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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.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. LXVII

No. 7

“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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‘LET ME ALWAYS CONFORM TO THY WILL’

April 28, 1914

THOU art the Master of the world; Thy law unfolds before us with precision, and as I thought or rather as Thou didst make me understand it before we left Paris, it is the best — what could best serve Thy work in the world — that has happened.

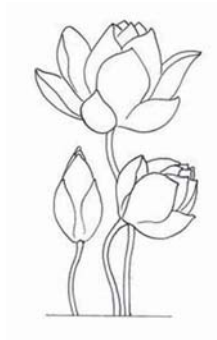
In beatitude I communed with Thy puissance dominating over darkness and error, shining like a marvellous and eternal dawn above the mud of hypocritical force and its apparent success. Everything has been brought to light, we have taken one more step towards the full light of sincerity, and this full light will be the first stage of Thy reign upon earth.

O Thou inconceivable splendour, Thou conqueror of all ignorance, victor over all egoism, Thou who dost illumine all hearts and enlighten all minds, Thou who art Knowledge and Love and Being, let me live constantly in the consciousness of Thy unity, let me always conform to Thy Will.

With reverent and silent devotion I bow to Thee as the sovereign Lord of the world.

THE MOTHER

(Prayers and Meditations, CWM 2nd Ed., Vol. 1, p. 132)



SRI AUROBINDO: LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MAHAYOGI

(Continued from the issue of June 2014)

Chapter: XXXIV

“Beginning of a New Era”

Like Goethe at the battle of Valmy, I could have said, “Today marks the beginning of a new era, and you can say that you were present at it.”

Henry W. Nevinson¹

A BIZARRE twilight must have descended on the French Gardens, the sprawling venue for the 23rd conference of the Indian National Congress on the 26th of December 1907, after the first session ended late in the afternoon amidst chaos, the delegates hastily retreating into their camps and the bewildered public disappearing into the city.

But before the sepulchral silence had set in, if the young K. M. Munshi, a self-confessed “Ardent Arvindite” were accurate in his observation, Sri Aurobindo who “alone was cool and detached” when every leading member of both the camps was agitated or tense, “turned to Tilak and said: ‘Mr. Tilak, you had no confidence so far. But this is the nation. Look at it. From today it is the only power in India.’”²

Looking through the turmoil and chaos leading to the curtain coming down on the preliminary proceedings, Sri Aurobindo evidently saw the upsurge of a hitherto unknown collective courage that demanded a radical departure from the policy of hypocritical resolutions passed by the Congress, year after year, soliciting the grace of an alien government and expressing some mild protests against some of its policies.

It is doubtful if any leader of either camp could have enjoyed a wink of sleep during the night that followed. As the dawn of the 27th of December broke out, copies of a Gujarati leaflet, probably the handiwork of some local Moderates, were seen abundantly scattered — a mischief designed to reduce serious ideological issues to populist chauvinism. These were also distributed at the entrance of the auditorium a few hours later. A rough English translation of it reads:

The Gujaratis of Surat please arise and awake. Tilak has put a black spot on your forehead. Do rub it out. You have seen the hooliganism in the session yesterday. What will you do today? In the past Shivaji came twice to Surat and robbed it. He had told at that time that he would come again. Shivaji has not

been able to come but Tilak has come. He has come to cut your nose and ears. So please arise and awake.³

A study of the literature and documents available on the event clearly shows that while the Moderates had no other concern except managing the day's programme as chalked out by them and obstinately keeping their doors shut, the Nationalist camp was keen to strike a compromise even at that stage.

This was on the 27th of December, in the morning. Motilal Ghose, the veteran editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, who was not completely identified with the Nationalists, was desperately keen to become a peace-maker. He was hopeful of achieving that end even at the cost of his friend Tilak, albeit with the latter's consent. He writes in his introduction to one of the biographies of Tilak:

I still remember the very words I addressed him on this occasion. I was trying my humble best to effect reconciliation and have the congress held on the following day though without any prospect of success. Tilak knew it. I told him, "Look here, Tilak, you alone can save the situation. But it means a tremendous sacrifice on your part — self-condemnation. Knowing you as I do, I am confident you are prepared for it. Now, there is a glorious work for you. They want your blood. Why not give it to them for the sake of the Congress? I know you are not the author of this unpleasant affair. They, however, want you to be gilletted to infamy by stigmatising you as such. Are you willing to give me a written undertaking saying that you are ready to take the whole odium on your shoulders and make a public declaration to that effect if thereby the death of the Congress is averted? It will be a noble sacrifice on your part of which you may well be proud. Naturally you would feel that this would be doing violence to your honest conviction, as you did not bring about the disturbance. But rather do this violence than allow this national organisation to collapse.⁴

Despite protests from his friends, Tilak wrote out a letter to the Moderates laying down his readiness to take upon himself all the blame for the unfortunate happenings if they were willing to discuss the agenda for the immediate future session. Here is Motilal's report regarding their response:

With this written undertaking in our possession I, Ray Yatindranath Ray Choudhury and a few other friends ran to the Moderate camp with a view to bring about a reconciliation, if possible, but we were simply howled out by the Moderate leaders headed by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. They were all in high temper and it was impossible to reason with them.⁵

The inevitable 1 p.m. struck and the Presidential procession entered the venue vaunting its traditional dazzle. A note from Tilak conveying his “wish to move an adjournment with a constructive proposal” and adding, “Please announce me”, was handed over to Mr. Malvi by a volunteer. It is difficult to say whether or not Mr. Malvi cared to glance at it, but he appeared, consciously or otherwise, to remain absorbed in thoughts too serious to care for Tilak’s request.

Tilak had been allotted a chair on the platform, but he chose to sit in the first row facing the platform hoping to attract the attention of the leaders on it and to be called. But as there was no sign of any attention by Malvi or anybody else being focused upon him, he sent yet another note, this time through N. C. Kelkar, a leading Congressman who was a renowned author and editor, but had the misfortune to witness this note too being quietly ignored.

The comprehensive “Source Material, Collected from Bombay Government Records” and published by the then Government of Bombay in 1958 states:

Babu Surendranath Bannerji was called upon to resume his speech, seconding the election of the President. Mr. Tilak . . . rose to go up the platform *immediately* after Babu Surendranath, who was calmly heard by all, had finished his speech. But he was held back by a volunteer in the way. Mr. Tilak, however, asserted his right to go up and pushing aside the volunteer succeeded in getting to the platform just when Dr. Ghose was moving to take the President’s chair. The Official Note says that by the time Tilak came upon the platform and stood in front of the president, the motion of the election of Dr. Ghose had been passed by an overwhelming majority; and Dr. Ghose being installed in the Presidential Chair by loud and *prolonged* applause, had risen to begin his address. All this, if it did take place, as alleged, could only have been done in a deliberately hurried manner with a set purpose to trick Mr. Tilak out of his right to address the Delegates and move an amendment as previously notified. According to the usual procedure Mr. Malvi was bound to announce Mr. Tilak, or if he considered the amendment out of order, declare it so publicly, and to ask for a show of hands in favour of or against the motion. But nothing of the kind was done; nor was the interval of a few seconds sufficient for a prolonged applause as alleged.⁶

Of the several records left of all that happened thereafter, this author considers the one left by Nevinson most authentic because his conscious role was that of a witness. Even though he had sympathy for the freedom-lovers, he was nonetheless an objective observer on behalf of his newspapers, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News* of London. Extracts:

In deliberate and expectant silence the proceedings began. Mr. Malvi called upon Mr. Banerjea to take up his speech, seconding the appointment of Dr. Ghose as President. Speaking with a chastened exuberance, as of a hero rebuked by fate, Surendra Nath appealed to the past achievements of the Congress, appealed to the necessity of union for strength, and sat down amid silence, amid applause. Mr. Motilal Nehru, wealthy barrister of Allahabad, circumspect and respected, Moderate by nature in everything but generosity, said a few sentences. Everyone went delicately, moving on a crust of ashes. In inaudible words Mr. Malvi proposed that Dr. Ghose should take the Chair as President, and amid various shouting he declared the motion carried. Heavy with years and knowledge, Dr. Ghose transferred himself to the seat, and rose at once to deliver that thoughtfully prepared address. "Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "my first duty is to tender you my thanks for the signal honour you have done me."

Beyond his first duty he never went. As when lightning flashes in air surcharged with storm, Mr. Tilak was seen standing straight in front of the Presidential Chair itself, expostulating, protesting, all in that calm, decisive voice of his, the voice of a man indifferent to fate. He had given notice of an amendment, he was there to move it, and there he would remain. "You cannot move an adjournment of the Congress," cried Mr. Malvi; "I declare you out of order."

"I wish to move an amendment to the election of President, and you are not in the Chair," Mr. Tilak replied. "I declare you out of order!" cried Dr. Ghose.

"You have not been elected," answered Mr. Tilak; "I appeal to the delegates."

Uproar drowned the rest. With folded arms Mr. Tilak faced the audience. On either side of him young Moderates sprang to their feet, wildly gesticulating vengeance. Shaking their fists and yelling to the air, they clamoured to hurl him down the steep of the platform. Behind him, Dr. Ghose mounted the table, and, ringing an unheard bell, harangued the storm in shrill, agitated, unintelligible denunciations. Restraining the rage of Moderates, ingeminating peace if ever man ingeminated, Mr. Gokhale, sweet-natured even in extremes, stood beside his old opponent, flinging out both arms to protect him from the threatened onset. But Mr. Tilak asked for no protection. He stood there with folded arms, defiant, calling on violence to do its worst, calling on violence to move him, for he would move for nothing else in hell or heaven. In front, the white-clad audience roared like a tumultuous sea.

Suddenly something flew through the air — a shoe! — a Mahratta shoe! — reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendra Nath Banerjea on the cheek; it cannoned off upon Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell, and, as at a given signal, white waves of turbaned men surged up the es-

carpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked to them Moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos . . .

The Indian ladies vanished. The platform leaders withdrew rapidly through a door at the back of the Pandal. Mr. Tilak was borne off by his followers. But in the vast pavilion itself a combat raged at large. Chairs, useless now except as missiles, flew through the air like shells discharged at a venture; long sticks clashed and shivered; . . . Group rushed upon group, delegate upon delegate. . . . It was hard to tell friend from foe. Ten thousand men, all crowded together among ten thousand chairs, no uniform, no distinction, nothing to mark off Extremist from Moderate except the facial expression of a temperament — it was a confused and difficult conflict to maintain. Who would wish to fall to the bludgeon of a political friend? Nor was a certain chivalry or politeness wanting.⁷

Recollects Munshi:

In the general rush to the platform I had been carried there and was standing on the table with quite a few dozen others when it crashed.⁸

At night once again some faint attempts were made for reconciliation, but the mutual distrust had grown too stubborn to allow them any headway. The next day the Moderates held their meeting — with a small audience — at the same venue. Those who attended had to take a sort of oath that they would quietly follow the proceedings.

In the afternoon the Nationalists too held a convention. Reports Nevinson:

In the large courtyard of a private house they met in silent crowds. Grave and silent — I think without saying a single word — Mr. Arabindo Ghose took the Chair, and sat unmoved, with far-off eyes, as one who gazes at futurity. In clear, short sentences, without eloquence or passion, Mr. Tilak spoke till the stars shone out and someone kindled a lantern at his side. He reviewed the situation, accused the “Bombay Moderates” of seeking favour with the Government and rejecting the Nationalist offer of compromise. He had no wish to destroy the Congress, for its prestige was useful; but a new spirit had entered Indian affairs and unless the congress was permeated with the new spirit it had better die — it was dead already. By the new spirit he meant self-confidence and self-assertion, contrasted with the old methods of petitions for rights, appeals for justice, and other forms of mendicancy which the British Government answered with elusive promises, and the Anglo-Indians with scorn.⁹

Nevinson had travelled to Surat from Calcutta by the train that carried the Moderate leaders of the Congress. He returned with them too. Throughout the onward journey the leaders had been greeted and garlanded by jubilant crowds. But what a contrast on their way back! There were no electronic media, no radio in those days; newspapers were limited in their circulation. Yet the news of the happenings at Surat had reached all over India at an incredible speed. Needless to say, the picture left by Nevinson is the most authentic account of the people's mood:

As I returned with the leaders of the Congress movement in the train, each station rang with the chorus of "Down with Rash Behari!" "Down with Gokhale!" "Down with Surendra Nath!" Not a cheer, not a single cry of "Jai!" That was on a Sunday and on the Wednesday before no cheering, no garlands had seemed enough. It had been roses, roses all the way.¹⁰

(To be continued)

MANOJ DAS

References and Notes

1. Henry W. Nevinson: *The New Spirit in India*; Indian reprint – Metropolitan Book Co., Delhi, 1975.

The Battle of Valmy (1792) was an important encounter in the series of "the French Revolutionary Wars". After several setbacks, the French defeated the Prussian army led by Brunswick. Ironically, Goethe was with Brunswick. Even then, when asked by his depressed colleagues what he thought of the situation, he said, "From this place and from this day forth commences a new era in the world's history and you can all say that you were all present at its birth." (Sources: *The French Revolution*, Pernoud and Flaissier; and *Oxford Dictionary of World History*.)

Nevinson quoting Goethe assumes significance as he was an Englishman against whom the Nationalists were fighting.

2. K. M. Munshi in *Bhavan's Journal*; 27 November 1960.

3. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research.

4. This is an extract from Motilal Ghose's Foreword to a biography of Tilak entitled *A Step in the Steamer*; reproduced in *Memoirs of Motilal Ghose* by Paramananda Dutt; Amrita Bazar Patrika Office.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II; Government of Bombay, 1958.

7. Henry W. Nevinson: *The New Spirit in India*.

8. K. M. Munshi in *Bhavan's Journal*; 27 November 1960.

9. Henry W. Nevinson: *The New Spirit in India*.

10. *Ibid.*

ARYA

I. BEFORE THE BEGINNING

A clear idea of the work

[August 1912 or after]

Dear M¹

. . . 15th August is usually a turning point or a notable day for me personally either in sadhana or life — indirectly only for others. This time it has been very important for me. My subjective sadhana may be said to have received its final seal and something like its consummation by a prolonged realisation & dwelling in Parabrahman for many hours. Since then, egoism is dead for all in me except the Annamaya Atma, — the physical self which awaits one farther realisation before it is entirely liberated from occasional visitings or external touches of the old separated existence.

My future sadhan is for life, practical knowledge & shakti, — not the essential knowledge or shakti in itself which I have got already — but knowledge & shakti established in the same physical self & directed to my work in life. I am now getting a clearer idea of that work & I may as well impart something of that idea to you; since you look to me as the centre, you should know what is likely to radiate out of that centre.

