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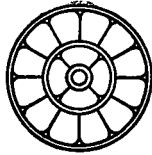
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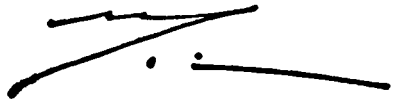


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 9

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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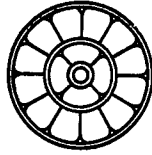
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

*Go and prepare yourself
and the best preparation is to be
useful to the Divine's work.*

Go and prepare yourself and the best preparation is to be useful to the Divine's work.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 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 herself at the time of its first publication in French in February 1968.)

OCTOBER 10, 1956

SOME days ago, during the Translation Class,¹ I found a passage in *The Life Divine* which, I thought, would interest you this evening. Sri Aurobindo is speaking of the movement of Nature and explaining how from matter which seems inert came life, then how from life came forth mind and also how from mind there will come supermind or the spiritual life; and he gives a sort of brief survey of the time it takes. I am going to read this passage to you and will tell you later what relation it has to our present situation:

"The first obscure material movement of the evolutionary Force is marked by an aeonic graduality; the movement of life-progress proceeds slowly but still with a quicker step, it is concentrated into the figure of millenniums; mind can still further compress the tardy leisureliness of Time and make long paces of the centuries; but when the conscious spirit intervenes, a supremely concentrated pace of evolutionary swiftness becomes possible."

(The Life Divine, p. 932)

I am reading this to you because I have been asked about the action of the Supermind, and I had compared this manifestation of the Supermind to that of the mind which, according to all modern scientific discoveries, took nearly a million years to evolve from the animal brain, the ape-brain, to the first human brain. And I told you that, consequently, one should not expect that this will take place in a few months or a few years, that obviously it would take much longer. Some people, it seems, thought that I was announcing that the superman would not come for yet a million years! I want to correct that impression.

Sri Aurobindo has said that as the development rises in the scale of consciousness, the movement becomes more and more rapid, and that when the Spirit or the Super-

¹ Till 1958, three times a week, Mother used to translate into French, before a class of disciples, some books of Sri Aurobindo. *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, the last six chapters of *The Life Divine* and a part of *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

mind intervenes in it, it can go much faster. Hence we may hope that in a few centuries, the first supramental race will appear.

But even that is quite disconcerting for some people, for they think it contradicts what Sri Aurobindo has always promised: that the time has come for the supramental transformation to be possible.... But we must not confuse a supramental transformation with the appearing of a new race.

What Sri Aurobindo promised and what naturally interests us, we who are here now, is that the time has come when some of the élite in humanity who fulfil the conditions necessary for spiritualisation, will be able to transform their body with the help of the supramental Force, Consciousness and Light, so as not to be animal-men any longer but become supermen.

This promise Sri Aurobindo has given and he founded it on the knowledge he had that the supramental Force was on the point of manifesting on the earth. In fact it had descended in him long ago, he knew it and knew what its effects were.

And now that it has manifested universally, I may say, generally, the certitude of the possibility of transformation is naturally still greater. There is no longer any doubt that those who will fulfil or who fulfil now the conditions are on the way to this transformation.

The conditions Sri Aurobindo has given in detail in *The Synthesis of Yoga* and in still greater detail in his last articles on *The Supramental Manifestation*. So it is only a question now of realising them.

Now, if someone wants to ask me a question on the subject....

The method of these realisations, formerly, was an integral surrender to you. Now also it is the same thing; then, in these new conditions, should not this surrender be still more rigorous than before?

What I read today¹ seems to be the most essential condition for starting, because it is that which is the most universal.

(*After a silence*) Everyone must follow his path in accordance with his own nature, and there is always a preference for one way rather than another. As we read

¹ It is then by a transformation of life in its very principle, not by an external manipulation of its phenomena, that the integral Yoga proposes to change it from a troubled and ignorant into a luminous and harmonious movement of Nature. There are three conditions which are indispensable for the achievement of this central inner revolution and new formation, none of them is altogether sufficient in itself, but by their united threefold power the uplifting can be done, the conversion made and completely made. For, first, life as it is is a movement of desire and it has built in us as its centre a desire-soul which refers to itself all the motions of life and puts in them its own troubled hue and pain of an ignorant, half-lit, baffled endeavour. For a divine living, desire must be abolished and replaced by a purer and firmer motive-power, the tormented soul of desire dissolved and in its stead there must emerge the calm, strength, happiness of a true vital being now concealed within us. Next, life as it is is driven or led partly by the impulse of the life-force, partly by a mind which is mostly a servant and abettor of the ignorant life-impulse, but in part also its uneasy and not too luminous or competent guide and mentor; for a divine life the mind and the life-impulse must cease to be anything but instruments and the inmost psychical

in one of the last classes, for him who follows the path of action, it is much more difficult to feel that the human personality does not exist and that only the divine Force works. For the one who follows the path of knowledge it is relatively very easy, it is a thing one discovers almost immediately. For him who follows the path of love, it is elementary, since it is by giving himself that he progresses. But for the one who follows the path of action it is much more difficult, and consequently for him the first step is to do what is said here in the passage of *The Synthesis of Yoga* which we read: to create in himself this complete detachment from the fruit of action, to act because it is that which is to be done, to do it in the best way conceivable, and not to be anxious about the consequences, to leave the results to a Will higher than his own.

One can't make a general rule for the order of importance of the paths, it is an exclusively personal affair. And there is a moment when one understands very well, it is evident, that no two paths are alike, no two paths can be alike, and every one follows his own path and that is the truth of his being. One can, if one looks from a sufficient height, see a difference in the speed of advancing, but it does not always conform to the external signs; and one could say a little humorously, that it is not always the wisest who go fastest!

(Silence)

It seems to me no longer possible to make general rules. Indeed, the Grace is over all. And what is necessary to let it act? That is very difficult to say.

If one can see it, feel it, experience so to say its action, be conscious of its presence and movement, then one has the joy of the movement, the progress, the realisation; but that does not mean that if one doesn't feel this joy, the action of the Grace is not there, the realisation not there.

And after all, all the ways of being of the Divine, all the forms of being of the manifestation are necessary to express the Divine. It is this manifestation as a whole, in its totality, which progresses towards a growing, infinite, eternal perfection. It is not each separate element, individually, it is the whole altogether, as a collective and total expression of the divine Truth. All this is moving forward constantly, eternally, towards a greater perfection. The universe of tomorrow will necessarily be more divine, if one may say so, than the universe of yesterday; and that of yesterday was more divine than the one preceding it. And thus, it could be said that it is the Divine, in his expression of Himself, who is in perpetual progress towards a more and more perfect, more and more divine manifestation.

being must take their place as the leader on the path and the indicator of a divine guidance. Last, life as it is is turned towards the satisfaction of the separative ego, ego must disappear and be replaced by the true spiritual person, the central being, and life itself must be turned towards the fulfilment of the Divine in terrestrial existence; it must feel a Divine Force awaking within it and become an obedient instrumentation of its purpose.

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, p.166)

And in that case, each element has only to manifest as perfectly as possible its own law, what it should be in the whole, in order to do to the maximum what ought to be done. It is thus a conscious, enlightened, it could almost be said disinterested, discovery of this truth of each being, which is for it the first and most important necessity.

OCTOBER 17, 1956

Is delight the highest state? And if so, could it be said that when one loses delight, one goes down in one's consciousness?

Sri Aurobindo has said that the universe was built upon the delight of existence and that delight being its origin is necessarily its goal also. Hence this should mean in fact that delight is the highest state.

But I don't need to tell you that this is not delight as it is understood in the ordinary human consciousness.... Indeed, that delight is beyond the states which are generally considered as the highest from the yogic point of view, as for instance, the state of perfect calm, of perfect equality of soul, of absolute detachment, of identity with the infinite and eternal Divine, which lifts you necessarily above all contingences. Parallel to this state there can be another which is the state of perfect, integral, universal love, which is the very essence of compassion and the most perfect expression of the Grace which wipes away the consequences of all error and all ignorance. Those two states have always been considered as the summit of consciousness; they are what may be called the frontier, the extreme limit of what the individual consciousness can attain in its union with the Divine.

But there is something which lies beyond; that precisely is a state of perfect delight which is not static: delight in a progressive manifestation, a perfect unfolding of the supreme Consciousness.

The first of the two states I spoke about leads almost always to a withdrawal from action, an almost static condition, and very easily would it lead to Nirvana (in fact, that has always been the way prescribed for all those in search of Nirvana). But this state of delight I am speaking about, which is essentially divine because it is free, totally free from all possibility of oppositions and reverses, does not break away from action; on the contrary, it leads to an integral action, but one perfect in its essence and completely liberated from all ignorance and all bondage to ignorance.

One can experience, on the path, when one has made some progress, when there is a greater understanding, a more total opening, a more intimate union with the divine Consciousness, one can experience this Delight as something that comes by and adds colour to life and gives it its true meaning, but as long as one is in the ordinary human consciousness this Delight gets very easily deformed and changes into something which no longer resembles it at all. Consequently, one could hardly say that if one loses the delight one goes down in consciousness, for...the Delight I speak

of is something which cannot ever be lost. If one has reached beyond the two states I spoke about a while ago, that is to say the state of perfect detachment and close union, and the state of perfect love and compassion, if one has gone beyond these two states, and has found the divine Delight, it is practically impossible to come down from there. But in practical life, that is, on the path of yoga, if one is touched even in passing by this divine Delight, it is evident that, should it leave you, you are bound to feel that you have come down from a peak into quite a dark valley.

But Delight without detachment would be a very dangerous gift which could very easily be perverted. Hence, to seek for Delight before having acquired detachment does not seem to be a very wise thing. One must first be above all possible opposites: above, indeed, pain and pleasure, suffering and happiness, enthusiasm and depression. If one is above all that, then one may aspire for Delight quite safely.

But as long as this detachment is not realised, one may easily confuse Delight with an exalted state of ordinary human happiness, and this would not at all be the true thing nor even a perversion of the thing, for the nature of the two is so different, almost the very opposite, that from one you cannot pass to the other. So, if one wants to be safe on the path, it seems to me that the seeking for peace, for perfect calmness, perfect equality, for a widening of the consciousness, a vaster understanding and liberation from all desire, all preference, all attachment, is certainly an indispensable preliminary condition.

It is the guarantee of an equipoise, both inner and outer.

And on this equilibrium, on this foundation which must be *very solid*, one may then build whatever one wants. But the foundation must be there, unshakable — to begin with.

(*Silence*)

Some one has asked me just what I meant by these words:

"One must be calm."

It is obvious that when I tell someone "Be calm", I mean many different things according to the person. But the first indispensable calmness is mental quietude, for generally that is the one that's most lacking. When I tell someone "Be calm", I mean: Try not to have troubled, excited, agitated thoughts; try to quieten your mind and to stop turning round in the circle of all your imaginations and observations and mental constructions.

One could quite fairly add a question: You tell us "Be calm", but what should we do to be calm?... The answer is always more or less the same: one must first of all feel the need for it and want it, and then aspire, and then try! For trying, there are innumerable means which have been prescribed and attempted by many. These means are generally long, arduous, difficult; and many people get discouraged before

reaching the end, for, the more they try, the more do their thoughts start whirling around and getting agitated in their head.

For each one the means is different, but *first* one must feel the need, for whatever reason it may be — whether because one is tired or because one is overtaxed, or because one truly wants to rise above the state one lives in — one must first understand, feel the need of this quietude, this peace in the mind. And then, afterwards one may try out successively all the means, known and new ones, to attain the result.

Now, one quickly perceives that there is another quietude which is necessary, and even very pressing, this is vital quietude, that is to say, the absence of desire. Only, the vital when not sufficiently developed, as soon as it is told to keep quiet, either goes to sleep or goes on strike; it says, “Ah! no. I can’t work any longer! If you don’t give me the sustenance I need, excitement, enthusiasm, desire, even passion, I prefer not to move and I won’t do anything any more”. So there the problem becomes a little more delicate and perhaps yet more difficult; for surely, to fall from excitement into inertia is very far from any progress! One must never mistake inertia or a somnolent passivity for quietude.

Quietude is a very positive state; there is a positive peace which is not the opposite of conflict — an active peace, contagious, powerful, which controls and calms, which puts everything in order, organises. It is of this I am speaking; when I tell someone, “Be calm”, I don’t mean to say “Go and sleep, be inert and passive, and don’t do anything”, far from that.... True quietude is a very great force, a very great strength. In fact one can say, looking at the problem from the other side, that all who are really strong, powerful, are always very calm. It is only the weak who are agitated; as soon as one becomes truly strong, one is peaceful, calm, quiet, and one has the power of endurance to face the adverse waves which come rushing from outside in the hope of disturbing one. This true quietude is always a sign of force. Calmness belongs to the strong.

And this is true even in the physical field. I don’t know if you have observed animals like lions, tigers, elephants, but it is a fact that when they are not in action, they are always so perfectly still. A lion sitting and looking at you seems always to be telling you: “Oh! how fidgety you are!” It looks at you with such a peaceful air of wisdom! And all its power, energy, physical strength are there, gathered, collected, concentrated and — without the shadow of any agitation — ready for action when the order is given.

I have seen people, lots of them, who could not sit still for half an hour without fidgeting. They had to move a foot or a leg, or an arm or their head; they had to stir restlessly all the time, for they did not have the power or strength to remain quiet.

This capacity to remain still when one wants to, to gather all one’s energies and spend them as one wishes, completely if one wants, or to apportion them as one wants in action, with a perfect calm even in action; that is always the sign of strength. This may be physical strength or vital strength or mental strength. But if you are in the least agitated, you may be sure there is a weakness somewhere; and if your restless-

ness is integral, it is an integral weakness.

So, if I tell someone "Be calm", I may be telling him all sorts of things, it depends upon each person. But obviously, most often it is: "Make your mind quiet, don't get restless all the time in your head, don't rake up lots of ideas, calm yourself."

For most people an experience exists only when they can explain it to themselves. The experience in itself (contact with a certain force, a widening of consciousness, communion with an aspect of the Divine — no matter what experience — an opening of the being, the breaking of an obstacle, crossing over a stage, opening new doors) all these experiences, if people cannot explain them to themselves in so many words and materialise them in precise thoughts, it is as though these did not exist! And it is just this need for expression, this need for translation which causes the best part of the experience to lose its power of action on the individual consciousness. How is it that you have a decisive, definitive experience, that, for instance, you have opened the door of your psychic being, you have had communion with it, you know what that means, and then — that does not remain? It is because it does not have a sufficiently tangible power unless you can express it to yourself. The experience begins for you only when you are able to describe it. Well, when you are able to describe it, the greater part of its intensity and its capacity of action for the inner and outer transformation has already evaporated. There it may be said that expression, explanation is always a coming down. The experience itself is on a much higher plane.

DARSHAN DAY : AUGUST 15, 1973

LET me recount as much as I can remember of this memorable day. It was cloudy in the morning, I went about my usual chores, done before 7:00 a.m. then to the Ashram for fruit and the first touch of the Samadhi. When I arrived at 6:45 a.m. there was already a frightful crowd. After promising that I wouldn't sneak ahead in the line going up to Sri Aurobindo's room I was allowed into the Ashram. I hardly recognized any faces. The Samadhi was nearly empty because everyone was afraid to leave their place in the line. It was very beautiful and very simple. A sea of pink rose petals all velvety to the touch and breathing out their perfume with a strength that could stop any heart in wonder. Sri Aurobindo's symbol was in the center in a white jasmine outline and large white lotuses were about with only an occasional immaculate and perfect rose — one very red I remember whose perfection was equal to the force of its significance.

