

THE ADVENT

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*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



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The Advent

Whoever can go beyond the brain
to the heart will hear the voice of
the Eternal.

SRI AUROBINDO



The ADVENT

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1972

Let us all try to be worthy
of Sri Aurobindo's century.



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIAL

(A note on Kalidasa's "The Hero and the Nymph" (translated by Sri Aurobindo), staged at the Ashram Theatre on December 1st and December 3rd, 1971.)

THE story of Kalidasa's "The Hero and the Nymph" is the eternal legend of the marriage of heaven and earth upon earth. The Heavenly Beauty can descend upon earth and be united to a human soul only, as it appears, under a malediction; for heaven and earth are normally understood to be opposites and contradictories. The malediction means that the union can happen under certain limitations. First of all, there is the limitation of time, that is to say, the union does not last long, it can be only for a more or less short duration : even the span of human life is too long for it. It is not in the nature of supreme love to linger long on our murky earth :

"Only a little the God light can stay."

Secondly the limitation is that of a mixture, a dilution. The quality and nature of Divine Love entering earth suffers an alteration, a diminution and pollution. It is mixed with baser elements of human

nature. Kalidasa mentions too of these — foremost of all is jealousy — jealousy that caught Urvasie like a wild fire and made her run helter-skelter and enter straight into the arms of self-oblivion and infra-consciousness — she turned into a soulless plant; secondly, the limitation that the very intensity and turbulence of passion bring — it is not only turbulence but turbidity, love gone mad, love becoming lunacy — that is Pururavas, his cry :

“Halt, ruffian, halt! Thou in thy giant arms
Bearest away my Urvasie !..”

His cry almost verges on King Lear’s heart-rending frantic yell : “Blow, Winds and crack your cheeks; rage, blow.”, relieved, one may say in Kalidasa, by his sheer poetry — but in Shakespeare also not less so, although in a different hue and tune. This tumult of the soul, the raging raving wild thing that man becomes — this seems to be, in Kalidasa, the price that mortality has to pay for a touch of divinity — it is the churning of the ocean that yields at last immortality. It may be suggested here that the queen is a foil, a call back to poise, wisdom, steadiness, to normalcy. She represents also the consent of the mere human to the divine dispensation.

A Shakespearean tragedy Kalidasa avoids by finding a way out of the impasse — a happy marriage between heaven and earth is possible if with the heaven agreeing to come down upon earth, earth too on its side agrees to go up to heaven. The heavenly Bride can stay here on earth as companion to Pururavas only if Pururavas agrees to go up to heaven, consents to take up the Gods’ work.

The earthly mixture presumably gives to the pure heavenly love a zest, a strange homely taste which otherwise it could not have. The white diamond with this immixture of the earthly ray becomes as it were a ruby.

Here was a human soul, a rare human soul, a soul of beauty and bravery. Even on earth he was in the service of the Gods and as a reward he was given the chance of lifting the divine trophy and treasure it in his earthly home : he succeeded in possessing the treasure as he continued to be in the service of the Divine.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

SRI AUROBINDO: PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM

WITH anyone who would say that it does not matter whether we call Sri Aurobindo a “philosopher” or a “mystic”, and that to discuss whether he is properly to be designated one or the other, neither or both, is idle, and just “a matter of words”, I am in considerable sympathy; but still the discussion need not be idle; and in fact our choice of words in all contexts is a very important thing, and precision of terminology cannot be separated from precision of apprehension, thought, vision—in short, such knowledge as we have: aside from the fact that if we do not clarify our terms we cannot communicate at all. So it may be in order to make some effort to see just what Sri Aurobindo has to do with “philosophy” and “mysticism”, whatever they may be.

I have been prompted here by S. K. Maitra’s article, “Is Sri Aurobindo a Mystic?”¹ I am afraid that I can say little more for the said article than that a modern philosophy professor might consider it “technically competent” (for what the consideration might be worth); and that, to a serious seeker and one with some really meaningful competence withal, it raises a question only to obscure it; and drives the answer, if not to cover, then far afield. For Professor Maitra does not approach an adequate idea of what mysticism is—that is, he does not lay or discover a sufficient groundwork—and he tells us little more than that Sri Aurobindo is not Plotinus.

It is a curious thing that, having all of India to draw upon, the professor should cite Evelyn Underhill as his one authority, and proceed as if mysticism were wholly a Western and chiefly a Christian development. Of course it is true that the word “mysticism” is Western, and comes from the Greek: the derivation is not certain, but perhaps the fundamental meaning is “keeping silence”. We are told that this is selfish, and that the mystic is a kind of aristocratic hoarder, who gloats over his rare distinction and would withhold the divine gifts from mankind. Also we are told that he is concerned

¹ First published in *The Advent*, August, 1946; later included in the volume *The Meeting of the East and the West in Sri Aurobindo’s Philosophy*.

with "being"—that is, being something superior—and not with "knowing"; and that it is a matter of "intuition" alone and has no "rational element". And the mystic of the professor's imagination is most utterly contemned as wanting to have a "monopoly of God".

I must say now that I have never heard of a mystic who is much like this caricature. No genuine mystic would deny or wish to deny that very same "monopoly of God" to anyone who could achieve it or receive it. The mystic does not *withhold* either knowledge or being from the rest of mankind, for the sake of exclusive possession; he is willing and glad to share, but he knows that the sharing must be with the relative few who are capable of it; and that, in Christian or Biblical terms, swine have a tendency not only to trample pearls into the mud, but to turn and rend the giver. The darkness comprehendeth not the light: the individual nature must purify itself or be purified, and achieve or receive an individual glory. This is not "selfish", and if ego remains, it means that the mystical aspirant has more to do: it is not of the *essence* of mysticism, as Professor Maitra seems to suppose.

Hitherto mysticism, whether Eastern or Western, from the Vedic times on down, has flourished in small groups of dedicated people or in isolated individuals who were true aspirants, capable of the necessary discipline. They have kept secrets—kept silence—for two reasons: because it would be certainly useless and probably harmful to tell these things to those not prepared, and because the real thing, even with the best will in the world, cannot be told. Most people talk too much anyway, wasting their ill-directed energies; and to bandy words of the great secret is to debase and trivialize it, not to raise mankind. And no matter how true the expression, it must be lost on those who are not ready for it: and the real communion, and communion, is in the Silence.

But now we live in more "democratic" times—on the brink of the new divine age—and must do our best to clarify, and to spread the tidings to whomever may be responsive. There is a secret that has perhaps escaped Underhill and Maitra alike: that in true and authentic mystical experience to "know" and to "be" are identical. This is as true of St. Teresa in her "transverberation" quite alone with God—as true of Plotinus "alone with the Alone"—as it is

of Sri Aurobindo at his largest and most inclusive and world-transforming. But of course the Knowledge that is Being is not of an intellectual kind, and has no "rational content": this is true not only of the mysticism that Professor Maitra does not want, but of all genuine spiritual experience. The spiritual in fact is by definition not the mental: all the regions of spiritualized mind, we are told by Sri Aurobindo, are decisively *higher* than intellect, and thus have no "intellectual content". It is only in the proportion that the intellect has what may be called "spiritual content", indeed, that it is of any service to a yogi, or an advanced spiritual aspirant. The rational mind is a lower instrument fumbling in the darkness; at best it keeps order within ignorance, and helps make it possible for one to rise to the suprarational. In those higher, mystical regions there is a higher, a suprarational order of things; one is not sunk in subrational, or rational, confusion. The experience, the Being that is Knowledge and the Knowledge that is Being, can to some extent be rationalized as in mystical literature, including Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*; this does not mean that the thing itself is at all rational, or has any intellectual content or element.

Of course Professor Maitra is right in what is perhaps his main emphasis: that Sri Aurobindo as a world-saving figure is far greater than all our traditional mystics. But yet I see no reason for refusing to call him a "mystic" on that account. All the narrower mystical experiences are also his, and they are essential to the full realization: he knows the truth of the Alone as well as the truth that transcends it. He has more suprarational experience, knowledge, being than others; and he has brought Divinity to the transformation of the world; but this does not make his unparalleled achievement any the less "mystical", and he has certainly kept silence: that is, he has not even attempted any complete exposition of his yoga, in ultimate terms. Also his Integral Yoga is not "democratic", if this means that it is available to everyone, in the sense that every being on earth can have the complete divine realization, without hierarchy or conditional divergence. Even in the divine Identity there must always be greater and lesser achievement; and there is forever more to achieve, for everyone. In dreaming of his "democratic" millennium, Professor Maitra is perhaps himself approaching "mysticism" in the pejora-

tive sense: that is, a sentimental mistiness.

But what he is doing primarily is taking or rather attempting to take a philosophical approach to mysticism: that is, an externalistic approach, entirely inadequate. So long as there is the "rational element", one cannot have the real thing.

Thus he persists in speaking of Sri Aurobindo's "philosophy", though Sri Aurobindo himself has decisively declined to accept the designation, and has assured us that he is not a philosopher at all. He has written in philosophical terms, but that is another matter. There is only one way in which philosophy can be of use to a spiritual aspirant: by helping him to develop, discipline, enlarge and lift his mind, refine and purify his mental being, until it can go beyond philosophy, or receive supraphilosophical that is suprarational light: helping him to become a Jnana Yogi. Sri Aurobindo of course is far more than a Jnana Yogi—not to speak of just a philosopher, that is a groping intellectual speculator. He can be called a philosopher—loosely—only if the term is taken in its largest sense—a "love of wisdom" that is an attempt to Know, to enlarge one's whole nature in Truth. And even here he is more than a philosopher, an aspirant under the control of a rational mind that looks above, and will perfect and not blight the nature: for he has not only attempted, but achieved. He deals, not in "concepts" and provisional formulations, but in realities.

Jesse Roarke

SRI AUROBINDO: THE SPIRITUAL POET

THE poet W. B. Yeats once observed, "A work of art is the social act of a solitary man." The truth of this pregnant observation is fully borne out in the life of Sri Aurobindo—who spent forty years of his life in a more or less complete withdrawal from all public activities especially the vortex of a revolutionary political struggle against foreign domination. In a letter to an old political associate Mr. Baptista he called Pondicherry his cave of Tapasya. But as is evident from the thirty bulky volumes of his works this withdrawal was an exploration into the occult but luminous realms of gold which hold in themselves the secret of human spiritual regeneration. It was

The olden quest, the golden quest, the quest for
everlasting things...

which brought him to this hallowed place.

Sri Aurobindo, in the manner of the old conquistadors discovered for man

luminous tracts and heavens serene
And Eldorados of splendour and ecstasy
And temples to the Godhead none can see.

When we read lines like these:

A deathbound littleness is not all we are:
Immortal our forgotten vastnesses
Await discovery in our summit selves;
Unmeasured breadths and depths of being are ours...

we hear what the Greek critic called 'the reverberation of a great soul'. The glowing magnificence and what Bagehot characterised as 'the haunting atmosphere of enhancing suggestions' of his poems is a triumph of spiritual description. I call it a triumph because the

well-known American poet-critic Louis Untermeyer after a review of modern trends in poetry thus formulates his conception of this great art. 'Poetry', he observes, 'attempts to express the inexpressible in terms of the unforgettable.' In the light of this when one surveys Sri Aurobindo's huge poetical works culminating in his epic *Savitri* one has only to catch his breath and ejaculate '*Inopem me copia fecit*'— the wealth of examples overwhelms me. Those whose imaginations are still awake and whose hearts are yet uncalcined by the staleness of a meaningless pursuit of shadowy pleasures are bound to thrill ecstatic by the splendour and sustained majesty of lines like these:

Our souls can visit in great lonely hours
 Still regions of imperishable Light,
 All-seeing eagle-peaks of silent Power
 And moon-flame oceans of swift fathomless Bliss
 And calm immensities of spirit Space.

(*Savitri*, Bk. I, C. IV)

His poetry enshrines a new vision of human life moulded and transformed by what he calls the 'plenary supramental illumination' and that inevitably requires an ampler style, a rhythm capable of sustaining impassioned and prophetic statements of the greater life that awaits us when we will emerge from the present morass of the materialistic values of life.

Even his earliest poems reveal a maturity of thought, richness of imagery fraught with a sensuous delicacy rising to sublime heights, and the perfect mastery of execution. All these foreshadow his spiritual idealism. His poems on Ireland composed when he was a student in England—it may be mentioned in parenthesis he was sent there at the age of seven and stayed there for fourteen years—have found him a place in George Sampson's *History of English Literature* and W.B. Yeats once remarked that he was the only Indian who could write creatively in English. This is how the opening lines of his first poem presage the fuller articulation of his mystical experiences:

Sweet is the night, sweet and cool
 As to parched lips a running pool;
 Sweet when the flowers have fallen asleep
 And only moonlight rivulets creep
 Like glow-worms in the dim and whispering wood,
 To commune with the quiet heart and solitude,
 When earth is full of whispers, when
 No daily voice is heard of men,
 But higher audience brings
 The footsteps of invisible things...

and the call of the cuckoo in the following lines in the same poem gives us a hint of his own revivifying clarion call rousing the nation from her agelong slumber:

In the soft springtide comes the bird
 Of heaven whose speech is one sweet word,
 One word of sweet and magic power to bring
 Green branches back and ruddy lights of spring...

and now listen to the strains of 'The Blue Bird' a lyrical poem written much later—

I am the bird of God in his blue;
 Divinely high and clear
 I sing the notes of the sweet and the true
 For the god's and the seraph's ear.
 I rise like a fire from the mortal's earth
 Into a griefless sky
 And drop in the suffering soil of his birth
 Fire-seeds of ecstasy.
 My pinions soar beyond Time and Space
 Into unfading Light;
 I bring the bliss of the Eternal's face
 And the boon of the Spirit's sight.

and now the soul-animating voice in the last verse

Nothing is hid from my burning heart;
 My mind is shoreless and still;
 My song is rapture's mystic art,
 My flight immortal will.

A.D. Hope in his essay "The Three Faces of Love" makes a very profound and perceptive observation. He argues 'As the mark of the active way of life is to possess the objects of desire, and the mark of the contemplative way of life is to enjoy the knowledge of the objects of desire, so the mark of the creative way of life is to bring new objects of desire into being.' Wordsworth also meant the same thing when he said that a great poet creates his own taste by which he is to be enjoyed. Well, if this be the mark of a great poet then Sri Aurobindo leads the roll of the great creators whose names are sacred to human memory. Everywhere his poetry extends our sensibilities to the vision of new galaxies in new dimensions. Again and again he touches chords that had never resounded before. The wealth of powerful imagery and significant details with which he has enshrined unforgettably his spiritual visions makes them throb with a directness and vividness in our imaginations so that they become in his own phrase a 'lodestar of nature's aspiration'. His longer poems like those of Shelley's 'are best studied along with the showers of star-dust that attended their launching into space'. The style and verse have everywhere a controlled force and a transparent purity. I will now read out his sonnet, 'Transformation'. By way of introduction I may point out that the aim of his Integral Yoga is first an ascent to the highest spiritual planes and then a descent of that Light, Bliss, Wideness and Power into the whole lower nature of man—his mind, his vital and even the cells of the physical body. In the following sonnet the experience is projected into direct sensuous embodiment with the texture of the verse full of suggestive overtones:

TRANSFORMATION

My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream;

It fills my members with a might divine:
I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine.

Time is my drama or my pageant dream.
Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme.
And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine
Channels of rapture opal and hyaline
For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.

I am no more a vassal of the flesh,
A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.
My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,
My body is God's happy living tool,
My spirit a vast sun of deathless light.

Mark that the body is firstly not discarded but transformed and secondly the transformation thus effected is not a mere personal achievement but the body no longer weighed down by its age-old inertia has become God's happy living tool. From the last quatrain of another sonnet we learn what is meant by its becoming God's tool.

My heart shall throb with the world-beats of Thy love;
My body become Thy engine for earth-use;
In my nerves and veins Thy rapture's streams shall move;
My thoughts shall be hounds of Light for Thy power
to loose.

The divinized body has to work for the whole earth with its radiance and bliss. The transformation sought after is not for any personal well-being but for God's work in the world. This is further elucidated in his poem 'Jivanmukta'. The Jivanmukta who has achieved complete liberation from the clutches of Desire and its dark brood of sorrows has now no personal need to prolong his stay on earth. But Sri Aurobindo gives to the concept a new turn and thus makes a sharp departure from the aim pursued in traditional yogas. Personal liberation is the first necessity of yoga but then there is the work of

redeeming the world of Ignorance struggling towards Light. I will read out the last three verses of the poem:

Although consenting here to a mortal body,
 He is the Undying; limit and bond he knows not;
 For him the aeons are a playground
 Life and its deeds are its splendid shadow.

Only to bring God's forces to waiting Nature,
 To help with wide-winged Peace her tormented labour
 And heal with joy her ancient sorrow,
 Casting down light on the inconscient darkness,

He acts and lives. Vain things are mind's smaller motives
 To one whose soul enjoys for its high possession
 Infinity and the sempiternal
 All is his guide and beloved and refuge.

This is the meaning of liberation in his yoga. It is made further clear by a letter of Sri Aurobindo's where he says, 'My point about my sadhana was that my sadhana was not done for myself but for the earth-consciousness as a showing of the way towards the Light so that whatever I showed in it to be possible—inner growth, transformation, manifesting of new faculties, etc.—was not of no importance to anybody, but meant as an opening of lines and ways for what had to be done.' In another letter he writes, 'I have no intention of achieving the Supermind for myself only — I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (Moksha) nor supramentalisation. If I am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others. My supramentalisation is only a key for opening the gates of the Supramental to the earth-consciousness; done for its own sake, it would be perfectly futile.'

Another great contribution of his poetry is that it strikes a note of affirmation, a note which everything that our spiritual vision has seen will be actualised and given a material shape on earth. The

note of negation has ever shadowed human progress. And when the progress is towards a luminous ideal the word of negation perpetually clouds our vision and saps our will by its depressing murmur, 'The mud is constant; and the stars are ever out of reach'. Sri Aurobindo's poetry is a counterblast to this insistent word of despair.

“Oh, surely one day he shall come to our cry,
 One day he shall create our life anew
 And utter the magic formula of peace
 And bring perfection to the scheme of things.
 One day he shall descend to life and earth,
 Leaving the secrecy of the eternal doors,
 Into a world that cries to him for help,
 And bring the truth that sets the spirit free,
 The joy that is the baptism of the soul,
 The strength that is the outstretched arm of Love.
 One day he shall lift his beauty's dreadful veil,
 Impose delight on the world's beating heart
 And bare his secret body of light and bliss.”

(*Savitri*, Bk. 2, C. VI)

Now I will quote a passage from his long poem 'Ahana' (the dawn of god). The poem opens with a magnificent full-chorded paean sung by the voices of the hunters of spiritual joy who are the first to greet her when she descends on this world of strife and trouble of mortality. The dactylic beat with the interplay of classical quantity and the English stress-beat gives the poem the oceanic surge and sweep of the Homeric epics. This is another contribution of Sri Aurobindo's to the English rhythmic structure and invests the poem with a new motion, a polyphonic freedom and an orchestral sonority. I will read out Ahana's reply to their long supplication:

Voice of the sensuous mortal, heart of eternal longing,
 Thou who hast lived as in walls, thy soul with thy senses' wronging!
 But I descend at last. Fickle and terrible, sweet and deceiving,
 Poison and nectar one has dispensed to thee, luring thee, leaving.
 We two together shall capture the flute and the player relentless.

Son of man, thou hast crowned thy life with the flowers that are
 scentless,
 Chased the delights that wound. But I come and midnight shall
 sunder.

Lo, I come, and behind me knowledge descends and with thunder
 Filling the spaces Strength, the Angel, bears on his bosom
 Joy to thy arms. Thou shalt look on her face like a child's or a
 blossom,

Innocent, free as in Eden of old, not afraid of her playing,
 When thy desires I have seized and devoured like a lioness preying.
 Thou shalt not suffer always nor cry to me lured and forsaken:
 I have a snare for his footsteps, I have a chain for him taken.
 Come then to Brindavan, soul of the joyous; faster and faster
 Follow the dance I shall teach thee with Shyama for slave and for
 master.

Follow the notes of the flute with a soul aware and exulting;
 Trample Delight that submits and crouch to a sweetness insulting.
 Then shalt thou know what the dance meant, fathom the song and
 the singer,
 Hear behind the thunder its rhymes, touched by lightning thrill to
 his finger,
 Brindavan's rustle shalt understand and Yamuna's laughter,
 Take thy place in the Ras and thy share of the ecstasy after.

In a footnote he explains the word Ras in these words, 'The dance-
 round of Krishna with the cowherdesses in the moonlit groves of
 Brindavan, type of the dance of Divine Delight with the souls of
 men liberated in the Bliss secret within us.'

Finally, his great contribution to English poetry is the secret of
 Mantra and how its possibilities can be exploited in English. I can-
 not here enter into a fuller treatment of the subject but shall content
 myself with quoting a passage from *Savitri* where he has crystallized
 the whole secret of the mantric power. Richard Lannoy has cited
 this passage in his book 'The Speaking Tree' with these words, 'The
 following lines by Sri Aurobindo summarize the significance of the
 Word to Hinduism.' When the mantra falls on the receptive ears,
 Sri Aurobindo says:

Its message enters stirring the blind brain
 And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sound;
 The hearer understands a form of words
 And, musing on the index thought it holds,
 He strives to read it with the labouring mind,
 But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:
 Then, falling silent in himself to know
 He meets the deeper listening of his soul:
 The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains:
 Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body's self
 Are seized unalterably and he endures
 An ecstasy and an immortal change;
 He feels a Wideness and becomes a Power,
 All knowledge rushes on him like a sea:
 Transmuted by the white spiritual ray
 He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
 Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech...

(*Savitri*, Bk 4, C. III)

The passage itself emanates mantric vibrations. The verse moves with lovely assonances and alliterations making melody and spreading magic with the blank verse flowing and lucid and yet free from any dissolute overflow or loose liquidity. The separate harmony of the single lines is clearly felt without any arrest of continuity. This is mantra par excellence.

Thank you

RAVINDRA KHANNA

MY DISCOVERY OF THE LIFE DIVINE

IT seems to me that from the very young age I was taking keen interest in the study and learning of the books in which the fundamental problems of philosophy and their solutions are discussed. I therefore gradually studied all the systems of Indian philosophy, the Sankhya, Nyaya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta, not excluding Buddhism, Jainism and the materialist charvaka. While studying Shankar's commentary on the Vedanta Sutras, specially his criticisms of other philosophic systems, his arguments appeared to me so impeccable and convincing that I decided to read his philosophy very thoroughly. I therefore studied, all the important works written by his followers. For several years during this period my mind seemed to be floating on water without finding any standing ground. At last after eight years when I studied the 'Advait Siddhi' written by Sri Madhusudan Saraswati in which the philosophy of Shankar reaches its highest culmination, I felt that I found its bottom and I could measure its height and depth and length and breadth.

Before I begin to explain my difficulties in understanding the validity of this system, I would like to mention here the contribution which Shankar made to the philosophical thinking of India. Although the Veda, the Upanishads and the Gita, the three great scriptures in which almost all the followers of Vedic culture have absolute faith, are monistic. They hold one and the only one Supreme Reality behind this universe. But the difference or rather opposition between Spirit and Matter (Chetana and jada) appeared to them so great that the philosophers generally were not convinced in their mind and heart by monism. It was very difficult to conceive Matter to be Brahman or vice versa. Hence the dualistic and pluralistic systems like Sankhya, Yoga and Nyaya were born. The Atheistic system of Sankhya based on the verses of Ishwara Krishna was not appealing much to the thinkers. The pluralistic system of Nyaya was more prevalent. It was Shankar who by his subtle arguments and forceful presentation, clarified the Indian thinking and established monism permanently. The influence of his Mayavada can be seen even on Sayana, the well-known

translator of the Vedas, who belonged to the ritualistic school of Mimamsa. Even the followers of Bhakti school who could not relish the theory of the unreality of the world, explained their systems in terms of monism. Shankar is perfectly logical in proving the sole reality of Brahma behind the universe and so he is rightly respected as the world teacher, Jagadguru.

There is a stage in spiritual sadhana when all the movements in the world seem to be the activities of the Nature and soul remains only an impartial witness. This experience is quite enough to liberate the soul from the bondage of the Prakriti. This solution is offered by Sankhya Darshan. But there is a higher stage in sadhana when behind the soul and the nature some other Reality is seen (क्षरात्मानो ईशते देव एकः). The philosophy of Sankhya does not solve completely the problem of the relation of the soul and the Nature. Similarly there is a stage in sadhana when everything in the world, our eating, drinking, social service, human service, even performance of yogic sadhana is seen as illusory, a sort of dream imposed upon the soul, by itself or by some other agency. Just as a man puts on clothes to see some festival, similarly soul puts on these clothes — body, mind, life, eating, drinking etc. to see the world. One can see moment after moment putting on and putting off of these garbs. But this is not the highest or the final stage. There are higher stages in which the world and all its activities are seen to be intimately connected with the Divine. In this stage the meaning and the significance of the activities of the world is entirely changed. Everything is seen as the manifestation of the Divine Idea, Will, Consciousness and Force. Shankar's philosophy did not perhaps reach that stage. Shankar therefore while proving the sole reality of Brahman is perfectly right, but when he tried to prove the unreality of the world he was partially right and I could not agree with his arguments.

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My difficulties in understanding the unreality of the world were twofold, one from the side of logic and another from the side of authority. There are generally three causes by which a thing is created, the material, the efficient and the instrumental. For example

for a pot clay is the material cause, potter is the efficient cause and his wheel, stick etc., are the instrumental cause. In the cases of illusory appearances there is another cause called basic cause or adhithana. When a rope appears as a snake, the rope is the adhithana or basic cause. According to the philosophy of Shankar when a rope appears as a snake an absolutely new snake is created there. There the mistaken identity of the rope is the material cause or upadana for the creation of the new snake. Similarly from the Ignorance of Brahman an absolutely new world is created, Brahman being its Adhithan cause and its Ignorance the material cause or *upādāna*. According to the Nyaya philosophy the percipient who mistakes the rope as the snake had actually seen a snake somewhere and now projects that perception on the rope because of their close resemblance This view of Nyaya philosophy is called anyatha-khyati and the theory of Mayavada is called anirvachaniya khyati.

Here arises a question: who is in ignorance? whose ignorance is the cause of the creation of the world? Is it Jiva or Brahman? What is Jiva? According to Shankar's philosophy Jiva is consciousness limited by mind (antahkaranachchinna chaitanya). To pure consciousness illusory appearance is not possible, it is possible only when it is limited or conditioned by mind or *antahkaraṇa*, and this limitation is possible when the mind is in existence. Mind can function only when there exists a healthy body and senses and that is possible again when the Earth, the Sun, and Nebulae are in existence which means the creation of the world. Thus the ignorance of Jiva can create the illusory world only when the world has already been created. This is a fallacy of mutual dependence (anyonyaasraya). This theory accepts beforehand what it sets out to prove.

Let us say then that it is the pure Brahman who is the subject as well as the object of Ignorance who sees the illusory world. This theory has been accepted by Madhusudan Saraswati.*

The first difficulty in this theory is that Brahman is absolutely static, motionless, immutable, immobile (कूटस्थ, अक्षर, अचल, अविकार्य), if there would be the least movement in it, it would perish like pot, cloth etc.** Therefore the movement of illusory appearance cannot be possible in Brahman. It may be said that there is another force called Maya which imposes the false appearance of the world upon

the pure consciousness of Brahman. But Brahman is described in the Upanishad, All-Light (ज्योतिर्मय) All-knowing, Omniscient (सर्वज्ञ, सर्ववित्) Omnipotent (सर्वशक्तिमान्) and Ignorance or Maya is a sort of darkness, how can then we imagine that Brahman's own light cannot dispel this darkness? If somehow Maya is able to cover his pure light then Maya must be more powerful than Brahman. In that case we have to accept two equally powerful realities, Brahman and Maya. And as Brahman is not able to destroy this dark force, how will it be destroyed? By the mental knowledge of the Jivas who are the creatures of Maya? It seems to be impossible. Maya must be as eternal as Brahman and so the world also must be eternal and there is no hope for men to be free from their ignorance. It may be said that Maya does not really cover the real nature of Brahman but creates the world without it. But this is not possible. When a man sees a snake in place of a rope, his knowledge is really concealed by the ignorance of the rope. If the perceiver knows that it is a rope, the new snake would not be created, would not appear to the perceiver, whatever would appear to him would be real. Similarly the world created by Maya without covering Brahman's knowledge would be real.

Another difficulty for me in understanding the unreality of the world in Shankar's philosophy was this: It is said in the Upanishads that Brahman perceived (or thought), 'I am one, let me become many, let me create worlds, he created these worlds, he became many'¹. As Brahman is All-knowing, pure truth, pure in consciousness, infinite in knowledge², there is no possibility in him of any false idea. All the examples of creation given in the Upanishads show Brahman as the material cause and not the illusory cause. For instance, it is said that from the Spirit came ether, from ether was born air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth, from earth plants, from plants came forth bodies of living beings³, from body hair, nails etc., and again, from earth pot, from gold ornament, from iron nail-cutter, from milk butter, etc, etc.... In the Vedas and Upanishads and the Gita I could not find even a single instance of rope and snake, mother of pearl and silver, mirage and water. In spite of my best efforts I could not be convinced with the logic of the Maya-*vaḍā* that although Brahman was pure gold (शुद्धम्), pure in existence

(सत्), pure in consciousness (चित्), pure in knowledge (ज्ञानम्), pure truth (सत्यम्) still the very first idea that occurred in him was false, and not only that idea but from the beginning till the end every thing he created was false. Or that, being omnipotent, all-ruler (सर्वेश्वर) he could not dispel by his light and force the darkness imposed upon him by some other false agency or that he would perish like an earthen pot if the slightest movement, even of an idea of creation, occurs in him. The Upanishads say that what he created was real⁴ (सत्, याथातथ्यतः); the Mayavada interprets these words as unreal (असत्, अयाथातथ्यतः). We can understand that an ornament made out of pure gold must be pure golden, but we cannot understand that the ornament made out of pure gold would by itself become iron or lead. Thinking in this way I came to the conclusion that as Brahman is true and pure in knowledge, the idea of creation that arose in him was the true idea. This is the seed about which it is said in the Shwetashwataropanishad that God manifested one seed into many forms (एकं बीजं बहुधा करोति). It is that seed according to the Gita, which is cast by the Divine in his womb called Mahad Brahman⁵. As this idea is true idea, the world created out of it must be true not illusory (जगत्सत्यं न मिथ्या). While I was doing research in the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, I read a paper in this subject explaining that just as an idea of a house in the mind of an engineer materialises in the form of the house, as an idea of a picture in the mind of an artist takes the form of a picture, likewise, the idea in the Mind of Brahman about the creation of the world takes the form of the world. There is no possibility of any ignorance or falsity either in the idea or the creation. During discussion on the paper Dr. R. B. Das, a realist, asked me a question, "what is the difference between the mind of man and the mind of God". I could not give any answer to that question at that time. But afterwards when I pondered seriously over the question, I received the following answer in my mind. Everything in the world requires four causes namely idea, will, action and material. For instance, for the building of a house it needs first an idea of the house in the mind of some man, secondly his will, his determination to build it and thirdly a mason and some labourers and fourthly bricks etc., as material. In human mind these are quite separate from each other. For example some old man,

feeling some difficulty in living thinks to build a new house for him, he has an idea of it. But he can think that he has become too old to undertake the job, and his grown up children could themselves make it if they so liked. So the idea is there but there is no will to carry it out. If the will is there the house may not be built if some mason and labourers are not available or if bricks etc., the necessary material is lacking. If any one of the four causes is missing no house would be built. But when the idea of world creation comes in the Mind of God, the will to carry on accompanies it. And as all the forces and things are various forms of God himself, the idea contains within itself necessary force and also the material to work it out. Hence idea, will, labour and material all these four causes are combined together in that Idea.

Moreover in the light of Shwetashwataropanishad I was feeling what is called illusory Maya by the Mayavadins must be the self-power of the Divine (देवात्म शक्ति) or the Paraprakriti of the Gita, i.e; his omniscience, omnipotence. Hence as I felt that there was no possibility that such a Divine Power would create an unreal world.

Thinking on these lines I had an aspiration to do Yoga in order to discover a philosophy in which the world should be the real manifestation of Brahman through the true Idea and by his All-Knowing, All-Powerful Divine force. I had discussed this problem with Prof. K.C. Bhattacharya who as a visiting professor was invited to deliver some lectures on certain philosophical problems in the Institute. He suggested me some books to read but I could get no material which could satisfy my thirst. At that very time, under certain mysterious circumstances I reached Pondicherry in November 1937 for Darshan and requested Sri Aurobindo to permit me to stay permanently in the Ashram and do Sadhana there. Sri Aurobindo wrote "It may turn out like that, but at present he is allowed to stay till February Darshan". I wrote him in reply "there is no distinction between the thought and the will and actuality of the Divine. If 'may be' is there 'must be' also must be there." After a few days the Mother sent me words through the Secretary, "The Mother is very much pleased with you. She has given you a room in the Ashram."

While I was doing Sadhana in the Ashram, naturally I began to read *The Life Divine* published in the Arya. While going through it

I was extremely delighted to find that the truth which my soul was searching after was in *The Life Divine* and that was what was needed for the present day world. What I used to call the mind of God, Sri Aurobindo named the Supermind, what I used to call Satya Sanklpa or true idea Sri Aurobindo named it 'Real Idea'. Sri Aurobindo also accepted Maya to be All-knowing Divine Power of God. Apart from that, while I proceeded further in reading *The Life Divine* I found solutions of many other such problems of philosophy, religion and human life which had been declared insoluble by human thought. In this way I came to the conclusion that the solutions given by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* were so correct, reasonable and convincing that they could be given only by one who had created the world. Just as the creator of a machine alone can explain correctly the purpose and functions of each part of the machine, similarly those solutions could be given by none other than one whom the Vedas speak as the World Creator (विश्वकर्मा) the World-Seer (विश्वचक्षा). In each and every word of the Life Divine I began to feel as if the world-creator out of compassion for his ignorant creatures had revealed the secrets of his creation by assuming human body.

After having this experience I thought that as the philosophy which I was in search of had already been brought down upon the earth by Sri Aurobindo, there was no need for me to do Sadhana for that purpose. What I could and should do with profit was to receive those truths in my mind, live them in life and express them, as far as possible, correctly in my own easily understandable language.

Keeping this idea in mind I requested Sri Aurobindo in 1939, when *The Life Divine* was being printed for the first time in a book form, to permit me to translate it into Hindi. Sri Aurobindo set me words through the secretary "Well, it is a monumental work, we shall consider it later on." In 1942 I requested him again to send me a copy of it for translation with his autograph and blessings. He sent me a copy of it in three volumes with his autograph. After sometime, while going for Pranama to the Mother, I gave her a letter requesting to give me written blessings for its translation. Taking my letter in her hand Mother closed her eyes and went into trance for a few minutes. When Mother opened her eyes she smiled and blessed me by keeping her hand over my head. Next day, Sri Nolini returned

back my letter on which the Mother wrote "My blessings for the translation of *The Life Divine*".

I have gone a little astray from the main subject of the article with which we started. The reason being that this article was written as an introduction to my translation of the *Life Divine* and there it was necessary to tell the readers my discovery and evaluation of *The Life Divine* and I believe that this part also would be equally interesting to the readers. In the next article I propose to deal with that subject i.e. Sri Aurobindo's contribution to philosophical thinking of the world.

(To be continued)

K. D. ACHARYA

(A free rendering of the author's Introduction to Divya Jivan, his Hindi translation of The Life-Divine)

- * आश्रयत्वविषयत्वभागिनी निर्विभागचित्तिरेव केवला ।
पूर्वसिद्धतमसो हि पश्चिमो नाश्रयो भवति नापि गोचरः ॥
- ** यदाश्रया क्रिया तमविकुर्वती नैवात्मानं लभते । यद्यात्मा क्रियया विक्रियेत, अनित्यत्व-
मात्मनः प्रसज्येत । तस्मान्न स्वाश्रया क्रियाऽऽत्मनः संभवति । — ब्रह्मसूत्रशांकरभाष्य १।१।४
- (1) तदैक्षत बहुस्यां प्रजायेय । छान्दोग्य ६।२॥
सरोक्षत लोकान्नु सृजा इति, स इर्माँल्लोकानसृजत ॥ ऐतरेय १।१।२॥
- (2) सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं, ऋतं, सत्यं, सर्वज्ञं, सर्ववित्
- (3) तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मनः आकाशः संभूतः, आकाशाद्वायुः, वायोरग्निः, अग्नेरापः, अद्भ्यः
पृथिवी, पृथिव्या ओषधयः, ओषधीभ्योऽन्नं, अन्नात्सुखः । — तैत्तिरीय २।१॥
- (4) कथमसतः सत् जायेत ॥ छान्दोग्य ६।२॥
याथातथ्यतोऽर्थाव्यदधाच्छाश्वतीम्यः समाम्यः ॥ ईश ८॥
- (5) •ममयोनिर्मद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ॥ गीता १४।३॥

OLD BENGALI MYSTIC POEMS

XLVII

BETWEEN the lotus and the thunderbolt my union was made:

The Outcast Woman blazed fierce in utter equanimity;

The house of the untouchable woman is burning,

it is on fire:

Take up the Moon and pour out the waters upon it.

It does not scorch, it does not burn, nor any smoke is seen.

By the northern pole it enters the heavens.

All the Gods and Godheads are burnt,

Burnt are the sacred threads and the tablet of rules.

Dhama says, he has a clear knowledge now

And the waters rise up the fivefold channel.

- line. 1. lotus=lotus of the heart.
thunderbolt=referring to the solidity and luminosity of the Supreme Consciousness, Nirvana.
- line 2. Outcast Woman=the Divine Soul in man; the name Chandali literally means she, the fierce one; outcast because usually not accepted or recognised by the ordinary consciousness.
We may remember the union achieved in between Ganga and Yamuna spoken of in the Tantras (Gangajamunayormadheya); *vide* also poem No. 14.
- line 4. Moon=Soma; immortality.
Waters=streams of immortality.
- line 6. Northern pole: the summit of being or consciousness, the southern pole being the lower end corresponding to *sahasrāra* at the top and *mūlādhāra* at the bottom, of the the Tantras, Sumeru and Kumeru.
- line 10. Fivefold channel: the five senses; also compare the fivefold sheaths of the Upanishads.

XLVIII

(The original text is lost. Only a Tibetan translation exists.)

XLIX

The boat made of the thunderbolt I ply across the bosom of the
Padma.

The cruel robbers looted all my burden.

Today, O Bhusaka, truly you have become a Bengali,

Your own wife is taken away by the outcast villains.

The five tablets, the sense-objects are now burnt.

I do not know where has entered my consciousness,

No more do I possess gold or silver;

In my own sphere I dwell in great happiness.

My four-square treasury is now exhausted—

there is no difference between life and death.

- line 1. Padma = the river of life.
line 3. Bengali = I am now my true self.
line 9. Four-square = full, complete.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIA

THE ESSENCE

THERE are, underlying all the multitudinous diversities of India's millennial endeavour, an abiding spirit, some essential characteristics which inform its total movement. "An ingrained and dominant spirituality, an inexhaustible vital creativeness and gust of life and, mediating between them, a powerful, penetrating and scrupulous intelligence combined of the rational, ethical and aesthetic mind each at a high intensity of action"¹ — this in sum is the essence of the Indian spirit. To miss or overemphasise any of these essential things in our past history will be to give an inadequate picture.

"The note of spirituality is dominant, initial, constant, always recurrent; it is the support of all the rest."² India has always been enamoured of the Infinite; it has been the ruling passion of its highest spirits to seek the Eternal, enter into some communion with it, express in whatever way its truth and beauty and delight through philosophy and thought, art and poetry, religion and the life's joy. A sound and stable social order, an opulence of material life unparalleled elsewhere until modern times, a political system that until its disruption by the medieval upheaval had provided an adequate guarantee for the unfettered development of the people's culture and life; these too, the things of "mundane" existence, derived their sap and support from the spiritual urge and experience.

It is important to grasp this synthetic quality of the Indian spirit, its ever-recurring tendency to create a bridge between the abstract and the concrete. "The Hindu has been always decried as a dreamer and mystic. There is truth in the charge, but also a singular inaccuracy. The Hindu mind, in one sense, is the most concrete in the world. It seeks after abstraction, yet is it never satisfied so long as it remains abstraction.... It is this double aspect of Hindu temperament which is the secret of our civilisation, our religion, our life and literature: extreme spirituality successfully attempting to work in harmony with extreme materialism."³

The synthetic approach to the problem of existence in all its varied aspects is the natural outcome of India's spiritual vision.

THE SPIRITUAL ASPIRATION¹

The essence of Indian spirituality lies in "a recognition of something greater than mind and life, the aspiration to a consciousness pure, great, divine, beyond our normal mental and vital nature, a surge and rising of the soul in man out of the littleness and bondage of our lower parts towards a greater thing secret within him."⁴

This "recognition of something greater than mind and life" opened up an endless vista of supra-physical realms, "worlds" as they are called in the Vedas and the Puranas, each with its corresponding plane or level of consciousness within man himself, the "sheaths" of the Upanishadic and later philosophic and Tantric terminology. Each of these worlds or planes of consciousness has its own peculiar powers of knowledge action and delight, its denizens and embodiments fully conscious in their own fields and sometimes exerting an influence on the other planes. They are in fact so inextricably mixed up one with another that the Upanishads and the Gita use the metaphor of weaving—woven as in a weft and woof—to describe concretely their texture.

But all this complexity of the visible and invisible worlds finds its unity and harmony in the Indian view through its recognition of Something or Someone unique that is manifested in all this diversity. The Veda calls it "the One of whom the sages speak variously"⁵ The Upanishads dwell on it as the "Self, the Spirit, the Godhead in man and creatures and Nature and all this world and in other worlds and beyond all cosmos, the Immortal, the One, the Infinite"⁶ The Gita's Purushottama who is the All and is beyond the All, the Tantra's Mahashakti creatrix and upholder of the universe are but other names of this One and Unique. It is This that provides the base for the synthetic spiritual vision of India.

It is This also that lies at the root of the practical side of Indian spirituality, which is known by the generic term Yoga. "The principle of Yoga is the turning of one or of all powers of our human existence into a means of reaching the divine Being."⁷ Here too there is

an endless complexity of approach and result; the variations spring from the particular instrument chosen as the leverage and the result intended or aspired for. The Hathayoga fixes on the powers of the body and the life-force latent in the body; its primary aim and result is an immense capacity for the body's well-being and capacities. The Rajayoga chooses the mental being and primarily aims at the mastery of the whole apparatus of thought and consciousness. The Yoga of Knowledge selects the reason and the mental vision, the Yoga of Devotion selects the emotional and aesthetic powers of the soul, the Yoga of Works the will to work and action. The different schools of Tantric Yoga seek to convert the whole man and his lower nature of the senses into some figure of perfection.