1. To reexplain the Sanatana Dharma to the human intellect in all its parts, from a new standpoint. This work is already beginning, & three parts of it are being clearly worked out. Sri Krishna has shown me the true meaning of the Vedas, not only so but he has shown me a new Science of Philology showing the process & origins of human speech so that a new Nirukta can be formed & the new interpretation of the Veda based upon it. He has also shown me the meaning of all in the Upanishads that is not understood either by Indians or Europeans. I have therefore to reexplain the whole Vedanta & Veda in such a way that it will be seen how all religion arises out of it & is one everywhere. In this way it will be proved that India is the centre of the religious life of the world & its destined saviour through the Sanatana Dharma.

2. On the basis of Vedic knowledge to establish a Yogic sadhana which will not only liberate the soul, but prepare a perfect humanity & help in the restoration of the Satyayuga. That work has to begin now but will not be complete till the end of the Kali.

1. 'M' is Motilal Roy with whom Sri Aurobindo stayed in Chandernagore. In his letters to Motilal Roy, Sri Aurobindo signed as 'Kali' or just 'K'. — Ed.

3. India being the centre, to work for her restoration to her proper place in the world; but this restoration must be effected as a part of the above work and by means of Yoga applied to human means & instruments, not otherwise.

4. A perfect humanity being intended society will have to be remodelled so as to be fit to contain that perfection.

You must remember that I have not given you the whole Yogic sadhana. What I have given you is only the beginning. You have to get rid of ahankara & desire & surrender yourself to God, in order that the rest may come. You speak of printing Yoga & its Objects. But remember that what I have sent you is only the first part which gives the path, not the objects or the circumstances. If you print it, print it as the first of a series, with the subtitle, the Path. I am now busy with an explanation of the Isha Upanishad in twelve chapters; I am at the eleventh now and will finish in a few days. Afterwards I shall begin the second part of the series & send it to you when finished.

I have also begun, but on a very small scale the second part of my work which will consist in making men for the new age by imparting whatever siddhi I get to those who are chosen. From this point of view our little colony here is a sort of seed plot & a laboratory. The things I work out in it, are then extended outside. Here the work is progressing at last on definite lines and with a certain steadiness, not very rapid; but still definite results are forming. I should be glad to have from you clearer knowledge of the results you speak of over there; for my drishti is not yet sufficiently free from obstruction for me to know all that I need to know at this stage. . . .

Kali

(CWSA 36:177-79)

Vedic studies

[August 1913]

. . . I need some extra money badly now for materials for the work I have now seriously entered on in connection with the Veda and the Sanscrit language. In that same connection will you please make a serious effort this time to get hold of Dutt's Bengali translation of the Rigveda & send it to me — or any translation for that matter which gives the European version.

Kali

(CWSA 36:188)

New Society

5 May [1914].

I shall write to you about what I propose to do about Vedantic Yoga & publication; as yet it has not been sufficiently formulated to write. At present we have only started a new society here called *L'Idée Nouvelle* (the New Idea) & are trying to get an authorisation.

K.

(CWSA 36: 207)

Another line of action

Afterwards, when the Mother came in 1914, it was with a few men chosen from out of this group that she laid the first foundation of her work here; they formed the Society called “L’Idée Nouvelle”. Already, in her Paris days, a similar group had been formed around her, a group that came to be known as the Cosmique, a record of whose proceedings has appeared in part in the Mother’s *Words of Long Ago* (*Paroles d’Autrefois*). Here, in Pondicherry, she started building up an intimate circle of initiates simultaneously with the publication of the *Arya*.

(Nolini Kanta Gupta, *Reminiscences*, pp. 56-57)*

“L’Idée Nouvelle”

In close connection with the intellectual work of synthesis undertaken by this Review a Society has been founded in French India under the name of the New Idea, (L’Idée Nouvelle). Its object is to group in a common intellectual life and fraternity of sentiment those who accept the spiritual tendency and idea it represents and who aspire to realise it in their own individual and social action.

The Society has already made a beginning by grouping together young men of different castes and religions in a common ideal. All sectarian and political questions are necessarily foreign to its idea and its activities. It is on a higher plane of thought superior to external differences of race, caste, creed and opinion and in the solidarity of the spirit that unity can be realised.

The Idée Nouvelle has two rules only for its members, first, to devote some time every day to meditation and self-culture, the second, to use or create daily at least one opportunity of being helpful to others. This is, naturally, only the minimum

* This passage as well as subsequent passages marked with an asterisk have been taken from the April 1989 issue of the journal *Sri Aurobindo — Archives and Research*. — Ed.

of initial self-training necessary for those who have yet to cast the whole trend of their thought and feeling into the mould of a higher life and to enlarge the egoistic into a collective consciousness.

The Society has its headquarters at Pondicherry with a reading-room and library. A section has been founded at Karikal and others are likely to be opened at Yanaon and Mahe.

(CWSA 13: 459)

II. THE BEGINNING

Parallelism of dates

It is said that the Arya began on the day the world war broke out or just before it. Has this not some significance? Was it not a kind of parallel movement?

The Arya was decided on the 1st June and it was agreed that it would start on the 15th August. The war intervened on the 4th. “Parallelism” of dates if you like, but it was not very close and certainly nothing came down at that time.

(CWSA 35: 28-29)

Proposal for a philosophical review

. . . I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the Yoga and came to Pondicherry — I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher! How I managed to do it? First, because Richard proposed to me to co-operate in a philosophical review — and as my theory was that a Yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything, I could not very well refuse; and then he had to go to the war and left me in the lurch with 64 pages a month of philosophy all to write by my lonely self. . . .

(Dilip Kumar Roy, *Sri Aurobindo Came to Me*, p. 49, & *On Himself* (1972) p. 374)*

“New Idea” to “Arya”

[June 1914]

Dear Saurin,¹

I have received your letter and I reply first to the one or two points in it which demand an answer. We have changed the name of the review from the New Idea to the Arya. We are bringing out a prospectus with specimens of the content which will have to be distributed so as to attract subscribers. It will probably be out in the middle of the month. Please let us know before then how many copies we should send to you to distribute. The address of the Review will be 7 Rue Dupleix & subscriptions should be sent to the Manager, Arya at that address. This is the house that has been found for M & Madame Richard; they have not occupied it yet but

1. This is a draft of a letter to Saurin Bose, brother of Sri Aurobindo’s wife Mrinalini; he was a member of Sri Aurobindo’s household in Pondicherry between 1911 and 1919. — Ed.

will do so within a week or so. It is Martin's house over on the other side of the street just near to the Governor's. It is also to be the headquarters of the Review & the Society, at least for the present.

Sukumar has not yet sent the garden-money but I presume he will do so before long. I have received Rs 400 of the Rs 600 due to me from another quarter & hope to get the remainder by August. With the garden money, this will mean Rs 1100, & with another Rs 100 & 130 for payment of the old rent, we could just go on for a year even without the Rs 1000 arrangement yearly or other money. But Rs 150 is the real minimum sum needed, especially if we keep this house after Nagen goes, as Richard wishes. If the Review succeeds, the problem will be solved; for with 500 subscribers abroad & 1500 in India, we could run the Review, pay the assistants & keep a sufficient sum for the two Editors.

As for your loans, my point was not about a legal process or any material trouble as the result of non-payment. It was that those who give the loan should not have any feeling of not being rightly dealt with, if we should fail to repay them, any feeling that advantage had been taken of their friendship. I have had too bad an experience of money-matters & their power to cool down friendly relations not to be on my guard in this respect. Therefore, I desire that there should be no ground left for future misunderstanding in any matter of the kind, & loans are the most fruitful of these things, much more than money asked or taken as a gift.

You will of course return before August, — as soon in fact as it is no longer necessary for you to stay in Bengal to get matters arranged there. I await your farther information with regard to the idea of Mrinalini coming here. At present it seems to me that that will depend very much on the success of the Review & a more settled condition in my means of life. We shall see, however, whether anything else develops.

(CWSA 36: 251-52)

Start of the *Arya*

Simply put a note in your book: 'Paul Richard, who met Sri Aurobindo for the first time in 1910 . . .' And you can mention that he was a theological writer or something of the sort to explain how he prompted Sri Aurobindo to write.

When he returned, he told me he would take me there [India] as soon as he could.

The *Arya* began in June 1914, and the first issue was scheduled to come out on August 15, Sri Aurobindo's birthday; and the war broke out before the first issue appeared — on August 3, I believe — a very interesting point. . . . the war broke out. But since everything was ready we went ahead and published it.

I wrote in my book that Paul Richard intended to bring out simultaneously in Paris a 'Review of the Great Synthesis.' Is this true?

No, it's not true! This was never intended, never! The *Arya* was bilingual, one part in French and one in English, but it was one and the same magazine published here in Pondicherry. There was never any question of publishing anything in France; this is incorrect, entirely false — a myth. Besides, it was I who translated the English into French, and rather poorly at that! . . .

The first issue began with *The Wherefore of the Worlds* (the English following the French), and in it Richard attributed the origin of the world to Desire. They were in perpetual disagreement on this subject, Richard saying, "It is Desire," and Sri Aurobindo, "The initial force of the Manifestation is Joy." Then Richard would say, "God *desired* to know Himself," and Sri Aurobindo, "No, God had the joy of knowing Himself." And it went on and on like that!

(From the Mother's conversation with a disciple on 5 November 1961)

The necessary arrangements

The Mother arrived. She would meet Sri Aurobindo in company with the rest of us at our afternoon sessions. She spoke very little. We were out most of the time, but also dropped in occasionally. When it was proposed to bring out the *Arya* she took charge of the necessary arrangements. She wrote out in her own hand the list of subscribers, maintained the accounts herself: perhaps those papers might be still available. And afterwards, it was she herself who helped M. Richard in his translation of the writings of Sri Aurobindo into French for the French edition of the *Arya*. The ground floor of Dupleix House was used as the stack room and the office was on the ground floor of the Guest House. The Mother was the chief executive in sole charge. Once every week all of us used to call at her residence accompanied by Sri Aurobindo and had our dinner together. On those occasions the Mother used to cook one or two dishes with her own hands.

(Nolini Kanta Gupta, *Reminiscences*, pp. 76-77)*

A new philosophical Review

[June 1914]

Dear M

I have received from Grindlays Rs 400. That leaves Rs 200 out of the Rs 1000, which I hope will be received by next August. We have also the clothes & shoes, — but for myself only the slippers are useful as the shoes are too large. I have written to Saurin about the garden money & he says he has asked Sukumar to send it. But

I have received nothing as yet. If I get this money and the remaining 200 from Das, that will be Rs 1100 in hand. With 100 more and 130 on account of the old rent, say Rs 250 altogether, we shall be provided for bare necessities for a year, during which other conditions may arise. That Rs 250 ought to come from Sham Babu and Sharma, but there is little hope of money once swallowed by a patriot being disgorged again. His philanthropic stomach digests sovereignly. I must seek it elsewhere. If this can be done, the only burden which will fall on you is to refurnish us with apparel and footwear from time to time. At the same time an attempt should be made to keep up the arrangement with Das, if possible; for we do not know whether our attempt to provide otherwise will succeed.

That attempt takes the form of a new philosophical Review with Richard and myself as Editors — the Arya, which is to be brought out in French & English, two separate editions, — one for France, one for India, England & America. In this Review my new theory of the Veda will appear as also a translation and explanation of the Upanishads, a series of essays giving my system of Yoga & a book of Vedantic philosophy (not Shankara's but Vedic Vedanta) giving the Upanishadic foundations of my theory of the ideal life towards which humanity must move. You will see so far as my share is concerned, it will be the intellectual side of my work for the world. The Review will be of 64 pages to start with and the subscription Rs 6 annually. Of the French edition 600 copies will be issued, and it will cost about Rs 750 a year minus postage. Richard reckoned 200 subscribers in France at the start, ie Rs 1200 in the year. For the English edition we are thinking of an issue of 1000 copies, at a cost of about Rs 1200 annually. We shall need therefore at least 200 subscribers to meet this expense & some more so that the English edition may pay all its own expenses. Let us try 250 subscribers to start with, with the ideal of having 800 to 1000 in the first year. If these subscribers can be got before the Review starts, we shall have a sound financial foundation to start with. The question is, can they be got. We are printing a prospectus with specimens of the writings from my translation & commentary on a Vedic hymn, and an extract from Richard's collections of the central sayings of great sages of all times called the Eternal Wisdom to show the nature of the Review. This is supposed to come out in the middle of this month, & the Review on the 15th August, so there will be nearly two months for collecting subscribers. How far can you help us in this work? There is always one thing about which great care has to be taken, that is, there should be no entanglement of this Review in Indian politics or a false association created by the police finding it in the house of some political suspects they search for; in that case people will be afraid to subscribe. My idea is that young men should be got as agents who would canvas for the Review all over Bengal, but there so many young men are now political suspects that it may not be easy to find any who will be free & active & yet above suspicion. In that case some other method must be tried. I should like to know from you *as soon as possible* how far you can help us & how many copies of

the prospectus we should send to you. If the review succeeds, if, that is to say, we get in India 850 regular subscribers, and 250 in France etc. we shall be able to meet the expenses of the establishment, translation-staff etc. and yet have enough for each of the editors to live on with their various kinds of families, say Rs 100 a month for each. In that case the money-question will practically be solved. There will of course be other expenses besides mere living & there may be from time to time exceptional expenses, such as publication of books etc., but these may be met otherwise or as the Review increases its subscribers. Therefore use your best endeavours towards this end.

(CWSA 36: 208-210)

Announcement in the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, 1st July 1914

Arya.

It is perhaps known to everybody that a new philosophical monthly, the *Arya*, will be published from Pondicherry from the 15th of August under the editorship of Srijut Arabindo Ghosh and Paul and Mrs. Richard. The writing will be the outcome of five years of study and meditation of Srijut Ghosh in Pondicherry.

The Secretary of the *Arya* has sent to me some copies of prospectus of the Review. Those interested in the studies of Hindu theism and philosophy may have the specimen copy from the following address on application.

MOTILAL ROY,
Boraichanditala, Chandernagore.

Paul Richard was the unsuccessful Socialist candidate at the recent elections to the Chamber of Deputies. Moti Lal Roy is a well-known Chandernagore suspect who has paid at least one visit to Pondicherry.

(National Archives of India)*

The Prospectus of the French edition of *Arya*

“ARYA”
NOTRE PROGRAMME.

La Revue “ARYA” est purement philosophique.