Off to the dining room, home for a short time and then back to the Ashram by 8:15 to try my endurance in the queue for Sri Aurobindo's room, over an hour to no avail. At 9:30 I left the line in order to go to the Ashram for the meditation. When I arrived at the Ashram gate there was a huge crowd trying to enter; it seemed as if a force was gently guiding me, without my effort, through the crowd. When I was about five feet from the doorway a tremendous pushing began from several directions. I haven't experienced anything like it since a political demonstration of years ago. Two friends were there and more or less helped me through. Once inside the Ashram gate it was instantly a different atmosphere, remarkably different. I made my difficult way to my accustomed place on such occasions. There I spent the next hour in silence and comfort. Meditation was as usual: 10:00-10:30. It was a lovely hour. I had the distinct awareness of openness in the top of the head and in the heart. Later there seemed to be some glimmerings in the third-eye centre between the brows and at that time one line of poetry came following a flash-vision:

Sheets of stars shafting brilliant across the virgin sky.

I suppose if I had had a pencil and paper more might have come but this was all for then and up to now.

Again I joined the queue and it was well worth the waiting and perseverance. I picked up the *Bulletin* on my way.

In the morning the Darshan Day Schedule had a question mark against "Balcony Darshan". Later, 6:15 p.m. was chalked on a large board. So we were to have the Darshan! I had a refreshing nap after lunch. At 4:00 I thought I'd go and see what was happening in the Ashram. The crowd had already tightly filled the street but I paid no attention and went to sit in the Ashram.

5:00. I went out into the street. When I arrived on the side where the Mother would come I felt a little discouraged, the crowd was immense and impregnable — it seemed as though I might not be able to see the Mother and still 1 hour and 15 minutes to go before 6:15. The sky was overcast and it was hot. I was standing somehow near a whole group of men from Orissa and two or three Ashram girls. A friend was there,

he was very kind and helpful making it easier for me to see by letting me stand where he had stood. He gave me a chance to edge further in when the moment was to come for all those, who had been sitting, to stand up leaving more room. So we waited. 5:30, 5:45 the sky grew dark and a cool breeze came through the crowd, the kind of breeze foretelling rain — yes, it started to rain, it was good cool rain, first slow then hard rain. I wondered, “Oh, how can we expect the Mother to come in this rain? It is better for Her if She doesn’t come.” The coverings of Her balcony were wet and I could see that it was windy up there from the way a nearby palm was bending shiny in the wind. It was darker now. 6:07 — Champaklal, Nolini and André came out into the rain on the side-terrace below; it let up a little but did not stop. I had to make a shield over my eyes with my hands so I could look up to the balcony. 6:10. Could it be? Yes, She was actually coming in the rain! I cannot express with any words what it did to me to see the Mother come to see us even in the rain. Pranab stayed very close to Her. She came to the railing and looked down. Then I thought She would return the way she had done in April. But no, She walked a great distance, at least half the whole balcony — and She was strong in her walking and more upright than usual. I could see Her hands very clearly: they did not appear to be the hands of someone Her age. She stood a long time and twice seemed to go into a trance as if She would stay there for hours except that Pranab would talk to her. It was a long Darshan and it was “shattering” to see and experience how She gives to us who give so little to Her. I have no words, as I have said. Any description can only minimize what happened. When She was walking, I had to blink because of the falling rain... I saw a lot of light, it even hurt my eyes, and when the Mother went into the trance the light became more intense with a hue of pink and gold, again I had to blink as if when looking at the sun. Although it was not as bright as the sun, it was most real.

I am afraid I have done an injustice in my attempt to give the Darshan Day, so inadequate is my ability to convey all that my heart felt and saw. After the Mother went in I stood a bit and then went to the Samadhi. While there I prayed that He protect the Mother and I suddenly saw Her and then I started to open my eyes. On the verge of opening them I saw His white blue brilliant intense light; it was only a flash but it seemed like an answer. I am so moved by Them and that I can be their child.

When the Mother was there on the balcony I found myself saying “my Guru, my Guru”, but it came from deep within, for what brought the Mother out in the rain was the Divine, the Divine Love, the Divine Mother, and what I saw or felt or absorbed was an immense guidance for surrender and for infinite giving. How life can be filled with so much love and so much inspiration I never dreamed it was possible. Today I feel victory in the air and it is a victory filled with unbounded light and love and it will grow and grow. I am sure it will change me, which means it will change the whole ordinary world.

A DISCIPLE

ASPIRATION SCHOOL, AUROVILLE — A GLIMPSE

What should be the guiding principle of the new ideal of education?

TRUTH, HARMONY, LIBERTY.

THE MOTHER

ASPIRATION school, Auroville, was opened on December 15th, 1970, with 35 children and 12 adults. Now in 1973, 105 children, representing 10 nationalities, 9 Indian states and a wide diversity of social and cultural backgrounds are experimenting together along the lines laid out in the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Our endeavour in the two and a half years of the school's history has been to discover and manifest the conditions in which education can be both a joyful and a truly progressive process. We have tried to rely solely on the aspiration and enthusiasm of every individual involved and on the mutual stimulation and direction that have arisen naturally among them under such diverse and harmonious conditions — free as they are from conventional demands and guided and inspired by the highest educational ideals. There are no examinations or imposed standards to be met and the groupings of students and teachers are not made arbitrarily. The children are encouraged to learn for the joy of learning and are free to move from one area of interest to another as they will. We aim at a full and natural integration of our children into the life of the community, where they will find their place by following their own natural interests and aptitudes. The school has evolved as a dynamic organism embracing many diverse elements. It is not confined to a building or a programme — our education takes place throughout the community of Auroville in an increasing variety of environments and activities.

In the 2 to 5 age group there are 33 children. 10 live in Aspiration and the others come by bus from various parts of Auroville. Many of them were born in Auroville. They arrive at 8:30 a.m. and spend the morning in a large garden playing in sand and water and on the climbing frame or slide; there are huts and shades providing areas for construction and mathematical games, for painting, for dancing and gymnastics, for play of all kinds. There is a special place for the very smallest children and a silence room where beautiful pictures are displayed and meditative music is played. The children come together for games, to sing in French, English, Tamil and Sanskrit and to listen to stories. There are six adults working here, four French/English speakers, one German/English and one Tamil — three men and three women. All meet under the mango tree at 10:00 each day for a morning snack. They go home at noon.

In the 5 to 10 age group there are 38 children. 19 live in Aspiration and 19 in other parts of Auroville and in Pondicherry. They have formed themselves quite naturally into five distinct batches, each with its own environment. Derek is an Englishman whose background is in science and mathematics. He now works with six

boys, three Tibetan, one Indian/Swedish, one from Orissa and one from Andhra, all aged 8 to 9. They like to make kites and clay models, to experiment in the science room as well as to pursue regular studies in reading, writing and mathematics. They visit the school workshop for carpentry and metal work. The Tibetan boys like doing embroidery with an American girl from the community. They keep a small garden and make expeditions to the Success tree nursery near 'Forecomers' or the farm 'Utilité' to learn about and share in the work there. Recently they were involved in a project on numeration that included Roman, Greek, Babylonian calculations and other number systems. They prepared an exhibition on the topic which was displayed in Last School. This is a typically energetic and versatile group.

Renate is German and with the help of a French girl, Manon, she looks after two groups, the first consisting of one Tamil boy and four Tibetan boys and girls, the other of four girls, one from Orissa, one from Andhra and two from local villages. All these children are 6 to 8 years old. Two German girls and one Tamil girl of this age divide their time between here and Last School. With Renate the children especially like to draw, paint, do embroidery, crocheting, knitting and to 'keep house', maintaining an immaculately clean room decorated with flowers. Some of these children join in the singing and dance classes at Last School. Once a week they go to the education/recreational area below the beach which is kept by an American couple. There they bathe in the sea, do clay work, painting and prepare their own lunch. This beach environment is also used by eight boys, seven Tamil and one Bengali, aged 6 to 10, under the care of Jean and Gordon, a Tamil-speaking American couple who have two of the boys living with them, and Ursula, a German girl who has many years of experience with this age-group. These boys especially like to build houses, paint, draw and study reading and writing — in English and Tamil. They spend a lot of time listening to stories and looking at picture books. Jean and Gordon have taken their Tamil boys on expeditions to nearby towns giving them the experience of travelling in a train and seeing the world outside their local village and Aspiration. These children are extremely observant and know all about the habits of local animals, plants and birds.

At Last School there is a group of about 12 children of German, Italian, French, Indian and American origin, aged between 6 and 10. Working with them are one Englishwoman, two German men, a Frenchwoman, and volunteer-visitors of many nationalities. To Last School come visiting teachers from the Auroville community and from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry to give classes in singing, Indian dance, acting, art, instrumental music and handicrafts which are open to all children who are interested. Last School also houses the library of about 5000 volumes on a wide range of subjects, mostly in English and French, but some in other European and Indian languages, and a newly established French environment which is intended to make the French culture and language available in a more integral way. In addition to these activities, the children who are based at Last School are learning Sanskrit, English, French, geography and mathematics in an informal

but often very concentrated way, working on various projects according to their interests. One of these projects was the development of the faculties of concentration, memory and sense-receptivity through games led by one of the adults. In the course of the project they made a video-tape showing some of the games that they have developed for memory training. All these children are working at the moment on an exhibition showing different systems of writing and in this they are joined enthusiastically by visiting children from other groups.

In the age group of 11 to 19 there are 34 children, 14 living in Aspiration and 20 from Pondicherry and other parts of Auroville. They also work in small batches of 6 to 8 children where they follow a special programme to develop their mental powers. They have the help of four full time teachers, two from Bengal, one from Andhra, one from Gujarat. One of these, Ananda, was educated at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Pondicherry. There are also three visiting teachers for language studies, two Tamil and one from Andhra plus an Englishwoman and a Frenchwoman. The regular activities of these groups include Tamil, Sanskrit, English, French, Science and mathematics, history and literary studies. They also pursue individual interests such as flute playing, photography and mechanics and participate in community projects such as the polyester factory, the printing press, the handicrafts centre at 'Fraternity', the vehicle maintenance and repair workshop at 'Abri', the construction of the Matrimandir and others.

The students are encouraged to help those who are younger. In addition to assistance given in the Kindergarten once or twice a week by some of the children aged 9 to 16, there are boys aged 11 to 18 teaching English and mathematics to Tamil workers of the same age from the polyester factory and the handicrafts centre.

All those over five and some even younger children who choose to do so participate in the physical education programme each afternoon from 4:30 to 5:45. They do gymnastics, athletics, games — cricket, basketball, volleyball, cabbadi and others — coordinated movements and exercises. Judo and sea swimming are also available at the beach.

There are at present two projects concerned with the education of children from the local villages. One is with a group who are the children of paid workers for Auroville and it is intended as preparation for their full integration into Aspiration school. A couple from Bihar works with 19 of these children aged 5 to 11. They have a full day's programme including lunch and sports. They employ the Montessori materials. Six children from this group have already been integrated into Aspiration School. Two of them are living in Aspiration with teachers' families. Also, 68 children from the Kuilapalayam village near Aspiration take part in a sports programme from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. each day on the school sportsground. Uniforms and a nourishing snack are provided. A similar scheme has now been started at Kottakorai, another village in Auroville, for 20 children with the possibility of increasing the number to 50 soon. These have been extremely needed, welcome and rewarding projects.

The Last School building was opened on October 6, 1971. It is the first to come into use of several new buildings intended to meet a wide variety of educational needs. Still under construction are the Sanskrit research building, After School 1 for science and mathematics and After School 2 designed as a library. It may be appropriate here to call attention to the names that the Mother has given to the projected educational buildings in Auroville: 'Last School, After School, Super School and No School.' These are undoubtedly significant not only of the trend of education in Auroville but also of the Time Spirit and the demands of universal Nature with regard to education everywhere.

In attempting to give a picture of Auroville's school today we have said nothing about teaching methods and materials, or about the psychological approach, the relationship between teacher and pupil, or learner and guide. This is because these things are still being developed. Instead we have given a kind of 'photograph' of our daily activities in late April, 1973. Because of the dynamic and experimental nature of our development you should not be surprised to find that today many, perhaps most, of the details making up this picture have changed — people come and go, groups change, new activities are taken up and others put aside, new possibilities present themselves continually.

Aspiration School will surely continue to grow in the same organic and many-sided fashion as it has up to now, constantly enriching our opportunities for experience, self-discovery and growth. One or two projects that are under way may prove to be of special interest. One is the children's village. On April 4th, 1973, the foundation stone was laid and work has begun to construct a complete educational environment where it may be possible to develop new ways of living together more favourable to individual and collective growth with better habits of hygiene, nutrition, work, sleep and play. Another is the Creche, being established at the moment, which will be devoted to pre- and post-natal education for mothers and infants. Here could be brought together the best psychological, medical, educational and spiritual guidance available to help the children of the future realise their highest potentialities.

The idea of a truly international centre of education presented to us by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, with pavilions representing the true culture of each nation, where children could be taught in their own mother tongue, in the milieu of their own culture, but still be in close and stimulating contact with the children, languages and cultures of all the other nations, has yet to be realised. However, the small beginnings are there, ready perhaps to flower in the near future.

But whatever emerges to fulfil our outward needs, we must remember always and strive to realise the truth of Sri Aurobindo's teaching:

"The business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like inert plastic material.... The true secret, whether with child or man, is to help

him find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as 'the leader of the march set in our front', will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards a realisation of its potentialities of which our present mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience or forming any conception."

SRI AUROBINDO, *The Human Cycle*
SHRADDHAVAN

LET ME DECANT...

LET me decant, see the colour of the wine,
If there is love, let it sparkle to the day!
Pure let me stand, for your service, by your side;
If there is none, let me turn and pass away.

Love let there be, love that rises from the heart,
Bliss let there be, a bliss that answers to your love,
Not by the mind made to strain after a dream
But by your grace pouring on me from above.

Seal me below, that the joy cannot escape
Then let it pour like golden honey on my life;
Pierce through my eyes that they can see but cannot take,
That I may embrace all the universe as wife.

PETER

TRAVELLER'S LUCK

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1973)

II

EARLY this year I again heard from Delhi that I might have to go to Japan and Thailand for two to three weeks. Then, as usual, they kept me waiting for months, but without doing much at the other end either. On coming to know that I was going to Japan, a young teacher from the Centre of Education wrote to me: You are going to the land of my dreams. How I wish she could have gone instead of me. She would have convinced without the need to lecture. For many reasons — including of course that the Mother had lived there — in our minds Japan is bathed in a beauty of its own. The cherry blossoms, the ikebana, Mt Fuji, the Ronins, the Samurai, the Tales of Geni, the Geishas, kimono, the Tea Ceremony, the tempura, the Kabuki theatre, bunraku and the Noh plays, Haiku, the Zen and Shinto shrines, the Meiji Reform, Hiroshima, not to forget Rabindranath Tagore and Subhashchandra Bose, most of us feel a ready rapport with the Land of the Rising Sun. I was no exception. But the question today is slightly different: is it a sunrise or a sunset that we are witnessing? Not an easy question to answer. The battle between tradition and modernity is still on, a fight to the finish. Or will the shaping spirit reconcile the opposites?