But whatever the divergences in method and primary aim, all the systems of Indian Yoga find their essential unity in the final objective. That objective is liberation, "the liberation of the soul of man from its present natural ignorance and limitations, its release into spiritual being, its union with the highest self and Divinity."⁸ The nature of the liberation aimed at varies with the particular view of the human personality and the supreme Divinity. It may be the "self-oblivious abolition of the soul's personal being in the absorption of the One, *sāyujya-mukti*.... There is an eternal ecstatic dwelling in the highest existence of the Supreme, *sālokyā*.... There is an eternal love and adoration in a uniting nearness... *sāmīpyā*. There is an identity of the soul's liberated nature with the divine nature, *sādṛśya-mukti*."⁹ There is the Buddhist *nirvāṇa*; the Jaina aims at *kaivalya*, the sole purity of soul-existence sheer and absolute. But the ultimate result of all this striving, the essential nature of all Yoga is "a high effort of the human spirit to rise beyond the life of desire and vital satisfaction and arrive at an acme of spiritual calm, greatness, strength, illumination, divine realisation, settled peace and bliss."¹⁰

RELIGION IN INDIA

Nowhere else perhaps in the whole range of the Indian endeavour is the spirit of widest catholicity more apparent, nowhere its ability to found all diversities on a secure sense of order more persistent than in its dealings with popular religion. Indian religion gave

itself no name—"Hinduism" is a modern invention, it is unknown to any of our scriptural texts,—because it admitted all possible forms of human worship within its fold. It had no single authoritative scripture; the Veda, the Upanishads, the Gita, Puranas, Tantras, sayings of the Buddha, Mahavira, Kabir, Sri Chaitanya, songs and poems of the southern saints, of Nanak and the mystics of medieval Maharashtra—to mention only the best-known names—are all reckoned as "scriptures"; deference is paid to them entirely according to the bent of the particular worshipper, no one compels obedience on pain of eternal hell. This is not to say that all of them are of equal worth: the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita rank among the highest that the religious spirit in man has created, and we shall have to devote more than one essay to study them in the barest outline. The point to emphasise here is that these numerous scriptures are an index of the Indian spirit of toleration, a sign of its ever enlarging tradition; they also serve to maintain the long continuity of this tradition over the past three thousand years and more.

It is well to understand the real source of strength of this millennial effort. Indian religion, it is often pointed out by foreign observers, is a medley of confusions. It is animism, anthropolatry, ancestor-worship; it is pantheism and henotheism; in fact it is no "religion" at all, only a way of life, a socio-religious system.¹¹ It is precisely here, in this "confusion", that lies its strength. For "its method has been the method of evolutionary Nature herself, to allow all developments, all means of communication and action of the spirit upon the members, all ways of communion between man and the Supreme or Divine."¹² The aim of a spiritual culture "must be not only to raise to inaccessible heights the few elect, but to draw all men and all life and the whole human being upward."¹³ This it could do only by taking each man at the stage of evolution he has reached and providing him with the kind of spiritual support he can understand and utilise. "To the soul that knows...God is all and all is the Godhead....Ordinary religion is a sacrifice to partial godheads, other than the integral Divinity....Men consecrate their life and works ordinarily to partial powers or aspects of the divine Existence as they see or conceive them—mostly powers and aspects that ensoul to them things prominent in Nature and man or else reflect to them their own humanity in a divine

exceeding symbol. If they do this with faith, then their faith is justified; for the Divine accepts whatever symbol, form or conception of himself is present to the mind of the worshipper...and meets him according to the faith that is in him....However small or low the form of the worship, however limited the idea of the godhead, however restricted the giving, the faith, the effort to get behind the veil of one's own ego-worship and limitation by material Nature, it yet forms a thread of connection between the soul of man and the All-soul and there is a response."¹⁴

This is the entire rationale of the "medley of confusions" presented by Indian religion to the positivist thinker.

This religion took each man at the stage where he was, offered him a ritual that satisfied his heart, trained him in beliefs that suited his mind, and promised him benefits here and in the hereafter if he had faith. It also permeated his daily living with symbols of sacrifice that he might not forget his indebtedness to the cosmic Powers that preside over the movements of the universe. For it saw behind the outward phenomena the will and the activities of conscious Beings, far more powerful than man, Beings that could be approached through prayer and faith. The result was that there remained nothing that was "secular" in the Indian scheme of life.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK

If faith links the soul of man to the highest Reality, it is reason that acts as a bridge between the innate spiritual urge and the strong feeling for life natural to the healthy soul. Philosophy in India has been the most powerful aid in explaining with the analytical reason the truth of spirituality and Yoga, and justifying the faith on which popular religion finds its support.¹⁵ Here too we shall find the same bewildering diversity founded on an essential unity of aim and method, the same pursuit of the ultimate truths knowable to thought never for a moment losing sight of the possibility of their practical translation into life-experience, the marriage of the abstract with the concrete that marks the Indian spirit.

Indian philosophy is ultimately founded on spiritual experience;¹⁶ the Veda, and to a much greater degree, the Upanishads are its main-

stay, the intuitive knowledge embodied in them forms its basis and starting point. By that it does not become irrational or dogmatic, as some critics are inclined to suppose. The methods of Indian philosophy as developed in the various schools are entirely logical; indeed it was through a continuous process of acute debate among the exponents of particular points of view that these schools developed. Each had therefore to perfect its line of argument and meet those of the other schools with cogent reasons of its own. It is true that scriptural authority, *śabda*, was recognised as one of the means of proof. But even here, even in appealing to scripture, logic was not dispensed with. Far from it, for a whole system of philosophy, the *Purva-mimansa*, grew up around the science of interpretation, and its findings can be usefully adapted to any kind of interpretative work, legalistic or otherwise.

It may be asked, if scripture were held in such high esteem, why should there have been any debates at all? The answer is that the Vedas and the Upanishads looked at Reality in Its many different aspects; each of the philosophical schools fixed on one or more of these aspects and built its system on that basis. In such a method of approach, differences were bound to arise. And as is the habit of the human reason, it gets attached to a particular point of view and becomes its partisan.¹⁷ Hence arose the different view-points represented by the different schools. Here we find illustrated in striking fashion one peculiar tendency of the Indian mind to which Sri Aurobindo draws pointed attention: "to follow each motive, each specialisation of motive even, spiritual, intellectual, ethical, vital, to its extreme point and to sound its utmost possibility.... When it formulated a spiritual atheism, it followed that to its acme of possible vision. When, too, it indulged in materialistic atheism, — though it did that only with a side glance, as the freak of an insatiable intellectual curiosity, — yet it formulated it straight out, boldly and nakedly, without the least concession to idealism or ethicism."¹⁸

But a notable feature of Indian philosophic thought, as indeed of every other formulation of the Indian spirit, is that this extremism never resulted in disorder. "In every extreme the Indian spirit seeks for a law in that extreme and a rule, measure and structure in its application. Besides, this sounding of extremes is balanced by a still more

ingrained characteristic, the synthetical tendency, so that having pushed each motive to its farthest possibility, the Indian mind returns always towards some fusion of the knowledge it has gained...."¹⁹ This synthetic tendency is clearly apparent in the philosophical substance of the Gita, the Puranas, the Tantra. It is equally noticeable, though perhaps not so clearly, in the assimilation of nihilistic Buddhist thought in Shankaracharya, in the appropriation of Buddhist logic by the Nyaya and Mimamsa systems, in the acceptance of the Sankhya cosmology in much of later Vedantic thought. It was again this synthetic spirit that enabled almost all the systems to present a composite picture of their world-view: metaphysics, epistemology, logic, psychology, and ethics were inextricably linked together in their system. Still more important, it enabled them, or most of them, to accept as common ground the theories relating to Karma, rebirth, other worlds, the possibility and the necessity of man getting "liberated" from his ordinary lower nature of mind, life and body; they also shared in large measure a certain contempt for life on earth and the body in particular. A high code of ethical conduct is their common property. And whatever their particular differences, the total effect of philosophic thought on the mind of India can hardly be exaggerated.

DHARMA AND SHASTRA

But the work of the philosophical mind, the reasoning intelligence, was not confined to philosophy itself. It examined in the minutest detail the life of man in society and all his action social, economic and political, as well as all that concerns his individual well-being and progress moral, physical and aesthetic. It thus erected a science, a Shastra, in all these fields; and as a basis and principle of the Shastra, it sought for the particular law or laws that governed or should ideally govern physical nature in man and the world, and all man's activities individual and social. This was the Dharma. Dharma and Shastra thus understood give expression to the Indian spirit in one of its major aspects.

Here too there is a bewildering variety harmonised by a deep underlying oneness.

To take the physical sciences first, India, our critics tell us, sadly

lacked the scientific spirit, was too immersed in the search for the Beyond to care much for the physical world of material realities. This criticism omits to take into account the record of history. "The plain truth is that no nation before the modern epoch carried scientific research so far and with such signal success as India of ancient times. Not only was India in the first rank in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, surgery, all the branches of physical knowledge which were practised in ancient times, but she was, along with the Greeks, the teacher of the Arabs from whom Europe recovered the lost habit of scientific enquiry. In many directions India had the priority of discovery — to take only two striking examples among a multitude, the decimal notation in mathematics or the perception that the earth is a moving body in astronomy."²⁰ Here too, we may point to the practical aim always kept in view. The principles, the Dharma of each phenomenon once discovered, were at once utilised for the practical benefits they could confer — this not only in chemistry, medicine and surgery but also in mathematics and astronomy which were used in large measure for the religious ritual and for ascertaining man's fate astrology it must be remembered was raised in India almost to the position of an exact science, not less exact than modern medicine. And Indian science, in its multitude of details and sometimes conflicting theories, never lost sight of the fact that "the same general laws and powers hold in the spiritual, the psychological and the physical existence,"²¹ a remarkable evidence of the synthetic spirit.

In the social sciences, the primary aim was to find a norm, Dharma, or shall we say a number of governing principles, that should govern in each case the inner attitude and the external activity of men in their social, economic and political life, in their ethical and aesthetic endeavour. This life and this endeavour is a complex of many strands; and not only must there be an endless difference of detail, but also a necessary adaptation to the needs of each individual or well-defined group. The Dharma had also to be adapted to the changing needs of particular epochs: the theory held in some quarters that the East does not change is a complete myth. All this multiform pattern of Dharma is the basis of the numerous types of Shastra. Dharma-shastra, the composite science of social living

that includes in its scope ethics, sociology, economics, polity, civil and criminal law as we understand them today but all interwoven as a single whole in the synthetic Indian manner, is the Shastra par excellence. But each of these different sciences had its particular Shastra as well that elaborated the details: Niti-shastra for ethics, Artha-shastra for economy and polity with a fairly detailed study of law, the various compendia on *ācāra* (social theory and practice), *vyavahāra* (legal theory and practice), *dvandva-nīti* (political theory and practice). All this Shastra, again in the typical Indian manner, aimed not merely at enunciating theories and principles, but kept always prominently in view their effective application in practice. And in order that the practice followed the precepts, "all Shastra was put under the sanction of the names of the Rishis",²² names which carried in ancient and medieval India an unquestioned authority.

To sum up the position in the words of Sri Aurobindo, Dharma was "in the view of Indian culture . . . a living according to a just understanding and right view of self-culture, of the knowledge of things and life and of action in that knowledge . . . Shastra meant any systematised teaching and science . . . founded on detailed observation, just generalisation, full experience, intuitive, logical and experimental analysis and synthesis, in order to enable man to know always with a just fruitfulness for life and to act with the security of right knowledge."²³

THE ETHICAL IMPERATIVE

The clearest expression of Dharma, as was but natural, took shape in ethics. "The ethical aspect of life, contrary to the amazingly, ignorant observation of a certain type of critic, attracted a quite enormous amount of attention, occupied the greatest part of Indian thought and writing not devoted to the things of pure knowledge and of the spirit."²⁴ Some features of the Indian ethical idea therefore deserve to be mentioned here, in however brief an outline. Here too there is a perplexing fullness of varying emphasis based on a basic unity of purpose.

Indian ethical thought does not prescribe a single body of commandments that must be observed by all under all circumstances,

knowing well that that is a demand that can never be fulfilled. "The man of knowledge, the man of power, the productive and acquisitive man, the priest, scholar, poet, artist, ruler, fighter, trader, tiller of the soil, craftsman, labourer, servant cannot usefully have the same training, cannot be shaped in the same pattern, cannot all follow the same way of living. All ought not to be put under the same tables of the law; for that would be a senseless geometric rigidity that would spoil the plastic truth of life. Each has his type of nature and there must be a rule for the perfection of that type; each has his own proper function and there must be a canon and ideal for the function".²⁵ This explains what seems otherwise obscure why so much stress has been laid in Indian thought on the different norms prescribed for the different castes and occupations. To take a crucial example: "non-injuring is the very highest of its laws, *ahimsā paramo dharmah*; still it does not lay it down as a physical rule for the warrior."²⁶ Sri Krishna is made to say in the Gita, to Arjuna the warrior, "If thou doest not this battle for the right, then hast thou abandoned thy duty and virtue...and sin shall be thy portion."²⁷

There is hardly an ethical injunction devised by man that does not find a place in the Indian scheme. But the point on which great stress is laid here is in the inwardness of the ethical demand. "Morality is for the Western mind mostly a thing of outward conduct; but conduct for the Indian mind is only one means of expression and sign of a soul-state.... Hinduism enjoins a spiritual or ethical purity of the mind with action as one outward index."²⁸ Another feature of the Indian ethical idea — this it shares with Zoroastrianism — which springs from the inwardness of its ethical motif, is its view of the constant conflict between the representatives of good and evil in the cosmic scheme. "The fundamental idea...is a struggle between the Gods and their dark opponents...a battle in which man takes part and which is reflected in all his inner life and action."²⁹

But what gives the Indian view of ethics its characteristic stamp is that all these divergent traits find their unity in certain ideals of conduct and inner feeling which mark out the *śreṣṭha*, the good or noble man, who is always held up as the example to follow. And it is always stressed that the ethical rule is only an intermediary between the unbridled license of the lower propensities, the satisfaction of

desires and self-interest, *kāma*, *artha*, and the highest end of man, *mokṣa* or liberation from the bondage of the lower life into the freedom of the Spirit. Ethics becomes imperative if man is to reach his highest goal.

THE AESTHETIC APPEAL

India in its obsession with the spiritual ideal did not shut out the appeal of beauty; ethicism seldom was puritanic enough to discourage art and literature. On the contrary, Indian aesthesis was founded like everything else in the Indian endeavour on the highest spirituality and the deepest concepts of Dharma.

Three things mark out Indian aesthesis in particular. "It is in a great part of the literature the same turn of inspiration and self-expression that we see in the architecture, painting and sculpture. Its first character is a constant sense of the infinite.... Its second peculiarity is a tendency to see and render its spiritual experience in a great richness of images taken from the inner psychic plane or in physical images transmitted by the stress of a psychic significance.... And its third tendency is to image the terrestrial life often magnified...or else subtilised in the transparencies of a larger atmosphere, attended by a greater than the terrestrial meaning...."³⁰ Perhaps no better illustration can be given than in the single example of Kalidas, our national poet in classical Sanskrit: "after reading a poem of his the world and life and our fellow creatures human, animal or inanimate have become suddenly more beautiful and dear to us than they were before."³¹

Much of the misunderstanding and adverse criticism of Indian art and literature spring from the inability to grasp the underlying spirit, in seeking to find what they do not seek to give. The aim in Indian sculpture and painting, even when it treated of mundane subjects, was not to present the beauty of mere external form, but to reveal the spirit, a soul-state, an emotional mood; where the subject was avowedly religious, as in the best surviving work, the spiritual idea or power or delight was all that mattered. The artist has to be judged by the fidelity with which he has succeeded in this essential aim. Indian religious architecture is an aspiration to the

Infinite rendered in stone or brick; it is vain to expect here a fidelity to the Greek canons. The greatness of Indian literature, the flexible and many-sided self-expression of the Indian spirit, lies "first in the greatness and worth of its substance, the value of its thought and the beauty of its forms, but also in the degree to which, satisfying the highest conditions of the art of speech, it avails to bring out and raise the soul and life or the living and the ideal mind of the people".³² The appeal of Indian aesthetic creation derives primarily from this "soul-touch".

Indian literature pulsates with the movement of life. But "it does not seek to represent life and character primarily or for their own sake; its aim is fundamentally aesthetic.... It did not attempt to seize a man's spirit by the hair and drag it out into a storm of horror and pity and fear and return it to him drenched, beaten and shuddering.... Still less could it have consented to occupy itself with the problems of disease, neurosis and spiritual medicology generally which are the staple of modern drama and fiction. An atmosphere of romantic beauty, a high urbanity and a gracious equipoise of the feelings, a perpetual confidence in the sunshine and the flowers are the essential spirit of a Hindu play."³³ These remarks apply with equal cogency to the best work in the plastic arts. "It is an art like this that the soul finds the repose, the opportunity for being confirmed in gentleness and in kindly culture, the unmixed intellectual and aesthetic pleasure in quest of which it turned away from the crudeness and incoherence of life to the magic regions of Art."³⁴ To get at the true spirit of Indian artistic creation, "it has to be seen in loneliness, in the solitude of one's self, in moments when one is capable of long deep meditation and as little weighted as possible with the conventions of material life."³⁵ To appreciate this art and this literature—one might include here music and the dance as well—one needs a more than aesthetic sense. "There is a spiritual insight or culture needed if we are to enter into the whole meaning of Indian artistic creation; otherwise we get only at the surface external things or at the most at things only just below the surface."³⁶

It must be remembered that Indian art and literature have a long continuous tradition extending over at least three thousand years. This accounts for the splendid opulence of styles and genres

which give such widely varying expressions to the one underlying spirit. To cite a few instances; the crowding detail and the massiveness of the Dravidian temples, the grace and lightness of the northern school, the magical beauty of the mid-worlds shining through the marble of Indo-Saracenic mausoleums, the epic power and grandeur of the earlier Vedantic Jain and Buddhist sculpture, the later Puranic turn towards grace and lyric ecstasy and movement in the surviving specimens of the painter's art, the wealth of work done in almost all the possible forms of literary expression, epic and lyric, drama and romance and the didactic tale, the ode and hymn and gnomic verse,—all this bears testimony to the fecundity of the Indian spirit, which at the same time never misses its primary aim of making the abstract concrete, which “insists on mapping the infinite, on seeing the unseen, on visualising the spiritual.”³⁷

THE JOY OF LIFE

It is but a truism to say that all this magnificent creation could not have been the product of a national mind sicklied over by a palsied life-force. A dreamy, pessimistic, other-worldly people with no interest in and little hold on the realities of life, bereft of all joy in living, looking on the world as Maya and human life the bubble of a minute,—the grotesque picture concocted from nowhere by critics who could not have studied with any understanding the patent records of the civilisation—such a people never existed in India even in the worst days of decline. A lifeless India is a myth.

“What,” Sri Aurobindo asks in a memorable passage, “what is meant after all by life and when is it that we most fully and greatly live?...It is religion and philosophy and thought and science and poetry and art, drama and song and dance and play, politics and society, industry, commerce and trade, adventure and travel, war and peace, conflict and unity, victory and defeat and aspirations and vicissitudes, the thoughts, emotions, words, deeds, joys and sorrows which make up the existence of man....All this mass of action was not accomplished by men without mind and will and vital force, by pale shadows of humanity in whom the vigorous manhood had been crushed out under the burden of a gloomy and all-effacing asceticism, nor does it

look like the sign of a metaphysically minded people of dreamers averse to life and action."³⁸

The ancient and medieval literature of India and to a lesser extent some of the surviving monuments of art give a clear enough view of the Indian attitude to life. The general picture that emerges is that of an opulent and vigorous society which allowed the fullest opportunities for the satisfaction of man's natural propensities. "Man was allowed to fathom on his way all experience, to give to his character and action a large rein and heroic proportions, and to fill in life opulently with colour and beauty and enjoyment."³⁹ And it must be remembered that these opportunities were available not merely to a selected few, but to the community at large. "Though the higher classes led and had the lion's share of the force and wealth of life", as in all countries in the past, "the people too lived and until much later times intensely though on a lesser scale and with a more diffused and less concentrated force. Their religious life was more intense than that of any other country....They produced some of the most delicate and beautiful poetical literature ever produced....They gave India her artists and architects and many of the famous poets in the popular tongues....The life portrayed in the literature of the country is glad and vivid, and even now, despite certain varieties of temperament and many forces making for depression, laughter, humour, an unobtrusive elasticity and equanimity in the vicissitudes of life are very marked features of the Indian character."⁴⁰

But it must be emphasised that although Indian culture gave a large recognition to the powers of the natural ego in man, his insistence on the satisfaction of desire, sense-attraction and self-interest, it emphasised in no uncertain terms that "these powers have to be... put in order....This element must be kept from making any too unbridled claim or heading furiously towards its satisfaction; only so can it get its full results without disaster....India has felt the call of the senses not less than Greece, Rome or modern Europe; she perceived very well the possibility of a materialistic life....But this could not take full hold or establish even for a time any dominant empire....Another power claims man and overtops desire and self-interest and self-will, the power of the Dharma."⁴¹ The rule of Law was everywhere imposed as a check to license; it prepared the life-force in man for its

true purpose, namely, that of becoming a powerful instrument for realising the true goal of man, the Liberty of the Spirit. For, in the Indian view of life, man is not the ephemeral creature with a mortal body and a precarious life-force destined to exhaust all his possibilities within the span of a brief existence on earth, but an immortal soul that takes repeated births in a material frame for the purpose of widening its experience and knowledge and powers, until it becomes full-grown enough to aspire to divinity and earns the title to be free of all bondage to birth and death, which is its true Liberty. "By liberty we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural self-fulfilment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment.... And all repressive or preventive law is only a makeshift, a substitute for the true law which must develop from within and be not a check on liberty, but its outward image and visible expression. Human society progresses really and vitally in proportion as law becomes the child of freedom."⁴²

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORDER

Did the organisation of Indian society and economy allow of this vital condition of progress? What was the element of law and regimentation in it, and what the provision for freedom? These are questions of immense importance, as a negative answer based on a superficial study has long prejudiced the issue.

"The problem which Indian culture had to solve was that of a firm outward basis on which to found the practical development of its spirit and idea of life. How are we to take the natural life of man and while allowing it sufficient scope and variety and freedom, yet to subject it to a law, canon, Dharma...? And how again are we to point that Dharma towards its exceeding by fulfilment and cessation of its disciplinary purpose in the secure freedom of the spiritual life?"⁴³ It found the key to a solution of the problem in its scheme of socio-economic organisation described by Sri Aurobindo as the "triple quartette", of the four great ends of life, *caturvargya*, the four graded classes of society, *cāturvarṇya*, and four successive stages of a developing human life, *caturāśrama*. To each of these we must devote some attention if we are to get at the spirit of Indian life.

“The ancient civilisation of India founded itself very expressly upon four human interests: first, desire and enjoyment, next material, economic and other aims and needs of the mind and body, thirdly, ethical conduct and the right law of individual and social life, and lastly, spiritual liberation, *kāma*, *artha*, *dharma*, *mokṣa*.... Except in very rare cases, the satisfaction of the three mundane objects must run before the other; fullness of life must precede the surpassing of life.... There was no preaching of a general rush to the cave and the hermitage.”⁴⁴ Buddhism no doubt disrupted this ancient balance for a time by its insistence on the monastic life, and for this it has been severely criticised in some of the great Law books and the Puranas. But on the whole, this ancient scheme was ensured by the *caturāśrama* system until the whole fabric of Hindu society was broken up by the incursion of modernism.

Under this system, “life was divided into four natural periods and each of them marked out a stage in the working of this cultural idea of living. There was the period of the student, the period of the householder, the period of the recluse or forest-dweller, the period of the free super-social man, *parivrājaka*.”⁴⁵ Each of these stages provided for a particular kind of discipline appropriate to its needs; each allowed of a preparation for the next stage. Thus, the student, at least in the earlier days, was grounded in the ideals of Aryan living, the householder was allowed the legitimate satisfaction of desire and material aims subject to the observance of the right law in each of these things, the recluse “worked out in a certain seclusion the truth of his spirit”, the *parivrājaka* was free from all the forms of social life, “making his soul ready for eternity”. But the important thing to note is that “this circle was not obligatory on all. The great majority never went beyond the two first stages.” And an opening was always provided for the advanced spirits who would opt for an early *sanyāsa*.

In considering the *caturvarṇya*, the ancient Indian scheme of the four graded classes which incidentally has little in common with its later travesty in the chaotic proliferation of castes and subcastes, one is often apt to forget that “there is no national life perfect or sound without the *caturvarṇya*. The life of the nation must contain within itself the life of the Brahmin,—spirituality, knowledge, learning, high and pure ethical aspiration and endeavour; the life of the Kashatriya,

—manhood and strength moral and physical, the love of battle, the thirst for glory, the sense of honour, chivalry, self-devotion, generosity, grandeur of soul; the life of the Vaishya,—trade, industry, thrift, prosperity, benevolence, philanthropy; the life of the Shudra, —honesty, simplicity, labour, religious and quiet service to the nation even in the humblest position and the most insignificant kind of work.”⁴⁶ It is the cultivation of these inner qualities and not mere outward function that in the view of Indian thinkers constituted the essence of *varṇa*. True, in the actual application of ideals to life, they had to accept the status determined by birth as the principal criterion—and in the Indian view birth was largely determined by character as it had been developing in the course of previous lives. But in the best ages of the culture, an appropriate training was provided for at least the three higher orders that helped them immensely in shaping the inner temperament in accordance with the demands made on them by the ideal system.

More than that, and here lies the peculiar value of the system, each member of the various orders was assured of spiritual perfection through the right and careful performance of the duties assigned to him by his birth and vocation and inner bent. “If he performs his natural function in the right spirit...serves with it the Spirit manifested in the universe or makes it a conscious instrumentation for the purposes of the Divine in humanity, he can transmute it into a means towards the highest spiritual perfection and freedom.”⁴⁷ This is not to imply that a fixed hierarchy based on birth is the best means of social progress. But one has to remember that it gave an astonishing durability to Indian society in the face of many attacks from within and without—at one stage Buddhism appeared to be cutting at the very roots of the system and barbarian inroads offered a continuous challenge. Much of its apparent rigidity was mollified in practice and winked at by the Law books through the constant intermarriages and *mésalliances*, through local and regional variations, and through a confused medley of functions actually performed by the diverse groups often at variance from the prescribed norms,—witness the long list of Shudra kings and Brahmin generals in the annals of ancient India,—to give but another, striking illustration of the catholicity of the Indian spirit and its turn towards spiritual practicality.

This sense of practicality appears in clear relief in the economic organisation too. In its economic aspect, the system of *cāturvarṇya* is the finest example in pre-modern times anywhere of the division of labour principle on which the success of any economic organisation so much depends. "The economic order of society was cast in the form and gradation of these four types. The Brahmin class was called upon to give the community its priests, thinkers, men of letters, legislators, scholars, religious leaders and guides. The Kshatriya class gave it its kings, warriors, governors and administrators. The Vaishya order supplied it with its producers, agriculturists, craftsmen, artisans, merchants and traders. The Shudra class ministered to its need of menials and servants."⁴⁸

What lent a special value to the system was that "even the most despised pursuits had their education, their law and canon, their ambition of success, their sense of honour in the discharge and scruple of well doing, their dignity of a fixed standard of perfection."⁴⁹ This it is that accounts in large measure for the fact that "no people before modern times reached a higher splendour of wealth, commercial prosperity, material appointment.... The splendour of Asiatic and not least of Indian prosperity, the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind, the "barbaric doors rough with gold", *barbaricae postes squalentes auro*, were once stigmatised by the less opulent West as a sign of barbarism!"⁵⁰ Whatever one may think of the charge,—"the opulent barbarism and a much less artistic ostentation of wealth are to be found in London, New York and Paris"⁵¹—it has to be emphasised that India never upheld the ideal of compulsory poverty for anyone outside the monastic orders and other schools of spiritual discipline. Indeed there is a sizeable literature in epic and classical Sanskrit extolling the supreme importance of wealth. To cite only one among many instances: "Valmiki, our ancient epic poet, includes among the signs of a just and enlightened state of society not only universal education, morality and spirituality, but this also that there shall be none who is compelled to eat coarse food, none uncrowned and unanointed, or who lives a mean petty slave of luxuries."⁵²

The last phrase is significant and brings out the true Indian spirit. India has lived richly in the purely material sense. But it has also spent magnificently. Rare indeed have been the instances—we are

not here referring to the enervating luxuries of the period of decline—where a surfeit of wealth has led to proud ostentation or a slackening of the moral fibres. Ramachandra or the Pandava brothers relinquishing an empire in order to honour a doubtful pledge, Buddha renouncing the promise of far-flung dominion, Harshavardhana, or perhaps even Chandragupta Maurya emptying his accumulated treasure for the benefit of the needy and putting on borrowed garments stand out among the finest embodiments of the Indian ideal. Sacrifice is the keynote of the socio-economic harmony created by ancient India. Indeed it is the master idea of life in the Indian view. For, “sacrifice is the law of the world and nothing can be gained without it, neither mastery here, nor the possession of heavens beyond, nor the supreme possession of all,” the spiritual liberation and the felicity it brings.⁵² That is the reason why every important act in the social or economic life of the individual or the community was associated in the Indian scheme with a religious act, and what is religion if it is not a way of commerce between man and the Powers that govern the cosmos. The attempt of Indian social and economic life was to turn it into a sacrament, and thus to prepare it for self-exceeding into something approaching the spiritual. The purely materialistic view of sociology and economics is a modern invention, it is not Indian.

THE INDIAN IDEAL

We have already, on an earlier occasion dwelt at some length on the Indian view of polity, and that need not detain us now.⁵³ Suffice it to say that here as elsewhere, unity in diversity, a strong sense of liberty coupled with an ordered arrangement, all leading towards the best outflowing of the human potential are the principal elements. The ideal of Dharma preparing for the highest spiritual good of the individual and the race: this is the keyword.

We may however take this occasion to summarise in the words of Sri Aurobindo what exactly was this Indian ideal that sought to give a body to the Indian spirit.

“The universal embracing Dharma in the Indian idea is a law of ideal perfection for the developing mind and soul of man.... This ideal was not a purely moral or ethical conception, although that element

might predominate; it was also intellectual, religious, social, aesthetic, the flowering of the whole ideal man, the perfection of the total human nature. The most varied qualities met in the Indian conception of the best, *śreṣṭha*, the good and noble man, *ārya*. In the heart benevolence, beneficence, love, compassion, altruism, long-suffering, liberality, kindness, patience; in the character courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience and reverence where these were due, but power too to govern and direct, a fine modesty and yet a strong independence and noble pride; in the mind wisdom and intelligence and love of learning, knowledge of all the best thought, an openness to poetry, art and beauty, an educated capacity and skill in works; in the inner being a strong religious sense, piety, love of God, seeking after the Highest, the spiritual turn; in social relations and conduct a strict observance of all the social Dharmas, as father, son, husband, brother, kinsman, friend, ruler or subject, master or servant, priest or warrior or worker, king or sage, member of clan or caste: this was the total ideal of the Arya...⁵⁴

THE INDIAN ACHIEVEMENT

How far was this ideal translated into fact? This is the important test by which the spirit of India has to be finally judged. Here too the records speak for themselves. "Of her spiritual and philosophic achievement there can be no real question. They stand there as the Himalayas stand upon the earth...mediating still between earth and heaven, measuring the finite, casting their plummet far into the infinite....⁵⁵ She saw the myriad gods beyond man, God beyond the gods, and beyond God his own ineffable eternity....Then with that calm audacity of her intuition...she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain....But...spirituality does not flourish on earth in the void, even as our mountain tops do not rise...out of the clouds without a base.

"When we look at the past of India, what strikes us next is her stupendous vitality....She has been creating abundantly and incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many-sidedness, republics and kingdoms and empires, philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences

and creeds and arts and poems and all kinds of monuments, palaces and temples and public works, communities and societies and religious orders, laws and codes and rituals, physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of Yoga, systems of politics and administration, arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts,—the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity...

“The third power of the ancient Indian spirit was a strong intellectuality, at once austere and rich, robust and minute, powerful and delicate, massive in principle and curious in detail....The mere mass of the intellectual production during the period from Asoka well into the Mahomedan epoch is something truly prodigious....There is no historical parallel for such an intellectual labour and activity before the invention of printing and the facilities of modern science; yet all that mass of research and production and curiosity of detail was accomplished...with no better record than the memory and for an aid the perishable palm-leaf...”⁵⁶

And we must always remember that “India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples.”⁵⁷

SANAT K. BANERJI

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REVIEW

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In this attractive presentation of the talks given by Swami Muktananda in Australia during his visit to that country in 1970, one gets a clear idea of the philosophy and its realising Yoga popularised by the saint. As Baba himself says there is little that is novel or absolutely new in his teaching. The truths of God, Man and Nature are eternal. It is in their application that men differ according to the goals they choose or are led to choose. The central teaching here is that the Divine Power that has created the universe and guides the cosmos on its journey Godward, is also embedded in man as a latent power. When it is awakened and set into action, it changes the direction of the consciousness and turns it Godward. It effects a series of changes in man and leads him to an identity with the Divine Spirit presiding over the human embodiment. The awakening of this Power, called Kundalini in the Tantras, is brought about by various means, but the one recommended by Baba is the intercession of the Guru, his *śaktipāt*. Devotion to and love for the Divine in the Guru is the surest means towards that end.

What is this *śaktipāt*? The editor, Mr. Peter Hunt, answers: "Kundalini (Shakti), according to the scriptures, is the Power of God Himself; it is the divine Power which can create and dissolve universes. This infinite Power becomes finite without losing its infinity and takes seat at the base of the spine in the human body, remaining dormant until aroused. After being awakened, it is led upward through the spinal column (*suṣumnā*) to the cerebrum (*sahasrāra*). On its way it completely purifies the individual's body, mind and psyche, and on reaching the *sahasrāra*, allows one to realise his essential unity with the universal Self." "The most secret method of awakening the Kundalini, is that of *śaktipāt* or the transmission of the grace of a Siddha Guru. In such a Guru the Kundalini is not only

awake, but also fully developed. He has realized his identity with Shiva (the Lord) and so is the master of Kundalini Shakti and not its servant. The scriptures say that he can awaken one's Kundalini by his touch, word, look or thought, regardless of distance, and it is he who guides and controls Kundalini during Her upward journey to the *sahasrāra*.

"The ease of the path through grace is self-evident. The *suṣumnā* is like a maze which has to be traversed by Kundalini. If one tries cross it unaided much time and effort is wasted by following dead-ends. However, if one is aided by the Guru who knows the way, imagine how effortless the journey becomes!

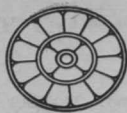
"This inner awakening may occur even without any deliberate thought on the Guru's part. Sometimes a seeker whose Kundalini is fully active also serves as a channel for the flow of grace. It is like one lamp lighting another. However, in the Siddha Guru, this channel is fully and perfectly developed. Thus, through him, grace flows most readily. Even one may be physically separated from him, by devotion (Gurubhakti) and service (Guruseva) to him one intersects this mighty channel of grace and enjoys untold blessings."

A very helpful guide to Kundalini Yoga.

M. P. PANDIT



The Advent



25-12-71

The time has come for the
rule of falsehood to end.

In the Truth alone is
salvation.

The ADVENT

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THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIAL

KNOW THY SELVES

The Double Trinity

THE human being is composed of three beings, his person is made of three persons — it is a trinity, a triptych as it were. The first is the external person whom we recognise by his name and form. It is indeed the physical body in and through which the Nature and character express themselves or try to express themselves as best as they can. For the body, the material body is both an expression and a limitation, the body is not capable of expressing all that is behind it against which it acts as a dam with a few sluices to let something of the inner content flow out. This inner content means the vital world with its desires and impulses and various dynamisms and behind it there is also the mind, the mind with its own activities, its thoughts, ideas, imaginations; these two seek expression through the body taking the help of the senses. All this forms the outer personality of man—its sign and symbol is the material body.

Behind this physical person figured in physical body there is

the subtle person and it expresses itself in a subtle body. The subtle body, because it is subtle does not mean that it is formless. This too has a form which has not the rigidity of the material body, not bound like the physical body in a contour of fixed unchangeable unchanging lineament. The form, supple and flexible, changes in shape and colour—like a mass of cloud according to the nature of its movements and activities and yet maintains its identity and is recognisable as a distinct person from others. Here the movements are free and almost unchecked and one can go far in the direction of the bad and the wrong as also towards the good and the beneficent. It is difficult for this person to make the choice. In the physical body such choice is made by the mental will, in the subtle body the mental will if it remains intact is one among many forces of equal strength.

But the saving grace lies in the third person which is the Divine person, man's true person and real identity. This is composed of true consciousness, true force, and the supreme truth of being, the delight and immortality. This is man's, as we call it, psychic being or soul.

This being made of light and power and delight is not a vague or almost formless entity but a real being, a person and possesses a name and body, a Divine name and a Divine body recognisable in the same way as a physical body is recognised.

Now this Divine person is in us normally behind the veil almost inoperative acting or influencing only indirectly and can be and has to be brought forward and put in charge of the other personalities over the head of the subtle body and the physical body. Then that true person will be the ruler and guide and control and choose and inspire the movements of the subtle personality and allow only the right and proper activities to pass through and express themselves in the physical body. In this way gradually the three persons will be integrated and unified in a single homogenous perfect personality embodying and expressing only the Divine Truth.

We know the Divine himself has three such bodies or a triple status of his one existence. First, he is Prajna, the being or consciousness that contains the fundamental or typical realities that form the very basis of creation. It is the nucleus or the seed enclosing all the starting-points as in a tight knot, all future elaborations. These el-

borations are made by the second status or person of the Trinity, it has the beautiful name Hiranyagarbha, the golden womb. Here are laid out all possibilities, all probabilities even, endless and infinite lines of development and progression of the forces of existence. Every possible thing is being brought forth and allowed to try its fate. Out of these reckless, as it were, possibilities only some are chosen to appear as physical or material realities. This choice is made by the third person of the trinity, Virat. Each and every possibility in the Hiranyagarbha may have the chance to appear on the material plane but that means perhaps time and a particular creation, for evidently there are many creations or cycles of creations of different types, one following another after a Pralaya as the ancients conceived the process.

The triple person, it may be noted, is psychologically co-related to the three well-known Upanishadic states of consciousness—one, Sushupti (perfect sleep), two, Swapna (dream) and three, Jagrat (wakefulness).

The triple human person, it is evident, exists as a movement parallel to the triple Divine person : it is an application of the latter to a special set of conditions, in a particular frame of reference. The human triplicity in other words is a specialisation of the Divine Triplicity.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA*

INTRODUCTION

INDIAN spirituality—by far the richest and profoundest, the largest, widest and most complex, the most exalted and many-sided spirituality in the world—has two major aspects, the exclusivistic and the synthesizing. It will follow every possible path to the very end, without deflection or distraction from the way and purpose; and it will embrace all paths, in the fullest possible knowledge and living, realized glory. At times the exclusivistic tendencies and the narrower teachings have prevailed; but the synthesis has never been forgotten, and the fundamental need for synthesis has been always present, and working : the power of the divine Unity, that has made this world. Both movements are necessary : the searching into every possibility is eventually an enhancing of the Unity, and an increasing fulfillment of the divine evolution of existence. For the Unity is not a blank and not a uniformity, but a Oneness of many things: the greatest diversity is the greatest Oneness. This teaching, and the living realization of the truth of this teaching, has been given to us by Sri Aurobindo in the fullest measure that we have had.

In the earlier development of his yoga the Bhagavad Gita played a major role, and his study of this great work—monumentally great, and perennially living in its life-giving greatness—his *Essays on the Gita*, is perhaps the best book of his to read first, if one would understand him. One is of course not obligated to understand him, exactly; and one cannot expect ever to do so with a perfect thoroughness; but if one wants to overcome the difficulties of the present world and the now acute crisis of humanity, he cannot afford to be ignorant of Sri Aurobindo and the solution that he and he alone offers. For the solution may be found only in growing spirituality: not in merely claiming or embracing something “exotic” and mysterious as a kind of spice to the continuance of the accustomed ways, but in finding one’s true self that is universal and transcendent as well as individual, and that is not bound by or dependent on country, race, social status

* From the author’s forthcoming book.

or condition: that is, in outgrowing the things that make the difficulties: and Sri Aurobindo shows the way with the most complete knowledge and wisdom yet manifested, and gives the guiding and helping light and power, to those who can receive it.

His achievement, his synthesis of yoga, is the greatest that India has made; and he has made it, through Indian spirituality—the Spirit has spoken through him—not for India alone, but for the world. The Gita, called with justice the Bible—the Book—of India, is the greatest synthetic work of the past: not at all an eclecticism, but a living embracing and harmonizing of different paths. Sri Aurobindo has gone beyond the Gita, but in a way that completes its teachings, without abrogating any of them. To study the Gita itself, in the light of Sri Aurobindo, is the best introduction to him.

One need not be put off by the unfamiliar character of the externals. They are easily penetrated, to the truth behind them that is universal and valid everywhere. And the giving an ampler scope to the work, beyond its particular country and epoch, may actually increase its profundity of truth and its efficacious power. Sri Aurobindo has noted that in fact the Gita itself often suggests the possible wider scope. Inwardness is required, of course, and intuitive sympathy; but these are required in any case, if one is to grow in self-knowledge, and liberation from ignorance; if one is to develop spiritually, that is: and the best help is to be obtained from the best guides, and the Source in which the most complete knowledge is to be found. To follow the Bhagavad Gita one need not be a “Hindu”; indeed any creed or dogma or slavery to the dead hand of custom is at best an irrelevance to spiritual growth, and usually—or sooner or later—becomes a positive hindrance to it.

Living as I do in the United States of America, on occasion I have been asked indignantly why India should be the world’s spiritual leader: why *India* should know so much, of all places! Well; the why of it can be understood only by the divine consciousness; but the fact is quite palpable that indeed the spiritual leader of the world *is* India. If as yet the Western world cannot see this, or cannot see what it means, it is because as yet the Western world has such an extremely limited, inhibited and rudimentary knowledge or rather notion of what spirituality is. It confuses it with intellectuality, with

morality, with emotionality, with aesthetic sensitivity: it does not know it as a whole separate sphere and greater life, that can take up the lower nature and transform it, but that cannot be bound by its lesser terms. But a fully spiritual life is the next stage of evolution. The old mental terms have proved their bankruptcy, as it may be called in a money-minded society; they are inadequate, they are not enough. Humanity must grow beyond them, or admit failure and fall by the wayside.

Growing into spirituality is not a matter of going "back to the womb", at least as our "depth psychologists" understand this adventure; and it is not a matter of relaxing into the irresponsibility of the infra-rational and the infra-moral. It is rather a coming to maturity at last, being born from the womb of Truth an old man deathless and ageless, cutting the cord that ties one to the lower, the ignorant nature of life-and-death, *samsara*; it is a blooming in the eternal, a rising to Life in one's higher nature, a nature of Knowledge, Truth, Light, Immortality. In Sri Aurobindo's yoga, the further one goes the greater his responsibility becomes for all existence. This is not a "humanitarian" thing, or a kind of weak mental vision or idealism: it is a knowledge of the divine Oneness, and the fundamental Identity of all things. It is in this knowledge alone that there can be genuine brotherhood on earth, the fraternity which must be the basis of a genuine equality and liberty. In spirituality alone is there freedom, and the mutuality and the harmony that is an absolute desideratum for a really good life: in the knowledge of everyone's fundamental identity in the Divine.