Elle a pour but l'étude des plus hauts problèmes, et la formation d'une vaste synthèse de connaissance, harmonisant entre elles les diverses traditions religieuses,

orientales et occidentales, de l'humanité.

La méthode est celle d'un réalisme à la fois rationnel et transcendantal consistant à unir aux disciplines intellectuelles et scientifiques celles de l'expérimentation intuitive.

La Revue sert d'organe aux divers groupements nés de sa pensée.

PLAN DE LA REVUE.

La Revue se divisera en quatre parties comprenant:

1° des études synthétiques de philosophie spéculative.

2° des traductions et des commentaires de textes anciens.

3° des études de religions comparées.

4° des méthodes pratiques de culture intérieure et de développement individuel.

5° Une cinquième partie sera consacrée au mouvement des idées ainsi qu'aux nouvelles des groupements se rattachant à la Revue.

1^e Partie.

Pendant l'année 1914-15, la Revue publiera: —

1°/ sous le titre général: "Le Pourquoi des Mondes", une série d'études relatives aux grands problèmes de l'être, de ses origines et de ses principes premiers.

2°/ un exposé de la pensée védantique d'après l'Ishopanishad.

2^e Partie.

Dans cette partie la Revue publiera: —

1°/ une traduction annotée des Upanishads.

2°/ une présentation nouvelle des textes védiques fondée sur l'étude philologique des formes évoluées de l'ancien sanscrit et sur la restitution du sens originel des symboles.

Nous donnerons aujourd'hui même une idée de la haute valeur de ces travaux, poursuivis au cours de cinq années de méditation solitaire par Sri Aurobindo Ghose, en publiant le fragment suivant de son étude sur les Védas.

[Suivait ici Le Secret du Véda, "Le colloque entre Indra et Agastya" (paru dans le premier numéro de l'Arya).]

3^e Partie.

Notre étude des religions comparées sera précédée de la publication d'un travail de coordination synthétique de textes empruntés aux plus grands sages de l'humanité.

Sous le titre de "*Paroles Éternelles*", ces textes seront groupés de façon à former un ensemble homogène de discours suivis développant les grandes lignes d'un plan d'enseignement unanime des religions.

Ce plan peut être ainsi résumé:

Introduction: Sagesse et Religions.

Livre 1^{er}: Le Dieu de tous, le Dieu qui est en tous.

Livre 2^e: La découverte en soi du Dieu qui est en tous.

a.- La conquête de la Vérité. — b.- La pratique de la Vérité.

Livre 3^e: La réalisation en chacun du Dieu qui est en tous.

Livre 4^e: L'union de tous par l'unité du divin en tous.

Conclusion: Les perspectives suprêmes de l'espoir humain.

Nous donnerons ici une idée de la façon dont est conçu ce travail en publiant le fragment suivant où se formule d'ailleurs admirablement l'esprit même de la Revue.

[À la page suivante étaient publiés des extraits de "*Les Paroles Éternelles*", Livre 2^e, 1^{re} Partie, chapitre V, "*Esprit de Synthèse*".]

4^e Partie.

La Revue commencera, dès son premier numéro, l'exposé pratique d'une méthode nouvelle de développement intérieur fondée sur une expérimentation personnelle et coordonnant les résultats acquis des méthodes anciennes.

5^e Partie.

La Revue accueillera dans cette partie les nouvelles relatives au mouvement d'idées dont elle est le centre. Elle répondra aux questions et demandes d'éclaircissements présentant un intérêt philosophique pour ses lecteurs.

(*Archives and Research journal*)

The Prospectus of the Arya (English Translation)

[Please note that except where indicated the English translation is by the editors of Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research. As far as it is known, no copy of the English prospectus of Arya has survived.]

“ARYA”

OUR PROGRAMME.

The “ARYA” is a review of pure philosophy.

The object which it has set before itself is twofold: —

- 1. A systematic study of the highest problems of existence;*
- 2. The formation of a Synthesis of knowledge, harmonising the diverse religious traditions of humanity occidental as well as oriental. Its method will be that of a realism, at once rational and transcendental, — a realism consisting in the unification of intellectual and scientific discipline with those of intuitive experimentation.*

The Review will also serve as an organ for the various groups and societies founded on its inspiration.¹

PLAN OF THE REVIEW.

The Review will be divided into four parts, consisting of:

- 1. Synthetic studies in speculative Philosophy.**
 - 2. Translations and commentaries of ancient texts.**
 - 3. Studies in Comparative Religion.**
 - 4. Practical methods of inner culture and self development.²**
 - 5. A fifth part will be devoted to the intellectual movement and the news of the groups attached to the Review.**
-

First Part.

During the year 1914-15, the Review will publish:

1. Under the general title “The Wherefore of the Worlds”, a series of studies relating to the great problems of being, its origins and its first principles.
 2. An exposition of Vedantic thought in accordance with the Ishopanishad.
-

Second Part.

In this part the Review will publish:

1. An annotated translation of the Upanishads.
2. A new interpretation of the texts of the Veda based on a philological study of the forms evolved from the ancient Sanskrit and on a restitution of the original sense of the symbols.

We will give here an idea of the high value of these works, carried out during five years of solitary meditation by Sri Aurobindo Ghose, by publishing the following

- 1. This section (in italics) has been taken from the inside front cover of the English edition of Arya.*
- 2. The translation of these four parts is taken from the inside front cover of the English edition of Arya.*

fragment of his study of the Veda.

[Here was printed “*The Colloquy of Indra and Agastya*”, published in the first issue of Arya and later reproduced in *The Secret of the Veda*.]

Third Part.

Our study of comparative religion will be preceded by the publication of a synthetical work bringing together texts drawn from the greatest thinkers of humanity. These texts will be published under the title *The Eternal Wisdom*. They will be grouped in such a way as to form a homogeneous whole made up of the following categories, which develop the main lines of the unanimous teachings of the religions.

This plan may be summarized as follows:

Introduction. Wisdom and the Religions.

First Book. The God of All, the God who is in All.

Second Book. The discovery in oneself of the God who is in All.

a) The conquest of Truth

b) The practice of Truth.

Third Book. The realisation in each of the God which is in All.

Fourth Book. The Union of All by the Unity of the Divine in All.¹

Conclusion. The supreme perspectives of man’s aspiration.

We will give here an idea of the way in which this work has been conceived by publishing the following fragment, which moreover puts forward admirably the spirit of this Review.

[On the next page appeared “*The Spirit of Synthesis*”, *Book II, Part I, Chapter V of The Eternal Wisdom*. Later published in *Arya*, vol. I, pp. 502-3.]

Fourth Part.

Starting with the first number, the Review will begin a practical exposition of a new method of inner development, based on a personal experimentation, and coordinating results gained through ancient methods.

Fifth Part.

The Review will welcome in this part communications related to the intellectual movement of which it is the centre. Questions and requests for clarification which

1. *The translation of the contents of these four books follows the printed edition of The Eternal Wisdom (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1921).*

are of philosophical interest to our readers will be answered.

(*Archives and Research journal*)

Business matters

(Undated letter of July 1914)

I write today only about two business matters. As to the Review, I do not think we can dispense with the 200 subscribers whom you promise. The only difficulty is that, if there are political suspects among them, it will give the police a handle for connecting politics and the Review and thus frightening the public. But this is not a sufficient reason for the Review refusing so many subscribers or for so large a number being deprived of the enlightenment it may bring them. Therefore, some arrangement should be made. I should suggest that you should make those subscribers who are mainly interested in Yoga, and as for those who decline to give up political opinions of a vehement nature or to conceal them so as not to fall into police snares, they may without becoming subscribers on our list receive the Review from trustworthy agents appointed by you as our representatives. The agent must let us or you know the number of copies wanted, send in the money and receive the Review from us or you in a packet as a declared agent commissioned to sell a certain number of copies, receiving (nominally) a discount on each copy sold. I suggest this arrangement but if another would be more convenient, please let us know. You must organise the subscription matter before starting for your pilgrimage so that we may have a fair start in August. I shall write a longer letter to you about Yoga and other matters as soon as I have a little time.

(*Archives and Research journal*)

Another business letter

Again a business letter. Enclosed you will find two samples of paper, taken from a sample book of the Titaghur Mills which we want made to order, of a certain size, for our Review. Will you please see *at once* the agent in Calcutta, whose address is given, and ask him for all the particulars, the price, whether the paper of that sample, of the size required, is available or can be made to order by them, in what minimum amount, within what time etc. and let the Manager know immediately by the British post.

What about the commercial transaction and my last letter? The Psalmist's¹ brother is asking for reply.

K.

1. "The Psalmist". . . may be Parthasarathi Iyengar — Ed.

P.S. Received your letter. Please let us know how many copies of the *Arya* you want sent to you for sale, since you cannot get subscribers. I shall write later. The divorce from Tantrism is necessary if you are to do the work of the Review or the other work I wish you to undertake. You must surely see that. Neither will work if there are any occurrences of the old kind mixing them up together.

[Note added to the letter by one of the young men living in Sri Aurobindo's house]

If it is possible please make some subscribers. Subscribers' book is nearly as blank as it was at the time of our purchasing it.

Yours,

[illegible signature]

(Archives and Research journal)

From the diary notes

March 29

The afternoon & evening taken up by R's [Richard's] visit, Bh's [Bharati's] & translation of Rigveda II. 23 & 24.

Today with the Veda, the literary work of the Dharma has definitely begun; Veda II. 23, 24, 25, 26 — completed today.

March 30

Veda [II.] 27.

April 6

Today there was sahitya (Veda II. 28);

April 15

Since the morning Sahitya has again revived and the "Life Divine", long suspended owing to the confused & overcrowded action of the mental Sruti, has been resumed with a greater clearness & regular proportion in its argument.

May 9

Veda. VIII

May 10

Veda VIII

May 11

The chief work done was in the karma, ie translation of Veda VIII,

May 12

Veda continues (3 hymns in the day)

May 14

Veda IX. 1 – 5, 11 to 53, were read & annotated in less than 3 hours (the first five taking one hour) without any more than a slight eventual fatigue of the bodily parts, but no failure of the rapid & luminous faculty in the brain.

May 15

Veda. Veda [IX.] 54 to 60 completed on the 14th. Today 61 – 75. (long hymns)

May 16

Veda IX. 76 – 114 minus 86. 96. 97. 107 – 110.

May 17

Veda IX. 86. 96. 97. 107 – 110. The ninth book completed in 4 days;

May 18

Seventh book of Veda commenced. 41 – 45 translated with notes. X. 1 – 4. read. Introduction to Veda commenced yesterday continued. Introduction to Life Divine commenced.

May 19

Veda X. 5 to 15 read.

Veda VII. 46 – 49 translated.

May 22

Isha Upanishad translated with notes.

Veda VIII. 101. translated with notes.

May 23

Veda I. 90 — translated with notes; settling several doubtful points, owing to the brilliance of the illuminations acting on the external proof. Kena Upanishad I Kh[anda] translated with notes.

Also Ved I. 91. others prepared.

May 24

Veda I. 92.

May 25

The Idea of the Veda begun as an introduction to translations.

May 26

Veda I. 170 translated with commentary for the review.

Veda III. 37. . 40 rendered with notes.

May 27

Veda III. 41 – 50. Translation & Commentary on I. 1 commenced

May 28

Veda I. 1. Commentary begun. III. 51.

May 30

Continuance of the work on the Veda (The Secret of the Veda).

May 31

Isha Up. translation & notes recast finally.

June 1

The idea came to ask Mme. R. [Richard] how soon they would go into the new house, but the question was asked only in the mind; in 15 or 20 seconds she answered, "In one or two days perhaps we shall go into the house."

June 17

Commencement of the Tablet of Vedanta.

The Affirmations remain. They are resisted in their conscious & perfect application. They have yet to be finally disengaged from that resistance.

=

The first chapter of the Secret of Veda completed. The power of swift writing & the joy & force of inspiration have been entirely recovered; but cannot be used with sufficient continuity as yet, because of the obstructive *tamas* in the physical consciousness. The shadow of *Vritra* still remains on the *Adri*.

—

Intimations —

1. The first chapter of the Life Divine & of the Synthesis of Yoga will be immediately begun & rapidly completed.
2. The physical *siddhi* will be extended into *utthapana*.
3. The literary activity having been organised, the activity of Dharma will be organised as the second outward fulfilment.

Jun 18

Study has to be arranged with the same force & order that is almost accomplished in the writing. It has to be confined at present to Veda and philology. In both perfection & not rapidity must be the first consideration, but rapidity will come hand in hand with perfection.

=

Study of Veda.

June 19

Study of Veda is beginning to take its proper form.

—

The Synthesis of Yoga commenced.

June 20

Synthesis of Yoga takes its final form; the first Book of the Life Divine begun (the Vedantic Affirmations).

June 21

Annotated translation of *Isha Up.* corrected and copied.

June 22

Karma. Life Divine. Secret of Veda (improved & copied)

June 23

Reference to Veda for indicative *Vak*.

Work to be done.

A Society to be formed like the Theosophical Society which will support & popularise the Knowledge & the writings which express it.

This is to be done by two means, the Will & Vyapti spreading the impulse to know & calling silently its supporters & the growth & manifestation of the Yogic powers attracting inquirers & convincing doubters.

Karma

Recopying & correction of Secret of Veda Chapter I completed.

June 25

Karma.

The first chapter of the Life Divine completed with great illumination in the thought & rapidity in its expression.

Idea of a publication "The Divine Victory" or the "Conquest of Immortality" ie the Hymns of Vamadeva translated into English in their psychological sense; suggested by the rendering of verses to be prefixed to the first Chapter of the Life Divine.

Karma

The first instalment of Yogic Synthesis recommenced & rapidly completed. What was written before, is reserved for the second instalment.

June 26

Karma.

Translation of IV. 13. R.V. also 15 & 25

June 27

Karma

Life Divine — Chapter I recopied & corrected.

June 30 —

Karma.

Final draft of Synthesis of Yoga begun.

Veda IV. 1 completed & IV. 2. partly translated.

July 12

The Sahitya has been resumed; it will be pursued now steadily by the ordering of the activities & the denial of the physical tamas; from tomorrow.

July 13

Karma —

Sahitya resumed.

July 14

Karma —

Veda — I. 4 two translations & Commentary.

Notes for Review.

Veda VIII. Some hymns studied.