Torn between the isolation and tranquillity of her past and the Technocracy of her present, Japan is sorely divided, uncertain, perched on a precipice. The efficiency of her Industrialization and her post-war economic recovery is a miracle. It may also be her undoing. For long centuries expert in the art of designing with Nature, the Japanese are now engaged in designing against her. 'A world of made is not a world of born.' The clearest proof or nemesis of this is pollution. Where there had been once flowering forests we have the fumes of a paper factory feeding glossy rubbish. Its latest totems are bulldozers, skyscrapers, supermarkets and expressways. Kobe cancels Kyote. Unable to bear the tension and the vulgarity of the new Nippon some of the sensitive spirits — the Nobel Laureate, Kawabata and the young novelist, Misima — preferred suicide.

What now her anxious soul doth lack
Is energy of peace to be
At one wit with nature's mystery.

How cannily Rabindranath had anticipated all this! As the Santiniketan-re-turned Professor Azuma pointed out, Tagore's bitter analysis has come true, too true. The worship of Mammon and the Machine has brought material wealth and greed, Nationalism and Militarism. And old Japan seems to be on the way out; seems but not quite, not yet.

Altogether Japan offers an unexampled prospect of watching social change at close quarters. Part of its beauty is that it is passing. One has a sense of living in two worlds: a timeless world of grace and refinement as well as a whirling puppet play run at the behest of a faceless, soulless Emperor of Automata. Japan today seems an ideal setting for schizophrenia. But as my interpreter, Mrs Ikeda assured me: We know how to switch on and off. One does not know how long the power to do so will last.

The Meiji Reform turned Japan modern almost overnight. The operation was too quick and the wounds remain. Master in the art of imitation, she has in the past assimilated the Chinese and the Korean elements. Will it not be the same with her recent Westernization? That is Japan's dilemma, her date with destiny. Industrialization is a poison that can kill as well as cure. One need not despair. Even today, in her rituals and ceremonies, her social decorum which makes every outsider feel a barbarian, in the temple cities of Kyoto, Kamakura and Nara there glows the unearthly beauty of her landscape and soulscape, the timeless pageant of her Buddhist pantheon. Who that has seen the Avalokiteswara of the White Moon or the Kannon of Nara can ever forget these archetypes of awareness and compassion? Perhaps her innate subtlety, sense of balance and simple harmony will preserve Japan from going wholly West and help her to escape the blight of coca-colonization.

But I forget the lectures. There were difficulties. The Indian Govt. had given too short a notice and the Embassy had done little or nothing to help. But in the end it came all right. In spite of her modernization and the American Occupation, the Japanese did not take to English and I have heard lectures on English Literature being given in the Japanese language. This meant that all my talks, except one, had to be translated. As a rule, and I am glad it is so, the Japanese audience is gentle, serious and patient. Even if it is bored it will not let you know.

The first talk on "Sri Aurobindo and the New Society" was held under the auspices of the East-West Institute, Tokyo. It was, by the way, in Bengali. The reason was that most of my listeners were students of Bengali. Nor should I forget a somewhat unusual nocturnal *rencontre* with a Hippy group in a Kyoto discotheque. Though a little outlandish, it was a sensitive group, not unfamiliar with the logic and appeal of the higher life. You never can tell, who will be touched, when and how.

IV

Bangkok was the last on my list, last not least. At Santiniketan I had known students from Thailand and was looking forward to meeting some of them. Thailand is largely Hindu-Buddhist and still maintains mediaeval pockets or ways of life reminiscent of the Glory that was Ind. In the past our cultural links must have been strong and continuous. Today Thailand has a constitutional monarchy, which means that the king, a highly cultured person, has no power but an enormous prestige. The country is ruled by a junta, which has allowed the U.S.A. to use Thailand as a military

base. A Hindu-Buddhist milieu, army rule, an American Military Base, affluence, unease, it's a strange amalgam. The many massage clinics, the five-star hotels and commodious campuses (where, happily or unhappily, student trouble is unknown) and the numerous *wats* or temples made a curious impression on me, half modern, half museum. I reached Bangkok on the evening of May 26th only to be told that the Universities were closed. How thoughtful of the ICCR, I thought, to provide me with a perfect holiday, with no work to do. But this was not to be. My host, the first secretary of the Indian Embassy, Mr Moulik, was a determined and resourceful person. The very next day, a Sunday too, he arranged a sort of press interview. An absurdly teen-ager reporter, with little English and less sense of news, duly appeared on the scene. I was in great form and must have said all manner of things. A surrealistic version, with details missing or messed up, appeared in the next day's *Bangkok Post*. Like Lord Byron, overnight I had become famous or infamous. My host had calculated correctly. Invitations and inquiries began to pour in. Not too many, but enough to boost morale and give me the right to exist. The first was an invitation to meet informally, some English-speaking students at the prestigious Chulalongkorn University. Meeting these nice-looking, well-behaved boys and girls was a delight. On their part they too did not seem to be unhappy. For my theme I had chosen "Youth and the Modern Crisis". This, or something like this, is what I said:

"Thanks to overpopulation, national rivalries, the indiscriminate waste of natural resources, and an irresponsible attitude towards the Nature of Things, pollution has become a polar peril. But the deeper malady is indeed worse: a pollution of consciousness which we see all around us. Ours is a sick society. Civilization has turned all of us into Displaced Persons, a humanity uprooted. Those who suffer most from this rootlessness and meaninglessness are perhaps the young. But corruption has never been compulsory. The choice is always ours.

"If man is to survive we must revise our goals. More than the knowledge of narrow specialists, knowing more and more about less and less, we have to revive the lost art of wisdom and balance. In the attempt at recovery the first thing to note — the point is often missed — is that the crisis of civilization forms part of a wider issue, the crisis of evolution, which few understand. One of the few that do is Sri Aurobindo. As he sees it, at present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny. In certain directions the human mind has achieved an enormous development, while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. So there is this prolonged confusion and darkness, this violent, shifting incertitude. The prospect of racial suicide, the point of no return, may not be far off. No wonder our age has been called an Age of Anxiety. In such a world it is not a pleasure to be young. It is not a bliss but a curse, to live through a time where everything hurts.

"To avoid the impending doom we have to utilise all our resources and recover the lost wisdom and science of Yoga, an integral Yoga as Sri Aurobindo calls it. Not a world-renouncing yoga, concerned with the salvation of the few but a society of the free.

The Bodhisattva ideal of Sarvamuktivad, but with a difference. It will be a Yoga that will meet the demand for total development as well as give us the means for a just society. The evolution or change of consciousness towards wholeness and self-exceeding is man's ultimate revolution, the Revolution by Consciousness. Of this our politicians and so-called scientists, the joint directors of our ruin, know nothing.

"This is the real sense, motive or background of the youth unrest today, its deeper content or discontent. It is not merely a question of economics or politics. What is needed is, first, a clarification of issues, a new definition and creative role for the youth of the world. Young people have one great advantage: what they will not accept, cannot survive. This imposes a terrible burden or responsibility and it is not enough to be angry or on the rampage, distressed and dissatisfied. As it is, the goalless if not Godless, modern youth seem better in protest. But slogans cannot be a substitute for thought. Mostly negative, our young seem better equipped to know what they do not want. But do they also know what they want? Many of them have more energy than direction, and nothing is more liable to misuse.

"Youth is really not a matter of years but of attitude. It is a perennial possibility, a willingness of the heart. Unfortunately, sometimes young people can also be dreadfully dogmatic or opinionated. There are old men of eighteen and young men of eighty. Yet the fact remains the problems of modern youth are not of their making but largely a gift of the Establishment. They are not the villains of the piece but its victims. We must understand their situation sympathetically and in depth. We should also realise that we cannot stop their experiments in group living or in communes. But the experiments should be sincere and not shoddy, sober and not silly escapades. Otherwise youth's a stuff that will not endure."

In my talk, which lasted hardly thirty minutes, I made passing references to Sri Aurobindo. But the inquiries that followed, sincere, pertinent and spontaneous, were revealing. A young lady — so petite, a half moon on a lotus stalk — wanted to know more about Integral Yoga. (How I wished that my friend Arindam had been there instead of poor me.) Another asked about the methods of the Yoga of Transformation. Still another inquired if Sri Aurobindo's point of view was widely accepted in India. (What answer would you have given?) A young gentleman was keen on clearing up the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. And so on. Mind you this was perhaps the first time that they had ever heard of Sri Aurobindo.

On June 2 I was back in Calcutta as if nothing had happened. But memory lingered. The man who had gone out wasn't exactly the person that came back.

V

Now to sum up. First a word about the sponsors. If the Government had really wanted me to go as a Centennial Lecturer they should have planned the itinerary more intelligently. Most of the time I had little to do.

Apart from what the Government did or did not do, there are deeper issues.

The foremost among these is the need for self-examination. We can never forget that before we can hope to change others, we had better change ourselves. Who among us will claim that he is a fit and proper person to embody or put across Sri Aurobindo's ideas and insights? On that score I have no illusions. If the Lord chose to use me or anyone else, that was my or his luck. It need not cause any swelling of the head or complacency. Both would be clearly unspiritual. In the eyes of the Divine there is neither high nor low. We are but His instruments, serving Him, as and where we are and slowly or at once, our sense of being the doer or worker must disappear. To be used by him, is that not honour enough?

On a more mundane level I would like to make a few suggestions, or do some kind of loud thinking, before I finish. The traffic will continue and whether it is Bulgaria or Baluchistan, Japan, Thailand or New Zealand, the visiting lecturer should be well posted in the history, culture and religion of the country to which he is going or being sent. Let us respect our audience and not merely pontificate. How can we communicate a sense of values to someone we do not know nor care for? Imagine if I had been able to talk in Japanese. Half the battle, I should say. Also we should avoid making unnecessary doctrinal niceties and not pretend to a wisdom that, in most cases, we do not possess. And no high-hat, holier-than-thou attitude, please. For not what you say but what you are is what matters. Our being, our very look should be an open book. The audience can easily separate the grain from the chaff. There are good and serious people everywhere. Some of them are intelligent too.

In other words, though his name will carry us through, the more we are able to relate and use analogies, speak in their terms, in terms of their milieu the better. In Japan an appreciation of Zen as of Mahayana Buddhism and the Bodhisattva ideal is a must; in Bulgaria the aim, method and history of recent socialist planning; in Thailand a knowledge of the links between mediaeval India and Suvānabhūmi would be essential. We are not to forget that, for the most part, we are reviving a lost cultural contact, perhaps never wholly lost. As agents of awareness, we cannot afford to be ignorant or insensitive.

If these elementary cautions are ignored, the desire to save others will not save ourselves and the Vedantic export is likely to sink or boomerang. Let us be human before we can hope to be divine. No one is fully equipped for the task, which is one of continuing education. Here is a simple example. We may have our own convictions. But why should that prevent us from seeing that others have an equal right to their opinions and to life-styles of their own? Dialogue is an enemy of dogma. It does not take much intelligence to see that there can be no readymade solution to the human situation, for all the ills that history is heir to, the pain of living and the drug of dreams. In any case, I cannot solve your problems, so long as you and I remain separate, opposed, different. In other words, before one goes out there is plenty of homework to be done. But since this is rarely done, the globe-trotter's I.Q. remains much the same.

Yet, how can one not be affected? For the sensitive person the rewards of travel

are many and inestimable. Travel teaches as nothing else and whether *I* was able to help others or not, I have profited and changed, maybe unawares, maybe not always for the better. One learns to be tolerant, to appreciate other points of view, and to become conscious of the whole world at the same time. Above all, one learns humility, the mystery, if not the meaning of experience. 'Unless you receive as a child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' There is a touch of tears in mortal things, said Vergil. And the traveller's lot is essentially transient. Pathos is of the essence, every hour he has to look his last on all things lovely and say a thousand farewells.

Paradoxically, the journey outward is also the voyage within, the longest journey towards self-discovery. And what is it one discovers?

Across the salt waste of the endless years
 He travels through waking and through sleep....
 And never can the mighty traveller rest
 And never can the mystic voyage cease,
 Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man's soul
 And the morns of God have overtaken his night.

Towards the morns of God, the cradle of the arriving God, let us walk together, whether by going abroad or by going within, privileged to sing the Name of Names, Sri Aurobindo, key to a numinous future.

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

ETERNAL PRESENCE

VAST endless eternal presence.
 Our beginnings and endings are
 Small flares of ego-flame,
 Re-kindling of aspiration.
 We go to make a new beginning
 To satisfy our need for pageantry:
 To mark an ego-signpost along the path of ignorance,
 Knowing birth to be a choice more or less clear
 And death to be an accident born of long-practiced ignorance.
 Endless cycles of beginnings and endings
 Superimposed upon, yet fully pervaded by,
 The ever-existent unbroken process of light.

LORETTA

SRI AUROBINDO AND INDIA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1972)

THE ULTIMATE GOALS

ACCORDING to Sri Aurobindo, our immediate objectives in planning the economic life of independent India should be: eradication of poverty, soundness of the national finances, economic self-sufficiency. What should be the ultimate goals?

The nation has to become rich, not because wealth is a thing desirable in itself, not even because it brings prestige. Our sole aim in making India rich must be to serve the purpose of God in raising India from the dust to which it has fallen. Material prosperity can only be a means to an end; it will not save the nation in its hour of trial if we lose sight of the aim.

“Swadeshi by itself may merely lead to a little more material prosperity, and when it does, you might lose sight of the real thing you sought to do in the glamour of wealth, in the attraction of wealth, and in the desire to keep it safe. In other subject countries also, there was material development; under the Roman Empire there was material development, there was industrial progress; but industrial progress and material development did not bring life to the Nation. When the hour of trial came, it was found that these nations which had been developing industrially, which had been developing materially, were not alive. No, they were dead and at a touch from outside they crumbled to pieces.”¹

India is rising, Sri Aurobindo was never tired of repeating, in order to bring the reign of Spirit over Matter. She is to show by her example that selfishness and greed cannot be the end of either the individual or the national life, that exploitation of man by man, of weaker nation by the stronger cannot be the rule of human living. Her riches must be for the good of all. There can therefore be no place here for the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. Nor can India tolerate for long the fratricidal struggle between Labour and Capital that has been a marked feature of economic life, one might say almost a concomitant of economic prosperity, in some of the Western countries.

Europe tried to secure social and economic justice through the French Revolution's gospel of Liberty Equality and Fraternity. The principle of unchecked individual liberty and unrestricted competition has been tried in the balance and found wanting. She is now experimenting with the second word of the gospel, equality. But equality too has its pitfalls if attempted on too mechanistic lines. The key to the gospel lies in its third word, fraternity. But that has never yet been tried except within the limited precincts of a religious order. That is the old Vedantic ideal of oneness in God. It is for India to find ways to apply it in the economic field — a very difficult task,

"India...can learn to shun like deadly poison all those misnamed ideals so dear to the West: the industrialism that dwarfs the worker down to the pin's point over which it is his miserable lot to work out his very life, the commercialism that floods the world with ugly and worthless wares owing nought to beauty or religion..."²

The ultimate aim of a regenerated economic life, as Sri Aurobindo envisages it, "would be not to create a huge engine of production, whether of the competitive or the co-operative kind, but to give men — not only to some but to all men each in his highest possible measure — the joy of work according to their own nature and free leisure to grow inwardly, as well as a simply rich and beautiful life for all."³

This is a far enough distant goal. Our immediate preoccupation must be with the more pressing objectives, and of these the eradication of poverty has to be given first priority. By what means, that is the urgent question.