One may of course balk, and claim that we must have "Western ways for Western people", and so on; but Truth is not something that conforms itself to individual ways. On the contrary, the individual ways are valid only in the degree that they approach and embody Truth: and as yet no way, whether Western or of the "inscrutable" Orient, has come near to embracing Truth entirely. But the intellect is less than the Spirit, and cannot possibly embrace it; and this the Orient does know. And the Orient has found and explained the distinction between the subconscious nature, the subliminal nature, and the superconscious nature: three distinct and very large and complex spheres: while the most profound and searching West-

ern psychologists are the veriest children here, fumbling and puddling and playing quite ignorant games of "interpretation". To insist that Western ways give truth for Western man, or Western man's truth, is idle; or if it is true, it means that Western man is not yet capable of spirituality: that is, that he cannot go beyond his vain and useless mental constructions — useful for game-playing, perhaps, but invariably found wanting for serious purposes. But Sri Aurobindo has come to tell him not only that he can do so, if he will, but that the need for him to do so is imperative.

It is true that what spirituality there has been in the West is a narrow and a slight and precarious thing: and the whole social *milieu* has always been against a full and large development. Here India has the immense advantage above all other countries both Eastern and Western that its whole society, whatever its faults, is essentially based on spirituality, and works for it more than against it. This is not to say that there is anything spiritual about suffering and poverty (this in fact is a Western, or a Christian conception), or starvation and disease. But the true, the radical solution to all social problems can come only by spiritual knowledge; and by its busy manipulations on the surface of things the Western world has been creating more problems than it has been solving. It has been concerning itself sometimes with partial truths, perhaps, in one place and another, but without large grasp and vision, and with all too much of a self-seeking pettiness: not the less petty, when it poses as the height of the altruistic. Truth itself has not been found and embraced, and the very thought of such a discovery and alliance has been dismissed as meaningless by the "hard-headed" devotees of "progress". But progress not in the spiritual is largely a sham, and is fundamentally ill-founded; and, when it comes to a head, hardness is not the one possible virtue: aside from the fact that it may conceal considerable softness beneath its ossification. So far from being meaningless is the finding and embracing of truth in the Spirit, that it is the only thing that is really meaningful: beyond the merely philosophical capacity though it certainly is. We have as yet had no genuine radicalism, for all our social activity. What is needed is to find the true Roots, which are not of the lower nature but of the higher.

What stands in Western man's way is his acute ego-sense, that

he actually prides himself on coddling and defending. He thinks that in this he is superior to the Oriental man, and to a culture that does not "respect the individual". But the one system in the Orient today that does not respect the individual is the Chinese : that is, the Communism imported from Europe: a strange acceptance for a people so obsessed with the idea of resisting foreign ways. India has not lost its vigor, to collapse so dismally: its society did not break and crumble at one rude touch of the Western hand: and in India indeed is the truest respect that the world has known for the individual consciousness. In fact it is the claim and the acknowledged importance of the individual that has kept India from achieving political unity: for it could never be satisfied with that sham and organized failure, a uniformity externally imposed. A true unity, political and otherwise, can come only in the spiritual realization; it must be a unity of free individuals, each freely flourishing and developing in his own way; and *its* own way, respecting the groups involved. Such a society has never yet been in the world: the key to it is to be found, whatever the present confusion, in India, and the spirituality of which it is the fountain-head for all mankind.

What stands in the way is just that thing that the West considers so precious and very important: the sense of ego. It is this that separates man from man, nation from nation, and men and nations from Divinity. It is not, be it noted, the *individuality* that does this: it is that false individuality, that sham and illusory existence, the ego. The true Individual is spiritual — self-contained, full and free, harmonious with itself and with all, satisfied and calm, never envious, never contentious, never in pain, peril or confusion: the true individuality is the Self, the Atman, is identical with Brahman, with God: Who is everything. The Western idea that the Indians want to lose the individual self in the Absolute is quite false; it comes from a hasty glance at some philosophical expressions, taken with a lack of experience. The individual becomes at once identical with God, with the universe and with all other individuals, this being its own unique and native character: it remains individual without losing its universality, its transcendence, its divinity. This of course being a spiritual thing is a spiritual thing, and not an intellectual idea. Only very inadequately can it be suggested in intellectual terms at all.

The difficulty is simply a matter of the native incapacity of the intellect, and the sober fact that what is lesser cannot encompass what is greater; it is not obscurantism, or "anti-intellectualism". It is, that is to say, not what so often would pass for mysticism, in the Western world. It is not a murky preference of the "blood" to the mind; neither is it a championing of the "vital impetus" as the very ground of things and true reality: not to speak of the ignorant ideas of the Unconscious now so prevalent. The intellect is a very important part of one's nature: it is not the intellect itself, but the incapacity or the unwillingness to go beyond it — the trying to make of the intellect the highest faculty and the sovereign power — that makes all the difficulty. The intellect can be an excellent servant — for the Spirit, not, as now it so often is, for the lower nature — but it cannot be the master and the leader. Here it has always failed, and here it must fail, because by its very nature it is divisive and not unitive, analytical and not synthetic. It divides what is radically one; the Oneness it can see only partially and as an hypothesis or a remote ideal that it does not know how to realize. Its attempts at unification, at synthesis, are wooden, brittle and problematical, never sure and never sound, lacking the fulness and the harmonious intricacy and the breath of life. The kind of oneness it imposes is a dead uniformity — a sham and failure.

One does not really need a very large knowledge of Indian culture, to see what a splendid development of the intellect obtains there. But it is not the naked, ignorant, prideful, egoistic intellect, seeking to dominate and impose its own peculiar narrow terms upon everything. For always in Indian creativity, even the most worldly, there is some breath of the spiritual: and even in the most intellectualistic philosophies the intellect is a guide and pointer to something greater than itself. It is an organizer of ideas and impressions, for their transcendence. The ego is overcome, and the intellect is put in its place — its true, and its noble place — as an enlightened servant, a loyal retainer of the spiritual Lord. This is the way to knowledge and perfection and the true solving of the fundamental problems: not in the attempted usurpation by a lesser power of a function and status beyond itself. Truth is of the Spirit, and not of the mind. This whole lower nature of mind and body and vitality is

the instrument and the expression of the spiritual being, and nothing otherwise. It is its painful attempts to be autonomous, cut off from its true source and nature, that makes our difficulties and has now brought humanity close to its own destruction.

The glib dismissal of Indian spirituality as something that itself dismisses the world as "mere illusion", is too glib; but it does have truth. Whatever concern Indian mystics may have had with the world, they have never fully possessed it; and for many centuries they were so much turned toward the a-cosmic, away from the manifestation, and were so strong and pervasive in their influence, that Indian civilization itself lost its hold on life, until it was easily dominated by a foreign power. But still the cultivation of a spirituality divorced from the world is not so "useless", even to the world, as the unspiritual may eagerly enough suppose. It is because India has cultivated this spirituality, because it has such an immense fund of knowledge and power behind its growth, that it *can* grow, and come to a hold on life such as the world has never seen. For a true hold on life, a true mastery of existence, can come only from and in the Spirit: from having the spiritual light and power, and bringing it into the world and the everyday workings of things. To seek a true and sure life and mastery of the world, without spirituality, is to make the hopeless and desperate confusion of things that is all our most "advanced" and "progressive" societies are able to achieve. Truth does not conform itself to society, or to human failings and human unwillingness to grow. Truth must be found and obeyed within, and only the fullest spiritual realization can save the world.

Sri Aurobindo has brought the world the full realization that it needs: he has opened the way, for men to solve their problems in the surpassing of themselves. But they must co-operate, because their advance must be evolutionary: an unfolding of their true natures in a spiritual aspiration. The best introduction to the greatest and the leading spiritual culture of the world, is the Bhagavad Gita; in his *Essays on the Gita*, Sri Aurobindo has at once given us the best commentary on this work, and the best introduction to himself and the inestimable gift that he has brought us, if we can receive.

JESSE ROARKE

SRI AUROBINDO ON THE PROCESS OF POETIC CREATION

SRI Aurobindo is a believer in the power of inspiration not merely as a theory but a fact of both personal and general creative experience. And though a mysterious, uncertain, variable and essentially unanalysable power from the intellectual point of view, — for it is, as he says, a thing to be felt and inwardly perceived and realised rather than mentally understood and grasped, — it has been, nevertheless, explored and examined and even, one may say, precisely categorised and classified by him so that we may have as adequate a knowledge of its various planes and levels and their distinguishing features as it is humanly possible at present to acquire. Whether or no we are yet ready to understand all of them, particularly the various levels of the Overhead inspiration such as the Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Overmind and their various combinations and interminglings, we cannot fail to admit that it is something of a significantly epoch-making work he has done in the field of aesthetics, and bequeathed a whole world of new categories and terms to the aesthetic domains for the use of not only the artists and critics but also the psychologists and metaphysicians of the future.

When we turn to the question of the process of poetic creation and read his views on it, mostly scattered in a number of letters, we find once again that it is something of a revelation which he opens out to us. And once again it is not so much of a theory that he seeks to establish before us, pitted against other theories which may be there in the field claiming our attention. Some of the outstanding publications on the creative process are there to give us a fairly adequate idea of the way in which this question has been regarded and the mystery of poetic creation explored in the West in recent times. The Freudian and Jungian psychological researches as well as the Marxist sociological and materialistic theories have been some of the leading guides or lights there and most poets, artists, literary critics and aesthetic theorists of recent times have chiefly drawn upon them. And yet one does not feel quite satisfied with their discoveries

and theories. It appears that they are still on the fringe of the problem, for they have not yet delved into the deeper depths or scaled the overhead heights of the human consciousness. The creation of poetry like every other human creation is integrally connected with the level of consciousness attained by man, and as the recent Western aesthetic theories are mostly concerned with the lower consciousness of man or his ordinary physical-vital-mental consciousness only, they can but help us understand something of the mystery of the ordinary, the vital and mental, particularly the lower vital and mental, products only of the creative genius: they are altogether inadequate to explain the whence and wherefore of some of the greatest and noblest artistic and poetical works. And as to such creations as the Veda, the Upanishad, the Gita, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata, or the Bible, and the Quoran, they can only mislead us and even pervert our critical approach and understanding.

When, however, we read Sri Aurobindo's views on this point we not only breathe a purer and cleaner air of understanding and feel greater aesthetic and critical satisfaction but also find ourselves on surer and more revealing and illuminated grounds of observation from which to proceed on the right and progressively ascending lines. On the contrary, the Freudians and the Marxists can ultimately lead us but to a blind alley.

With an almost scientific accuracy of a general operative law, Sri Aurobindo tells us that true poetry "comes always from some subtle plane through the creative vital and uses the outer mind and other external instruments for transmission only".¹ There are, thus, broadly speaking, "three elements, the original source of inspiration, the vital force of creative beauty which gives its substance and impetus and determines the form, and the transmitting outer consciousness of the poet".² "The most genuine and perfect poetry," he continues, "is written when the original source is able to throw its inspiration pure and unaltered into the vital and there it takes its true native form and power of speech exactly reproducing the inspiration while the outer consciousness is entirely passive and transmits without alteration what it receives. When the vital is too active and gives too much of its own initiative or a translation into more or less turbid vital stuff, the poetry remains powerful but is inferior in quality and

less authentic. Finally, if the outer consciousness is too lethargic and blocks, or too active and makes its own version, then you have the poetry that fails. It is also the interference of these two parts either by obstruction or by too great an activity of their own or by both together that causes the labour of writing. There would be no difficulty if the inspiration came through without obstruction or interference in a pure transcription — and that is what happens in a poet's highest or freest moments when he writes not at all out of his own external human mind but by inspiration, as the mouthpiece of the Gods."³

Of the three elements mentioned above, the most important, therefore, is the original source of inspiration which, as Sri Aurobindo says, can come through "without obstruction or interference in a pure transcription". As a matter of fact, as he says in another letter, "a poem may pre-exist in the timeless as all creation pre-exists there too or else in some plane where the past, present, and future exist together. But it is not necessary to presuppose anything of the kind to explain the phenomena of inspiration. All is here a matter of formation or creation. By the contact with the source of inspiration the creative Power at one level or another and the human instrument, receptacle or channel get into contact. That is the essential point, all the rest depends upon the individual case. If the substance, rhythm, form, words come down all together ready formed from the plane of poetic creation, that is the perfect type of inspiration ; it may give its own spontaneous gift or it may give something which corresponds to the idea or the aspiration of the poet, but in either case the human being is only a channel or receptacle, although he feels the joy of the creation and the joy of the *āves enthousiasmos*, elation of the inrush and the passage."⁴

Thus, the best creator of poetry, according to Sri Aurobindo is one who not only considers himself to be merely "a channel or receptacle" of the creative Power, but by this pure habit or condition of passivity or surrender of his ordinary self is able to establish contact with that power at "the original source of inspiration" itself where, it is said, the whole poem may exist ready-made and he has only to allow it to come through his perfectly surrendered creative vital, "pure and unaltered". This is what happens when the poet is so

completely possessed by the creative Power that he is said to write "not at all out of his external human mind but by inspiration", when his "outer consciousness is entirely passive and transmits without alteration what it receives." At such moments he hardly writes like a human poet but becomes the "mouthpiece of the Gods". But it is obvious that such a perfect creation happens rarely. Often enough what happens when the poet is working under the influence of inspiration is that "the creative source sends down the substance or stuff the force and the idea, but the language, the rhythm, etc. are found somewhere in the instrument".⁵ That is to say, it is the poet himself who, through the external means of expression like language, rhythm, etc. "has to find the human transcription or something that is there in diviner essence above."⁶ There is no doubt "an illumination or excitement"⁷ working within him or upon him from above but there is also "a conscious labour of creation swift or slow, hampered or facile",⁸ as the case may be a good deal depending, of course, upon the nature and power of the instrument. In such cases "something of the language may be supplied by the mind or vital, something may break through from somewhere behind the veil, from whatever source gets into touch with the transcribing mind in the liberating or stimulating excitement or uplifting of the consciousness".⁹ It is also possible that "a line or lines may come through from some plane and the poet excited to creation may build around them constructing his material or getting it from any source he can tap."¹⁰ Indeed, there may be several possibilities of this nature. Also, quite different results are likely to happen if the original source of inspiration does not flow above the mental or ordinary consciousness but gets working "from somewhere within on the ordinary levels, some inner mind, emotional, vital, etc., which the mind practised in poetical technique works out according to its habitual capacity".¹¹ And here again quite a number of variations are possible, though in a different way and with different results.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Sri Aurobindo considers the intellect or the mental activity which is given such a large importance in Western aesthetics to be a rather dangerous instrument for the poet. Even most of the creative artists in Europe seem to think that for the actual task of composition or execution the

use of the mind is a necessity. Without the exercise of the faculty of mental judgment and discrimination, how can they chop and change, select and reject, refine and discipline in order to achieve perfection of expression? As the process of the selection of the right means of expression and rejection of the wrong ones, as the whole act of disciplining and refining the experience into a perfect form of expression is a conscious activity, this can be best done by the mind, the intellect which is the most conscious instrument or faculty we possess. Such is the substance of their argument for the deliberate use of the mental power and intellectual judgment in works of art. In any case, those who consider themselves to be classicists find it almost impossible to reject the use of the intellect in their artistic creation.¹² But for Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, whose idea of poetic creation is, as we have seen above, that the poet should make himself as completely passive an instrument as possible for the transmission of the original source of inspiration which itself has the power to create its own true native form and substance of speech while passing through the creative vital and should be, therefore, allowed by the poet to use his outer mind and other external instruments for transmission only, the conscious or active use of the intellect can only prove to be an obstacle in perfect poetic creation. We are reminded here of Housman's statement that "the intellect is not the fountain of poetry... it may actually hinder its production..."¹³ Sri Aurobindo's view, too, is that this intellect being "an absurdly over-active part of the nature always thinks that nothing can be well done unless it puts its finger into the pie and therefore it instinctively interferes with the inspiration, blocks half or more than half of it and labours to substitute its own inferior and toilsome productions for the true speech and rhythm that ought to have come".¹⁴ As such, what happens in the case of the poet who allows his intellect or power of judgment to choose the words, rhythm, images etc. is that he "labours, in anguish to get the one true word, the authentic rhythm, the real divine substance of what he has to say, while all the time it is waiting complete and ready behind, but is not allowed transmission by some part of the transmitting agency which prefers to try to translate and is not willing merely to receive and transcribe".¹⁵ This happens particularly "when the brain is at work trying to fashion out of itself or to give its own version

of what the higher sources are trying to pour down".¹⁶

There is no doubt, says Sri Aurobindo, that an artist should have in the very act of creation "the guidance of an inner power of discrimination"¹⁷ which has the inherent capacity for "constantly selecting and rejecting in accordance with a principle of truth and beauty which remains always faithful to a harmony, a proportion, an intimate relation of the form to the idea".¹⁸ But this "inner power of discrimination" is not to be confused with, as often it is done in Western literary criticism or aesthetics, with the discrimination of the "critical intellect". With all the emphasis which he can command, Sri Aurobindo tells us therefore, that "the discrimination which works in the creator is... not an intellectual self-criticism or an obedience to rules imposed on him from outside by any intellectual canons, but itself creative, intuitive, a part of the vision, involved in and inseparable from the act of creation".¹⁹ For "it comes as part of that influx of power and light from above which by its divine enthusiasm lifts the faculties into their intense suprarational working".²⁰ The fundamental truth being so, the artist who attempts to correct, revise or even recast his work by "rule and intellectual process"²¹ really uses "a false or at any rate an inferior method and cannot do his best. He ought rather to call to his aid the intuitive critical vision and embody it in a fresh act of inspired creation or re-creation after bringing himself back by its means into harmony with the light and law of his original creative intuition."²² In any case, Sri Aurobindo is emphatic on the point that "the critical intellect has no direct or independent part in the means of the inspired creator of beauty".²³

And yet it is not a fact that Sri Aurobindo would have the poets sit idle until they get the full flow of inspiration from above or within. The instruments of work have got to be kept ready so that when the call comes from above, they are in a position to give the best response. In any case, he is not prepared, in spite of being a full believer in the creative power of inspiration, to subscribe wholly to D.H. Lawrence's view that "one can only write creative stuff when it comes, otherwise it is not much good". To him this statement of Lawrence is no doubt "true in principle" but he cannot ignore the fact, particularly in view of the example of the regular and constant toil of such great poets as Virgil and Milton, that "in practice most poets have to sus-

tain the inspiration by industry".²⁴ Also, there is the larger fact that there are few poets who "can keep for a very long time a sustained level of the highest inspiration".²⁵ As he says, "the best poetry does not usually come by streams except in the poets of a supreme greatness, though there may be in others than the greatest long-continued windings at a considerable height. The very best comes by intermittent drops, though sometimes three or four gleaming drops at a time. Even in the greatest poets, even in those with the most opulent flow of riches like Shakespeare, the very best is comparatively rare."²⁶

The very best is comparatively rare and comes by intermittent drops mainly because the contact with the inner or higher planes where poems already exist, complete and ready-made, is intermittent and uncertain. Often it so happens that the whole poem does not come from one single plane of consciousness or inspiration; on the contrary, the various parts of it hail from quite different planes. Why it happens like this is explained by Sri Aurobindo thus:

"If the parts of a poem come from different planes, it is because one starts from some high place but the connecting consciousness cannot receive uninterruptedly from there and as soon as it flickers or wavers it comes down to a lower, perhaps without noticing it, or the lower comes in to supply the continuation of the flow, or, on the contrary, the consciousness starts from a lower place and is lifted in the *āves* perhaps occasionally, perhaps more continuously higher for a time or else the higher force attracted by the creative will breaks through or touches or catches up the less excited inspiration towards or into itself."²⁷

This process of the lifting up of the consciousness of a lower plane by the creative force of the higher planes usually happens on the overhead places. As Sri Aurobindo says.... "the Overmind, for instance, is the ultimate source of intuition, illumination or heightened power of the planes immediately below it. It can lift them up into its own greater intensity or give out of its intensity to them or touch or combine their powers together with something of its own greater power or they can receive or draw something from it or from each other."²⁸ This kind of intermixing process can also happen on the

lower places beginning from the mental. But "the working is not the same, for the different powers here stand more on a footing of equality whether they stand apart from each other, each working in its own right, or co-operate."²⁹

It may be stated in this connection that an interesting question was put to Sri Aurobindo by one of his disciples, with regard to the language used by the creative power of inspiration: "Are all the innumerable languages of earth spoken in the higher planes or do the latter possess merely modes or states of consciousness?"³⁰ To this Sri Aurobindo's reply was equally interesting and revealing:

"As for the language, the tongue in which the poem comes or the whole lines from above, that offers no real difficulty. It all depends on the contact between the creative Power and the instrument or channel; the Power will naturally choose the language of the instrument or channel, that to which it is accustomed and can, therefore, readily hear and receive. The power itself is not limited and can use any language, but although it is possible for things to come through in a language unknown or ill-known—I have seen several instances of the former it is not a useful case, since the *samskāras* of the mind, its habit of action and conception would normally obstruct any such unprepared receptiveness; only a strong mediumistic faculty might be unaffected by this difficulty. These things, however, are obviously exceptional, abnormal or supernormal phenomena."³¹

Such, in brief, is Sri Aurobindo's theory of the process of poetic creation. It is obviously based upon a subtle and profound psychological as well as spiritual experience and realisation. This is why it goes to the very roots of the matter and lays bare to our vision the very fountain-heads of poetic creation. On the other hand, when we go through the views expressed by the leading English poets and critics on the subject,³² we hardly find that they concern themselves with the psychological and spiritual origins of the process, which lie hidden behind the actual form of the poem. They are usually pre-occupied with the constituent limbs and features of poetry and, therefore, skim the surface only of poetic creation. Of course, we cannot

say that their analysis becomes superficial on this account. What we may say is that instead of going to the soul of poetic creation, they get confined mostly to the body of it. But here and there we find views which come nearer the truths as revealed by Sri Aurobindo. Among the earlier English critics, Thomas Lodge, Sir Philip Sidney and G. Puttenham appear to have divined that poetry is fundamentally a thing of inspiration and comes to the poet from above.... "poetry", says Lodge, for example, "cometh from above, from a heavenly seat of glorious God, unto an excellent creature man...it cometh not by exercise of play-making, neither insertion of gauds, but from nature and from above... and whereas the poets were said to call for the Muse's help, their meaning was no other... but to call for heavenly inspiration from above to direct their endeavours...when their matter is most heavenly their style is most lofty."³³ The obvious implication here is that when the poet does not try to interfere with the working of inspiration upon him from above, his creation is the best. Even Ben Johnson who like all classicists laid much stress upon "rules", "exercise", study, imitation, etc., was not quite ignorant of the invisible presence of this higher creative Power or source when he said that poetry was uttered "somewhat above a mortal mouth".³⁴ "Then it riseth higher, as by a divine instinct, when it contemns common and known conceptions....Then it gets aloft and flies away with his rider, whether before it was doubtful to ascend.... This the poets understand by their *Helicon, Pegasus or Parnassus*....hence it is that the coming up of good poets....is so thin and rare among us...."³⁵ But from about the later half of the 17th century until the time of the Romantics we find that inspiration comes regarded as "a dangerous word"³⁶ and its working, too, is ridiculed and condemned by saying that it is "a spiritual fit, derived from the ancient ethnic poets, who then, as they were priests, were statesmen too, and probably loved dominion; and as their well dissembling of inspiration begot them reverence then equal to that which was paid to laws, so these who now profess the same fury may perhaps by such authentic example, pretend authority over the people...."³⁷ It is Hobbes, however, who is the strongest critic of the theory of inspiration during this period and thinks of it as a foolish and unreasonable custom coming of yore, "which a man enabled to speak wisely from the principles of nature and

his own meditation, loves rather to be thought to speak by inspiration, like a bagpipe."³⁸ And in order to break such a foolish "bagpipe" to pieces he set down his own theory of poetic creation thus: "Time and Education begets experience; Experience begets memory; Memory begets judgment and fancy; Judgment begets the strength and structure, and Fancy begets the ornaments of a poem. The ancients therefore fabled not absurdly in making memory the mother of the Muses."³⁹ The critical judgment of Hobbes, therefore, ascribed the source of poetic creation to memory. Another rational critic of the period, Sir William Temple, sought to explain this ancient mystery of inspiration, by saying that it was nothing more than "a certain noble and vital heat of temper...specially for the brain."⁴⁰

However, we find that the great Romantic poet and critic, Wordsworth, gave a quite deeper meaning to the faculty of memory, stressed so much by Hobbes, and to the theory of the vital brain energy of William Temple. When he made the famous statement that "...poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this is carried on....."⁴¹ This was quite a big advance on previous theories of the way poetry was born, inasmuch as it sought to relate the poetic process to some of the deeper psychological truths of human nature and consciousness. And when Coleridge came out with his theory of the part played by Imagination and Fancy in poetic composition a further stride was taken in the psychological understanding of the poetic phenomenon. The distinction between these two creative faculties of the poet is admirably brought out by him thus; "How excellently the German *Einbildungskraft* expresses this prime and loftiest faculty, the power of co-adunation, the faculty that forms the many into one—*In-eins-bildung*: Eisenoplasy or esenoplastic power, is contra-distinguished from fantasy or the mirrorment,—either catoptric or metoptric repeating simply, or by transposition and, again involuntary (fantasy) as in dreams, or by an act of the will."⁴²

Here, it is just possible, one may say — as for example, even such a finely endowed critic as J. W. Mackail does regarding most of the philosophical-critical passages of Coleridge's — that "it is rhetoric, not criticism...barren word-play."⁴³ But the fact is that Coleridge is putting forward a very profound truth about the way a poet truly creates, and at the same time, effectively showing up the inadequacy of, and demolishing as well, the theory of Memory and Fancy which Hobbes had put forward before, with all the authority of his philosophical and literary scholarship. It is by virtue of "Eisenoplasy" or "esemplastic power" which in common parlance is the faculty of Imagination, and not "fantasy" or fancy that the poet, according to Coleridge, really creates. The distinction between what he called the primary and secondary Imagination was, it is probable, set forth by him — unfortunately in his typical cryptic and compressed style again — in order to give a fitting reply to Hobbes, Locke and Hartley. Professor Basil Willey has made Coleridge's views on this important classical theory explicit enough thus:

"What of the distinction", Prof. Willey asks, "between the two kinds of Imagination, the Primary and the Secondary?" And he replies, "I fear that some readers are misled by the oracular sublimity of Coleridge's definition of the former: 'The Primary Imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'.

"This is not to be dismissed as metaphysical babble; a weight of thought, indeed a whole philosophy, lies beneath each phrase. Coleridge is here summarising the great struggle and victory of his life — his triumph over the old tradition of Locke and Hartley, which had assumed that the mind in perception was wholly passive, 'a lazy looker-on on an external world' The mind, he now teaches, works actively in the mere act of perception; it knows its objects not by passive perception, but by its own energy and under its own necessary forms; indeed, it knows not mere objects as such, but itself in the objects:...

In speaking, thus, of the Primary Imagination, then, Coleridge is affirming that the mind is essentially and inveterately creative: 'we receive but what we give', and in the commonest everyday acts

of perception we are making out own world. We make it, indeed, not *ex nihilo*, but of the influxes proceeding from Nature, or as Coleridge preferred to say 'the infinite I AM'. Whatever we perceive is what we have made in response to these stimuli; perception is an activity of the mind, not a merely mechanical registering of impressions. However (and this is now the point to be emphasised), it is the Secondary Imagination, not the Primary, which he proceeds to contrast with Fancy, it is the Secondary Imagination which is at work in the making of poetry. For how does it operate?

"It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate ... it struggles to idealise and unify. It is essentially vital even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead."

"Here speaks the seer, the poet and the romantic; not content with the automatic 'poetry' which we all create, and which we call the world of everyday appearances, he would transcend this for a vision more intense, more true, than is afforded by the light of common day

"If we ask, then, what it is which the Secondary Imagination must 'dissolve, diffuse and dissipate;' the answer is ... it is the 'inanimate cold world' of the Primary Imagination all that is allowed to the daily, prosaic consciousness of average humanity, and to poets themselves when power deserves them ... this desire (as Wordsworth expresses it)

"For something loftier, more adorned
Than is the common aspect, daily garb
Of human life." (*The Prelude*, Book V, lines 575-77)

is no mere romantic escapism, though it may sometimes take that form; it is the originating impulse of poets of all times (including our own time), and not merely of poets, but of seers and saints and scientists as well....

"The Imagination, then (we may now drop the word "secondary") is the mind in its highest state of creative insight and alertness; its acts are acts of growth...."⁴⁴

"Fancy, on the contrary," says Coleridge, "has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The fancy is, indeed, no other

than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready-made from the law of association."⁴⁵

There is, no doubt, that in so far as it involves acts of selection and arrangement — "that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word choice" — Fancy, as Basil Willey tells us, "is on a higher level than mere perception or mere memory. But it is below Imagination in that, instead of making all things new, it merely constructs patterns out of *ready-made* materials, 'fixities and definites'. It juxtaposes images, but does not *fuse* them into unity; its products are like mechanical mixtures (as of salt with iron filings), in which the ingredients, though close together, remain the same as when apart; whereas those of Imagination are like chemical compounds (say, of sodium and chlorine), in which the ingredients lose their separate identities in a new substance, composed of them indeed, but differing from them both."⁴⁶

At another place, Coleridge says that the images of Fancy "have no connection natural or moral, but are yoked together by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence."⁴⁷ On the other hand, in Imagination all the essential qualities of the images are made to interpenetrate; and "as the co-ordinating, shaping power" its function is "to see all things as one, and the one in all things."⁴⁸

Thus, if we put the matter a little philosophically we may say that according to Coleridge, the poetic power is the Secondary Imagination which is the Universal Being's creative faculty actively at work in the individual, co-existent with the individual conscious will; and it is when this Secondary Imagination acts creatively on the objects of sensation which are the Primary Imagination repeated in the individual, that we get into touch with the original creativity projecting those objects within the Universal Consciousness. And it is then that we see everything as a symbol of the Infinite and thus participating, in our human way, in the significance of the Universe as it exists in the Supreme.

Then, at one place Coleridge also says, "Forms exist before the substance out of which they are shaped."⁴⁹ The idea of the pre-exis-

tence of poetic creation on some higher plane of the infinite is, as stated by Sri Aurobindo, thus clearly adumbrated in Coleridge's poetics as well.

And Shelley says, "Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it...⁵⁰ Referring to the greatest poets of his own day, he asks whether it is not "an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labour and study."⁵¹ "Milton", he continues to argue, "conceived the *Paradise Lost* as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the Muse having 'dictated' to him the 'unpremeditated song'... a great statue or picture grows the very mind which directs the hands in formation is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations, or the media of the process."⁵² Again he also says about poetry, generally, "It acts in a divine and unapprehended manner beyond and above consciousness."⁵³ In such statements he is in fact suggesting that the sources of poetic creation are somewhere above and not "subject to the control of the active powers of the mind." Shelley, too, therefore, relates the process of poetic creation to the working of some higher consciousness in the psychology of man, and then confirms Sri Aurobindo's experience of it.

There is also a significant passage in E. A. Poe's *The Poetic Principle* (1844): "The struggle to apprehend the supernal loveliness — this struggle on the part of souls fittingly constituted, — has given to the world all *that* which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and to *feel* as poetic."⁵⁴ Poe's idea here that there is "the supernal loveliness" existing somewhere above the human consciousness, and that "souls fittingly constituted" struggle to "apprehend" it, or make "a wild effort to reach the beauty above"⁵⁵ is a clear indication once again that in essence poetic creation has a subtler and deeper psychological motivation and process of a higher order that is within the reach of the human intellect. Robert Browning seems to be still more positive and precise about this point when he says, "He (i.e. the subjective poet), gifted like the objective poet with the fuller perception of nature and man, is impelled to embody the thing he perceives, not so much with reference to the many below,

as to the One above him, the supreme intelligence which apprehends all things in their absolute truth--an ultimate view ever aspired to, if but partially attained, by the poet's soul. Not what man sees, but what God sees--the Ideas of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand,—it is towards these that he struggles...and he digs where he stands,—preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak. Such a poet...is rather a seer, accordingly, than a fashioner, and what he produces will be less a work than an effluence.⁵⁶ Here, too the idea is clearly suggested that the whole process of poetic creation by the subjective poet who is not “a fashioner” like the objective poet but “a seer” lies in psychologically and spiritually reaching out to and establishing contact with the higher region above where, “the Ideas of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly in the Hand” exist perennially. Also, it is the poet's soul alone, i.e. the most plastic instrument of the divine consciousness is man which is “the nearest reflex of that absolute mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak”.

There are some modern critics, too, who, like Sri Aurobindo, have the feeling that poetry or art is not ‘created’ so much as that it is brought down from a place where it already exists, complete and ready for transmission. Marcel Prout, for example, says about a work of art in *Remembrance of Things Past*, “...we do not create it as we please...it pre-exists in us and we are compelled, as though it were by a law of nature, to discover it because it is at once hidden from us and necessary.” G.G. Coulton in his *Mediaeval Panorama* (1938) says about Dante, “...we feel not so much...that he is creating, as that he stands by, removes veil, and eternity...” E.H. Combrich says nearly the same thing about Michaelangelo in his *The Story of Art* (1950) that he “always tried to conceive his figures as lying hidden in the block of marble on which he was working. The task he set himself as a sculptor was merely to remove the stone which covered them.” Clive Sansom, too, expresses this very view when he says: “It is as if the whole poem, form and all, already exists—whether in outer space or inner consciousness doesn't matter. The poet's job is to collect and bring down to earth before the already fa-

ding realisation of it is dispersed again." Even what is known as the poet's craftsmanship, he says, "comes in but to help in deciding whether one's view of the existing poem is correct rather than to help in creating it. The poem, in fact, is there already. All one's faculties, including craftsmanship, are concentrated on extracting it intact."

Thus, we see that the essence of Sri Aurobindo's deeper psychological and spiritual perception of the way poetry is born is, to an appreciable extent, well adumbrated and confirmed in the view of not a few of the English critics, past and present. But mostly they are able to catch the essence only. The details of the whole process, the multiplicity of the planes from which not only the diviner form of expression comes down to the well-known attuned human receptacle, the intermingling of the various planes of consciousness and the consequent difference in the results and motives of the poetic achievement, the distinction between the overhead planes of inspiration and those existing from the mind downwards, the various parts of the same poem coming from different planes and the illuminating reasons given for such a phenomenon which is quite usual, the role of the creative vital, and the outer mind and other external instruments in the over-all process of poetic composition, the precise nature of the pre-existence of a poetic composition, the precise qualification of the true poet as lying in his being merely a most plastic and faithful receptacle, the choice of the language of expression by the creative Power etc,—all these things are given fairly elaborately and precisely by Sri Aurobindo more than anybody else. His theory of poetic creation, provided it can be called just a theory, is, therefore, much more comprehensive and precise, subtle and profound, deeply psychological as well as spiritual, than we get elsewhere; and it reveals to us the very hidden fountain-heads and not merely the visible expanding bed of the outflowings of the dynamic creative powers of inspiration. And on the basis of what he has to give us on this point we may be quite justified in saying that the process of what is usually known as poetic creation is, in fact, and more properly, but the process of poetic transmission through the fit human channel, and that all the poet needs to do during the act of creation is to concentrate all one's faculties, including the one of craftsmanship or organisation on transmitting "the whole poem, form and all intact from either the

higher planes above or the psychic regions within, where it already exists, ready and complete. And even when the originating source is but the subtle-physical plane or the higher or lower vital or the creative intelligence—for this source, as Sri Aurobindo says, “may be anywhere”,—the best way in which the so-called creative poet can respond to it is to render himself a fit channel of transmission only without any let or hindrance from any part of himself. As he compendiously says in another letter, “Poetry is a question of the right concentrated silence or seeking somewhere in the mind with the right openness to the Word that is trying to express itself—for the Word is there ready to descend in those inner planes where all artistic forms take birth, but it is the transmitting mind that must change and become a perfect channel and not an obstacle.”⁵⁷ At the same time, although the poet plays his role best by being only a channel or receptacle, he is not quite deprived of “the joy of the creation and the joy of the *āveś enthousiasmos*, elation of the inrush and the passage.”

There is a passage towards the end of *The Future Poetry* where Sri Aurobindo states the psychological phenomenon of poetic inspiration in as luminous a manner as he does in his letters. He says:

“The voice of poetry comes from a region above us, a plane of our being above and beyond our personal intelligence, a supermind which sees things in their innermost and largest truth by a spiritual identity and with a lustrous effulgency and rapture and its native language is a revelatory, inspired, intuitive word limpid or subtly vibrant or densely packed with the glory of this ecstasy and lustre. It is the possession of the mind by the supramental touch and the communicated impulse to seize this sight and word that creates the psychological phenomenon of poetic inspiration and it is the invasion of it by a superior power to that which it is normally able to harbour that produces the temporary excitement of brain and heart and nerve which accompanies the inrush of the influence.”⁵⁸

This, at any rate, is the true psychological interpretation or explanation of the kind of strange physical or sensational symptoms

which the artists often say, they feel when the creative mood is theirs or suddenly descends on them. One is reminded here of Housman's personal statement : "Experience has taught me, when I am shaving of a morning, to keep watch over my thoughts, because, if a line of poetry strays into my memory, my skin bristles so the razor ceases to act. This particular symptom accompanied by a shiver down the spine; there is another which consists in a constriction of the throat and a precipitation of water to the eyes; and there is a third which I can only describe by borrowing a phrase from one of Keat's last letters, where he says, speaking of Fanny Browne, "everything that reminds me of her goes through like a spear. The seat of this sensation is the pit of the stomach."⁵⁹ This is quite all right for the creation of vital or emotional or vitalised intellectual poetry but even here it is not quite right to say that the "seat" of such a creative sensational is "the pit of the stomach", or that, as Housman says again, poetry is, "more physical than intellectual." Eliphaz the Temanite to whom Housman refers in that essay puts the matter much more correctly when he says: 'a spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up'. But it is not till we come to the luminous psychological interpretation of the true sources of poetic creation by Sri Aurobindo that we get a truer, deeper, subtler and more convincing knowledge of the very origin and the while process of artistic creation, and the accompaniment, if any, of either physical or nervous or cerebral sensation.

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2. *Ibid*, p. 3.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.
4. *Life—Literature—Yoga*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, p. 89.
5. *Ibid*, pp. 89-90.
- 6,7,8,9,10,11. *Ibid*, p. 90.
12. According to Sri Aurobindo, however, it is the pseudo-classical or lower kind of classical art and literature which depends upon the faculty of intellect for achieving perfection, for real classical art "works by a large vision and inspiration, not by the process of intellect" (*The Human cycle*, p. 172.)

13. *The Name and Nature of Poetry.*
14. Op. cit. *Letters*, 3rd series, p. 5.
15. *Ibid*, p. 5.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
17. *The Human Cycle*, American edition, 1950, p. 155.
- 18, 19. *Ibid*, p. 155. Coleridge, one of the best literary critics not only in English but all European literature, also hints at this basic truth when he says, while defending the creative genius of Shakespeare, that "genius cannot be lawless," in as much as it possess inherently "the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination". Coleridge's *Literary Criticism*, an anthology with an introduction by J.W. Mackail, O.U.P, reprinted, 1949, p. 185.
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30. *Ibid*, p. 89.
31. *Ibid*, p. 90.
32. A very good collection of such views by writers excluding the moderns is to be found in the opening chapter entitled "The Theory of Poetic Creation" of R. P. Cowl's Selections *Theory of Poetry in—England*. Macmillan. 1914.
33. Quoted in Cowl's book, op. cit. Pp. 2-3.
34. *Ibid*, p. 5.
35. *Ibid*, Pp. 5-6.
36. Davenant: *Preface to Gondibert*, 1650.
37. Quoted in Cowl's book, p.8.
38. *Ibid*, p. 10.
39. *Ibid*, Pp. 5-6.
40. *Ibid*, Pp. 16-17.
41. *Ibid*, Pp. 28-29.
42. *Ibid*, p. 38.
43. Op. cit, Mackail's *Coleridge's Lit. Criticism*, p. ix.
44. Basil Willey's *Nineteenth Century Studies*, Chelto-Windus, London, 1955, Pp. 13-16.
45. *Biographic Literaria*, p. 160.
46. Op. cit, B Willey's book, p. 16.
47. *Table Talk*, June 23, 1834.
48. Op. cit, Basil Willey, p. 19.
49. Allsop's *Letters, Conversations and Recollections*, 1836, quoted in Cowl's book, p. 121.
50. *A Defence of Poetry.*
51. *Ibid*.
52. *Ibid*.
53. *The World of Poetry.*
54. Quoted in Cowl's book, p. 40 .
55. *Ibid*, p. 40.
56. *On the Poet, Objective and Subjective*, 1851, also quoted in Cowl's book, p. 41.
57. Op. cit, *Letters*, 3rd series, p. 162.
58. *The Future Poetry*, pp. 392-93.
59. *The Name and Nature of Poetry.*

TWO OLD BENGALI POEMS

(1)

VIDYAPATI

O sister mine ask not how I feel
The rapture ineffable, for as I try to express it,
it gushes up afresh at each instant.
O from the cradle onwards have my eyes gazed on Beauty
and yet they were never sated.
For aeons unnumbered, I have with my heart pressed close
to the heart and yet my heartache is not assuaged.
Night after night I have passed in ravishment
and yet the sense of it all has eluded my thought.
The experts sing praises of the nectar but none has
traced its source.
Says Vidyapati, not one in a million
has slaked soul's unquenched yearning for Bliss.

(2)

CHANDIDASA

Love broods on Love
and Love creates the Mood
and Mood on Mood doth dwell.
But from the Mood is born delight.
Delight nestles in the heart
and delight then gushes forth.
The fountain springs from the flow.
But who could taste the rapture there.
Flowers mingle with flowers
and among flowers doth fragrance reside.
The fragrance wafts Four Letters

And that is a riddle (conundrum) to spell!

The shore dwells upon the shore

and waves lap on the shore,

And waves roll into waves.

But few are those who con it!

The Two dwell upon two;

Some here or there may divine it;

But those alone upbear Love.

Thus speaks Chandidasa the twice-born.

Translated by N. and R.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL OUTLOOK

Chapter: 3 — The Human Problem: an Analysis

THE social evolution of the human race is necessarily a development of the relations between three constant factors,—individuals, communities of various sorts, and mankind. Each seeks its own fulfilment and satisfaction, but each is compelled to develop them not independently but in relation to the others. The first natural aim of the individual must be his own inner growth and fullness and its expression in his outer life. This can only be accomplished through his relation with other individuals. Similarly the community (or nation) seeks its own fulfilment, but it can accomplish its growth only through individuals. Mankind as a whole has not yet any consciously organised common life, but still the idea and the fact of our common human existence, nature, destiny has always exercised its strong influence on human thought and action. One of the chief preoccupations of ethics and religion has been the obligations of man to mankind.