- July 15
Karma —
Secret of the Veda. Veda VIII. Translation of Veda copied. Half translation of X. 129.
- July 16
Karma
Secret of Veda
- July 17
Karma
The Secret of Veda, Commentary, copied and corrected.
- July 18
Karma
Analysis of Upanishad begun.
- July 22
Karma
The Synthesis of Yoga.
- July 23
Karma
The struggle between physical unwillingness (*nir-utthapana*) & the faculty of constant luminous work & activity is being resumed in the *Sahitya*.
Synthesis of Yoga.
- July 24
Karma
Synthesis of Yoga — 2^d chapter finished. Rewriting of Secret of Veda begun
- July 25
Karma
Life Divine. II commenced.
- July 26
Karma
Life Divine II
- July 27
Karma
Life Divine II — Veda. Nirukta & Hymns to the Ribhus, the latter commenced today, the former yesterday.
- July 28
Karma
Life Divine II
- July 29
Karma
Life Divine completed (II)
Analysis of I.U. [*Isha Upanishad*] — half finished.
Secret of Veda commenced (final copy) —

July 30

Karma

Analysis of I.U (for Sept) completed —
Life Divine corrected.

August 1

The Karma of Sahitya is being maintained, but too much in one groove. As soon as the October work is finished, a freer movement must be allowed, including Veda (Vamadeva), Poetry, Philology and a prose volume on Yoga. Essays on the Gita will also be begun.

August 2

Instructions

Regularise the work of the Review, Sahitya and study of the Veda & philology
Kriti Veda VI. 29 . . 38. (previously 39 . . 4) — Secret of Veda II finished.

August 3

Karma

Veda VI 19 . . 21

August 4

Script.

The Sahitya is being steadily pursued but has not yet gathered sufficient force & rapidity.

Karma — Veda VI. 22 . . 26.

August 5

For the kriti all preconceived notions must be renounced; only the Sahitya is sure in its details.

Vedanta

1. The Life Divine (I.U [Isha Upanishad])
2. The Mind & its Master. (K.U [Kena Upanishad])
3. The Kingdom of Heaven. (T.U [Taittiriya Upanishad])
4. Heredity & Evolution. (A.U [Aitareya Upanishad])
5. The Realm of the Idea. (Vijnana)
6. The Play of God (Ananda)
7. The Triple Stair. (M.U [Mandukya Upanishad]).

These seven & two more

8. The Twelve Upanishads.
9. Vedanta & its Children.

In Veda —

1. The Secret of the Veda.
2. The Vedic Path of Truth.
3. The Gods of the Veda.
4. The Psychology of the Veda.
5. Vedic Terminology

6. The Origins of Aryan Speech.

7. The Rigveda (translated)

=

8. Vedic Legends.

9 The Aryan Religions.

In Poetry.

1. The Trilogy

2. Ilion

3. The Descent of Ahana & other Poems.

This is the programme, a vast one but realisable, like that of the Yoga.

Karma

Veda VI 27 – 28. 9 – 18. Translation X. 129.

August 6

Karma

Veda VI. 2 – 3. Work for the Review.

August 7

Karma

Translation of Paroles Eternelles — L'Impensable Divin. Le Devenir Divin.

Dieu en Tout.. Translation of Le Pourquoi des Mondes Chapter II commenced.

Veda Select Hymns 3 commenced.

August 8

Script

Today, Translation & Vedic Hymn.

The Karma of Sahitya must now be entirely regularised. Here also the rapid concentrated method will be used.

Karma.

Veda [I.] 165 – 6 — with Notes

Le Pourquoi des Mondes

August 9

Karma

Ved [I.] 166 – 167 Notes.

Chapter II. L. P des M. [Le Pourquoi des Mondes] completed.

also L'Essence Unique & Au Commencement in E.P. [Les Paroles Eternelles]

August 10

Karma.

Philology. An family (also an)

Veda [I.] 168 Notes (elaborate)

VI. 1. 3 – 9.

Script

The scholastic is now begun in earnest, with order & the working of the intuitive perception & the intuitive reason. Nothing, except physical interference,

can now oppose its steady completion.

It is also working rapidly.

The poetical faculty remains to be remanifested. That will be done afterwards, though not too long afterwards.

August 11

Karma — Veda VI. 50 . . 59

August 12

Karma — Veda V. 61.

VI 60 – 61.

August 13

Karma — V 1 notes . . 2 – 3. 5 – 6 read

VI. 62.

Selected Hymns. III

August 14

Karma Ved — V. 4 . . 7. 30. 46 . . 63.

August 15

Script.

Life has been preparing all this time. Today it begins with the publication of the Review and the continued stream of subscribers.

Karma — Veda V. 64 – 72.

(CWSA, 10: 422-600)

The Arya and Yogic Sadhan

As directed by Sri Aurobindo in 1910, the Mother reached Pondy on March 29, 1914. A few days after her arrival, Bejoykanta introduced me to her. How did he do it? He introduced me as one of the students of the Calvé College and as one keen on practising Yoga.

The Mother lived in the house No. 3 facing the North, in Duplex Street. She had so much work to attend to that she met people only at an appointed time. Steps were taken even then to start the monthly review *Arya* both in English and in French.

Students from our school, in small groups, would come at their leisure hours to see the Mother. We did not know then who the Mother was.

At that time the book *Yogic Sadhan* could be seen in the hands of many of those persons who frequented Sri Aurobindo's house. This book Bejoykanta taught me. I did not consider him a teacher. The terms Guru, Acharya, teacher, instructor, preceptor were not current amongst us those days. All that we had been taught was social etiquette and hospitality, no one had given us any idea of modesty or humility or devotion.

Amidst all these superficialities I approached the Mother with the help of Bejoykanta. My dumb heart at once came to feel the magic power of the Mother. Over my

poor heart lay loads of dirt. If one load dropped down, another would roll in to occupy the empty space.

In my first approaches to the Mother I thought her to be one like others. My mind's way led me in one direction, my heart's voiceless feeling led in another. I had not learnt at that time either to listen attentively to the still voice of the heart, or forgetting all outer hankerings, to feel the inner urge. The *tapasyā* perhaps that I had failed to do in my previous births I began doing now in this short span of life.

Had someone seen the Mother and myself seated on chairs, facing each other, almost as equals, with the book *Yogic Sadhan* in hand, he would have been in a fix to know who was teaching whom. In truth, however, I approached the Mother in the spirit of a seeker of knowledge.

(K. Amrita, "Old Long Since", *Reminiscences* by Nolini Kanta Gupta, pp. 179-80)*

Reading the first copy

One day at the beginning of September I took up a copy of the first issue of the *Arya* from the table on the long verandah upstairs in Sri Aurobindo's house and started reading the first article of the series, "The Life Divine", written by Sri Aurobindo, just loudly enough for myself to hear. I read it over and over again. Great thoughts clothed in great words — I could not at all comprehend! However, it was sweet to read and re-read it. It was as if someone else in me was comprehending all that was read!

As I was reading, Sri Aurobindo came, stood in front of the table and kept listening to my reading. When I put down the copy of the *Arya* and lifted my head I saw Sri Aurobindo standing there. I told him that the reading was delightful but nothing could be grasped.

Sri Aurobindo heard all that I said and replied, "It is not necessary to understand it all at once. Go on reading. If you find a joy in reading, you need not stop it."

(*Ibid.* 182-83)*

A brief note by a contemporary

Just at that time Paul Richard came back to Pondicherry and started the publication of the monthly "Arya" which Sri Aurobindo edited and through which he expounded his new Yoga based on his interpretation of the Védas. He published in it his translation of the Íśavasya Upanishad and his translations of portions from the Rg Vēda. Richard brought out in it his "Wherefore of the Worlds" as a continuous series. Bharati also contributed to it his English translation of some verses from Sri Andal's Tiruppāvai. It has thus a good start and continued for more than half a dozen years.

(Srinivasachari MS.)*

The situation during the war

In paragraph 13 of my report dated 2nd June 1914 I referred to the association of a mysterious individual named Stair Sidhar with Arabindo Ghosh. In April Stair Sidhar left Pondicherry for Bengal where he associated with well-known agitators like Shyam Sundar Chakravarti and Liyaqat Husain. On 21st October he was deported as an undesirable alien. He arrived at Port Said on 9th November and proceeded to Cairo but was again deported to Malta on 27th November, along with other subjects of the enemy, as being a Palestine Jew.¹

In his possession were found several letters addressed to persons in Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Calcutta and Paris. I quote the following passage² from one of these which bore the address: —

‘Monsieur Sreenivasacharyar,
Ex-directeur du journal,
‘India Office’,
Rue Dupleix,
Pondicherry.’

“J’ai le regret de vous faire connaître que, par ordre du gouverneur du Bengal je suis deporté à Port Said, Egypt. Les derniers temps de mon sejour à Calcutta, je travaillais trop ouvertement avec le mouvement swadesi, etc. Je faisais trop de propaganda pour *Arya*, ce qui evidemment troublait les C.I.D., tant effarés par Aurabindo Ghose, qu’ils voient de tous côtés à la fois, même à Berlin! Ils m’ont pris pour son ombre en Calcutta. D’autre part je demeurais avec un des grands swadeshi leaders of Calcutta Sham Sundar Chakravarty qui fut envoyé en deportation, lors du *Vande Mataram* case. La majorité du public en Calcutta est pour l’Allemagne, pensant qu’elle sera disposée à aider l’Inde dans son oeuvre de liberation. Vous savez combien la situation politique est chaude maintenant dans le Bengal et le Punjab, surtout depuis l’affaire du *Komagata Maru*.³ Pour toutes ces raisons le gouvernement a cru bon de se debarrasser de moi en m’envoyant en Egypt. Mais ils se trompent, je crois. Quelque part où je sois, je travaillerais pour l’Inde ma Patrie spirituelle, pour sa liberation, pour sa gloire, suivant la voie tracée par nos chers Maîtres: Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Tilak.”

(National Archives of India)*

1. As a native of Palestine, Sidhar was a subject of the Sultan of Turkey, and therefore was considered an enemy alien.
2. This letter is reproduced as printed in the Government of India report. The French has not been corrected.
3. The *Komagata Maru* was a Japanese ship chartered in early 1914 to transport Punjabis living in the Far East to Vancouver. Most of the passengers were refused admission to Canada, and the ship sailed to Calcutta. . . . On 29 September the ship reached Bengal. Refusing to enter the train provided to take them to Punjab, the passengers marched in a body to Calcutta. A riot ensued and many lives were lost.

English translation of the letter

“I regret to inform you that by the order of the Governor of Bengal I have been deported to Port Said, Egypt. During my recent stay in Calcutta I worked rather openly with the swadeshi movement. I did much propaganda for the Arya which evidently disturbed the CID, so alarmed by Aurobindo Ghose that they see on all sides, even in Berlin! They took me for his shade in Calcutta. Moreover, I stayed with one of the great swadeshi leaders of Calcutta, Shyam Sundar Chakravarty who was exiled in the Vande Mataram case. Most of the public in Calcutta is for Germany, thinking that she would be inclined to help India in her struggle for liberation. You know how tense is the political situation now in Bengal and Punjab, especially after the Komagata Maru business. For all these reasons the Government has thought it right to get rid of me by sending me to Egypt. But they are mistaken, I believe. Wherever I may be, I will work for India, my spiritual motherland, for her liberation, for her glory, following the path chalked out by our Masters: Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Tilak.”

From a report of the Madras police

“The French Government have published in Pondicherry and Karaikal a *communique* explaining in detail the cause of the rupture with Turkey. Muhammadan feeling in both places is satisfactory. They have also begun a rigorous campaign against the importation of the seditious literature both through the post and otherwise and in this connection have searched the house of the notorious V.V. Subrahmanya Ayyar in Pondicherry. They have at last realised the harm which is being done by the extremist party in Pondicherry and have warned V.V. Subrahmanya Ayyar that any mischievous behaviour on his part will be met by deportation to Saigon. They have also warned Paul Richard that his intimacy with the extremists must cease, or his removal from Pondicherry will be considered. All the extremists are now under strict surveillance by the French Police as well as by our mufti parties in Pondicherry and Karaikal, and the result of all this action has been that they are in a very dispirited condition. Two of the principal men, C. Subrahmanya Bharati and S. Srinivasa Chari have made overtures to a Deputy Superintendent, Criminal Investigation Department, in charge of the Pondicherry party, who has twice interviewed them under instructions from the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, and reported their conversation. They wished to petition Government to return to British India and desired his assistance. He was directed to give them a non-committal answer, as (their present attitude being entirely due to the fact that they are afraid of action by the French Government and are also becoming very hard up for money), their real ideas and purposes remain unchanged. The relations between the French and the British Police in Pondicherry and Karaikal are now very

cordial and the situation in Pondicherry has not been under control to the extent it now is since the extremists took up their residence there four or five years ago.”

August 1914

(National Archives of India)*

Having to leave Pondicherry

Report of 2 February 1915

The authorities at Pondicherry recently ordered the deportation of Paul Richard, a French socialist who has been on terms of intimacy with Arabindo Ghose and other agitators, and thereby caused these people some alarm; but Richard has appealed to Paris against the order and it has been held in abeyance pending decision of the appeal.

Report of 2 March 1915

The French authorities in Pondicherry and Karaikal are working harmoniously with the British police, and it is reported that the refugees in the former place are discussing the desirability of emigrating to Algiers, for the sake of the protection which M. Paul Richard professes to be able to extend to them. M. Richard left for France on the 22nd February, however, before any arrangements could be made.

(Tamil Nadu State Archives)*

Seditious conspiracy in India.

[February 1915]

Pondicherry affairs. — Paul Richard, to whose association with Arabindo Ghose I have referred in previous reports, has been ordered by the French Government to leave Pondicherry and return to France to serve as a reservist. The real reason of the order is that he has made himself obnoxious to the Governor by his association with political refugees and his anti-British intrigues.

Paul Richard, accompanied by his wife, arrived in Pondicherry from Paris in March last. They held a written commission from Abdul Baha to preach Bahaimism, but have shown little or no zeal in this matter. They are also reported to have brought letters of introduction from Shyamaji Krishna Varma to Arabindo Ghose and V.V.S. Aiyar. Paul Richard's main object in coming to Pondicherry was to stand for election as Deputy. He enlisted all the extremists on his side and canvassed [in] Pondicherry

and Karaikal vigorously with their assistance. His election speeches were socialistic and violently anti-British; but he gained very little support, getting only some 300 votes out of total of 50,000 at the elections in May last. He tried to get the elections upset by bringing charges of corruption against the Governor. During his stay in Pondicherry he has been in daily association with members of the extremist party, in particular with Arabindo Ghose, with whom he collaborated in the production of the *Arya*. He put forward schemes for starting societies among young Hindus, but nothing even [*sic*] came of these projects, although the formation of a society called *L'Idée Nouvelle* was actually sanctioned by the French Government in June 1914. He has several times attempted to induce the French Government to have the British police party turned out of Pondicherry. In the end of October Paul Richard called on the British Consul in Pondicherry and assured him that he was an admirer of the British Government and that Arabindo Ghose wished to disassociate himself entirely from politics and was in the habit of exhorting other refugees to refrain from seditious activity. The object of this visit was to ascertain whether Bijoy Kumar Nag, who was acquitted in the Manicktolla case chiefly on account of his youth, would be allowed to go out of Pondicherry as an agent for the *Arya*. No permission was given, and Bijoy on entering British territory has been interned by the Madras Government.