ERADICATION OF POVERTY

In our earlier discussion of the subject we have already hinted at some of the methods that Sri Aurobindo advocates. We shall here enlarge on them a little. The principle underlying the methods remains the same: find out the causes of poverty and remove them. The causes are by now well-known to most students of history. They are: destruction of our industries with the consequent pressure on the land, depletion of our agricultural wealth through wholesale exports of foodgrains and substitution by cash crops on a large scale, the gross ignorance of our peasantry in regard to modern methods of increasing farm production, their exploitation by the middleman, their habits of wastefulness in money matters, the absence of suitable credit facilities. To these must be added the utterly tamasic inertia that has gripped our people over the centuries, and a system of education, or the lack of it, that makes men lose all initiative and does not impart the skills needed to meet the demands of a changing world. A rapidly rising population, inevitable in a country so steeped in ignorance, leads one almost to the verge of despair.

But there is no cause for despair, once we are assured, as Sri Aurobindo constantly assures us, that God is behind the movement for India's regeneration, because India holds the key to the world's future. What is needed is steadfastness, courage, a calm high spirit, the wisdom to plan and act, solid work, orderly action.

"There is plenty of selfishness, prudence, hesitating calculation in the country, plenty of fear and demoralisation in the older generation. Steadfastness, courage, a calm and high spirit are what we now need, wisdom to plan and act, not prudence to abstain from action. Nationalism tempered by expediency is like the French despotism tempered by epigrams. The epigrams undermined the despotism; the expediency is likely to undermine and in some quarters is visibly undermining the nationalism."⁴

These were words of mild rebuke addressed to the hesitating Moderates of

1909, and the rebuke was intended to prod them to move faster towards the goal of national freedom. The words have a relevance today as we are pressing towards the goal of national regeneration.

Planned action is essential, if we are to reach anywhere near the goal. But planning, in the view of Sri Aurobindo, has to take note of certain basic facts. And perhaps the most important of these facts is that we cannot hope to achieve anything by a sudden rush. This does not mean that we must be satisfied with slow progress, "leisurely and gentlemanlike spreading out of the struggle...through five or six centuries in order to avoid the perils of the struggle."⁵ But it does mean that we must be sure of the first step we have taken before rushing on to the next. Make haste slowly, that should be the guiding principle. And the reason is clear:

"It is not always possible to accomplish the whole of the ideal by the first effort towards it. So long as we cherish the ideal whole and unbroken, we are at liberty to consult the demands of practicability and realise it, not at one rush but by successive approximations, each being the vantage-ground for a fresh rush forward. This...is the necessary condition for rapid progress. The force of the hunger for the whole ideal, of impatience with half realisations must remain behind; but the means of each advance must be secured by that which went before."⁶

On what lines shall we plan?

The first and most essential point here is that our methods must be radical; no tinkering with details would do, nor would any attempt to combine the old with the new where the two are entirely disparate. Nor can the task of planning our future be entrusted to the aged, the cautious, to men out of sympathy with the spirit of the new age.

"The spirit and ideals of India had come to be confined in a mould, which, however beautiful, was too narrow and slender to bear the mighty burden of our future. When that happens, the mould has to be broken and even the ideal lost for a while, in order to be recovered free of constraint and limitation. We have to recover the Aryan spirit and ideal and keep it intact but enshrined in new forms and more expansive institutions."⁷

Our rural economy for example had served well enough the requirements of India's ancient and medieval life. But it tended to be too narrow and self-centred; village did not cooperate with village, each formed an isolated islet. Our cottage industries, however fine their craftsmanship, could not possibly meet the demands of a new industrial age which has come upon us in the wake of Europe; they might at best serve as auxiliaries. The needs of the surging population in the urban areas are now not the same as in the past; our economy must be adjusted to the new demand. India must learn to think widely, plan boldly, if she is to meet the challenge of the future, in this the economic as in every other field of her national life.

"The old, petty forms and little narrow, make-believe activities are getting out of date. The world is changing rapidly around us and preparing for more colossal

changes in the future. We must rise to the greatness of thought and action which it will demand upon the nations who hope to live."⁸

This does not mean that we shall forsake our ancient ideals and turn ourselves into servile imitators of the West, however apparently successful it might seem in some of its economic experiments. One of these ideals is intimately connected with the idea of a planned economy. Immediately we think of planning, we are reminded of the State as the master planner. This is an obvious imitation of a Western idea. Sri Aurobindo, we may hasten to add, does not suggest that the State has no part to play in the planned development of the country; indeed, under conditions of modern life, the State can be a most valuable instrument. What he means to suggest is that the instrument should not become the master: the State must recognise its limitations and should confine itself to the role that it can properly play. This is a point of capital importance to which we shall revert later, while considering the details of method.

Here it may suffice to draw attention to the ancient Indian ideal of the State and its role in the life of the community, a point not sufficiently stressed in studies of Indian polity.

"The State machine existed only for a restricted and superficial action; the real life of the people was determined by other powers with which it could not meddle. Its principal function was to preserve and protect the national culture and to maintain sufficient social and administrative order...for the real life of the people to function undisturbed in its own way and according to its own innate tendencies."⁹

If we are to remain true to our ideals, State action must not proceed on lines that cripple the people's initiative; for that would be to sap the vigour of the race. Already, through a succession of foreign rulers, the Indian people has been made to depend too much on the powers that be, the *sarkar* has long become the *ma bap* of a helpless peasantry. The malady has gone too far to be cured in a day. But the planners of modern India may have to remember always that the malady exists, and that it does not bode well for the future to prolong it. The State can certainly come in to help, but it must not pauperise.

(To be continued)

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THE GODDESS TWINS KUMARI AND KORE

A STUDY IN THE DURGA LEGEND AND RELATED MYTHS

THE Vijaya Dashami approaches, crowning the nine nights of the most magnificent of Hindu festivals. The whole nation will be involved in an intense worship of the Goddess Durga. On occult planes the war with the Asura will be waged once more, and for the individual the opportunity presents itself to allow that which Durga symbolises to come into his being and vanquish his lower nature. In the world at large the Goddess will again manifest her power and attack the forces of darkness, and on the cosmic scale the very Earth itself will physically enact the rites: the Sun will poke its head above the horizon of the zodiac, signifying the passage into the higher sphere of the cycle of creation, the rise out of darkness and the voyage homeward to the Origin; the first steps will be taken during these nine days which will serve as the initiating power, — an initiation, in truth, which opens the way and indicates the road the soul must journey on in order to make the total union consummate. By enacting the rites in honour of the Goddess man each year confirms his faith in the prophecy of the victory on Earth of the Divine Mother.

In order to speak of Durga in a truthful manner and one which I hope will communicate something of the profound feeling I have for the Goddess, or, better said, for that which this legendary figure and myth symbolises, I must approach the task as a lay person and not a scholar, precisely because the meeting with Durga, the living experience of the myth, came in this way — a direct contact before there was any knowledge of what was written in the scriptures. Let us say it was Durga who presented herself to me and revealed what she now represents in the evolution. I was shown through these experiences that three aspects of the Supreme are working in manifestation simultaneously, this trinity that is the Goddess Durga.

In 1971 I arrived in India on the Navami, the 9th night of the Durgotsava, and from the airport to the hotel, ordinarily a brief ten minute ride, because of traffic complications we were detained for one hour in front of a statue of an Indian Goddess whom people were adoring. The driver explained who she was and the memory of that image is still vivid: her fierce yet serene attitude, her many arms and weapons, the trident, her retinue, the lion on which she rode, her golden colour, and the bull she was about to slay. Yet though I had lived through the experience of that story and known its psychological and deeper meaning, at that time I did not know those experiences could be comprehended through the myth, that they could possibly have any correspondence at all, that this story contained the key to the experiences, as well as the key and connecting link in the unfoldment of the evolution, the connection to the past and the revelation of the future. But most important of all is that by living these experiences, by meeting the Goddess intimately one was able to learn from her directly the point in which humanity is now situated on the scale of creation. It was evident up to then that for people interested in the study of cosmic harmonies and the

interrelatedness of phenomena of all levels, it is quite easy to discern and locate the past as well as give a rather clear indication of the future. But it became apparent that the most difficult task was the perception of the exact place of evolution in the present. It was evident also that a profound penetration of the present would be the only true means of unfolding both past and future. It was evident that only if the present revealed her true face could we have an exact understanding of what had hitherto transpired and what is to come about in future Ages. It appeared to be a matter of breaking through the barriers of time and space, which could only be done by a plunge into a dimension that contained the all and which must be translated into our language as the Now.

In doing this with the aid of Durga something very interesting came about. One was able to see that not only this myth but also others became clear and appeared to be intimately connected to the Durga legend. At the same time it was seen that these myths were not only tales of symbolic episodes but were at once revelations and prophecies of very precise happenings; one was able then to discover what this prophecy was and how it took shape in the Manifestation. The precision and perfection of these events then proved astonishing; stories that evolved thousands of years ago appeared in evolution with the mathematical accuracy of a planetary orbit, — nothing was missing, no piece fell out of the design of the original revelation. It was clear that myths spring from some eternal and timeless reservoir, the understanding of which is to be sought and found in the soul of man.

In previous articles I have gone into the Durga myth in a rather detailed manner, showing through a series of cosmic harmonies and symbols how the legend has taken shape during this 9th Manifestation, how, in fact, it is the incarnated force of our times. By several of the symbols used in the myth we were able to pinpoint its meaning, such as the trident which denotes the sign Pisces, the lion which is Leo, and the Moon in Capricorn corresponding, to the sign of the Divine Mother's victory, bringing the festival to a close, the Vijaya Dashami. We saw the manifestation of the Goddess intimately connected to the number 9, the master key of the drama, thereby revealing this to be the essence of the 9th Manifestation, marking the plunge into a greater dimension on the spiral of creation.

These things can be understood after actual initiation by the Goddess through various means: symbols, numbers, calendars and such things that one could consider purely arbitrary. But the point I would like to establish here is that our notion of what is arbitrary is in itself an arbitrary or partial understanding, for in this Manifestation we are given the privilege of being witnesses to a display of perfection in each detail which can be ascertained by the use of just such "arbitrary" methods. It is a fact that our calendar, for example, has come into use precisely at the time it would be needed for the deciphering of certain phenomena at the outset of the 9th Manifestation, which would then clearly show man the link existing between his plane and certain more subtle levels of creation which perform determining functions in our evolution on Earth. The very years the Julian and Gregorian calendars came into use

are significant in themselves and reveal the perfection of the guiding force, for it is a fact that the force permeating the worlds at present is one of harmony and perfection, though in appearance it may not be immediately evident. One speaks of the omnipotence of the Mother and her ability to work in creation through what seem to us to be miraculous means, but being faced with the proof of such powers on an all-inclusive scale, — universal, mundane or individual, — we sometimes recoil, perhaps staggered by that which the mind cannot comprehend. As we evolve into a race of more perfected beings whose instruments of perception have widened, allowing us to live in a condition of cosmic consciousness, we shall be able to meet these events and even consciously participate in the drama of creation.

In past articles I tried to show how certain numbers are significant, namely the 9, 6 and 3 — these representing the trinity Satchidananda; in terms of the zodiac these become 9, 5 and 1. In our calendar therefore these numbers are significant with respect to our Manifestation, and the calendar is used not as an arbitrary means, but as a perfectly planned method of communicating to man the place at which he is on the scale and that which he must now accomplish. The times call for a conscious participation. They are difficult. Man is pushing the destiny of Earth-life to a point of either a total breakthrough into a greater dimension, or extinction. But knowing the design, man also knows that extinction at this point is impossible, and Durga, though terrific in the war she wages against the Asura, is nevertheless the incarnation of the force of protection. This was the living experience of Durga, a force that was ruthless in its pressing power for transformation and upheaval of all decadent and obscure tendencies in the nature, but which at the same time revealed itself to be the height of the protective power of the Universal Mother.

In world history we have a clear picture of the action of Durga, namely the Second World War. All wars we can say are a reflection in the more material realms of what occurs on certain occult planes, but no war better than this one can claim the title of an "occult war". It is called, "the Mother's War", and certainly this was the case, for the conflict came about in answer to a heightened manifestation in the Earth's atmosphere of the force of Durga. The descent, shall we call it, provoked a reaction of the forces of darkness and a desperation to maintain their supremacy.

We have then Durga working through Pisces and Leo, whose symbols are captured in the myth by the trident and the lion, as well as her appearance during an Air Age, Aquarius. And the "Mother's War" also figures in the legend because the Asura she slays is represented by the Bull. Hitler was born with the Sun in Taurus, the sign of the Bull. A study of his horoscope is quite interesting because it reveals certain excellent capacities, and one can only deduce from this that he was truly a pawn used by forces greater than himself which thereby permitted evolution to take decisive steps forward; had he not done what he did, had there not been the sacrifice of so many victims at that time, perhaps evolution would not have been able to move at its present accelerated pace. It appears to me that that episode was the turning-point in the Manifestation; in some manner the course of evolution took its destined direction

into the sphere of light and out of darkness. It is clearly the historical episode most closely connected to the legend of Durga.

Krishna was the Incarnation of the 8th Manifestation, followed then by the incarnation of Durga's force in the 9th. We find this information not only in the Markandeya Purana but also in the Vishnu Purana. In the 5th Book, Chapter I, Parasara relates to Maitreya the details of the birth of Krishna as an Incarnation of Vishnu. He tells how Kansa was the charioteer of Vasudeva and Devaki on the night of their wedding, when a voice spoke to him saying that the 8th child of Devaki would slay him. He promptly wished to kill Devaki but Vasudeva entreated him to let her live and then promised to give up all the children born of her to Kansa.

Parasara goes on to relate how Earth went to Mount Meru and complained of her terrible plight to Brahma and the Gods, how the Asuras were overriding the Earth. Together then they all proceeded, the Gods and Earth, to the Milky Sea to beseech the aid of Vishnu, who incarnates whenever there is need to re-establish order. After listening to their tale of woe, Vishnu plucked two of his hairs out, one white and the other black, and said to the Gods: "These my hairs shall descend upon Earth and shall relieve her of the burden of her distress" ...and he went on to say how his black hair would be the 8th conception of Devaki and would slay Kansa. He mentioned nothing about the white hair. Commentators believe the white one to be Balarama, Krishna's brother, but I do not find clear enough indication to this effect.

When the time comes for Devaki to conceive, Vishnu gives instructions to Yogandhra, his consort who is known as Durga in the Markandeya Puranas, bride of Shiva. He tells her of the details of the birth of Balarama, Devaki's seventh child, and of the method by which he is to be saved from Kansa. Then he continues: "I will myself become incarnate in the 8th conception of Devaki; and you shall immediately take a similar character as the embryo offspring of Yasoda. In the night of the 8th lunation of the dark half of the month of Nabhas, in the season of the rains, I shall be born. You shall receive birth in the 9th. Impelled and aided by my power, Vasudeva shall bear me to the bed of Yasoda, and you to that of Devaki. Kansa shall take you, and hold you up to dash you against a stone; but you shall escape from his grasp into the sky, where the hundred-eyed Indra shall meet and do homage to you, through reverence for me, and shall bow before you, and acknowledge you as his sister. Having slain Sumbha, Nisumbha, and numerous other demons, you shall sanctify the Earth in many places..."