Nature works always through these three terms and none of them can be abolished. If or when the whole of humanity arrives at an organised common life, and seeks a common fulfilment, it can only do it by means of the relation of this whole to its parts, and by the aid of the expanding life of individual human beings and of the communities whose progress constitutes the larger terms of the life of humanity.

Just as in the life-type there are the three terms, genus, species and individuals, so also in the social organisation of man the three terms are interlinked,—even more intimately in man than in the animal. Therefore it would seem that the ultimate aim of Nature must be to develop all individuals to their full capacity, to develop all communities to the full expression of their many-sided potentialities, and to evolve the united life of mankind to its full common capacity, by taking full advantage of the diversity.

Just as diversity is as necessary as unity to our true complete-

ness, so freedom is as necessary to life as law and regime. Thus, while diversity is essential for power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement and stability. But unity does not mean uniformity. This latter is only sought for by the reasoning factor in man, because uniformity gives a strong illusion of unity in place of the real oneness. Moreover, uniformity also makes it easiest to impose law, order and regimentation. But on the other hand, diversity, in the present condition of mankind, only leads to strife and disorder and separation. Yet uniformity and regimentation go to the other extreme and only lead to inertia in the society and eventually block the way to progress.

It is only in harmony between our unity and our diversity that the real secret of life lies. For ultimately we find that a real spiritual and psychological unity allows a free diversity based on a free variation, which is also Nature's rule. By liberty, therefore, we mean the freedom to obey the law of our being, to grow to our natural self-fulfilment, to find out naturally and freely our harmony with our environment.

Human society progresses in proportion as law becomes the child of freedom. It will reach its perfection when man has learned to know and become spiritually one with his fellow-men. Then the spontaneous law of his society will exist only as the outward mould of his self-governed inner liberty. This is not only an idea, but a practical possibility, as this background survey of modern sociology will endeavour to show.

(ii)

All mankind may be regarded as a collective being—which is not merely a mind or a body but a soul and a life. Each society develops into a group-soul of humanity and develops also a general temperament, character, type of mind, and evolves governing ideas and tendencies that shape its life and its institutions. There is, however, no discoverable common reason and will; for this group-soul works out its tendencies by a diversity of opinions, of wills and of life. The vitality of the group-life depends largely on the working of this diversity, its continuity and its richness. And it is always the

reason and will of a comparatively few effective men that rules and regulates things with the consent of the half-hypnotised mass.

Man needs freedom of thought and life and action in order to grow, otherwise he will remain fixed where he is. If his individual mind and reason are ill-developed, he may consent to grow, as does the infra-rational mind, in the group-soul, in the herd or in the mass, with that subtle, half-conscient general evolution common to all in the lower process of Nature. As he develops individual reason and will, he needs room for an increasing play of individual freedom and variation. Where there is excessive regulation of life, however, revolt sets in, and may spread. The state, in turn, tends to regulate this by an education adapted to its fixed forms of life, and particularly an education that seeks to drill the citizen in a fixed set of ideas, attitudes and propensities. Also, there will be the suppression of freedom of speech and thinking so as to train and compel all to be of one mind, one sentiment, one opinion and one feeling. This, as we have seen, would be the end of the reasoning man, and a thoroughgoing mechanisation of life.

To make a larger and better development of life possible, on a basis of harmony and not of conflict and struggle, the soul in man must discover itself in its highest and completest spiritual reality. Only then can a progressive upward transformation of its life-values be effected into those of the spirit. For the spiritual is the one truth of which all others are the veiled aspects and in which they can find their own right form and true relation to each other. This is the work the reason cannot do. The business of the reason is to observe and understand this life by the intelligence, and discover for it the direction in which it is going and the laws of its self-development on the way. But the integral truth of things is truth not of the reason but of the spirit. As we have seen, the reason mechanises in order to arrive at fixity of conduct and practice amid the fluidity of things. Such mechanisation can never truly succeed in dealing with conscious life, because there it is contrary to the law of life. Thus, reason can never arrive at perfection by its own methods. Reason must call in a higher spiritual principle of life.

This means that the collectivity itself must allow for a free individual development on the basis of unity and a closely harmonised

common existence. To do that, there must be the acceptance of the basic spiritual principles as a science of spirituality. In this way spirituality itself will enlighten through the reasoning faculty.

Anarchism in its idealistic form is not lawlessness and chaos, but a condition of non-government where each person has the knowledge and will to live in harmony with everyone else in the collectivity. In such a state social law or compulsion would be unnecessary. But the principle of social compulsion, which has operated so largely in the past is the necessary law of man's present imperfect nature. In the earliest stages of his social evolution it was clearly inevitable. For until man has grown out of the causes of its necessity, he cannot be really ready for the anarchistic principle of living.

However, it is clear that the more the outer law is replaced by an inner law, the nearer man will draw to his true and natural perfection. And the perfect social state must be one in which governmental compulsion is abolished and man is able to live with his fellow-men by free agreement and co-operation. This might be aided by the principle of fraternity,—a free equality founded on spontaneous co-operation, not on governmental force and social compulsion.

All efforts to build such a collectivist society have failed to take account of the infra-rational element in man, the vital egoism to which the most active and effective part of his nature is bound. If, however, the ego-force is overshadowed, cowed and depressed, then the life of man becomes artificial, mechanical and uncreative. We are, therefore, in the end compelled to aim higher than the rational and intellectual solution and go farther.

The solution lies not in the reason but in the soul of man, in its spiritual tendencies. It is a spiritual and inner freedom that can alone create a perfect human order. A deeper brotherhood, a yet unfound law of love is the only sure foundation possible for a perfect social evolution. No other can replace this. And it is only in the soul that this brotherhood and love will find its natural roots. For such spiritual comradeship is the expression of an inner realisation of oneness. Only in this way can egoism disappear, and the true equality and oneness of all take its place.

From the viewpoint of the spiritual evolution, this beginning will imply the descent of an influence that will alter the whole life of

mankind in its orientation and enlarge, as did the development of his reason in the intellectual sphere, its potentialities and all its structure in the spiritual sphere.

(iii)

At its best normal human society establishes, against the interests which lead to conflict, the interests which call for association and mutual assistance. It creates or stimulates sympathies and habits of helpfulness that give a psychological support and sanction to its mechanism of law, custom and contract. While society deals only with the life, mind and body as the three terms of existence with which it can completely handle, it develops a system of mental growth efficiency, and an intellectual, aesthetic and moral culture. It also evolves the vital side of life and creates an ever-growing system of economic efficiency and vital enjoyment. By systems of physical culture and a cumbrous science of habits and remedies society attempts to right the balance of vital excesses and mental depressions. But in the end, experience shows that society tends to disintegrate through some radical deficiencies. This is proof that its method of development does not correspond to all the reality of the human being and to the aim of life which that reality imposes.

It is found that civilisation has created many more problems than it can solve. It has multiplied excessive needs and desires the satisfaction of which it has not sufficient vital force to sustain. And it has developed a mass of claims and artificial instincts in the midst of which life loses its way and has no longer any sight of its aim. At present the cure is aimed at by more and more mechanical devices, a more scientific organisation of life, which means that the machine will replace life.

Just as in the individual a healthy body, a strong vitality and an active clarified mind carry man no more than a certain distance, so these three things alone leave a deficient development in society. Even a religious system and widespread spirit of belief cannot in themselves bring the means of social salvation, as it has repeatedly failed to do in the past. It is only in its new turn inwards, towards a greater subjectivity now in its beginning stages, that there

is a better hope. For by that inner turn it must discover that the real truth of man is to be found in his soul. That indeed is the possibility if the inward turn is in right earnest.

Religion in the past failed because in taking the inward turn it looked beyond the earth for its fulfilment, the earth being only a preparation for individual salvation or release from the burden of life. Human society has never seized on the discovery of the law of its own being, or on a knowledge of the soul's true nature and need as the right way of terrestrial perfection. It is only now, by a new growth and awakening in spirituality, that society can assimilate this knowledge for the common good.

The true spiritual aim in society will regard man as a soul incarnated for a divine purpose on earth. Life, mind and body are not ends in themselves, but are instruments—though as yet imperfect instruments of the soul. The destiny of life, mind and body is to become spiritualised, in order to grow into visible members of the spirit, illumined, more and more conscious and perfect.

The spiritualised society will accept the truth of man's soul as a thing entirely divine in its essence. It will accept also the possibility of his whole being becoming divine in spite of Nature's first contradiction of this possibility. It will also regard the collectivity as a soul form of the Infinite, a collective soul myriadly embodied upon earth for a divine fulfilment or purpose.

It will hold up this creed and ideal as a light and inspiration to all parts of man's natural being to grow with the godhead from within themselves, to become freely divine. For a spiritualised society will not seek to imprison or impoverish, but to let in the widest air and the higher light. The spiritual aim will recognise that man as he grows in his being must have as much free space as possible for all the potentialities in man to develop.

The way of spirituality is to present, even to the lower parts of man's being, the truth of the spirit translated into their own field of action. It aims to show man the way to seek for the Divine in every way of his being, and to live and act in the Divine.

Chapter 4 — The Spiritual Solution

Man seems to be a double nature. On the one hand there is an animal nature of the vital and physical being which lives according to instincts, impulses, desires and automatic reactions. On the other hand there is the nature of the self-conscious intellect, which has ethical, aesthetic, intelligently emotional and intelligently dynamic motives. While the aim of the animal part is merely to possess and enjoy, the aim of the intelligent and aesthetic part is to use the powers of mind much more than the powers of life and body, especially in the direction of what is true, good and beautiful.

But in our day-to-day life these two elements live together in a continual perplexity, which is made perpetually uneasy and ineffectual to each other. All the uneasiness, dissatisfaction, disillusionment, weariness, melancholy, and pessimism of the human mind comes from man's practical failure to solve the riddle and the difficulty of his double nature.

In a materialistic age, such as the one we have been passing through, the intellect of man is bent on studying Life and Matter only, and recognising Mind only as an instrument of Life and Matter. All its knowledge is devoted to a tremendous expansion of the vital and physical life, its practicality, its efficiency, its comfort and the splendid ordering of its instincts of production, possession and enjoyment. All this dominated the commercial and economic activities of mankind.

The natural result has been a struggle—an economic or "cold" war—between the most efficient and civilised or advanced nations for the possession and enjoyment of the world, of its wealth, of its markets, and its available spaces.

Amidst all this struggle there have been attempts to return to an older ideal, with a will to use the reason and the ethical mind better and more largely in the ordering of individual, of national, and of international life. But such attempts have proved that they cannot be the real and final solution. The solution lies, as it has been previously hinted, in an awakening to our real self and nature. This is our hidden self, or soul, which we have yet to become aware of. It is only by awakening to this highest in us that we can overcome the

conflicts of the lower nature and establish the needed harmony in ourselves and in the world.

The science of spirituality teaches us that the secret of the transformation of human life lies in our attaining a higher consciousness. This will be a greater step in the evolution than was made in the past from the vital mind of the animal to the thinking mind of man. In the greater step a spiritual will must replace the present vital will. This spiritual will is above mind,—a supramental power, (just as mind is above the life-force).

At present our will and power is centred in the mental plane, where we live in the strength of the Idea. But this Idea is still the mental idea, and is intermediary, and not the final attainment of the evolutionary ascent. It is because of this intermediary status that there are two opposite pulls—one downward and outward towards the vital and physical life, and the other inward and upward towards the spirit. We see this opposition in thought, in art, in conduct and in life where we are divided between two tendencies, one idealistic and the other realistic.

Of the two, the realistic tendency seems more solidly founded, more in touch with actualities, because it relies upon a reality which is seen, can be felt, and is already accomplished. The idealistic tendency, on the other hand, seems to us something unreal, fantastic, unsubstantial, nebulous, a thing more of thoughts and words than of living actualities, because it is trying to embody a reality not yet accomplished. In other words, our idealism has to convert itself into a spiritual realism which will help this lower reality of our sensational, vital and physical nature to grow upwards.

At this stage, the domination of the vital elements must be replaced by the domination of the spirit. In this direction lies the perfection of man. This higher perfection will come by a spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has discovered his own nature. For this spontaneity will be intuitive and internally conscious. It will be a glad obedience to a spontaneous principle of spiritual light, to the force of a unified and integralised highest truth, largest beauty, good, power, joy, love and oneness. Our insight into the workings of this spiritual principle will become clearer only as we go deeper into the study of spirituality.

(ii)

When man boldly declares that all he has yet developed, including the intellect, are now no longer sufficient for him, he will then begin to set free the greater light within. His philosophy, art, science, ethics, and social organisation will then be no longer an exercise of mind and life, but a means for the discovery of a greater truth behind mind and life, and for bringing its power into our human existence. This is the essence of the change from the mental and vital to the spiritual order of life.

Such changes must necessarily be accomplished in the individual first, and in a great number of individuals (aided by a broader educational curriculum). For Nature intends in man, unlike the animal, a more and more conscious evolution, and therefore the developed individuality is of paramount importance and indispensable. The mass follows the individual achievement, although in a very imperfect and confused fashion, which often ends in failure or distortion of the thing created.

Therefore if the spiritual change is to be effected, it must unite two conditions which have to be simultaneously satisfied but are most difficult to bring together. Firstly, there must be the individuals who are able to see, to develop, and re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit, and to communicate both their idea and its power to the mass. Secondly, there must at the same time be a society, or at least the constituents of a group-body, which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating and ready to follow.

In the past, either the individual has not been sufficiently developed, or the collectivity has not been ready for any far-reaching message, with the result that the final acceptance of the spiritual ideal by the society has been the beginning of a distortion or diminution of the spirit, rather than an enlargement.

The first step is that the common human mind begins to admit the ideas proper to the higher order that is in the end to be. The heart of man also must begin to be stirred by aspirations born of these ideas. The first sign in this direction is the growth of the subjective idea of life,—the idea of the soul, the inner being, its powers, its possibilities, its growth, its expression, and the creation of a true,

beautiful and helpful environment for it as the one thing of first and last importance.

Centred on a sturdy science of spirituality, these ideas will influence philosophy, philosophical things, the creative arts and poetry, as well as painting, sculpture, music and the main ideas of ethics and social well-being, — and naturally politics and economics. This will also lead to new lines of scientific research which will then break the walls between soul and matter. There will be an extension into a more exact knowledge of the psychological and psychic (or subliminal) realms with a realisation that these have laws of their own which are other than physical. Religion, too, will reject much of the dead weight of the past and revivify its strength in the fountains of the Spirit.

The basis of this spirituality will be established as a living force when the higher idea of man as a soul develops itself individually and collectively in the life and body. The elevation of human life will thus come not through material efficiency alone or the complex play of man's vital and dynamic powers mastering the energies of physical Nature for the satisfaction of the life-instincts, but through the greatness of his mental and psychic being. Through this inner turn, the organisation of man's vast subliminal nature and its forces will be discovered and brought forward. The basis will be laid for the joy and power of knowledge, for the joy and power of beauty, for the joy and power of the human will mastering not only physical Nature, but the vital and mental Natures. The inner secrets of mind-powers and life-powers will be discovered and used for a freer liberation of man from the limitations of his shackled bodily life.

Such a turn of human thought, effort, and ideas of life, if it took hold of the communal mind, would lead to a profound revolution throughout the whole range of human existence. It would give it a new tone and atmosphere, a loftier spirit, wider horizons and a greater aim. It would develop a Science which would open the doors of other worlds. It could develop an achievement of Art and Beauty which would make the greatness of the past a comparatively little thing, and would save the world from the astonishingly callous reign of utilitarian ugliness. It could open up a freer and closer interchange between human minds, and also a kindlier interchange between

human hearts and lives. But first it is essential that, if mankind is to be spiritualised, it must first in the mass cease to be the material or the vital man, and become the psychic and the true mental being.

From this conversion the idea will become strong that mind itself is no more than a secondary power of the Spirit working, and that Spirit is the great Eternal, the original and sole reality. The spiritual age of mankind will only be possible on the basis of this realisation.

A spiritual human society would start from and try to realise three essential truths of existence,— God, freedom and unity. These three are really one, for you cannot realise freedom and unity unless you realise God, you cannot possess freedom and unity unless you possess God, and at the same time possess your highest self and the self of all creatures. God is only waiting to be known, while man seeks for him everywhere and creates images of the Divine, which are only projections of his own ego.

Each man has to grow into the Divine within himself through his own individual being, therefore a certain growing measure of freedom is a necessity of the being as it develops,—and perfect freedom is a condition of the perfect life. But also, the Divine whom he thus sees in himself, he sees equally in all others and as the same Spirit in all. Therefore a growing unity with others is a necessity of his being, and perfect unity the sign and condition of the perfect life. He will thus seek not only his own freedom, but the freedom of all, not only his own perfection, but the perfection of all.

(iii)

The awakening to a spiritual ideal in life is only a first step. But in order to have a dynamic re-creating of individual manhood, a general spiritual awakening and aspiration in mankind is the necessary motive power. For spirituality is a subjective element and not mechanical. Therefore it has to be lived inwardly, and the outward life must flow out of this inward living. Unless spirituality is lived it can have no meaning.

The individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the

destiny and therefore the great need of the human being. An evolution or conversion of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity is the need of the race, as well as the intention of Nature. Men must be left to resort to the belief and forms to which they are naturally drawn,—a wanton destruction of past traditions and beliefs is not what is required. What is essential is the faith in the spiritual conversion, and the attempt to live it out.

If the light that is being born increases, if the number of individuals who seek to realise the possibility in themselves and in the world grows large and they get nearer the right way, then the spirit who is here in man, now a concealed divinity, a developing light and power, will descend more fully as the messenger of a yet unseen and unguessed Godhead from above into the soul of mankind and into the great individualities in whom the light and power are the strongest. The earthly evolution will have taken its great impetus upwards and accomplished the revealing step in a divine progression of which the birth of thinking and aspiring men from animal nature was only an obscure preparation and a far-off promise.

(iv)

Although confusion seems to reign everywhere, the present world outlook (nearing the fourth quarter of the 20th century) is really one of active preparation for the manifestation of a higher light and power in the world,—known to present-day spirituality as the Gnosis. Even now the pressure of the Gnosis on life itself is acting in the three spheres of human endeavour. Firstly in the sphere of political power; secondly in the sphere of economics, or the distribution of the world's resources and money power; and thirdly in the sphere of personal and family life. Let us examine each of these spheres of human life in turn.

Present-day political power is directly descended from an ancient idea that kings are delegated by God to frame the laws and uphold the customs and traditions of their people. But today the old kings have been replaced by rulers who, having been voted into power, claim to be supported by the mass of the people. Prior to the Second World War there were three or four powerful dictators and an equal

number of imperialistic powers, who each tried to impose their suzerainty over large areas of Europe, Africa and Asia. But after the downfall of these dictators (of the totalitarian type), there has been the world-wide movement of the breaking up of all the old empires and the recognizing of individual states, each with a national status and representation in the United Nations. In this process France and Great Britain and other European powers have ceded their old empires, while endeavouring to retain friendly links with their former possessions. But the United States and the Soviet Union, as the dominant world powers of today, have stepped in to form their own separate groupings and alliances. The present situation has forced many of the newly-formed states to become dominated by small, nationalistic or regional dictators, risen mostly from the military ranks. Other states, for their own protection against the growing power of America and Russia, have formed separate groups, — such as the Common Market group in Western Europe, and the various tentative groups of Asia and Africa.

The present political picture is therefore characterized by fierce, though localized, disputes between rival groups or states who find themselves uneasy neighbours. These quarrels are chiefly centred on the question of land, boundaries, and navigable communication links (such as the Suez area). Although America and Russia have made various attempts to intervene in these disputes, both countries are acting very cautiously in order to prevent a major war spreading to and directly involving their own countries. India also in her divided condition is suffering because of the constant border quarrels. The new states of Africa are likewise on their guard to retain their newly-won powers of national freedom and growth.

So at present all the new states are clinging precariously to the United Nations as a bulwark against a more widespread and calamitous confrontation. But there is no doubt that the increasing division into small, sovereign states has increased the quarrels and has created tensions which may either be decided by another widespread war, or more slowly by a series of localized wars.

It does not seem possible, in the present pattern of things, that the two powerful and opposing forces — such as America and Russia are at present — can come to terms with the great challenge

facing humanity today, — the formation of a World Body which has the political power and sovereignty to unite all nations into one comity of nations, in place of the present rival groupings. A series of localized wars involving the densely populated countries of China, South-East Asia, India and the Middle East seem therefore more probable. It might indeed be the only means of breaking the present deadlock and deciding the sovereign nation, or rather the combined group of nations, which will be powerful enough to bring together without opposition the diverse states of the world into the desired political unity, — with, at least, a working agreement between them for peaceful, progressive and harmonious living.

While for the major part of this century there have been widespread political forces at work of an extreme socialistic type, attempting to break up the personal and family groups and to replace them with some amorphous collective life, — the political state, — this process has only tended more and more to restrict individual development and initiative. The individual has been made subordinate in most countries of today to the collective or mass needs and movements. Yet the true purpose of the collectivity, as we have stressed in the previous chapters, is to produce the developed individuals who will be equipped to lead the evolutionary growth of nations, — and not merely to seek the power to dominate over others (as is the present state of affairs). The present indications are that it is still the family-like unit, and not any collective mass, which is the natural and most effective protective body for the complete upbringing and education of the individual.

Under present conditions the problem of meeting the needs of individual development through education is almost nullified in most countries because of the collective efforts to establish mass education. Although in the most progressive countries, the basic material needs such as housing, food and health are cared for by the state, yet this is far from sufficient for human progress on the psychological level. For if education, with its psychological disciplines, lacks the human element, then it becomes merely a mechanized system without any spiritual aim, motive or content.

It is true that governments, large and small, have turned their attention to the application of Science for mass-production and

constructive purposes, but at the same time there is a greater deterioration in the psychological factors which support a fair economic distribution of the basic human needs. In business affairs competition has reached a destructive level, with greater power-seekers in the field. Such factors as a common feeling of brotherhood, honesty, fair dealings and trust, not only between nations, but within the nation itself, have been obliterated through excessive or unrestricted competition. Both competition and freedom are in fact among the great developments of the modern world, but when these two otherwise very helpful principles come under the sway of the vital ego in man, they become wholly destructive and vengeful forces, opposing man's true progress. In fact it now looks as though the great material advances that have taken place in recent years have only produced a backward step in man's psychological development, wherein greed and jealousy are the common motives. This points to the more pressing need of a spiritually infused education, especially at the higher levels, which can give a lead and directive enlightenment to the new generation.

The unrest of youth throughout the world is no doubt deeply rooted in this rapid deterioration of the psychological factors in human relations. In the years before the second World War it was women who strove to establish their rightful place in the management of world affairs, but although women have gained a voice in recent years, this did not succeed in overpowering the male 'supremacy'. Women are still dependents economically, and have to be content with a background influence in the serious affairs of world diplomacy. The youth of the world is thus conscious of the inability of their fathers' generation to guide the world towards peace, harmony and unity. Young men and women everywhere — especially the more highly educated ones — are strongly opposed to the authority of their elders, and are trying in their own way to restore a new balance in social life. But although they are aiming to wipe away hatred and traditional prejudices, in order to usher in an era of universal love, present-day youth is still raw and ill-equipped educationally for the task. In fact they are like immature children, without the power to exert a positive influence. That is why their attempts are mainly negative, ending in frustration, escape from life, or destruction. For

the real need is a living spirituality, bringing with it a wider understanding between people, which will help God's Love and Power to save the world from its own self-annihilation.

It is obvious that without the genuine spiritual love on earth, the world cannot live in peace and harmony, but must continue to fight and struggle until the entire hostile and non-progressive elements are subdued or transformed. The promised new era of cooperation, love and unity will then arise from a changed psychological condition. It will in fact be a rebirth of embodied spiritual forces which have the will, power and vision to build a new world-order.

N. PEARSON

SRI AUROBINDO: THE MESSAGE AND THE CALL

SRI Aurobindo brings a message of hope based on an absolute certitude. His call is to the élite of humanity to overpass the limitations of the past. He effects a synthesis on which both the East and the West can assuredly build their future. He offers a new Yoga which will prepare the future of man for a divine life on earth. He embodies in himself all that he has promised for the race.

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“Not to go on for ever repeating what man has already done is our work, but to arrive at new realisations and undreamed-of masteries....

“What is there new that we have yet to accomplish? Love, for as yet we have only accomplished hatred and self-pleasing; Knowledge, for as yet we have only accomplished error and perception and conceiving; Bliss, for as yet we have only accomplished pleasure and pain and indifference; Power, for as yet we have only accomplished weakness and effort and a defeated victory; Life, for as yet we have only accomplished birth and growth and dying; Unity, for as yet we have only accomplished war and association. In a word, godhead, to remake ourselves in the divine image....¹

“This is thy work and the aim of thy being and that for which thou art here, to become the divine superman and a perfect vessel of the Godhead....

“It is to be the master of thy mind, thy life and thy body; it is to be a king over Nature of whom thou art now the tool, lifted above her who now has thee under her feet. It is to be free and not a slave, to be one and not divided, to be immortal and not obscured by death, to be full of light and not darkened, to be full of bliss and not the sport of grief and suffering, to be uplifted into power and not cast down into weakness. It is to live in the Infinite and possess the finite

“To live in the divine Being and let the consciousness and bliss, the will and knowledge of the Spirit possess thee and play with thee and through thee, this is the meaning....”²

And who are the élite of humanity to whom is addressed this inspiring call?

“Whosoever is weary of the littlenesses that are, whosoever is enamoured of the divine greatnesses that shall be, whosoever has any glimpse of the Supreme within him or above him or around him, let him hear the call, let him follow the path. The way is difficult, the labour heavy and arduous and long, but its reward is habitation in an unimaginable glory, a fathomless felicity, a happy and endless vastness....”³

The élite are always looking for an ideal. “What then shall be 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.”⁴

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For the illusionist philosopher and the materialist, all this is moonshine. Life is a vain turmoil of the spirit, man as he is now is the utmost limit of his possibility; he must resign himself to this unalterable fact that human nature always returns to its native crookedness like the proverbial dog’s tail however much we may try to keep it straight. An escape from mundane existence into the beyond, or else a final dissolution into the Néant is then the only ultimate issue.

Sri Aurobindo affirms that man and the world in which he lives are not an illusion, matter is not the sole or ultimate reality. “The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real. The

reality is the infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. This Divine by his power has created the world or rather manifested it in his own infinite Being. But here in the material world or at its basis he has hidden himself in what seem to be his opposites, Non-Being, Inconscience and Insentience.... The Being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as the Spirit.... This is what we call evolution, which is an evolution of consciousness and evolution of the Spirit in things and only outwardly an evolution of species...."⁵ This is the key to the riddle of the universe.

If this is accepted as the true truth of things, then the whole picture assumes a different aspect. Life on earth and the physical body of man acquire a new significance. For it is on earth that the evolution takes place, the growing manifestation of the Spirit; it is on earth, this "little midget in Infinity" that the steps of this manifestation are visible. And man, only so long as he remains in the physical body is capable of progressing; between death and another life there is no progress, only an assimilation of past experience and a discarding of elements no longer of utility. And the possibilities of progress on this earth in a physical body are endless, because the Divine is the Infinite and our progress is merely an expression of what the Divine chooses to manifest of this Infinity. More important still, life in the world and not in some remote forest or hill-top is to be made the occasion and the field of all our progress; it is not by rejecting life but by transforming it that man attains to divinity.

This is the message and the hope.

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"Man is an abnormal who has not found his own normality".⁶ This is the position from which Sri Aurobindo starts. The entire burden of his work lies in showing the way and helping man progress towards this normality.

Man is an abnormal because he is unique in the whole of manifested existence. There is not the like of him anywhere, nor among the denizens of earth, nor among those who live in the other worlds,

For, these latter are all fixed in their own types, and they have no desire to change or grow into something else; they are too satisfied with themselves. Man alone has been endowed with a divine discontent, he alone does 'pine for what is not'. He may sometimes come to believe that he has reached his goal. But in this he is soon deceived, for the Daemon within him will not let him rest.

Nevertheless, even an unending journey must have its stadia, places of temporary halt to give one some breathing space. These are the ideals that man erects from time to time; he seeks refuge in these ideals in the course of his march. His ideals have been many but they may be broadly classed into two main categories, the mundane and the supra-mundane. The supra-mundane ideal fixes the goal of man's journey in a more or less permanent escape from the terrestrial existence into a heaven or a state of Nirvana whether of the Buddhistic or the Adwaitic kind where one is no more bothered by the problems of mind in a living body. This ideal has exercised a tremendous influence on some of the choicest spirits throughout the ages in every civilised country; its hold has been particularly strong on the mind of medieval man, and in India almost throughout its history since the failure of the Upanishads to give a practical turn to the high hope of the Vedic mystics.⁷

The other ideal, the mundane, accepts the possibility of some measure of perfection in the terrestrial life itself. The perfect individual in a perfected society, this is its broad formula. Within this formula, there are differences of detail born of variations of stress. The ancient Hellenic ideal, of a healthy mind in a healthy body, emphasised the need for a strong and beautiful body "well-fitted for the rational use and enjoyment of life".⁸ And by a sound mind was meant "a clear and balanced reason and enlightened and well-trained mentality ... trained to ... range freely, intelligently and flexibly in all questions and in all practical matters of philosophy, science, art, politics and social living"⁹. Its idea of collective progress was to create a form of social and political organisation which might ensure a sufficient liberty to the individual that would enable him to grow along with his compeers in sufficient dignity and leisure.

The modern Western ideal, born partly of the ancient Greek idea but considerably modified by the Roman practical and utili-

tarian spirit and the long centuries of Christian-Hebraic training in serious righteousness, presents a number of interesting features. In place of the medieval Christian ideal of a City of God to be established on earth by a miraculous divine Intervention, it looks forward to a City of Man, a world perfected by the scientific reason and the ethical endeavour of man. It erects man as the godhead to be worshipped and served. "The body of man is to be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventible death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted. The heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation, freed from belittling influences. The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity. And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind."¹⁰ The modern mind has—or shall we say had until quite recently—an immense faith in its capacity to realise this ideal.

But both these mundane ideals, the ancient Hellenic and the modern European, seem to ignore or belittle the importance of that hidden Something within him which marks out man from the rest of creation. "If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution; he is too imperfect an expression of the spirit, mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional being."¹¹

It is not that glimpses of this truth have not visited man from time to time, both in the West and in the East. The urge to a dynamic spiritual change, "the aspiration to a spiritual mastery and mutation of Nature, to a spiritual perfection of the being, a divinisation of the mind, the heart and the very body,"¹² has not been wholly absent. But this aspiration has so far been confined to a limited few, and even among these it has seldom found the right method of ful-

filment. At best, the task has been left unfinished, perhaps because it was found to be too difficult, perhaps because the time had not yet come. And in any case, the aspiration could never yet be generalised in the mind and heart of the race. And unless that is done, unless there is a collective mind open to receive the spiritual ideal as the one thing worth pursuing, the aspiration to divinise humanity remains a chimera. "Therefore, if the spiritual change of which we have been speaking is to be effected, it must unite two conditions which have to be simultaneously satisfied but are most difficult to bring together. There must be the individual or individuals who are able to... re-create themselves in the image of the Spirit.... And there must be at the same time a mass... which is capable of receiving and effectively assimilating, ready to follow..."¹³

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There is no other way for mankind than this. Man has been trying every means in his power—philosophy and religion, ethics and education, art and literature, sciences of all kinds, physical and biological, social and political, psychology and occultism and systems of yoga. They have all failed him. Sri Aurobindo examines the reasons for this failure.

"Philosophy, sometimes spiritual or at least intuitive, sometimes abstract and intellectual, sometimes intellectualising spiritual experience or supporting with a logical apparatus the discoveries of the spirit, has claimed always to take the fixation of ultimate Truth as its province. But... intellectual philosophy... has been sometimes powerful for high speculation, pursuing mental Truth for its own sake, sometimes for a subtle gymnastic of the mind in a mistily bright cloud-land of words and ideas, but it has walked or acrobatised far from the more tangible realities of existence. Ancient Philosophy in Europe was more dynamic, but only for the few; in India in its more spiritualised forms, it strongly influenced but without transforming the life of the race....

"Religion... professed to build a bridge between spiritual Truth and the vital and material existence; it strove to subordinate and reconcile the lower to the higher, make life serviceable to God, Earth

obedient to Heaven. It has to be admitted that too often this necessary effort had the opposite result of making Heaven a sanction for Earth's desire.... Religion, leaving constantly its little shining core of spiritual experience, has lost itself in the obscure mass of its ever extending ambiguous compromises with life.... At the same time in a vain effort at self-defence against this downward gravitation, Religion was driven to cut existence into two by a division of knowledge, works, art, life itself into two opposite categories, the spiritual and the worldly.... But this aggravated rather than healed the disease."¹⁴ Man under the influence of religion turned to heaven for a final solution of his problems, reason turned away from Religion in disgust and sought its salvation elsewhere. Art and the pursuit of beauty severed all connection with Religion and Ethics.

Ethics, long an ally of Philosophy and Religion, has claimed its right to regenerate man. But "an ethical rule merely puts a bit in the mouth of the wild horses of Nature and exercises over them a difficult and partial control, but it has no power to transform Nature At best its method is to lay down limits, to coerce the devil, to put the wall of a relative and very doubtful safety around us Ethics is a mental control and the limited erring mind is not and cannot be the free and ever luminous Spirit"¹⁵ The ethical rule fails in the end, because it seeks to impose impossible conditions on the natural vital man. "Commencing with discipline and subordination, they (that is, Religion and Ethics acting together) proceed to complete mortification, which means when translated, the putting to death of the vital instincts, and declare that life itself is an illusion to be shed from the soul"¹⁶

Education is now expected to do what the earlier religio-ethical systems failed to do. "The necessity and unmixed good of universal education has become a fixed dogma in the modern intelligence, a thing held to be beyond dispute by any liberal mind or awakened national conscience."¹⁷ And how is this miracle to be achieved? "The intelligent thinking being, moralised, controlling his instincts and emotions by his will and his reason, acquainted with all that he should know of the world and his past, capable of organising intelligently by that knowledge his social and economic life, ordering rightly his bodily habits and physical being, this is the conception that now governs

civilised humanity.”¹⁸ This is the theory. “But it has not been found in experience, whatever might have once been hoped, that education and intellectual training by itself can change man; it only provides the human individual and collective ego with better information and more efficient machinery for its self-affirmation, but leaves it the same unchanged human ego.”¹⁹

The ancients attached a great deal of importance to the training of the aesthetic faculties, through the cultivation of art and literature. “The imperative instinct for beauty and the aesthetic demand which set that among the first needs and was not satisfied with anything else if this were neglected or put second in importance, are now things that are almost lost.”²⁰ In an age of dominant commercialism of which the acme was reached during the last hundred years or so, “the aesthetic instinct and intelligence flourished as a rather glaring exotic ornament, a sort of rare orchid in the button-hole of the vital man ...”²¹ But to the men of old, “the poet was a seer, a revealer of hidden truths The image was to these seers a revelative symbol of the unrevealed.”²² Art and literature have, even when they do not keep to these high standards, a great educative value. They open the doors of the inner being, and by developing a taste for the beautiful may to a certain degree help smooth out “the rough, uncouth and excessive in action and manner.”²³ They can certainly be used, as everything else in human life, as a means of our progress towards the divine. But to expect them to “transform” the outer human nature is to run after a chimera. “Literary people are often the most impossible on the face of the earth”,²⁴ Sri Aurobindo once commented in a half-humorous vein.

Science today occupies a particularly honoured place in the minds of men because of its enormous strides within a brief space of time and the “miracles” it has performed in applying its principles to practice. In both these regards, it has rendered very useful service. No doubt it has in the modern age severely limited its field of inquiry to the physical and the sensible, and it still regards with suspicion anything supraphysical. But “the supraphysical can only be really mastered in its fullness...when we keep our feet firmly on the physical.... And it is certainly the fact that the wider we extend and the surer we make our knowledge of the physical world, the

wider and surer becomes our foundation for the higher knowledge, even for the highest, even for the Brahmavidya."²⁵ In the practical field, in its conquests over matter and space and time, in its wide-ranging attempts at making life more enjoyable — it hopes one day even to render immortal the physical frame — it has given high hopes to a perfected life on earth. But all this need not blind us to its limitations. In the first place, "even the truth of physical things cannot be entirely known, nor can the right use of our material existence be discovered by physical science and outward knowledge alone or made possible by the mastery of physical and mechanical processes alone."²⁶ Secondly, "physical science, with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race."²⁷ Last and most important, science, by its constant ministering to the needs of the animal being in us has been a force of retardation, it has been pointing the race to a new barbarism, the barbarism of the vital and economic man. "In a commercial age with its ideal, vulgar and barbarous, of success, vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession, the soul of man ... cannot permanently rest."²⁸

The scientific attitude, with its emphasis on reason and justice, and efficiency and practicality, has largely moulded the socio-economic and political life of the modern age. In earlier times, there were eminent thinkers who sought to guide this external life of the race, not through any radical change in its principles but by means of minor adjustments as they became necessary with the changing habits and needs of the people. By this means they managed to give a certain stability to the socio-political order, but at the same time they helped perpetuate a number of sanctified tyrannies which the social reason awakened by the touch of science could no longer tolerate. But the vice of reason, once it takes up the guidance of life, is that it ignores the basic principle of life, and by so doing it defeats its own ends. Thus, the ideals of freedom, equality and unity which the social reason of modern man has erected as its godheads, have been sought to be applied mechanically, uniformly, without regard to the subtle distinctions, the plasticity and diversity inherent in life. That is why at every step the idea comes into collision with facts. Democracy with its ideal of liberty leads to gross inequalities, socialism with its idea of

equality spells the end of freedom, the hope of fraternal unity gives way to a never-ending discord. "Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego."²⁹ The problem of social living can only be solved by man attempting to live in his soul; from within outward is the ideal law. It is only by finding that "deeper principle of our being to which oneness and integrality are native ... that we can solve the problem of our existence and with it the problem of the true way of individual and communal living."³⁰

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

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4. *Ideals and Progress*, "Our Ideal".
5. *On Yoga*, II. 1 (First Edition) page 45.
6. *The Human Cycle*, Chapter 22.
7. *On Yoga*, II. 1 (First Edition) page 109
8. *The Human Cycle*, chapter 13.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *The Ideal of Human Unity*, chapter 34.
11. *The Life Divine*, II. 23.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *The Human Cycle*, chapter 23.
14. *On Yoga*, I. (First Edition), pages 158-9.
15. *Ibid.*, page 155.
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19. *The Life Divine*, II. 28.
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22. *Ibid.*, chapter 1.
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24. *Letters of Sri Aurobindo Third Series* (First Edition), page 295.
25. *The Life Divine*, I. 2.
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29. *The Ideal of Human Unity*, chapter 34.
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THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY

AN OUTLINE

CHAPTER 12

THE ANCIENT CYCLE OF PRENATIONAL EMPIRE BUILDING

THE ancient world started with a distinct geographical unit (Greece, Italy, Gaul, Egypt, China, Persia, India, Arabia, Israel) which formed a loosely united cultural group, containing within it a number of smaller but much more compact units (clans, tribes, cities, regions). There was a close and vivid form of collective life within these smaller units but they were very often in relations of hostility with similar units within the bigger geographical group. Wherever the sense of difference among these component units of the group was more acute, the difficulties of national unification were correspondingly greater.

In many cases an attempt was made towards such national unification. In some instances (e.g. Israel and Egypt) the attempt seemed to succeed, primarily because a real sense of need had been forced on them by foreign aggression. Where this element of need was lacking, the task of unification was undertaken by a single city or clan subduing the others by force. But in such cases, the conquering state was impelled by its ambition to push beyond the national borders and found empires, before the national consciousness had had time to fix firmly. Hence these empires could not last and had to give place to another cycle of nation-building.

Some like the Roman empire lasted a little longer than the others like the Greek. The reason was that Rome lacked men of sufficient talent and ambition after Augustus, like Alexander who spoiled the work of Philip. Italy was better organised than Greece; but even there the old elements of variation had not been thoroughly assimilated to the Italian nation-idea before she undertook her world-conquest. Hence she too collapsed in the end.

The reason for this collapse is to be sought in the method followed by these early empires, of which the Roman example is typical.

The problem of human unity has been to unite the small living groups (the city, the clan, etc.) into the bigger nation-unit. By common association these originally hostile groups develop a sense of community and some of the bluntness of the old opposition disappears. But there also develops a tendency to exploit and devour the smaller and weaker units in the interests of the more powerful; when this happens there is no true unification but a destruction of the smaller by the bigger units.

It is this that happened in the case of Rome. She withdrew to herself the entire vital and mental energies of the nations which she brought within her orbit. The result was that when these latter were denuded of their old vitality, Rome herself had no more resources left and she fell an easy prey to outsiders. It was the vigour of the barbarians that restored life to Christendom, after they had destroyed the Roman empire.

But the Roman steam-roller had served a useful purpose. It had crushed out of existence the old separativeness of the clan-life in Gaul, England and Spain, and the Greek city life. These could not offer any resistance to the later work of nation-building. They helped on the other hand in the formation of the large baronial fiefs and the vigorous municipalities of Flanders and France which gave it a needed element of local variation, which was not needed in the case of England owing to its marked differences in race.

In the absence of such levelling down of the old regional barriers, India on the other hand could not evolve a strong nation-unit until after the British pressure.

The clan-life of Scotland, Ireland and Germany which had been left untouched by the Romans offered a similar obstacle to nation-unity. The city-life of Italy had been allowed to continue even under the Roman empire, and this proved a great stumbling-block to Italian unity, although it proved to be of inestimable benefit to civilisation.

In the European cycle of nation-building, some of the errors in the Roman experiment have been rectified. First, the new nations did not overstep the national bounds immediately on attaining unity; secondly, they have passed through three successive stages which served to keep alive the vigour of the smaller units.... There was at first a long balancing of centripetal and centrifugal tendencies; next there was a movement of uniformity, with a centralised capital, a strong despotic monarchy which also headed the religious life; and last, the most distinctive feature, there was a movement of expansion which was aimed at liberty and equality for the entire nation.

This last stage of the nation-building process makes us hope that a larger measure of devolution to communes and other centres of regional life will provide a secure basis for keeping the nation-unit firmly united.

CHAPTER 13

THE FORMATION OF THE NATION-UNIT

The method of unification by external means is to create a sense of unity through pressure of circumstances and with the help of institutions rather than by a direct creation of the sense of oneness from within. It is this method that has been followed in the evolution of the nation-unit.

The type of loose unity with which this new development began shows a common feature everywhere. It was a system of fixed social hierarchies based on the four main types of social and economic function, the spiritual, the military, production and exchange, and service. The main motive force was the fixity of status, the aim a form of unity sufficient to keep the structure from breaking. Where this hierarchical system was missing, the nation-unit failed to develop, as in the Islamic countries.

Another essential condition for the growth of this type of unity was the creation of a secular centre which would build around itself a clear political self-consciousness, and gather in its hands the reins of government. China and Japan early developed such a secular centre; India did not, for here the sacerdotal class never lost its superiority in

the national mind over the centre of secular authority.

