Sethia and a dedicated and scholarly secretary, Mr. Dick Batstone.

The souvenir which in a by-line introduces its subject as the "Herald and Pioneer of Future Man" also substantiates the statement by appropriate extracts from Sri Aurobindo's writings. Three extracts from Sri Aurobindo and one from the Mother apart, the souvenir contains the reminiscences of the Hon'ble Mrs. Monica Parish's of her visit to Pondicherry, "Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Evolution" by Arabinda Basu, "Sri Aurobindo and History" by Ninian Smart, "Auroville and the Crisis of our Time" by Jobst Mühling, an appraisal of the concept of the old and the new in a true psychological perspective by Edith Schnapper, "Facets of Integration" by David

Davies, "The Humour of Sri Aurobindo" by Prithwindra Mukherjee, and "The Concept of an Integral Absolute in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy" by Robert Kleinman.

These revealing pieces, along with Mr. Batstone's brilliant editorial, will no doubt serve as a wide window into the rising world of Sri Aurobindo's vision.

MANOJ DAS

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**Savitri** by Sri Aurobindo, translated by Vidyavati 'Kokil' in Hindi in 7 parts. Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2. Price: Rs. 6.50, Rs. 4, Rs. 4, Rs. 5, Rs. 5, Rs. 5.50 and Rs. 8. respectively.

Translation is one of the most fascinating literary pastimes. And full of hazards. But when it comes to poetry it is much more intensely so and in addition tricky.

One might as well guess that when a book is translated from one language to another and then retranslated into its original language, the author will very likely wonder whether it was his own creation or some other mind's progeny.

Be that as it may, translating Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* falls in a category more or less exclusively its own.

It goes without saying that a translation has not to be flat and spineless. And it is no more a translation if the meanings of the original are sacrificed. But what about the revealed power of the word which expresses the vision that is the poet-seer's?

Even though the translation may faithfully give the exact meanings of words as in the original, it may not carry the intensity and power of the vision, it may not carry the sound-movement and the thought-movement in a certain context, it may not carry the music and the rhythm that have so powerfully and richly expressed the original inspiration. At the same time the frame-work of versification, the metrical rhythm and the rhyme scheme etc., have to be maintained in a sustained manner as perfectly as possible to keep up the proper effect of the music of poetry so that it does not mar the beauty of the poetic movement, or fail to impart the poetic delight.

I might observe that the value of rhyming in poetry, of the lyric and equally of the epic type, in most of the Indian languages cannot be easily ignored. It enhances the musical effect of the verse and even makes up for any weakness in the intensity and power of poetic expression.

Vidyavati's translation has a quality of its own. For one thing, she has tried to be as faithful to the original text as possible. And it will really help the Hindi public to know the contents of the epic. It will also greatly benefit those Hindi-knowing people who want to profit by study and meditation of the original but have not enough knowledge of English.

One does not very well relish the liberty she has taken with the set length of each line and the rhyme scheme. One misses something in the beauty and flow of the verse-

movement and the joy gets jarred. She has justified her method by saying that she had to resort to this liberty in order not to miss the exact meanings of the original and keep close proximity to the text. She might also be accused on the score that her language is a little difficult. Yet it is indeed humble of her when she says in one of the introductions that her efforts in translating *Savitri* will be rewarded enough if her translation helps people to know what Sri Aurobindo has enshrined in the great epic and even understand the English original more fruitfully. It does serve these purposes in an ample measure.

Her *bona fides* as a poet to take up this translation work is beyond doubt. She has handled it with admirable dexterity. The sincerity and consecration that went into the production of this thought-engaging and time-consuming work are praiseworthy. It was carried out *con brio* and *con amore*.

Vidyavati 'Kokil' took it up in a spirit of sadhana and put herself out heart and soul to accomplish it. It has been a work of long labour of love for her.

The translation has appeared in 7 parts — 'flowers'. It was as if each 'flower' was an offering *ex voto* made ritually before her deity almost every 15th August starting on 15th August 1966 and culminating on the birth centenary of Sri Aurobindo — 15th August 1972.

The elaborate introductions, the run of the story for each Book, the glossary and her apologia all enhance the value of the work.

As she has published a better revised edition of the first part of the whole book, we can certainly expect a more successful presentation in subsequent revised publications in the future.

We join her in the sacred hope expressed by her in her Hindi 'Dedication', which may be Englished thus:

The mortal shall one day ascend to heaven  
Holding the soul-bright rays of *Savitri*,  
And heaven itself shall descend on earth,  
In cataracting seas of ecstasy.

May I so drown myself to con its truth  
That new-transformed becomes all life of mine,  
And, honey-intoxicated, every breath  
Squanders each moment at thy feet divine!

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

# *Students' Section*

## **EYE EDUCATION**

### **BETTER SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES**

THE orthodox belief is that for errors of refraction like myopia, hypermetropia and astigmatism, there is not only no cure, but practically no preventive also. Any rational mind will think such a claim, dogmatic, an imperfection in the Ophthalmic science. When the sight begins to deteriorate, there must be some cause for it, and the cause is always an effort to see or strain or staring. The eye being a sense organ is closely associated with the mind in its functioning, and like other sense organs makes no effort to see in its normal course. The normal eye, when it makes an effort to see at a distance, its distant vision become defective and myopia or short sight is produced. When the normal eye makes an effort to see at a near point, its near vision becomes defective and hypermetropia is produced. Glasses neutralize the effect of such conditions but do not relieve the cause of the trouble. So, in many cases deterioration in eyesight continues and the number of the glasses goes on increasing. Often glasses become an added torture to increase the pain and suffering and loss of eyesight. Development of headache is one of the serious complications.

It is a well-known fact that vision is a process of mental interpretation. The picture which the mind sees is not the impression on the retina, but a mental interpretation of it. For example, to the good eye the white centre of the letter 'O' seems to be whiter than the margin of the page: this is because the mind interprets the retinal image in this way. Therefore, our vision varies also due to the variation in our mental relaxation.

The old writers on Ophthalmology did not consider that the mental strain could play an important part in the formation of visual defects, hence they isolated the eye while determining the cause and treatment of visual defects. To rectify the effect of defective vision they prescribed glasses. But very little has ever been claimed about their usefulness except that these contrivances neutralize the effects of the various conditions for which they are prescribed. This incurability of errors of refraction is based on the theory that the eye changes its focus for vision at different distances by altering the curvature of the lens.

It struck Dr. W.H. Bates, an American Ophthalmologist, that further investigation is necessary to determine the facts about accommodation and errors of refraction and he found that the orthodox ophthalmic science is full of fallacies. His experiments are a proof that the lens is not a factor in accommodation. The eye adjusts its focus for different distances just like a camera, by a change in the length of the organ, and this alteration is brought about by the action of the external muscles of the eye called oblique muscles. Dr. Bates has made many remarkable discoveries for the improvement of eye sight.

*(To be continued)*

DR. R. S. AGARWAL