All the pieces of the cosmic puzzle fit together in this story, for Durga here is clearly shown to be the 9th Incarnation and to accomplish her task after Krishna, who is the 8th. In a symbolic legend a statement like that of Krishna being the 8th conception often means something much wider than the simple fact of being an 8th child. Devaki, according to the Puranas, takes on in fact the qualities of the Universal Mother when she is carrying Krishna; she is immediately made a cosmic symbol. All of these facts correspond with what is found in the zodiac regarding the avatars. I do believe there has been some confusion about their appearances. Generally Krishna is said to be

the 8th Avatar, and Buddha is spoken of as the 9th, which can in no way be the case since Buddha's birth took place during the 8th Manifestation. Moreover, I do not believe there are ten avatars as the scriptures appear to state, for the simple reason that once the work of Durga is accomplished there will be no need for an Avatar to take birth in order to re-establish order. From this Manifestation we move into the 10th, that which corresponds to the sign Capricorn, the victory of the Divine Mother, the Golden Age; at that time each man will live in the truth of his being, falsehood will have been finally conquered and the reign of Truth will be a fact, hence there will be no need for certain beings to take birth according to the patterns established for the preservation of the evolution. That these beings will appear, the Incarnations of higher planes shall we say, is not the question at hand; the point is: they will not *need* to come for the purpose of establishing order and thus they can no longer be considered a part of the list of avatars. I know this statement of nine avatars instead of ten goes against all tradition, but a deep study of the harmonies and symbols that contain the knowledge of the avatars has revealed this truth. If we consider Buddha as an "evolutionary avatar", I see no reason not to consider Jesus as such, who perhaps lays a more legitimate claim to the title, considering his mission as one of establishing the kingdom of heaven on Earth and his promise to return at a future time to complete that task. By this I do not mean to minimise the figure of Buddha, but there is a difference, I feel, between his role and that of certain other Incarnations who are clearly sent to carry out a work for the evolution. These Incarnations being, therefore, what I call *evolutionary avatars*, their lives can be clearly seen in the map of evolution and the harmonies of the universe, whereas the others do not figure in such a way; these Avatars are all manifestations of the Divine Mother, and the universe is Her body.

In *Vyasa and Valmiki*, page 49, Sri Aurobindo says this of Buddhism: ... "(it) stands at the opposite pole from the gospel of Sri Krishna and has had the very effect he deprecates; it has been the author of confusion and the destroyer of the peoples." It appears evident to me that the work of an evolutionary Avatar must necessarily be the complement of the one who precedes him, or his must be a higher step *in the same direction*. Otherwise we have the paradoxical situation of the Divine Mother trying to defeat her own purpose.¹

¹ Sri Aurobindo has written the following in a letter to a disciple: "Krishna, Buddha and Kalki depict the last three stages of the spiritual development — Krishna opens the possibility of overmind, Buddha tries to shoot beyond to the supreme liberation but that liberation is still negative, not returning upon earth to complete positively the evolution, Kalki is to correct this by bringing the Kingdom of the Divine upon earth, destroying the opposing Asura forces."

And in another: "Krishna opened the possibility of overmind with its two sides of realisation, static and dynamic. Buddha tried to shoot from mind to Nirvana in the Supreme, just as Shankara did in another way after him. Both agree in overleaping the other stages and trying to get at a nameless and featureless Absolute. Krishna on the other hand was leading by the normal course of evolution. The next normal step is not a featureless Absolute, but the supermind. I consider that in trying to overshoot, Buddha like Shankara made a mistake, calling away the dynamic side of the liberation. Therefore there has to be a correction by Kalki." (Centenary Ed. Vol. 22, Section 7.)

If we want to enlarge the list of Avatars in any way we must perforce include Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, two beings who worked for the one goal of the Manifestation. Their position in the cosmic design is beautifully clear, and one example can be given: Ramakrishna was born with the Sun in Aquarius. When it was *in the sign opposite to Aquarius*, Leo, and at quasi the very degree of the natal Sun of Sri Aurobindo which is also that of the Independence of India, he passed away. Vivekananda was a Capricorn, and when the Sun was *in the sign in opposition to Capricorn*, Cancer, he passed away, the very day of the celebration of the Independence of America. As Ramakrishna's work was essentially to prepare the way of the Divine in India, so was Vivekananda's in America, through which country it spread to the rest of the world. Ramakrishna in particular prepared the way for the Incarnation of the force of Durga. He was born in the year 1836 and Vivekananda was born in 1863, both years are numerological 9's and are made up of the same numbers.

One can say this much: in the 10th Manifestation, the 6,480 years of the reign of Truth, the Supreme Force will manifest in the form of an entire race of men, living according to the highest truth. The sons of Durga will populate the Earth, the virgin-born Kumaras.

(To be continued)

29 July, 1973

PATRIZIA NORELLI-BACHELET

NIGHT

My God, here I am,
naked and destitute,
homeless.
I call for Thee,
not the Other One,
but Thou, God in me,
Unnamable and Unknowable One
that cannot be seen nor heard.
I do not ask: Where art Thou,
for I am in Thee and Thou art in me.
That is the only thing I know,
the only thing that keeps me going
when I groan in despair
and Thou hearest not,
when Thou seemest farther away
than the end of the universe and the end of death,
when darkness falls
and the cold rises and covers everything,
and nothing is left
but emptiness,
when I search in vain
and clasp desperately
at nothingness, and my scream
loses itself in space,
When nothing sees, nothing hears,
life is emptied out from my heart
and my breath dries up,
when death is no more a deliverance....

In spite of all this,
at the bottom of nothingness,
at the end of the all,
is the End, the Beginning.
Where Death destroys itself
Life begins anew.
Stumbling and in despair,
blinded by tears,
empty and dying with thirst,
knowing only this:
The Light is alive,

somewhere, far away,
Beacon without direction,
beyond time and space,
in which I live like an island
in the immensity of the sea,
unknowably deep.

The Light is alive,
it breathes in me.
A small flame is burning,
far, far away.

There is a commandment
greater than all others:
one attitude: to give oneself,
one answer: yes,
yes to the Light
and yes to Silence,
yes to God
and yes to me.
Then emptiness will be fullness,
silence a song,
darkness will be light
and death will have died.

And I lay down my head,
tired and broken,
because all is well.

The Light is burning,
somewhere, far away,
Infinitely.

D.

LOTUS-FLAME

OR

SURYAMAN

(Continued from the issue of May, 1973)

ANOTHER cycle stirred in the void of things.
A greater pulse was felt vibrating in time.
Life rose sensing a striding vehemence close,
The tide of pale and unsubstantial thought.
Slowly the turquoise mass of welkin leaned
Tinged with a colour no life could snatch and own.
Marvels were felt the common law unbound.
The generous wings of an unreachd eagle's flight
Pressed on the dumb sky-line of wizard shapes
Casting its flaming shadow on verdant sod.
Deserts and sweeping tundras of menacing death
Gave way to the large smile of luminous green;
Rivers paced to the awakened unhorizoned seas.
And pinioned blooms jewelled the ravishing sense.
A presence and an influence of the Unknown
Thrilled now the twilight-heart of drunken clay
With magic far too unreal to be seized.
But too soon the epiphany and wonder passed
With its breath of significant creative floods,
The spell of honey wine and beauty's dance.
Leaving again a dismal a spectral room
All void of life and thought and aureate bliss,
Empty of dreams that built a path of dawn.
The earth fell back to its inglorious past
Effacing the lines of its own measureless birth
Into the stark fruitless eternities.
Cycles after cycles of amazing moods,
Of creative flush and a million ecstasies,
Of surges free, of songs unsung and lost,
Of rhythms spent and stirrings born again
Amid the pageant of acts, sagas of toil
Laboured incessantly to fail and die.
Behind these overtures of limpid growth,
The grey profitless cataclysms abrupt.
The seed divine was behind undying, lone,

A self-lost fire, a dreamer without a dream,
 A sun without its multitudinous rays.
 The gods above, dallying in supernal groves,
 Traced not its labour and its sacrifice,
 Unconscious of the Spirit's holocaust
 That built the universe, the fling of the stars.
 Aloof they felt not its passage like a streak
 Stealing behind with mystic tread of light
 That gave them birth in their magnificent sweep
 From its solar summits inconceivable
 To the dire abyss that was the unplumbed Inane.
 Veiled and immune the altitude leaned down
 Turning the antipode of all It was,
 A dense midnight frigid, unutterable.

*
 **

All was the changeless in the mid-air of the gods

ROMEN

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE FUTURE

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

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

(c)

It is surprising how — in spite of Teilhard's "Universal Christ" necessitating a radically novel envisagement of (1) God's creative act and His relationship with "participated being", (2) the nature of "original sin" in its bearing on man in particular as well as on the cosmos in general and (3) the right moment for Christ's "Parousia" or final advent to unify the Creation with himself and God — it is surprising how Rideau finds Teilhard still a true son of the Church. But he is too sharp to miss the dissident notes wherever they occur: what he does is to give them a minor role in the total reckoning.

One of the points is that Teilhard makes Christianity depend on Evolution: he maintains that it has to come to terms with Evolution and that whatever does not do so fails to qualify for the religion of the future. Not only does Teilhard hold the Universal Christ to be the core of Christianity: he also considers this Christ as unable to carry out his unifying cosmic function unless we accept science's evolutionary world. Occasionally he states nothing more than that such a world is in the fitness of things for the central work of Christ, but Teilhard's recurrent stress is on its indispensability for this work. Thus Rideau,¹ after mentioning a less rigorous context, remarks: "In another passage, what is here noted as appropriate, is regarded as *necessary*: 'The Christian Universal-Christ would be inconceivable if the universe which it is his function to gather into himself, did not in virtue of some evolutionary structure have a natural centre of convergence from which the Word, becoming incarnate, could radiate its influence over the whole of the universe' (*Introduction au Christianisme*, 1944)." Again, we have Teilhard saying: "By showing us the summit that crowns the world, evolution makes Christ possible, just as Christ, by giving direction to the world, makes evolution possible. In other words Christ must find a sum-

¹ *Teilhard de Chardin: A Guide to His Thought* (Collins, London, 1969), pp. 528-29, note 83.

mit to the world for his consummation, just as he had to find a woman for his conception" (*Comment je crois*, 1934).¹

One would have thought it was admitted by all that Teilhard based himself on science in most of his philosophical and theological writings. Rideau² himself cites J.M. Le Blond: "The tendency in fact in Teilhard's work is to move from science and technology to religion, the general direction is religious" (*Mise en garde contre le P. Teilhard de Chardin in Études*, September 1962, p. 283). Rideau has several passages which play variations on the *leit-motif* phrase in the one we have taken from him in the preceding chapter — namely, that the need of the hour is "a Christ who can be and is commensurate with the universe, in other words a God — the God we look for — of evolution."³ And yet Rideau⁴ tells us: "Teilhard's theology, which, *in virtue of its supernatural sources*, is entirely independent of his cosmological system, expresses the essence of the whole content of tradition, to which on *a priori* grounds it is absolutely faithful. There is no fundamental dogmatic statement that is not affirmed and maintained in its entirety." But after listing the traditional dogmas, Rideau⁵ has to admit: "These dogmatic statements can be found in Teilhard's work but their expression is sometimes sporadic and disconnected." We get the impression that Teilhard's heart lay elsewhere than in these echoes of tradition. And we may add that, while the general form of the dogmas is retained from the past, their whole content is recast. Rideau's direct ground⁶ for Roman-Catholicising Teilhard *in toto* reduces itself really to a letter Teilhard wrote on 12 October 1951 to the General of the Society of Jesus. He speaks of "three convictions which are the very marrow of Christianity: the unique significance of man as the spearhead of life; the position of Catholicism as the central axis in the convergent fascicle of human activities; and finally the essential function as consummator assumed by the risen Christ at the Centre and peak of Creation" (in *Letters from a Traveller*, pp. 42-3). Actually, in the idea of life's having a spearhead in man and of an axis in a convergent human collectivity and of a consummation at Creation's centre and peak we have the idea of a natural development towards the ultra-human through an organising and unifying energy drawn ever higher by Point Omega — an idea that is evolutionary through and through. The very language of the letter bespeaks the scientific cosmologist envisioning a theology. So, with the scientific cosmologist being all-persuasive, Rideau is surely off the mark when, after painting Teilhard as true to orthodoxy, he⁷ adjoins the following counter-balance as if it constituted just a minor aberration:

"In so far, however, and only in so far, as Teilhard sought to effect too close a *rational synthesis* of cosmology and dogma, his theology necessarily became somewhat more precarious: the rigidity of the system then becomes apparent and, although it gives his thought its vital originality, at the same time it tends to undermine its validity.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 635, note 180.

² *Ibid.*, p. 656.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 642.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

"In so far, again, as Teilhard's theology depends upon an evolutionary concept of history and a *Weltanschauung* of total unification, there is some difficulty in reconciling it completely with the legacy of tradition."

One should expect that the true Teilhardism is just the feature which gives his thought its "vital originality" and that, if his thought is not founded on evolution, it is utterly un-Teilhardian. What else can we say when we face these words which Rideau¹ quotes from *The Phenomenon of Man* (p. 219) and which, with a sentence at the start and one at the close which are omitted by Rideau we may regard as Teilhard's touchstone of truth: "Is evolution a theory, a system or a hypothesis? It is much more; it is a general condition to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must bow, and which they must satisfy henceforth if they are to be thinkable as true." Nor does Teilhard stop with his sweeping ascription of primacy to the evolutionary world-view. He comes to a burning focus in the question of Christ himself: "Nothing can be admitted into our systems unless it first satisfies the conditions of a world in process of transformation.... A Christ whose features are not moulded to the requirements of a world that is evolutionary in structure, will be progressively rejected without further examination — just as in any scientific institution today a treatise on perpetual motion or squaring the circle goes straight into the wastepaper basket, unread" (*Christianisme et évolution*, 1933).²

No mode of speech could be harsher towards orthodoxy, no attitude of mind more coldly contemptuous of tradition, no sentence of death on non-scientific Christianity so definitive. The formula "Christ is all or nothing", which we have seen Teilhard to be deeming the sole dogma distinguishing his Christianity, is now seen glaringly to signify "Christ the Evolver and the Evolving — or no Christ at all." Whatever disagrees with Teilhardism, with a Christology totally re-thought in the light of the Universal Christ as demanded by Evolution is to be summarily discarded. The whole of Christianity's contents of the pre-scientific epoch is fit for the wastepaper basket.

Even the special sense in which "orthodoxy" and "Christianity" and "Catholicism" were understood by Teilhard seem in two passages to have struck him as doubtful and his Christ appears to break through all Christian framework. One may indeed query whether his use of the name "Christ", connected as it is with the historical Jesus, is valid at all, though his ever-increasing devotion still works under the spell of this name. Rideau's collection of Notes has both the passages:³

"Christ is becoming more and more indispensable to me, ...but at the same times the figure of the historical Christ is becoming less and less substantial and distinct to me" (Letter of 8 January 1936). — "I have never felt myself so full of my 'gospel' and at the same time more wholly and entirely dependent, body, mind and soul, on Christ Jesus. I have a bitter-sweet feeling of being completely powerless without him. And at the same time I am terrified when I realize that my view of him is continually carrying

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

² *Ibid.*, p. 308.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 622.

him further and higher along the axis of (I hope) orthodoxy. It is not unlike what astronomers tell us of the stars — that while they are ever more closely integrated in our system they are also ever more breath-takingly distant than we imagine. In fact, my pan-Christism is in some way 'trans-Christic'..." (Letter of 12 April 1948).