A first condition for the creation of such a secular authority was that the church should be subordinated to the state. This was secured in France, Spain, and the Protestant countries of Europe; in Italy where the Pope continued to hold sway, the nation-unit took long in forming. In China and Japan the secular authority combined in itself the headship of the church and the state. In India, the people who first developed a sense of nationality, the Sikhs, the Rajputs, the Mahrattas, succeeded in doing this by endowing the secular authority with the true headship of the nation. It is only now when the Brahmin sacerdotal authority has largely secularised itself that India has developed a true political self-consciousness.

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This new centre of authority was the king. He gathered power in his hands by taking away all the existing liberties, and gave to the nation a cohesion which it could not have had otherwise. The examples are the Plantagenet and Tudor kings of England, the Capets, Valois and Bourbons in France, the House of Castile in Spain, the Ivans, Peters and Catherines of Russia, the Hohenzollerns of modern Germany, the king-hunting expeditions in the Balkans, the resurrection of the Mikado, the modern dictators in China and Europe. It is a sense of this great role of the king at the most critical stage in the growth of national life which explains the high honour and prestige of monarchy both in the East and the West until modern times.

The harsh attitude of the modern mind towards this great institution springs from the fact that the king, by the nature of his work, had to abrogate the liberties of the nation, impose a common rule, law, one central authority, and suppress all free variation. The king had to make the life, thought and conscience of the people one, single, undivided, perfectly efficient, — this is the parent of the totalitarian idea. This meant the imposition of tyrannical authority and religious uniformity on the entire people. This also explains the action and attitude of the Tudor and Stuart kings, the religious wars in France, the Inquisition in Spain, the oppressive rule of the Czars and their successors in Russia, Germany and Italy. Where, as in Poland, the

attempt of the king did not succeed, the nation fared very badly. Elsewhere as in England where the king finally had to give way, a similar result did not follow because the nation-unit had been fully formed in the meanwhile.

The king made the church and the aristocracy his servants, left them their privileges but broke their power, withdrew the real privileges of the bourgeoisie after using it to break the power of the barons, utilised them all for his own purposes.

But the king's autocracy was tolerated only so long as he was really needed by the nation. He had actually weakened his position by reducing the church and the aristocracy to a nullity; for when the newly awakened middle class began to question the rights of the king and church and nobility to special privilege, they found an easy support among the masses and little resistance could be offered by the higher orders. Hence came the collapse of the monarchy and the beginning of a new order.

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The purpose served by this third stage of national development was to generalise the benefits of the new order, make them available to all the members of the nation-unit; because that was the main object in creating this larger unity. Therefore the church had to be forced to allow freedom of thought and deprived of its power over the life of individuals and the society. The king and the aristocracy had to be made to part with their monopoly of power. The bourgeois capitalist had to be induced or compelled to a more equitable economic order. This could not be done so long as the nation-unit was not assured of its continued existence; but once the danger of disintegration was no longer there, the cry for liberty and justice could not be ignored.

The aim in view is to make the benefits of civilisation available to all, to give them equal opportunities and an equal training to develop their faculties and use them. This might have been conceivably done better through a system of free cooperation guided and helped by a wise and liberal central authority expressing the common will. But actually it is now proposed to be done through the machinery of the State, a secular, democratic, socialistic authority which does not

hesitate to sacrifice liberty in the name of efficiency and equality. The reason why we had to revert to this mechanical method was probably that so long as man lives by egoism, he cannot reconcile liberty and equality. It is only a psychological change and a true inner oneness which can solve the difficulty; but that cannot be achieved by any mechanical method.

CHAPTER 14

THE POSSIBILITY OF A FIRST STEP TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL UNITY

If the unity of the human race is to be achieved through external means, we may expect it to follow the same stages of development as have been noted in the case of the nation. That seems to be the most visible probability.

A loose form of chaotic unity, like that of the feudal order, seems to be the inevitable starting point. Although the first world war brought out clearly the need for achieving human unity in the future, it would be idle to hope that the world is as yet ripe for a total change of the basis of our life or the establishment of a complete or real unity. There has not yet been an adequate preparation for such a change, as was ushered by the socialist revolution within the nation-unit.

In the absence of such preparation, the future will be shaped by the practical mind of the politician, who has to follow the average mentality of the race and who has limitations of his own which prevent him from embarking on new and uncertain adventures.

If the political mind alone were to be left in charge, we could not expect a better ordering of the international life than a state of unstable equilibrium which would not prevent future conflicts. There is hope that the moral collapse and the reaction produced by the War would give time for new ideas and forces to emerge. The creation of the League of Nations was an indication of the lines of change.

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Two main ideas about the reshaping of international life took shape as a result of the War. First, it was strongly felt that such a

catastrophe must not recur. And secondly, steps should be devised to prevent a similar dislocation of the economic life in the future.

It was therefore to be expected that some attempt should be made towards the elimination of war and of commercial conflicts, through a settled and effective machinery. If this provided for the beginnings of international control, then, in spite of its initial defects, it might pave the way for a better future.

It would however be idle to hope that the control would be fully effective during the initial stages, for the new arrangements will proceed on the old lines, on the basis of national egoisms, and will merely try to prevent too disastrous collisions. The causes of strife will remain, and the limitation of armaments or of national armies will prove to be illusory. Wars cannot be wholly prevented except by the erection of a machinery which humanity has not yet been able to devise.

The Great War came because all the leading nations of the world had been so acting as to make it inevitable. Even if Germany were to be eliminated and the Balkan question or the problem of the Near East or Far East were to be settled, new causes of strife must necessarily develop where the spirit of national egoism and cupidity seeks satisfaction.

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The limitation of armies or armaments will be an illusory remedy. Apart from the difficulty of effective control in peace time, the limitation will disappear as soon as war breaks out. The ability of England to convert itself during the Great War from a peaceful nation into a great military people is an object lesson on the point. Nor will a more stringent application of international law be a true solution.

Law within the nation derives its power from the fact that a dominant section of the people or the community as a whole is interested in maintaining it, and there is always an authority with a monopoly of armed power behind it to uphold its decrees; there can be no security if the armed force of the state is balanced by any other within the state. Even with this monopoly of armed strength, law within the nation has not been able to prevent civil strife or crime.

In any loose international formation that is all that we can hope for at the present. Each of the constituent units would be in full possession of its own armed strength, just as the feudal lords did in the medieval age.

To set up a composite international police force would not be of much use under existing conditions; it would break apart into its component units as soon as war breaks out. Within the nation, the policemen or the individual soldiers dare not revolt against the established authority for fear of public opinion. The members of the international force would belong at heart to their respective nations, and these nations or empires who would furnish the soldiers could very easily raise the standard of revolt with impunity, when the occasion arose.

Unless therefore an international authority resembling a world-state were to come into existence, we could not hope for the elimination of war. If actual war does not take place, it could always be replaced by more disastrous forms of strife, like the general strike within the nation used as a means of class war.

It is clear that there must come into existence a much more stringent form of international organisation, as the next step in our evolution towards a durable state of world-union.

SANAT K. BANERJI

THE ISSUE OF THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE

(A PLEA WITH EDUCATIONISTS AND EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES)

KNOWLEDGE is awareness of objectivity, of truth, of existence. Subjectivity is egoity or self-centredness. The child is largely identified with its own wishes and it becomes adjusted to the external world rather slowly. But that just creates social communicability and make social existence possible. Subjectivity, in fact, persists obstinately and creates difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge as in social adjustments and in administration.

Physical science seeks to control objectivity through external physical checks and measurements. But the truths thus obtained are of the physical plane of existence. The truths of the biological and the mental planes are more elusive.

In fact, the objectivity obtained through external checks is not the right objectivity. A mind freed from its identification with personal wishing, i.e., its subjectivity, could alone be a confident seeker, pursuer and realiser of knowledge. Being basically free from self-centredness or selfishness, it could also confidently avail of the truths thus discovered in the interest of the total well-being of man.

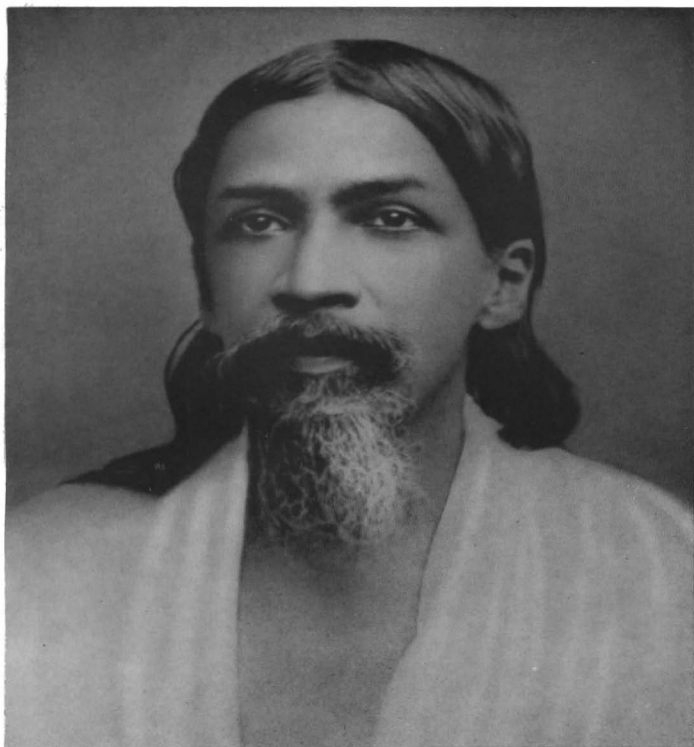
At present our unhappiness over science and its great discoveries is due to the fact that great cosmic truths are possessed by an egoistic mind and sought to be used egoistically. Cosmic truths could be rightly used only by a cosmically wide mind. It is certainly dangerous that a small mind should possess great truths of enormous power.

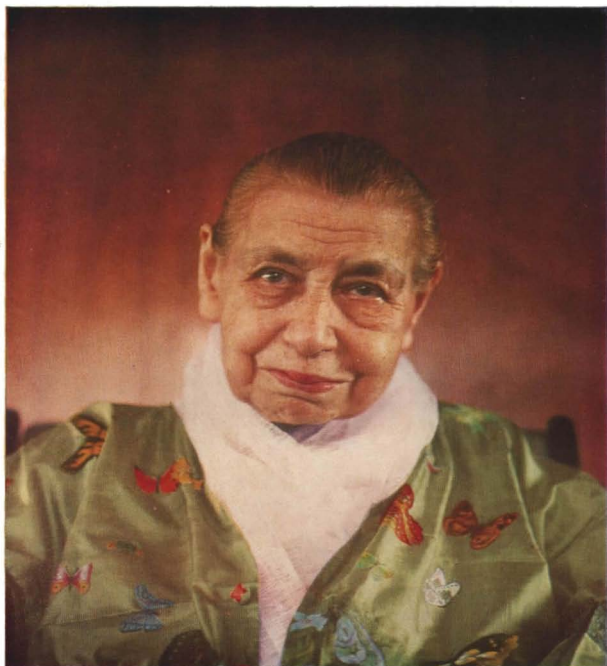
Further, it is necessary to know the integral truth in order that truths of the physical plane or of the biological and mental planes are rightly availed of.

This involves a conception of education where intellectual pursuit goes hand in hand with Sadhana or where personal integration is recognised as a means of progress in knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo's entire thought involves this attitude and, it appears, it could be, in the present times, a great help in giving the needed re-direction to our pursuit of knowledge and cultural life.

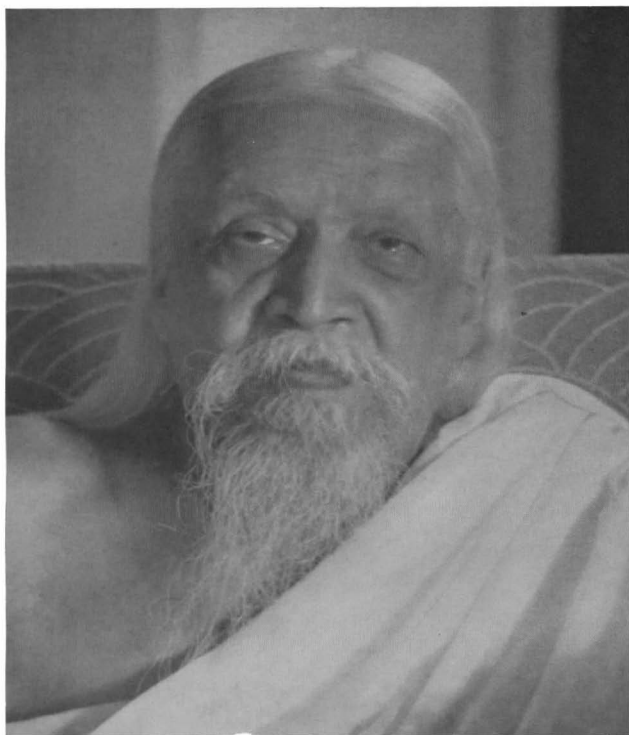
INDRA SEN





OUR HOMAGE

Swaika Oil Mills, Calcutta



OUR HOMAGE

Shellac Export Promotion Council, Calcutta



OUR HOMAGE

Kanoria Chemicals & Industries, Calcutta



The Advent

The supramental world has to be formed or created in us by the Divine will as the result of a constant expansion and self-perfecting.

SRI AUROBINDO

The ADVENT

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AUGUST 1972

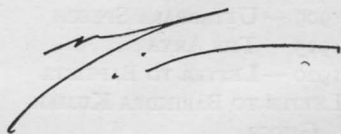
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Think only of the Divine

Work only for the Divine.

Live only for the Divine





THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIAL

A CENTURY'S SALUTATION TO SRI AUROBINDO

The Greatness of the Great

I

THE greatness of a person is the greatness of the Impersonal in him. He has little concern about himself. His thoughts, feelings and acts are in relation to a wider frame of reference. The wider the frame, the higher the status of the being; there is an ascending scale in the structure of human life and society. There are gradations that mount from narrower ranges, moving towards vaster and vaster ranges, taking the person into greater and purer degrees of impersonality. We start, for example, from the lowest and narrowest range, namely, the family and extend ourselves more and more to the next range, the nation, then to mankind and then still farther to transcendent ranges.

Sri Aurobindo from his very birth was such an impersonal personality — and, in the very highest sense. He had never the consciousness of a particular individual person: all reference to a personal frame of his was deleted from the texture of his nature and character. There was some reference to the family frame in a very moderate way, almost casually: the stress was much more on the next higher frame, the national. In its time the national frame was very strong and played a great part; and yet even there it was not an end in itself, the frame of humanity always loomed large behind. In fact it was that that gave a greater and truer value and significance to the national frame. The nation is but a ladder to humanity, it is a unit in the human collectivity. It serves as a channel for international and global welfare, but there is yet a still larger frame, the frame of the spirit, the transcendent consciousness. Indeed it was this that lay at the bottom of Sri Aurobindo's consciousness as the bedrock of his being which gave the whole tone and temper of his life, its meaning and purpose. Even when not overt and patent this noumenal personality was always there insistent from behind; it gave a peculiar rhythm and stress, newness and freshness and a profound element of purposefulness to the whole life, even to the activities of the earlier and narrower frames. For it was like viewing everything through the eyes of infinity and eternity, the eye wide extended in heaven as the Vedic Rishi says, the third eye.

In other words, the yogi, the Divine, the Impersonal man in Sri Aurobindo was the real person always there from the very birth. Thus we see him starting life exactly with the thing where every one ends. In his inner being he had not to pass through the gradations that lead an ordinary person gradually towards the widening ranges of consciousness and existence. In all the stations of his life, in every sphere and status Sri Aurobindo was doing his duties, that is, his work — *kartavyam karma* — selflessly, which means with no sense of self, or perhaps we should say, with supreme Selfhoodness; for such is the character, the very nature of the born yogi, the God-man. The duties done for and within a frame of life tend always to overflow, as it were,

the boundaries and do not always strictly follow the norm of the limited frame. For example, even while in the family life, in the midst of relatives and close friends he was never moved by mere attachment or worldly ties, he was impelled to do what he had to in the circumstances, unattached, free, under another command. Again, when he chose the larger field of national life, here too, he was not limited to that frame, his patriotism was not chauvinism or a return to the parochialism of the past; his patriotism was broad-based upon the sense of human solidarity and even the broad-based humanity was not broad enough for the consciousness in him; for humanity does not mean mere humanitarianism, charity, benevolence, or service to mankind. True humanity can be or is to be reached by pushing it still farther into the Divinity where men are not merely brothers or even portions of the Divine but one with Him, the self-same being and personality.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo was an ideal worker, the perfect workman doing the work appropriate to the field of work according to its norm, faultless in execution. As a family man, as a citizen, as a patriot, he carried out his appointed function not in any personal sense with the feeling or consciousness of any individual personality but a large impersonal personality free from ego-sense which is the hall-mark of a luminous cosmic consciousness, based upon a still higher and transcendent standing.

Sri Aurobindo was a man of action absolutely in the Gita's sense of the word. He set an example, he was an exemplar showing by his life — his way of "standing and walking" as the Gita puts it — the actions that should be done and the way of doing according to the stage and the field given to oneself. This does not naturally mean that one has to be bound to the current frame, bound to the conventional, attached to what is customary, transitional and formal; on the contrary, as I have said, Sri Aurobindo in his stride was always transgressing and overflowing the borders, he was a revolutionary, even an iconoclast, for nothing short of the supreme and complete and integral truth satisfied the urge of consciousness in him; in this sense each step of the scale served as a jumping board to the higher, indeed

to the highest inherent or hidden in everyone of them.

It was this secret ultimate truth that overshadowed, brooded over all these stages and steps and occupations he passed through: they only led up to that transcendent reality, but it was the sense, constant sense of that reality that lent a special character to all his *karma*. This urge towards the supreme reality, this transcendence, did not mean for him a rejection of the domains passed through: it is a subsuming, that is to say, uplifting the narrower, the lower status, integrating them into the higher: even as the soil at the root of the plant is subsumed and transmuted into the living sap that mounts high up the plant towards its very top, to the light and energy above.

In the scheme and pattern of human existence in the hierarchy that is collective life, Sri Aurobindo sought to express the play of the supreme Truth, express materially that which works always in secret and behind the veil. The supreme Reality is not merely the supreme awareness and consciousness, but it is a power and a force; and it holds still a secret source that has not yet been touched, — touched consciously by the human consciousness and utilised for world existence. Man's genius has contacted today in the material world material forces which are almost immaterial — the extra-galactic radiation, the laser beams and other energies of that category which are powerful in an unbelievable, unheard of degree. Even so in the consciousness, there is a mode of force which is not only a force that knows but creates, not only creates but transforms. That force at its intrinsic optimum can enter into dull matter and transforming it, transform into radiant matter, radiant not only with the physical, the solar light but the light of the supreme Spirit.

This is the force which Sri Aurobindo has disclosed and put at the disposal of mankind. This is the force he has set free that is creating a new world, — reorganising and remoulding, through a great travail indeed, our ancient sphere that will cradle the earth of the golden age.

II

In Sri Aurobindo particularly the impersonalisation is in reality a re-personalisation. Impersonalisation need not mean de-personalisation, that is to say, a complete negation and annihilation of all personality: impersonalisation really means the negation of the ego or rather the replacement of the ego by the true person, the ego being only a deformation or degradation. The basic ego-sense lies in the individual; but it has its formations in the collectivity also at all the different degrees and levels of consciousness. We have spoken of the mounting frames of reference, and accordingly there is a family ego, a national ego and even there is a humanity ego. The collective ego is as strong as the individual ego. It is only in the transcendent consciousness, the consciousness of the Divine who is the one true Person, that the inferior egos are eliminated or sublimated and can find their true person.

Thus the true process of impersonalisation is re-personalisation; in other words, to be conscious of, to grow into and become the true reality of the being behind the ego formation. It means divinisation of the person. The individual divinises himself into the individual Divine and then around him, first of all in his inner consciousness, the frame or field changes also into a divine structure. Thus even the family for such a consciousness changes not only its connotation but even its denotation. We may in this connection remember Christ's words with regard to his true family. The nation too assumes its Divine reality; a transcendent personality appears as an expression of the Divine afflatus, each one a particular mode of fulfilling the cosmic purpose. Humanity too undergoes a sea-change and its personality attains a glorious stature in the *sahasra-śiṛṣāpuruṣa* as hymned by the Vedic Rishi.

This is the cosmos that Sri Aurobindo has expressed, created in his consciousness and therefore in the consciousness of the cosmos itself. This transcendent formation the future is holding ready-made in the womb of the World-Purusha (or rather World-Prakṛiti) and the

day is approaching when this new creation will manifest itself upon earth. The true truth of things is always there up somewhere in the Supreme — in the Parabrahman — from time sempiternal: the question is when and how to bring it down. He who does that is the Avatara, he who comes down and embodies it.

To conclude and to recapitulate: Impersonalisation involves or culminates in divinisation which means the descent of the Divine, the supreme Person, from above or His emergence from within (both mean the same thing), with the result that all other inferior or external formulations are subsumed, integrated into the supreme Reality forming one single body and personality.

Such is the content of Sri Aurobindo's consciousness, such is the work that is being pursued under the stress of that consciousness towards the realisation of a new, a divine world.

We end as we began, only giving a positive turn to what we said: the greatness of the Great is the greatness of the Divine in him.

In conclusion, here is, in his own words, what he stood for and worked for, what he promises for the future of earth and mankind:

“All then shall change, a magic order come
 Overtopping this mechanical universe.
 A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal's world.
 On Nature's luminous tops, on the Spirit's ground,
 The superman shall reign as king of life,
 Make earth almost the mate and peer of heaven
 And lead towards God and truth man's ignorant heart
 And lift towards godhead his mortality.

*
 **

Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
 The Spirit shall take up the human play,
 This earthly life become the life divine.”

(*Courtesy: A. I. R.*)

(*Savitri*, Bk. XI, C.1)
 NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

A HYMN TO AGNI

MANDALA I SUKTA 74

1. As we move forward to the path of the* sacrifice let us speak out the word of our thought to Agni who hears us from afar and from within.
2. He who supreme (ancient, first) in the worlds of our action that pour forth the clarity meeting together (or, when our labours that drip their fruit combine together), protects for the giver his offering (or movement).
3. Yea, let *all* creatures born (be able to) say, "Up Agni comes into being slayer of Vritras, conqueror of our wealth in battle after battle.
4. He whose messenger thou art to his house thou takest his offerings on thy journey; (or takest his offerings on thy journey to be eaten *by the gods* or comest to the offering); thou makest effective his path of sacrifice.
5. Him men call the man blessed** in his offering, blessed** in his godhead, blessed** in his base of sacrifice, O Angiras, O Son of Force.
6. Thou bringest both those gods here that we may express them and bearest, O rich in delight, the offerings on their journey (or, to be expressed and to eat the offerings).

* *Alternative reading:* pilgrim

** *Alternative reading:* complete.

7. No tramp is heard of the horses of thy chariot in its going when thou goest on thy embassy, O Agni.
 8. By thee fostered the horse of life goes undeviating each one after that which preceded it and the giver of sacrifices progresses, O Agni.
 9. Yea, and thou lodgest throughout *his being* for the giver and his gods, O God, Agni, vast and luminous completeness of energy.
-

The Hymn is a hymn of the Adhwara Yajna, the Sacrifice of the Path. Agni the Divine Will-Force or Power of Consciousness is the deity.

1. The Gotamas, illumined minds, are to proceed to the path of the sacrifice; let them then give voice to the thought in them which is to be the governing word of their progress for the Divine Will-Force to use; that Force hears the word and responds whether as the deity realised within or as the deity of the universe seated in the highest and most distant worlds.
2. The Divine Will-Force is the first and supreme among divine powers; it protects our movement in the sacrifice from plane to plane and all the planes of our being on which the Work proceeds come together in a conscious harmony and stream forth their reaction in response to our giving.
3. Let this Divine Force manifest itself so that all shall say, "It is born and comes on high, slaying all the hostile powers that obstruct our progress and winning wealth on new wealth for the soul in battle after battle.

4. These results are attained, because the Divine Will-Force becomes a compelling envoy who carries our offerings in their journey to the goal which is our home and the home of the gods, the divine plane of the Truth, thus it makes the sacrifice of the path effective; the worlds meet together and drop their riches under the compulsion of the all-creative, all-manifesting Truth of Surya Savitri.
5. The man then becomes perfect in his sacrifice; the offering is effective, the godheads are completely manifested, the base of sacrifice in the soul includes all the various planes of our being. The Divine Force, the Angiras, the puissance of Seer Will and of Sur Will and the Son of Strength overpowering the Panis and Vritras, effects this completeness.
6. He is the envoy and effects the great commerce between earth and heaven, bringing the gods down from the higher planes so that they may be manifested in man in the terrestrial, and taking our offerings, the fruits of our terrestrial life upwards to be divinised, transformed into the divine essence, eaten, in the Vedic image, by the gods. That transformation is effected in the perfect bliss of the Divine Will-Force.
7. This great going and coming is effected in a silent spiritual rapidity; there is no rumour or clamour at all of the trampling hooves of the Vital Forces in their swiftness; but the chariot of the movement gallops swiftly.
8. Finally, the Divine Will-Force lodges in all our being for the benefit of the soul itself and of the gods who work in him a complete and utter heroic energy, vast with the vastness of the Truth and luminous with its light.

A FRAGMENT OF A PLAY*

ACT I: MATHURA
SCENE I

A STREET IN MATHURA: OCROOR HOUSE
OCROOR — SUDAMAN

SU. Who art thou?

OC. One that walks the night.

SU. No Ogre,
But Ocroor by thy voice.

OC. Sudaman? The children
Of Surasegu, hadst thou madest such reply
Would otherwise have answered.

SU. So they would.
An Ogre, I? Yes, one to eat all up.
Ocroor, I have a belly to digest
Much more than Mathura.

OC. So Ravan had
And yet he perished. Walk not thus alone
When the black night has draped the cowering earth,
Lest one of those whose brothers, fathers, sons
Thy word destroyed, should rip that belly through
And laugh, "So dies Sudaman."

SU. I am shielded.

* Found in Sri Aurobindo's note-books.



OUR HOMAGE

The Indian Tube Company Limited
A Tata Stewarts & Lloyds Enterprise





SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN SRI AUROBINDO'S LIFE

1909

UTTARPARA SPEECH

WHEN I was asked to speak to you at the annual meeting of your Sabha, it was my intention to say a few words about the subject chosen for today, the subject of the Hindu religion. I do not know now whether I shall fulfil that intention; for as I sat here, there came into my mind a word that I have to speak to you, a word that I have to speak to the whole of the Indian Nation. It was spoken first to myself in jail and I have come out of jail to speak it to my people.

It was more than a year ago that I came here last. When I came I was not alone; one of the mightiest prophets of Nationalism sat by my side. It was he who then came out of the seclusion to which God had sent him, so that in the silence and solitude of his cell he might hear the word that He had to say. It was he that you came in your hundreds to welcome. Now he is far away, separated from us by thousands of miles. Others whom I was accustomed to find working beside me are absent. The storm that swept over the country has scattered them far and wide. It is I this time who have spent one year in seclusion, and now that I come out I find all changed. One who always sat by my side and was associated in my work is a prisoner in Burma; another is in the North rotting in detention. I looked round when I came out, I looked round for those to whom I had been accustomed to look for counsel and inspiration. I did not find them. There was more than that. When I went to jail the whole country was alive with the cry of Bande Mataram, alive with the hope of a nation, the hope of millions of men who had newly risen out of degradation. When I came out of jail I listened for that cry, but there was instead a silence. A hush had fallen on the country and men seemed bewildered; for instead of God's bright heaven full of the vision of the future that had been before us, there seemed to be overhead a leaden sky from

which human thunders and lightnings rained. No man seemed to know which way to move, and from all sides came the question, "What shall we do next? What is there that we can do?" I too did not know which way to move, I too did not know what was next to be done. But one thing I knew, that as it was the Almighty Power of God which had raised that cry, that hope, so it was the same power which had sent down that silence. He who was in the shouting and the movement was also in the pause and the hush. He has sent it upon us, so that the nation might draw back for a moment and look into itself and know His will. I have not been disheartened by that silence, because I had been made familiar with silence in my prison and because I knew it was in the pause and the hush that I had myself learned this lesson through the long year of my detention. When Bepin Chandra Pal came out of jail, he came with a message, and it was an inspired message. I remember the speech he made here. It was a speech not so much political as religious in its bearing and intention. He spoke of his realisation in jail, of God within us all, of the Lord within the nation, and in his subsequent speeches also he spoke of a greater than ordinary force in the movement and a greater than ordinary purpose before it. Now I also meet you again, I also come out of jail, and again it is you of Uttarpura who are the first to welcome me, not at a political meeting but at a meeting of a society for the protection of our religion. That message which Bepin Chandra Pal received in Buxar jail, God gave to me in Alipore. That knowledge He gave to me day after day during my twelve months of imprisonment and it is that which He has commanded me to speak to you now that I have come out.

I knew I would come out. The year of detention was meant only for a year of seclusion and of training. How could anyone hold me in jail longer than was necessary for God's purpose? He had given me a word to speak and a work to do, and until that word was spoken I knew that no human power could hush me, until that work was done no human power could stop God's instrument, however weak that instrument might be or however small. Now that I have come out, even

in these few minutes, a word has been suggested to me which I had no wish to speak. The thing I had in my mind He has thrown from it and what I speak is under an impulse and a compulsion.

When I was arrested and hurried to the Lal Bazar *hajat* I was shaken in faith for a while, for I could not look into the heart of His intention. Therefore I faltered for a moment and cried out in my heart to Him, "What is this that has happened to me? I believed that I had a mission to work for the people of my country and until that work was done, I should have Thy protection. Why then am I here and on such a charge?" A day passed and a second day and a third, when a voice came to me from within, "Wait and see." Then I grew calm and waited, I was taken from Lal Bazar to Alipore and was placed for one month in a solitary cell apart from men. There I waited day and night for the voice of God within me, to know what He had to say to me, to learn what I had to do. In this seclusion the earliest realisation, the first lesson came to me. I remembered then that a month or more before my arrest, a call had come to me to put aside all activity, to go into seclusion and to look into myself, so that I might enter into closer communion with Him. I was weak and could not accept the call. My work was very dear to me and in the pride of my heart I thought that unless I was there, it would suffer or even fail and cease; therefore I would not leave it. It seemed to me that He spoke to me again and said, "The bonds you had not strength to break, I have broken for you, because it is not my will nor was it ever my intention that that should continue. I have had another thing for you to do and it is for that I have brought you here, to teach you what you could not learn for yourself and to train you for my work." Then He placed the Gita in my hands. His strength entered into me and I was able to do the sadhana of the Gita. I was not only to understand intellectually but to realise what Sri Krishna demanded of Arjuna and what He demands of those who aspire to do His work, to be free from repulsion and desire, to do work for Him without the demand for fruit, to renounce self-will and become a passive and faithful instrument in His hands, to have an equal heart for high and low, friend and opponent, success

and failure, yet not to do His work negligently. I realised what the Hindu religion meant. We speak often of the Hindu religion, of the Sanatana Dharma, but few of us really know what that religion is. Other religions are preponderatingly religions of faith and profession, but the Sanatana Dharma is life itself; it is a thing that has not so much to be believed as lived. This is the Dharma that for the salvation of humanity was cherished in the seclusion of this peninsula from of old. It is to give this religion that India is rising. She does not rise as other countries do, for self or when she is strong, to trample on the weak. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her over the world. India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great.

Therefore this was the next thing He pointed out to me, — He made me realise the central truth of the Hindu religion. He turned the hearts of my jailors to me and they spoke to the Englishman in charge of the jail, "He is suffering in his confinement; let him at least walk outside his cell for half an hour in the morning and in the evening." So it was arranged, and it was while I was walking that His strength again entered into me. I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. This was the first use of the deeper vision He gave me. I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies. Amongst these thieves and dacoits there were many who put me to shame by their sympathy, their kindness, the humanity triumphant over such adverse circumstances.

One I saw among them especially, who seemed to me a saint, a peasant of my nation who did not know how to read and write, an alleged dacoit sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment, one of those whom we look down upon in our Pharisaical pride of class as *chhota-lok*. Once more He spoke to me and said, "Behold the people among whom I have sent you to do a little of my work. This is the nature of the nation I am raising up and the reason why I raise them."

When the case opened in the lower court and we were brought before the Magistrate I was followed by the same insight. He said to me, "When you were cast into jail, did not your heart fail and did you not cry out to me, where is Thy protection? Look now at the Magistrate, look now at the Prosecuting Counsel." I looked and it was not the Magistrate whom I saw, it was Vasudeva, it was Narayana who was sitting there on the bench. I looked at the Prosecuting Counsel and it was not the Counsel for the prosecution that I saw; it was Sri Krishna who sat there, it was my Lover and Friend who sat there and smiled. "Now do you fear?" He said, "I am in all men and I overrule their actions and their words. My protection is still with you and you shall not fear. This case which is brought against you, leave it in my hand. It is not for you. It was not for the trial that I brought you here but for something else. The case itself is only a means for my work and nothing more." Afterwards when the trial opened in the Sessions Court, I began to write many instructions for my Counsel as to what was false in the evidence against me and on what points the witnesses might be cross-examined. Then something happened which I had not expected. Arrangements which had been made for my defence were suddenly changed and another Counsel stood there to defend me. He came unexpectedly, — a friend of mine, but I did not know he was coming. You have all heard the name of the man who put away from him all other thoughts and abandoned all his practice, who sat up half the night day after day for months and broke his health to save me, — Srijut Chittaranjan Das. When I saw him, I was satisfied, but I still thought it necessary to write instructions.

Then all that was put from me and I had the message from within, "This is the man who will save you from the snares put around your feet. Put aside those papers. It is not you who will instruct him. I will instruct him." From that time I did not of myself speak a word to my Counsel about the case or give a single instruction, and if ever I was asked a question, I always found that my answer did not help the case. I had left it to him and he took it entirely into his hands, with what result you know. I knew all along what He meant for me, for I heard it again and again, always I listened to the voice within, "I am guiding, therefore fear not. Turn to your own work for which I have brought you to jail and when you come out, remember never to fear, never to hesitate. Remember that it is I who am doing this, not you nor any other. Therefore whatever clouds may come, whatever dangers and sufferings, whatever difficulties, whatever impossibilities, there is nothing impossible, nothing difficult. I am in the nation and its uprising and I am Vasudeva, I am Narayana, and what I will, shall be, not what others will. What I choose to bring about, no human power can stay."

Meanwhile He had brought me out of solitude and placed me among those who had been accused along with me. You have spoken much today of my self-sacrifice and devotion to my country. I have heard that kind of speech ever since I came out of jail, but I hear it with embarrassment, with something of pain. For I know my weakness, I am a prey to my own faults and backslidings. I was not blind to them before and when they all rose up against me in seclusion, I felt them utterly. I knew then that I, the man, was a mass of weakness, a faulty and imperfect instrument, strong only when a higher strength entered into me. Then I found myself among these young men and in many of them I discovered a mighty courage, a power of self-effacement in comparison with which I was simply nothing. I saw one or two who were not only superior to me in force and character, — very many were that, — but in the promise of that intellectual ability on which I prided myself. He said to me, "This is the young generation, the new and mighty nation that is arising at my command.

They are greater than yourself. What have you to fear? If you stood aside or slept, the work would still be done. If you were cast aside tomorrow, here are the young men who will take up your work and do it more mightily than you have ever done. You have only got some strength from me to speak a word to this nation which will help to raise it." This was the next thing He told me.

Then a thing happened suddenly and in a moment I was hurried away to the seclusion of a solitary cell. What happened to me during that period I am not impelled to say, but only this that day after day He showed me His wonders and made me realise the utter truth of the Hindu religion. I had had many doubts before. I was brought up in England amongst foreign ideas and an atmosphere entirely foreign. About many things in Hinduism I had once been inclined to believe that they were imaginations, that there was much of dream in it, much that was delusion and Maya. But now day after day I realised in the mind, I realised in the heart, I realised in the body the truths of the Hindu religion. They became living experiences to me, and things were opened to me which no material science could explain. When I first approached Him, it was not entirely in the spirit of the Bhakta, it was not entirely in the spirit of the Jnani. I came to Him long ago in Baroda some years before the Swadeshi began and I was drawn into the public field.

When I approached God at that time, I hardly had a living faith in Him. The agnostic was in me, the atheist was in me, the sceptic was in me and I was not absolutely sure that there was a God at all. I did not feel His presence. Yet something drew me to the truth of the Vedas, the truth of the Gita, the truth of the Hindu religion. I felt there must be a mighty truth somewhere in this Yoga, a mighty truth in this religion based on the Vedanta. So when I turned to the Yoga and resolved to practise it and find out if my idea was right, I did it in this spirit and with this prayer to Him, "If Thou art, then Thou knowest my heart. Thou knowest that I do not ask for Mukti, I do not ask for anything which others ask for. I ask only for strength to uplift this nation, I ask only to be allowed to live and work for this

people whom I love and to whom I pray that I may devote my life." I strove long for the realisation of Yoga and at last to some extent I had it, but in what I most desired I was not satisfied. Then in the seclusion of the jail, of the solitary cell I asked for it again. I said, "Give me Thy Adesh. I do not know what work to do or how to do it. Give me a message." In the communion of Yoga two messages came. The first message said, "I have given you a work and it is to help to uplift this nation. Before long the time will come when you will have to go out of jail; for it is not my will that this time either you should be convicted or that you should pass the time, as others have to do, in suffering for their country. I have called you to work, and that is the Adesh for which you have asked. I give you the Adesh to go forth and do my work." The second message came and it said, "Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the Rishis, saints and Avatars, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising up this nation to send forth my word. This is the Sanatana Dharma, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have now revealed to you. The agnostic and the sceptic in you have been answered, for I have given you proofs within and without you, physical and subjective, which have satisfied you. When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word, that it is for the Sanatana Dharma that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world. When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the Dharma and by the Dharma that India exists. To magnify the religion means to magnify the country. I have shown you that I am everywhere and in

all men and in all things, that I am in this movement and I am not only working in those who are striving for the country but I am working also in those who oppose them and stand in their path. I am working in everybody and whatever men may think or do, they can do nothing but help on my purpose. They also are doing my work, they are not my enemies but my instruments. In all your actions you are moving forward without knowing which way you move. You mean to do one thing and you do another. You aim at a result and your efforts subserve one that is different or contrary. It is Shakti that has gone forth and entered into the people. Since long ago I have been preparing this uprising and now the time has come and it is I who will lead it to its fulfilment."

This then is what I have to say to you. The name of your society is "Society for the Protection of Religion". Well, the protection of the religion, the protection and upraising before the world of the Hindu religion, that is the work before us. But what is the Hindu religion? What is this religion which we call Sanatana, eternal? It is the Hindu religion only because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this Peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages. But it is not circumscribed by the confines of a single country, it does not belong peculiarly and for ever to a bounded part of the world. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy. It is the one religion which impresses on mankind the closeness of God to us and embraces in its compass all the possible means by which man can approach God. It is the one religion which insists every moment on the truth which all religions acknowledge that He is in all men and all things and that in Him we

move and have our being. It is the one religion which enables us not only to understand and believe this truth but to realise it with every part of our being. It is the one religion which shows the world what the world is, that it is the Lila of Vasudeva. It is the one religion which shows us how we can best play our part in that Lila, its subtlest laws and its noblest rules. It is the one religion which does not separate life in any smallest detail from religion, which knows what immortality is and has utterly removed from us the reality of death.

This is the word that has been put into my mouth to speak to you today. What I intended to speak has been put away from me, and beyond what is given to me I have nothing to say. It is only the word that is put into me that I can speak to you. That word is now finished. I spoke once before with this force in me and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism. This is the message that I have to speak to you.

1915

THE ARYA

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 maga-

zines 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 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 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 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 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 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 scholiast. 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.

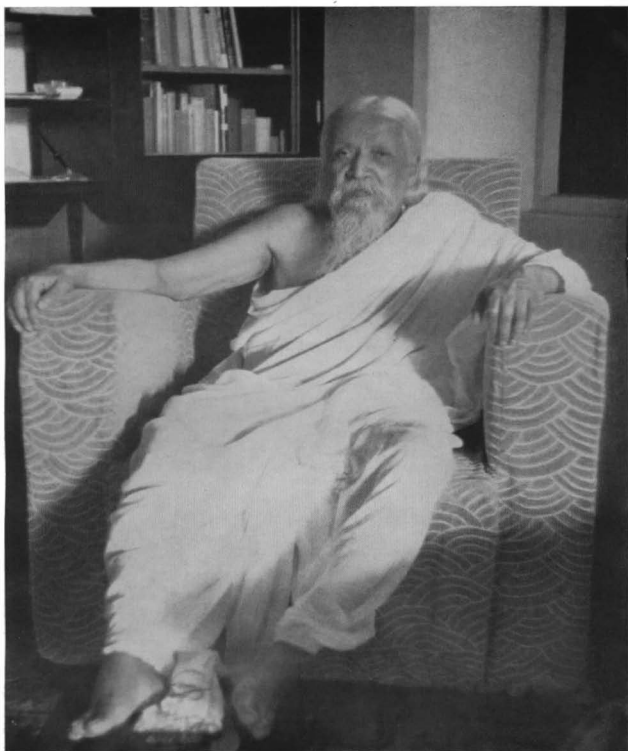
Our plan has compelled us to deal mainly with first principles and work them out in their fullness. In the future we do not propose to start any other long series of this kind, but to have more short articles with a broader, more direct and, as far as possible, more popular treatment. We shall also permit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

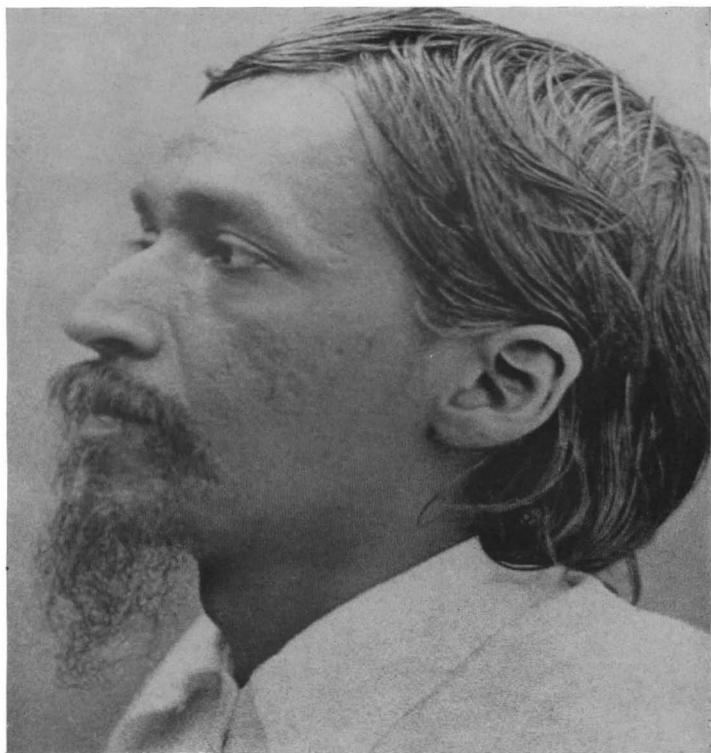
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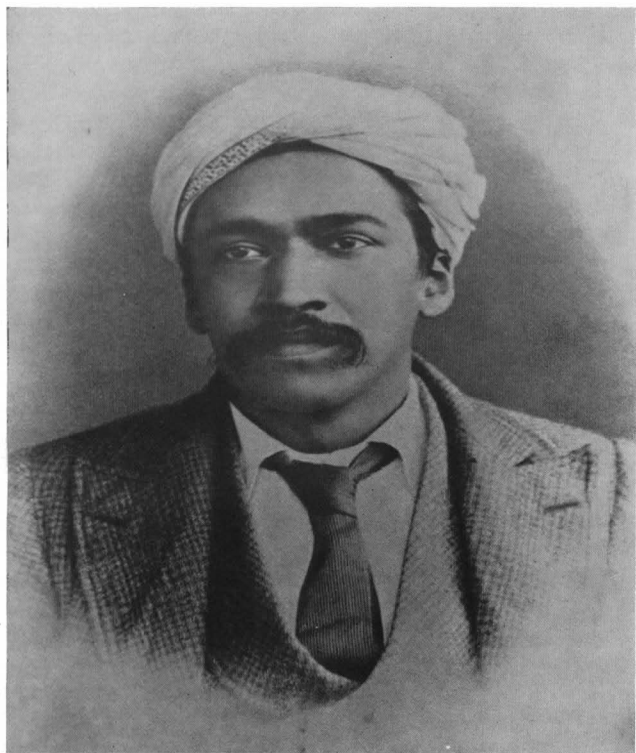
LETTER TO BAPTISTA

Dear Baptista,

Your offer is a tempting one, but I regret that I cannot answer it in the affirmative. It is due to you that I should state explicitly my reasons. In the first place I am not prepared at present to return to British India. This is quite apart from any political obstacle. I understand that up to last September the Government of Bengal (and probably the Government of Madras also) were opposed to my return to British-India and that practically this opposition meant that if I went back I should be interned or imprisoned under one or other of the beneficent Acts which are apparently still to subsist as helps in ushering in the new era of trust and co-operation. I do not suppose other Governments could any more be delighted by my appearance in their respective provinces. Perhaps the King's Proclamation may







make a difference, but that is not certain, since, as I read it, it also does not mean an amnesty, but an act of gracious concession and benevolence limited by the discretion of the Viceroy. Now I have too much work on my hands to waste my time in the leisured ease of an involuntary Government guest. But even if I were assured of an entirely free action and movement, I should yet not go just now. I came to Pondicherry in order to have freedom and tranquility for a fixed object having nothing to do with present politics — in which I have taken no direct part since my coming here, though what I could do for the country in my own way I have constantly done, — and until it is accomplished, it is not possible for me to resume any kind of public activity. But if I were in British India, I should be obliged to plunge at once into action of different kinds. Pondicherry is my place of retreat, my cave of Tapasya, not of the ascetic kind, but of a brand of my own invention. I must finish that, I must be internally armed and equipped for my work before I leave it.