(National Archives of India)*

III. FROM THE ARYA

“Arya”— Its Significance¹

What is the significance of the name, “Arya”?

The question has been put from more than one point of view. To most European readers the name figuring on our cover is likely to be a hieroglyph which attracts or repels according to the temperament. Indians know the word, but it has lost for them the significance which it bore to their forefathers. Western Philology has converted it into a racial term, an unknown ethnological quantity on which different speculations fix different values. Now, even among the philologists, some are beginning to recognise that the word in its original use expressed not a difference of race, but a difference of culture. For in the Veda the Aryan peoples are those who had accepted a particular type of self-culture, of inward and outward practice, of ideality, of aspiration. The Aryan gods were the supraphysical powers who assisted the mortal in his struggle towards the nature of the godhead. All the highest aspirations of the early human race, its noblest religious temper, its most idealistic velleities of thought are summed up in this single vocable.

In later times, the word Arya expressed a particular ethical and social ideal, an ideal of well-governed life, candour, courtesy, nobility, straight dealing, courage, gentleness, purity, humanity, compassion, protection of the weak, liberality, observance of social duty, eagerness for knowledge, respect for the wise and learned, the social accomplishments. It was the combined ideal of the Brahmana and the Kshatriya. Everything that departed from this ideal, everything that tended towards the ignoble, mean, obscure, rude, cruel or false, was termed un-Aryan. There is no word in human speech that has a nobler history.

In the early days of comparative Philology, when the scholars sought in the history of words for the prehistoric history of peoples, it was supposed that the word Arya came from the root *ar*, to plough, and that the Vedic Aryans were so called when they separated from their kin in the north-west who despised the pursuits of agriculture and remained shepherds and hunters. This ingenious speculation has little or nothing to support it. But in a sense we may accept the derivation. Whoever cultivates the field that the Supreme Spirit has made for him, his earth of plenty within and without, does not leave it barren or allow it to run to seed, but labours to exact from it its full yield, is by that effort an Aryan.

If Arya were a purely racial term, a more probable derivation would be *ar*,

1. Published in the *Arya* in September 1914.

meaning strength or valour, from *ar*, to fight, whence we have the name of the Greek war-god Ares, *areios*, brave or warlike, perhaps even *aretē*, virtue, signifying, like the Latin *virtus*, first, physical strength and courage and then moral force and elevation. This sense of the word also we may accept. "We fight to win sublime Wisdom, therefore men call us warriors." For Wisdom implies the choice as well as the knowledge of that which is best, noblest, most luminous, most divine. Certainly, it means also the knowledge of all things and charity and reverence for all things, even the most apparently mean, ugly or dark, for the sake of the universal Deity who chooses to dwell equally in all. But, also, the law of right action is a choice, the preference of that which expresses the godhead to that which conceals it. And the choice entails a battle, a struggle. It is not easily made, it is not easily enforced.

Whoever makes that choice, whoever seeks to climb from level to level up the hill of the divine, fearing nothing, deterred by no retardation or defeat, shrinking from no vastness because it is too vast for his intelligence, no height because it is too high for his spirit, no greatness because it is too great for his force and courage, he is the Aryan, the divine fighter and victor, the noble man, *aristos*, best, the *śreṣṭha* of the Gita.

Intrinsically, in its most fundamental sense, Arya means an effort or an uprising and overcoming. The Aryan is he who strives and overcomes all outside him and within him that stands opposed to the human advance. Self-conquest is the first law of his nature. He overcomes earth and the body and does not consent like ordinary men to their dullness, inertia, dead routine and tamasic limitations. He overcomes life and its energies and refuses to be dominated by their hungers and cravings or enslaved by their rajasic passions. He overcomes the mind and its habits, he does not live in a shell of ignorance, inherited prejudices, customary ideas, pleasant opinions, but knows how to seek and choose, to be large and flexible in intelligence even as he is firm and strong in his will. For in everything he seeks truth, in everything right, in everything height and freedom.

Self-perfection is the aim of his self-conquest. Therefore what he conquers he does not destroy, but ennobles and fulfils. He knows that the body, life and mind are given him in order to attain to something higher than they; therefore they must be transcended and overcome, their limitations denied, the absorption of their gratifications rejected. But he knows also that the Highest is something which is no nullity in the world, but increasingly expresses itself here, — a divine Will, Consciousness, Love, Beatitude which pours itself out, when found, through the terms of the lower life on the finder and on all in his environment that is capable of receiving it. Of that he is the servant, lover and seeker. When it is attained, he pours it forth in work, love, joy and knowledge upon mankind. For always the Aryan is a worker and warrior. He spares himself no labour of mind or body whether to seek the Highest or to serve it. He avoids no difficulty, he accepts no cessation from fatigue. Always he fights for the coming of that kingdom within himself and in the world.

The Aryan perfected is the Arhat. There is a transcendent Consciousness which surpasses the universe and of which all these worlds are only a side-issue and a by-play. To that consciousness he aspires and attains. There is a Consciousness which, being transcendent, is yet the universe and all that the universe contains. Into that consciousness he enlarges his limited ego; he becomes one with all beings and all inanimate objects in a single self-awareness, love, delight, all-embracing energy. There is a consciousness which, being both transcendental and universal, yet accepts the apparent limitations of individuality for work, for various standpoints of knowledge, for the play of the Lord with His creations; for the ego is there that it may finally convert itself into a free centre of the divine work and the divine play. That consciousness too he has sufficient love, joy and knowledge to accept; he is puissant enough to effect that conversion. To embrace individuality after transcending it is the last and divine sacrifice. The perfect Arhat is he who is able to live simultaneously in all these three apparent states of existence, elevate the lower into the higher, receive the higher into the lower, so that he may represent perfectly in the symbols of the world that with which he is identified in all parts of his being, — the triple and triune Brahman.

(CWSA 13: 441-44)

The Needed Synthesis¹

What is the Synthesis needed at the present time?

Undoubtedly, that of man himself. The harmony of his faculties is the condition of his peace, their mutual understanding and helpfulness the means of his perfection. At war, they distract the kingdom of his being; the victory of one at the expense of another maims his self-fulfilment.

The peculiar character of our age is the divorce that has been pronounced between reason and faith, the logical mind and the intuitive heart. At first, the declaration of war between them was attended by painful struggles, a faith disturbed or a scepticism dissatisfied. But now their divorce has created exaggerated tendencies which impoverish human life by their mutual exclusiveness, on the one side a negative and destructive critical spirit, on the other an imaginative sentiment which opposes pure instinct and a faith founded on dreams to the sterile fanaticism of the intellect.

Yet a real divorce is impossible. Science could not move a step without faith and intuition and today it is growing full of dreams. Religion could not stand for a moment if it did not support itself by the intellectual presentation, however inadequate, of profound truths. Today we see it borrowing many of its weapons

1. Published in the *Arya* in August 1914.

from the armoury of its opponent. But a right synthesis in virtue of a higher and reconciling truth can alone dissipate their mutual misunderstandings and restore to the race its integral self-development.

The synthesis then of religious aspiration and scientific faculty, as a beginning; and in the resultant progress an integrality also of the inner existence. Love and knowledge, the delight of the Bhakta and the divine science of the knower of Brahman, have to effect their unity; and both have to recover the fullness of Life which they tend to banish from them in the austerity of their search or the rapture of their ecstasy.

The heart and the mind are one universal Deity and neither a mind without a heart nor a heart without a mind is the human ideal. Nor is any perfection sound and real unless it is also fruitful. The integral divine harmony within, but as its result a changed earth and a nobler and happier humanity.

(CWSA 13: 439-40)

The War¹

The “Arya”, a Review of pure Philosophy, has no direct concern with political passions and interests and their results. But neither can it ignore the enormous convulsion which is at present in progress, nor at such a time can it affect to deal only with the pettier happenings of the intellectual world as if men were not dying in thousands daily, the existence of great empires threatened and the fate of the world hanging in the balance. The War has its aspects, of supreme importance to a synthetic Philosophy, with which we would have the right to deal. But now is not the hour, now in this moment of supreme tension and wide-spread agony. Therefore, for the time, we suppress this heading in our Review and shall replace it by brief notes on subjects of philosophical interest, whether general or of the day. Meanwhile, with the rest of the world, we await in silence the predestined result.

(CWSA 13: 462)

Our Ideal²

The “Arya” having completed its first year and survived the first perils of infancy, now offers itself a second time to the decisions of Time and the mind of the hour.

1. Published in the *Arya* in September 1914.

2. Published in the *Arya* in August 1915.

When this essay was included in *Ideal and Progress* in 1920, four paragraphs referring to the *Arya* were deleted: the original first paragraph and the fourth, third and second paragraphs from the end. The first sentence of the last paragraph was also deleted: “We shall develop our general thought in later numbers; at present we content ourselves with restating our ideal.” When Sri Aurobindo revised the second edition, he inserted a new sentence at this point: “What then shall be our ideal?” For the modified version, see CWSA 13: 140-147 & CWSA 13: 103-04. — Ed.

We think it necessary to open our new year with a succinct statement of the idea this Review is intended to serve and the aim which it holds before it. For our Review has been conceived neither as a mirror of the fleeting interests and surface thoughts of the period we live in, nor as the mouthpiece of a sect, school or already organised way of thinking. Its object is to feel out for the thought of the future, to help in shaping its foundations and to link it to the best and most vital thought of the past.

We believe in the constant progression of humanity and we hold that that progression is the working out of a Thought in Life which sometimes manifests itself on the surface and sometimes sinks below and works behind the mask of external forces and interests. When there is this lapse below the surface, humanity has its periods of apparent retrogression or tardy evolution, its long hours of darkness or twilight during which the secret Thought behind works out one of its phases by the pressure mainly of economic, political and personal interests ignorant of any deeper aim within. When the Thought returns to the surface, humanity has its periods of light and of rapid efflorescence, its dawns and splendid springtides; and according to the depth, vitality, truth and self-effective energy of the form of Thought that emerges is the importance of the stride forward that it makes during these Hours of the Gods in our terrestrial manifestation.

There is no greater error than to suppose, as the "practical" man is wont to do, that thought is only a fine flower and ornament of life and that political, economic and personal interests are the important and effective motors of human action. We recognise that this is a world of life and action and developing organism; but the life that seeks to guide itself only by vital and material forces is a slow, dark and blundering growth. It is an attempt to approximate man to the method of vegetable and animal existence. The earth is a world of Life and Matter, but man is not a vegetable nor an animal; he is a spiritual and a thinking being who is set here to shape and use the animal mould for higher purposes, by higher motives, with a more divine instrumentation.

Therefore by his very nature he serves the working of a Thought within him even when he is ignorant of it in his surface self. The practical man who ignores or despises the deeper life of the Idea, is yet serving that which he ignores or despises. Charlemagne hewing a chaotic Europe into shape with his sword was preparing the reign of the feudal and Catholic interpretation of human life with all that that great though obscure period of humanity has meant for the thought and spiritual development of mankind. But it is when the Thought emerges and guides life that man grows towards his full humanity, strides forward on his path and begins to control the development of Nature in his destiny or at least to collaborate as a conscious mind and spirit with That which controls and directs it.

The progress of humanity has therefore been a constant revolution with its rhythm of alternative darkness and light, but both the day and the night have helped to foster that which is evolving. The periods have not been the same for all parts of

the globe. In the historic ages of the present cycle of civilisation the movement has been almost entirely centred in the twin continents of Asia and Europe. And there it has been often seen that when Asia was moving through the light, Europe was passing through one of her epochs of obscurity and on the other hand the nights of Asia's repose or stagnation have corresponded with the days of Europe's mental vigour and vital activity.

But the fundamental difference has been that Asia has served predominantly (not exclusively) as a field for man's spiritual experience and progression, Europe has been rather a workshop for his mental and vital activities. As the cycle progressed, the Eastern continent has more and more converted itself into a storehouse of spiritual energy sometimes active and reaching forward to new development, sometimes conservative and quiescent. Three or four times in history a stream of this energy has poured out upon Europe, but each time Europe has rejected wholly or partially the spiritual substance of the afflatus and used it rather as an impulse to fresh intellectual and material activity and progress.

The first attempt was the filtering of Egyptian, Chaldean and Indian wisdom through the thought of the Greek philosophers from Pythagoras to Plato and the Neo-Platonists; the result was the brilliantly intellectual and unspiritual civilisation of Greece and Rome. But it prepared the way for the second attempt when Buddhism and Vaishnavism filtered through the Semitic temperament entered Europe in the form of Christianity. Christianity came within an ace of spiritualising and even of asceticising the mind of Europe; it was baffled by its own theological deformation in the minds of the Greek fathers of the Church and by the sudden flooding of Europe with a German barbarism whose temperament in its merits no less than in its defects was the very antitype both of the Christian spirit and the Graeco-Roman intellect.

The Islamic invasion of Spain and the southern coast of the Mediterranean — curious as the sole noteworthy example of Asiatic culture using the European method of material and political irruption as opposed to a peaceful invasion by ideas — may be regarded as a third attempt. The result of its meeting with Graecised Christianity was the reawakening of the European mind in feudal and Catholic Europe and the obscure beginnings of modern thought and science.

The fourth and last attempt which is as yet only in its slow initial stage is the quiet entry of Eastern and chiefly of Indian thought into Europe first through the veil of German metaphysics, more latterly by its subtle influence in reawakening the Celtic, Scandinavian and Slavonic idealism, mysticism, religionism, and the direct and open penetration of Buddhism, Theosophy, Vedantism, Bahaism and other Oriental influences in both Europe and America.

On the other hand, there have been two reactions of Europe upon Asia; first, the invasion of Alexander with his aggressive Hellenism which for a time held Western Asia, created echoes and reactions in India and returned through Islamic

culture upon mediaeval Europe; secondly, the modern onslaught of commercial, political, scientific Europe upon the moral, artistic and spiritual cultures of the East.