Doubtless, Teilhard always held that we could not dissociate from Jesus of Nazareth the extra push towards unification which he felt going on in the world after the birth of the Son of Mary and which, in his eyes, would be fulfilled by the Pleromatic Divinity visioned by St Paul as the Christ of the Parousia. But his mind was concentrated on that Pleromatic Divinity rather than on Jesus of Nazareth. According to him, without the latter serving as a *point de départ*, the former could not be what St Paul had visioned: besides, the former, without the latter's humanity, would lack for us the heart and face our own humanity keenly wants. Yet once the sense of a heart and face in the Universal Christ is acquired by us, Teilhard would like to forget the Man born in Nazareth and crucified on Calvary: only the Risen Christ, the Christ who, after his human body had been crucified, appeared with a glorified divine form to the Apostles and to St Paul on the road to Damascus mattered to Teilhard.

The birth in Nazareth would have little meaning for Teilhard if the Universal Christ were not related to it. Even Rideau cannot escape this idea of its being a means-to-an-end instead of an end-in-itself. After quoting passages that speak of the historical Christ as indispensable for generating "the mystical energy that has been accumulating for the last two thousand years in the Christian phylum", Rideau¹ adds: "Teilhard immediately, however, relates Christ's historical reality to his universality. 'I believe in the divinity of the child of Bethlehem *because it is included, and in so far as, and under the form in which* it is included historically and biologically in the reality of the Universal Christ to whom my faith and adoration are more directly extended' (*Introduction au Christianisme*, 1944)."

Rideau's own impression of the balance between the historical Christ and the Universal in Teilhard's "total Christ" comes out pretty definitively in the course of a comparison of Teilhard's "spirituality" with the details of St Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* which is the handbook of the Jesuit Order. Rideau² writes:

"...In spite of what Teilhard asserts in principle his thought is so centred on the glorious mysteries that consummate the Incarnation, that it seems by contrast to be less concerned with the contents of the *Gospel*. It leaps directly to the Paschal, the Eucharistic Christ, the Christ above all of the Parousia. It is so wedded to the rational and scientific view of the historical evolution of the world, that it tends to emphasize the still incomplete character of Christ (in his mystical body) at the expense of his already actual and total character. The very ardour of Teilhard's contemplation of the burning heart of Christ soon leads to an imprecision that identifies it with the universal presence of Christ in the world. In the tradition of the *Exercises*, however, the spiritual transformation is in fact effected only in diligent contemplation of the person of

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 530-31.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.

Jesus in the acts and events of his historical existence, by assimilating his mysteries and imitating his behavior. On the other hand, Teilhard's spirituality, though it never excludes this, does not go further than to pre-suppose the journey of the faithful soul on the roads of Galilee and the hill of Calvary. One may well wish, too, that Teilhard's entrancement with the greatness of the universe had been balanced by a more loving examination of the *humble* station and the negation of the greatness chosen by the Word."

Teilhard thus cannot be considered a good Jesuit. And in general we must agree with Rideau¹ when he says: "One can well understand the reaction of François Mauriac who was disconcerted by a certain lack of intimate physical feeling for the Jesus of the Gospels...." Mauriac² exclaims: "If Christ is commensurate with the cosmos, I am perfectly happy about it — but it means nothing to me" (*Ce que je crois*, Grasset, 1962, p. 139). Père Maréchal, as cited by Rideau, has perhaps the last critical word from the orthodox yet understanding mind. Rideau³ reports: "Père Maréchal...felt that he was justified in pointing out to Teilhard that Christ's 'universal' and cosmic function was less important than his supernatural function of sanctifying souls." Then Rideau gives us the *verba ipsissima* of the eminent Jesuit: "...Surely, to be thus the key to the whole of nature and the 'saviour of cosmic evolution', necessary and splendid though that be, is only a secondary perfection for Christ the saviour of souls? To 'see' it and explicitly to inspire our 'practice' by it seems to me to belong more to the elaboration of our religion than to its essence." Rideau picks up the thread here and writes: "He added that some of Teilhard's expressions seemed to him 'to invert, at least 'affectively'', the necessary order of the two aspects — supernatural and cosmic — of Christian salvation."

Rideau does not mention Teilhard's comment on Maréchal's criticism. Teilhard cannot separate the saving of evolution from the saving of souls: the two necessarily and indivisibly imply each other. De Lubac⁴ tells us that to Teilhard the World has to be envisaged "in the form of an immense movement of Spirit"⁵ and the immortality of the soul no less than the personality of God is an element "essential to the structure of my Universe".⁶ We learn further that for him God would be fully glorified in "the realization of an organic *unity* — into which, of course, will be drawn the whole marvellous essence of the inter-personal relationships that characterize the Universe, starting from Man".⁷ This being so, "nothing in my view is more spiritual than the consummation of the Universe".⁸ To split, as Maréchal did, the function of the Cosmic Christ into two components, which required to be rearranged in order of priority, is senseless in Teilhard's eyes. On 24 August, 1934, he remarks in a letter:

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 229. ² *Ibid.*, p. 629. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 168

⁴ *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning* (A Mentor-Omega Book, The New American Library, New York, 1967), p. 147.

⁵ Letter of 15 April, 1929, to Léontine Zanta.

⁶ Letter of 20 September, 1929.

⁷ Letter of 29 April, 1934. ⁸ *Ibid.*

"This distinction knocks me sideways! as if souls weren't the fruit *par excellence* of the cosmos, supremely 'cosmic' themselves! — I must say, I thought anyone could understand what I meant."

If so acute a mind as Maréchal did not understand it, there must be a huge hiatus between his Christianity and Teilhard's. So, even as regards the Cosmic Christ, Teilhard stood at variance with the Bible's and the Church's attitude. And, apropos of the inversion recommended by Maréchal and the indivisibility envisaged by Teilhard of Christ's role as saviour of evolution and as saviour of souls, we may define Teilhard's own broad position *vis-à-vis* the Bible and the Roman Church. For, the Bible as the scripture of the Cosmic Christ and the Church as his instrument, had to Teilhard quite other functions than those which orthodoxy primarily claims for them. Rideau¹ confesses:

"Teilhard does not seem to have paid much attention to the purifying and illuminating influence of the *Bible*. In fact he seldom uses the word. He was content to take a number of passages — not many, but admittedly of capital importance — from the New Testament to confirm his theory of the convergence of history towards unity; but he does not consider the present efficacy of the sacrament of the Word of God for the spiritual progress of consciousness. The *Church*, again, to whom Teilhard asserts his loyalty and to whose growth he is devoted heart and soul is not presented in the first place as the means of salvation, as the sacrament of Christ in history, or as the mother who brings into life the Sons of God. In short, the primacy accorded to the *universe* (a universe that, no doubt, when one re-reads Teilhard, is theologically recognized as Christic), to which everything is related, tends to relegate to the background the act of theological submission to the supernatural sources of the revealed message, and the acceptance of the historical forms which determine the relationship between man and God."

In numerous respects Teilhard's Christianity stands away from that of his fellow-Catholics and in the most important respects it stands over against theirs. Whatever he holds in common with them is mainly a matter of nomenclature. His devotion to Christ, the Church and the Jesuit Order cannot be questioned but it is there for reasons all his own: he sees them as forms under which a new religion of the future can best be fostered provided their present contents are either emptied out or radically refreshed.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 220.

SEVEN LIVES

A SAGA OF THE GODS AND THE GROWING SOUL

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1973)

CHAPTER V

PART 4

THIS time it took Hiranyamaya still longer to assimilate the divine boon. Outwardly from the very day after the visitation, he overcame all his tiredness and was immediately able to take up his duties as before. But a decade was almost too short a time for the divine ananda to forge itself into an integral portion of his body and being, or for it to be assured that it had so definitely changed him that he would never again be the same person that he had been before the day he had sat upon the ledge at the mouth of the valley. And so the ten years passed with a few extra ones added for good measure, until the sadhak had arrived at that period in life that is usually considered middle-age. Shukratma may at the same time have passed his seventieth or his hundredth or perhaps even his two hundred and fiftieth year for all anyone knew, and mostly passed his days in a profound and imperturbable meditation. Yet never for a moment did he cease to guide his disciples from within, nor refrain externally from sharing their daily life, though undoubtedly he tended to speak less and less, and finally restricted himself to a few essential words a day usually about purely material matters.

The time had now come for Hiranyamaya to encounter the third major experience in his life's recollection with Shukratma, and it was the one upon which he would dwell till the end of his days in the hermit valley. This time it did not come to him in the wakeful brightness of morning as the other two had done, but poured in upon him in all its grandeur during a night's repose. He did not even have any intimation of its advent as he had had with his previous vision, but surprisingly, found himself all the more ready for it in the unsuspecting passivity of sleep.

On this final occasion, no divine emissary or god came as the bearer of the boon, but the Divine One himself appeared in all his majesty, not as an abstract formation of force, but as a timeless rishi of transcendent splendour who, in living terms, represented man as an evolved divinity. But what was this sharp pang of recognition Hiranyamaya felt upon beholding the sacred and beloved face? Had he not seen it before? Was it already not as much a part of him as his own soul? But to which age or time did the recollection belong? To some ancient, hoary past, or to some future to which he must yet return? He could not tell, but the Divine One in that form he knew at once to be the very sum and goal of his adoring aspiration, for all within him cried out that he had been born to serve this One alone.

Yet even the supreme deity himself had not come to visit empty-handed. In his deific graciousness, he had brought a gift that would put all other gifts and boons to shame. He had brought the gift of his own wisdom, that was, more than any attribute of knowledge, a state of being and inner felicity. It was a vastness that encompassed all motivation for action, and accepted all results as the outflowing of some divine necessity, with each act and consequence having its inevitable time and place. It was a condition of soul which understood the meaning of eternity and yet valued the unrolling of small events in the mortal accounting of time. And most of all it was a largeness of spirit that accepted man and god and beast alike, and that could look even the Titan and the Asura in the face with an unruffled equanimity bespeaking an inner security so great that evil and ignorance acted upon it as a fleck of soot upon the immaculate pelage of a white lion. A minute flicker of the skin and the spot would be gone, leaving the great mystic animal to his kingly contemplations. Indeed, the image of the white lion was not unsuited to the occasion, for after the countenance and figure of the Divine One had persisted in Hiranyamaya's dream vision for seemingly half the night, and the boon that he wished to bestow kept emanating from him in great waves of force throughout that time, he spoke and said, "I leave with you an emblem of my gift. He shall pass from my body into yours and remain there as long as you shall value him."

At this a white lion with shining coat and resplendent, venerable mane took form and emerged from the Divine One's body. The divine wisdom shone in its eyes, and the divine nobility and unshakable courage in its face, while a timeless dignity and patience lurked in its torso of restrained power. With measured tread the magnificent beast approached Hiranyamaya and then silently entered into the secret caves of his being.

The vision ceased and the sadhak slept dreamlessly through the few remaining hours of the night. When he awoke the next morning he knew that once again both he and his entire existence had changed irreversibly. The new boon that had come to him set at nought the carefully settled inner condition he had been able to establish within himself after his first two gifts of the divine love and the divine ananda. Now he would have to begin the work all over again with a bigger factor to assimilate than ever before, and he fully realized the magnitude of his task. Impatient to see his guru even before the group meditation and invocation at sunrise, he came out of his cell. And as usual, Shukratma seemed to have been pre-warned of his disciple's need and was standing by his door, apparently waiting for him.

Hiranyamaya once again sank to his knees and touched his master's feet; then as he raised his head, Shukratma took his face between his hands.

"Thrice blessed," he said. "Now even that which mortal men scarce dare to pray for has come to you. Beyond this, you have only one task left — to make a suitable house of your being for your royal guest. The divine sagacity needs no bejeweled temple or soaring palace for a roof. It needs only a clean, swept floor upon which to rest and the harmony of a divine peace and order in your inner

environment in which to breathe and move. Prepare yourself to meet these conditions and all shall be well. But make sure that you permit no pretense to creep in and mar your effort. The boon you harbour is one that brooks no pride. You shall destroy it and drive out the heavenly visitor if for one moment you allow the serpent of vanity to creep into its sacred precincts.

"Ah, but there is no reason to be alarmed. Heedless of time and its impatience, we shall move forward with caution and safety. Have courage then, for in the end you shall overcome all obstacles."

Hiranyamaya rose to go but he was still trembling with fear, for this time he was not at all sure he could handle the enormity of the gift the Divine One had left for him. Misgivings invaded him, and all his human consciousness rose up protesting its incapacity and the impossibility of accepting what must be accommodated in so frail and mortal a frame. And then there were the guru's admonitions...never before had Shukratma spoken to Hiranyamaya of such dangers that had the power to overwhelm his whole life's gains. Before, there had always been the soothing touch but no stern warnings. Now on the other hand, it seemed that the seating of this great white leonine king upon his inner throne was fraught with peril. In an agony of doubt and despair Hiranyamaya stumbled back into his cell. As he entered it he saw that the twilight of the rising day had just crept in and picked out the unfinished bas-relief on the room's back wall. All at once the sculpted face caught his attention as it had not caught it for all the million times he had seen it day in and day out since he had joined the hermit colony. It was the face of the Divine One who had come to him in his dream. He stood transfixed before it for several seconds, then with tears in his eyes, ran out of the cell and down to the other end of the gallery where the old sadhak lived whom he knew kept the sculptor's chisels.

"Venerable one, I wish to finish the sculpture in my cell," he blurted out when he reached him. "Will you show me how?"

"Ah, so the inspiration has come to you? You are fortunate, my boy. We can begin when you return from your morning chores. That statue has waited too long already."

Hiranyamaya mumbled his thanks, returned to his cell for the meditation, and forcibly drove all thoughts from his clamouring mind so that he might concentrate on the image of divinity he was determined to reproduce in stone. The effort succeeded and his inner panic subsided and remained in abeyance throughout the morning, so absorbed did he become in thinking about the Divine One and the image of him he was about to leave engraved in the stone forever, as his predecessor had wished to leave it.

That afternoon, he began the work as he had planned. With the customary minimum of words the elderly sculptor taught Hiranyamaya how to handle the tools and how to polish the stone, then left him to his own devices. Thereafter each day when he had finished gathering the wood, Hiranyamaya returned to the chisels at the back wall of his cell. He worked slowly and with extreme caution, recognizing his own

inexperience and not wishing to make even the slightest mistake due to any hasty or ill-judged stroke. Any skilled artist might have laughed at him and the tiny chips he so laboriously struck away from the rock, but he was not concerned. The work was serving its function of absorbing his whole attention while the turmoil inside him settled to manageable proportions, and he was content. The white lion still roamed his inner landscape with the uneasiness of a stranger, and the earth beneath the glorious creature's feet still cried out at its unaccustomed burden. But at least the ghouls and demons that lurked under the rocks and subterranean crevices kept their distance and thus averted open conflict.

Two years later, with not an afternoon of labour missed, Hiranyamaya finished the sculpture to his satisfaction. Before him in a pose of serene meditation now sat a recognizable facsimile of the Divine One as he had appeared when he had come with his boon of sublime wisdom. An ineffable sense of power and assurance coupled with an oceanic calm and compassion flowed from the image and flooded the room.