Next in the matter of the work itself. I do not at all look down on politics or political action or consider I have got above them. I always laid a dominant stress and I now lay an entire stress on the spiritual life, but my idea of spirituality has nothing to do with ascetic withdrawal or contempt or disgust of secular things. There is to be nothing secular, all human activity is for me a thing to be included in a complete spiritual life, and the importance of politics at the present time is very great. But my line and intention of political activity would differ considerably from anything now current in the field. I entered into political action and continued it from 1903 to 1910 with one aim and one alone, to get into the mind of the people a settled will for freedom and the necessity of a struggle to achieve it in place of the futile ambling Congress methods till then in vogue. That is now done and the Amritsar Congress is the seal upon it. The will is not as practical and compact nor by any means as organised and sustained in action as it should be, but there is the will and plenty of strong and able leaders to guide it. I consider that in spite of the inadequacy of the Reforms the will to self-determination, if the country keeps its

present temper, as I have no doubt it will, is bound to prevail before long. What preoccupies me now is the question what it is going to do with its self-determination, how will it use its freedom, on what lines is it going to determine its future?

You may ask why not come out and help myself, so far as I can in giving lead? But my mind has a habit of running inconveniently ahead of times, — some might say, out of time altogether into the world of the ideal. Your party, you say, is going to be a social democratic party. Now I believe in something which might be called social democracy, but not in any of the forms now current, and I am not altogether in love with the European kind, however great an improvement it may be on the past. I hold that India having a spirit of her own and a governing temperament proper to her own civilisation, should in politics as in everything else strike out her own original path and not stumble in the wake of Europe. But this is precisely what she will be obliged to do, if she has to start on the road in her present chaotic and unprepared condition of mind. No doubt people talk of India developing on her own lines, but nobody seems to have very clear or sufficient ideas as to what those lines are to be. In this matter I have formed ideals and certain definite ideas of my own, in which at present very few are likely to follow me; since they are governed by an uncompromising spiritual idealism of an unconventional kind and would be unintelligible to many and an offence and stumbling-block to a great number. But I have not as yet any clear and full idea of the practical lines; I have no formed programme. In a word, I am feeling my way in my mind and am not ready for either propaganda or action. Even if I were, it would mean for some time ploughing my lonely furrow or at least freedom to take my own way. As the editor of your paper, I shall be bound to voice the opinion of others and reserve my own, and while I have full sympathy with general ideas of the advanced parties so far as concerns the action of the present moment and, if I were in the field would do all I could to help them, I am almost incapable by nature of limiting myself in that way, at least to the extent that would be requisite.

Excuse the length of this screed. I thought it necessary to explain fully so as to avoid giving you the impression that I declined your request from any affectation or reality of spiritual aloofness or wish to shirk the call of the country or want of sympathy with the work you and others are so admirably doing. I repeat my regret that I am compelled to disappoint you.

Yours sincerely,
AUROBINDO GHOSE

LETTER TO BARINDRA KUMAR GHOSE

(Translated)

7th April 1920

First about your Yoga. You wish to give me the charge of your Yoga, and I am willing to take it, that is to say to give it to Him who is moving by his divine Shakti both you and myself whether secretly or openly. But you must know that necessary result will be that you will have to follow that special way which He has given to me and which I call the Integral Yoga.

What I began with, what was given to me by Lele, that was a seeking for the path, a wandering around in this and that direction touching this or that in all the old partial Yogas.

Afterwards when I came to Pondicherry, this unsteady condition ceased. The Guru of the world who is within us gave me the complete direction of my path, its full theory, the ten limbs of the body of the Yoga.

These ten years He has been making me develop it in experience. But it is not yet finished.

The Brahman, the Self, God, are always there. What God wants

of man is to embody Him, here in the individual and the community, to realise God in life.

If one cannot rise above, that is to the Supramental level, it is hardly possible to know the last secret of the world. The problem of the world does not get solved.

The physical body, the life, the mind and understanding, the Supermind and the Ananda, these are the spirit's five levels. The higher we rise the nearer we get to the condition of the highest perfection of Man's spiritual evolution. By rising to the Supermind it becomes easy to rise to the Ananda. There is a firm foundation in the condition of the indivisible and infinite Ananda. Not only in the timeless Akshara Brahman, but in the body, in life, in the world. The full Being, the full Consciousness, the full Ananda, blossoms out and takes form in life. That is the central clue of my Yoga, its fundamental word.

This is not easy to become. After these fifteen years I am only now rising into the lowest of the three levels of the Supermind and trying to draw up into it all the lower activities. But when this Siddhi will be complete then I am absolutely certain that God will through me give Siddhi of the Supermind to others with less difficulty. Then my real work will begin. I am not impatient for success in the work. What is to happen will happen in God's appointed time. I am not disposed to run wildly and leap into the field of work in the strength of my little ego. Even if I did not get success in my work I would not be shaken. This work is not mine but God's. I will listen to no other call, when God moves me then I will move.

All these are the signs of the incompleteness and unripe condition. This is the infancy or embryonic condition. It is the previous hint, not even the beginning.

I do not want a society founded on division. I want a Sangha which is the image of spiritual unity and founded on spirit. You will say, 'what is the need of a Sangha? I will be free and remain in every vessel. Let all become one without form, let whatever happen in the midst of the vast formlessness.' That is true but only one side of the

truth. Our business is not with the formless spirit. We have to keep life in motion. There is no effective motion of life without form. The taking of a life by the formless, the assumption of name and form is not a caprice of Maya. It was needed. We do not want to leave anything of the world, Politics, Society, Poetry, Literature, Art will all remain. But we shall have to give them a new soul and a new form.

People now talk of spiritualising Politics. Its result will be, if there be any permanent result, some kind of Indianised Bolshevism. To that kind of work also I have no objection. Let each man do according to his inspiration. But that is not the real thing. If one pours the spiritual power into all these impure forms, the water of the causal ocean into a raw vessel — either that raw thing will break and the water be spilt and lost or the spiritual power will evaporate and only the impure form remain. In all fields it is the same. I can give the spiritual power but that power will be expended in making the image of an ape and setting it up in the temple of Shiva. If the ape is made powerful by the putting of life into it he may play the part of the devotee Hanuman and do much work for Rama, so long as that life and that power remain. But what we want in the temple of India is not Hanuman, but the God, the Avatar Rama himself.

I can mix with all, but in order to draw all into the true path keeping intact the spirit and form of our ideal. If we do not do that, we shall lose our direction and the real work will not be done. If we remain — individually everywhere, something will be done indeed, but if we remain everywhere as parts of a Sangha, a hundred times more will be done. As yet that time has not come. If we try to give a form hastily, it may not be the exact thing we want. The Sangha will be at first an unconcentrated form. Those who have the ideal will be united but work in different places. Afterwards giving it some form like a spiritual commune and making a complete Sangha, they will give all their work a shape according to the growth and need of the age — not a bound and rigid form. Not an Achalayātana but a free form which will spread out like the sea, take different wave forms and surround this, overflow that, take all into itself.

As we go on doing this there will be established a spiritual community. This is my present idea. As yet it has not been fully developed, all is in God's hands, whatever he makes us do that we shall.

You write about the Deva-Sangha, I am not a God, I am only some much hammered and refined iron. No one is God but in each man there is a God and to make him manifest is the aim of divine life. That we can all do.

I do not want hundreds of thousands of disciples. It will be enough if I can get a hundred complete men, empty of petty egoism, who will be instruments of God.

If the raw person goes amidst the raw what work can he do?"

1934

THE TEACHING OF SRI AUROBINDO

The teaching of Sri Aurobindo starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united in that One Self and Spirit but divided by a certain separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true Self and Reality in the mind, life and body. It is possible by a certain psychological discipline to remove this veil of separative consciousness and become aware of the true Self, the Divinity within us and all.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching states that this One Being and Consciousness is involved here in Matter. Evolution is the process by which it liberates itself; consciousness appears in what seems to be inconscient and once having appeared is self-impelled to grow higher and higher and at the same time to enlarge and develop towards a greater and greater perfection. Life is the first step of this release of

consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does not finish with mind, it awaits a release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental. The next step of the evolution must be towards the development of Supermind and Spirit as the dominant power in the conscious being. For only then will the involved Divinity in things release itself entirely and it become possible for life to manifest perfection.

But while the former steps in evolution were taken by Nature without a conscious will in the plant and animal life, in man Nature becomes able to evolve by a conscious will in the instrument. It is not, however, by the mental will in man that this can be wholly done, for the mind goes only to a certain point and after that can only move in a circle. A conversion has to be made, a turning of the consciousness by which mind has to change into the higher principle. This method is to be found through the ancient psychological discipline and practice of Yoga. In the past, it has been attempted by a drawing away from the world and a disappearance into the height of the Self or Spirit. Sri Aurobindo teaches that a descent of the higher principle is possible which will not merely release the spiritual Self out of the world, but release it in the world, replace the mind's ignorance or its very limited knowledge by a supramental Truth-Consciousness which will be a sufficient instrument of the inner Self and make it possible for the human being to find himself dynamically as well as inwardly and grow out of his still animal humanity into a diviner race. The psychological discipline of Yoga can be used to that end by opening all the parts of the being to a conversion or transformation through the descent and working of the higher still concealed supramental principle.

This, however, cannot be done at once or in a short time or by any rapid or miraculous transformation. Many steps have to be taken by the seeker before the supramental descent is possible. Man lives mostly in his surface mind, life and body, but there is an inner being within him with greater possibilities to which he has to awake — for it is only a very restricted influence from it that he receives now and that pushes him to a constant pursuit of a greater beauty, harmony,

power and knowledge. The first process of Yoga is therefore to open the ranges of this inner being and to live from there outward, governing his outward life by an inner light and force. In doing so he discovers in himself his true soul which is not this outer mixture of mental, vital and physical elements but something of the Reality behind them, a spark from the one Divine Fire. He has to learn to live in his soul and purify and orientate by its drive towards the Truth the rest of the nature. There can follow afterwards an opening upward and descent of a higher principle of the Being. But even then it is not at once the full supramental Light and Force. For there are several ranges of consciousness between the ordinary human mind and the supramental Truth-Consciousness. These intervening ranges have to be opened up and their power brought down into the mind, life and body. Only afterwards can the full power of the Truth-Consciousness work in the nature. The process of this self-discipline or sadhana is therefore long and difficult, but even a little of it is so much gained because it makes the ultimate release and perfection more possible.

There are many things belonging to older systems that are necessary on the way — an opening of the mind to a greater wideness and to the sense of the Self and the Infinite, an emergence into what has been called the cosmic consciousness, mastery over the desires and passions; an outward asceticism is not essential, but the conquest of desire and attachment and a control over the body and its needs, greeds and instincts are indispensable. There is a combination of the principles of the old systems, the way of knowledge through the mind's discernment between Reality and the appearance, the heart's way of devotion, love and surrender and the way of works turning the will away from motives of self-interest to the Truth and the service of a greater Reality than the ego. For the whole being has to be trained so that it can respond and be transformed when it is possible for that greater Light and Force to work in the nature.

In this discipline the inspiration of the Master and, in the difficult stages, his control and his presence are indispensable — for it would be impossible otherwise to go through it without much stumbling and

error which would prevent all chance of success. The Master is one who has risen to a higher consciousness and being and he is often regarded as its manifestation or representative. He not only helps by his teaching and still more by his influence and example but by a power to communicate his own experience to others.

This is Sri Aurobindo's teaching and method of practice. It is not his object to develop any one religion or to amalgamate the older religions or to found any new religion — for any of these things would lead away from his central purpose. The one aim of his Yoga is an inner self-development by which each one who follows it can in time discover the One Self in all and evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature.

1947

THE FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST 1947

August 15th is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But it has a significance not only for us, but for Asia and the whole world; for it signifies the entry into the comity of nations of a new power with untold potentialities which has a great part to play in determining the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity. To me personally it must naturally be gratifying that this date which was notable only for me because it was my own birthday celebrated annually by those who have accepted my gospel of life, should have acquired this vast significance. As a mystic, I take this identification, not as a coincidence or fortuitous accident, but as a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began life. Indeed almost all the world movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime,

though at that time they looked like impossible dreams, I can observe on this day either approaching fruition or initiated and on the way to their achievement.

I have been asked for a message on this great occasion, but I am perhaps hardly in a position to give one. All I can do is to make a personal declaration of the aims and ideals conceived in my childhood and youth and now watched in their beginning of fulfilment, because they are relevant to the freedom of India, since they are a part of what I believe to be India's future work, something in which she cannot but take a leading position. For I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, to achieve expansion, greatness, power and prosperity, — though these too she must not neglect, — and certainly not like others to acquire domination of other peoples, but to live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race. Those aims and ideals were in their natural order these: a revolution which would achieve India's freedom and her unity; the resurgence and liberation of Asia and her return to the great role which she had played in the progress of human civilisation; the rise of a new, a greater, brighter and nobler life for mankind which for its entire realisation would rest outwardly on an international unification of the separate existence of the peoples, preserving and securing their national life but drawing them together into an overriding and consummating oneness; the gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and her means for the spiritualisation of life to the whole race; finally, a new step in the evolution which, by uplifting the consciousness to a higher level, would begin the solution of the many problems of existence which have perplexed and vexed humanity, since men began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society.

India is free but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom. At one time it almost seemed as if she might relapse into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. Fortunately there has now developed a strong possibility that this disastrous relapse will be avoided. The wisely drastic policy of the

Constituent Assembly makes it possible that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. The partition of the country must go, — it is to be hoped by a slackening of tension, by a progressive understanding of the need of peace and concord, by the constant necessity of common and concerted action, even of an instrument of union for that purpose. In this way unity may come about under whatever form — the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, the division must and will go. For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and even frustrated. But that must not be.

Asia has arisen and large parts of it have been liberated or are at this moment being liberated; its other still subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The unification of mankind is under way, though only in an imperfect initiative, organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and, if the experience of history can be taken as a guide, it must inevitably increase until it conquers. Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure, For

in any case the unification is a necessity in the course of Nature, an inevitable movement and its achievement can be safely foretold. Its necessity for the nations also is clear, for without it the freedom of the small peoples can never be safe hereafter and even large and powerful nations cannot really be secure. India, if she remains divided, will not herself be sure of her safety. It is therefore to the interest of all that union should take place. Only human imbecility and stupid selfishness could prevent it. Against that, it has been said, even the gods strive in vain; but it cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. Nationalism will then have fulfilled itself; an international spirit and outlook must grow up and international forms and institutions; even it may be such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship and a voluntary fusion of cultures may appear in the process of the change and the spirit of nationalism losing its militancy may find these things perfectly compatible with the integrity of its own outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

The spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The rest is still a personal hope and an idea and ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must come through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far or how soon this connection will be fulfilled,

depends upon this new and free India.

15th August, 1947

1949

A MESSAGE TO AMERICA

I have been asked to send on this occasion of the fifteenth August a message to the West, but what I have to say might be delivered equally as a message to the East. It has been customary to dwell on the division and difference between these two sections of the human family and even oppose them to each other; but for myself I would rather be disposed to dwell on oneness and unity than on division and difference. East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seekings and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialistic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before.

There is a common hope, a common destiny, both spiritual and material, for which both are needed as co-workers. It is no longer towards division and difference that we should turn our minds, but on unity, union, even oneness necessary for the pursuit and realisa-

tion of a common ideal, the destined goal, the fulfilment towards which Nature in her beginning obscurely set out and must in an increasing light of knowledge replacing her first ignorance constantly persevere.

But what shall be that ideal and that goal? That depends on our conception of the realities of life and the supreme Reality.

Here we have to take into account that there has been, not any absolute difference but an increasing divergence between the tendencies of the East and the West. The highest truth is truth of the Spirit; a Spirit supreme above the world and yet immanent in the world and in all that exists, sustaining and leading all towards whatever is the aim and goal and the fulfilment of Nature since her obscure inconscient beginnings through the growth of consciousness is the one aspect of existence which gives a clue to the secret of our being and a meaning to the world. The East has always and increasingly put the highest emphasis on the supreme truth of the Spirit; it has, even in its extreme philosophies, put the world away as an illusion and regarded the Spirit as the sole reality. The West has concentrated more and more increasingly on the world, on the dealings of mind and life with our material existence, on our mastery over it, on the perfection of mind and life and some fulfilment of the human being here: latterly this has gone so far as the denial of the Spirit and even the enthronement of Matter as the sole reality; Spiritual perfection as the sole ideal on one side, on the other, the perfectibility of the race, the perfect society, a perfect development of the human mind and life and man's material existence have become the largest dream of the future. Yet both are truths and can be regarded as part of the intention of the Spirit in world-nature; they are not incompatible with each other: rather their divergence has to be healed and both have to be included and reconciled in our view of the future.

The Science of the West has discovered evolution as the secret of life and its process in this material world; but it has laid more stress on the growth of form and species than on the growth of consciousness: even, consciousness has been regarded as an incident and not the whole

secret of the meaning of the evolution. An evolution has been admitted by certain minds in the East, certain philosophies and Scriptures, but there its sense has been the growth of the soul through developing or successive forms and many lives of the individual to its own highest reality. For if there is a conscious being in the form, that being can hardly be a temporary phenomenon of consciousness; it must be a soul fulfilling itself and this fulfilment can only take place if there is a return of the soul to earth in many successive lives, in many successive bodies.

The process of evolution has been the development from and in inconscient Matter of a subconscious and then a conscious Life, of conscious mind first in animal life and then fully in conscious and thinking man, the highest present achievement of evolutionary Nature. The achievement of mental being is at present her highest and tends to be regarded as her final work; but it is possible to conceive a still further step of the evolution: Nature may have in view beyond the imperfect mind of man a consciousness that passes out of the mind's ignorance and possesses truth as its inherent right and nature. There is a truth-consciousness as it is called in the Veda, a supermind, as I have termed it, possessing Knowledge, not having to seek after it and constantly miss it. In one of the Upanishads a being of knowledge is stated to be the next step above the mental being; into that the soul has to rise and through it to attain the perfect bliss of spiritual existence. If that could be achieved as the next evolutionary step of Nature here, then she would be fulfilled and we could conceive of the perfection of life even here, its attainment of a full spiritual living even in this body or it may be in a perfected body. We could even speak of a divine life on earth; our human dream of perfectibility would be accomplished and at the same time the aspiration to a heaven on earth common to several religions and spiritual seers and thinkers.

The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim and necessity, for that is the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a

meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit.

August 11, 1949

SRI AUROBINDO





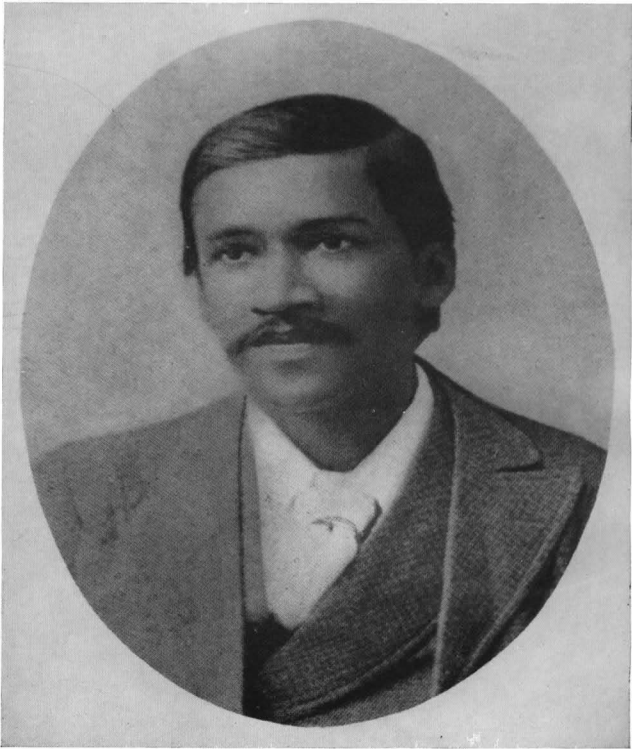
OUR HOMAGE

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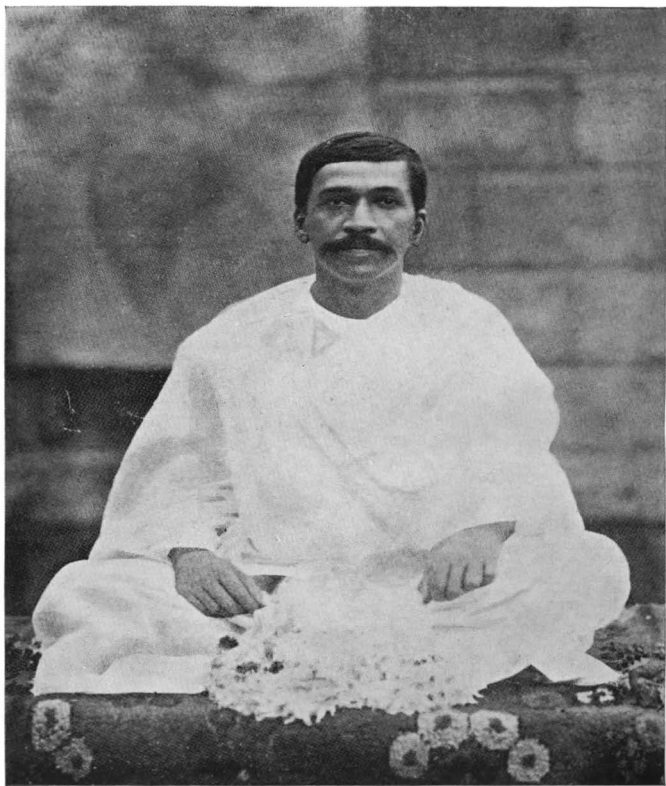
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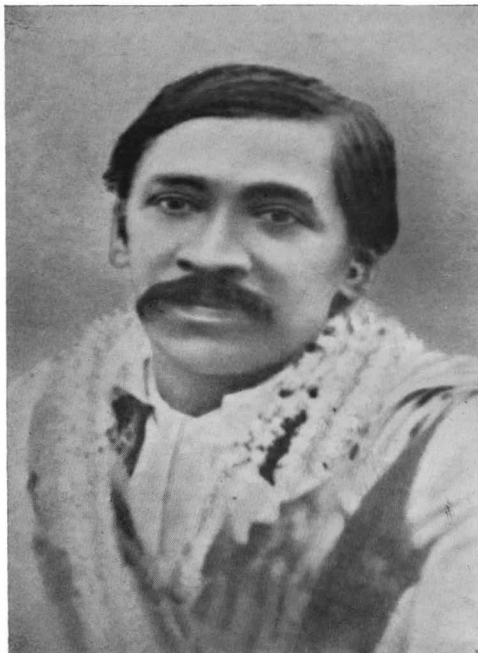
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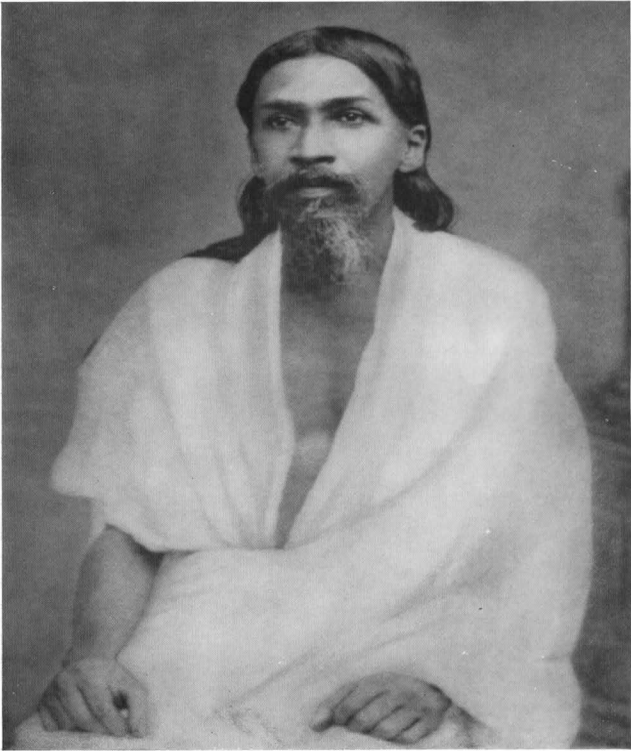
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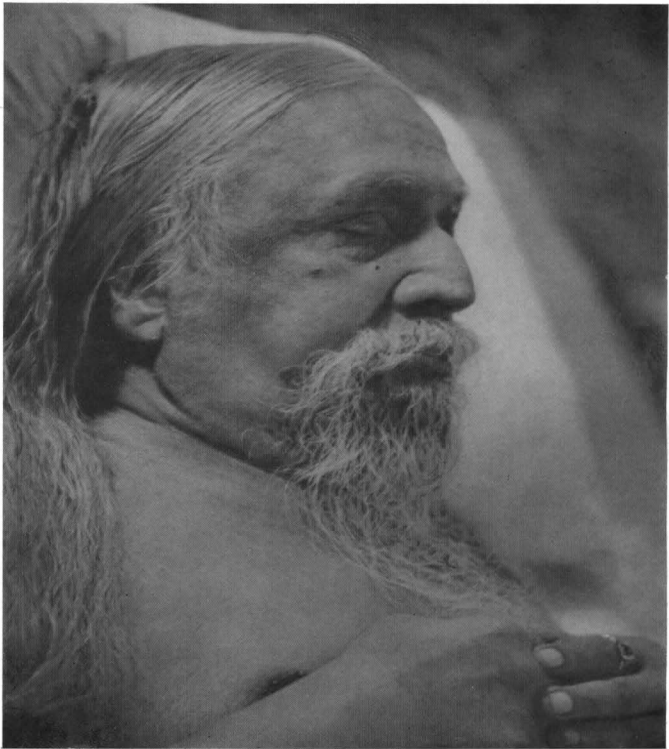


OUR HOMAGE

Hico Products Private Ltd., Calcutta







OUR HOMAGE

Pioneer Spring & Steel Concern, Calcutta



OUR HOMAGE

Purulia Radio Mart, P.O. & Dist. Purulia (W. Bengal)

HIS GOSPEL

THE HUMAN ASPIRATION

THE earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation, — for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment, — is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organised entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression. To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation, — this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their

validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.

For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unillumined compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organised mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or subconscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seem to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the Rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it

be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind. Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect. Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for an immediate solution. By that hunger mysticism profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism which itself could not satisfy because, although its business was inquiry, it was unwilling sufficiently to inquire. The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith, is itself a kind of obscurantism. The will to escape from a cosmic necessity because it is arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results, slow in regulating its operations, must turn out eventually to have been no acceptance of the truth of Nature but a revolt against the secret, mightier will of the great Mother. It is better and more rational to accept what she will not allow us as a race to reject and lift it from the sphere of blind instinct, obscure intuition and random aspiration into the light of reason and an instructed and consciously self-guiding will. And if there is any higher light of illumined intuition or self-revealing truth which is now in man either obstructed and

inoperative or works with intermittent glancings as if from behind a veil or with occasional displays as of the northern lights in our material skies, then there also we need not fear to aspire. For it is likely that such is the next higher state of consciousness of which Mind is only a form and veil, and through the splendours of that light may lie the path of our progressive self-enlargement into whatever highest state is humanity's ultimate resting-place.

II

DIVINE LIFE

In the growth into a divine life the spirit must be our first pre-occupation; until we have revealed and evolved it in our self out of its mental, vital, physical wrappings and disguises, extracted it with patience from our own body, as the Upanishad puts it, until we have built up in ourselves an inner life of the spirit, it is obvious that no outer divine living can become possible. Unless, indeed, it is a mental or vital godhead that we perceive and would be, — but even then the individual mental being or the being of power and vital force and desire in us must grow into a form of that godhead before our life can be divine in that inferior sense, the life of the infraspirtual super man, mental demi-god or vital Titan, Deva or Asura. This inner life once created, to convert our whole surface being, our thought, feeling, action in the world, into a perfect power of that inner life, must be our other preoccupation. Only if we live in that deeper and greater way in our dynamic parts, can there be a force for creating a greater life or the world be remade whether in some power or perfection of Mind and Life or the power and perfection of the Spirit. A perfected human world cannot be created by men or composed of men who are themselves imperfect. Even if all our actions are scrupulously

regulated by education or law or social or political machinery, what will be achieved is a regulated pattern of minds, a fabricated pattern of lives, a cultivated pattern of conduct; but a conformity of this kind cannot change, cannot re-create the man within, it cannot carve or cut out a perfect soul or a perfect thinking man or a perfect or growing living being. For soul and mind and life are powers of being and can grow but cannot be cut out or made; an outer process or formation can assist or can express soul and mind and life but cannot create or develop it. One can indeed help the being to grow, not by an attempt at manufacture, but by throwing on it stimulating influences or by lending to it one's forces of soul or mind or life; but even so the growth must still come from within it, determining from there what shall be made of these influences and forces, and not from outside. This is the first truth that our creative zeal and aspiration have to learn, otherwise all our human endeavour is foredoomed to turn in a futile circle and can end only in a success that is a specious failure.

To be or become something, to bring something into being is the whole labour of the force of Nature; to know, feel, do are subordinate energies that have a value because they help the being in its partial self-realisation to express what it is and help it too in its urge to express the still more not yet realised that it has to be. But knowledge, thought, action, — whether religious, ethical, political, social, economic, utilitarian or hedonistic, whether a mental, vital or physical form or construction of existence, — cannot be the essence or object of life; they are only activities of the powers of being or the powers of its becoming, dynamic symbols of itself, creations of the embodied spirit, its means of discovering or formulating what it seeks to be. The tendency of man's physical mind is to see otherwise and to turn the true method of things upside down, because it takes as essential or fundamental the surface forces or appearances of Nature; it accepts her creation by a visible or exterior process as the essence of her action and does not see that it is only a secondary appearance and covers a greater secret process: for Nature's occult process is to reveal the being through the bringing out of its powers and forms, her external pressure is only a

means of awakening the involved being to the need of this evolution, of this self-formation. When the spiritual stage of her evolution is reached, this occult process must become the whole process; to get through the veil of forces and get at their secret mainspring, which is the spirit itself, is of cardinal importance. To become ourselves is the one thing to be done; but the true ourselves is that which is within us, and to exceed our outer self of body, life and mind is the condition for this highest being, which is our true and divine being, to become self-revealed and active. It is only by growing within and living within that we can find it; once that is done, to create from there the spiritual or divine mind, life, body and through this instrumentation to arrive at the creation of a world which shall be the true environment of a divine living, — this is the final object that Force of Nature has set before us. This then is the first necessity, that the individual, each individual, shall discover the spirit, the divine reality within him and express that in all his being and living. A divine life must be first and foremost an inner life; for since the outward must be the expression of what is within, there can be no divinity in the outer existence if there is not the divinisation of the inner being. The Divinity in man dwells veiled in his spiritual centre; there can be no such thing as self-exceeding for man or a higher issue for his existence if there is not in him the reality of an eternal self and spirit.

To be and to be fully is Nature's aim in us; but to be fully is to be wholly conscious of one's being: unconsciousness, half-consciousness or deficient consciousness is a state of being not in possession of itself; it is existence, but not fullness of being. To be aware wholly and integrally of oneself and of all the truth of one's being is the necessary condition of true possession of existence. This self-awareness is what is meant by spiritual knowledge: the essence of spiritual knowledge is an intrinsic self-existent consciousness; all its action of knowledge, indeed all its action of any kind, must be that consciousness formulating itself. All other knowledge is consciousness oblivious of itself and striving to return to its own awareness of itself and its contents; it is self-ignorance labouring to transform itself back into self-

knowledge.

But also, since consciousness carries in itself the force of existence, to be fully is to have the intrinsic and integral force of one's being; it is to come into possession of all one's force of self and of all its use. To be merely, without possessing the force of one's being or with a half-force or deficient force of it, is a mutilated or diminished existence; it is to exist, but it is not fullness of being. It is possible, indeed, to exist only in status, with the force of being self-gathered and immobile in the self; but, even so, to be in deficient force of it, is a mutilated or diminished existence; power of self is the sign of the divinity of self, — a powerless spirit is no spirit. But, as the spiritual consciousness is intrinsic and self-existent, so too this force of our spiritual being must be intrinsic, automatic in action, self-existent and self-fulfilling. What instrumentality it uses, must be part of itself; even any external instrumentality it uses must be made part of itself and expressive of its being. Force of being in conscious action is will; and whatever is the conscious will of the spirit, its will of being and becoming, that all the existence must be able harmonically to fulfil. Whatever action or energy of action has not this sovereignty or is not master of the machinery of action, carries in it by that defect the sign of an imperfection of the force of being, of a division or disabling segmentation of the consciousness, of an incompleteness in the manifestation of the being.

Lastly, to be fully is to have the full delight of being. Being without delight of being, without an entire delight of itself and all things is something neutral or diminished; it is existence, but it is not fullness of being. This delight too must be intrinsic, self-existent, automatic; it cannot be dependent on things outside itself: whatever it delights in, it makes part of itself, has the joy of it as part of its universality. All undelight, all pain and suffering are a sign of imperfection, of incompleteness; they arise from a division of being, an incompleteness of consciousness of being, an incompleteness of the force of being. To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight of being and to live in this

integrated completeness is the divine living.

But, again, to be fully is to be universally. To be in the limitations of a small restricted ego is to exist, but it is an imperfect existence: in its very nature it is to live in an incomplete consciousness, an incomplete force and delight of existence. It is to be less than oneself and it brings an inevitable subjection to ignorance, weakness and suffering: or even if by some divine composition of the nature it could exclude these things, it would be to live in a limited scope of existence, a limited consciousness and power and joy of existence. All being is one and to be fully is to be all that is. To be in the being of all and to include all in one's being, to be conscious of the consciousness of all, to be integrated in force with the universal force, to carry all action and experience in oneself and feel it as one's own action and experience, to feel all selves as one's own self, to feel all delight of being as one's own delight of being is a necessary condition of the integral divine living.

But thus to be universally in the fullness and freedom of one's universality, one must be also transcendently. The spiritual fullness of the being is eternity; if one has not the consciousness of timeless eternal being, if one is dependent on body or embodied mind or embodied life, or dependent on this world or that world or on this condition of being or that condition of being, that is not the reality of self, not the fullness of our spiritual existence. To live only as a self of body or be only by the body is to be an ephemeral creature, subject to death and desire and pain and suffering and decay and decadence. To transcend, to exceed consciousness of body, not to be held in the body or by the body, to hold the body only as an instrument, a minor outward formation of self, is a first condition of divine living. Not to be a mind subject to ignorance and restriction of consciousness, to transcend mind and handle it as an instrument, to control it as a surface formation of self, is a second condition. To be by the self and spirit, not to depend upon life, not to be identified with it, to transcend it and control and use it as an expression and instrumentation of the self, is a third condition. Even the bodily life does not possess its own

full being in its own kind if the consciousness does not exceed the body and feel its physical oneness with all material existence; the vital life does not possess its own full living in its own kind if the consciousness does not exceed the restricted play of an individual vitality and feel the universal life as its own and its oneness with all life. The mentality is not a full conscious existence or activity in its own kind if one does not exceed the individual mental limits and feel a oneness with universal Mind and with all minds and enjoy one's integrality of consciousness fulfilled in their wealth of difference. But one must transcend not only the individual formula but the formula of the universe, for only so can either the individual or the universal existence find its own true being and a perfect harmonisation; both are in their outer formulation incomplete terms of the Transcendence, but they are that in their essence, and it is only by becoming conscious of that essence that individual consciousness or universal consciousness can come to its own fullness and freedom of reality. Otherwise the individual may remain subject to the cosmic movement and its reactions and limitations and miss his entire spiritual freedom. He must enter into the supreme divine Reality, feel his oneness with it, live in it, be its self-creation: all his mind, life, physicality must be converted into terms of its Supernature; all his thought, feelings, actions must be determined by it and be it, its self-formation. All this can become complete in him only when he has evolved out of the Ignorance into the Knowledge and through the Knowledge into the supreme Consciousness and its dynamis and supreme delight of existence; but some essentiality of these things and their sufficient instrumentation can come with the first spiritual change and culminate in the life of the gnostic supernature.

THE MOTHER

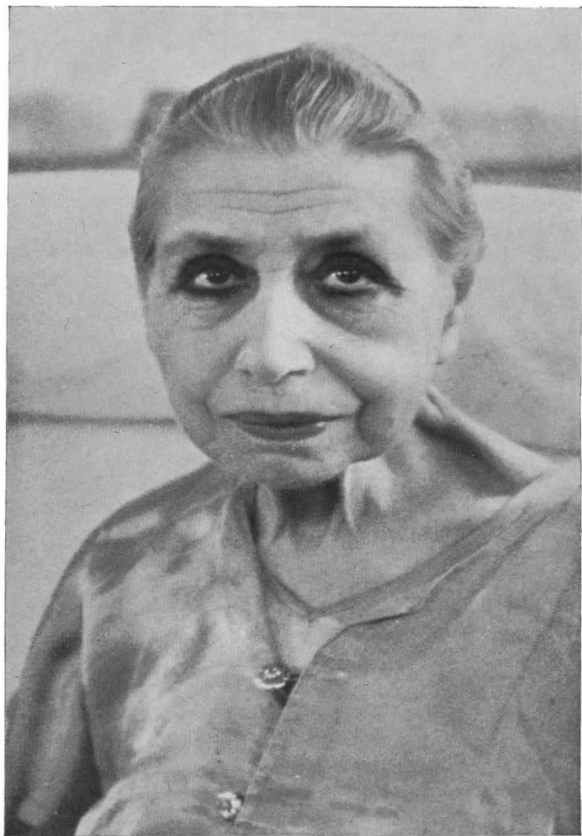
THE MOTHER

THE Mother's consciousness is the divine consciousness and the Light that comes from it is the light of the Divine Truth. One who receives and accepts and lives in the Mother's light, will begin to see the truth on all planes, the mental, the vital, the physical. He will reject all that is undivine,—the undivine is the falsehood, the ignorance the error of the dark forces; the undivine is all that is obscure and unwilling to accept the Divine Truth and its light and force. The undivine, therefore, is all that is unwilling to accept the light and force of the Mother. That is why I am always telling you to keep in contact with the Mother and her Light and Force, because it is only so that you can come out of this confusion and obscurity and receive the Truth that comes from above.

When we speak of the Mother's Light or my Light in a special sense, we are speaking of a special occult action — we are speaking of certain lights that come from the Supermind. In this action the Mother's is the White Light that purifies, illumines, brings down the whole essence and power of the Truth that makes the transformation possible. But in fact all light that comes from above from the highest divine Truth is the Mother's.

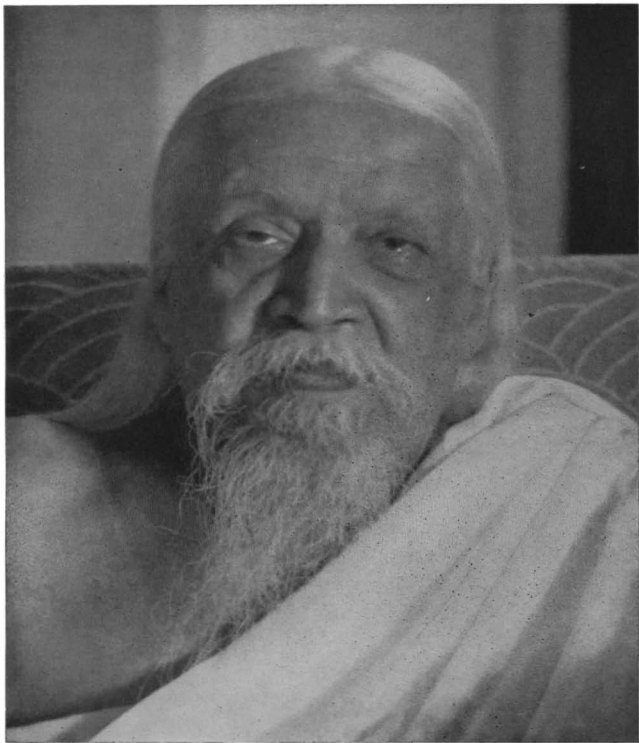
There is no difference between the Mother's path and mine; we have and always had the same path that leads to the supramental change and the divine realisation; not only at the end, but from the beginning they have been the same.