The new features of this mutual interpenetration are, first, that the two attacks have synchronised and, secondly, that they have encountered in each case the extreme exaggeration of their opposites. Intellectual and materialistic Europe found India, the Asia of Asia, the heart of the world's spiritual life, in the last throes of an enormous experiment, the thought of a whole nation concentrated for centuries upon the pure spiritual existence to the exclusion of all real progress in the practical and mental life of the race. The entering stream of Eastern thought found in Europe the beginning of an era which rejected religion, philosophy and psychology, — religion as an emotional delusion, philosophy, the pure essence of the mind, as a barren thought-weaving, — and resolved to devote the whole intellectual faculty of man to a study of the laws of material Nature and of man's bodily, social, economic and political existence and to build thereon a superior civilisation.

That stupendous effort is over; it has not yet frankly declared its bankruptcy, but it is bankrupt. It is sinking in a cataclysm as gigantic and as unnatural as the attempt which gave it birth. On the other hand, the exaggerated spirituality of the Indian effort has also registered a bankruptcy; we have seen how high individuals can rise by it, but we have seen also how low a race can fall which in its eagerness to seek after God ignores His intention in humanity. Both the European and the Indian attempt were admirable, the Indian by its absolute spiritual sincerity, the European by its severe intellectual honesty and ardour for the truth; both have accomplished miracles; but in the end God and Nature have been too strong for the Titanism of the human spirit and for the Titanism of the human intellect.

The salvation of the human race lies in a more sane and integral development of the possibilities of mankind in the individual and in the community. The safety of Europe has to be sought in the recognition of the spiritual aim of human existence, otherwise she will be crushed by the weight of her own unilluminated knowledge and soulless organisation. The safety of Asia lies in the recognition of the material mould and mental conditions in which that aim has to be worked out, otherwise she will sink deeper into the slough of despond of a mental and physical incompetence to deal with the facts of life and the shocks of a rapidly changing movement. It is not any exchange of forms that is required, but an interchange of regenerating impulses and a happy fusion and harmonising.

The synchronism and mutual interpenetration of the two great currents of human effort at such a crisis in the history of the race is full of hope for the future of humanity, but full also of possible dangers. The hope is the emergence of a new and better human life founded on a greater knowledge, a pursuit of the new faculties and possibilities opening out before us and a just view of the problem which the individual, the society, the race have to solve. Mankind has been drawn together by the developments of material science and for good or evil its external future is

henceforth one; its different parts no longer develop separately and in independence of each other. There opens out at the same time the possibility that by the development and practice of the science and the life of the soul it may be made one in reality and by an internal unity.

The idea by which the enlightenment of Europe has been governed is the passion for the discovery of the Truth and Law that constitutes existence and governs the process of the world, the attempt to develop the life and potentialities of man, his ideals, institutions, organisations by the knowledge of that Law and Truth and the confidence that along this line lies the road of human progress and perfection.

The idea is absolutely just and we accept it entirely; but its application has been erroneous. For the Law and Truth that has to be discovered is not that of the material world — though this is required, nor even of the mental and physical — though this is indispensable, but the Law and Truth of the Spirit on which all the rest depends. For it is the power of the Self of things that expresses itself in their forms and processes.

The message of the East to the West is a true message, “Only by finding himself can man be saved,” and “what shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?” The West has heard the message and is seeking out the law and truth of the soul and the evidences of an inner reality greater than the material. The danger is that with her passion for mechanism and her exaggerated intellectuality she may fog herself in an external and false psychism, such as we see arising in England and America, the homes of the mechanical genius, or in intellectual, unspiritual and therefore erroneous theories of the Absolute, such as have run their course in critical and metaphysical Germany.

The idea by which the illumination of Asia has been governed is the firm knowledge that truth of the Spirit is the sole real truth, the belief that the psychological life of man is an instrument for attaining to the truth of the Spirit and that its laws must be known and practised with that aim paramount, and the attempt to form the external life of man and the institutions of society into a suitable mould for the great endeavour.

This idea, too, is absolutely just and we accept it entirely. But in its application, and in India most, it has deviated into a divorce between the Spirit and its instruments and a disparagement and narrowing of the mental and external life of the race. For it is only on the widest and richest efflorescence of this instrumental life that the fullest and most absolute attainment of the spiritual can be securely based. This knowledge the ancients of the East possessed and practised; it has been dimmed in knowledge and lost in practice by their descendants.

The message the West brings to the East is a true message. Man also is God and it is through his developing manhood that he approaches the godhead; Life also is the Divine, its progressive expansion is the self-expression of the Brahman, and to deny Life is to diminish the Godhead within us. This is the truth that returns to the

East from the West translated into the language of the higher truth the East already possesses; and it is an ancient knowledge. The East also is awaking to the message. The danger is that Asia may accept it in the European form, forget for a time her own law and nature and either copy blindly the West or make a disastrous amalgam of that which she has in its most inferior forms and the crudenesses which are invading her.

The problem of thought therefore is to find out the right idea and the right way of harmony; to restate the ancient and eternal spiritual truth of the Self so that it shall embrace, permeate and dominate the mental and physical life; to develop the most profound and vital methods of psychological self-discipline and self-development so that the mental and psychical life of man may express the spiritual life through the utmost possible expansion of its own richness, power and complexity; and to seek for the means and motives by which his external life, his society and his institutions may remould themselves progressively in the truth of the spirit and develop towards the utmost possible harmony of individual freedom and social unity.

This is our ideal and our search in the "Arya". Throughout the world there are plenty of movements inspired by the same drift, but there is room for an effort of thought which shall frankly acknowledge the problem in its integral complexity and not be restrained in the flexibility of its search by attachment to any cult, creed or extant system of philosophy.

The effort involves a quest for the Truth that underlies existence and the fundamental Law of its self-expression in the universe — the work of metaphysical philosophy and religious thought; the sounding and harmonising of the psychological methods of discipline by which man purifies and perfects himself — the work of psychology, not as it is understood in Europe, but the deeper practical psychology called in India Yoga; and the application of our ideas to the problems of man's social and collective life.

Philosophy and religious thought must be the beginning and the foundation of any such attempt; for they alone go behind appearances and processes to the truth of things. The attempt to get rid of their supremacy must always be vain. Man will always think and generalise and try to penetrate behind the apparent fact, for that is the imperative law of his awakened consciousness; man will always turn his generalisations into a religion, even though it be only a religion of positivism or of material Law. Philosophy is the intellectual search for the fundamental truth of things, religion is the attempt to make the truth dynamic in the soul of man. They are essential to each other; a religion that is not the expression of philosophic truth, degenerates into superstition and obscurantism, and a philosophy which does not dynamise itself with the religious spirit is a barren light, for it cannot get itself practised.

Our first preoccupation in the "Arya" has therefore been with the deepest thought that we could command on the philosophical foundations of the problem; and we have been so profoundly convinced that without this basis nothing we could say

would have any real, solid and permanent value that we have perhaps given too great a space to difficult and abstruse thought whether in the shaping of our own ideas or in the study and restatement of the ancient Eastern knowledge. Our excuse is that we come forward as ourselves learners and students and must begin at the roots to proceed forward safely.

Our second preoccupation has been with the psychological disciplines of Yoga; but here also we have been obliged to concern ourselves with a deep study of the principles underlying the methods rather than with a popular statement of methods and disciplines. But without this previous study of principles the statement of methods would have been unsound and not really helpful. There are no short cuts to an integral perfection.

Other and more popular sides of our work we have been obliged hitherto to neglect; but now that we have advanced a little in the more difficult part of it, we hope to turn increasingly to these more obvious and general subjects of interest. And if our readers are still willing to follow us, their recompense will be a more clear, sound and solid thought on these subjects than we could otherwise have given them.

We shall develop our general thought in later numbers; at present we content ourselves with restating our ideal. Unity for the human race by an inner oneness and not only by an external association of interests; the resurgence of man out of the merely animal and economic life or the merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence; the pouring of the power of the spirit into the physical mould and mental instrument so that man may develop his manhood into that true supermanhood which shall exceed our present state as much as this exceeds the animal state from which science tells us that we have issued. These three are one; for man's unity and man's self-transcendence can come only by living in the Spirit.

The "Arya's" Second Year¹

The "Arya", born by a coincidence which might well have been entirely disastrous to its existence in the very month when there broke out the greatest catastrophe that has overtaken the modern world, has yet, though carried on under serious difficulties, completed its first year. We have been obliged unfortunately to discontinue the French edition from February last as our director M. Paul Richard was then recalled to join his class of the Reserve Army in France. We have to thank the indulgence of our French subscribers who have consented to receive the English edition in its stead.

1. Published in the *Arya* in July 1915.

We have been obliged in our first year for reasons we shall indicate in the preface to our August number to devote the Review almost entirely to high philosophy and severe and difficult thinking. But the object we had in view is now fulfilled and we recognise that we have no right to continue to subject our readers to the severe strain of almost 64 pages of such strenuous intellectual labour. We shall therefore in the next year devote a greater part of our space to articles on less profound subjects written in a more popular style. Needless to say, our matter will always fall within the definition of a philosophical Review and centre around the fundamental thought which the “Arya” represents.

We shall continue the *Life Divine*, the *Synthesis of Yoga* and the *Secret of the Veda*; but we intend to replace the *Selected Hymns* by a translation of the Hymns of the Atris (the fifth Mandala of the Rig Veda) so conceived as to make the sense of the Vedic chants at once and easily intelligible without the aid of a commentary to the general reader. The same circumstance which obliged us to discontinue the French edition, will also prevent us from continuing the *Wherefore of the Worlds*. Happily, we have been able to bring it to a point where the writer’s central idea appears, the new creation of our world by redeeming Love, — a fitting point for the faith and reason of man to pause upon at the moment of the terrible ordeal which that world is now undergoing.

Without the divine Will which knows best what to use and what to throw aside, no human work can come to the completion hoped for by our limited vision. To that Will we entrust the continuance and the result of our labours and we conclude the first year of the “Arya” with the aspiration that the second may see the speedy and fortunate issue of the great world-convulsion which still pursues us and that by the Power which brings always the greatest possible good out of apparent evil there may emerge from this disastrous but long-foreseen collapse of the old order a new and better marked by the triumph of higher principles of love, wisdom and unity and a sensible advance of the race towards our ultimate goal, — the conscious oneness of the Soul in humanity and the divinity of man.

(CWSA 13: 101-02)

The “Arya’s” Fourth Year¹

We close this month the fourth year of the “Arya”, and bring to a conclusion at the same time the “Psychology of Social Development”, the “Ideal of Human Unity” and the first series of the “Essays on the Gita”. A few more chapters will complete the “Life Divine”. We are therefore well in view of the completion of the first part of the work which we had proposed to ourselves in starting this philosophical monthly, and we take the opportunity to say a few words upon the principle which has

1. Published in the *Arya* in July 1918.

governed our writing and which the difficulty of a serial exposition on several lines at a time, scattering and breaking up the total impression, may have prevented some of our readers from grasping in its entirety.

We had not in view at any time a review or magazine in the ordinary sense of the word, that is to say, a popular presentation or criticism of current information and current thought on philosophical questions. Nor was it, as in some philosophical and religious magazines in India, the restatement of an existing school or position of philosophical thought cut out in its lines and needing only to be popularised and supported. Our idea was the thinking out of a synthetic philosophy which might be a contribution to the thought of the new age that is coming upon us. We start from the idea that humanity is moving to a great change of its life which will even lead to a new life of the race, — in all countries where men think, there is now in various forms that idea and that hope, — and our aim has been to search for the spiritual, religious and other truth which can enlighten and guide the race in this movement and endeavour. The spiritual experience and the general truths on which such an attempt could be based, were already present to us, otherwise we should have had no right to make the endeavour at all; but the complete intellectual statement of them and their results and issues had to be found. This meant a continuous thinking, a high and subtle and difficult thinking on several lines, and this strain, which we had to impose on ourselves, we were obliged to impose also on our readers. This too is the reason why we have adopted the serial form which in a subject like philosophy has its very obvious disadvantages, but was the only one possible.

Our original intention was to approach the synthesis from the starting-point of the two lines of culture which divide human thought and are now meeting at its apex, the knowledge of the West and the knowledge of the East; but owing to the exigencies of the war this could not be fulfilled. The “Arya” except for one unfinished series has been an approach to the highest reconciling truth from the point of view of the Indian mentality and Indian spiritual experience, and Western knowledge has been viewed from that standpoint. Here the main idea which has governed our writing, was imposed on us by the very conditions of the problem. All philosophy is concerned with the relations between two things, the fundamental truth of existence and the forms in which existence presents itself to our experience. The deepest experience shows that the fundamental truth is truth of the Spirit; the other is the truth of life, truth of form and shaping force and living idea and action. Here the West and East have followed divergent lines. The West has laid most emphasis on truth of life and for a time come to stake its whole existence upon truth of life alone, to deny the existence of spirit or to relegate it to the domain of the unknown and unknowable; from that exaggeration it is now beginning to return. The East has laid most emphasis on truth of the Spirit and for a time came, at least in India, to stake its whole existence upon that truth alone, to neglect the possibilities of life or to limit it to a narrow development or a fixed status; the East too is beginning to return from

this exaggeration. The West is reawaking to the truth of the Spirit and the spiritual possibilities of life, the East is reawaking to the truth of Life and tends towards a new application to it of its spiritual knowledge. Our view is that the antinomy created between them is an unreal one. Spirit being the fundamental truth of existence, life can be only its manifestation; Spirit must be not only the origin of life but its basis, its pervading reality and its highest and total result. But the forms of life as they appear to us are at once its disguises and its instruments of self-manifestation. Man has to grow in knowledge till they cease to be disguises and grow in spiritual power and quality till they become in him its perfect instruments. To grow into the fullness of the divine is the true law of human life and to shape his earthly existence into its image is the meaning of his evolution. This is the fundamental tenet of the philosophy of the "Arya".

This truth had to be worked out first of all from the metaphysical point of view; for in philosophy metaphysical truth is the nucleus of the rest, it is the statement of the last and most general truths on which all the others depend or in which they are gathered up. Therefore we gave the first place to the "Life Divine". Here we start from the Vedantic position, its ideas of the Self and mind and life, of Sachchidananda and the world, of Knowledge and Ignorance, of rebirth and the Spirit. But Vedanta is popularly supposed to be a denial of life, and this is no doubt a dominant trend it has taken. Though starting from the original truth that all is the Brahman, the Self, it has insisted in the end that the world is simply not-Brahman, not-Self; it has ended in a paradox. We have attempted on the contrary to establish from its data a comprehensive Adwaita. We have shown that mind and life and matter are derivations from the Self through a spiritual mind or supermind which is the real support of cosmic existence and by developing mind into that, man can arrive at the real truth of the spirit in the world and the real truth and highest law of life. The Self is Sachchidananda and there is no incurable antinomy between that and the world; only we see the world through the eyes of the Ignorance and we have to see it through the eyes of the Knowledge. Our ignorance itself is only knowledge developing out of its involution in the apparent nescience of Matter and on its way to a return to its conscious integrality. To accomplish that return and manifest the spiritual life in the human existence is the opportunity given by the successions of rebirth. We accept the truth of evolution, not so much in the physical form given to it by the West as in its philosophical truth, the involution of life and mind and spirit here in matter and their progressive manifestation. At the summit of this evolution is the spiritual life, the life divine.