The evening of its completion, Shukratma came to his sadhak's cell. Not a word did he utter upon seeing the sculpture but lost himself in a deep concentration. After ten minutes he turned and left, still silent and absorbed. He paid no attention to the sculptor and Hiranyamaya quickly understood why. For the Divine One had manifested himself in the stone and credit was due to no human hand or mind, nor should any human agency wish to take pride in such a manifestation. Gratitude was due only to the divine being himself.

Now that the work of sculpting was complete, Hiranyamaya spent his afternoons in meditation before the statue, and each time its soothing effect would act as an antidote to all the difficulties that encircled him and the white lion within during the rest of the day. For of all things, the gracious beast still seemed the most intolerable to every aspect of the human earth nature. The petty self-inflating thoughts of men would float up to Hiranyamaya from a thousand miles away or more, as though attracted by some outrage that needed to be summarily dealt with. On his morning walks each would taunt and attack him. Each would parade before him like a harlot, or try to lay a grimy hand on the spotless coat or mane of the lion he harboured within his being. Each was determined to do its part in driving the noble creature from its new home in nausea and disgust for they all wished to show it that the world was not its property but theirs. And yet somehow, Hiranyamaya was able to hold firm through even those shaky, preliminary years. But only he knew how close the arrogance of man had come to crumbling the protective bastions of his being. How nearly it had made him rise in revolt against the infinite gentleness he held inside himself by crying out to him — "Traitor! Why must you forget that man is a harsh creation who has been given for his lot anger, hunger, pain, and sorrow? Why must you forget that he is the one who must fight for his joys and pleasures like the common beasts from which he has sprung, and that his blood runs as thick and slow as any ape's? If such be man's pre-ordained fate, a curse be upon this bright divinity that mocks his leaden gait, his weary furious heart, and his mind that is his final shield

against a senseless destiny! Small may be his dominion but I dare any god or devil to take it from him, for if out of spite he has been created in his present form, out of spite he will as tenaciously retain it."

All the bitterness of these sentiments that flew to him as metal scraps to a magnet jostled for entry into his consciousness until he almost succumbed to their arguments and became convinced that man was the step-child of the gods — maltreated, abandoned, and derided by them amidst the welter of his blind despair. Could he then desert the ranks of men to accept this ultimate divine boon that sat so ill upon his human frame, and strove to drive all vestiges of human smallness from their native niches, as one might drive vermin, rats and mice from their ancestral holes and burrows?

The choice was not an easy one to make for the whole, great murky mass of humanity's prehistoric past seemed prepared to hold its own through the medium of the sadhak's nature against the white, deific wisdom that sought to displace it.

(To be continued)

BINA BRAGG

“LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL”

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1973)

YOGA AND EDUCATION

(2)

MODERN scientists are busy with the analysis of the mind — meaning the study of the brain. But the brain forms just a part of the physical mind. They have discovered that the brain has about 10,000 million interconnected nerve cells, and all of them do not work at the same time. There are many different centres in the brain both for pleasure and pain.

Robert Fludd, 17th century English physician and inventor, theorized that the mind of man was a universe in miniature.¹

But the issue is, can scientists scrutinise the ranges beyond the mind? Without the knowledge of these regions, will the study of the mind be complete?

So long as the mind is not at peace, man will never be at peace. If man is not at peace there will always be conflict in society and the world will never be a place of peace.

In one of his letters Sri Aurobindo writes that an ordinary man can never have peace of mind. And without peace, it is necessary to repeat, man cannot be freed from the conflicts of life. To acquire mental peace, mental illumination and abiding happiness, one must subject oneself to Yogic discipline.

The two hundred-year-old colonial system of education is so defective that it fills the young mind with a hundred kinds of external subjects but does not teach how to go beyond mind — to rise to a higher level of consciousness.

India holds that there are ranges of life beyond our life, ranges of mind beyond our present mind and above this there are the splendours of the Spirit.... She declared that there are none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge, he could conquer these ranges of mind, become the Spirit, become a god, become one with God. Unless one trains himself to this end, however partially, one will have to carry a cart-load of mental luggage all his life. One will not be able to reach a stage where nothing causes worry.² It is only at the higher level of consciousness that a synthesis between divergent elements in us is possible. This explains Sri Aurobindo's insistence on a change of consciousness. Yoga opens unlimited possibilities in the youngsters and quickens spiritual evolution.

¹ *Life, Science Library, The Mind*, p. 9.

² In the West alone over a million mental patients are admitted to hospitals every year. *Life, The Mind*, p. 11.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva report, dated May 13, 1973, "At least 1,000 people commit suicide every day and 10,000 attempt it."

Here also lies the role of India — India, where spirituality was first born. It may not be out of place to say a word about the India of Sri Aurobindo's Dream:

"India has a secret Power that no nation possesses. All that she needs is to rouse in her that faith, that will. God has breathed life into her once more. Great souls are at work to bring about her salvation. The movement of which the first outbreak was political, will end in a spiritual consummation. India is still in possession of her soul. The world will receive its message of emancipation from India."

Even while in Baroda Sri Aurobindo had predicted: "India will send forth the future religion of the world." The same thought almost in the same words we hear from the Marquess Zetland. In the Foreword to a book on Sri Aurobindo by Prof. Langley, the one-time vice-chancellor of the Dacca University, the Marquess writes:¹

"It is India who must send forth from herself the future religion of the world, the Eternal Religion which is to harmonise all religions, sciences and philosophies and make mankind one soul."

Sri Aurobindo's oft-quoted poem "Invitation" is India's invitation to the world to join hands in the building of a new world peopled by the race of Sons of God — the Supramental race.

"Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, Vice-President of the Poetry Society of London, who toured India in 1949-50 addressing many universities and Literary Societies on Poetry, particularly that of Indians, paid in almost all his lectures a glowing tribute to Sri Aurobindo as a poet. He read his poems before his audiences and often the one called 'Invitation' which, he said, 'is a matchless one, comparable to the great speech of Mr. Winston Churchill delivered during the World War II when he called upon the British nation, at a critical hour, to cooperate with him in the uphill task of gaining victory.'"²

The other day a Japanese journalist, representing an important paper in his country, came to the Ashram and met Madhav Pandit. Describing the purpose of his visit to India he said: "Japan had made a great economic recovery but people have become more and more materialistic in their outlook. Some of the thinking men in my country were alarmed at this turn of events and wanted to do something to correct the balance by introducing some spiritual catalyst in their society. Naturally they turn to India, famed for her spirituality." He had been sent to this country to study the role that spirituality plays in the life of our people, its impact on our thinking and living.*

¹ The *Back to Godhead* magazine has a circulation of over 5,000,000 a month in 10 languages. The books published by the Krishna Consciousness Society include six volumes of a projected 60 volumes of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Nectar of Devotion*, *Teaching of Lord Chaitanya*.

² Sisirkumar Mitra, *India, Vision and Fulfilment*, p. 192.

* During the centenary year, the Government of India sent Dr. Sisirkumar Ghose of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, to Japan to explain the thought of Sri Aurobindo.

"It would be a tragic irony of fate," says Sri Aurobindo, "if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the world there is more and more turning towards her for spiritual help and saving light."

With this digression we hasten to add, India is not a spent force nor has she spoken the last word. She has still the vitality to bring forth a Rishi of the stature of Sri Aurobindo in this atomic age, and a poet like Rabindranath Tagore who received in his lifetime the unstinted homage of the whole of mankind. Today Indira Gandhi is not only a jewel of India but an object of world-wide admiration.

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Why do people from various corners of the World feel attracted towards India? What attracts them?

The West is fed up with a mechanical life. No more do the people there want to lead a life of desires. They find that satisfaction of desire does not promise a contented life. There is no end to desires and it leads not to fulfilment but frustration. India's theory of the conquest of desire, on the other hand, helps one enter the subtle regions of the being. This gives a taste of a new life, fills the heart with a new hope.

Again, India holds that God is not to be feared but loved.¹ There is no greater pleasure than to love Him, to live in Him, live for Him, be one with Him and work for Him. This is Yoga. The first boon of Yoga is peace — silence.

The West believes in speech;
The East feeds on silence.

Traditional Yogas teach silence and samadhi. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga's insistence is not on samadhi or salvation but on "silence and action" — action sustained and nourished by silence.

The stress of the West is on salvation,
The seeking of the East is realisation,
The India of tomorrow will teach transformation.

Life cannot be transformed by five minutes' daily meditation. The Divine cannot be won by tricks. One must dive deep into the ocean of sadhana, however fearful it might seem. It needs life-long preparation — perpetual education.

There are a hundred kinds of contradiction in us — we are, as it were, made of pieces and each wants to go its own way, each is at war with the other. All in us resists

¹ " . the fear of God plays a very large part, sometimes the largest . Fear of god arose from man's ignorance of God and his ignorance of the laws that govern the world.... It [religion] makes hell and heaven and not the Divine himself the object of the human soul"

(Sri Aurobindo: *The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 524-26.)

an upward march. The Mother counsels — “One must educate each of them as one educates a child.”¹ The expansion of education has brought knowledge but not wisdom or self-conquest.

The mind of the West is fixed on World-conquest.
The soul of the East yearns for Self-conquest.

The present woeful and wearisome state of affairs in India is due to its mad imitation of the West for material progress. The sooner India awakes the better. Outer acquisition must keep pace with inner equipment. Only wisdom yields no power and only action imparts no light. India must set an example of how to achieve both.

India's age-long preparation must culminate in the government and guidance of God in men's hearts and minds. There lies its fulfilment. There lies the future of mankind. One might speculate when God's hour strikes Sri Aurobindo's vision and message will receive universal acclaim and acceptance. It will also give birth to a greater India.

However fanciful and attractive this theory might appear today, when the gulf between theory and practice narrows down, we shall realise, these are facts, not fancies.

Our youth have no big ambitions in life. They can shine only if they receive the very best education from teachers who are examples of scholarship and character. Here lies the importance of the educational experiment that is going on in the Ashram's educational atmosphere.

(To be continued)

NARAYAN PRASAD

¹ *Mother India*, June 1973.

“THE GOLDEN BIRD” BY SRI AUROBINDO

AN APPRECIATION

The Golden Bird, a short prose piece, is one of the most beautiful of its kind among the writings of Sri Aurobindo.¹ It is sheer poetry and we can feel throughout the creative delight of the poet, his mind and heart aglow with the mythical and romantic creations he has brought forth from his inspired imagination — the golden bird, the forest of Asan, Luilla.

The forest of Asan, like the palace of Kubla Khan in Xanadu skirted by the sacred river Alph, fires our imagination with a strange mystery and enchantment. It has friendly and open spaces, sunny retreats, is a green home of human safety where a man and a maiden could walk in the moonlit night. But it is also an impenetrable depth, haunt of the dancers and untrodden of human feet, coiling place of the cobra and python, lair of the lion and jaguar: it has its coverts of dread and menace and death.

Luilla! the very name is full of romance! It is neither oriental nor occidental and yet a beautiful blend of all the delicacies one can imagine in a damsel, half human and half divine. She loves to wander on the verges of danger and yet has a high regard for her radiant beauty, the daily delight of all who dwelt on the verges of the forest of Asan. Her mind, like a many-hued butterfly, wanders far into the forbidden regions of the forest of Asan, far beyond the natural rampart of thorns and brambles which stretches for miles sequestering them from its open and friendly spaces. It is not out of fear of the lions and the serpents that Luilla forbore to enter the secret places of the forest of Asan, because she was not only fearless but could overcome the most ferocious intentions of the most dangerous beast if only given a few minutes to look steadily into its eyes. Luilla fascinates us by her beauty and her calm strength. She is full of unutterable grace and sweetness and a majestic royalty which evokes instant admiration to the point of worship from all who have seen her. No doubt, the Golden Bird chooses her of all persons for addressing its wonderful message.

The Golden Bird is the mystery *par excellence* of the piece. Sri Aurobindo has spent much artistry and fervent love in painting the Golden Bird. Luilla's eyes are dazzled and her soul is full of wonder at the sight of this beautiful bird which flutters out from the impenetrable thickets of Asan. Its little body is a constant flame of flying gold and the wings that open and flutter are of living gold and the small shapely head is crested gold and the long graceful quivering tail is trailing feathered gold. All is gold about the bird except the eyes which are two jewels of a soft ever-changing colour and shelter strange-looking depths of love and thought in their gentle brilliance. When it sits on a bough it seems as if all the soft shaded leaves were suddenly sunlit.

The Golden Bird sings in its high secret language but Luilla's ears understand

¹ Published in *Mother India*, August 15, 1960.

its thoughts and her soul thirsts and trembles with delight. The bird that comes out of death's night sings to Luilla a song of beauty and delight.

Now, certainly behind this beautiful imagery of the forest, the maiden and the bird of mystery there is another deeper meaning. May we humbly venture on an interpretation?

Luilla is the élite of humanity, a soul that has evolved through hundreds of lives and is now fit for a supreme divine adventure, tasting the nectar of immortality while yet remaining on earth. She is a lover of beauty, herself an object of daily worship of all who come in contact with her, fearless and puissant, so puissant that her steady gaze can hold at bay the most ferocious beast. She loves to wander on the verges of danger and yet her heart is exquisitely tender and sensitive and thirsts, listens and trembles with delight at the song of the Golden Bird. It is such a soul, complex, rich, heroic and sweet, a diver of deep seas laden with gems and pearls of life, the spirit which will undertake out of joy the supreme adventure and be the pioneer of the new golden consciousness.

This marvellous joy, this new conquest of the human consciousness can come only by treading calmly and courageously the impenetrable regions of the subconscious and the inconscient, where lurk all the menaces, dangers and pitfalls for the human consciousness, the cause of all its sufferings, failures, of disease and death. This is the forest of Asan, the impenetrable haunt of the serpent and jaguar, of ambush and death. Once this impenetrable morass is crossed and its perils faced and conquered the soul rises into the splendours of the Supramental Light.

The Golden Bird is the Supramental Consciousness, harbouring strange depths of love and thought and transforming into pure gold everything that comes into contact with it. The Bird, the Supramental godhead, sings to the élite soul of humanity a message of deathless beauty and delight. Like the flute of Sri Krishna it sounds in the depths of Luilla, the aspiring soul, calling it to the new adventure of the Time Spirit, the conquest and transformation of life.

"Luilla, Luilla, Luilla, green and beautiful are the meadows where the children run and pluck the flowers...green and beautiful the cornfields ripening on the village bounds, but greener are the impenetrable thickets of Asan and more beautiful the forests of death and night. More ensnaring to some is the danger of the jaguar than the attractive face of a child.... Shall I not take thee, O Luilla, into these woods? Thou shalt pluck the flowers in the forests of night and death, thou shalt lay thy hands on the lion's mane. O Luilla! O Luilla! O Luilla!"

The Supramental Grace and Love and Courage which the Golden Bird represents have come down to beckon and lead man's soul to the plenary splendours of a divine life. It fully knows all the labyrinths and menace and dangers and also their significance and the joy for which they were created. The descent into hell is necessary for bringing down heaven on earth. Only two things are required, the aspiring soul and the Supreme Divine Grace.

JAGDISH KHANNA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Arvind Ka Rashtra Ko Ahvan (Hindi) — **Sri Aurobindo's Call to the Nation.** Editors: Devadutta and Hriday. Publishers: Suruchi Sahitya, Jhandewala, New Delhi 55. Pages 104. Price Re. 1.