SRI AUROBINDO



OUR HOMAGE

Hind Stores, Raniganj, Burdwan, West Bengal





The Advent

Intellectual sympathy can only
draw together, the sympathy of
the heart can alone unite.

SRI AUROBINDO

The ADVENT

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NOVEMBER 1972

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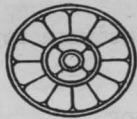
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The ADVENT
CONTENTS



The Truth concerning
only
can make feet, in those
who are not of the eye.

Bliss



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIAL

A PROGRAMME FOR THE SECOND CENTURY OF THE DIVINE MANIFESTATION

IT is *Integration*. I am using a much used, much abused word but it happens to be *the* word. We have reached a status of consciousness within as distinct units, individual or collective: our effort should now be to co-ordinate, to harmonise the different and differing units or separate elements into a well-knit single whole. That means, the ego-centres that are still left and active are to be exorcised, purified — the separative knot has to be dissolved and the true centre of unity to be found — the psychic divine centre.

First each element in the individual, each level of his being must find its centre, its soul or psychic base — and then only a co-ordination of all would be possible. Next through the psychic level the general level of the being and consciousness, that is to say, its expression and its field of action should be lifted and raised to a higher potency of poise — the higher the better — towards the higher mind,

towards the overmental — and beyond.

The Divine Presence in the heart — the central psychic — should not only be felt constantly there in the heart but in all other parts or levels of the being: it must create or awake its figure or norm everywhere so that it can inspire and control directly all activities and movements in a global and total gesture. It has to be an integral dynamic Presence, that is the way of uplifting the poise of the *ādhāra*, its global existence. The process is first to deepen the Presence, that is from the surface to dive into the inner realm and then float up again into a wider and higher expanse, deeper and deeper means truer and truer truth — nearer the pure fundamental reality — the Eternal and Infinite, the supreme Spirit, the bedrock of existence. Higher and higher means formulations of the Reality in a gradually evolving expansion up the ladders of the physical, the vital, the mental consciousness and towards the higher mental and overmental, indeed towards the Supramental.

(2)

It is not sufficient that the central psychic being comes forward and exercises what is at most a general influence on the other limbs of the being. It should enter into its counter-parts or counter-points — the inherent psychic centres of each part and parcel and make them directly active. The central psychic — self — has its delegated selves everywhere in the global being. Indeed each particle of the being must itself be a psychic or psychicised particle: a consciousness-photon. There is thus a vital photon, a mental photon, a photon of the physical consciousness even as the material photon. And all these in their hierarchic harmonious arrangement shall constitute the global system of the new person.

Even so, there is to be a transmutation of the environment also: the outer objects and circumstances and happenings will be a field — an Einsteinian field — of modulations, pulsations, tensions, of these consciousness-particles of the psychic.

An uplift of consciousness is a natural consequence of the psychic's aspiration. The psychic has the power to call down the rain of higher existence, a wider law of being — higher means, as I have said,

higher than the highest mental yet achieved by man normally and generally — stepping by the intermediary gradations towards the Supermind.

This, on the whole, is the inherent activity of the inferior or subordinate nature in its aspiration to move upward and transform itself. This activity in us all, it must be noted, is supported, initiated and inspired by the self-action of the higher nature, the descent of the above-mental regions.

(3)

The first definitive and distinctive higher status is that of the Overmind. Its character is a global and entire being and consciousness, a cosmic and universal all-inclusive existence. Each being attains its self and each self lives in every other self and all selves together and at the same time live in each self. The diversities are not abolished — as in the unitary consciousness and being of the absolute Existence, Brahman — variations are maintained as the multiple aspects or modalities of the same single infinite eternal power.

I am now speaking here of *sāmrājya-siddhi*, the realisation of the world-empire, the spiritual or Divine Empire. First of course there is, as the basis of the *sāmrājya*, the *svarājya*, the kingdom or reign of the individual's own self. In effect, the world-empire or the imperial reign of the Spirit has three gradations. At the outset each element, that is, each individual human being (we limit ourselves to the human collectivity at present) has to attain *svarājya*, self-rule, a perfectly homogeneous integral spiritual whole in himself: then all such individuals should achieve integrality with one another. Each lives in and through every other and all together live in everyone. The whole forms an indissoluble integral and unitary life. This collective integration means all individuals have one mind, one vital being, even one physical consciousness, not of course one material body but still a feeling of the kind. One mind or one vital or one physical consciousness does not mean everyone has the same identical formations and movements in these respective regions, but all possess substantially the same stuff belonging to a self-same unit. A comparison or analogy may explain and illustrate the point. For

example, the different parts of a human body form one integrated texture: they are all bound up, united although not fused together, in an inextricable, "inexorable" unity. Action in one part creates a reaction, re-echoes or re-doubles in every other part: they all rise up *like one man* as it is popularly said, at a single touch. Different in form, different in function, they are identical in their substantial composition, in their fundamental stuff — the organic plasma; even so, the minds of all, their vital movements, their physical movements too, however different and diverse, contrary or contradictory, are in their own respective domains part and particles of the one and the same substance and all together contribute to form, to create a symphony, a grand Beethovensque orchestra.

The next grade of integration in the Divine world-empire comes when not only individuals but groups and collectivities find and establish their own selves — each its *svarājya*, and all combined in a yet larger and greater organisation: combined and unified they act in a unified and homogeneous living as individuals do in the world aggregate. Although the individual is the basic reality, aggregations and collectivities also are realities, even spiritual realities in the progressive unfoldment of the cosmic spirit.

(4)

Such a consummation, so complex in composition, so global in scope would be possible only when the above-mental or the overmental world-consciousness descends into the mental and lower hemisphere and takes possession of it and becomes active and dynamic there. The movement upward, the evolutionary force in nature inclusive of the human aspiration is the spearhead to break through the solid frontier wall of ignorance and inferior consciousness; the luminous point that breaks through is, as I have said, the soul-power, the psychic. That creates the rift in the dense covering through which can pour down the rains and streams of the universal consciousness with its purificatory ablution of the lower nature and consciousness. But this again becomes not only possible but inevitable when this new consciousness contacts openly and directly its master and overlord, the supreme Supramental Consciousness, which is the true

reality behind pressing down always upon the lower creation, rejecting whatever has to be thrown out, sifting and screening the mixture, sublimating, subsuming all that has to be retained within itself.

The problem, the fundamental problem is not merely to extract the Truth out of its covering of falsehood—in the image of the Upanishads, to pull the inner stem out of its sheath. It is not sufficient to liberate the spirit from the obscuring matter but to instal the spirit in the body of matter and transfigure it into the substance of the Spirit, build it in its own image. It is not sufficient to arrive at the One without the second, the Unitary Unit, but to realise the Unit in its most concrete multiplicity.

To spiritualise Matter does not mean dematerialising Matter! It means rather re-materialising the Spirit. And that is the task of the Supermind and its intermediate and immediate helpers—agents and emissaries—the Overmind and Above-mind.

(5)

The Supermind is of course the last and ultimate or otherwise the first and original support and inspiration of all other levels of being and living. Apart from this fundamental, this one source of sustenance, each intermediary level depends directly and leans upon the one that lies just above it, over-arches it as it were. Thus speaking of the major intermediaries, the Overmind is under the direct control and guidance of the over-arching Supermind. And Overmind itself over-arches, broods over the mind and from behind guides and controls it. The Mind has evolved primarily because of the pressure of the Overmind standing immediately above it in the hierarchy of the grades of existence. And because of this constant ruling presence of the Overmind, the mind in man is a progressive entity unveiling powers lent or delegated to it, sent down into it from the Overmind. The animal, on the contrary, is not a progressive being like man, for the Overmind does not reach it. The animal is not in contact with the Overmind. It is in contact, a somewhat precarious contact, with the Mind. Something of the Mental has made an in-road into him, into his vital texture. It is to be noted that the mind in the animal is of a different kind from the human mind: it is only

in the domesticated animals, the animals living in the neighbourhood of man, having contact with him, that something of the human mind percolates or is imbibed. As I have said, the human mind has developed and is developing fast, specially in recent years, to an extraordinary degree, in the domain of physical science leading to discoveries that appear so subtle and distant, far off as almost to be out of reach of his normal means of experience. Discoveries of other kinds, hints and intimations with regard to other forms and fields of knowledge and experience are explained most logically and adequately by the fact of an interruption or intervention of another type of consciousness into the present constitution of the human mind. We are referring to the influence of the Overmind, gradually becoming more and more explicit, extensive and effective, the immediately directing power, the guide of the new age. And this naturally because of the operative presence, in and through the Overmind, of the Supramental upon earth and in earth.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

A HYMN TO AGNI

[Mandala IV, 6]

[Among Sri Aurobindo's Notes on Vedic Hymns is found this valuable exercise of a translation of this Hymn according to Sayana followed by a rendering of his own. (Ed)]

1. SAYANA: High, very high for us stand, O summoner (or, performer of offering), O Agni, a great sacrificer in the sacrifice (in which the gods are extended).

SRI AUROBINDO: High, yea, very high, stand, O Flame, O offering priest of the journeying sacrifice, be very mighty for sacrifice in the forming of the gods. For thou comest over every thought and thou carriest on its way the thinking mind of the orderer of the work.

2. SAYANA: The intelligent offering priest, the enrapturing Agni of great knowledge is settled among the peoples (the priests) in (for) the sacrifices; he resorts upward to his lustre like the sun; like a pillar he supports his smoke above the heaven.

SRI AUROBINDO: The offering priest inspired of mind has taken his seat in the peoples, Agni, the rapturous, the wise thinker in the gettings of knowledge; he has risen high into light like the all-creating sun; like a pillar he holds up his smoke against the heavens.

(The joy, wisdom, knowledge of Agni in men's gettings of knowledge, he is a high creator of knowledge like the sun; he supports the heavens with his smoke).

3. SAYANA: The (ghee-giving) flame (or ladle?) controlled and very swift (or very old) is wealthy (i.e. full of ghee); he (Agni or the adhvaryu) becomes or goes (round from left) to right; widening the sacrifice; and also the new born post becomes high; approaching, very bright, the axe (?) goes to the animals (or the post excellent etc. and well placed goes to the animals.)

SRI AUROBINDO: The clear-shining flame of him is reined and swift and opulent (or, delightful), he on this right hand circling widens the extension of the gods; high like a post of sacrifice, new born, moving, firm on his base and bright he brings the (seeing) herds.

4. SRI AUROBINDO: The altar spread, the fire kindled, the leader of sacrifice pleasing the gods stands high; the offering priest ancient, greatening (the offering), goes like a herdsman thrice round (the cattle).
5. SAYANA: Limited in motion he goes round himself (in his own form), the offerer Agni enrapturing, sweet-voiced, having sacrifice; his lustrous run forded (or like horses); all beings fear when he blazes.

SRI AUROBINDO: He encompasses with himself in his measured motion, the Flame, the offering priest, rapturous, honey-worded, master of truth; his lustres run like horses; all the worlds are in awe when he blazes forth.

6. SAYANA: O fair-flaming Agni, the delightful, praisable (or auspicious) image of thee terrible, pervading on every side, is full-seen, because they (the nights) do not stop thee with darkness nor the destroyers put (create) sin in thy body.

SRI AUROBINDO: O thou Flame of great force (or, fire of force), though thou art terrible as thou goest abroad over the regions, happy and beautiful is the vision of thee; for the nights envelop thee not with darkness nor have the destroyers cast sin into thy body.

7. SAYANA: Of whom, father (of rain), his giving (or, lustre) is not stopped (by anybody); and in whose sending the father and mother (heaven and earth) do not quickly prevail, the purifier like a well-pleased friend shines among the peoples of Manu.

SRI AUROBINDO: The gettings of this begetter of things (or, the light of this begetter and getter of things) cannot be shut in, nor the Father and Mother when he urges. Then shines the purifying flame as the friend, well-based, in the human peoples.

8. SAYANA: Whom the ten sisters coming together (the fingers), bore, Agni, among the peoples of Manu, like women, waker

at dawn, the eater (of offerings), bright, four-faced, like a sharp axe (killing the Rakshasas).

SRI AUROBINDO: Twice five sisters who dwell together gave birth to this flame in the human peoples; they like women(?) gave birth to the brighter eater who awakes with dawn, whose face is beauty, he is like a keen axe.

9. SAYANA: These horses of thine, Agni, streaming wonder, red, strength moving, well-going, shining young (or, runners well-formed and beautiful) are called to the sacrifice.

SRI AUROBINDO: These bright steeds of thine, O Flame, who streams clear brightness (ghrita), and are red and straight and fair of motion, shining potent stallions, are called in their power to the extending of the godheads.

10. SAYANA: Those rays of thine, overcoming, moving, bright, to be served, go like horses to their goal; they are great sounding like the Maruts host.

SRI AUROBINDO: Those illuminings of thee, O Flame, they overpower, they travel, they are keen in brightness, they are active, they move like eagles to the goal, they are many voiced like the host of the Life-gods.

11. SAYANA: O thou who art being kindled, for thee the praise is made; One (the hota) speaks the praise, one (the yajamana) sacrifices; give (wealth): Men desiring (wealth) serve worshipping Agni the caller of the gods speakable (praisable) of man.

SRI AUROBINDO: The soul-thought is formed, O kindling Flame, for thee; for thee one speaks the word and sacrifices; ordain. Men, the desirers, take refuge in the flame, the priest of sacrifice, with obeisance to the expresser of the human being.

A LETTER OF SRI AUROBINDO

IT is true that I have by the practice of Yoga attained to the higher spiritual consciousness which comes by Yoga, and this carries with it a certain power. Especially there is the power to communicate to those who are ready or to help them towards that spiritual state which, in its perfection, is a condition of unalterable inner calm, strength and felicity. But this spiritual peace and joy is something quite different from mental peace and happiness. And it cannot be reached without a spiritual discipline.

I do not know whether this has been rightly explained to your Highness. I may say briefly that there are two states of consciousness in either of which one can live. One is a higher consciousness which stands above the play of life and governs it; this is variously called the Self, the Spirit or the Divine. The other is the normal consciousness in which men live; it is something quite superficial, an instrument of the Spirit for the play of life. Those who live and act in the normal consciousness are governed entirely by the common movements of the mind and are naturally subject to grief and joy and anxiety and desire or to everything else that makes up the ordinary stuff of life. Mental quiet and happiness they can get, but it can never be permanent or secure. But the spiritual consciousness is all light, peace, power and bliss. If one can live entirely in it, there is no question; these things become naturally and securely his. But even if he can live partly in it or keep himself constantly open to it, he receives enough of this spiritual light and peace and strength and happiness to carry him securely through all the shocks of life. What one gains by opening to this spiritual consciousness, depends on what one seeks from it; if it is peace, one gets peace; if it is light or knowledge, one lives in a great light and receives a knowledge deeper and truer than any the normal mind of man can acquire; if it is strength or power, he gets a spiritual strength for the inner life or Yogic power to govern the outer work and action; if it is happiness, he enters into a beatitude far greater than any joy or happiness that the ordinary human life can give.

There are many ways of opening to this Divine consciousness or entering into it. My way which I show to others by a constant practice is to go inward into oneself, to open by aspiration to the Divine and once one is conscious of it and its action, to give oneself to It entirely. This self-giving means not to ask for anything but the constant contact or union with the Divine consciousness, to aspire for its peace, power, light and felicity, but to ask nothing else and in life and action to be its instrument only for whatever work it gives one to do in the world. If one can once open and feel the Divine Force, the Power of the Spirit working in the mind and heart and body, the rest is a matter of remaining faithful to It, calling for it always, allowing it to do its work when it comes and rejecting every other and inferior Force that belongs to the lower consciousness and the lower nature.

I have written so much in order to explain my position and the nature of my Yogic power. I do not usually ask anyone to practise this Yoga, because it is possible only for those who have from the beginning or who develop a strong call to it; others cannot go through it *all* to the end. Nor do I often go out of my way to help those who are merely in need of some kind of quietude of *external* nature though I do not refuse to do it in certain cases. My aim is to create a centre of spiritual life which shall serve as a means of bringing down the higher consciousness and making it a power not merely for 'salvation' but for a divine life upon earth. It is with this object that I have withdrawn from public life and founded this Ashram in Pondicherry (so called for want of a better word, for it is not an Ashram of sannyasins, but of those who want to leave all else and prepare for this rule). But at the same time I have a small number of disciples all over India who live in their families and receive spiritual help from me even at a distance.

This is all I can answer to your Highness at present. It is for you to decide¹ whether what you seek has anything to do with what I have explained in this letter.

¹ Alternative words: see for yourself

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

II. AVATAR AND VIBHUTI

THE most important fact of world history is the Avatar, the incarnation of God. The fact is recurrent and compelling; it is the impetus, the light and power brought by the Avatar that carries the world through its evolutionary development, the unfolding of its involved splendours. A full understanding of the divine Incarnation is not possible to mankind, but a sincere and growing attempt to understand it is indispensable, for one who would know truly the world and his own place within it, his true nature and the purpose and meaning of all natures, all Nature and all existence.

The Avatar is not just the god-man in a lesser sense, the man who has realized something of divine Truth within himself. He is more than a Knower of Brahman, who has gained release from the lower processes and entanglements; more than the raptured devotee who closes the world out in the glories of the name of God. He is more than the Jivanmukta, the "free-while-living", who remains in the world for a time but is not of it; and more than the most consummate Yogin of any kind, who has established some genuine spirituality or soul-radiance within his nature. The Avatar is not the human being risen to God: he is God Himself, come down to assume the human nature for some great purpose; a purpose always the most intimate and urgent, for the growth of mankind and the world.

It is the full human nature he puts on, and not just the physical body, the most outward form; and from this one can see that the term "incarnation" is a crudity, a rough-and-ready makeshift that does not really express the truth of the matter. For a human birth is not just an "encasement in flesh", a soul entrapped in a body like a butterfly in a box or a bird in a cage, to await the time for its release and its flight in the heavenly skies and gardens. It is the mental and the vital nature, as well as the physical, that God must assume: the whole nature of the "three worlds" of the Ignorance; he assumes the evolving soul-nature that sustains these worlds and co-ordinates them, and by his

presence eventually helps it to come forward and take the lead, drawing men Godward. In the Avatar God becomes a struggling, evolving being, and yet remains God, supreme beyond. Because he puts on the full human nature he must share the human sufferings and difficulties: yet, remaining God, he can resolve them, overcome them, and show the way, giving light and power to his devotees who would follow. In a sense he is the Son of God, come to demonstrate the divine Sonship of every man, and help to its full realization, where it passes to real identity of nature. Because the creation, the manifestation is his own and his very substance, by perpetually recurring, appearing and reappearing, returning always in fuller measure he demonstrates in the fullest and most radically progressive terms his kinship, his Fatherhood and Sonship, his identity: saving, redeeming, and bringing to the apotheosis of Light.

Christianity of course has seen a part of this, and has made the Incarnation its cardinal doctrine. But because it has made it more a *doctrine* than a living truth, it has narrowed and to a large extent falsified it. For the Divine will not be restricted to *one* appearance and birth in the nature of mankind, one time and one place. The Avatar indeed does not come so much to found a new religion as to quicken the divine seeds in human nature. To say this is not to "deny Christ"; but it is to say that the Christ-manifestation must be put into perspective. Sri Aurobindo surely respected Jesus or the Christ, and accepted him as a genuine Avatar of divine Love. The Christ gave a great impetus, and a great work has grown around it, a great cultural and civilizing movement in the world, in which even some spirituality has come through the doctrinaire barriers. But even if this work had been fully Christian it would have been partial and limited; and now the time for wholly new and greater things is at hand. The time indeed of doctrinaire and organized religion is over and done with; it may linger, but its only real efficacy will be in quickening and helping to cultivate the divine seeds, in helping men to a true spiritual orientation until they can grow out of creed and dogma, into the living and infinitely flexible and varied Truth, that is One beyond all possible grasp or construction of the mind. As God has put on human nature, so humanity must put on divine nature, and

Our life is a paradox with God for key.¹

Paradoxes are made by the mind, its too rigid approach to things; growing beyond the mind, one lives not in paradoxes and psychological confusion and pain, but in the clarity, bliss and glory of the many that are One, the One that is manifold. For this it is not enough to follow one dispensation or path by creed, the letter of a book or even the spirit of it according to the mind's fumbling and too self-sure ineptness. And beyond this, the line of the Avatars is progressive, and the latest is always the great one; when he comes, the old ways are changed. The "law" may be fulfilled, rather than abrogated; but then it will be found to be a greater and larger law than men had previously been able to understand.

This is not a "cut-and-dried" thing, however, and hitherto different peoples have received different dispensations, with teaching and guidance suited to their natures and stages of development. The Buddha, an Avatar of Peace and Compassion, converted most of Asia, as later the Christ converted Europe; but the later appearance of the Christ does not mean that Christianity has received a divine mission to convert the entire world: nor is there anything in Christianity or divine Wisdom that means that those Buddhists or other "heathen" (the great majority) who have refused to become Christian have contumaciously turned and given themselves to the darkness. Historically Buddhism has been for people more capable of spirituality, Christianity for people relatively barbarous. They have done their work, each in its proper time and sphere of action, and the influences yet remain. That Christianity, for all its emphasis on one historical moment, can hardly afford, in its obtuse intellectualization, to take a fully historical view and thus admit the necessity for the eventual superseding of itself, is only a Christian problem, made by an unfortunately unspiritual approach to things, and has little meaning for the world at large. The world must grow beyond any particular formulation, and even any particular inspiration, however purely received and recorded, from a higher source than humanity. And now there is an increasing consciousness that the world is *one* world,

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book I, Canto IV.

and a greater dispensation, for all mankind, is at hand.

In Sri Aurobindo's view — a view that must at once recommend itself to a rational man, even without Sri Aurobindo's sanction — the traditional line of the Avatars of Vishnu is an *evolutionary* development. We have the fish, the amphibian, the higher animalistic and the lower or semi-human developments, until at last we have the full, the truly human status blooming in Ramachandra. From the time of the writing of the Ramayana to this day, Rama and Sita have been the Indian ideal of manhood and womanhood. They represent the triumph of mentality, high-mindedness and the control of the mind over the lower nature; the rule of *dharma*, an organized way of life with ethical standards, that can hold a truly human society together. Then came the Krishna of the Mahabharata, who troubled, bewildered and offended so many in his time, and has not ceased to bewilder, trouble and even offend: for he came to establish something higher than human morality or ethical fervor, and the shaky mental grasp of things. To the moral man he is an immoral monster; it is to the beginning spiritual man that he appeals. He came to open the way to the spiritual being, the true Self.

It is not that there was no spiritual knowledge or teaching before the advent of Krishna. What the Avatar opens is a larger prospect, and a greater possibility of development among mankind at large. And because men are never equal except in divine essence and are never all on the same level of development, many continue to draw primarily from the older sources, rather than the newer. Thus, though in a sense Rama has been superseded, in a sense he continues his work: for noble ideals of manhood and womanhood remain necessary, and a problematical moral rule or ethical foundation is still the best that much of mankind can rise to. But a larger way has been opened. There is an esoteric Ramayana, for the few, giving Rama a higher spiritual status and his story a higher meaning; but in the Mahabharata is a still higher meaning brought forth or at least adumbrated, and given freely to all readers or hearers. It is the vanguard, the élite of humanity that responds first to the new dispensation, and thus helps to lead the world; but God descends to raise man to Himself, and to assure that sooner or later the whole race may share in a truly divine manifestation, development and life.

The two later Avatars outside the traditional series, the Buddha and the Christ, came to lead mankind to a spiritual rebirth; that is, to lead that portion of mankind that could or would follow them. They did not do so more than Krishna; rather less so; but they worked in different terms. The Buddha, primarily mental, brought a release into Nirvana and a vision of the immaculate divine purity of existence; the Christ, more devotional and heart-centered, brought a movement of love for God and his creatures (though in historical Christianity most of his creatures have been excluded, the influence of St. Francis of Assisi notwithstanding). Krishna includes both Nirvana and Love, and raises them to the highest spiritual mentality; but still the Buddha and the Christ are Avatars, and have done a necessary and a great work in the world. These two in fact were not so much for India, the spiritual leader and fountainhead, as for the great world outside. The Christ indeed was outside of India altogether; the Buddha did his largest work outside of India, and was eventually absorbed (though perhaps with some loss of richness and flexibility) by the continuing tradition of his country.¹ Of still later figures, Chaitanya may be accepted as a partial and intermittent Avatar of divine Love, a worshipper of the other Krishna, the Krishna of Vrindavan, come to raise devotional religion to one of its highest summits; and Ramakrishna may be accepted as at least a partial Avatar working toward the great synthesis that has been perfected by Sri Aurobindo.

In a sense, every man is a divine "incarnation": for the Divine is present in all beings. The world, the manifestation is divine splendour, and the concentrated outflowing of that splendour is the Vibhuti. All superior things are the Vibhuti, each leading thing in its grade. They bring the creation closer to its full divinity, they help in the upward and onward movement; they are concentrations of power and light, they are like magnets drawing the soul. Among men the great geniuses, the leaders in art and literature, religion and culture, the leaders in politics and war who help to establish new and larger developments, the great thinkers and the supreme achievers

¹ Sri Aurobindo said that the new age should bring a fuller understanding of Buddhism, or at least a "recovered sense of its meaning"; but as yet there is small sign of this development. (*Essays on the Gita*, I, I.)

of mankind in every sphere, whether of Knowledge, Power, Love or Beauty—men or beings in human form like Alexander the Great, Bach or Empedocles, Leonardo da Vinci or Napoleon, Vyasa and Dante, Homer and Shakespeare—all heroic men, in the sense in which Carlyle used the term—a Mohammed, a Bodhidharma, a Joan of Arc, a Mirabai—all very great men or figures, who shine over others with the compelling divine splendour, are Vibhutis. Arjuna, the great warrior, is a Vibhuti; and the Avatar himself is the Vibhuti, and much more.

And so Arjuna, a Vibhuti of the Divine, stands in the very presence of the Divine Himself, the Krishna of Kurukshetra. But he does not recognize the fact, for it is too much for his yet human consciousness. He accepts Krishna for what he is but the full meaning remains far from his awareness and further from his comprehension. The vastness overwhelms him, and he does not know that the God who is the Preserver is the very same as the God who is the Destroyer: he destroys to preserve, and to carry on the divine venture and process of the world. It is a divine action and not a human that Krishna has come for, and he will strengthen Arjuna to participate in the action, and lead him by his ego and his human nature to his true self that is non-egoistic and spiritual, his true nature that is divine.

In Arjuna the lower nature recoils and despairs, in weakness, confusion and pain: but also it aspires, and the disciple would see the truth, ascend to a higher being, comprehend his teacher, friend and companion, and know how to live and what to do. Krishna, the Avatar, the descent of God, the transgressor of the old *dharma* for a new fulfilment, the bringer of a greater light to the earth, is his charioteer, his servant: this chariot of the body, vitality and mind indeed is driven by the Lord within and above, not known to the egoistic man. It is by turning and becoming himself the servant that the man grows, to his divine nature. The true aspiring man looks up, to the god-in-mankind: the god comes down, to raise the man to his divine being. Arjuna is told, shown, brought to understand the illusory character of the world as he has seen it, with all his desires and his mental constructions put upon it; more knowledge is imparted to him than he can grasp at once, but he arises firm, knowing that it is possible at once to do a great and necessary work in the world, and

remain calm above it. He will slay, and not with the egoism even of the high and moral mind. He will take refuge in the Lord, and conquer, doing the work required, adhering to the greater *dharma* that is the truth of his growing nature and his way of action.

To his Vibhuti the Lord, the Blessed One, sings his song of enlightenment. The lower nature is bound in the Ignorance and moved by the universal forces, like a pot on a wheel, or a man grown dizzy from ceaseless revolving. His growth must be out of his dizziness and his character of clay. The divine guide and lord within must work heavily veiled, until the man is ready. For the making of the true vessel and temple of divinity the co-operation of the human nature is necessary: of the stable and steady man, turned back from the whirling rim toward the hub, the Source. The fuller, more willing and more enlightened the co-operation, the swifter and more certain and sure the task may be, and the completion. The knowledge of humanity is not true knowledge, for the senses and the mind are not sufficient; one must come to higher knowledge in a spiritual awakening, and see that the lower terms are not binding and do not hold. The field of Nature is to be known and mastered, and worked for a greater flowering in the true knowledge and yield of life. One must know that truly he is not bound, he is free, and lives in Light forever. He is to realize this light by mental discrimination, by work, by meditation; he is to turn himself fully to the Lord in adoration, when the fullest return shall surely come. He is to know that one can be injured only by oneself, and that within oneself is one's salvation. It is only rank egoism and subjection to the hold of blind darkness that makes one think that his own overt action is the fundamental thing, and that the fate of the world depends upon it. These warriors have been slain already by the Lord: Arjuna's task is to help carry out the divine decree and action on the earthly plane. The Lord who at once destroys and saves, who is all harshness and all Love, assures his champion that the destruction of the outward form is not the death of the soul that lives forever taking newer forms in a ceaseless progress, growth upward in the divine progression. The purpose, process and meaning of all this is divine, and the human must serve and follow. Arjuna arises, bow in hand, and they drive forward to the clash. The blare of conchs is the signal of the ending of

a world, which is a new world born.

The fact that the unaccountable Krishna serves as Arjuna's charioteer is itself an affront to the adherents of the old *dharma*. Even though he has been made a king, Karna, one of the greatest warriors on the other side, has been scorned in public assembly because his father (his putative father) is a charioteer. But though Karna is the son of the very Sun, and half-brother to Arjuna himself, Arjuna must slay him. (That he does not know of the relationship is a mitigation of his sufferings in this tremendous crisis. That Karna does know it before the decisive battle is a part of his own difficult and not inglorious destiny). This is a battle of the universe, in which the strength and purpose of the more than universal Lord prevails. After the battle, that has lasted for eighteen days and nearly destroyed the entire Kshatriya class, Krishna is confronted by the old queen, Gandhari: she sees his responsibility for it all, and unspiritually she blames him and hates him. She in fact dares to curse him: she says that he will cause the destruction of his own people (who have not joined in the war), and that he himself will die obscurely and ignobly. She has been a good woman, by the lights of the time, and her curse must bear fruit. So Krishna tells her: and also he informs her that he has known his death from his birth, that that very destruction of his people is his current task, and that she has made it easier for him. The human cannot follow the divine, cannot comprehend it, must be baffled by it. Only by an entire giving of oneself to divinity, thus fulfilling one's nature and the reason for one's existence, can one understand.

The work of the Avatar is not easy, it is not a radiant and unbroken divine progress and triumph. He is not just God come to inaugurate a new kingdom, as it were, by fiat, for in an evolutionary world this is not possible and would have no meaning. He is God come to spur the difficult, problematical and dangerous evolutionary advance, and give help to those who can or will receive it. And for this he is not just God, come down in his supernal nature: he is God-and-man, and is fully present in both characters. He must experience the sufferings of humanity, and is subject to the persecutions of a malignant self-importance, the unregenerate human nature with all its bad will, the darkness that does not comprehend the light. Humanity does not always welcome its saviors and helpers; it may not

be willing to admit that it has any need for help or salvation. It represents his presence; it may feel "degraded" in being "dependent", or it may just hate anything greater than itself, or even different from itself. The fate of Jesus is the world's most prominent example of the persecution and suffering to which an Avatar may be subjected; most prominent because it was most external, and so most easily to be seen.

Hard is the world-redeemer's heavy task;
The world itself becomes his adversary,
His enemies are the beings he came to save.¹

But in him the human is divine, and he cannot be defeated. His work goes on though it be not recognized. He is not degraded by the utmost of what humanity calls degradation, and though he may not suffer overtly and in the eyes of men he bears the whole cross and pressure of the world's degradation and ignorance within him, to resolve the difficulties and prepare the further advance.

His love has paved the mortal's road to Heaven:
He has given his life and light to balance here
The dark account of mortal ignorance.²

He bears the sufferings of humanity that he may bring it to its divine nature and remake the very world. He comes among us both for a great inner change and a great outward working, and not all the powers of ignorance and darkness can radically defeat him.

And now at hand is a greater Kurukshetra, and in this new age we have the greatest of the Avatars, Sri Aurobindo. Rather we have an unprecedented biune Avatar, Sri Aurobindo and the Divine Mother: the Lord and his Shakti have assumed human nature together to bring down the divine consciousness for the transformation of existence. Krishna the Anandamaya is more greatly at work than ever, from the divine Bliss directing the destiny of the world, the manifestation. We are now at the greatest evolutionary crisis in

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book VI, Canto II,

² *Ibid.*

history, the passage from development in the Ignorance to development in the Knowledge; the possibilities are larger now, more glorious and more universal than ever before; and what is required is the fullest will and most strenuous action of humanity, or at least the true élite of humanity, toward the Light and the Beatitude.

JESSE ROARKE

ATTRACTION OF THE OCCULT

EVERY one knows that the Mother is unique. It is difficult to find a parallel in history to such a combination of spiritual consciousness and occult Power in one person. It is, however, true that more are drawn to her attracted by this Power than by her spiritual, divine consciousness. Many have sought to benefit in a worldly way with the help of her all-conquering Force. Some have even approached her to teach them the occult science in which she has been a rare adept since her early years.

But the Mother has demurred. Not because she does not wish to part with the knowledge, but because of the dangers inherent in the pursuit of the Occult unless one first fulfills certain conditions. And what are these conditions, I asked.

There is of course the first requirement: one must have no fear. The occult worlds are full of forces and beings that are foreign to human type and a good many of them are dangerous. If one is afraid, they get the upper hand and the consequences are none-too-happy. Whatever the nature of the confrontation, one must not fear. But this can be possible only if one has an inborn courage that can face up to any situation—and that is very rare—or one has absolute trust in the Divine and arms himself with the Divine's protection. This means one is inwardly surrendered to the Divine without reserve. There should be no corner in oneself which is not so given, which does not fully share the faith in the Divine. Even a small part that hesitates or doubts is enough to open the door to disaster. One has to work out the surrender and establish the faith integrally.

These conditions apart, there is the question of relevance. The Mother tells everyone who seeks to practise occultism that one's ideal is spiritual realisation, then Occultism is, to say the least, out of place. Unless one first builds up the spiritual consciousness, it is dangerous to dabble in these matters. As soon as one enters into that field, the vital comes into play; the forces and movements of the occult sphere impinge upon this part that loves adventure and power and one enters the world of falsehood, however glamorous it

may appear. And that is the end of the spiritual Quest.

Spiritual consciousness and living in that consciousness is the first business of the seeker. All else is secondary. If one is born with some gifts of the occult kind or these powers naturally manifest themselves in the course of one's development, it is best to yoke them to the psychic lead. And that implies purity of motive, sincerity in conforming to the demands of the soul, in a word wielding the occult knowledge and power with a consciousness that is spiritual.

So first to be spiritual, and only secondarily occult—if that be the divine Will.

M. P. PANDIT

SRI AUROBINDO'S CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY

II

SHANKAR AND SRI AUROBINDO*

THERE are three main problems of philosophy:

- (1) What is the Reality behind the universe?
- (2) Why the world appears out of it? In other words, what possibility is there in it for the manifestation of the world.
- (3) What is the ultimate goal of man's life upon the earth?

After thinking and meditating a good deal, the Vedic seers discovered that there is One and only one Reality behind the universe. It is Brahman, Sachchidananda (Existence, Consciousness, Bliss). Everything and being, animate and inanimate, conscient and inconscient is nothing but its manifestation. Though this idea was discovered in the very early stages of the Vedic culture, the difference between Matter and Spirit, Conscient and Inconscient appeared so great to the thinkers of the later period that they were not satisfied with this monistic view. Therefore the Sankhya and Yoga, the Nyaya and Vaisesika, the Mimansa and Vedanta—these six systems of philosophy appeared. The medieval period of Indian philosophy is full of disputes between the philosophers on this subject. It was Shankar who by his forceful and subtle arguments clarified from clouds of doubts and confusions the mental horizon of philosophers and established permanently the sole Reality of Brahman.

But while Shankar was perfectly right in proving the One Reality of Brahman, he was not correct in proving the unreality of the world. He follows Buddha in this line. The solutions, therefore, given by

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This article is a free rendering of the author's Introduction to his translation of *The Life Divine* Vol. II. I.

him of other philosophical problems were partial and imperfect, not complete, absolute and final.

No doubt, there appeared "other philosophies which disputed with more or less force and success the conclusions of these systems but none has been put forward with an equal force of presentation or drive of personality or had a similar massive effect. The spirit of these two remarkable spiritual philosophies—for Shankar in the historical process of India's philosophical mind takes up, completes and replaces Buddha,—has weighed with a tremendous power on her thought, religion and general mentality: everywhere broods its mighty shadow, everywhere is the impress of the three great formulas, the chain of Karma, escape from the wheel of rebirth, Maya".

(L.D.II.V.4)

Sri Aurobindo refers to Buddhism casually here and there only. He attached so much importance to Mayavada that he thought it proper to devote almost the whole of the Part I of the second volume of *The Life Divine* on explaining and examining the main concepts of the Mayavada, Brahman, Purusha, Ishwara, Maya, Avidya, Prakriti, Ignorance, Illusion, Dream, hallucination, falsehood etc., etc. We shall be, therefore, in a better position to understand Sri Aurobindo's contribution to philosophy if, while appreciating Shankar's contribution to philosophy, we may also know the limits and drawbacks of his system. I am therefore examining here in the light of *The Life Divine* a few main arguments put forward by Shankar and his followers to prove the unreality of the world.

If we read Shankar's mind and ask him this question: when you accept Brahman, the only one Reality, why don't you accept the world to be his real manifestation? he would reply that because it is said in the Upanishads that Brahman is inactive (निष्क्रिय), still (शान्त), stable (कूटस्थ), immobile, immutable (अक्षर), unmodifiable, unchangeable (अविकार्य). If we ask him again that it is also said in the Upanishads that all things are born out of him, exist by him, disappear in him, then why do you not accept that there is a movement of creation, preservation and destruction in him? If Upanishads are the only authority and there it is said in innumerable places that Brahman is both active

and inactive (तदेजति तन्नैजति, अकर्त्ता, सर्वकर्त्ता), then why do you not accept him both inactive as well as active, static as well as dynamic? He would reply that as Brahman is described in the Upanishads as eternal (नित्य), if there is the least movement in him he would perish like pot, cloth etc. This is the main argument of Shankar upon which the whole structure of Mayavada stands. If it can be proved that a thing can be both active and inactive without perishing, the whole structure will fall down like the house of cards or a wall built out of sand.

Let us now examine as to how far this argument of Shankar is true that if there is any movement in Brahman he would perish like a pot, cloth etc. When a potter makes a pot out of soil, if the pot is not according to his liking he breaks it and makes it again and goes on making and remaking from the same soil hundreds of time till he is satisfied with the form of the pot. In spite of all these movements of making and remaking, the soil does not perish, nor does the pot perish because it remains always potentially or actually in the soil; if once it breaks down, it can be formed again. A blacksmith makes instruments out of iron. If the instruments are broken he melts them and makes again new ones. The gold-smith makes ornaments out of gold; if the ornaments are broken down, he makes second and third time other ornaments out of the same gold. Water by heat becomes vapour and invisible to our eyes and we think that it has perished, but we can gather the vapour and change it into water if we so desired. This does not mean that the soil, iron, gold, water etc. have perished by the irremovements and have become non-existent.

According to the theory of existent-effect (Sat-Karya Vada), which has been accepted equally by the Sankhya and Vedanta, everything has two aspects—essence and form. When the soil is changed into pot, it is only its form that is changed, its essence remains unchanged and so the pot is called earthen pot. When ornaments are made out of gold and silver, their essence does not change, only their forms are changed and so the jeweller purchasing or selling evaluates them according to their essence and not to their form. But the unchangeableness of soil, gold, silver, iron etc. is under certain limits. According to the physical science, all things of the world are made out of three electrical particles called electron, proton and neutron, which are again made out of one Energy. The Energy is the essence

or origin of all things. When pot, soil, gold, iron etc. perish—as we usually call—they assume the form of the Energy. The Energy taking millions and millions of forms millions and millions of times, neither decreases, nor increases, its total amount remains always the same. It is imperishable, as it is ably put by Sir James Jeans:

“The first law of thermodynamics teaches that energy is indestructible, it may change from one form to another but its total amount remains unalterable through all these changes so that the total energy of the universe remains the same.”

—The Universe Around Us

According to the Sankhya philosophy all things of the world are made out of five gross elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether, and these are the effects of five subtle elements called tanmatras—smell, taste, form, touch and sound, and these are again the effects of three qualities called Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. These three qualities are called in one word Prakriti or Nature. These qualities, according to the Sankhya system, in spite of their assuming millions and millions of forms neither increase nor decrease nor perish. Sattwa remains always Sattwa, Rajas remains always Rajas, Tamas remains always Tamas. Like the Energy of the physical scientists, their amount remains always the same, as it was before the creation so is now and so much would be after the dissolutions even of millions of creations.

Sankhya system accepts the duality of Nature and Soul. Upanishadic Vedanta going beyond the limits of Sankhya discovered that just as Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas these three qualities are behind the material world according to Sankhya, so behind soul and nature there are three other qualities Existence, Consciousness and Bliss called in one word Sachchidananda Brahman. This is one and the sole Reality behind all things of the world, animate and inanimate, conscient and inconscient.

If pot, cloth etc. will dissolve where will they go? They cannot become non-existent (नाभावो विद्यते सतः). They can dissolve only according to the Upanishads in their ultimate cause, the Brahman out of which they were born. Hence there must be some movement in Brahman which brings them forth and afterwards dissolves into it. This

idea is emphasised by the Upanishads in innumerable places like these:

“All existence are born out of Brahman, being born live by him and passing away from here enter into him. As a spider creates cob-web, as vegetables are produced in the earth, as hair, nails, etc. are produced from (the body of) the conscious being so the world is produced from the Immovable Being. As sparks are produced from burning fire similarly various things are produced from the Immovable Being.”

From these and many other passages we can know that the Upanishads while they describe Brahman on one side inactive (निष्क्रिय), immutable, immovable (अक्षर, अचल), stable (स्थाय), they accept in him movement of creation, preservation and destruction of the world. Therefore the analogy of pot does not prove that if there would be the movement of creation in Brahman, he would perish. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, writes:

“The analogy of pot can tell more convincingly the other way; for the pot is real by right of its being made out of the substance of earth which is real; it is not an illusion and even when it is dissolved into the original earth its past existence cannot be thought to have been unreal or an illusion. Moreover, the pot form is an eternal possibility of earth substance or ethereal substance, and while the substance exists the form can always be manifested. A form may disappear, but it only passes out of manifestation into non-manifestation: a world may disappear, but there is no proof that world existence is an evanescent phenomenon; on the contrary, we may suppose that the power of manifestation is inherent in Brahman and continues to act either continuously in time-eternity or in an eternal recurrence”.