It was necessary to show that these truths were not inconsistent with the old Vedantic truth, therefore we included explanations from this point of view of the Veda, two of the Upanishads and the Gita. But the Veda has been obscured by the ritualists and the scholiasts. Therefore we showed in a series of articles, initially only as yet, the way of writing of the Vedic mystics, their system of symbols and the

truths they figure. Among the Upanishads we took the Isha and the Kena; to be full we should have added the Taittiriya, but it is a long one and for it we had no space. The Gita we are treating as a powerful application of truth of spirit to the largest and most difficult part of the truth of life, to action, and a way by which action can lead us to birth into the Spirit and can be harmonised with the spiritual life. Truth of philosophy is of a merely theoretical value unless it can be lived, and we have therefore tried in the "Synthesis of Yoga" to arrive at a synthetical view of the principles and methods of the various lines of spiritual self-discipline and the way in which they can lead to an integral divine life in the human existence. But this is an individual self-development, and therefore it was necessary to show too how our ideal can work out in the social life of mankind. In the "Psychology of Social Development" we have indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In the "Ideal of Human Unity" we have taken the present trend of mankind towards a closer unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting to them in order that real human unity may be achieved.

Our plan has compelled us to deal mainly with first principles and work them out in their fullness. In future we do not propose to start any other long series of this kind, but to have more short articles with a broader, more direct and, as far as possible, more popular treatment. We shall also permit ourselves a freer range and diversity, so far as that is permissible in a philosophical review.

(CWSA 13: 105-08)

IV. REGARDING THE ARYA

A work of spiritual philosophy

The *Arya* is a work of spiritual philosophy founded on personal realisation; it is obviously not meant for minds that do not think out spiritual things in all their aspects.

(CWSA 35: 86)

Continual spiritual experiences

(In a letter from Allahabad a question was asked: "Do you find that you are more energetic after practising Yoga than you were when you appeared for the I.C.S. examination?"

Sri Aurobindo turning to a disciple, asked the same question in a general form.)

Disciple: I find that my experience is, perhaps, not encouraging.

Sri Aurobindo: Does it mean that you are less energetic now than before you began Sadhana? *(Turning to another disciple)* What do you say?

Disciple: I find that it is not possible to put forth energy in the old way.

Sri Aurobindo: My experience is quite the reverse. I feel ten times more energetic than I was before Yoga.

Disciple: Are there times in Sadhana when one finds the energy flagging?

Sri Aurobindo: That is due to Tamas. The question is not of Tamas coming up. Even if Tamas came, why should the energy be absent?

Disciple: There are times when one can't put forth energy as one used to do.

Sri Aurobindo: That may be temporary.

Disciple: Did you find in your case a steady increase of energy with the practice of Yoga ?

Sri Aurobindo: No, not steady. I was more energetic when I was working in politics than I had been before; when I took up Yoga I was more energetic than I had been in politics.

Disciple: There are times when one cannot do work that is expected of one.

Sri Aurobindo: Of course, one can't do what others demand of one. The question is whether you have the energy, never mind in what way it is put forth. For instance, in that house just before I began the *Arya* there was a period of six months in which there was a continual spiritual experience and I could not do any writing at that time. But that does not mean I was less energetic.

I could not have written the 64 pages of the *Arya* before without flagging. I give another instance: now I do not find it possible to make speeches as before. If I am asked to make speeches I would find myself very unenergetic.

(*Evening Talks*: 137-38)

No theology

I do not find it easy to answer the few brief and casual sentences in Angus' letter, — precisely because they are so brief and casual. Not knowing him or the turns of his mind, I do not exactly seize what is behind this passage in his letter. It would be easier to reply if I had some notion of the kind of thought or experience on which he takes his stand when he dismisses so cavalierly the statement of spiritual truth put forward in the *Arya*. As it is, I am obliged to answer to what *may* be behind his sentences and, as there is much that possibly stands behind them, the reply becomes long and elaborate and is in danger of seeming long and discursive. I could of course answer easily myself by a few brief and trenchant sentences of the same calibre, but in that kind of discussion there is no profit.

Let me say that he makes an initial mistake — quite natural for him, since he has not read the *Arya*, — when he describes the extract sent to him as a “theological fragment”. I must insist that there is no theology in the *Arya*. Nothing there is written to support or to develop any kind of religious belief or dogma or to confirm or enunciate the credo of any old or new religion. No less does he miss the mark when he describes as a scholastic distinction the substance of the passage. The teaching there is not taken from books, nor, although put in philosophic language, is it based upon abstract thought or any formal logic. It expresses a fundamental spiritual experience, dynamic for the growth of the being, confirmed and enlarged and filled with detail by almost thirty years of continuous sadhana, and, as such, it cannot be seriously challenged or invalidated by mere intellectual question or reasoning, but, if at all, then only by a greater and wider spiritual experience. Moreover, it coincides (not in expression, it may be, but in substance) with the experience of hundreds of spiritual seekers in many paths and in all parts of the world since the days of the Upanishads — and of Plotinus and the Gnostics and Sufis — to the present time. It is hardly admissible then to put it aside as the thought of a tyro or beginner in spiritual knowledge making his first clumsy potshots at a solution of the crossword enigma of the universe. That description seems to show that he has missed the point of the passage altogether and that also makes it difficult to reply; for where there is no meeting point of minds, discussion is likely to be sterile.

I was a little surprised at first by this entire lack of understanding, shown still more in his cavil at the two Divines — for I had somehow got the impression that Angus was a Christian and the recognition of “two Divines” — the Divine Trans-

endent and the Divine Immanent — is, I have read, perfectly familiar to Christian ideas and to Christian experience. The words themselves in fact — transcendent and cosmic — are taken from the West. I do not know that there is anything exactly corresponding to them in the language of Indian spiritual thinking, although the experiences on which the distinction rests are quite familiar. On another side, Christianity insists not only on a double but a triple Divine. It even strikes me that this triple Godhead or Trinity is not very far off at bottom from my trinity of the individual, cosmic and transcendent Divine — as far at least as one can judge who has not himself followed the Christian discipline. Christ whether as the human Incarnation or the Christos in men or the Godhead proceeding from the Father, seems to me to be quite my individual Divine. The Father has very much the appearance of the One who overstands and is immanent in the cosmos. And although this is more obscure, yet if one can be guided by the indications in the Scripture, the Holy Ghost looks very much like a rather mysterious and inexpressible Transcendence and its descent very much like what I would call the descent of Light, Purity, Peace — that passeth all understanding — or Power of the supramental Spirit. In any case these Christian and Western ideas show surely that my affirmation of a double or a triple Divine is not anything new and ought not to be found startling or upsetting and I do not see why it should be treated as (in itself) obscure and unintelligible.

Again, are these or similar distinctions very positively made in the Christian, Sufi or other teachings mere theoretical abstractions, scholastic distinctions, theological cobwebs, or metaphysical puzzles? I had always supposed that they corresponded to very living, very dynamic, almost — for the paths to which they relate — indispensable experiences. No doubt, for those who follow other ways or no way at all or for those who have not yet had the illuminating and vivifying experience, they may seem at first a little difficult or unseizable. But that is true of most spiritual truth — and not of spiritual truth alone. There are many very highly intelligent and cultured people to whom a scientific explanation of even so patent and common a fact as electricity and electric light (this is a reminiscence of an article by Y.Y. in the *New Statesman and Nation*) seems equally difficult to seize by the mind or to fix either in the memory or the intelligence. And yet the distinction between positive and negative electricity, both necessary for the existence of the light, — like that of the passive and active Brahman (another scholastic distinction?) both necessary for the existence of the universe, — cannot be dismissed for that reason as something academic or scholastic, but is a very pertinent statement of things quite dynamic and real. No doubt the unscientific man does not and perhaps need not trouble about these things and can be content to enjoy the electric light (when he is allowed to do so by the grace of the Pondicherry Municipality), without enquiring into the play of the forces behind it: but for the seeker after scientific truth or for the practical electrician it is a different matter. Now these distinctions in the spiritual field are a parallel case; they seem theoretical or abstract only so long as experience has not

made them concrete, but once experienced they become living stuff of the consciousness and, after a certain stage, even the basis of action and growth in the spiritual life.

Here I am driven to a rather lengthy digression from the main theme — for I am met by Angus' rather baffling appeal to Whitham's History of Science. What has Whitham or Science to do with spiritual truth or spiritual experience? I can only suppose that he condemns all intrusion of anything like metaphysical thought into the spiritual field — a position excessive but not altogether untenable — and even perhaps proposes to bring the scientific method and the scientific mentality into spiritual experience as the sole true way of arriving at or judging the truth of things. I should like to make my view clear as to that point, because here much confusion has been created about it, and more is possible. And the first thing I would say is that if metaphysics has no right to intervene in spiritual experience, neither has Science. There are here three different domains of knowledge and experience each with its own instrumentation, its own way of approach and seeing, suited for its own task, but not to be imposed or substituted in these other fields of knowledge, — at least unless and until they meet by some kind of supreme reconciling transmutation in something that is at the source of all knowledge. For knowledge may be essentially one, but like the one Divine, it manifests differently in different fields of its play and to abolish their distinctions is not the way to arrive at true understanding of experience.

Science deals effectively with phenomenon and process and the apparent play of forces which determine the process. It cannot deal even intellectually in any adequate way with ultimate truths, that is the province of the higher, less external mind — represented up till now by metaphysics, though metaphysics is not its only possible power. If Science tries to fix metaphysical truth by forcing on this domain its own generalisations in the physical field, as people have been doing for almost the last century, it makes a mess of thought by illegitimately extended conclusions and has in the end to retire from this usurpation as it is now beginning to retire. Its discoveries may be used by philosophy, but on the grounds proper to philosophy and not on the grounds proper to Science. The philosopher must judge the scientific conceptions of relativity or discontinuity or space-time, for instance, by his own processes and standards of evidence. So too, Science has no instrumentation or process of knowledge which can enable it to discover spiritual truth or to judge or determine the results of spiritual experience. There is a field of knowledge of process in the spiritual and the occult domain, in the discovery of a world of inner forces and their way of action and even of their objective dynamisation in the mind and life and the functioning of the body. But the mathematical exactitudes and rigid formulas of physical Science do not apply here and the mentality created by them would hamper spiritual experience.

(CWSA 35: 87-91)

A harmonising of the different parts of a many-sided knowledge

You wrote to X that though people call you a philosopher you have never learnt philosophy. Well, what you have written in the Arya is so philosophical that the greatest philosopher of the world can never expect to write it. I don't mean here the bringing down of the new Truth, but the power of expression, the art of reasoning and arguing with intellect and logic.

There is very little argument in my philosophy — the elaborate metaphysical reasoning full of abstract words with which the metaphysician tries to establish his conclusions is not there. What is there is a harmonising of the different parts of a many-sided knowledge so that all unites logically together. But it is not by force of logical argument that it is done, but by a clear vision of the relations and sequences of the knowledge.

(CWSA 35: 65-66)

Arya — not from the brain

Sri Aurobindo: . . . I had received the command from within that a human Guru was not necessary for me. As to meditation . . . I was meditating practically the whole day.

All that I wrote in the *Bande Mataram* and in the *Karmayogin* was from that state. I have since trusted the inner guidance even when I thought it was leading me astray. The *Arya* and the subsequent writings did not come from the brain. It was, of course, the same Power working. Now I do not use that method. I developed it to perfection and then abandoned it.

(*Evening Talks*: 316-17)

Out of an absolute silence of the mind

. . . To return to the supramental — the supramental is simply the direct self-existent Truth-Consciousness and the direct self-effective Truth-Power. There can therefore be no question of jugglery about it. What is not true is not supramental. As for calm and silence, there is no need of the supramental to get that. One can get it even on the level of Higher Mind which is the next above the human intelligence. I got these things in 1908, twenty-seven years ago and I can assure you they were solid enough and marvellous enough without any need of supramentality to make it more so! Again, a calm that “seems like motion” is a phenomenon of which I know nothing. A calm or silence which can support or produce action — that I know and that is what I have had — the proof is that out of an absolute silence of the mind I edited the *Bande Mataram* for four months and wrote 6½ volumes of the *Arya*, not to

speaking of all the letters and messages etc. etc. I have written since. If you say that writing is not an action or motion but only something that seems like it, a jugglery of the consciousness, — well, still out of that calm and silence I conducted a pretty strenuous political activity and have also taken my share in keeping up an Asram which has at least an appearance to the physical senses of being solid and material! If you deny that these things are material or solid (which of course metaphysically you can), then you land yourself plump into Shankara's illusionism, and there I will leave you. . . .

(CWSA 35: 346-47)

Direct transmission

Disciple: Do any thoughts or suggestions come to you?

Sri Aurobindo: What do you mean? Thoughts and suggestions come to me from every side and I don't refuse them. I accept them and see what they are. But what you call 'thinking', that I never do. Thinking in that sense ceased long ago — since I had that experience with Lele. Thoughts, as I said, come to me from all sides and from above and the transmitting mind remains quiet, or it enlarges to receive them. True thoughts come in this way. You can't think out such thoughts, what Mother calls "mental constructions".

Disciple: Was *Arya* written in that way?

Sri Aurobindo: No, it was directly transmitted into the pen. It is a great relief to get out of that responsibility.

Disciple: Oh yes, Sir!

Sri Aurobindo: I don't mean responsibility in general but that of thinking about everything. Some thoughts are given or reflected from above. It is not that I don't ask for knowledge. When I want knowledge I call for it. The higher faculty sees thoughts as if written on a wall.

(*Evening Talks*: 546)

True mental spontaneity

. . . To be spontaneous means not to think out, organise, decide and make an effort to realise with the personal will.