HERE is a topical little book. It is topical because the views expressed by Sri Aurobindo in his articles and speeches, which form most of it, are as burningly applicable now as when they were authored some six and a half decades back. They are applicable even more after India's emancipation from the foreign rule. Before there was only one problem uppermost in the minds of her countrymen. It was to fling away the alien yoke. Other psychological problems were subjected to a sub-surface position. Now they are emerging more and more poignantly and they all demand more or less urgent handling.

Sri Aurobindo presents his solution to these problems, and with all the reasons at his disposal, convincingly, comprehensively, wholesomely. His key, in short, is spirituality. Some people dump all the burden of the country's ills on the too-muchness of her spiritual leanings. The answer is that India had had too little of it in the sense of true spirituality. There can never be *de trop* of it. It is really the *deus ex machina*, the one redeeming power which life always seeks after but is not encountered by it. True fulfilment does not come by satisfaction but by self-change and self-discipline. Life cannot find it because it seeks wrongly, searches wrong quarters, taps wrong sources.

Sri Aurobindo says about India, sharply, powerfully and without hesitation. "God always keeps for himself a chosen country in which the higher knowledge is through all chances and dangers, by the few or the many, continually preserved, and for the present, in this *caturyuga* at least, that country is India." "Each nation is a Shakti or power of the evolving spirit in humanity and lives by the principle which it embodies. India is the Bharata Shakti, the living energy of a great spiritual conception, and fidelity to it is the very principle of her existence. For by its virtue alone she has been one of the immortal nations; this alone has the secret of her amazing persistence and perpetual force of survival and revival."

The purpose of this review will be better served by a few more outstanding and enlightening quotes.

"The European sets great store by machinery. He seeks to renovate humanity by schemes of society and systems of government; he hopes to bring about millennium by an act of Parliament. Machinery is of great importance, but only as a working means for the spirit within, the force behind. The nineteenth century in India aspired to political emancipation, social renovation, religious vision and rebirth, but it failed because it adopted Western motives and methods, ignored the spirit, history and destiny of our race and thought that by taking over European organisation and equipment we should reproduce in ourselves European prosperity, energy and progress. We of the twentieth century reject the aims, ideals and methods of the anglicised nine-

teenth, precisely because we accept its experience. We refuse to make an idol of the present; we look before and after, backward to the mighty history of our race, forward to the grandiose history for which that destiny has prepared it."

The exhortation "Materially you are nothing, spiritually you are everything.... First, therefore, become Indians. Recover the patrimony of your forefathers. Recover the Aryan thought, the Aryan discipline, the Aryan character, the Aryan life. Recover the Vedanta, the Gita, the Yoga. Recover them not only in intellect or sentiment but in your lives. Live them and you will be great and strong, mighty, invincible and fearless." As the force of inflow of formidable currents of energy, it is as if you are undergoing *kāyākalpa*.

The hammering note of assurance from the pen of Sri Aurobindo is our destiny's best insurance: "The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world. Every hour, every moment could only bring them nearer to the brightness of the day that God had decreed The function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation. Whenever the first play of energy is exhausted and earth grows old and weary, full of materialism, racked with problems she cannot solve, the function of India is to restore the youth to mankind and assure it of immortality. She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it like St. George in the well of life and recovers strength, hope and vitality for its long pilgrimage. Such a time is now at hand."

These words are not only the prophecy of a prophet of nationalism, but the guiding light for those who look for knowledge and wisdom and the true line of action. They have the mantric force of a visionary and guide who has acted his dreams and lent his power of mind, body and soul to the achievement of his ideals.

When great things are in the matrix of high development and reconstruction, and renaissance is arising, "The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and most difficult."

One cannot turn a blind eye to the rampant corruption and nepotism, religious chauvinism and bigotry, economic backwardness and social injustices, high-flown and posh living on one hand and rank poverty on the other. Viruses of the diseases from which the society is suffering only seem to be proliferating. The social set-up is top-heavy and poor people remain run-down, emotionally as well as materially. Political life shows no better picture. The situation remains explosive and violence at any time shows its ugly and crippling manifestations. Hidden lava of unreasoned aspirations of human emotions and sentiments surges up suddenly with a big boom.

Sri Aurobindo was aware of this "state of things. Things are bad, are growing worse and may at any time grow worst or worse than worst if that is possible — and

any thing however paradoxical seems possible in the present perturbed world. The best thing for them [the people] is to realise that all this was necessary because certain possibilities had to emerge and be got rid of if a new and better world was at all to come into being; it would not have done to postpone them for a later time."

After all this he comes with his usual consoling tone, to make us "feel the hands of calm". "Also they can remember the adage that night is darkest before dawn and that the coming of dawn is inevitable."

The publishers have printed one lakh copies of this book in its first impression. In the beginning a short life-story is given in modern cryptic style. The book is very well edited and the material very thoughtfully and judiciously selected. If books of true national importance and public utility, books for the masses from which they should and can more easily profit by, are chosen for prizes, then this book can claim sure attention. It is of great national benefit to see such books translated into as many languages as possible and made to reach the public at large.

This almost pocket-size book is really inexpensive at a rupee. With such headings as A Glimpse, Short Life-Story, Durga Stotra, Immortal India, Our Tradition of Knowledge and Wisdom, The West and We, The Goal of Independent India, Call to the Youth, Miscellaneous Thoughts, Uttarpara Speech, A Historic Letter and the Message of 15th August, the book condenses in a nut-shell most of the outstanding pieces on nationalism that Sri Aurobindo has authored. The coloured design on the cover with Sri Aurobindo's picture set in it has made the book attractive.

Brought out on the birth centenary of Sri Aurobindo, the book has been most appropriately dedicated "for earth and men" to The Mother, whose one aim in life is to make real in the most physical way the ideals that Sri Aurobindo cherished and sought to achieve. She has often remarked "India is the Guru of the world", and she is striving to realise it silently but tenaciously and concretely, unknown to and unrecognised by the generality of men,

"Hiding herself even from those she loved,".

Her *Invocation* is a reminder to anyone as to how deeply she loves India. "O our Mother, O soul of India, Mother who hast never forsaken thy children even in the days of darkest depression, even when they turned away from thy voice, served other masters and denied thee, now when they have arisen and the light is on thy face in this dawn of thy liberation, in this great hour we salute thee. Guide us so that the horizon of freedom opening before us may be also a horizon of true greatness and of thy true life in the community of the nations. Guide us so that we may be always on the side of great ideals and show to men thy true visage, as a leader in the ways of the spirit and a friend and helper of all the peoples."

The dedication reads:

From where the irrepressible call goes forth
 Ever of the sempiternal Dawn's new birth,
 Therein in this World-Mother's Feet is born
 The golden Morn.

Where Grace of God is crouched in space and time,
 Offered are these word-flowers on those Feet sublime.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Sri Aurobindo Circle, Twenty-Ninth Number (Sri Aurobindo Society Annual, 1973). Price: Rs. 6.00.

The 1973 issue of *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, with its 157 pages and photographs, containing ten articles by guest contributors and a large and generous quantity of extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, addresses itself to one underlying theme: the truth of things. Covering a wide range of topics, from poetry and literature, to occultism, knowledge, society, philosophy and Auroville, this journal concerns itself with the whole range of human activity. All Life is Yoga.

In the opening pages are three recent photographs of the Mother, the second of which has a fascinating resemblance, in posture and expression, to the 1950 Cartier-Bresson study of Sri Aurobindo in his armchair. The text itself opens with two short messages of the Master concerning his will and world-events, and several recent messages of the Mother. The journal also closes with all the Darshan messages from August 1950 (Sri Aurobindo's last Darshan before leaving his body) up till November 1972. That in itself is enough to make this issue a real collector's piece.

"Sat" (Truth) is the title of the appropriately chosen opening essay by Sri Aurobindo, and is one of a series of extracts from his works which are presented under the titles, "Occultism", "The Higher and the Lower Knowledge", "The Subordination of the Individual to the Collectivity", and "The Spiritual Genius of the Indian People". "What is Truth?" asks Sri Aurobindo in "Sat". Then, as if to invalidate himself and, for that matter, the rest of the journal, he adds "Mind and speech are not permitted to lead us to it." Spiritual literature, writing about Truth is, excuse the misquotation, a finger pointing to the sun, and not the sun itself. However, in the case of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, it is the sun's own finger pointing at itself.

It is precisely this extraordinary luminosity of the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, with a vision so complete and deep and high above the intellect that excites many of the contributors to this journal, creates the essence around which they weave their thoughts as they explore the truth of philosophy, of social thought, of human unity, of life and the expression in life as in a city, of a new kind of living inspired and animated by a new consciousness and force. H. Maheshwar, for example, in "Significance of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy" articulates precisely those thoughts

and feelings which are evoked by reading *The Life Divine*, wherein a consciousness that can harmonize and perfect apparently polar opposite points of view provides the clue to a solution to all the problems of existence and life, if only we will rise to that level and apply it. He says, "Sri Aurobindo's philosophy has this special uniqueness that without cancelling the demands of reason and consistency it has accommodated the truths of not only differing but even mutually opposing systems.... His appreciation of every system, even the mutually opposed ones, is deep and thorough and unreserved so far as it goes; beyond that he points critically though constructively the gaps and lapses, limitations and shortcomings of it, often showing how its synthesis with another system in an enlarged scheme of ideas would make it move towards self-completion." This the essence of holism, and the secret by which such a complete harmony is possible is "the source of his vision and experience of Truth in a consciousness higher than mental or logical...to the gnosis and power of which integrality and unity is native and immediate. From that consciousness the nature and working and facts of all other levels of consciousness become clear and relevant for an integral comprehension."

What experiences lead to such a perfected vision as Sri Aurobindo's? Kireet Joshi, in "Sri Aurobindo's Experiences in the Realm of the Spirit" has collected some of Sri Aurobindo's own descriptions of his experiences and realizations, and presented them chronologically with a brief biography relating them to his outer life. It is a fascinating and moving account, beginning with experiences before 1904, when Sri Aurobindo first turned decisively to yoga, and tracing an adventure through progressive realms of light up to the Supermind. "It has been affirmed", narrates Kireet, "that the supramental force has now come to a stage of decisive action on events and people, and that it is Sri Aurobindo Himself who is in Action that is omnipotent and irresistible." He quotes the Mother, "Sri Aurobindo does not belong to the past nor to history. Sri Aurobindo is the Future advancing towards its realization."

K.D. Sethna's illuminating essay on "The Inspiration of *Paradise Lost*" throws a clear ray, with all the thoroughness of a scholar, the perspicacity of a critic, the feeling of a poet, and the understanding of a Yogi, upon Milton's masterpiece. Sethna's treatment of the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall has much that is relevant to those not only with a literary interest, but also those who, doing the yoga, may wonder about the ups and downs of their own, and the world's progress.

Similarly, Prema Nandakumar, with thoroughness and clarity, discusses "*The Divine Comedy* and *Savitri*" and presents much that will be pertinent to seekers, *Savitri* enthusiasts, and literateurs.

Kishor Gandhi's article, "Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo" is a most useful synopsis, with extracts culled from the various works, there being no single comprehensive exposition of Sri Aurobindo's views on the subject of social philosophy. According to Sri Aurobindo, Kishor tells us, "a society...is not merely a collection of individuals or a structure of their relationships, as most of the modern social thinkers maintain; in its essential reality it is a conscious being, a self with a real existence of its own independent of the individuals of which it is constituted."

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's "Sri Aurobindo and Human Unity" briefly traces Sri Aurobindo's views on the problem as they evolved through the different stages of his life, and posits a certain urgency, "It seems to be a race against time, and a race between the perverse will to racial suicide and the residual sovereign instinct for survival and a racing forward to the future." Fortunately, one of the Darshan messages, that of 24-11-1951 quotes Sri Aurobindo with the reassurance, "It is not a hope but a certitude that the complete transformation of the nature will take place."

G. Monod-Herzen in "The Ideal of Human Unity" reports on the various ways of understanding human unity presented at the International Seminar on Human Unity held at New Delhi in 1972. He states that "about three-quarters of the speakers sought to find by what reforms, what progress, in the present establishments, the aim could at least be approached, if not attained." Whereas a second group, in the minority, objected that "mankind has been attempting such reforms for the past three thousand years, from extremely divergent political, religious or economic ideologies, without any success. Thirty centuries of failure lead us to believe that the true solution is only to be found *inside* man, through a change of consciousness. But how to obtain this change?" Inside man, yes, but what man?

Well, one group of men, richly endowed with all the difficulties, shortcomings and possibilities of the human race is described by Ruud Lohman in "A City with a Soul". Ruud traces the early adventures of the building of a city, Auroville, which is really the adventure of building a new man and a new society, with the aim of a complete change of consciousness, in the light of the teachings, guidance and force of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. As Sisirkumar Ghose puts it, in "Towards a New Society", "These men, who realize the need for a radical change, will not be content with the holding of an attractive idea only. Rather they will live it out under modern conditions of life." And as Shyam Sundar Jhunjhunwala says, in "Auroville, its *raison d'être*", "the life in Auroville, if it has to achieve its aim, has to be truth-based, truth-oriented, truth-motivated, truth-animated. That is the call of the soul of Auroville."

VIKAS

Student's Section

BETTER SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES

(Continued from the issue of August 15, 1973)

HOW TO IMPROVE THE SIGHT

LEARN right blinking and do palming two or three times a day. By palming I mean to close the eyes and cover them with the palms of the hands avoiding any pressure on the eyeballs. The details of the methods can be studied from *Yoga of Perfect Sight*. If you are myopic do not use your glasses in reading because your reading sight is better than with glasses, and read in dim light or candle light. Reading under bright light causes strain. Keep a Snellen eye chart in your room and read it daily with gentle blinking from 10 feet or more without glasses.

Dr. Bates' discoveries are a boon to humanity. Hundreds of cases, so called incurable, have been greatly benefited at the School for Perfect Eyesight at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry. A German lady had developed squint due to the wrong suggestions of her father about the use of the eyes. She suffered from severe headache when she attempted to read. She was cured in two weeks by eye education and mental relaxation exercises. A boy developed semiblindness and got cured just in a few days by proper eye education. Myopic patients respond very well to this treatment.

BLIND NOTIONS: There are some blind notions prevalent. Reading fine print is commonly supposed to be harmful to the eyes, and reading print of any kind in dim light and close to the eyes is regarded as a dangerous practice. Due to such a belief a student suffered a lot. He used to concentrate on his mathematical problems under bright light without blinking for a long time. He would not read small print books and while reading he held the book at about 18 inches. It is his teacher who persuaded him to keep the book at a long distance because he himself, being an aged person, used to hold the book at an arms length and it was not possible for him to read the print at a nearer distance. This student had developed so much pain and headache that he lost the peace of his mind and his health was affected. When he began to read fine print in candle light and good light alternately at a close distance, surprisingly all his pain and headache faded away just in a few days. Reading fine print is extremely beneficial.

There was a time when we had no means and our knowledge was very shallow for correcting the visual defects but now we assure the public that most cases of visual defects can be greatly improved without glasses and their headache of short or long duration can be cured in quite a short time at the School for Perfect Eyesight. Cases of retinal disorder as retinitis pigmentosa, retinitis, macular degeneration etc. can improve their eyesight and can be saved from becoming blind.

R. S. AGARWAL