(L.D.II.VI.20)

“The silence, the status are the bases of the movement, an eternal immobility is the necessary condition, field, essence even, of the infinite mobility, stable being is the condition and foundation of the vast action of the force of being. The opposition we make is mental and conceptual; in reality the silence of the Spirit and the dynamis of the Spirit are complementary truths and inseparable”.

(L.D.II.II.13)

“The indwelling reality has built the Universe on the principle of the development of one seed into a million different fashions (एकं बीजं बहुधा यः करोति); if there were not this secure basis which brings it about that nothing changes yet all changes, all Nature's workings and creations would in this play collapse into disintegration and chaos; there would be nothing to hold her disparate movements and creations together.”

(L.D.II.II.17)

“It is perfectly rational to suppose that the eternal status of being of the Reality contains in it an eternal force of being and this dynamis must necessarily carry in itself a power of action and movement, a kinesis; both status of being and movement of being can be real—we must therefore conclude that eternal status and eternal dynamis are both true of the Reality...; the immobile and the mobile Brahman are both the same Reality.

(L.D.II.II.18)

Shankar was so much enamoured with his experience of the static Brahman that in spite of the fact that the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras, the Gita describe the world as real modification of Brahman, he ignored the dynamic aspect of Brahman and tried to explain away such texts and to prove the unreality of the world by giving the examples of dreams and rope-snakes etc.

Let us now see whether these examples do prove the unreality of the world. Ordinarily, we can divide dreams into three categories. Firstly those that are the product of the impressions upon our subconscious mind during the waking state. Secondly symbolic and thirdly inner visions in dreaming state. The first type of dreams are like the impressions of the outer things on the film of a camera. Just as it is possible that due to some defect in the lens or film of the camera the impressions may become curved or partially mixed with one another, similarly due to some disordered state of the mind the impressions may appear confused or disordered in sleep. Hence it is possible that the man who has seen a tiger and a sheep may see in

dreams the head of a tiger on the body of a sheep and vice versa. But if he has not seen these animals actually in the outer world, he would not see such dreams. A blind man would not see coloured things in dreams. Therefore, just as it is proved from the impressions on the film that such things really exist in the world, similarly from dreams is proved the real existence of the world.

The Second type of dreams are called symbolic. They usually come when our subliminal being is awakened and is active in sleep. These dreams have their significance. They are a sort of occult script which if we could read and understand, could give us knowledge of present and future events and widen our vista of knowledge. For instance, it is said in the Upanishads that if one sees in dreams some woman (and if she had a jar full of water in her hands) there would be success in the work undertaken by the man. Dream psychology is being studied in modern times with keen interest. Just as we cannot say that the script of the mantras of the Vedas and the Upanishads which describe the nature of Brahman and the world is unreal or false, similarly such dreams or the events or things which they signify cannot be said to be unreal or false. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“There can come to us the records of happenings seen or experienced on other planes of our own being or of universal being into which we enter: these have sometimes, like the symbolic dreams, a strong bearing on our own inner and outer life or the life of others, reveal elements of our or their mental being and life-being or disclose influence on them of which our waking self is totally ignorant.”

(L.D.II.V.13)

The Third series of dreams are inner visions in dreams. Our subliminal being is open to the universal being. When it is fully awakened it gets exact visions of events that are happening at a distance, in other planes or are going to happen upon the earth in the future. In such dreams, men, houses, places which the man has not seen so far appear with an exact precision. In this state of inner development, very little difference remains between inner visions in dreams and in yogic samadhi. Sometimes same visions are seen in both the states. These

dreams also cannot be said to be false or unreal.

"Dream becomes a series of thoughts, often strangely or vividly figured, problems are solved which our waking consciousness could not solve, warnings, premonitions, indications of the future, veridical dreams replace the normal subconscious incoherence."

(L.D.II.V.13)

There are other psychic and spiritual dreams in which our inner or subliminal being sees figures of some diety, Sri Krishna, Buddha, Rama or some other gods and receives messages from them. These dreams produce great influence on the life of the percipient. The Mother in her childhood used to see the figure of Sri Aurobindo in her dreams and she was "led to call him Sri Krishna." Being a good painter she drew his picture. When she saw Sri Aurobindo for the first time on 29th March 1914 she "recognised him", by that very picture, "the well known being whom she used to call Sri Krishna". To say that these dreams are false shows an utter ignorance of the occult world.

"If this is a true account of dream experience, dreams can no longer be classed as a mere unreal figure of unreal things temporarily imposed upon our half-unconsciousness as a reality; the analogy therefore fails even as an illustrative support for the theory of Cosmic Illusion. The dream analogy fails us altogether and is better put out of the way."

(L.D.II.V.17)

It is said by the Mayavadins that the Unreal world appears to our senses due to our ignorance of Brahman, just as a snake appears in place of a rope. There an entirely new snake is created due to the ignorance of the rope, and that ignorance is the material cause (upadana) of the snake. Similarly Ignorance of Brahman (not Brahman itself) is the material cause (upadana) of the world. But this analogy does not hold good in the case of the creation of the world for the following reasons: (1) The man who sees a snake in place of a rope, has previously seen real snake somewhere. He has the knowledge that snake contains poison, it bites and by that man dies. He has fear in

his mind towards it. If these things were absent, if the man had not seen actually existing snake anywhere, this illusion would not arise. Likewise, for the illusory appearance of the world it is necessary that the man must have seen it beforehand. If the world was already existent, the question of its first creation remains unsolved.

Secondly, the snake does not appear in the air or in the indeterminate energy in the form of electron and proton. When these particles take the form of a rope which can be seen by the naked eyes, then only the illusion of the snake can arise. Similarly, the illusion of the world in the form of the sun, moon, earth, etc., can be created only if Brahman had taken some such form which can be seen by the eyes. As Brahman is always indeterminate, formless, beyond the senses, no illusion of the world like rope-snake is possible.

Thirdly, there is some similarity of form between the snake and the rope. Size of the rope may be about one or two yards in length, about one inch in thickness, some curve in its lying on the ground etc. When silver appears in a mother of pearl, shiningness of the two articles is common. But there is not the least similarity between Brahman and the cosmos. Brahman is formless, the world has a form, Brahman is immovable, the world is moving, Brahman is conscious, the world is unconscious. Hence the analogy of the rope-snake-illusion cannot be applicable in the case of the world creation.

Moreover, ignorance is a function of the mind of the jiva, i.e. man, ant, mosquito etc. Jiva, according to the Mayavada, is a reflection of Brahman in mind or inner instrument (अन्तःकरणावच्छिन्न चैतन्यो जीवः). For the creation of the world out of Ignorance, it is necessary that the jiva and his mind, etc., must be existent, which means that the creation of the world (world-illusion) already is there. In this way Mayavada accepts beforehand that which it is going to prove. It is a fallacy of mutual-dependence (अन्योन्याश्रय) according to Indian logicians.

Moreover, mind by itself can bring before it only the images of the things which he has seen beforehand or somewhat similar to them. But it has no power to create new things. It is possible that some very great yogin by his mental power may create a new body or something new by changing the combination of certain atoms already present upon the earth or by bringing some new substance here from

some other planes. But he or his mind has no power to create those atoms or that substance. For each and every so called new creation, he has to use the material which is already in existence. We know that power of knowledge is greater than that of ignorance. While the greatest human yogins are incapable to create even an atom, how can we imagine that the ignorance of mosquitos, ants, dogs etc. has created the earth, sun, moon, sky etc.? To say so would not be a philosophy but a dogma, not a reason but a blind belief.

It is said by certain Mayavadins that the world is not a creation of the ignorance of the individual jivas but of some other ignorance cosmic in nature, called Avidya or Maya. It can be asked here as to how the Maya came into existence in the pure consciousness of Brahman? The reply is given that the Maya is not created at any point of time. It is from eternity. But in that case, we may say that there would be two eternal realities, Brahman and Maya and so the adwaitism of Mayavada would collapse. It is said by Mayavada in reply that the duality would have been possible if Maya had been eternal, i.e. existing in three times, but it is not so. It was from eternity in the past, it is at present but it would disappear when all the jivas get knowledge of the Brahman and by that knowledge their ignorance disappears; at that time Maya and the world both will vanish. Brahman is eternal because it exists in three times, past, present, and future. Maya is temporary, perishable because it exists in two times, in the past and the present only, not in future, so there is no duality.

But this argument does not help the Mayavada's case. We can imagine the disappearance of Maya and the world by the disappearance of the ignorance of the jivas if their ignorance would have been the cause and the Maya and the world its effect, just as soil is the cause and pot the effect, gold the cause and ornament the effect, so if the soil the cause is destroyed the pot, its effect, will automatically disappear and by the destruction of the cause-gold its effect-ornament would be destroyed. But by the destruction of the pot and the ornament their cause, the soil and the gold would not be destroyed. Similarly, by the destruction of the ignorance of the jivas which is the effect of Maya, the Maya and the world which are the cause, will not be destroyed but remain for ever as they were before. Hence the

duality of Maya and Brahman will remain.

Moreover, the jivas are only the reflections of Brahman in the inner instrument (antahkarnas). If Maya is capable of creating innumerable number of inner instruments (antahkarnas), and if the ignorance of certain jivas is destroyed and they are liberated, still the Maya would go on creating new antahkarnas. As Brahman is powerless to destroy the Maya and her creations, Maya would be free to continue her creation for all times to come. Hence it would exist in three times and would be eternal, and so the duality of Brahman and Maya cannot be avoided.

Moreover, if Ignorance which is the negation of all things could create such positive things as the sun, moon, earth, iron, gold etc. there should be no difficulty in admitting some kind of knowledge at the basis of the world. It would be more reasonable to suppose it because, we find some order, some law working in the universe. Each movement of atom, sun, moon, living organism shows signs of some intelligent working behind it. While, accepting Brahman as the only reality, we find difficulty in understanding Ignorance at the basis of the world which is Brahman's direct opposite, something foreign to its nature and different from it. But, as Brahman is consciousness, there is no difficulty in accepting knowledge as its nature, its part and parcel and therefore no question of duality arises. This view is supported by a large number of such passages of the Upanishads which describe Brahman as the creator of the world.

He saw, "let me create the worlds, he created the worlds (स ऐक्षत लोकास्तु सृजा इति, स लोकानसृजत), He thought that let me become many (एकोऽहं बहु स्याम्). In the Upanishads Brahman is said to be the Truth, Knowledge but nowhere falsehood or ignorance. From this argument we come to the conclusion that Brahman being omniscient created by his all-knowledge-will the real world.

SUMMARY

In the end, summarising our arguments, we may ask the following questions to the Mayavadins:

1) Question: Accepting Brahman the sole reality at the root of the world, why do you not accept the world to be his real creation?

Reply from him: Real creation needs some creative movement in the cause, as Brahman is described in the Upanishads inactive (निष्क्रिय) immovable (अक्षर), stable (कूटस्थ), therefore the world cannot be its real creation.

2) Question: The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, the Brahma-sutra have stated in thousands of places that just as a pot is made out of soil, an ornament from gold, curd from milk, similarly the world has been born from Brahman. All these instances show that Brahman is the material cause of the world, and the world his real modification (परिणाम), why do you say, then, that he is the illusory cause and the world unreal, by coining the analogy of rope-snake which is not found in any of the scriptures mentioned above?

Reply from him: Because if there would be the least movement in Brahman, it would perish like pot etc., therefore, the only alternative is to accept Brahman as the illusory cause and the world its illusory creation (विवर्त्त) like a snake in a rope.

If this is the correct position of the philosophy of Shankar, the proper reply that a sincere seeker of Truth can give, would be as follows:

All the facts of the world show that the basic Reality must be static as well as dynamic and at the same time imperishable. This fact has been supported fully by the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, the six systems of Indian philosophy and by the latest discoveries of the modern science. Therefore your theory that the Reality would perish if there would be any movement in it is your own mental view based upon your imperfect observation of the facts of the world and against the letter and spirit of the ancient scriptures upon which you proclaim your theory to be based. Your interpretation of the scriptures to suit your own view is a fallacy: in the words of Sri Aurobindo:

“The conscious or half conscious wresting of fact and word and idea to suit a preconceived notion or the doctrine or principle of one's preference is recognised by Indian logicians as one of the most fruitful sources of fallacy.”

From this discussion we reach at this perfectly rational conclusion which is in full accord with the Upanishads: Brahman being both static and dynamic, by his Real Knowledge (सत्यं ज्ञानं), Real Idea (सत्य संकल्प) has created the Real world (सत्य जगत्). This view has been ac-

cepted by Sri Aurobindo as the true solution of the first problem of Philosophy, the ultimate cause of the world. The next problem is why does he create the world. The solution of this problem we shall try to find out in the next article in the light of Sri Aurobindo's 'The Life Divine.'

(To be continued)

K. D. ACHARYA

SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

ACCORDING to Sri Aurobindo, "The child's education ought to be an outbringing of all that is best, most powerful, most intimate and living in his nature, the mould into which the man's action and development ought to run is that of his innate quality and power. He must acquire new things but he will acquire them best, most wholly on the basis of his own developed type and inborn force." True education, is, thus self-education, a creative process in which man achieves the objectives of his own innate nature and his motivation. The best education that a child can receive is the one which develops every aspect of his personality, which contributes to every aspect of his development, the intellectual, the spiritual, the social and the individual. Indian philosophers believe that the highest element in man is not his mind but his soul, and in this respect they differ from the Western tradition of philosophy which accepts the mind as the highest element possessed by man. Despite his internationalism, Sri Aurobindo was a staunch nationalist. He felt that nationalism should form the basis of every aspect of life within the country. He was convinced that all over the world human beings have the same needs, that knowledge and truth are not the possessions of any one country. But he knew that every nation, and every individual in each nation, had a duty, an innate nature, which compelled him to develop according to this tendency. He therefore argued that any pattern of education evolved for the country should be based on nationalistic principles. He said that the education that we are striving for is an education equipped with an Indian soul, Indian needs and nature, and an Indian culture. It is not an education which looks to the past for faith and inspiration, but an education that evinces faith in the developing and evolving soul of India, in the future aspirations and needs of the country, in its greater glory to be achieved in the future, and over and above all a faith in the abiding universal soul. In his book *A System of National Education*, Sri Aurobindo has presented a plan for national education in which he has expressed his faith in the principle of unity in diversity. He believes that there

is infinite variety in nature, and that because of this variety nature prospers. Hence, even if one believes in internationalism, it is impossible to wipe out nationalistic leanings. But it must be remembered that national education does not imply total neglect of modern scientific knowledge and truth. A national education means simply that all the knowledge which is acquired should be clothed in an Indian garb so that it may become a living part of our existence. For this reason he stressed the importance of a national language as the medium of education, although he himself had received his education through English.

In every part of his philosophy Sri Aurobindo has maintained that all human development should follow a natural pattern. This fact must be borne in mind even more tenaciously when thinking about education. Education does not mean filling the child's mind with bits and pieces of loosely coordinated information. It instead lies in inspiring the child to employ knowledge, character and culture as the means of developing his mind and realizing his own nature and soul. Education must assist the educand as a constantly progressing soul. Hence, the aim of education is to provide all the means that the child needs in order to develop according to his own natural ability. Sri Aurobindo writes, "The true basis of education is the study of the human mind, infant, adolescent and adult."

Sri Aurobindo believes that man and society are two important aspects of the same reality, differentiated merely for convenience of thought. Hence, in discussing the aims of education he has paid adequate attention to the social aspect of education, because he feels that education is not determined only by the psychology of the individual. Education is also a social process. Its objectives are determined by the kind of society we are seeking to create. Sri Aurobindo envisages a divine man and divine society in which both have achieved the level of complete development. He objects to emphasis being laid on any one aspect of man's personality, irrespective of its importance. He is critical of the traditional Indian concept of perfection on the ground that it placed far too much stress on salvation. He believes that both activity and renunciation were equally important, that neither was to be neglected. He is neither an individualist, nor a collectivist, for he believes that man and society are so intimately

related that they cannot be really separated from each other. Both of them act as media for manifesting a single reality. Man's aim is to achieve perfection, and this involves development as an individual and also as a member of society.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education is based on certain fundamental principles, the first that the child has to learn for itself and develop itself, while the educator plays the role of the guide and the friend. The second principle is that education should conform to the specific traits, abilities, ideas and good qualities of the educand. And, for both individual and group alike, nationalism is the basic foundation of all development and progress, while blind imitation of others a sure means of destruction. In Sri Aurobindo's words, "The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use." Hence, every individual and group should prepare a plan for education which is in keeping with its own nature, because this is essential for the perfection both of the individual and of society. A more or less similar kind of theory was put forward by the ancient Greeks and Indians. Self-realization is also a commonly accepted aim of education, although very few thinkers have succeeded in realizing the true nature of the human soul. It must be realized that behind the physical, vital and mental structure of the soul, there is invariably the true soul. Education must aim at the manifestation of this basic element, so that it can bring out all that is finest in mankind.

According to Sri Aurobindo, "The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be." This principle is a corollary of the second principle. It is desirable that the curriculum, the general atmosphere in the school, the mode of education, in fact anything concerned with the educative process should conform to the nature of the educand. Education must have an indigenous ideal as well as an indigenous form, the product of the nation. The national plan for education should be based on the nation's past experience and heritage, and it should be imparted through the medium of the national language. But this does not lead

to the conclusion that one must never borrow anything from other nations. Borrowing or acquiring from others does not necessarily imply the abandoning of one's own things because human beings everywhere resemble each other in their qualities, abilities and capacities, desires and ambitions, mental and physical structures, etc. Hence, Sri Aurobindo did not demand the ostracism of Western knowledge, science and the English language. All that he insisted upon was that these should be given their rightful place in the educational system. As he himself expressed it, "The aim and principle of a true national education is not certainly to ignore modern truth and knowledge but to take our foundation on our own belief, our own mind, our own spirit". Other contemporary thinkers like Tagore, Vivekananda, etc., also subscribed to this principle.

MEDIUM OF EDUCATION

Being a staunch nationalist Sri Aurobindo favoured the use of the national language as the medium of education. He had a keen insight into human psychology which enabled him to see that the child learns everything more facily when taught through his mother tongue. Besides, knowledge of the mother tongue enabled the child to acquaint himself with the history and literature of his motherland and thus made it easier for the child to understand the life and people around him. Hence foreign languages should be taught only after the mother tongue has been learnt. Most other contemporary thinkers agree with Sri Aurobindo on this point.

CURRICULUM OF EDUCATION

Sri Aurobindo expressed the opinion that the educator's first task was to acquaint the child with the environment in which the latter lived so that the child may develop some interest in the life and sources of knowledge. Every child is born possessed of certain mental faculties and powers. The curriculum for the child's education should be shaped after deciding how these powers can be developed and used properly. The child should be acquainted with the more entertaining aspects of the national literature. In the

teaching of history the child's instinctive desire for hero-worship can be exploited. Similarly his curiosity can also be exploited in teaching him science. But in general it is not desirable to fill up the curriculum with too many subjects. In determining a pattern of education it must always be kept in mind that the naturalness of education should never be destroyed. All artificiality must be avoided and care must be taken to avoid any one-sided development, repression or a forced motivation. A comprehensive programme should be initiated in order to develop every aspect of the child. That is why Sri Aurobindo feels that mental education should be supplemented by physical, religious and moral education.

It is clear from this brief outline of the various aspects of Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy that it is a near approximation of the ideal of integral growth. His philosophy is based on his ideal of evolutionism. The object of every activity of man is his development, and the aim of education is the complete development of man. But this ideal is not to be achieved in schools alone. In Sri Aurobindo's opinion, yoga is necessary for the achievement of this ideal, because yoga is the most important and powerful instrument of human development. Complete development is impossible without yoga. Certain yogic exercises can help the educand to concentrate and focus his attention. Merely mental and physical training is not the aim of education. Education must try to put man and society on the path to perfection. In this process a stage comes when formal education fails to help. At this stage one should turn to yoga. Although many educational philosophers may not agree with Sri Aurobindo about the role that yoga can play in the process of education, it is amply evident from the brief sketch of his philosophy of education that he has achieved a fine harmony between the Indian and Western educational philosophies no less than between the ancient and modern ideas on the subject. His educational ideals are clearly founded on strong psychological facts the validity of which cannot be questioned. The pattern of education suggested by him looks after the physical, mental, spiritual, moral and religious development of the individual. He believes that human perfection is impossible unless supported by development of its social aspect, and therefore his theory achieves a synthesis between the development of individual qualities, abilities

and powers and the development of social qualities. Today the educationists of India are faced with complex problems, and in searching for the solutions they can turn to Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, because he has searched for truth in this sphere with a profound and comprehensive vision. His educational philosophy thus has significance not only for India but for the whole world.

RAM NATH SHARMA

A NOTE ON TEILHARD AND SRI AUROBINDO

LIKE Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard holds that evolution is essentially an evolution of consciousness and that consciousness has not stopped evolving at the present summit point of evolution which is man. Beyond the human "reflective" state expressed in separate individuals, Teilhard sees a movement of collective unification resulting in a "co-reflective" state. At its highest, co-reflection will mean a totalised and harmonised mankind functioning as a sort of "super-organism" with a "super-consciousness", a world-wide brain, so to speak, and a world-wide heart. Teilhard calls this culmination a "planetization" of consciousness, as well as "Omega Point." Teilhard considers Omega to mark the presence of the All and he conceives it as not only an emerged perfection but also an already existing Divine Reality which serves at once as a push from behind and a pull from the front, a God Above and a God Ahead. In orthodox religious terms, Teilhard's God is Christ the Prime Mover, Christ the Soul of the World, Christ the Evolver, Christ the Incarnate Word, Christ the Transformer and Diviniser, the Cosmic Christ who is the Gatherer-up of the evolving souls into his Universal Mystical Body which will complete and fulfil evolution in a final plenitude of spiritual being, named the Pleroma.

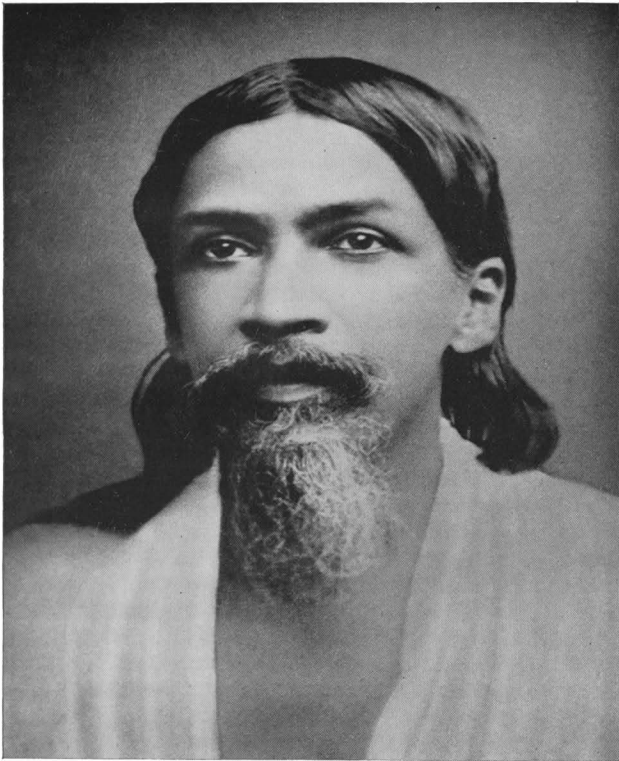
From the Aurobindonian point of view the Teilhardian Omega Point reached by evolution would be a sort of cosmic consciousness on a restricted scale — more correctly a planetary consciousness set to a human key. The state of being it would represent is a Vishwa Manava, the World-Man in complete unitary and multiple self-expression. To dub it the All or the God Above fused with the God Ahead would be a pseudo-religious exaggeration. Teilhard's Omega Point would be far indeed from Sri Aurobindo's Supermind. And the fulfilled humanity it brings about would hardly be that complete divinisation of mind, life and body which Sri Aurobindo terms "Supramental Transformation". In no respect can Teilhard's Omega Point parallel the realisation of the Aurobindonian Supermind.

Even if it broadly did so, the final postures of the operation of

the two would differ. According to Teilhard, when Omega Point is reached after millions of years, there will be an immediate passage from the "ultra-human" into the "trans-human", the totalised consciousness will leave the earth, break out of time and space and be taken up into the Divine Beyond, the Transcendent and there will be the end of history. Sri Aurobindo looks forward to a continuing progression on earth itself, an ever greater fulfilment, the Transcendent embodied more and more in evolutionary terms, perfecting and not annulling them. Following upon Supramentalisation there is the Ananda-embodiment, and there is still a beyond. Nor will Supramentalisation, which will be a radical divine change, come after millions of years. On the individual scale it is not very far off — and, even on the collective scale, within a measurable span of time. Teilhard's vision, starting in sympathy with the modern age's stress on completion here and now, is yet remote-minded and other-worldly in the last analysis. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga carries to their culmination the dreams and hopes and aspirations of the Time-Spirit. It is magnificently practical and supremely this-worldly.

K. D. SETHNA





THE FUTURE OF INDIA:
GLIMPSSES OF SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION
OF THE TASKS AHEAD

“YOUR feeling that there should be a re-integration of Indian culture under modern conditions is quite right; it is *the* work that has to be done.”¹ This message, one of his last, addressed to Shri K.M. Munshi, may perhaps be taken as Sri Aurobindo's last will and testament to his countrymen. This it may be well to remember, has been the core of his teaching about India right from the Swadeshi days.

“We have yet to know ourselves, what we were, are and may be, what we did in the past and what we are capable of doing in the future, our history and our mission. This”, he says in the Karmayogin,² “is the first and most important work. To raise the mind, character and tastes of the people, to recover the ancient nobility of temper, the strong Aryan character and the high Aryan outlook, the perceptions which made earthly life beautiful and wonderful, and the magnificent spiritual experiences, realisations and aspirations which made us the deepest-hearted, deepest-thoughted and most delicately profound in life of all the peoples of the earth, is the task next in importance and urgency.... Finally, the artistic awakening commenced by that young, living and energetic school which has gathered round the Master and originator, S. Abanindranath Tagore, the impulse which this school is giving, its inspired artistic recovery of the past, its intuitive anticipations of the future, have to be popularised and made a national possession.”

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These things, one might argue, are primarily things of the spirit and the mind. They have their importance, even a capital importance, for without them our life loses all sense of value. Still, there are problems equally insistent, problems of sociology, of economics and politics which if left unsolved might render the higher effort nugatory.

Above all, the world is upon us and we can no longer keep ourselves shut as in a shell; we have to meet it and master it if we are even to survive. How shall we deal with these?

The answer that Sri Aurobindo gives bears his individual stamp. He insists that our external life no less than the internal must be governed by "the supreme Indian idea of the oneness of all men in God...."³ Only, we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future."⁴

We have to see how this translates into practice.

Our social structure, says the ardent reformist, is badly in need of an overhaul, a renovation from the roots. To him, Sri Aurobindo's answer is: "We have to treasure jealously everything in our social structure, manners, institutions, which is of permanent value, essential to our spirit, or helpful to the future, but we must not cabin the expanding and aggressive spirit of India in temporary forms which are the creation of the last few hundred years."⁵

Again, we must get rid of the notion that the economic impoverishment of the nation, a result of the two centuries of British rule, cannot be met by vigorous steps in line with our ancient tradition and in the light of modern knowledge. "Valmiki, our ancient epic poet, includes among the signs of a just and enlightened state of society not only universal education, morality and spirituality, but this also that there shall be none who is compelled to eat coarse food, none who lives a mean and petty slave of luxuries."⁶ India must get wealth first, she must attain a high economic standard of life. Large scale production can alone bring about the necessary change.

What should be our aim in politics? Politics of the Western pattern, with its violence and strife, its constant recourse to platitudes and sham, is of an extremely rajasic type; it does not suit the genius of India which aims at harmony and peace as the basis of all human endeavour. We shall certainly adopt the means modern science places at our disposal — the platform, the press, the telecommunication systems. We shall hold as sacred the Vedantic ideal of liberty equality and fraternity. But these ideals cannot be put into practice unless the soul in man, the spiritual element in him becomes the

dominant influence. "Patriotism is true only when it takes count of the spiritual possibilities of the nation and develops them."⁷

As in our national life, so in the international, our aim must be to receive the external influences and return them to the world transfigured in the light of our deepest spirit. True, "the vast amount of new matter which India has to absorb is unprecedented in her history, but to her it is child's play.... The genius of Japan lies in imitation and improvement, that of India in origination. The contributions of outside peoples she can only accept as rough material for her immense creative faculty."⁸ India alone of all the nations of the world still preserves the secret of transmuting the base metal of earthly life into the gold of a divine existence. "Mankind has long been experimenting with various kinds of thought, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of a perfection to be gained by material means, impossible millenniums and humanitarian hopes. Nowhere has it succeeded in realising the ultimate secret of life. Nowhere has it found satisfaction.... The work which we have to do for humanity, which no other nation can accomplish, is the spiritualisation of the race."⁹ India, Sri Aurobindo has repeatedly said, is the guru of the world, and she must rise to the sense of her mission.

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To perform the functions of a guru, "a living influence, a living example, a present instruction is needed."¹⁰ India must provide the living example of spirituality before her teaching is accepted, her influence grows. But spirituality does not flourish on earth in the void; it needs a firm and wide base of an opulent intellectuality, an opulent vitality, a strong physical foundation.¹¹

Our first necessity, then, "is that the youth of India must learn to think, — to think on all subjects, to think independently, fruitfully, going to the heart of things, not stopped by their surfaces.... Let it have not only the minuteness but the wide mastery and sovereignty natural to the intellect of Bharat.... We must begin by accepting nothing on trust from any source whatsoever, by questioning every thing and forming our own conclusions. We need not fear that we shall by that process cease to be Indians. India can never cease to be India...

if we really think for ourselves".¹²

But thought alone is not enough; will too is needed, and the strength of heart that translates itself into love and courage. "The heart is the one inspirer of all human actions. In love is the will, the power, the spring of all ennobling human actions.... If our people begin to feel and not merely the animal feelings of hunger and thirst, not merely the necessity of comfort and convenience, but the primal necessity of greatness and glory, they will develop a strength of will which nothing can resist...."¹³ And "we hold that in order to rise, the nation must get into the habit of offering challenges rather than receiving them.... What India needs especially at this moment is the aggressive virtues, the spirit of soaring idealism, bold creation, fearless resistance, courageous attack.... We would apply to the present situation the vigorous motto of Danton, that what we need, what we should learn above all things is to dare and again to dare and still to dare."¹⁴

But will and courage without discipline and order and a noble ideal can easily lead a nation astray. It is the ideal of the Kshatriya that must be inculcated into the race. "Loyalty to leader and comrade, devotion to banner and cause, the love and expectation of greatness and truth in others, the pride that makes noble, the playfulness of him who can never be selfish and narrow, these are the qualities of the ideal knight.... The Kshatriya keeps his sinews like iron, his armour bright, and his spirit ever tense for the ideal..."¹⁵

All this implies a thorough overhauling of our system of education, not a mere tinkering with details but a reconsideration of its aims and a readjustment of methods to these aims. "It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities, for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its dharma, and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being."¹⁶ Nothing will be alien to its purpose. Philosophy, Science, Art, Literature, Politics, Sociology, Economics, the care and health of the body, will all be included in its scope, each pursued with one single aim in view, namely, "the revealing and finding of the

divine Self in man.... It would make the whole trend and aim and the permeating spirit not mere worldly efficiency, but this self-developing and self-finding."¹⁷ The principle of its method will be to help "build up men and not machines, — national men, able men, men fit to carve out a career for themselves by their own brain power and resource, fit to meet the shocks of life and breast the waves of adventure."¹⁸

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Thus equipped and educated, India may hope to carry the message of spirituality to the world. But here she must guard against some dangers.

The first danger comes from her own view of spirituality as it has developed during the last two thousand years and more, — an exaggeration of certain spiritual *motifs* to the exclusion of others. For instance, the Buddhistic insistence on the goal of Nirvana, or the Illusionist view of the Absolute as the only Real and all else the imposition of a real-unreal Maya on this Absolute, is not the whole of Indian spirituality. The Veda speaks of Maya, but in the sense of a creative and self-limiting power of the Supreme, who has "measured out" the worlds of mind and life and the worlds of Inconscience and of the Superconscience below and above them. The Upanishadic view of Reality accepts an *asat* beyond all phenomenal existence which seems to agree with the Buddhistic description of the Nihil, but it is a Non-existence that seems to contain the All; and "all this is *brahman*" or ultimate reality does not discard as unreal this phenomenal existence. The Gita, our last great scripture of spirituality, speaks of the triple status of the *puruṣa* or Lord, the transcendental, the universal and the individual, and of the two Natures, the supreme and the cosmic that rule the universe. All this presupposes the reality of phenomena no less than that of the Absolute.

Sri Aurobindo, basing himself on these supreme records of Indian spirituality and adding to them his own experience and knowledge presents a view of spirituality that is all-comprehensive. "The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real. The reality is Sacchidananda. But here in the material world he has hidden

himself in what seems to be his opposites, Non-being, Inconscience and Insentience.... The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Consciousness-Force of the Divine, and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter, begins to emerge in Life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a Supramental consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it.... Thus also, the delight of existence emerges from the original insentience, first in the contrary forms of pleasure and pain and then has to find itself in bliss of the Spirit or as it is called in the Upanishads the bliss of the *brahman*. That is the central idea in the explanation of the universe put forward in *The Life Divine*.¹⁹ This presupposes a graded series of ascending substance, beginning with the Inconscient and rising through Matter Life and Mind and the many intermediate planes of superconscience till it culminates in the all-creative Supermind or Gnosis, the supreme principle through which Sacchidananda manifests. In this view, *asat* or *nirvāna* is the unmanifest Absolute, Maya in the sense of Illusion is a temporary inlook of the Overmind consciousness, all the other spiritual standpoints become overwhelming experiences of a particular stage in the growth of the seeker's consciousness; all have a basis of truth, none is the ultimate reality.

Indian spirituality will escape its first danger if it accepts this position.

The other danger comes from the Western outlook. To the Western mind steeped in the traditions of European Christianity and the modern secular ideal, it is not at all clear that spirituality is "not a high intellectuality, nor idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things; a mental belief, creed or faith, an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula are not spiritual achievement and experience."²⁰

True spirituality recognises the full value of the intellectual, emotional and aesthetic activities of man; but it will permit none to usurp the functions of the others by a sort of "intellectual land hunger."²¹

"Philosophy is in the Western way of dealing with it a dispassionate enquiry by the light of the reason into the first truths of existence, which we shall get at either by observing the facts Science places at our disposal, or by a careful dialectical scrutiny of the concepts of the reason, or a mixture of the two methods. But from the spiritual viewpoint, truth of existence is to be found by intuition and inner experience and not only by the reason and by scientific observation; the work of Philosophy is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none and put them into their synthetic relation to the one Truth, the one supreme and universal Reality."²² There is no reason why Philosophy should keep itself tied to the apron strings of physical Science with its restricted domain of inquiry.

Science, in the spiritual view, need not "confine itself to a physical knowledge or to the knowledge of life and man and mind based upon the idea of matter or material energy as our starting-point; a spiritualised culture will make room for new fields of research, for new and old psychical sciences and results which start from spirit as the first truth...."²³ Here, the Indian mind, with its long heritage of the spiritual and occult tradition, may open to "the possibility of...working freely in its own nature discovering new methods or even giving a new turn to physical Science."²⁴ The startling experiments of J.C. Bose suggesting the scope and possibilities of sense reaction in plants, illustrating the ancient doctrine of *cetano acetaneşu*, are pointers in this direction.

"Religion is the first attempt of man to get beyond himself.... Its first essential work is to confirm and make real to him his subjective sense of an Infinite on which his material and mental being depends and the aspiration of his soul to come into its presence and live in contact with it."²⁵ As a step to the spiritual change it has a value, indeed a great value for the yet undeveloped physical and vital man. Science and Philosophy need not and "are not bound to square their observations and conclusions with any current ideas of religious

dogma.... One has sometimes to deny God in order to find Him; the finding is inevitable at the end of all earnest scepticism and denial."²⁶ The spirituality of the future will accept this as a self-evident truth, and expose the utter futility of the wranglings over the details of dogma and creed and church organisation.

"Morality is in the ordinary view a well-regulated individual and social conduct which keeps society going and leads towards a better, a more rational, temperate, sympathetic, self-restrained dealing with our fellows. But ethics in the spiritual point of view is much more, it is a means of developing in our action and still more essentially in the character of our being the diviner self in us, a step of our growing into the nature of the Godhead.... The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create images of man and Nature which shall satisfy the sense of beauty and embody artistically the ideas of the intelligence about life and the responses of the imagination to it. But in a spiritual culture, they become too in their aim a revelation of greater things concealed in man and Nature and of the deepest spiritual and universal beauty".²⁷

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In sum, "to get at the Divine and Eternal in himself and the world and to harmonise them" is the true aim and destiny of all the higher powers of man as envisaged by the Indian spiritual ideal.

But how is the spiritual ideal to deal with the lower nature of man, our normal life, which, either in the individual or the society, "is concerned not with good, beauty, spiritual experience, the higher truth, but with interests, physical needs, desires, vital necessities? Its whole principle and aim is to be, to assert its existence, to increase, to expand, to possess and to enjoy."²⁸ To the higher parts, it pays an occasional homage, but it fully reserves the right to its own self-fulfilment on its own lines. The attempt of reason and morality and religion and aesthetics to put a curb on this dangerous but dynamic part of human life has nowhere met with any kind of complete success.

The solution lies, says Sri Aurobindo, "in an awakening to our real, because our highest self and nature, a spiritual self and spiritual nature that will use the mental being which we already are, but the mental being spiritualised, and transform by a spiritual ideality the aim

and action of our vital and physical nature.”²⁹ This “spiritual ideality” will translate itself in the individual as well as the collective life in an insistence on freedom, unity and harmony. “It will not try to make man perfect by machinery or keep him straight by tying up all his limbs.... Its aim will be to diminish as soon and as far as possible the element of external compulsion in human life by awakening the inner divine compulsion of the spirit within and all the preliminary means it will use will have that for its aim.... But the Divine whom he thus sees in himself he sees equally in all others and as the same spirit in all. Therefore too is a growing inner unity with others a necessity of his being, and perfect unity the sign and condition of the perfect life.”³⁰

It is for the India of today and tomorrow to decide whether she is going to prepare herself for the tasks which Sri Aurobindo expects her to fulfil if she is to be true to her mission.

SANAT K. BANERJI

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REVIEWS

Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead on the Nature of God: *By Dr. Satya Prakash Singh*, Aligarh Muslim University, 1972, Pp. 196.

It is an attempt to bring together in one place the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead on the nature of God, with a view to evaluate them in the context of world thinkers. Three types of arguments are advanced: biographical, historical, and epistemological. It is indeed interesting to note that Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead were contemporaries at Cambridge. As long as they remained there, the author says, none of them evinced interest in Philosophy; they began to produce philosophical works only in their forties or fifties. Historically, the author points out that Whitehead, in his conception of God, makes "a clear departure from the entire western philosophical tradition" and "falls in line with the Aurobindian view which in itself is deep-rooted in the Rigveda Samhita". Epistemologically, their philosophical methods have little in common: while Sri Aurobindo adopts integral yoga as his method, Whitehead favours scientific speculation as his. Whatever the similarities between their thoughts, they are not of the same order, nor do they have identical significance.

In comparison, what Sri Aurobindo has achieved holds out a greater prospect for the modern world. One of the admirers of Whitehead remarked: "Whitehead's philosophy generates a moral attitude towards nature, by teaching that there is nothing in the universe that is really and completely dead". The crisis that confronts the modern man is not ethical but spiritual and evolutionary. It is not due to a lack of 'more thought' or 'better mental perspective' that would provide a stronger foundation for ethical values, but really due to the fact that mind has exhausted itself as a frame of reference, and man can no longer act with mind as his centre. The crisis points to the need for a centre far greater than the mind. And Sri Aurobindo rightly tells us that what is urgently needed now is not a change for a better system of ideas, but a complete change of mental conscious-

ness itself. It is to bring about a total transformation of mental consciousness that he has offered the method of integral yoga to humanity.

If we believe that on the academic level a sort of intellectual link can be established between the East and the West through a study of Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead, then this work is one step more in that direction. The author claims in his preface precision and compactness to his work. In fact he seems to say what he really means.

J. SHANMUGAM

The Mind: By *Swami Budhananda*. Publishers: Advaita Ashram, Calcutta 15. Pp. 112. Price: Rs. 1-50.

Before one can control one's mind, one must first know what are the constituents of the subtle organisation that is called mind. The writer gives a good analysis of this set-up according to the Indian system, e.g. *manas*, sense-mind; *buddhi*, intellect-will; *citta*, stuff of consciousness, *ahankāra*, egoity. He discusses the various sources of mental activity and draws upon texts like the Yoga sutras of Patanjali, Bhagavatam, Gita, Vivekachudamani, to present a scheme to control and direct the movements of the mental faculties. All depends upon the *abhyāsa*, assiduous practice of the discipline, of observation, discrimination, rejection of the harmful and promotion of the helpful thought-movements. The writer also touches upon the question of the sub-conscious but does not go sufficiently deep into it. He is content to cite from the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* the direction to awaken the Kundalini. Perhaps we could add that yogic experience commends the practice of extending the area of conscious mind, of exerting a conscious will upon the sub-conscious to orientate itself in the mould of the conscious parts.

M. P. PANDIT

Les Hiérarchies Spirituelles: By *Suzanne Siauwe*. Publishers: The French Institute of Indology, Pondicherry.

This is one more useful publication from The French Institute of Indology who have been making the French-knowing people conversant with Indian thought in the realms of literature, religion and philosophy.

The book under review is from the Anuvyakhya of Madhwa with the texts of verses chosen and commented upon ably in French by the author. The Anuvyakhya of the Acharya is an exposition of the subtleties (*anu*) of his tenets, a final synthesis of his thoughts on Brahma Sutra. The essential doctrine of Madhwa is based on duality, the dual nature of the Individual Soul and the Supreme Soul which are not one and the same. As a corollary to the dualistic approach, the Acharya adumbrates in his Anuvyakhya the essential differences and distinctions. The principle is governed by *tāratamya* (*tāratamasya bhāvaḥ*) the idea of comparison to distinguish the differences. For example, there is a multiplicity of gods but amongst them Vishnu is the unique supreme god. Lakshmi, his consort, comes only next in rank. Devotion, *bhakti*, is the only means given to the Individual Soul to approach the Supreme Soul. But devotion culminates in the realisation of the glory and grandeur of the Supreme and an adoration from a respectable distance. The whole existence is like a ladder with rungs high and low, on which the various gods are posited in charge of the cosmic functions. The whole cosmos is governed by a spiritual hierarchy and the individual soul who is in the cosmos is also governed by the same hierarchy. The desire for deliverance is marked by various steps, by gradations in the fruits of action. The realisation also is graded. These tenets of the Acharya are enshrined in the verses that are chosen from the Anuvyakhya and presented here.

The book is provided with a critical introduction, the translation of the verses being augmented by helpful footnotes. The Appendix rules out categorically any foreign influence, Muslim or Christian on the development of the Dualistic school of philosophy.

S. SHANKARANARAYANAN