I am going to give you two examples to make you understand what true spontaneity is. One — you all know about it undoubtedly — is of the time Sri Aurobindo began writing the *Arya*, in 1914. It was neither a mental knowledge nor even a mental creation which he transcribed: he silenced his mind and sat at the typewriter, and from above, from the higher planes, all that had to be written came down, all ready, and he had only to move his fingers on the typewriter and it was transcribed. It was in this state of mental silence which allows the knowledge — and

even the expression — from above to pass through that he wrote the whole *Arya*, with its sixty-four printed pages a month. This is why, besides, he could do it, for if it had been a mental work of construction it would have been quite impossible.

That is true mental spontaneity.

And if one carries this a little further, one should never think and plan beforehand what one ought to say or write. One should simply be able to silence one's mind, to turn it like a receptacle towards the higher Consciousness and express as it receives it, in mental silence, what comes from above. That would be true spontaneity.

Naturally, this is not very easy, it asks for preparation. . . .

(CWM 2nd Ed. 8: 281-82)

Perfect mental silence

The nature of my work is such that I have constantly to go on reading and writing and thinking — with the result that I live mostly in my mind. This constant preoccupation in mental activity stands in the way of the opening of the psychic centre. It has also made my life very dry and top-heavy. You have said in the Bulletin that this sort of constant mental activity is not good for receiving the New Consciousness that is now manifesting. But, then, if the work that I have to do demands it, how can I help it?

You seem to forget that Sri Aurobindo wrote for so many years the whole of the *Arya* in perfect mental silence leaving the inspiration from above to go through and manifest through his hands on the typewriter.

(CWM 2nd Ed. 12: 213-14)

Out of a silent mind

I have made no endeavours in writing; I have simply left the higher Power to work and when it did not work, I made no efforts at all. It was in the old intellectual days that I sometimes tried to force things, but not after I started the development of poetry and prose by Yoga. Let me remind you also that when I was writing the *Arya* and also since, whenever I write these letters or replies, I never think or seek for expressions or try to write in good style; it is out of a silent mind that I write whatever comes ready-shaped from above. Even when I correct, it is because the correction comes in the same way. Where then is the place for even a slight endeavour or any room at all for “my great endeavours”? Well?

(*Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo*: 370)

Written from the borderland

Sri Aurobindo: . . . The sign that you have attained to the Supermind is that you dispense with the need of thought, or thinking as we understand it. In the Supermind you do not need to think. It does not mean that there is no thought and that all is a mere blank. There is something self-existent that works.

Disciple: How?

Sri Aurobindo: “How” you can’t understand.

Disciple: But how does the Mind work when there is no thought?

Sri Aurobindo: In the Mind you think from one point to another point and then to another and so on. Then you gather them all up and connect them in the relation of cause and effect. Now suppose all these hundred thoughts arise simultaneously, showing up all the details and all that in less than one second. Can you imagine that? That is the Supramental thought.

Disciple: I can imagine that.

Sri Aurobindo: Yes, you can imagine, but you can’t have an idea of the thing unless you experience it.

Disciple: Will you give us some other aspect of the Supermind?

Sri Aurobindo: Some other aspect? It is not a thing to be understood mentally like that.

Disciple: All the same it may be of some help to us.

Sri Aurobindo: For instance, absolute rest and absolute activity at the same time. Can you imagine that?

Disciple: Is it true that all the mental faculties have their corresponding counterparts in the Supermind?

Sri Aurobindo: Well, that is what I have said in the *Arya*. I wrote the *Arya* when I was on the borderland. I should not say the same thing now. Everybody has to go through that stage. It is true that corresponding to Reason there is what may be called the Divine Reason; and you can say that what works as the Divine Reason is derived from the activity of the Supermind. But it is something which is quite different. I am putting the thing in terms of the mind. I can only give you images. But there it is not exactly the same thing. For instance, Reason finds out the cause and effect and connects them together — while the Divine Reason puts them all in the right relation.

There are other things which cannot be expressed in terms of the mind.

(*Evening Talks*: 521-22)

Bursting out like a volcano

... Really I believe that the hard crust will some day be broken miraculously, and all the energies will rush forth like snakes from a charmer's basket — poetry, prose, philosophy — everything. But I am not so sure about poetry any more, and wonder whether all that is said about Valmiki's sudden opening is true. You said about yourself that you had to plod on for a long time. How could Valmiki have it without undergoing any preparatory pangs of delivery?

Plod about what? For some things I had to plod — other things came in a moment or in two or three days like Nirvana or the power to appreciate painting. The “latent” philosopher failed to come out at the first shot (when I was in Calcutta) — after some years of incubation (?) it burst out like a volcano as soon as I started writing the “Arya”. There is no damned single rule for these things. Valmiki's poetic faculty might open suddenly like a champagne bottle, but it does not follow that everybody's will do like that.

(Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo: 201-02)

A new philosophy and a new method of Yoga

[1914 – 1915]

It is regrettable that Bengal should be unable to find anything in the Arya, but not surprising. The intellect of Bengal has been so much fed on chemical tablets of thought and hot spiced foods that anything strong and substantial is indigestible to it. Moreover people in India are accustomed only to secondhand thoughts, — the old familiar ideas of the six philosophies, Patanjali etc. etc. Any new presentation of life and thought and Yoga upsets their expectations and is unintelligible to them. The thought of the Arya demands close thinking from the reader; it does not spare him the trouble of thinking and understanding and the minds of the people have long been accustomed to have the trouble of thought spared them. They know how to indulge their minds, they have forgotten how to exercise them.

It does not matter very much just now, so long as the people who practise the Yoga, read and profit. The Arya presents a new philosophy and a new method of Yoga and everything that is new takes time to get a hearing. Of course, in reality it is only the old brought back again, but so old that it has been forgotten. It is only those who practise and experience that can at first understand it. In a way, this is good, because it is meant to change the life of people and not merely satisfy the intellect. In France it has been very much appreciated by those who are seeking the truth, because these people are not shut up in old and received ideas, they are on the lookout for something which will change the inner and outer life. When the same

state of mind can be brought about here, the Arya will begin to be appreciated. At present, Bengal only understands and appreciates politics and asceticism. The central ideas of the Arya are Greek to it.

Soon after the Arya began, I got a letter from some graduates saying that what they wanted was “man-making”. I have done my share of man-making and it is a thing which now anybody can do; Nature herself is looking after it all over the world, though more slowly in India than elsewhere. My business is now not man-making, but divine man-making. My present teaching is that the world is preparing for a new progress, a new evolution. Whatever race, whatever country seizes on the lines of that new evolution and fulfils it, will be the leader of humanity. In the Arya I state the thought upon which this new evolution will be based as I see it, and the method of Yoga by which it can be accomplished. Of course, I cannot speak plainly yet my whole message, for obvious reasons, I have to put it in a severe, colourless fashion which cannot be pleasing to the emotional and excitement-seeking Bengali mind. But the message is there, for those who care to understand. It has really three parts (1) for each man as an individual to change himself into the future type of divine humanity, the men of the new Satyayuga which is striving to be born; (2) to evolve a race of such men to lead humanity and (3) to call all humanity to the path under the lead of these pioneers and this chosen race. India and especially Bengal have the best chance and the best right to create that race and become the leaders of the future — to do in the right way what Germany thought of doing in the wrong way. But first they must learn to think, to cast away old ideas, and turn their faces resolutely to the future. But they cannot do this, if they merely copy European politics or go on eternally reproducing Buddhistic asceticism. I am afraid the Ramakrishna Mission with all its good intentions is only going to give us Shankaracharya & Buddhistic humanitarianism. But that is not the goal to which the world is moving. Meanwhile remember that these are very difficult times and careful walking is necessary. It is just possible that the war may come to an end in a few months, for the old immobility is beginning to break down and the forces at work behind the veil are straining towards a solution. While the war continues, nothing great can be done, we are fettered on every side. Afterwards things will change and we must wait for the development.

K.

(CWSA 36: 224-26)

V. READING THE ARYA

Reading the Arya

His aspiration may be satisfied if he makes himself fit. Let him continue to read the *Arya* and practise daily meditation. In the meditation he should concentrate first in an aspiration that the central truths of which he reads should be made real to him in conscious experience and his mind opened to the calm, wideness, strength, peace, light and Ananda of the spiritual consciousness. Let him write to you from time to time what experiences he gets or what are the difficulties that rise and prevent the experience.

(CWSA 35: 539)

Mental admiration for the Arya

(K had written a letter to S containing an account of his Sadhana after receiving Sri Aurobindo's last letter and sent some questions to be answered by Sri Aurobindo to which no reply was sent for many days. Whenever Sri Aurobindo was reminded he said, "I am not inclined to lecture on the psychic being."

Today he inquired whether there were any important letters unanswered. He was told about K's letter.)

Sri Aurobindo: Do you want me to lecture on the psychic being?

Disciple: Some general hints may be given, if you like.

Sri Aurobindo: Firstly, when the psychic awakens you grow conscious of your own soul, you know your true being. You no longer commit the mistake of identifying yourself with the mental or the vital being, you do not mistake them for the soul.

Secondly, when it is awakened, the psychic being gives the sadhak the true Bhakti for God or for the Guru. That devotion is quite different from mental and vital devotion.

In the mind one may have admiration for the intellectual ideas of someone, or one may have mental appreciation for some great intellect. But if it is merely mental, it does not carry matters very far; it is not sufficient by itself. It does not open the whole of the inner being; it only establishes a mental contact. Of course, there is no harm in having that. When K came here he had that mental admiration for what I have written in the *Arya*. One can get something from that kind of mental contact, but it is not what one can get by being in relation with the psychic being. I do not, for a moment, want to suggest that there was no truth in his Bhakti, but there was

much mixture in it and even what was mental and vital was very much exaggerated.

(*Evening Talks*: 149)

For understanding Arya

For understanding *Arya* one must have a sufficiently trained and developed intellect or else a basis of experience along with a capacity of mentalising experience. *X* as yet has neither. It is sufficient if he can get accustomed to forming general ideas and thinking coherently about them.

(CWSA 35: 86-87)

Answers in the Arya

Would it be all right if I asked questions pertaining to the Arya?

It is not possible for me to write answers to such questions as they would have to be very long — the *Arya* was written so that people might get the answers there. I can't write them all over again.

(CWSA 35: 462)

Solutions to all questions

(A letter from a gentleman putting questions about the jīvātmā and the paramātmā and their relation and also about the experience of the Supermind.)

Sri Aurobindo (with a smile): You can ask him to read all the issues of the *Arya* where he will find solutions for all his questions.

Disciple: But he may say he does not know English!

Sri Aurobindo: Then he can wait till he has learnt it! (*Laughter*)

(*Evening Talks*: 140-41)

If you want to know . . .

Guru,

What the deuce is "Brahman consciousness"? The same as cosmic consciousness?

Does one come to it after the psychic and spiritual transformations?

Is it something like seeing Brahman in everybody and everywhere or what? It is not spiritual realisation, I suppose, I mean realisation of Self? You see I am a nincompoop in this business. Please perorate a little.

Eternal Jehovah! You don't even know what Brahman is! You will next be asking me what Yoga is or what life is or what body is or what mind is or what sadhana is! No, sir, I am not proposing to teach an infant class the A.B.C. of the elementary conceptions which are the basis of Yoga. There is Amal who doesn't know what consciousness is, even!

Brahman, sir, is the name given by Indian philosophy since the beginning of time to the one Reality, eternal and infinite which is the Self, the Divine, the All, the more than All, which would remain even if you and everybody and everything else in existence or imagining itself to be in existence vanished into blazes — even if this whole universe disappeared, Brahman would be safely there and nothing whatever lost. In fact, sir, you are Brahman and you are only pretending to be Nirod; when Nishikanta is translating Amal's poetry into Bengali, it is really Brahman translating Brahman's Brahman into Brahman. When Amal asks me what consciousness is, it is really Brahman asking Brahman what Brahman is! There, sir, I hope you are satisfied now.

To be less drastic and refrain from making your head reel till it goes off your shoulders, I may say that realisation of the Self is the beginning of Brahman realisation; — the Brahman consciousness — the Self in all and all in the Self etc. It is the basis of the spiritual realisation and therefore of the spiritual transformation; but one has to see it in all sorts of aspects and applications first and that I refuse to go into. If you want to know you have to read the *Arya*.

(Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo: 991-92)

A good idea

It is indeed a very good idea to study the *Arya*. The little you can understand by yourself is better and more effective than an ocean of explanation from another.

(CWM 2nd Ed. 12: 214)

Easier to write 500 books

Someone told me that X is translating Saratchandra's novel into English, half of which is corrected by you. It amounts to this: that X is making you translate somebody's novel instead of himself translating Arya, which would be more reasonable. What ordeals for you to pass through! Perhaps the person who remarked in a London paper that you had written five hundred books was not quite wrong; by this time your letters to sadhaks would make three or four books for each of them and if to these are added your poems, translations and other writings the total would not be less than five hundred.

The idea of *X* translating *Arya* makes the hair stand on end! It would be much easier for me to write 500 books. Perhaps I have done so — if all I have scribbled is to be taken into account against me. But as most of it will not see the light of day — at least of public day, I may still escape establishing the record in book-production.

(CWSA 35: 467-68)

On translating

. . . Yes, it will be very good for you to read and translate the *Arya*. We have not until now been able to get the numbers you wanted from Calcutta, and at present we have not a set of the *Arya* available. I will send you a copy of the *Essays on the Gita*, first series; it will be best for you to begin with this and translate it. Accustom yourself to translate only a little every day and do it very carefully. Do not write in haste; go several times through what you have written and see whether it accurately represents the spirit of the original, and whether the language cannot be improved. In all things, in the mental and physical plane, it should be your aim, at present, not to go fast and finish quickly, but to do everything carefully, perfectly, and in the right manner.

(CWSA 36: 321)

No variation

What I want to know is — when does God take full charge of our sadhana?

The sadhana described in the Arya in the beginning was based on the conviction that God was the sadhak. In subsequent years, individual effort was permitted in Arya, something like cooperation between the individual and God.

This is an error. There is no such variation in the beginning of the *Arya* and in subsequent years.

(CWSA 35: 107)

An erroneous suggestion

30th December 1922
Arya Office
Pondicherry

. . . He should now without interrupting his higher psychic development give more attention to a self-controlled meditation and mental enlargement. In one letter he

speaks of interrupting the reading of “Arya” from the fear of growing too intellectual. This was an erroneous suggestion of his own mind. Let him by all means read and study these things. Of course in this kind of mental enlargement and self-controlled meditation there are dangers and likelihood of mistakes as in all the rest of Yoga. But I think it is what he needs at the present stage. The progress would be slow but it is likely to be more safe, and he can resume the full psychic development when the necessary conditions can be provided. He should also turn his will towards mental and vital purification. . . .

(CWSA 36: 337, 339)

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